



21st Sunday of Ordinary Time for St. Ambrose Parish August 23th, 2020

Pastor: Fr. Henry Smolenaars

Parish Deacon: Rev. Mr. Stephen Bourque

Fr. Henry email: frhenrys@gmail.com

Office hours: Monday to Friday from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm

Church email: stambrosemail@gmail.com

Bulletin email: stambrosebulletin1@gmail.com

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 August 22nd – 30th, 2020

Sat. 4pm Parishioners

Sun. 10am Raymond Andrew Doucette **and** Andrea Marie Doucette

Wed. 9am Basil McGuigan **and** Augustin Frotten

Sat. 4pm Janice Leslie **and** J. Russell Rodgerson

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 and the following Sunday at 10am (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.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: I offer as a gift to Jesus my heart and my soul, that there may be nothing in me that is not consecrated to him.

~St. Rose of Lima



SUPPORTING YOUR PARISH FINANCIALLY: **EMAIL TRANSFERS** are now available please 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.

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 note there is no mass scheduled for this weekend August 23.



Please welcome into our Christian community Haley Ann White who was baptised on Sunday August 16th, 2020.

Please keep Haley and her family in your prayers.



Our sympathy is extended to the family and friends of
Petronella “Nelly” Christina Johanna van de Donk (Amirault) Muise
Eternal rest grant unto her O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon her.

WANT TO BECOME CATHOLIC? *Are you a non-Catholic interested in inquiring about the Catholic faith? Are you a Catholic adult who has never celebrated 1st Communion and/or Confirmation? Are you a Catholic wishing to update your faith?*



If you answered “yes” to any one of these questions, then maybe RCIA is for you. Interested in finding out more? Phone the Parish Office at 902-742-7151.

REFLECTION: Jesus’ Secret

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Then he strictly ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was the Messiah. [Matthew 16:20](#)
This line in today’s Gospel comes immediately after Peter made his profession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus, in turn, tells Peter that he is “rock” and on this rock He will build His Church. Jesus goes on to tell Peter that He will give him the “keys to the Kingdom.” Then He tells Peter and the other disciples to keep His identity a strict secret.

Why would Jesus say such a thing? What is His motivation? It seems that Jesus would want them to go forth and to tell everyone that He is the Messiah. But this is not what He says.

One reason for this “Messianic Secret” is that Jesus does not want word of who He is to spread in a casual way. Rather, He wants people to come to discover His true identity through the powerful gift of faith. He wants them to encounter Him, prayerfully be open to all He says, and then to receive the gift of faith from the Father in Heaven.

This approach to His true identity highlights the importance of coming to know Christ personally through faith. Eventually, after Jesus’ death, Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, the disciples are called to go forth

and to preach openly about the identity of Jesus. But while Jesus was with them, His identity was communicated to people through their own personal encounter with Him.

Though we are all called to proclaim Christ openly and continually in our day and age, His true identity still can only be understood and believed through a personal encounter. When we hear Him proclaimed, we must be open to His divine presence, coming to us and speaking to us in the core of our being. He, and He alone, is able to “convince” us of who He is. He is the one and only Messiah, the Son of the Living God, as Saint Peter professed. We must come to this same realization through our personal encounter with Him in our hearts.

Reflect, today, upon the depth of your faith and knowledge of the Messiah. Do you believe in Him with all your might? Have you allowed Jesus to reveal His divine presence to you? Seek to discover the “secret” of His true identity by listening to the Father speak to you in your heart. It is only there that you will come to have faith in the Son of God.

Lord, I do believe that You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God! Help my lack of faith so that I may come to believe in You and love You with my whole being. Invite me, dear Lord, into the secret depths of Your heart, and allow me to rest there in faith with You. Jesus, I trust in You.

