

**PASTOR'S MEANDERINGS
TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME (A)**

3 – 4 OCTOBER 2020



SUNDAY REFLECTION

Today's readings make it clear that Christianity is a religion that makes demands, and that authentic Christians must be recognized by the fruits they bear. Isaiah has God, the lord of the vineyard, say, 'I expected (rich succulent) grapes; why has my vineyard yielded only sour grapes instead?' The Lord complained that He expected to find justice and integrity in His people, but all He could see or bear was bloodshed and the cry of the oppressed. The Gospel reading ends with the assertion that the kingdom will be given to those who will respond generously to the demands which the Lord will make on them, and who will produce the fruit of good works when God demands them. In our Second Reading, (Phil. 4:6-9) St. Paul's wish is that people's hearts and thoughts will be centered on Christ, on His example and on His teaching. He reminds his readers that they should practice the virtues that are admired and esteemed by all who appreciate what is best and noblest in human nature. The world should be able to see the

goodness, the decency, the integrity and the graciousness of all who claim to be followers of Christ.

How can we Christians who belong to a world where Christian values are being increasingly pushed to the margins of life live up to the demands and the high ideals that are expressed in these readings? How are we to live out in our daily lives the beliefs and principles we proclaim on Sunday? We who so often hear people decry the mores of contemporary society may be pleased to hear Paul suggest in today's reading that we might learn useful lessons from those around us who may not be noted for their piety or religiosity, but who observe high moral standards and live by noble ideals. The integrity, the generosity, the kindness which may be seen in the lives of many who are not particularly devout in the conventional sense can be a challenge to us who claim to live by Gospel values. Devotion to what is noble and true, a commitment to justice and integrity, wherever we find them, can rouse us from our own moral lethargy and inspire us to strive with greater energy for that which we know to be good and beautiful and pleasing to God and to modern men and women.

However, our Christian standards must not be determined merely by what society regards as desirable and praiseworthy behavior. For, as today's First Reading (Is. 5:1-7) and Gospel (Mt. 21:33-43) show, the Bible tells us not only what God has done for us, but also what we must do for God. As tenants in the Lord's vineyard we must abide by the conditions He has laid down for us. These conditions are summarized for us in the Ten Commandments and spelled out in many other passages of the Bible. But it is easy for us to forget these biblical ideals and to absorb the standards and assumptions, the values and fashions, that prevail in the world around us – standards and values that may be determined more by self-interest and the feeling of the moment than by the desire to do what is pleasing in the Lord's sight.

Having listed some of the virtues which Christians should find attractive ('whatever is true ... honorable ... just ... pure ... commendable ... worthy of praise') Paul in today's reading adds the exhortation: 'Think on these things (NRSV). Every Sunday our liturgy gives us an opportunity to think on the things that raise our minds from the merely pragmatic and the mundane to the higher ideals that can help us to become more authentically human and more genuinely Christian. In a world that is dominated by the television, the Internet, Social Media, mobile phone loaded with every app available, and every electronic phenomena imaginable it is important to take some time to think on those things that really matter in the eyes of God.

STEWARDSHIP: In the Gospel today, the owner of the vineyard sent messengers to collect his share of the harvest from the tenant farmers, but there was not a single good steward on the property! God is the owner, we are the tenants. What sort of stewards are we?

READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY

11 OCT '20

Is. 25:6-10: The prophet Isaiah speaks of a future Messianic banquet, which the Lord will prepare for all the nations. The Lord will save us from all sorrows, even the ultimate enemy, death.

Phil. 4:12-14, 19-20: Paul's hardships have taught him trust in God and increased his gratitude for others' generosity, including the recent financial support from the church at Philippi towards his mission. The Lord gives us strength to face anything, anywhere.

Mt. 22:1-14: Jesus offers a dramatic parable of a royal wedding banquet to illustrate the main themes of salvation, from God's invitation to our response and the final judgment.

DEVOTIONS

This week, Wednesday we celebrate the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary. Why this feast?

On October 7, the Roman Catholic Church celebrates the yearly feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Known for several centuries by the alternate title of "Our Lady of Victory," the feast day takes place in honor of a 16th century naval victory which secured Europe against Turkish invasion. Pope St. Pius V attributed the victory to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was invoked on the day of the battle through a campaign to pray the Rosary throughout Europe. The feast always occurs one week after the similar Byzantine celebration of the Protection of the Mother of God, which most Eastern Orthodox Christians and Eastern Catholics celebrate on October 1 in memory of a 10th-century military victory which protected Constantinople against invasion after a reported Marian apparition.

Pope Leo XIII was particularly devoted to Our Lady of the Rosary, producing 11 encyclicals on the subject of this feast and its importance in the course of his long pontificate.

