## PASTOR'S MEANDERINGS 24 – 25 AUGUST 2019 TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME (C)



In the Gospel we are reminded that we are on our journey which is to lead us to eternal life. We are also told that we will in our lives, our journey to eternal life, have to choose daily which gate to enter, narrow or broad.



That narrow gate is our love for all people, even the enemy. It is defined by a fidelity to Jesus Christ, the truth of His teachings and all that that encompasses.

It's a way of life that has mercy and compassion for all people, even the most difficult.

The world teaches us not to choose the narrow gate, but the broader one, the easier gate to get through, and unfortunately that gate does not lead to eternal life.

There are many times when people, and maybe even ourselves at moments, would really prefer to go through the broader gate, which might, today, even be called the more human way of dealing with things. The broader gate leads us to feel justified when we feel that hatred and resentment, jealousy and competitiveness, and even revenge, are appropriate.

The narrow gate is always love for the other person, even to the enemy.

When we find ourselves wanting to go through the broader gate, we need to pray for the courage to be faithful, committed and merciful, even to the one who is so difficult and so stressful to us. The way to eternal life is to live the life of Jesus. We are to be loving, caring and sharing people who walk our life's journey as Jesus did.

Which gate will you choose the next time there is a struggle, or a difficulty, or a conflict with someone?

There will, no doubt, be days we select the broader gate.

But the important thing is to recognize what we have done and pray for the grace to choose the narrow gate.

Do not give up, that is the important thing.

God is always there for us with His mercy and compassion, no matter how many times we fail.

Our spirituality develops very slowly, and usually is not even noticeable to us as we grow and develop.

**STEWARDSHIP:** Today's reading from Isaiah describes the Israelites bringing their offering to the Lord "in clean vessels." The gift of myself – my patient endurance and fidelity to the will of God – is as important as the monetary gift I offer.

#### Karl Adam

"As long as Catholicism lasts, it will feel the need for reform, for a more perfect assimilation of its actuality to the ideal which illumines its path."

#### **READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY**

1 SEP '19

**Sir. 3:17-18, 20, 28-29**: The wise teacher who speaks here reminds us of the importance of treating others with respect.

**Heb. 12:18-19, 22-24:** The author of Hebrews contrasts the making of the old covenant with that of the new. This new covenant takes place in heaven, not Mount Sinai, where Jesus' self-giving has made this covenant possible.

**Lk. 14:1, 7-14:** At table with critics, Jesus teaches them an important lesson in humility – those who exalt themselves will be humbled, but those who humble themselves will be exalted in the new life of God's Kingdom.

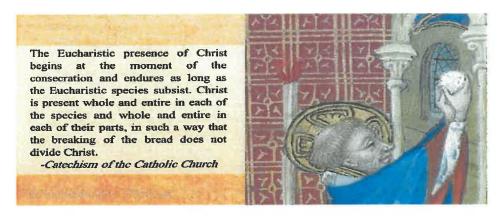
Helena P. Blavatsky

"The greatest among men is always ready to serve and yet is unconscious of the service."

#### PRO-LIFE NOVENA WITH ADORATION AND BENEDICTION

This Friday, 30 August, a novena of prayer will start and be held for nine consecutive Friday evenings. The Eucharist will be exposed beginning at 5:00 p.m. for private adoration. Benediction and the novena prayers will start at 6:30 p.m.

A **novena** (from Latin: novem, "nine") is an ancient tradition of devotional praying in Christianity, consisting of private or public prayers repeated for nine successive days or weeks. ... In the **Catholic** tradition, much used **novena** prayers include doctrinal statements in addition to a personal petition. More detail next week



#### BELIEF IN THE REAL PRESENCE

Earlier this month the PEW Research Center released a report on its survey of what US Catholics actually believed about the Eucharist and the Real Presence of Christ in that sacrament. The results as reported were rather disheartening with two-thirds stating that the eucharistic bread and wine were merely symbolic of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Since this is critical revelation of a deficiency in the Church's catechesis over the past 40/50 years and an essential defining doctrine of the faith and how we live it, I thought I would reprint two articles that pertain to this whole scenario for your information. The first is the information contained in the report and the second is a commentary on its probable accuracy. In the weeks ahead we will be revisiting discussions about the Eucharist, its meaning and importance as well as reexamining the Mass and what are we actually participating in.

