



16th Sunday of Ordinary Time for St. Ambrose Parish July 19th, 2020

Pastor: Fr. Henry Smolenaars

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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 18th 2020 – July 26th, 2020

Sat. 4pm Gary Muise and Florence Blanchard Zell

Sun. 10am Parishioners

Wed. 9am Intentions of Frances Cottreau and Paul Hubbard

Sat. 4pm Parishioners

Sun. 10am Marion Fitzgerald and Lillian Charchuck

SUNDAY MISSALS: For those of you that have been to church you may have noticed that there are no missals in the pews. This is one of the protocols we have to follow for a period of time. However, you are permitted to bring your own. In saying this we will not be providing new missals for 2020-2021 this upcoming fall. If you are interested in purchasing one for 2020-2021 please call the office place an order and we'll call you when they arrive for pickup. The cost is \$5.00. Please let us know by July 31st.

MASS SIGNUP: 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. Please note that when you register, your name will remain in the system until you call and remove it or until things can return to normal.

WEDNESDAY MASS: For the time being we are not planning to do a lottery draw for this mass. Protocols will be followed for those who plan to attend. If it becomes necessary to do the lottery then we will implement it at that time.

LIVE MASS WITH FR. HENRY: I (Fr. Henry) do a live mass every Wednesday at 9:00 am and for the next three Sundays at 10:00 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 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: My Lord Jesus, you do all your works out of true and ineffable love. St. Bridget

SUPPORTING YOUR PARISH FINANCIALLY: 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: The Defeat of Evil

Sixteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A

Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well." [Matthew 13:24-26](#)

The introduction to this parable should wake us up to the reality of the evil one in our midst. The specific action of the "enemy" in this parable is disturbing. Imagine if this story were true and you were the farmer who worked very hard at sowing the seed throughout your field. Then, if you awoke to hear the news that weeds had been sown also, you would be quite saddened, angered and disappointed.

But this parable is especially about the Son of God. Jesus is the one who has sown the good seed of His Word and watered that seed with His Precious Blood. But the evil one, the devil, has also been at work trying to undermine the work of our Lord.

Again, if this were a true story about you as a farmer, it would be hard to refrain from much anger and a desire for revenge. But the truth is that Jesus, as the Divine Sower, does not allow the evil one to steal His peace. Instead, He has allowed this action of the evil one to remain for now. But in the end, the works of evil will be destroyed and burned in the unquenchable fire.

What's also interesting to note is that Jesus does not root out all evil in our world here and now. According to the parable, He refrains so that the good fruit of the Kingdom will not be negatively affected. In other words, this parable reveals to us the interesting truth that the "weeds" all around us, that is, the evil alive within our world, cannot affect our growth in virtue and entrance into the Kingdom of God. We may have to endure evil on a daily basis and find ourselves surrounded by it at times, but our Lord's willingness to allow evil for now is a clear sign that He knows it cannot affect our growth in virtue if we do not let it.

Reflect, today, upon the reality of evil in your world. It's essential that you name evil activity for what it is. But evil cannot ultimately affect you. And the evil one, despite his malicious attacks, will ultimately be defeated. Reflect upon the hope that this truth brings and renew your trust in the power of God this day.

Lord, I pray that You do deliver us all from the evil one. May we be freed from his lies and snares and always keep our eyes upon You, our Divine Shepherd. I turn to You in all things, dear Lord. Jesus, I trust in You.

Seeking a Sign

Monday of the Sixteenth Week of Ordinary Time

"Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." He said to them in reply, "An evil and unfaithful generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet." [Matthew 12:38-39](#)

Jonah was the sign. He spent three days and nights in the belly of a whale. He certainly was presumed dead by those who threw him over the side of the boat. But the whale acted as an instrument of God's will in that it brought Jonah to Nineveh to preach repentance. And they did repent and change their lives! The darkness of the belly of the whale, in the end, became a blessing and a sign for ages to come.

Fast forward from the story of Jonah to the story above when the followers of Jesus seek a sign from Him. They want some sort of “proof” of who He is. Or perhaps they are just curious and want to be “entertained” by a miracle. Whatever the case may be, Jesus makes it clear that the sign He will give is the sign of Jonah.

Clearly, the story of Jonah is a prefiguration of the death of Jesus; His three days in the tomb and His Resurrection. This is the sign that Jesus will offer and the sign that He continues to offer. It’s a sign of great hope when we perceive it properly.

However, very often we can fall into the same temptation as the followers of Jesus in the story above. Very often we also want a sign other than the signs Jesus gave us. We want some other proof from God of His will. We want Him to speak loudly and clearly. But that doesn’t always happen. More often what we experience is what appears to be silence from God. We may wonder, “Lord, where are You? Why don’t You speak to me?” But Jesus will speak to us in the same way. He will gently remind us of His life, death and Resurrection. He will remind us that we must believe in all that He has spoken, and even if we feel like we are in the belly of a whale or dead in a tomb, hope is not lost. God is present in all things and He is active and present to us even when He seems to be silent.

