



19th Sunday of Ordinary Time for St. Ambrose Parish August 9th, 2020

Pastor: Fr. Henry Smolenaars

Parish Deacon: Rev. Mr. Stephen Bourque

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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 August 8th – 16th, 2020

Sat. 4pm Parishioners

Sun. 10am Yvonne Guertin **and** Edwin & Lorraine Harding

Wed. 9am Herbert Muise **and** Special Intentions

Sat. 4pm Lorraine Brown **and** Special Intentions

Sun. 10am Parishioners

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. Wednesday masses will be a first come first served for the time being, 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 this Saturday at 4:00pm (unless there are technical difficulties and then it will be put on after it has been recorded.). The masses will be 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: I have an ever deeper and firmer belief that nothing is merely an accident when seen in the light of God. ~St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross



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.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH: for parishioners who had regularly attended Our Lady of Lourdes, mass started up on Sundays. If you haven't received a call, contact Alice at 902-663-2386 or Betty at 902-742-4965.



Please welcome into our Christian community Matthew James Thibeau and Heather Jacqueline Goreham who were baptised on Sunday August 2nd, 2020.

Please keep Matthew and Heather and their families in your prayers.

REFLECTION: Fear Transformed

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

During the fourth watch of the night, [Jesus] came toward them walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. “It is a ghost,” they said, and they cried out in fear. At once Jesus spoke to them, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” [Matthew 14:25-27](#)

Does Jesus frighten you? Or, better put, does His perfect and divine will frighten you? Hopefully not, but sometimes it may, at least at first. This story reveals to us certain spiritual insights and the way we may react to the will of God in our lives.

First of all, the context of the story is important. The Apostles were on a boat in the middle of the lake at night. The darkness can be seen as the darkness we face in life as we go through various challenges and difficulties. The boat has been traditionally seen as a symbol of the Church and the lake as a symbol of the world. So, the context of this story reveals that the message is one for all of us, living in the world, remaining in the Church, encountering the “darkness” of life.

Sometimes when the Lord comes to us in the darkness we encounter, we are immediately frightened by Him. It’s not so much that we are frightened by God Himself; rather, we can easily become frightened by God’s will and what He asks of us. God’s will always calls us to selfless giving and sacrificial love. At times, this can be hard to accept. But when we remain in faith, our Lord will gently say to us, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” His will is nothing we should be afraid of. We should seek to embrace it with full confidence and trust. This may be challenging at first, but with faith and trust in Him, His will leads us to a life of the utmost fulfillment.

Reflect, today, upon whatever our Lord may be calling you to do right now in your life. If at first it seems overwhelming, keep your eyes fixed on Him and know that He will never ask of you anything that is too difficult to accomplish. His grace is always sufficient and His will is always worthy of full acceptance and trust.

Lord, may Your will be done in my life in all things. I pray that I may always welcome You into the darkest challenges of my life and that I will keep my eyes fixed upon You and Your perfect plan. May I never give in to fear but allow You to dispel that fear with Your grace. Jesus, I trust in You.

Avoid Offending Another

Monday of the Nineteenth Week of Ordinary Time

“But that we may not offend them, go to the sea, drop in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. Open its mouth and you will find a coin worth twice the temple tax. Give that to them for me and for you.” [Matthew 17:27](#)

This is an interesting situation. The tax collectors of the temple come to Peter and ask him why Jesus doesn’t pay the normal temple tax. Peter, in turn, asks Jesus this question and Jesus makes it clear that He does not owe tax, given who He is. However, He sends Peter to obtain a coin miraculously from the mouth of a fish so that others are not offended.

One thing this story reveals is that, at times, the foolish and unimportant concerns of others (such as collecting taxes) are not worth fighting about. This basic principle may apply to many other situations in life. It's easy to allow unimportant issues to get in the way of our service of God. It's not an uncommon experience for people to turn trivial concerns into major issues. We, as Christians, need to keep our eyes on what is important in life and not allow ourselves to be drawn into these foolish battles.

Humility, when fully embraced, will help us to avoid "offending" people even if we are in the right. Humility, as seen in this situation with Jesus, enables us to see that this or that battle is not worth fighting. Certainly, we cannot compromise on the truth, but we can and ought to compromise on more trivial and unimportant demands of others rather than allowing conflicts to rise for foolish reasons.

Reflect, today, upon those "issues" in life that seem to get more attention than they are worth. Reflect upon how you can diffuse these situations by humbling yourself before others. You may be called to accept small injustices at times for the sake of the bigger picture. Look at what those may be in your life and ask the Lord to give you the grace to follow His example.