# Just one-third of U.S. Catholics agree with their church that Eucharist is body, blood of Christ

#### BY GREGORY A. SMITH

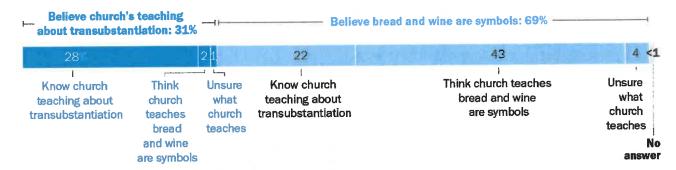
(Avalon\_Studio via Getty Images)

Transubstantiation – the idea that during Mass, the bread and wine used for Communion become the body and blood of Jesus Christ – is central to the Catholic faith. Indeed, the Catholic Church teaches that "the <u>Eucharist is 'the source and summit</u> of the Christian life."

But a new <u>Pew Research Center survey</u> finds that most self-described Catholics don't believe this core teaching. In fact, nearly seven-in-ten Catholics (69%) say they personally believe that during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine used in Communion "are *symbols* of the body and blood of Jesus Christ." Just one-third of U.S. Catholics (31%) say they believe that "during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus."

## Seven-in-ten U.S. Catholics believe bread, wine used in Communion are symbolic

% of U.S. Catholics who ...



Note: Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Source: Survey conducted Feb. 4-19, 2019, among U.S. adults.

#### **PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

In addition to asking Catholics what they believe about the Eucharist, the new survey also included a question that tested whether Catholics *know* what the church teaches on the subject. Most Catholics who believe that the bread and wine are symbolic do not know that the church holds that transubstantiation occurs. Overall, 43% of Catholics believe that the bread and wine are symbolic and also that this reflects the position of the church. Still, one-in-five Catholics (22%) reject the idea of transubstantiation, even though they know about the church's teaching.

The vast majority of those who believe that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ – 28% of all Catholics – do know that this is what the church teaches. A small share of Catholics (3%) profess to believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist despite *not knowing* the church's teaching on transubstantiation.

About six-in-ten (63%) of the most observant Catholics — those who attend Mass at least once a week — accept the church's teaching about transubstantiation. Still, even among this most observant group of Catholics, roughly one-third (37%) don't believe that the Communion bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ (including 23% who don't know the church's teaching and 14% who know the church's teaching but don't believe it). And among Catholics who do not attend Mass weekly, large majorities say they believe the bread and wine are symbolic and do not actually become the body and blood of Jesus.

## Most weekly Mass-goers believe in transubstantiation; most other Catholics do not

% of U.S. Catholics who ...

	NET Belleve bread and wine become body, blood of Christ t	Know church teaching on ransubstantiation	Don't know teaching/ unsure about teaching	NET Believe bread and wine are symbols	Know church teaching on transubstantiation	Don't know teaching/ unsure about teaching
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Attend Mass weekly or more	63	58	5	37	14	23
Monthly/yearly	25	23	1	75	25	50
Seldom/never	13	10	2	87	25	62
Men	32	30	3	67	24	44
Women	29	27	3	70	20	50
White	34	32	2	65	25	40
Hispanic	24	21	4	76	19	57
Under age 40	26	23	3	74	27	47
40-59	27	26	2	72	22	50
60 or older	38	35	3	61	18	43
High school or less	26	22	3	74	15	59
Some college	31	27	4	69	19	50
College graduate	37	36	1	62	33	30

Note: Those who declined to answer not shown. Whites include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics can be of any race. Source: Survey conducted Feb. 4-19, 2019, among U.S. adults.

#### PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The survey also finds that belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is most common among older Catholics, though majorities in every age group (including 61% of those age 60 and over) believe that the bread and wine are symbols, not the actual body and blood of Christ.

The **Pew Research Center** is a nonpartisan American think tank (referring to itself as a "fact tank") based in Washington, D.C. It provides information on social issues, public opinion, and demographic trends shaping the United States and the world. It also conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis, and other empirical social science research. The Pew Research Center does not take policy positions, and is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The Center's research is divided into nine areas:[1]

- U.S. Politics & Policy
- Journalism & Media
- Internet & Technology
- Science & Society
- Religion & Public Life
- Hispanic Trends
- Global Attitudes & Trends

- Social & Demographic Trends
- Research Methodology

## How Accurate Is the Pew Survey on the Eucharist?

#### Fr. Thomas Dailey, OSFS

The headline screamed for attention: "Just one-third of U.S. Catholics agree with their church that Eucharist is body, blood of Christ."

That's how <u>Pew Research</u> pushed a "fact-tank" article about transubstantiation. The jarring conclusion came at the beginning:

"In fact, nearly seven-in-ten Catholics (69%) say they personally believe that during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine used in Communion 'are *symbols* of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.' Just one-third of U.S. Catholics (31%) say they believe that 'during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus.'"

