



## 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time for St. Ambrose Parish July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Pastor:** Fr. Henry Smolenaars

**Parish Deacon:** Rev. Mr. Stephen Bourque

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**Tabitha Centre:** 902-742-8960

**Reconciliation/confession** Please email Fr. Henry if you can or call the office to make an appointment.

**Office telephone:** 902-742-7151

### **MASS INTENTIONS July 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 – July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**Sat. 4pm** Odette Nickerson **and** Rosa Hattie

**Sun. 10am** Parishioners

**Wed. 9am** William Letteney **and** Intentions of Kenneth Jacquard

**Sat. 4pm** Parishioners

**Sun. 10am** Victor McGuire **and** J Clifford O'Connell

**GOOD NEWS ... Churches are Opening:** We have been given the go ahead to reopen churches. 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. With social distancing in place 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.

**MASS TIMES:** Saturday at 4:00 pm and Sunday 10:00 am. Please note the change in the Sunday morning mass time is now 10:00 am and there is only one mass instead of two. Draws to attend mass will take place on Mondays and parishioners will be called by Wednesday at the latest. Once your name is in the draw it is not necessary to register again. Your name will be drawn and when everyone has had a turn they will be re-entered again. Thank you for your patience.

**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.stambroseymouth.ca](http://www.stambroseymouth.ca) or go to my YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/channel/UC1CwQV-c8xpu57fbCsu0fLg/videos?view=57&flow=grid](http://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.)

**FOOD BANK:** Even though we cannot hold our usual food bank collection, we would like to remind parishioners that the food bank still needs our help. The weekend of July 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> would normally be a food bank collection time. Please consider making a donation during the next few weeks. The food bank is only collecting donations of money at this time. You can make a donation in one of the following ways:

1. You can place your donation in an envelope marked FOOD BANK and drop it off at the Parish Centre.

2. You can mail your donation directly to the food bank treasurer, Art McPhee at 4624 Hwy 1, Woodvale NS, B5A 5B1.
3. Someone will be available to receive items in the parking lot of the church.



**QUOTE OF THE WEEK:** How many people are hidden martyrs for Christ each day, confessing the Lord Jesus with their deeds! -St. Ambrose

**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](mailto: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.stambroseymouth.ca/> and scroll down the page to the donate button in red and follow the directions.

### **REFLECTION: Childlike Faith**

#### ***Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A***

“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones.” [Matthew 11:25](#)

What a profound truth to understand! For many, if given the choice to be either a “little one” or “wise and learned” it can appear that being wise and learned is more attractive. The problem is that, according to Jesus, those who are little children are in fact far more wise and learned than those who simply act this way.

Those who are childlike are the ones who have the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven revealed to them. They are given a special grace to penetrate the truths of God’s inner life. This reveals, in part, the simplicity of God’s inner life. God and His will are never confusing and complex. We may make Him seem confusing and, as a result, experience God’s wisdom as overly complex. But in reality, the truth and beauty of God is only discernable by the simple mind who lives in a humble way.

One tendency we can all have is to spend excessive time and energy trying to “figure out God’s will.” We can think, and think and think, talk and talk and talk, and in the end remain in confusion about this or that. If you find yourself in this situation, of thinking too much and ending in confusion, then this is a sign that you may not be properly discerning the will of God and may not be allowing yourself to properly hear Him speak.

God speaks to us simply, clearly and only what we need to know, when we need to know. Therefore, it’s important to always approach our Lord in a humble and simple way, waiting for Him to speak the simple and profound truth we need to hear in His time. Ultimately, it comes down to patience with our Lord.

Reflect, today, upon whether you find yourself spending excessive time thinking about the mysteries of life only to be left confused. If so, seek to grow in humility so as to allow the Lord to reveal the simple yet profound truths He desires to reveal. Strive to be childlike in God’s eyes and you will become wiser and more learned than you could ever become on your own.