In the first of them, 1883's "Supremi Apostolatus Officio," he echoed the words of the oldest known Marian prayer (known in the Latin tradition as the "Sub Tuum Praesidium"), when he wrote, "It has always been the habit of Catholics in danger and in troublous times to fly for refuge to Mary."

"This devotion, so great and so confident, to the august Queen of Heaven," Pope Leo continued, "has never shone forth with such brilliancy as when the militant Church of God has seemed to be endangered by the violence of heresy ... or by an intolerable moral corruption, or by the attacks of powerful enemies." Foremost among such "attacks" was the battle of Lepanto, a perilous and decisive moment in European and world history.

Troops of the Turkish Ottoman Empire had invaded and occupied the Byzantine empire by 1453, bringing a large portion of the increasingly divided Christian world under a version of Islamic law. For the next hundred years, the Turks expanded their empire westward on land, and asserted their naval power in the Mediterranean. In 1565 they attacked Malta, envisioning an eventual invasion of Rome. Though repelled at Malta, the Turks captured Cyprus in the fall of 1570.

The next year, three Catholic powers on the continent – Genoa, Spain, and the Papal States - formed an alliance called the Holy League, to defend their Christian civilization against Turkish invasion. Its fleets sailed to confront the Turks near the west coast of Greece on October 7, 1571.

Crew members on more than 200 ships prayed the Rosary in preparation for the battle - as did Christians throughout Europe, encouraged by the Pope to gather in their churches to invoke the Virgin Mary against the daunting Turkish forces.

Some accounts say that Pope Pius V was granted a miraculous vision of the Holy League's stunning victory. Without a doubt, the Pope understood the significance of the day's events, when he was eventually informed that all but 13 of the nearly 300 Turkish ships had been captured or sunk. He was moved to institute the feast now celebrated universally as Our Lady of the Rosary.

“Turkish victory at Lepanto would have been a catastrophe of the first magnitude for Christendom,” wrote military historian John F. Guilmartin, Jr., “and Europe would have followed a historical trajectory strikingly different from that which obtained.”

Obviously the rosary, praying the rosary, is an important factor in this feast and throughout the month of October. More next week on this very Catholic form of prayer.

CHURCH BUILDING SANCTUARY CONT.

TABERNACLE The tabernacle, where the consecrated hosts are kept, is the “Tent” in which God dwells among us.

The Latin *tabernaculum* was originally a tent. In the history of salvation, the presence of God amidst His people in exodus was symbolized by the “Tent of Meeting”, where Moses went to converse with Yahweh in the name of the People, “as a man talks to his friend” (Ex. 33:11), in the New Testament, St. Paul compares the very humanity of Christ to a tent which was not made by human hands. (Heb. 9:11) the Greek text of the prologue to the Gospel according to St. John contains these very words: “The Word became flesh, He lived {in the Greek *eskenosen*, “pitched His tent”} among us” (Jn: 1:14)

The tabernacle in our churches is that small, ornate, locked cupboard on a wall or a side-altar in which the Holy Sacrament is kept. Hosts consecrated during a Mass were originally kept for the sick or dying (the viaticum), which is still the case today;. During the last few centuries, thanks to an increase in Eucharistic devotion, the Reserved Sacrament has also become an object of long silent adoration.

Two signs

The gold box in a Catholic church is sacred, set apart for a very special purpose.

One of the primary and most distinctive fixtures of any Catholic church is a box or cabinet, typically made of gold placed in the front and center of a church. The exact shape varies, but you will most often find a red vigil lamp lighted next to it.

As Catholics we call the box a tabernacle and it contains the “holy of holies,” Jesus present in the Eucharist.

The word *tabernacle* means “dwelling place” and refers to the “tent of meeting” that the Israelites built to facilitate their worship of God in the desert (Exodus 26). God commanded Moses’ brother Aaron, the chief priest, to offer sacrifice within the Tabernacle, and specified that three things be kept inside:

1. The Ark of the Covenant
2. The golden lampstand (Menorah)
3. The golden table of the Bread of the Presence

Additionally, within the Ark of the Covenant, Moses was to put some of the manna that God gave to the Israelites. The manna is often described in the Old Testament as the “bread of angels,” and was a heavenly bread that the people of Israel ate in the desert (Psalm 78:25). Both the manna and the Bread of the Presence (a sacrificial offering of bread that was eaten by the priests, along with wine) have distinct parallels to the Eucharist that Catholics consume, and

are seen as prefigurements of it.

When celebrating the Mass, the early Christians knew that they could not simply dispose of the left-over Eucharistic bread and at first, because they were being persecuted and did not have churches, they distributed all the remaining hosts to be carried to the sick and home-bound. When the persecution ended Christians started to build churches and, at the same time, tabernacles to house the reserved Blessed Sacrament. The first tabernacles were often shaped like a golden dove within a tower suspended over the altar.