#### Shock waves soon followed.

Among those apoplectic about the assertions is Bishop Robert Barron, arguably the most well-known Catholic apologist of our day. In an "animated" video response, he considers the PEW data to confirm two distressing realities about the present state of evangelization.

The bishop's own words turn up the fire on what he calls, in general, the "massive failure" on the part of educators (of all sorts) in the Church to carry on our own traditions. More specifically, he points to the inherently futile mentality in the Church that thinks we can divide apologetics (the defense of ideas) and pastoral friendliness (being nice), and should separate concern for doctrine (core beliefs) from that of social work (justice in action).

#### The bishop is right.

Our faith is born from and expressed in theology (speech about God). Theology, in turn, remains a matter of "faith seeking understanding," as St. Anselm once defined it. What we believe, we try to understand further; when we understand further, we believe more deeply. To grow in the faith means to engage in this cyclical process of seeking God.

#### **Different Survey, Different Results**

In terms of understanding how research reports fit into this search process, we need to appreciate how data is derived. Otherwise, headlines become harbingers of truths that may not hold true.

One factor to consider here is sample size. The <u>Disciple Maker Index</u>, administered by the Catholic Leadership Institute, has currently surveyed 131,845 Catholics around the country about multiple themes connected with parish life. (By contrast, the PEW survey was based on 1,835 Catholics in a total sample population of 10,971.)

When asked about doctrines of the faith, seventy-two percent of the DMI respondents strongly agreed with the statement "I personally believe the Eucharist really is the body and blood of Jesus Christ." Another nineteen percent agreed with that statement. That's almost 120,000 Catholics claiming they do agree with what the Church teaches, compared to the 569 respondents highlighted in the PEW headline.

A second factor to consider concerns the wording of the survey. As Mark Gray from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) <u>points out</u>, data gathered depends on the questions asked.

The PEW Research referred to the "actual" presence of Jesus in the bread and wine compared to the bread and wine being (mere) symbols of that presence. Gray theorizes that asking instead about Christ's "real" presence in the Eucharist would have yielded different results, since "actual" in common parlance tends to mean "factually present as proven by empirical observation." We'll see if that turns out to be true when CARA tests the question later this year. Until then, Catholic theologians and teachers will always have work to do in communicating belief in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, since the notion and reality of transubstantiation remains "an inexhaustible mystery." But the challenge does not absolve us of the responsibility to inculcate in every generation the central truths of what we believe.

#### **Empty Faith Leads to Empty Pews**

So, too, the faithful have a responsibility to seek an ever more mature understanding of what they believe. That understanding doesn't devolve from headlines, nor is it formed by data. It takes continuing education, well beyond what was taught in parochial school or catechesis. If our faith really matters, we will desire to appreciate what it truly means.

A veteran teacher in a local Catholic elementary school recently reminded me why this topic is so important. Looking ahead to a project-based learning series on the Eucharist for her new students, she pondered aloud the potential impact of this lesson plan:

"People don't go to Mass because they don't believe in the Real Presence, and they don't believe in the Real Presence because if it were true, then wouldn't the churches be full?" There's a lesson there for all of us.

What can you and your parish community do to increase the faith Catholics have in the Real Presence? Share your ideas in the comments at the bottom of the page.

The Ascension Blog thanks Catholic Leadership Institute for contributing this article. **About Fr. Thomas Dailey** 

Fr. Tom Dailey, a priest in the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales (OSFS), serves as a research fellow and spiritual advisor at the Catholic Leadership Institute in Wayne, PA. He holds the John Cardinal Foley Chair of Homiletics and Social Communications at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. He writes a monthly column and does occasional podcasts for CatholicPhilly.com. Check out his feature on CatholicSpeakers.com

#### **POSTURES & GESTURES Continued**

Since we have reached the awaited week for the installation of the pews, (The kneelers will be installed next week.) Now would be an appropriate time to address kneeling.

Kneeling

In the early Church, kneeling signified penance. So thoroughly was kneeling identified with penance that the early Christians were forbidden to kneel on Sundays and during the Easter season, when the prevailing spirit of the Liturgy was one of joy and thanksgiving. In the Middle

Ages kneeling came to signify homage, and more recently this posture has come to signify adoration, especially before the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It is for this reason that the bishops of this country have chosen the posture of kneeling for the entire Eucharistic Prayer.

One of the more "neuralgic" issues that surfaced during the several years that the US bishops were considering proposals to revise the Liturgy is the matter of appropriate postures for the people during various parts of the Mass.

It had been proposed, at one point, that the people might stand instead of kneeling throughout the Eucharistic prayer, although this idea was rejected by the vote of the bishops. Some liturgists have argued, vigorously, that standing is more appropriate at Mass during the Eucharistic prayer and before and after receiving Holy Communion.

