



SUNDAY REFLECTION

The word 'communion' aptly resumes the meaning of today's celebration. By loving, caring for others we commune, we are united with God. In Jesus, who is one with God, the whole of creation communes with God. The Church as Jesus's body communes with Him. Our communion with Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist is, therefore, the supreme expression and realization of God's plan for the universe. At this moment let us meditate on this fact and resolve to lead our daily lives accordingly, trying always to behave in a Spirit of communion with others, to made real the unity of all things in Jesus.

A woman in a red car one day drove up to a toll-booth and handed the attendant six tickets with the remark that she would like to pay for the next six cars. As each car stopped, the driver was told that a lady in a red car had paid their toll. She was inspired by a sentence written by Anne Herbert 'Practice random kindness and senseless acts of beauty.' Anne believed that random kindness is capable of generating a tidal wave just as random violence is. Could I try to do something like this and break through the safe routine of my life?

STEWARDSHIP: The good Samaritan was also a good steward, giving his time and his treasure to meet his neighbor's need. At the end of this familiar story, Jesus urges His hearers – and us – to go and do the same!

Nachman of Bratslav

"If we do not help a man in trouble it is as if we caused the trouble."

READINGS FOR SIXTEENTH SUNDAY

21 JUL '19

Gn. 18:1-10: The arrival of unexpected visitors marks God's sojourn with Abraham and Sarah. Because of his fidelity to God, Abraham knows how to respond to needs of these visitors. The spontaneity of gentle gesture, humble act of washing feet, bringing of food, will be rewarded as a new promise into the future is made to Abraham and Sarah.

Col. 1:24-28: Paul speaks of his suffering not being in vain but united with Christ in the building up of the Church. As a servant of the Church, he is called to reveal God's message so that this rich glory might help them to become saints.

Lk. 10:38-42: Jesus visits His friends Martha and Mary. Martha does the active hospitality of welcoming and serving, while Mary's act of hospitality is contemplative and patient – a beautiful image of God-among-us as two sisters seeks to open their hearts so that the Word Incarnate might find a welcoming home.

Dag Hammarskjöld

"Friendship needs no words – it is solitude delivered from the anguish of loneliness."

GESTURES & POSTURES Continued

Dipping Our Hand in Holy Water

When we come into the church building, what is the first thing we do? Most people will dip their hand into the holy water and make the sign of the cross. Many will help their children to do the same using the holy water from the main font or the ones on the side walls, they may even show their children where the little ones are at a height for small children. Why is this done? Well, for three reasons:

- a. in repentance for our sins;
- b. for protection against the Evil One;
- c. to remind us of our baptisms.

a. Holy water reminds us to be sorry for our sins. When there is the rite of sprinkling in the liturgy, we at times sing the *Asperges*, which means "you will sprinkle or wash". *Asperges me hysoppo et mundabor; lavabis me et super nivem dealabor*. These are words from the great penitential psalm, Ps 50: You will sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed: You will wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.

b. Holy water is a sacramental which is a protection against the snares of the devil. The old prayer for the blessing of holy water said: "O God, creator of unconquered power, King of invincible empire and victor ever-great: who put down the powers of hostile dominion and conquer the fury of the roaring enemy, who fight powerfully against our wicked foes: trembling

we beseech You, O Lord, we implore You and beg You: that You might graciously look upon this creature of water and salt, kindly illumine it, sanctify it with the dew of Your loving kindness, so that wherever it is sprinkled, through the invocation of Your holy Name, every infestation of the unclean spirit be cast out, and the terror of the poisonous serpent be driven far away. And may the presence of the Holy Spirit deign to be with us always, we who implore Your mercy."

c. Holy water reminds us of our baptism: of that great day when we ourselves or through our parents or sponsors—renounced Satan, professed faith in Christ, and were baptized into the mystery of the Holy Trinity. At that moment all our sins were forgiven: original and actual, and we became children of God, *fili in Filio*, heirs of the promise, daring now to call God our Father. When we dip our hand into the holy water font, remember these things, and like Our Lady, treasure them in your heart.

Sign of the Cross

Then we make the sign of the cross. Do it deliberately. Not hurriedly, not sloppily—but carefully and with reverence. The deepest mysteries of our faith are contained here.

When I was in grade school in that German parish with German nuns we were taught to make the sign of the cross with the thumb, forefinger and middle finger held together and the last two fingers held together against the palm.

The three fingers symbolize the Trinity, and the two fingers symbolize the double nature of Christ: divine and human. Making the sign of the cross then, becomes a mini-catechesis, a self-reminder of the most basic mysteries of our faith.