According to the [Catholic Encyclopedia](#), by the Middle Ages there were four chief methods of preserving the Eucharistic bread.

in a cabinet in the sacristy, a custom that is connected with early Christian usage;

in a cupboard in the wall of the choir [sanctuary] or in a projection from one of the walls which was constructed like a tower, was called Sacrament-House, and sometimes reached up to the vaulting;

in a dove or pyx [a round container made of precious metal], surrounded by a cover or receptacle and generally surmounted by a small baldachino, which hung over the altar by a chain or cord;

lastly, upon the altar table, either in the pyx alone or in a receptacle similar to a tabernacle, or in a small cupboard arranged in the reredos or predella of the altar.

It wasn't until the 17th century that more specific guidelines were laid down and tabernacles began to resemble those that we see in our churches today.

The *Catechism* further explains the history of the tabernacle and how "the tabernacle was first intended for the reservation of the Eucharist in a worthy place so that it could be brought to the sick and those absent outside of Mass. As faith in the real presence of Christ in his Eucharist deepened, the Church became conscious of the meaning of silent adoration of the Lord present under the Eucharistic species. It is for this reason that the tabernacle should be located in an especially worthy place in the church and should be constructed in such a way that it emphasizes and manifests the truth of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament." (1379).

The Real Presence? How Can We Be Sure?

As mentioned above, the use of a tabernacle in Catholic churches rests solely on the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the knowledge that Jesus himself is truly present under the appearances of bread (and wine). In other words, the tabernacle is not used in a symbolic way, to symbolize God's presence among us, but in a real way (like the Tabernacle of the Old Testament) to house and protect the real presence of God in the Eucharist.

This is also why Catholics genuflect when passing the tabernacle. We do so in honor of the real presence of Christ present in the Eucharistic bread reserved and protected in the tabernacle. The vigil lamp burns as a sign of Christ present. On Holy Thursday night, after the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Blessed Sacrament is removed from the main tabernacle to an altar of repose elsewhere in the church, for a time of adoration. For the period from Holy Thursday night through the beginning of the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night, a time when we recall

Jesus' death and burial, the tabernacle is empty, with the door left open and the vigil lamp extinguished.

Without the Eucharist, the tabernacle is simply an empty gold box.

As a Christian, you must be familiar with the tabernacle in the church. It is a special place in the church, which holds the ciborium that has the Eucharist. The tabernacle is thus the cornerstone and heart of the Catholic Church.

Unpracticed Faith is Functional Atheism

(Regis Nicoll)

The following article is placed here for your consideration and reflection.

What is the role and purpose of works in justification and our response to Grace?

Works and "Works"

Although the oft-quoted Pauline verse, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith," discounts salvific works—that is, human projects *motivated* and *directed* to move Heaven—it presumes a requisite "work." Our Lord stands at the door and knocks, but we must open the door and bid Him in to receive the sacramental grace of His Presence.

In the verse immediately following, St. Paul teaches that while we are not saved *by* works, we are saved *for* works: "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

The works he is referring to are not machinations to gain Divine favor, but responses to it, done in service of Christ to build up His Body with members who are undergoing a lifelong process of transformation into His image.

When Paul teaches that "righteousness is from faith to faith," he is inferring that the Christian life, which begins with the "work" of opening the door and receiving our Guest, is a life of obedience ("works") to all Christ commands as revealed in Scripture and passed down through Sacred Tradition. Fittingly, he instructed the church in Philippi, "to work out your salvation in fear and trembling."

Functional Unbelief

Unpracticed faith—that is, faith without works—St. James writes, is dead. It has no transformative or sanctifying power; it is intellectual assent that descends into paralyzing doubt (or worse), which is no faith at all. That's because faith is revealed, confirmed, and made perfect by our actions not affirmations (*for by their fruits you will know them*).

Consider a child, standing nervously at the edge of the pool, coaxed by his father to dive into the water. He has a choice: plunge headlong into the pool where the able arms of dad are ready to receive him, or remain at water's edge frozen in fear, dithering in doubt. He may sincerely believe that his father won't let harm come to him, but until he jumps, fear holds him captive in *functional* unbelief, revealing that his faith is in a danger that his father cannot save him from.

When the "rubber" of belief meets the "road" of decision, a choice has to be made. There is no middle road other than doubt, which defaults to unbelief and tosses us to and fro on the agnostic waves of uncertainty. Indeed, we will never walk on the troubled waters of life until faith moves us to get out of the boat!