The most frequent arguments advanced for changing the long-standing custom of kneeling by the people have been these:

- 1. Kneeling is a penitential and private posture, whereas the Eucharist is joyful and communal; therefore, a) kneeling during the penitential rite might be introduced as an option, but b) people should stand during the Eucharistic Prayer (Canon of the Mass) as well as pre- and post-Communion.
- 2. Kneeling during Mass is a medieval innovation, an outgrowth of the feudal practice of kneeling in obeisance before the overlord or prince, and was unknown in Catholic worship before feudal times.
- 3. The "early Church" and Eastern churches did not/do not kneel. (Neither do most Protestants.) Therefore, for historical and ecumenical reasons, Catholics should now stop the customary kneeling.
- 4. The Church's liturgical instructions after Vatican II eliminated kneeling from public worship because the theology of the Eucharist was radically changed by the Second Vatican Council.
- 5. The US bishops, in amending the General Instruction of the Roman Missal in 1969, voted to restrict kneeling only to the Eucharistic Prayer, so all other kneeling must be eliminated.
- 6. Only the US Church retains the practice of kneeling during Mass, so Church unity requires the elimination of kneeling. Those who persist in kneeling offend against Church unity and obedience to the bishops, and reject the Council's new eucharistic theology.

The opinion that the Church changed the theology of the Eucharist at the Second Vatican Council is plainly untenable. That Church authorities did not intend to eradicate the traditional posture of kneeling during the Communion rite, after the *Agnus Dei* and after receiving Communion is clear: 1) the custom of kneeling has persisted ever since the Council; 2) a list of norms including these traditional periods of kneelings was published by the bishops' liturgy office in 1966 (*BCL Newsletter* 1966); 3) the new *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* §43 reaffirms that where it is the custom to kneel throughout the Eucharistic prayer this is "laudably retained".

Following the Council, in 1966, the Newsletter of the US bishops' liturgy office re-printed an earlier (1964) chart on postures during Mass, including kneeling at the customary places. The traditional kneeling has been retained ever since — with few recent exceptions. (The confusing circumstances surrounding the bishops' vote on the 1969 "adaptation" of GIRM 21 that is so

often invoked in support of eliminating kneeling except during the Eucharistic Prayer were explored in "Every Knee Should Bow – But When?", AB June 1999.)

It is simply untrue that kneeling during Mass is unique to the US. In Scotland, for instance, people kneel almost throughout the entire Mass — including kneeling at the Communion rail to receive Holy Communion — as was the universal practice during a "low Mass" before the Council. Elsewhere in Europe, my experience, people generally kneel at least during the Consecration — unless prevented by the cramped arrangement of seating — and often, as well, before and after Communion until the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the tabernacle, when they sit.

#### Is reverence divisive?

Recent efforts to prohibit kneeling has met with considerable resistance from the pews — and from many bishops as well. In places where people have been ordered to stand until after everyone has received Holy Communion, worshippers feel manipulated, and torn between their desire to be obedient to their priest or bishop and their desire to show reverence for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Although many Catholics were very encouraged to hear bishops publicly defending the practices of kneeling and of reverencing the Blessed Sacrament at the November 2001 bishops' meeting, and were much relieved to learn that the bishops had explicitly voted to include kneeling after the *Agnus Dei* and after reception of Holy Communion in their proposed adaptation of IGMR 43, this action of the conference is being ignored by some priests and bishops.

With no sense of irony, the agents of "progressive" change call the people who wish to retain their custom of kneeling "divisive".

It has become apparent, in reviewing more than three decades of opinions of "progressive" liturgists, that the desire to suppress kneeling is closely related to a vigorous anti-hierarchical impulse. The goal is to eradicate the distinction between the priest (who re-presents the sacrifice of Christ and, indeed, personifies the One Priest in the celebration of Mass) and the congregation of worshippers who receive Christ in the Eucharist. (This goal is also visible in the radical re-orienting of the interiors of many renovated churches.)

Again, ironically, leaders who hold such views often employ coercive tactics to gain compliance — a method that would seem deeply inconsistent with their radically egalitarian theories about the nature of the Church.

Questions about the intentions of the Holy See's General Instruction (§43), which permits standing in certain circumstances, have been answered by a letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship in response to an American bishop's question. The letter expressly said that the Holy See did not intend that the people's kneeling should be eliminated. (See letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship published in AB Dec/Jan 2001 issue.)

This is hardly surprising. The Holy See is generally very hesitant to impose rules that might restrict authentic expressions of any culture. And kneeling as an act of reverence and worship of God is very deeply imbedded in the culture of both the Old and the New Covenants.