Admittedly many people see this as a practice of the Eastern Churches. So be it, but the significance of the meaning is still important and relevant. But the way of holding our fingers is not the only difference that may be found between the East and the West. The eastern tradition makes the sign of the cross from right to left, whereas we make it from left to right.

Why?

It's interesting to note that in the 13th century, Pope Innocent III (contemporary with St. Francis of Assisi) instructed the faithful on the meaning of the sign of the cross in these words: "The sign of the cross is made with three fingers, because the signing is done together with the invocation of the Trinity. This is how it is done: from above to below, and from the right to the left, because Christ descended from the heavens to the earth, and from the Jews (right) he passed to the Gentiles (left)."

Note that Pope Innocent is describing what the custom was in the West. In the 13th century the East and the West still made the sign of the cross in the same way. The pope goes on to say: "Others, however, make the sign of the cross from the left to the right, because from misery (left) we must cross over to glory (right), just as Christ crossed over from death to life, and from Hades to Paradise. [Some priests] do it this way so that they and the people will be signing themselves in the same way. You can easily verify this—picture the priest facing the people for the blessing— when we make the sign of the cross over the people, it is from left to right."

So the people, imitating the blessing of the priest, began to sign themselves from left to right. Be that as it may, centuries have gone by since then, and we in the West make the sign of the cross from left to right, with the palm open (perhaps).

Here's an important liturgical principle: it is always difficult and often undesirable to jump back across the centuries to some ideal liturgical practice of the past. That's what Pius XII

in *Mediator Dei* called "archeologism". You can't erase the intervening centuries. The principle rather is continuity with the tradition (mind you, we are not saying a fossilized tradition, but a living tradition). So the Western way of making the sign of the cross is a valid development of the liturgical tradition.

When we make the sign of the cross, are we aware of its meaning? Listen to what Guardini (referred to last week) says about this: "When we cross ourselves, let it be with a real sign of the cross. Instead of a small cramped gesture that gives no notion of its meaning, let us make a large unhurried sign, from forehead to breast, from shoulder to shoulder, consciously feeling how it includes the whole of us, our thoughts, our attitudes, our body and soul, every part of us at once, how it consecrates and sanctifies us. It does so because it is the sign of the universe and the sign of our redemption. On the cross Christ redeemed mankind. By the cross He sanctifies man to the last shred and fiber of his being."

In the liturgy, there are many occasions when we make the sign of the cross:

- with holy water before Mass begins
- at the beginning of Mass itself
- at the Gospel: "may the Lord purify my understanding, my speech, and my heart, so that I may receive the words of the Gospel". (the three crosses with which we sign our forehead {mind}, our lips {speech} and our hearts before the proclamation of the Gospel.)
- we make the sign of the cross in the rite of baptism, for anointing the sick, for exorcisms, when we pray throughout the day
- in the Divine Office, we make the sign of the cross when we begin the *Benedictus* and the *Magnificat*, because they are Gospel canticles, and the Gospel stands for Christ Himself.

In the library of Sant'Anselmo in Rome, there is a fine mosaic floor showing the cross of Christ, surrounded by the words: *Ave Crux, Spes Unica*. Hail O Cross, our only hope! The cross of Christ is indeed our only hope—there is salvation in no other name. So when we make the sign of the cross, which we do many times each day, let's do it well!

Genuflecting Before the Blessed Sacrament and Bowing Before the Altar

What's the next thing that is routinely done as we enter the Church? We walk to our seat, and if the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the sanctuary, we genuflect; if it's reserved somewhere else, you make a profound bow to the altar. (Physical disabilities may preclude genuflecting in which case the profound bow is sufficient.) Here we are talking about a gesture of greeting, a kind of salute. Genuflecting and bowing: What's the difference?

There's a traditional distinction that's very useful: a distinction using three Greek words: *latria*, *hyperdulia*, *dulia*. These three categories indicate different grades of reverence due to God and the saints. *Latria* means adoration: it is reserved to God alone. *Dulia* means reverence; it is given to the saints and to sacred objects. *Hyperdulia* means "extra special reverence". There is only one person in this category: Mary the Mother of God, since she is above all the saints by the glorious design of Divine Providence.

Latria, *hyperdulia*, *dulia*. When we reverence the altar — and the altar always represents Christ—we are showing honor to a sacred object. That means *dulia*. So we bow. When we reverence the Blessed Sacrament, however, we are adoring God Himself, since the Lord is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. That means *latria*. So we genuflect.