Functional Atheists

Behavioral studies by various pollsters suggest that the vast majority of Americans who self-identify as Christian are functional non-Christians, if not atheists, with rates of divorce, sexual promiscuity, substance abuse, and other behaviors on par with those of their non-Christian neighbors. (*By their fruits you will know them.*)

In his 2001 book *Growing True Disciples*, George Barna reported, “To the naked eye, the thoughts and deeds (and even many of the religious beliefs) of Christians are virtually indistinguishable from those of nonbelievers.” Six years later he similarly reported, “born again Christians are statistically indistinguishable from non-born again adults on most of the behaviors studied.” The studied behaviors included lying, substance abuse, and extra-marital sex. (*By their fruits you will know them.*)

For example, although the Church teaches that sex is reserved within the marital bond of one man and one woman, 94 % of adults admit to having had non—marital sex. Considering that roughly 70 % of the U.S. populace is Christian, it is safe to say that *a lot* of Christians—very likely, the majority—are guilty of sexual sin. (*By their fruits you will know them.*)

A Christian I’ll call “Kurt” is a case in point.

Over breakfast one morning, as Kurt was telling me about his girlfriend, I was taken aback when he breezily insinuated the sexual nature of their relationship. When I asked how he squared that with Church teaching, his jaw went slack as if I’d asked about the burial rites of the Inuit. After an awkward pregnant pause, he replied, “I’m committed to her!” as if that would resolve any biblical difficulty I might bring up. I brought up a few. He was unmoved. A few months later I heard that he was in another “committed” relationship.

On the issue of abortion, the pro-choice Guttmacher Institute found that in 2014, 54 % of women who chose abortion were Christian (24 % Catholic and 30 % Protestant) compared to 46 % who were non-Christian. That finding led the Jesuit publication, *America*, to report that Catholics are just as likely to get an abortion as anyone else. What’s more, although the Catholic Church stands resolutely against abortion, more Catholics favor its legality than oppose it. Every Sunday morning at the Catholic church I attend, I’ve noticed a car in the parking lot with a bumper sticker stating, “STOP the GOP war on women!”

Many of these people most likely would consider themselves good Christians. They are active in church, perhaps theologically conservative, even espousing conventional Church teaching. Yet, when it comes to the way they actually live they have cultivated, what Mary Eberstadt has called, the “will to disbelieve” what the Church plainly teaches.

By their words, they profess faith in Christ, but by their actions they reveal that their faith is in their instincts, urges, feelings, and the secular sirens of culture: Dear Abby, Oprah, Joel Osteen. (*By their fruits you will know them.*)

Barna’s research suggests some underlying causes here.

From surveys taken between 2005 to 2010, Barna found that less than 20 % of Christians are committed to spiritual formation. What’s more, says Barna, “less than one out of ten have talked about their faith with a non-Christian, fasted for religious purposes, and had an extended time of spiritual reflection during the past week.”

He goes on to report that among self-identified Christians, less than 3 % “have surrendered control of their life to God, submitted to His will for their life, and devoted themselves to loving and serving God and other people.”

Just think—70 % of Americans profess to be Christians, and yet as few as 3 % could be called disciples—that is, believers who have dedicated their lives to become more like Jesus by learning to do the things He commanded us to do. The rest are people of unpracticed faith who, if church members, are in effect “belonging-non-believers.”

In result, we have Christians who are exuding more the stench of death than the aroma of life and a Church that is losing its social and moral capital in an ever-increasingly secularized world. Lord have mercy!

(Regis Nicoll is a retired nuclear engineer and a fellow of the Colson Center who writes commentary on faith and culture. His new book is titled *Why There is a God: And why It Matters*).

SAINT of THE WEEK BLESSED FRANCIS XAVIER SEELOS

Seelos was born in [Füssen](#) in the Kingdom of Bavaria on January 11, 1819, one of 12 children born to Mang Seelos and Franziska Schwarzenbach. He was baptized that same day in the Parish Church of [St. Mang](#). He attended middle school at the Institute of Saint Stephen in Augsburg. Receiving his diploma in 1839, he went on to university in Munich, where he completed his studies in philosophy. Having expressed a desire for the priesthood since childhood, he entered the diocesan seminary on September 19, 1842.

Seelos was touched by the letters published in the Catholic newspaper *Sion*, from the Redemptorist missionaries describing the lack of spiritual care for the thousands of German-speaking immigrants. After visiting the Redemptorists in Alotting, he decided to enter the congregation, asking to be allowed to work as a missionary in the United States. He was accepted by the Redemptorists on November 22, 1842, and sailed the following year from [Le Havre](#), France, on March 17, arriving in New York on April 20, 1843. On December 22, 1844, after having completed his novitiate and theological studies, Seelos was ordained a priest in the Redemptorist Church of St. James in Baltimore, Md..