A Public Rebuke by Jesus

Monday of the Twenty-First Week in Ordinary Time

Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You lock the Kingdom of heaven before men. You do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow entrance to those trying to enter.” [Matthew 23:13](#)

In this chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus uses the harsh rebuke “Woe to you...” seven times in a row in reference to the scribes and Pharisees. He also calls them “blind guides,” “hypocrites,” “whitewashed tombs,” “serpents,” “brood of vipers,” and “murderers.” Jesus could not be any clearer about His wholehearted and harsh rebukes of these religious leaders.

Why is Jesus so harsh toward the scribes and Pharisees? Because they are doing one of the grave evils one can do. They are misleading people in the name of God. Nothing could be worse.

Unfortunately, the scribes and Pharisees may not see it this way. But that is precisely one of the main reasons Jesus is so strong in His public rebuke of these religious leaders. His strong rebuke is an act of mercy on His part in that the scribes and Pharisees need more than just a simple invitation to repentance. They need to have their twisted malice laid out before them clearly and definitively. And it needs to be laid out for them and also for others to see. This rebuke of Jesus is not spoken in irrational anger or hatred; rather, it is spoken in the hope that these truths will sink in and they will repent.

Reflect, today, upon two important lessons from these rebukes. First, ponder whether or not you struggle with the ugly sins of self-righteousness. Do you act religious, while at the same time fail to be truly merciful? Second, be aware that at times the most loving thing you can do for another is to rebuke them. Be careful with this and make sure that any rebuke offered is truly from the Lord. Do not hesitate to do so when, with a well-formed conscience, you discern this to be from God. It may be the best way to win this form of sinner back to Christ.

Lord, when I fall into the awful sin of self-righteousness and pride, please humble me and rebuke me at the core of my being. Help me to always respond to these holy rebukes by truly repenting of my sins. Help me, also, to charitably speak the truth to those who need to hear it for their own good. Give me wisdom, courage and mercy in life so that I may be used to help all sinners return to You. Jesus, I trust in You.

Cleanse the Inside First

Tuesday of the Twenty-First Week of Ordinary Time

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You cleanse the outside of cup and dish, but inside they are full of plunder and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may be clean.” [Matthew 23:25-26](#)

Though these very direct words of Jesus may have the appearance of being harsh, they are truly words of mercy. They are words of mercy because Jesus is going to great lengths to help the Pharisees understand that

they need to repent and cleanse their hearts. Though the initial message “Woe to you” may jump out at us, the real message we should hear is “cleanse first the inside.”

What this passage reveals is that it’s possible to be in one of two conditions. First, it’s possible that one’s interior is filled with “plunder and self-indulgence” while at the same time the exterior gives the appearance of being clean and holy. This was the problem of the Pharisees. They were very concerned with how they looked on the outside but gave little care to the interior. This is a problem.

Second, Jesus’ words reveal that the ideal is to start with an interior cleansing. Once that happens, the effect will be that the exterior is also cleansed and radiant. Think about the person in this second condition, the one who is first cleansed interiorly. This person is an inspiration and a beautiful soul. And what is beautiful is that when one’s heart is authentically cleansed and purified, this interior beauty cannot be contained inside. It must shine forth and others will notice.

Reflect, today, upon how easily the beauty of your interior life shines forth. Do others see this? Does your heart shine forth? Are you radiant? If not, perhaps you, too, need to hear these words Jesus spoke to the Pharisees. You may also need to be chastised out of love and mercy so that you will be motivated to allow Jesus to enter in and act in a powerfully cleansing way.

Lord, please do come into my heart and cleanse me thoroughly. Purify me and allow that purity and holiness to shine forth exteriorly in a radiant way. Jesus, I trust in You.

Honesty with Yourself

Wednesday of the Twenty-First Week of Ordinary Time

Jesus said, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and every kind of filth. Even so, on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing.” [Matthew 23:27-28](#)

Ouch! Once again, we have Jesus speaking in an exceptionally direct way to the Pharisees. He does not hold back at all in His condemnation of them. They are described as both “whitewashed” and “tombs.” They are whitewashed in the sense that they do all they can to make it look, exteriorly, that they are holy. They are tombs in the sense that filthy sin and death live within them. It’s hard to imagine how Jesus could have been more direct and more condemning of them.