To be continued Bowing Genuflection

ALTAR RELICS

The relics contained in the relic box that rests on the shelf under the altar are of:

St. Theodore	Dirt from the Tomb of St. Francis of Assisi
St. Margaret Mary Alacoque	St. Philomena
St. Vincent De Paul	St. Catherine Laboure
St. Louise De Marillac	True Cross
St. Joannis N.P.	St. John Baptist Di La Salle
St. John Neumann	St. Elizabeth Ann Seaton
St. John of the Cross	St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia
St. Paul	

Relics contained in the glass reliquary cabinet in the alcove in the left rear corner of the church which also holds the Sacred Oils:

St. John Neumann (2)	St. Maria Goretti
Blessed Lorenzo Salvi	St. Elizabeth Ann Seaton
True Cross (2)	

One reliquary that contains relics of:

St. Vincent De Paul	St. Louise De Marillac
St. Catherine Laboure	St. John Gabriel Peaboyre
St. Roque	Blessed. Francis Clet

Some people think the Catholic Church abandoned her teaching on relics after the Second Vatican Council. Obviously the above information and what was provided two weeks ago indicate that is not the case. The Code of Canon Law, published by authority of St. John Paul II in 1983, reveals that the Church very much considers sacred relics to be important and significant in the life of the Church (Canons 1281-89). Just what are relics and what meaning do they have for disciples of Jesus Christ?

Relics are physical objects that have a direct association with the saints or with Our Lord. They are usually classified into one of three classes. First Class relics are the body or fragments of the body of a saint, such as pieces of bone, flesh, hair or blood. Second Class relics are something that a saint personally owned and used, such as clothing, or book (or fragments of these). Third Class relics are those items that a saint touched or that have been touched to a First, Second or another Third Class relic of a saint.

The use of relics has some, although limited, basis in Sacred Scripture. In II Kings 2:9-14, the Prophet Elisha picked-up the mantle of Elijah, after he had been taken up to heaven in a whirlwind; with it, Elisha struck the water of the Jordan, which then parted so that he could cross. In another passage (II Kings 13:20-21), some people hurriedly buried a dead man in the grave of Elisha, "but when the man came into contact with the bones of Elisha, he came back to life and rose to his feet." In Acts of the Apostles we read, "Meanwhile, God worked extraordinary miracles at the hands of Paul. When handkerchiefs or cloths which had touched his skin were applied to the sick, their diseases were cured and evil spirits departed from them" (Acts 19:11-12). In these three passages, a reverence was given to the actual body or clothing of these very holy people who were indeed God's chosen instruments— Elijah, Elisha, and St. Paul. Indeed, miracles were connected with these "relics"— not that some magical power

existed in them, but just as God's work was done through the lives of these holy men so did His work continue after their deaths. Likewise, just as people were drawn closer to God through the lives of these holy men, so did they (even if through their remains) inspire others to draw closer even after their deaths. This perspective provides the Church's understanding of relics. The veneration of relics of the saints is found in the early history of the Church. A letter written by the faithful of the Church in Smyrna in the year 156 provides an account of the death of St. Polycarp, their bishop, who was burned at the stake. The letter reads, "We took up the bones, which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place, where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom." Essentially, the relics—the bones and other remains of St. Polycarp—were buried, and the tomb itself was the "reliquary." Other accounts attest that the faithful visited the burial places of the saints and miracles occurred. Moreover, at this time, we see the development of "feast days" marking the death of the saint, the celebration of Mass at the burial place, and a veneration of the remains. After the legalization of the Church in 313, the tombs of saints were opened and the actual relics were venerated by the faithful. A bone or other bodily part was placed in a reliquary—a box, locket, and later a glass case—for veneration. This practice especially grew in the Eastern Church, while the practice of touching cloth to the remains of the saint was more common in the West. By the time of the Merovingian and Carolingian periods of the Middle Ages, the use of reliquaries was common throughout the whole Church. The Church strove to keep the use of relics in perspective. In his *Letter to Riparius*, St. Jerome (d. 420) wrote in defense of relics: "We do not worship, we do not adore, for fear that we should bow down to the creature rather than to the Creator, but we venerate the relics of the martyrs in order the better to adore Him whose martyrs they are."

Here we need to pause for a moment. Perhaps in our technological age, the whole idea of relics may seem strange. Remember, all of us treasure things that have belonged to someone we love—a piece of clothing, another personal item, or a lock of hair. Those "relics" remind us of the love we continue to share with that person while he was still living and even after death. We are very proud to say, "This belonged to my mother," for instance. Our hearts are torn when we think about disposing of the very personal things of a deceased loved one. Even from an historical sense, at Ford's Theater Museum for instance, we can see things that belonged to President Lincoln, including the blood stained pillow on which he died. With great reverence then, we treasure the relics of saints, the holy instruments of God.