Lord, fill my heart with true humility. Help me to turn away from unimportant conflicts in life, even to the point of embracing injustice in a sacrificial way. May I never claim my rights over the joy of embracing deep humility. Jesus, I trust in You.

Becoming Like Children

Tuesday of the Nineteenth Week of Ordinary Time

"Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of heaven.

Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me." [Matthew 18:3-5](#)

How do we become like children? What is the definition of being childlike? Here are a few synonyms that most likely apply to Jesus' definition of becoming like children: trusting, dependent, natural, spontaneous, awe-inspired, without airs, and innocent. Perhaps some of these, or all of them, would qualify for what Jesus is talking about. Let's look at a few of these qualities in regard to our relationship with God and others.

Trusting: Children trust their parents without question. They may not always want to obey, but there is very little reason for children to lack trust that a parent will provide and care for them. Food and clothing are presumed and not even considered as a concern. If they are in a large city, or shopping mall, there is safety found in being close to a parent. This trust helps eliminate fear and worry.

Natural: Children are often free to be who they are. They are not overly concerned about looking silly or being embarrassed. They will often naturally and spontaneously be who they are and not worry about the opinions of others.

Innocent: Children are not yet skewed or cynical. They do not look at others and presume the worst. Rather, they will often see others as good.

Awe-inspired: Children are often fascinated by new things. They see a lake, or mountain, or a new toy and are amazed at this first encounter.

All of these qualities can easily be applied to our relationship with God. We must trust God to care for us in all things. We must strive to be natural and free, expressing our love without fear, not worrying if it will be accepted or rejected. We must strive to be innocent in the way we see others not giving into prejudice and bias. We must strive to be continually in awe of God and of all the new things He does in our lives.

Reflect, today, upon any of these qualities in which you find yourself most lacking. How does God want you to become more childlike? How does He want you to become like children so that you can become truly great in the Kingdom of Heaven?

Lord, help me to become childlike. Help me to find true greatness in the humility and simplicity of a child. Most of all, may I have absolute trust in You in all things. Jesus, I do trust in You.

Courage to Reconcile

Wednesday of the Nineteenth Week of Ordinary Time

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell the Church. If he refuses to listen even to the Church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector.” [Matthew 18:15-17](#)

Presented here is a clear method of problem solving given to us by Jesus. First of all, the fact that Jesus offers a basic method of problem solving reveals that life will present us with problems to be solved. This should not surprise us or shock us. It’s just life.

Too often, when someone sins against us or they live in a publicly sinful way, we enter into judgment and condemnation. As a result, we can easily write them off. If this is done, it’s a sign of a lack of mercy and humility on our part. Mercy and humility will lead us to desire forgiveness and reconciliation. Mercy and humility will help us to see others’ sins as opportunities for greater love rather than as reasons to condemn.

How do you approach people who have sinned, especially when the sin is against you? Jesus makes it clear that if you are sinned against you should go to great lengths to win the sinner back. You should spend much energy in love of them and do everything possible to reconcile and to bring them back to the truth.

You must start with a one-on-one conversation. From there, bring other trusted people into the conversation. The ultimate goal is the truth and to do all you can to let the truth restore your relationship. Only after you have tried everything should you then wipe the dust from your feet and treat them as a sinner if they are not won over to the truth. But even this is an act of love in that it is a way of helping them see the consequences of their sin.

Reflect, today, upon who it is that you may need to reconcile with. Perhaps you have not yet even had that initial personal conversation required as a first step. Perhaps you’re afraid to initiate it or perhaps you’ve already written them off. Pray for grace, mercy, love and humility so that you can reach out to those who hurt you in the way Jesus wants.

Lord, help me to let go of any pride I have that keeps me from being merciful and seeking reconciliation. Help me to reconcile when the sin against me is small or even great. May the compassion of Your heart fill mine so that peace can be restored. Jesus, I trust in You.

You Wicked Servant!

Thursday of the Nineteenth Week of Ordinary Time

“You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?’ Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart.” [Matthew 18:32-35](#)

That is definitely NOT what you want Jesus to say and do to you! How frightening to hear Him say, “You wicked servant!” And then to have Him hand you over to the torturers until you pay back all you owe for your sins.

Well, the good news is that Jesus deeply longs to avoid such an awful confrontation. He has no desire to hold any one of us accountable for the ugliness of our sins. His burning desire is to forgive us, pour out mercy, and wipe the debt away.

The danger is that there is at least one thing that will keep Him from offering us this act of mercy. It’s our obstinacy in failing to forgive those who have wronged us. This is a serious requirement of God upon us and one we should not take lightly. Jesus told this story for a reason and the reason was that He meant it. We can often just think of Jesus as a very passive and gentle person who will always smile and look the other way when we sin. But don’t forget this parable! Don’t forget that Jesus is serious about obstinate refusal to offer mercy and forgiveness to others.