Reflect, today, upon how strong your faith is even though you may not get the sign from Heaven that you may want. You must be reminded that the Father spoke to you clearly through the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus and this is the way He continues to speak to you today. Listen to that lesson and embrace the truths it proclaims. Even if you feel like you are in a tomb or God is silent, know He is not. He is speaking to you all the time. You just need to discern His voice.

Lord, help me to believe in You even though I do not see miracles or signs from Heaven. Help me to believe in You despite any doubts or weaknesses I have in life. Give me a firm faith to answer Your call in my life. Jesus, I trust in You.

Our Blessed Mother

Tuesday of the Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time

“Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother.” [Matthew 12:48-50](#)

This passage offers a wonderful opportunity to speak about the Blessed Virgin Mary. Some who read this passage fall into the trap of thinking that Jesus was in some way distancing Himself from His mother. It’s as if they conclude that His statement ignores her special role in His life. Nothing could be further from the truth. The truth is that His statement affirms her motherhood more than anything. Why? Because He is speaking about how one becomes a true member of His family. And that happens when one “does the will of my heavenly Father.”

Think about that line. Who better fulfilled the will of the Heavenly Father? Who was more obedient in all things than the Blessed Virgin? No one was. She acted in perfect obedience throughout her life and, therefore, she perfectly fulfills the requirement of being Jesus’ family.

One thing we should take from this passage is that our Blessed Mother’s relationship with Jesus was lived on two levels. First, there was the physical motherhood she was blessed with. This was an incredible grace and one for which she deserves great honor. But her physical motherhood was not the primary reason for her blessedness. The primary reason was a result of her spiritual motherhood. And this spiritual motherhood is seen in this passage above. It is the result of her perfect “Yes” to God in all things. This is the primary reason she is to be honored and called “blessed” for all ages.

Reflect, today, upon the role that our Blessed Mother holds in your life. God wants you to honor her, to imitate her and to make her part of your family. He wants you to receive her as your spiritual mother insofar as you are a member of Jesus’ family. If you strive for obedience to the will of the Father in your life you will also share in the blessings of His life. One of those great blessings is to share His mother.

Lord, I do desire to be obedient to You and Your will in all things. I desire to embrace the Father's perfect plan for my life. In that will, help me to share in Your divine life and become a full member of Your family. In that family, help me to take Your mother as my own. Dear Mother, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.

Rich Soil

Wednesday of the Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time

“But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear.” [Matthew 13:8-9](#)

The “ears” Jesus speaks of are much more than our physical ears. He is speaking of our interior lives through which we are able to hear, comprehend, accept and choose His holy will. He speaks His Word to us in many ways. The question to ponder is whether or not we are listening and are ready to allow His Word to soak in. Only by an attentiveness to His Word can we embrace His will.

Our souls must be like rich soil. This is a familiar image from Scripture, but it's an image that is worth spending much time with in meditation. Rich soil in our souls is not easy to obtain. It's much easier to be dry, thorny, rocky and unwelcoming soil. But to foster within ourselves a true richness and fertile soil requires much care and attention. How is this done?

One of the most important places to begin, so as to create rich soil within our souls, is to strive for true humility. Humility is ultimately all about seeing the truth of who we are and, specifically, seeing the need for the grace of God in our lives. The humble admission that we are powerless without the grace of God is essential to creating rich soil within.

From there, we must come to a point of total trust in God. When we first humble ourselves and recognize our total need for God, we will be in a position to trust Him when He speaks. And when He does speak, we will listen and obey with joy. Only then can the good fruit of His mercy be poured into our lives and, through us, into the lives of others.

Reflect, today, upon your interior life. What is there? Is it more like dry rocky ground? Or do you regularly seek to nourish your soul and prepare it to receive the holy Word of God? Seek to create a fertile disposition within and the Lord will take care of bearing good fruit in your life.

Lord, help me to become truly fertile soil for Your most holy Word. May I receive all that You speak and may the seed of faith be planted deep within. Help this faith to grow and to produce the blessings You wish to bestow. Jesus, I trust in You.

The Mysteries of Heaven

Thursday of the Sixteenth Week of Ordinary Time

The disciples approached Jesus and said, “Why do you speak to the crowd in parables?” He said to them in reply, “Because knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted. To anyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away.” [Matthew 13:10-12](#)

Does that seem fair? At first read it may not. Why would Jesus promise more to those who have more, and less to those who have not? This goes to the heart of the mystery of grace, and the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven!

First of all, we see that Jesus spoke in parables to the crowds but spoke clearly and directly to His disciples. Jesus explains that this is “Because knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted.” So, for that reason, Jesus speaks in veiled speech when speaking to the vast crowds.