During the Middle Ages, the "translation of relics" grew, meaning the removal of relics from the tombs, their placement in reliquaries, and their dispersal. Sadly, abuses grew also. With various barbarian invasions, the conquests of the Crusades, the lack of means for verifying all relics, and less than reputable individuals who in their greed preyed on the ignorant and superstitious, abuses did occur. Even St. Augustine (d. 430) denounced impostors who dressed as monks selling spurious relics of saints. Pope St. Gregory (d. 604) forbade the selling of relics and the disruption of tombs in the catacombs. Unfortunately, the Popes or other religious authorities were powerless in trying to control the translation of relics or to prevent forgeries. Eventually, these abuses prompted the Protestant leaders to attack the idea of relics

totally. (Unfortunately, the abuses and the negative reaction surrounding relics has led many people to this day to be skeptical about them.)

In response, the Council of Trent (1563) defended invoking the prayers of the saints, and venerating their relics and burial places: "The sacred bodies of the holy martyrs and of the other saints living with Christ, which have been living members of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, and which are destined to be raised and glorified by Him unto life eternal, should also be venerated by the faithful. Through them, many benefits are granted to men by God." Since that time, the Church has taken stringent measures to insure the proper preservation and veneration of relics. The *Code of Canon Law* (#1190) absolutely forbids the selling of sacred relics, and they cannot be "validly alienated or perpetually transferred" without permission of the Holy See. Moreover, any relic today would have proper documentation attesting to its authenticity. The *Code* also supports the proper place for relics in our Catholic practice: Canon 1237 states, "The ancient tradition of keeping the relics of martyrs and other saints under a fixed altar is to be preserved according to the norms given in the liturgical books," (a practice widespread since the fourth century). Many Churches also have relics of their patron saints which the faithful venerate on appropriate occasions. And yes, reports of the Lord's miracles and favors continue to be connected with the intercession of a saint and the veneration of his/her relics. In all, relics remind us of the holiness of a saint and their cooperation in God's work; at the same time, relics inspire us to ask for the prayers of that saint and to beg the grace of God to live the same kind a faith-filled life.

SAINT OF THE WEEK PHILIP HOWARD d. 1595 19 JUL

One of the forty Martyrs of England and Wales. Philip was the earl of Arundel and Surrey and although a Catholic, led a religiously apathetic life until his personal conversion, after which he was a zealous Catholic in the midst of Elizabethan England. Arrested by authorities, he was placed in the Tower of London in 1585 and condemned to death in 1589. The sentence was never carried out, and Philip languished in the Tower until his death at the age of thirty-eight. Beatified in 1929, he was included among the English martyrs canonized in 1970 by Pope St. Paul VI.

ADORATION IS AVAILABLE EVERY FRIDAY FROM 5:00 – 7:00 P.M.

PRAYERS

Prayer of St. John Gabriel Perboyre

O my Divine Savior,
Transform me into Yourself.
May my hands be the hands of Jesus.
Grant that every faculty of my body
May serve only to glorify You.
Above all,
Transform my soul and all its powers
So that my memory, will and affection
May be the memory, will and affections

Of Jesus.
I pray You
To destroy in me
All that is not of You.
Grant that I may live
But in You, by You and for You,
So that I may truly say,
With St. Paul,
"I live - now not I -
But Christ lives in me".

Good Samaritan Prayer

God of love, give us a deep love for you,
so that we can see the world as you see it,
feel the compassion you feel,
and be a people whose lives mediate your love to others.

So open our eyes that we might see what the Good Samaritan saw.
Grant us the insight to see the need in others,
the wisdom to know what to do, and the will to do it.

And so we pray for all those, who in many and various ways,
have been stripped, beaten and left for dead.