American Missions

After being ordained, Seelos worked for nine years in the Parish of [St. Philomena](#) in Pittsburgh, Pa. first as [curate](#) to St. John Neumann, who was the superior of the Redemptorist community, later as Superior himself, and for three years as pastor. During this time, he was also the Redemptorist Novice Master. With Neumann, he also dedicated himself to preaching missions. Regarding their relationship, Seelos said: "He has introduced me to the active life" and, "he has guided me as a spiritual director and confessor."

Seelos is described as, "...a tall, slender, dignified man, with a kind, open, innocent face." Although born in Bavaria, he spoke English elegantly and fluently.

Seelos' availability and innate kindness in understanding and responding to the needs of the faithful quickly made him well known as an expert confessor and spiritual director, so much so that people came to him even from neighboring towns. His confessional was open to all: "I hear confessions in German, English, French, of Whites and of Blacks". He practiced a simple lifestyle and a simple manner of expressing himself. The themes of his preaching, rich in Biblical content, were always understood even by the simplest people. Seelos was described as a man with a constant smile and a generous heart, especially towards the needy and the marginalized. A constant endeavor in this pastoral activity was instructing the little children in the faith. Seelos not only favored this ministry, he held it as fundamental for the growth of the Christian

community in the parish. In 1854, he was appointed simultaneously Pastor of [St. Alphonsus Parish](#) in Baltimore; Pastor and Prefect of Students at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Cumberland, Md., in 1857; and Pastor and Prefect of Students at St. Mary's Parish in Annapolis (1862). As Prefect of Students, he remained always the kind and happy pastor, always prudently attentive to the needs of his students and conscientious of their doctrinal formation. Above all, he strove to instill in these future Redemptorist missionaries the enthusiasm, spirit of sacrifice, and apostolic zeal for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people.

In 1860 Seelos was proposed as a candidate for the office of Bishop of Pittsburgh. Having been excused from this responsibility by Pope Pius IX, from 1863 until 1866, he dedicated himself to the life of an itinerant missionary preaching in English and German in the states of Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Wisconsin. Seelos notably preached a two-week parish mission at St. Mary of Victories Church in St. Louis, Missouri in October 1865. The Church has a small shrine to his honor, a first class relic, and one of the five known death masks made of Seelos. After a year as Curate of St. Mary's Parish in Detroit, Mi, Seelos was assigned in 1866 as Pastor of the Church of St. Mary of the Assumption, New Orleans. However, his ministry in New Orleans was destined to be brief. In September of that year, exhausted from visiting and caring for victims of yellow fever, he contracted the disease. After several weeks, he died on October 4, 1867, at the age of 48 years and 9 months.

DAILY SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

TWENTY-SEVENTH WEEK 5 – 10 OCTOBER

Bringing Mercy

Monday 5 October Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, Priest

Gal. 1:6-12 Ps. 111:1-2, 7-9, 10 Lk. 10:25-33

“Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” (Lk. 10:36-37)

Here we have the conclusion to the familiar story of the Good Samaritan. First, robbers beat him and left him for dead. Then a priest walked by and ignored him. And then a Levite walked by also ignoring him. Finally, the Samaritan walked by and took care of him with great generosity.

Interestingly, when Jesus asked the disciples which of these three acted as a neighbor, they didn't respond “the Samaritan.” Rather, they responded, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Mercy was the key focus.

It is so easy to be judgmental and harsh with one another. If you read the newspapers or listen to the news commentators you can't help but hear continual judgment and condemnation. Our fallen human nature seems to thrive on being critical of others. And when we are not critical, we are often tempted to act like the priest and Levite in this story. We are tempted to turn a blind eye to those in need. The key must be to always show mercy and show it in superabundance.

Reflect, today, upon the call God gives you to show mercy. Mercy, in order to be true mercy, must hurt. It must “hurt” in the sense that it requires you to let go of your pride, selfishness and anger and choose to show love instead. You choose to show love to the point that it hurts. But that hurt is a true source of healing in that it cleanses you of your sin. Saint Mother Teresa is quoted as saying, “

I have found the paradox, that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love.” Mercy is the kind of love that may hurt at first, but in the end leaves only love.

Lord, do make me an instrument of Your love and mercy. Help me to especially show mercy when it is hard in life and when I do not feel like it. May those moments be graced moments when You transform me into Your gift of love. Jesus, I trust in You.