#### What does the Bible say?

The following citations from the Bible show that kneeling did not originate in feudal times as an expression of servility of serfs to their master (as some liturgists still contend, although it could

just as well be argued that the practice of kneeling before a feudal Lord originated with kneeling before God); and that this posture is by no means merely penitential.

As these biblical passages reveal, the gesture of kneeling is a very ancient, multivalent sign which expresses worship, respect, willing obedience, prayer, reverence, petition, supplication and homage. Kneeling has from time immemorial been a customary posture in both public and private worship.

#### **Kneeling in the Old and New Testaments**

Genesis 41:43 – ...and he [Pharaoah] made him [Joseph] to ride in his second chariot; and they cried before him, "Bow the knee"! Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. [respect, obedience to a ruler]

I Kings 8:54 – Now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven [prayer, supplication]

I Kings 19:18 – Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed down to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him. [worship, reverence]

II Kings 1:13 – And the third captain of fifty went up, and fell on his knees before Elijah and entreated him, "O man of God, I pray you..." [supplication]

II Chronicles 6:13 – Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the court; and he stood upon it. Then he knelt upon his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven [public worship, invocation, reverence to God]

**Ezra 9:5** – And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garments and my mantle rent, and fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands to the Lord my God. [penitence, supplication]

Daniel 6:10 – When Daniel knew that the document [condemning him to the den of lions] had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem; and he knelt on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he had done previously. [petition, worship]

**Isaiah 45:23** – By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.' [public worship, reverence to God]

**Psalm 95:6** – O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! [public worship, reverence to and humility before God]

Matthew 8:2 – ...and behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean". [prayer, supplication]

Matthew 9:18 — While he was thus speaking to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live". [prayer, petition]

Matthew 15:25 – But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me". [prayer, petition, supplication]

Matthew 17:14, 15 – And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him [Jesus] and kneeling before him said "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic..." [homage, supplication]

Mark 10:17 – And as he [Jesus] was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life"? [homage, humility] Mark 15:19 – And they struck his head with a reed, and spat upon him, and they knelt down in homage to him. [mock worship]

**Luke 22:41** – And he [Jesus] withdrew from them [his disciples] about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed [worship, supplication]

Acts 7:60 – And he [Stephen] knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them". And when he had said this, he fell asleep. [petition]

Acts 9:40 – But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, rise". And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. [prayer, invocation, petition]

Acts 20:36 – And when he [Paul] had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all. [public worship]

Romans 11:4 – But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal". [worship, reverence]

Romans 14:11 – for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God". [reverence, public worship]

**Ephesians 3:14, 15** – For this reason I [Paul] bow my knee unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you ..." [reverence, petition]

**Philippians 2:10** – that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth [reverence, worship, homage]

#### PASTOR'S UP-COMING SCHEDULE

Saturday 24 Aug 8:30 a.m. Mass

Confessions 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Vigil Mass of 21st Sunday 5:00 p.m. Back Pack Blessing

Sunday 25 Aug Masses 21st Sunday

7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. Back Pack Blessing al Masses

Brig 7:50 p.m.

Monday 26 Aug Pastor's Day Off

Brig 7:50 p.m.

Tuesday 27 Aug Mass 8:30 a.m.

Parish Council 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday 28 Aug Mass 6:30 a.m.

Confessions 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.

Mass 8:30 a.m.

Youth Walk North Landing State Park 6:00 p.m. ....

Thursday 29 Aug Mass 8:30 a.m.

Confessions 5:00-6:30 p.m.

Mass 6:30 p.m.

Friday 30 Aug Mass 8:30 a.m.

Meeting 9:00

## Adoration 5:00 p.m.

## Benediction Pro-Life Novena sponsored by KoC 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 31 Aug Mass 8:30 a.m.

Confessions 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Vigil Mass 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday 5:00 p.m.

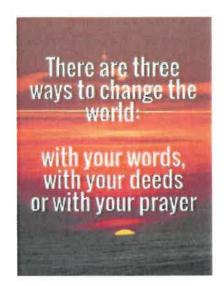
Sunday 1 Sep 2

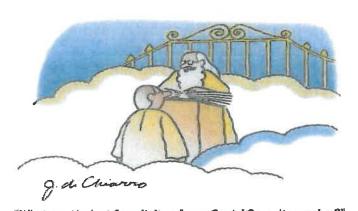
22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday

Masses 7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. Brig 7:50 p.m.

### **FUTURE EVENTS**

Saturday 21st Sep Blessing of Animals in Honor of St. Francis 10:00 a.m.





"What are the last four digits of your Social Security number?"