



13th Sunday of Ordinary Time for St. Ambrose Parish

June 28th, 2020

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GOOD NEWS ... Churches are Opening Soon with 50 People: We have been given the go ahead to start reopening churches. We are currently putting in place a plan of action. If you would like to attend mass, we ask you to please call the parish office between the hours of 9:30 to 1:00 Monday to Friday to register. We will be allowed up to 50 people as long as we can keep our social distancing of 6 feet. Therefore, we will be using a lottery system to choose who will attend the mass each weekend. We are asking for your patience and eventually everyone wishing to attend will have a turn. We hope to have everything ready for the first weekend in July.

LIVE MASS WITH FR. HENRY: I (Fr. Henry) do a live mass every Wednesday and Sunday at 9:00 am (unless there are technical difficulties and then it will be put on after it has been recorded.). The next live mass is this Sunday, streamed live from St. Ambrose Church. If you want to watch, go to our web site at www.stambroseyarmouth.ca or go to my YouTube channel www.youtube.com/channel/UC1CwQV-c8xpu57fbCsu0fLg/videos?view=57&flow=grid
(Copy and paste this link into your web browser if you would like to follow along.)



QUOTE OF THE WEEK: Where the church is, there also is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and all grace, and the Spirit of truth. - St. Irenaeus

SUPPORTING YOUR PARISH FINANCIALLY: During this difficult time, I ask that you continue to support our Parish financially. If you want you can drop donations off at the office during office hours. Please knock on the door to be served. We now have **EMAIL TRANSFERS SET UP**, send to stambrosemail@gmail.com please add your envelope number in the message box if you have one or a mailing address for an income tax receipt. We still have an account on line to which you can donate to. Simply go to <http://www.stambroseyarmouth.ca/> and scroll down the page to the donate button in red and follow the directions.

REFLECTION: Loving God Above All

Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A

Jesus said to his apostles: “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.” [Matthew 10:37-38](#)

Jesus explains an interesting consequence of choosing to love family members more than God. The result of loving a family member more than God is that one is not worthy of God. This is a strong statement meant to evoke serious self-reflection.

First, we should realize that the only way to authentically love one’s mother or father, son or daughter, is to first love God with your whole heart, mind, soul and strength. Love of one’s family and others must flow from this pure and total love of God.

For that reason, we should see Jesus’ warning as a call to make sure we are not only loving Him fully, but also a call to make sure we fully love our family by allowing our love of God to become the source of our love of others. How is it that we may violate this command of our Lord? How would we love others more than Jesus? We act in this sinful way when we allow others, even family members, to take us away from our faith. For example, on a Sunday morning while you are getting ready to go to church, a family member tries to convince you to skip Mass for some other activity. If you concede so as to appease them, then you are “loving” them more than God. Of course, in the end, this is not an authentic love of the family member since a decision was made contrary to the will of God.

Reflect, today, upon how you can truly love those in your family by turning your heart and soul first toward the love of God. Allow this complete embrace of the love of God to become the basis of love in every relationship. Only then will good fruit come forth from the love of others.

Lord, I give to You my whole mind, heart, soul and strength. Help me to love You above all things and in all things and, from that love, help me to love those whom You have put in my life. Jesus, I trust in You.

Being Ready and Willing

Monday of the Thirteenth Week of Ordinary Time

A scribe approached and said to Jesus, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” [Matthew 8:19](#)

This scribe said the right thing to Jesus. This is the attitude we should all have toward our Lord. We must be ready and willing to follow Him no matter what. However, Jesus’ response to this scribe is interesting. He said, “Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head” ([Matthew 8:20](#)).

What do we take from this response? It appears to be a way for Jesus to say to the scribe, “Are you truly ready and willing to follow me no matter what?” In other words, Jesus wants to illustrate to the scribe that the choice to follow Him is a commitment to travel down a road that is *risky* only in the sense that following Jesus requires complete trust in Him. We will not be told, ahead of time, where our Lord will lead and what He will ask of us. Rather, when we unreservedly choose to follow Jesus, we are putting our trust in Him as a person and are telling Him that we embrace His will no matter what it is. This level of trust is the key to what Jesus wants.

Reflect, today, upon two things. First, reflect upon these words of the scribe and ask yourself whether or not you can confidently say them in your own life. Say them over and over and try to let them move from your head to your heart as a willing embrace of the Lord’s plan for your life. Second, reflect upon the effects of such a response in your own life. Are you willing to not only say these words but to also embrace all that follows from such a commitment? Are you willing to trust the Lord with your whole life? Strive to make this firm resolution and this resolution will lead you down the path of much joy.

Lord, I do commit myself to following You wherever You go. I choose Your most holy will above all things. Help me to live faithfully in accord with Your divine will and to say “Yes” to You every day. Jesus, I trust in You.