*Dear Lord, help me to have a simple and childlike faith in You and, through this simple faith, come to know the beautiful mysteries You desire to reveal to me. Give me wisdom and knowledge, dear Lord, beyond what I could ever obtain by myself. Jesus, I trust in You.*

### **Trusting the Almighty**

#### ***Monday of the Fourteenth Week of Ordinary Time***

When Jesus arrived at the official’s house and saw the flute players and the crowd who were making a commotion, he said, “Go away! The girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they ridiculed him. When the crowd was put out, he came and took her by the hand, and the little girl arose. And news of this spread throughout all that land. [Matthew 9:23-26](#)

Jesus performed many miracles. He overwhelmed the laws of nature time and time again. In this Gospel passage He overcomes death by bringing this little girl back to life. And He does it in such a way that it appears to be quite normal and easy for Him.

It's insightful to reflect upon Jesus' approach to the miracles He performed. Many were amazed and in shock of His miraculous power. But Jesus appears to do it as a normal part of His day. He doesn't make a big deal about it and, in fact, He often tells people to keep His miracles quiet.

One obvious thing this reveals to us is that Jesus does have complete power over the physical world and all the laws of nature. We are reminded in this story that He is the Creator of the Universe and the source of all that is. If He can create all things by simply willing it, He can easily recreate and transform the laws of nature by His will.

Understanding the full truth of His complete authority over nature should also give us confidence in His complete authority over the spiritual world and everything that makes up our lives. He can do all things and can do all things easily.

If we can arrive at a deep faith in His almighty power, and also arrive at a clear understanding of His perfect love and perfect knowledge of us, we will be in a position to trust Him on a level we never knew possible. Why wouldn't we completely trust Him who can do all things and loves us perfectly? Why wouldn't we trust Him who knows everything about us and desires only our good? We should trust Him! He is worthy of that trust, and our trust will unleash His almighty power in our lives.

Reflect, today, upon two things. First, do you understand the depth of His power? Second, do you know that His love compels Him to use that power for your good? Knowing and believing these truths will change your life and allow Him to perform miracles of grace.

*Lord, I do believe in Your absolute authority over all things and Your complete authority over my life. Help me to trust in You and to trust in Your love for me. Jesus, I do trust in You.*

## **Irrationality vs. Normalcy**

### ***Tuesday of the Fourteenth Week of Ordinary Time***

A demoniac who could not speak was brought to Jesus, and when the demon was driven out the mute man spoke. The crowds were amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He drives out demons by the prince of demons." [Matthew 9:32-34](#)

What a stark contrast we see in the reaction of the crowds compared to the reaction of the Pharisees. It's actually quite a sad contrast.

The reaction of the crowds, meaning normal everyday people, was one of amazement. Their reaction reveals a simple and pure faith that accepts what it sees. What a blessing it is to have this form of faith.

The reaction of the Pharisees was one of judgment, irrationality, jealousy and harshness. Most especially, it is irrational. What would lead the Pharisees to conclude that Jesus "drives out demons by the prince of demons?" Certainly it was nothing that Jesus did that would lead them to this conclusion. Therefore, the only logical conclusion is that the Pharisees were filled with a certain jealousy and envy. And these sins led them to this ridiculous and irrational conclusion.

The lesson we should learn from this is that we must approach other people with humility and honesty rather than jealousy. By seeing those around us with humility and love, we will naturally arrive at genuine and honest conclusions about them. Humility and honest love will enable us to see the goodness of others and rejoice in that goodness. Sure, we will also be aware of sin, but humility will help us to avoid making rash and irrational judgments about others as a result of jealousy and envy.

Reflect, today, on the way you normally think and speak about others. Do you tend to be more like the crowds who saw, believed and were amazed at the good things Jesus did? Or are you more like the Pharisees who tend to fabricate and exaggerate in their conclusions. Commit yourself to the normalcy of the crowds so that you, too, can find joy and amazement in Christ.