Why is He so strong on this requirement? Because you cannot receive what you are not willing to give away. Perhaps that doesn’t make sense at first, but it’s a very real fact of the spiritual life. If you want mercy, you must give mercy away. If you want forgiveness, you must offer forgiveness. But if you want harsh judgment

and condemnation, then go ahead and offer harsh judgment and condemnation. Jesus will answer that act in kind and severity.

Reflect, today, upon those powerfully piercing words of Jesus. “You wicked servant!” Though they may not be the most “inspiring” words to reflect upon, they may be some of the most useful words to reflect on. We all need to hear them at times because we need to be convinced of the seriousness of our obstinance, judgmentalness and harshness toward others. If that is your struggle, repent of this tendency today and let Jesus lift that heavy burden.

Lord, I do repent of my stubbornness of heart. I repent of my harshness and my lack of forgiveness. In Your compassion please do forgive me and fill my heart with your mercy toward others. Jesus, I trust in You.

The Mystery of Unity in Marriage

Friday of the Nineteenth Week of Ordinary Time

“Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So, they are no longer two, but one flesh.” [Matthew 19:4-6a](#)

What is marriage? Men and women from a young age sense a certain draw to each other. It’s part of human nature to experience this. Yes, sometimes this “draw” becomes distorted and turns into lust, but it’s important to point out that this natural draw is just that...natural. “From the beginning the Creator made them male and female...” Therefore, from the beginning, God intended the sacred unity of marriage.

Marriage is truly mysterious. Yes, husbands may think their wives are “mysterious” and wives may think the same of their husbands, but in truth each person is a sacred mystery and the unity of two people in marriage is an even greater mystery.

As a mystery, one’s spouse and marriage itself must be entered into with an openness and humility that says, “I want to know you more each and every day.” Spouses who approach their marriage with self-righteousness will always look down on the other and always fail to respect the holy mystery of the other.

Each person you get to know, especially your spouse, is a beautiful and glorious mystery of God’s creation whom you are not called to “solve” but are called to meet on a deeper and deeper level each and every day. There must always be a humility that enables spouses to be open to the other in a new way every day so that they can continually discover a greater depth of beauty in the other. It is this humility and respect for the other in marriage that enables spouses to fulfill their joint mission of becoming one. Think about it, “they are no longer two, but one flesh.” Very few truly understand what this means and even fewer live the beautiful depths of this glorious and high calling of marriage.

Reflect, today, upon the mystery of the people you are called to love, especially if you are married. To call the other a “mystery” may at first lead to a smile as you acknowledge you cannot figure him/her out. But humbly recognizing the beautiful meaning of “mystery” will lead you to appreciate the uniqueness of others and help you to embrace the call to human unity, especially within marriage.

Lord, help me to see the beauty and holy mystery of the people You have placed in my life. Help me to love them with a humble love. May I especially deepen my love for my spouse each and every day. Jesus, I trust in You.

The Transforming Touch of Jesus

Saturday of the Nineteenth Week of Ordinary Time

“Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” After he placed his hands on them, he went away. [Matthew 19:14-15](#)

Jesus offered this gentle rebuke to His disciples for trying to prevent the children from coming to Him. Jesus makes it clear that these children are truly precious to Him and that He wants them each to receive the Kingdom of Heaven.

One frequently missed aspect of this passage is that Jesus laid His hands on the children and prayed for them. What a blessing! An interesting question to ponder is this: What effect did the laying of Jesus' hands coupled with His prayer have on these children? These acts would have bestowed a tremendous amount of grace on these little ones. Perhaps they did not realize what was happening, but they would have received much grace, nonetheless.

The same is true in our lives. We will not encounter Jesus coming to us physically in the same way, laying His hands on us and praying for us. But we do have something far greater! We have the Savior of the World coming to us in Holy Communion, entering into our souls and nourishing us in ways beyond what we can ever imagine. The power of His divine presence, coming to us in Holy Communion, is enough to transform our lives in powerful ways. The problem is that we often receive Him without being fully open to His grace and mercy. We easily come forward to receive His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity and fail to fully open ourselves to the infinite depths of His tender mercy.

Reflect, today, upon the intimate touch of the Savior upon your soul as you receive Him in Holy Communion. The power of that encounter is of infinite value. Are you open to all that He wishes to bestow? Renew your openness to Him and seek to allow Him to enter your soul more deeply next time you come forward to receive His divine touch.

Lord, I love You and desire to open my heart more fully next time I receive You in Holy Communion. May I open myself to all that You desire to pour forth upon me. Come into my heart, dear Lord, and transform my life by Your gentle touch. Jesus, I trust in You.

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