Calming the Storm

Tuesday of the Thirteenth Week of Ordinary Time

They came and woke Jesus, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” He said to them, “Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?” Then he got up, rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm. [Matthew 8:25-26](#)

Imagine you were out on the sea with the Apostles. You were a fisherman and spent countless hours on the sea throughout your life. Some days the sea was exceptionally calm and other days there were big waves. But this day was unique. These waves were huge and crashing and you feared that things would not end well. So, with the others on the boat, you woke Jesus in a panic hoping that He would save you.

What would have been the best thing for the Apostles to do in this situation? Most likely, it would have been for them to allow Jesus to remain asleep. Ideally, they would have faced the fierce storm with confidence and hope. “Storms” that seem overwhelming may be rare, but we can be certain they will come. They will come and we will feel overwhelmed.

If the Apostles would not have panicked and would have allowed Jesus to sleep, they may have had to endure the storm a bit longer. But eventually it would have died down and all would have been calm.

Jesus, in His great compassion, is OK with us crying out to Him in our need as the Apostles did on the boat. He is OK with us turning to Him in our fear and seeking His help. When we do, He will be there as a parent is there for a child who wakes during the night in fear. But ideally, we will face the storm with confidence and hope. We will ideally know that this too will pass and that we should simply trust and stay strong. This seems to be the most ideal lesson we can learn from this story.

Reflect, today, on how you react to hardship and problems in your life. Be they big or small, do you face them with the confidence, calm and hope that Jesus wants you to have? Life is too short to be filled with terror. Have confidence in the Lord no matter what you face each day. If He seems to be asleep, allow Him to remain asleep. He knows what He is doing and you can be certain that He will never allow you to endure more than you can handle.

Lord, whatever may come my way I trust You. I know You are always there and will never give me more than I can handle. Jesus, I do trust in You.

Deliver Us From the Evil One

Wednesday of the Thirteenth Week of Ordinary Time

When Jesus came to the territory of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs who were coming from the tombs met him. They were so savage that no one could travel by that road. They cried out, “What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the appointed time?” [Matthew 8:28-29](#)

This Scripture passage reveals two things: 1) Demons are ferocious; 2) Jesus has complete power over them. First of all, we should notice that the two demoniacs “were so savage that no one could travel by that road.” That’s a very significant statement. It’s clear that the demons possessing these two men were vicious and filled those in the town with great fear. So much so that no one would even come near them. This is not a very pleasant thought, but it is reality and it is worth understanding. True, we may not encounter evil in such a direct way very often, but we do face it at times. The evil one is alive and well and is constantly striving to build his demonic kingdom here on Earth.

Think of times when evil appeared to be manifest, oppressive, malicious, calculated, etc. There are times in history when the evil one appeared to triumph in powerful ways. And there are ways that his activity is still manifest in our world today.

That brings us to the second lesson of this story. Jesus has complete authority over the demons. Interestingly, He casts them out into the herd of swine and the swine then run down the hill and die. Bizarre. The towns people are so overwhelmed they then ask Jesus to leave the town. Why would they do that? In part, the reason seems to be the fact that Jesus’ exorcism of these two men causes quite a commotion. This is because manifest evil does not depart quietly.

This is an important lesson to remember in our day and age. It’s important because the evil one appears to be making his presence known to a greater and greater degree today. And he certainly has plans to make his presence even more known in the coming years. We see this in the moral downfall of our societies, the public

acceptance of immorality, the secularization of the various world cultures, the increase of terrorism, etc. There are countless ways that the evil one appears to be winning the battle.

Jesus is all-powerful and will win in the end. But the hard part is that His victory will most likely cause quite a scene and it will make many uneasy. Just as they told Him to leave their town after He freed the demoniacs, so also there are many Christians today who are all too willing to ignore the rise of the kingdom of the evil one so as to avoid any contention.

Reflect, today, if you are willing to face the “consequences,” so to speak, of confronting the kingdom of the evil one with the Kingdom of God. Are you willing to do what it takes to stand strong in a culture that is continually deteriorating? Are you willing to remain steadfast in the face of the noise of the evil one? Saying “Yes” to this will not be easy, but it will be a glorious imitation of our Lord Himself.

Lord, help me to remain strong in the face of the evil one and his kingdom of darkness. Help me to confront that kingdom with confidence, love and truth so as to bring forth Your Kingdom in its place. Jesus, I trust in You.

Courage to Seek Forgiveness

Thursday of the Thirteenth Week of Ordinary Time

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Courage, child, your sins are forgiven.” [Matthew 9:2b](#)
This story concludes with Jesus healing the paralytic and telling him to “rise, pick up your stretcher and go home.” The man does just that and the crowds are amazed.

There are two miracles that happen here. One is physical and one is spiritual. The spiritual one is that this man’s sins are forgiven. The physical one is the healing of his paralysis.

Which of these miracles are more important? Which one do you think the man desired the most?

It’s hard to answer the second question since we do not know the man’s thoughts, but the first question is easy. The spiritual healing, the forgiveness of his sins, is by far the most important of these two miracles. It’s the most significant because it has eternal consequences for his soul.