Resting at the Feet of Jesus

Tuesday 6 October St. Bruno Priest Blessed Marie Rose Durocher

Gal. 1:13-24 Ps. 139:1-3, 13-15 Lk. 10:38-42

Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me.” The Lord said to her in reply, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.”(Lk. 10:40-42)

At first this seems unfair. Martha is working hard at preparing the meal, while Mary is just sitting there at the feet of Jesus. So, Martha complains to Jesus. But interestingly, Jesus somewhat humbles Martha instead of Mary. Of course, He does it in a kind and gentle way. The truth is that both Martha and Mary were fulfilling their unique roles at that moment. Martha was doing Jesus a great service by serving Him through the preparation of their meal. This is what she was called to do and the service would have been an act of love. Mary, on the other hand, was fulfilling her role. She was called, at that moment, to simply sit at the feet of Jesus and be present to Him.

These two women have traditionally represented two vocations in the Church, as well as two callings we are all called to have. Martha represents the active life and Mary represents the contemplative life. The active life is that life most live on a daily basis, be it through the service of family or others in the world. The contemplative life is a vocation to which some are called through the cloistered life, in that they leave the busy world and dedicate most of their day to prayer and solitude.

Truthfully, you are called to both of these vocations. Even if your life is one filled with work, you are still called regularly to choose “the better part.” At times, Jesus calls you to imitate Mary in that He wants you to daily stop your work and dedicate some time to Him and Him alone. Not everyone is able to go spend time before the Blessed Sacrament each day in silent prayer, but some are. However, you should seek to find at least some time of silence and solitude every day so as to sit at the feet of Jesus in prayer.

Reflect, today, upon your own call to prayer. Do you pray? Do you pray every day? If this is lacking, then reflect upon the image of Mary being there at the feet of Jesus and know that Jesus wants the same from you.

Lord, help me to hear You calling me to stop what I'm doing and to simply rest in Your divine presence. May I find those moments every day in which I can be refreshed in Your presence. Jesus, I trust in You.

Praying the Lord's Prayer

Wednesday 7 October Our Lady of the Rosary

Gal. 2:1-2, 7-14 Ps. 117:1, 2 Lk. 11:1-4

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples." (Lk. 11:1)

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. In response, He taught them the "Our Father" prayer. There is much that can be said about this prayer. This prayer contains all we need to know about prayer. It is a catechetical lesson about prayer itself and contains seven petitions to the Father. Let's look at the first three of these as found in Chapter 11 of *My Catholic Worship!*

Hallowed be Thy Name: "Hallowed" means to be holy. As we pray this part of the prayer we are not praying that God's name become holy, for His name already holy. Rather, we pray that this holiness of God will be recognized by us and all people. We pray that there will be a deep reverence of God's name and that we will always treat God with the proper honor, devotion, love and awe to which we are called.

It's especially important to point out how often God's name is used in vain. That is a strange phenomenon. Have you ever wondered why, when people get angry, they would curse God's name? It's strange. And, in fact, it's demonic. Anger, in those moments, invites us to act in a contrary way to this prayer and to the proper use of God's name.

God Himself is holy, holy, holy. He is thrice holy! In other words, He is the Holiest! Living with this fundamental disposition of heart is key to a good Christian life and to a good life of prayer. Perhaps a good practice would be to regularly honor God's name. For example, what a wonderful habit it would be to regularly say, "Sweet and precious Jesus, I love You." Or, "Glorious and merciful God, I adore You." Adding adjectives like these before we mention God is a good habit to get into as a way of fulfilling this first petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Another good practice would be to always refer to the "Blood of Christ" we consume at Mass as the "Precious Blood." Or the Host as the "Sacred Host." There are many who fall into the trap of just referring to it as the "wine" or the "bread." This is most likely not malicious or even sinful, but it's much better to enter into the practice and habit of honoring and revering anything that is associated with God, especially the Most Holy Eucharist!

Thy Kingdom Come: This petition of the Lord's Prayer is a way of acknowledging two things. First, we acknowledge the fact that Jesus will, one day, return in all His glory and establish His permanent and visible Kingdom. This will be the time of the Final Judgment when the current Heaven and Earth will pass away and the new order will be established. So, praying this petition is a faith-filled acknowledgment of this fact. It's our way of saying we not only believe this will happen, we also look forward to it and pray for it.

Secondly, we must realize that the Kingdom of God is already here among us. For now, it's an invisible Kingdom. It's a spiritual reality that must become an all-consuming and present reality in our world.

To pray that God's "Kingdom come" means we desire that He first take greater possession of our souls. The Kingdom of God must be within us. He must reign on the throne of our hearts and we must allow Him. Therefore, this must be our constant prayer.

We also pray that the Kingdom of God become present in our world. God wants to transform the social, political and cultural order right now. So we must pray and work for that. Our prayer for the Kingdom to come is also a way for us to commit ourselves to God to allow Him to use us for this very purpose. It's a prayer of faith and courage. Faith because we believe He can use us, and courage because the evil one and world will not like it. As the Kingdom of God is established in this world through us, we will meet with opposition. But that's ok and should be expected. And this petition is, in part, to help us with this mission.

Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven: Praying for the Kingdom of God to come means, also, that we seek to live the will of the Father. This is done as we enter into union with Christ Jesus. He fulfilled the will of His Father with perfection. His human life is the perfect model of the will of God and it is also the means by which we live the will of God.

This petition is a way of committing ourselves to live in union with Christ Jesus. We take our will and entrust it to Christ so that His will lives in us.

By doing this we begin to be filled with all virtue. We will also be filled with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit which are necessary for living the will of the Father. For example, the Gift of Knowledge is a gift by which we come to know what God wants of us in particular situations in life. So praying this petition is a way of asking God to fill us with knowledge of His will. But we also need the courage and strength necessary to then live out that will. So this petition also prays for those Gifts of the Holy Spirit that enable us to live out what God reveals as His divine plan for our lives.

It is, of course, also an intercession for all people. In this petition we pray that all will come to live in unity and harmony with God's perfect plan.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Jesus, I trust in You.

Our Lady of the Rosary

Celebrated as a feast-day since the victory of the Christians over the Turks at the battle of Lepanto in 1571.

Ask, Seek, Knock

Thursday 8 October

Gal. 3:1-5 Ps. Lk. 11:5-13

"And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." (Lk. 11:9-10)

Sometimes this Scripture passage can be misunderstood. Some may think it means that we should pray, pray more and pray harder and eventually God will answer our prayers. Some may think that this means that God does not answer prayer if we fail to pray hard enough. And

some may think that whatever we pray for will be given to us if we just keep asking. We need some important clarifications on these points.

We certainly should pray hard and often. But one key question to understand is this: What should I pray for? This is key because God will not give us what we pray for, no matter how long and hard we pray for it, if it is not part of His glorious and perfect will. For example, if someone is sick and dying and it is part of the permissive will of God to allow that person to die, then all the prayer in the world will not change things. Instead, prayer in this case should be offered so as to invite God into this difficult situation so as to make it a beautiful and holy death. So it's not a matter of begging God until we convince Him to do what we want, as a child may do to a parent. Rather, we must pray for one thing and one thing only...we must pray for the will of God to be done. Prayer is not offered to change God's mind, it's to transform us, strengthen us and enable us to embrace all that God calls us to do.

Reflect, today, upon how you pray. Do you seek only the will of God in all things and pray deeply for that? Do you knock at the heart of Christ seeking His holy and perfect plan? Do you ask for His grace to enable you and others to fully embrace all that He has in mind for you. Pray hard and expect that prayer to change your life.

Lord, help me to daily seek You and to increase my life of faith through prayer. May my prayer help me to receive Your holy and perfect will into my life. Jesus, I trust in You.

Overcoming Sin

Friday 9 October St. Denis, Bishop & Companions Martyrs t. John Leonardi Priest

Ga. 3:7-14 Ps. 111:1-6 Lk. 11:15-26

“When an unclean spirit goes out of someone, it roams through arid regions searching for rest but, finding none, it says, ‘I shall return to my home from which I came.’ But upon returning, it finds it swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and brings back seven other spirits more wicked than itself who move in and dwell there, and the last condition of that man is worse than the first.” (Lk. 11:24-26)

This passage reveals the danger of habitual sin. Perhaps you've found that you have struggled with a particular sin in your life. This sin has been committed over and over again. Eventually you resolve to confess it and overcome it. After confessing it you are overjoyed, but find that within a day you are right back to that same sin.

This common struggle people go through can be a cause of much frustration. The Scripture above speaks about this struggle from a spiritual point of view, the point of view of demonic temptation. When we target a sin to overcome and turn away from the temptation of the evil one, the demons come at us with even greater force and do not give up the battle for our souls that easily. As a result, some eventually give in to sin and choose not to try any longer to overcome it. That would be a mistake.

One key spiritual principle to understand from this passage is that the more attached we are to a particular sin, the deeper our resolve must be to overcome it. And overcoming sin can be quite painful and difficult. Overcoming sin requires deep spiritual purification and a complete submission of our mind and will to God. Without this resolve and purifying surrender, the temptations we face from the evil one will be very difficult to overcome.

Reflect, today, upon how deep your resolve is to overcome sin. When temptations come your way, are you wholeheartedly committed to overcoming them? Seek to deepen your resolve so that the temptations of the evil one do not take hold of you.

Lord, I surrender my life into Your hands without reserve. I beg You to strengthen me in time of temptation and to keep me free from sin. Jesus, I trust in You.

Are You Blessed?