*Lord, I desire to have a simple, humble and pure faith. Help me to also see You in others in a humble way. Help me to see You and to be amazed at Your presence in the lives of those whom I encounter every day. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## **Miracles and Faith**

### ***Wednesday of the Fourteenth Week of Ordinary Time***

Jesus summoned his Twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness. [Matthew 10:1](#)

Jesus gives His Apostles a sacred authority. They were able to drive out demons and heal the sick. They also won many converts to Christ by their preaching.

It's interesting to look at this extraordinary charism the Apostles had to act miraculously. It's interesting because we do not see this happen that often today. However, at the beginnings of the Church it seems that miracles were quite common. One reason for this is that Jesus made quite a statement in the beginning to set things in motion. The miracles He did and those of His Apostles were powerful signs of the power and presence of God. These miracles helped the preaching of the Apostles to be more believable and bring forth many converts. It seems that, as the Church grew, miracles in such great numbers were not as necessary for the authentication of the Word of God. The personal lives and witness of believers eventually were sufficient to spread the Gospel without the help of numerous miracles. Martyrdom and acts of great faith became the true signs of God's presence.

This is helpful to understand because we see something similar in our own lives of faith and conversion. Often times, in the beginning of our faith journey, we have many powerful experiences of God's presence. There may be deep consoling spiritual feelings and a clear sense that God is with us. But over time, these feelings can start to disappear and we can wonder where they went or wonder if we have done something wrong. There is an important spiritual lesson here.

As our faith deepens, the spiritual consolations we may receive at the beginning can often fade away because God wants us to love and serve Him out of a more purified faith and love. We should believe and follow Him not because He makes us feel good, but because it is good and right to love and serve Him. This can be a difficult lesson to learn but an essential one.

Reflect, today, upon how deep and sustaining your faith is. Do you know and love God even when things are hard and when He seems far away? Those moments, more than any, are the moments when your personal faith and conversion can grow the strongest.

*Lord, help my faith in You and my love of You to be deep, stable and strong. Help me to rely upon that faith more than upon any external "miracles" or feelings. Help me to love You first and foremost out of a pure love for You. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## **The Cost of the Gospel**

### ***Thursday of the Fourteenth Week of Ordinary Time***

Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give. [Matthew 10:8b](#)

What is the cost of the Gospel? Can we put a price on it? Interestingly, we should put two prices on it. The first price is how much it should cost us to receive it. The second price is how much we "charge," so to speak, to give the Gospel.

So how much should the Gospel cost us? The answer is that it's of infinite value. We could never afford it monetarily speaking. The Gospel is priceless.

As far as how much we should "charge" to give the Gospel to others, the answer is that it's free. We have no right to charge or expect anything so as to give away something that we do not own. The saving message of the Gospel belongs to Christ and He offers it freely.

Let's start with the second half of the Scripture above. "Without cost you are to give." This tells us that we are to offer the Gospel to others free of charge. But this action of freely giving the Gospel brings with it a sort of hidden requirement. The giving of the Gospel requires that we give of ourselves. And that means we must give

of ourselves freely. What's the justification for giving everything of ourselves freely? The justification is that we have received everything "without cost."

The simple fact is that the Gospel is all about a total free gift to us which requires a total free gift of ourselves to others. The Gospel is a person, Jesus Christ. And when He comes and lives in us freely, we must then become a total and free gift to others.

Reflect, today, on both your complete receptivity of the Gospel as well as your complete willingness to give. May your understanding and reception of this glorious gift of God transform you into a gift for others.

*Lord, may my heart be open to You in a total way so that I may receive You as the Living Gospel. As I receive You, may I in turn give You to others in my very person. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## **Prepare for Persecution**

### ***Friday of the Fourteenth Week of Ordinary Time***

Jesus said to his Apostles: "Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves. But beware of men, for they will hand you over to courts and scourge you in their synagogues, and you will be led before governors and kings for my sake as a witness before them and the pagans." [Matthew 10:16-18](#)

Imagine yourself being a follower of Jesus at the time He was preaching. Imagine that there is much excitement about Him and great hopes that He will be the new King and is the Messiah. There would be much hope and excitement about what is to come.