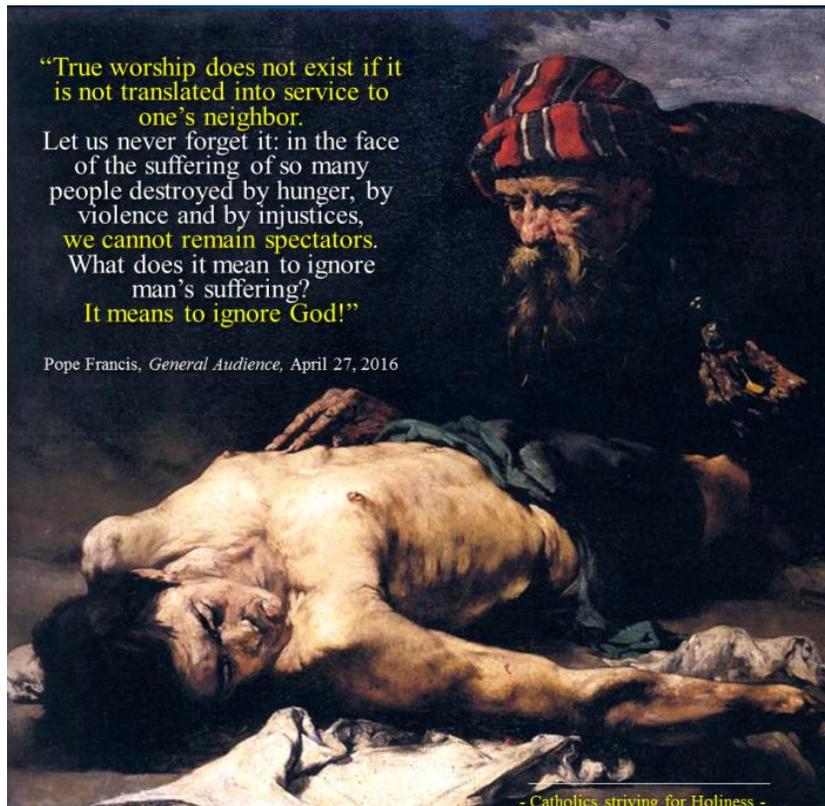
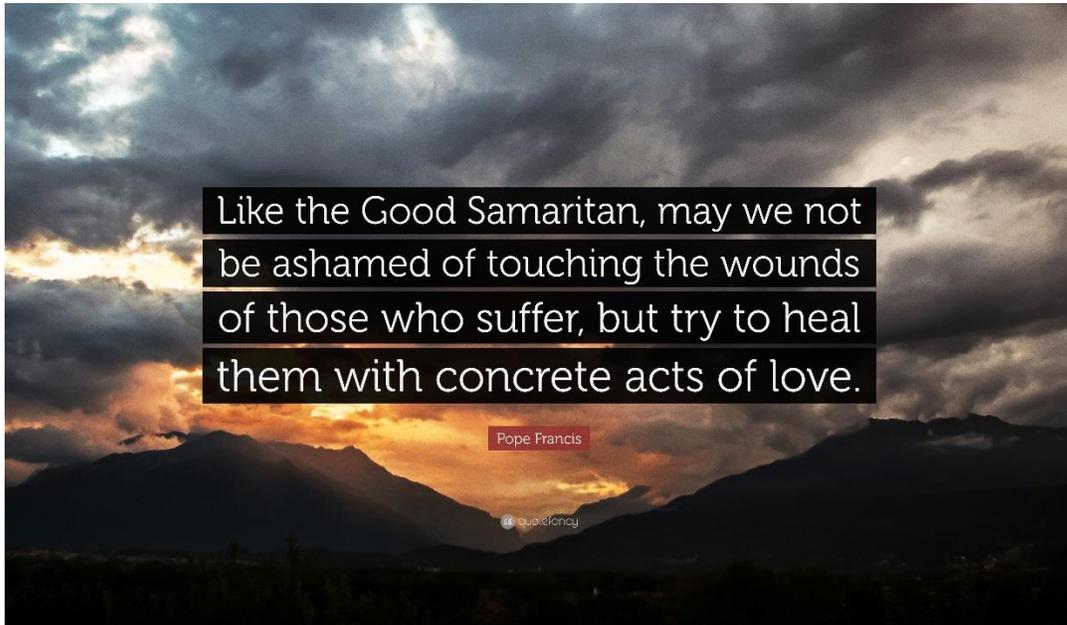
We pray for children who must grow up
in the most awful of circumstances,
especially for those starved of love, or food, or shelter or security.
May they receive the future you have planned for them.

We pray for those we might cross the road to avoid.
Who have been excluded socially because of their race,
their financial status, or their history.
May the dignity that is theirs be restored to them.

We pray for those whose need we would rather not face up to,
because it requires action of us,
those who suffer atrocities because of war, unjust trade rules,
or oppressive governments.
May the world receive a true picture of their suffering
and the factors that cause it, that justice may be done.

Open our eyes, that we might not cross the road from human need.
Give us deep love for You,

That we might see Your love at work in this world
And that we might go and do likewise.





"Pastor, about this new idea to reach teens..."