To speak plainly here, what Jesus is saying is that some people are simply more open to the truth than others. When someone is not open, Jesus is limited and, thus, He must speak in parables. One goal of a parable is to get someone thinking. It's a way of drawing them in so that they can engage their minds with the Word that was spoken.

When someone is open to the Truth, such as the disciples, Jesus is able to lift the veil and speak clearly, deeply and beautifully about the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. This must be our goal. We must seek to be those who “get it.” We must seek to understand all Jesus speaks and believe it wholeheartedly. In fact, once we do begin to believe and, subsequently, live what we come to believe, we will begin a wonderful journey of faith and understanding that we never knew existed before.

This is what Jesus means when he says, “to anyone who has, more will be given.” The life of grace is such that, once we begin to accept all that is true and then allow it to transform our lives, we will be given exponentially more than we ever imagined. And, on the flip side, when we refuse to listen and understand, even the little faith and understanding we have will slowly slip away into confusion.

Reflect, today, on how open you are to the Word of God and all that God wants to say to you. Seek to listen and understand. If you do this, you will discover that there is a glorious life of grace just waiting to be lavished upon you in full force.

Lord, I do want to know You. I do want to seek You and to discover all that You have to say. Help me to turn to You in all things and to grow continually deeper in the life of faith. Jesus, I trust in You.

Are You a “Pop-Christian?”

Friday of the Sixteenth Week of Ordinary Time

“The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy. But he has no root and lasts only for a time. When some tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away.” [Matthew 13:20-21](#)

Are you a “pop-Christian?” That may be a new word. But it gets at the heart of this particular Christian described above. This passage is one of four types of Christians identified in the Parable of the Sower. There are some who are like seed sown on a path, some like seed sown on rocky ground, some who are like seed sown in thorns, and some like seed sown in rich soil. Each one of these descriptions provide much to think about.

Let’s look at the Christian who is like seed sown on rocky ground, the one who has no roots. Practically speaking, this is the person who could be described as a “pop-Christian.” It’s the person who professes faith in Christ when it’s popular and well accepted by others. When it’s easy and convenient, this person is all in. But as soon as there is some challenge given to the Gospel, to the Word of God, and suddenly following Christ is not popular within the culture, this person is quick to choose the culture over the Truth.

This is a very real phenomenon in our day and age. The culture and the world as a whole are becoming more and more hostile toward the truth of our Christian faith. The world is becoming stronger, more influential, more of a bully, and appears to be winning the battle. This is a problem. And the real problem stems from too many Christians who lack deep roots in their life of faith.

The ideal is to have the Word of God sown deep into our hearts where there is rich soil. When this happens, the Word grows and becomes strong and stable. And in the midst of a cultural or social “storm,” the Christian with deep roots and deep faith will not waver.

Reflect, today, upon whether or not you are absolutely willing to stand with Christ and for the truth no matter how hard or unpopular it may be. Are you willing to endure the ridicule and misrepresentation the world gives to the Truth? Are you willing to stay strong in your faith in the midst of an increasingly secular society? If you struggle with being a “pop-Christian,” pray that God will sink His roots down deep into your heart so that you will be unwavering no matter the cost.

Lord, I desire that Your Word sink deep into my heart. I desire to stay strong in my faith no matter the cost. Help me to be radical in my faith and in my love in all things. Jesus, I trust in You.

The Evil All Around Us

Saturday of the Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time

“Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, ‘First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.’” [Matthew 13:30](#)

The evil all around us should be apparent to those with the eyes of faith. We only need to compare all that our Lord has revealed to us through the Scripture and the Church to the various values and opinions of the world. When we do so, we will be struck with the stark contrast between them.

Using the image of this parable, it would be like the farmer who goes out to check on his crop of wheat. As he does, he sees the weeds intermingled with the wheat. Though he sees both growing together, he is also aware of the fact that he cannot eliminate the weeds without pulling up the wheat. So instead of worrying about the growth of weeds, he puts his eyes on harvest time when the wheat will be harvested for good and the weeds will be gathered and burned.

So, it must be with our lives. We will easily be tempted to despair if we become fixated upon the evil within our world. We shouldn't ignore it, but we ought not to become overly concerned about it. This is only possible if we, like the farmer, keep our eyes upon "harvest time." The great harvest we anticipate is the moment of divine justice when God rights every wrong and sorts out the good from the bad. Justice will prevail in the end even though it may not be readily apparent here and now.

Reflect, today, upon any ways that you find yourself affected by the evils of our world. Perhaps the constant stream of bad news in the media gets you down. Or, perhaps you encounter various evils in your daily life from others. Whatever the case may be, do not be shocked or scandalized by the attacks of the evil one. Keep your eyes fixed on our Lord and have full confidence in His divine justice to come.

Lord, I trust in Your promise of fidelity in all things. As I see and experience various evils in this world, help me to never fall into their trap or lure. Free me from doubt and despair and give me perfect hope in Your promise of justice and mercy. Jesus, I trust in You.

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