But then, out of the blue, Jesus gives this sermon. He says that His followers will be persecuted and scourged and that this persecution will continue over and over. This must have made His followers stop and seriously question Jesus and wonder if it was worth following Him.

The persecution of Christians has been alive and well throughout the ages. It has happened in every time and in every culture. It continues to be alive today. So, what do we do with that? How do we respond?

Many Christians can fall into the trap of thinking that Christianity is all about simply "getting along." It's easy to believe that if we are loving and kind then everyone will also love us. But that's not what Jesus said.

Jesus made it clear that persecution is going to be a part of the Church and that we should not be surprised when this happens to us. We should not be surprised when those within our culture step on us and act maliciously. When this happens, it is easy for us to lose faith and to lose heart. We can get discouraged and feel like turning our faith into a hidden life we live. It's hard to live our faith openly knowing that the culture and world does not like that and won't accept it.

The examples are all around us. All we have to do is read the secular news to be made aware of a growing hostility toward the Christian faith. For that reason, we need to heed Jesus' words today more than ever. We need to be aware of His warning and have hope in His promise that He will be with us and will give us the words to say when we need it. More than anything, this passage calls us to hope and confidence in our loving God.

Reflect, today, on how ready and willing you are to face the hostility of the world. You should not react with similar hostility, rather, you must strive to have courage and strength to endure any and every persecution with the help, strength and wisdom of Christ.

*Lord, give me strength, courage and wisdom as I live my faith in a world hostile to You. May I respond with love and mercy in the face of harshness and misunderstanding. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## **Our Hidden Life**

### ***Saturday of the Fourteenth Week of Ordinary Time***

"Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known." [Matthew 10:26b](#)

This is either a very consoling thought, or very frightening depending upon what you may have "concealed" or what you hold "secret" within your heart. What is there, in the depth of your conscience? What is hiding that only God sees for now? There are two extremes into which people can fall in this regard, and many places between the extremes.

The first extreme is that person who lives a phony public persona but secretly lives a very different life. These are those who fall into the sin of hypocrisy, or are what we may call “two-faced.” This is a frightening situation to be in. It’s frightening because those living this sort of life are never truly at peace. They are completely caught up in what others think and what their public image looks like. Interiorly, they are filled with much sorrow, anxiety and fear. This person struggles greatly with any and every form of true humility, honesty and integrity.

But with that said, there is also another form of person who lives a hidden life. This is the hidden life of the saint! Take, for example, the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was seen as a fornicator early in her life and this “public image” of her was never corrected in this world. *How else would she have gotten pregnant with Jesus?* many thoughts. But the truth was that her soul was the most beautiful, pure and holy creation God ever made. And now, the beauty of her interior life is manifest before the angels and saints and will be made manifest for all eternity!

The promise of the Scripture above is that everything within our heart and conscience will be made manifest for all eternity. Therefore, those living truly holy, humble and sincere lives of virtue now will be seen in this light for eternity. Those living hidden dark lives will have those lives visible for eternity in some way in accord with God’s mercy and justice.

Again, this will most likely be either consoling or frightening, depending upon our hearts. But what we should take from this, more than anything, is the importance of striving for a truly holy and pure heart here and now. It doesn’t matter if no one sees your holiness, only God needs to see it. The goal is to allow God to form a beautiful interior life for you and to allow Him to make your soul beautiful to Him.

Reflect, today, on how well you do this. How well do you daily allow God to treat your heart and conscience as His possession, making it a place of true beauty that gives His heart, and yours, much delight?

*Lord, please come and make my heart Your dwelling place. Make my soul pleasing to You in every way. May Your glory be made manifest there and may You allow this glory to be made manifest for all eternity. Jesus, I trust in You.*

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