Saturday 10 October BVM, Pillar of Faith

Gal. 3:22-29 Ps. 105:2-7 Lk. 11:27-28

While Jesus was speaking, a woman from the crowd called out and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that carried you and the breasts at which you nursed." He replied, "Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it." (Lk. 11:27-28)

Do you hear the Word of God? And if you do hear it, do you observe it? If so, then you can consider yourself among those truly blessed by our Lord.

Interestingly, the woman speaking to Jesus in this passage was honoring His mother by saying she was blessed to have carried and fed Him. But Jesus honors His mother to an even greater degree by stating what He does. He honors her and calls her blessed because she, more than anyone else, hears the Word of God and observes it perfectly.

Hearing and doing are two very different things. Both of them take much commitment in the spiritual life. First of all, hearing the Word of God is not simply an audible hearing or a reading of the Bible. "Hearing" in this case means that God has communicated to our souls. It means we are engaging a Person, Jesus Himself, and we are letting Him communicate to us whatever He desires to communicate.

Though it can be challenging to hear Jesus speak and to internalize what He says, it is even more challenging to then let His Word change us to the point that we live what He has spoken. So often we can have very good intentions but fail to follow through with action by living the Word of God.

Reflect, today, upon both hearing and observing. Start with hearing and reflect upon whether or not you daily allow yourself to be engaged by Jesus. From there, reflect upon whether you are living what you know He has spoken. Recommit yourself to this process and you will find that you, too, are truly blessed!

Lord, may I hear you speak to me. May I meet You in my soul and receive Your sacred Word. May I also put that Word into action in my life so as to experience the blessings You have in store for me. Jesus, I trust in You.

PRAYERS

May the Holy Spirit be about us, in us, and with us.

May the Holy Spirit, O Christ, come to us speedily.

May the Holy Spirit, dwell in our body and soul.
May the Holy Spirit protect us readily against peril, against diseases.
Against devils, against sins, against hell and many evils.
O Jesus, May Thy Spirit hallow us, deliver us.
(Irish, ca. 1060)

COVID-19 Pandemic Prayer

(Richard Boever, C.S.S.R.)

Blessed Francis Seelos, you knew the sufferings of the sick at the time of the Yellow Fever Epidemic in New Orleans many years ago and gave your life ministering to those who were afflicted. Be with us in our times of trouble. So many prayers have been answered with your intercession in our struggles, and we ask you to join with us now in begging God's protection in the face of an unseen foe which wreaks havoc in our world. We acknowledge our dependence on you, Almighty God, and pray for solace in this troubled time.

Blessed Seelos, visit the sick suffering in our hospitals and homes and help them to know God's merciful healing in their time of need. Safeguard those who are serving the suffering with great dedication. Protect them from harm. Pray that we be surrounded by a shield to protect us as we continue in our daily endeavors. Give wisdom and right judgment to our leaders as they seek to direct us in our human efforts to be safe. Blessed Seelos, manifest your powerful aid, praying with us for healing for all who seek your help. Pray with us that we be protected from spiritual and temporal harm.

Gracious God, we know that You do not desire the destruction of Your holy people. Let us know Your mercy and free us from the affliction of coronavirus. We long to gather again as the Christian community around Your altar. Free us soon from the affliction that so limits our ability to gather for worship. Mother of Perpetual Help, be with us in your motherly tenderness for Christ's body. Blessed Francis Seelos, powerful intercessor, join us in our humble prayer to our loving God. Amen

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER - 11 OCTOBER

Weekday Mass schedule is Tuesday – Saturday 8:30 a.m.

An additional Mass is celebrated on Wednesday at 6:30 a.m.

And on Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

Confessions are held on Wednesday between the two Masses

Thursday evening from 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Sunday 4 Oct

7:00 a.m. Mass

8:30 a.m. Mass

11:30 a.m. Mass (Chuck Egress Confirmation, First Communion)

Opening Sessions of Religious Education

Monday 5 Oct Day off

No Mass

Tuesday 6 Oct

8:30 a.m. Mass

6:00 p.m. Meeting

Wednesday 7 Oct

6:30 a.m. Mass

7:00 – 8:30 Confessions

8:30 a.m. Mass

Thursday 8 Oct

8:30 a.m. Mass

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Confessions

6:30 p.m. Mass

Friday 9 Oct

8:30 a.m. Mass

5:00 p.m. Wedding Rehearsal

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Adoration

Saturday 10 Oct

8:30 a.m. Mass

2:00 p.m. Wedding

5:00 p.m. Mass

Sunday 11 Oct

7:00 a.m. Mass

8:30 a.m. Mass

11:30 a.m. Mass (Stefan Schiefler Phelps Baptism, Confirmation, First Communion)