For most of us, it’s easy to pray to God for things like a physical healing or the like. We may find it quite easy to ask for favors and blessings from God. But how easy is it for us to ask for forgiveness? This may be harder to do for many because it requires an initial act of humility on our part. It requires that we first acknowledge we are sinners in need of forgiveness.

Acknowledging our need for forgiveness takes courage, but this courage is a great virtue and reveals a great strength of character on our part. Coming to Jesus to seek His mercy and forgiveness in our lives is the most important prayer we can pray and the foundation of all the rest of our prayers.

Reflect, today, upon how courageous you are in asking God for forgiveness and how humbly you are willing to acknowledge your sin. Making an act of humility like this is one of the most important things you can do.

Lord, give me courage. Give me courage, especially, to humble myself before You and to acknowledge all my sin. In this humble acknowledgment, help me to also seek Your daily forgiveness in my life. Jesus, I trust in You.

Mercy for the Sinner

Friday of the Thirteenth Week of Ordinary Time

“Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, *I desire mercy, not sacrifice*. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.” [Matthew 9:12-13](#)

Jesus did not come for the “righteous” but came for “sinners.” This may be surprising at first because it seems that Jesus should have said that He came for people, the righteous and the sinner. But what we must understand is that no one is truly righteous. In other words, everyone is a sinner in need of the Savior.

By speaking this way, Jesus is addressing the -righteous attitude of the Pharisees who seemed to think that Jesus should only associate with those who were without sin. The Pharisees acted as if they were “righteous” and that Jesus should only associate with them and any others who were not publicly known to be sinners.

Sadly, the sin of the Pharisees was of a far graver nature than the sins of the tax collectors and the other sinners who came to Jesus. The Pharisees were guilty of the sin of spiritual pride and were sinning by presuming that they were righteous. When one fails to see their sin, God cannot forgive them since they do not repent.

Though this is a powerful condemnation of the Pharisees and others who are guilty of being self-righteous, it is also an invitation from Jesus to all who readily admit their sin. When we can humble ourselves before the perfection of God and see our sins in the light of His glory, we will be tempted to despair and feel shame for our sin. But shame will turn into joy and freedom when we allow our Lord to act as the Divine Physician in our lives. The purpose of His earthly life was to bring healing to our wounds of sin. When we realize how His perfect mercy perfectly heals us, we will readily run to Him.

Reflect, today, upon how ready and willing you are to confess your sin to Jesus. Do not hesitate to trust in His perfect love for you and to open yourself up fully to His divine mercy.

Lord, I turn to You in my need and admit my sin and guilt. I am sorry for having offended You and I know that You are the one and only answer for my sin. Please have mercy on me, dear Lord, and forgive me for all my sin. Jesus, I trust in You.

Fasting and Freedom

Saturday of the Thirteenth Week of Ordinary Time

The disciples of John approached Jesus and said, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast much, but your disciples do not fast?” Jesus answered them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.” [Matthew 9:14-15](#)

Do you want to be free? Do you want to discover true liberty in your life? Most certainly you do. But what does that mean? And how do you obtain it?

Liberty is what we are made for. We are made to be free to live life to the fullest and to experience the unfathomable joys and blessings God desires to bestow upon us. But all too often we have a misconception of what true freedom is all about. Freedom, more than anything else, is an experience of the joy of having the Bridegroom with us. It’s the joy of the wedding feast of the Lord. We were made to celebrate our unity with Him for eternity.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus clearly states that the wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them. However, “The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

It is helpful to look at the relationship between fasting and freedom. At first this may seem like a strange combination. But if fasting is properly understood, it will be seen as a pathway toward the glorious gift of true freedom.

There are times in our lives when “the Bridegroom is taken away.” This can refer to many things. One thing it particularly refers to are the times when we experience a sense of the loss of Christ in our lives. This can certainly come as a result of our own sin, but it can also come as a result of us growing closer to Christ. In the first case, fasting can help free us from the many sinful attachments we have in life. Fasting has the potential to strengthen our will and purify our desires. In the second case, there are times when we are growing very close to Christ and, as a result, He hides His presence from our lives. This may seem strange at first but it is done so that we will seek Him all the more. In this case, also, fasting can become a means of deepening our faith and commitment to Him.

Fasting can take on many forms, but, at the heart, it is simply an act of self-denial and self-sacrifice for God. It helps us overcome earthly and fleshly desires so that our spirits can more fully desire Christ.

Reflect, today, on how deeply you desire Christ in your life. If you see that there are other competing desires that tend to drown out Christ, consider offering acts of fasting and other forms of self-denial. Make them small sacrifices for God and you will see the good fruit they produce.

Lord, I desire You in my life above all things. Help me to see the things that compete for Your love and to offer sacrifice so that my soul can be purified and live in the freedom You desire for me. Jesus, I trust in You.

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