One thing this tells us is that Jesus is a man of the utmost honesty. He calls it as it is and does not mix His words. And He does not offer any false compliments or pretend all is fine when it’s not.

How about you? Are you able to act with complete honesty? No, it’s not our job to do what Jesus did and to condemn others, but we should learn from Jesus’s actions and apply them to ourselves! Are you ready and willing to look at your own life and call it as it is? Are you ready and willing to be honest with yourself and with God about the condition of your soul? The problem is that we often are not. We often just go about pretending all is fine and ignore the “dead men’s bones and every kind of filth” lurking within us. That’s not pretty to see and not easy to admit.

So, _____ again, _____ ho
w about you? Can you take an honest look at your own soul and name what you see? Hopefully you will see goodness and virtue and rejoice in that. But you can be certain you will also see sin. Hopefully not to the extent that the Pharisees had “every kind of filth.” But nonetheless, if you are honest you will see some dirt that needs to be cleaned.

Reflect, today, upon how willing you are to 1) honestly name the filth and sin in your life and, 2) sincerely strive to overcome it. Don’t wait until Jesus is pushed to the point of crying out “Woe to you!”

Lord, help me to daily take an honest look at my own life. Help me to see not only the good virtues You have formed within me, but also the filth that is there as a result of my sin. May I seek to be cleansed from that sin so that I can love You more fully. Jesus, I trust in You.

Jesus is Coming!

Thursday of the Twenty-First Week in Ordinary Time

“Stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.” [Matthew 24:42](#)

What if today is that day?! What if you knew that today was the day our Lord would return to Earth in all His splendor and glory to judge the living and the dead? Would you act differently? Most likely we all would. We’d probably contact as many people as we could and inform them of the imminent return of the Lord, go to confession and then spend the day in prayer.

But what would the ideal response be to such a question? If, by a special revelation from God, you were made aware of the fact that today was the day the Lord would return, what would the ideal response be? Some have suggested that the ideal response is that you go about your day as if it were any other day. Why? Because ideally, we are all living every day as if it were our last and we are daily heeding the Scripture above. We strive, every day, to “stay awake” and be ready for our Lord’s return at any moment. If we are truly embracing this Scripture, then it matters not if His return is today, tomorrow, next year or many years from now.

But this call to “stay awake” refers to more than just the final and glorious coming of Christ. It also refers to every moment of every day that our Lord comes to us by grace. It refers to every prompting of His love and mercy in our hearts and souls. It refers to His continuous gentle whispers calling us closer to Himself.

Are you attentive to Him coming to you in these ways every day? Are you attentive to the infinite number of ways He is seeking to enter your life more fully? Though we do not know the day on which our Lord will come in His final victory, we do know that every day and every moment of every day is a moment of His coming by grace. Listen for Him, be attentive, be watchful and stay awake!

Lord, help me to seek Your voice and be attentive to Your presence in my life. May I continuously be awake and ready to hear You when You call. Jesus, I trust in You.

The Oil of Charity

Friday of the Twenty-First Week in Ordinary Time

“‘Lord, Lord, open the door for us!’ But he said in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.’” [Matthew 25:11b-12](#)

What a frightening and sobering experience that would be. This passage comes from the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Five of them were prepared to meet our Lord and the other five were not. When the Lord came, the five foolish virgins were off trying to get more oil for their lamps, and when they returned, the door to the feast was already locked. The above passage reveals what happened next.

Jesus tells this parable, in part, to wake us up. We must be ready for Him every day. And how do we make sure we are ready? We are ready when we have plenty of “oil” for our lamps. The oil especially represents charity in our lives. So, the simple question to ponder is this: “Do I have charity in my life?”

Charity is more than just simple human love. By “human love” we mean an emotion, feeling, attraction, etc. We can feel this way toward another person, toward some activity or toward many things in life. We can “love” to play sports, or watch movies, etc.

But charity is so much more. Charity means we love with the heart of Christ. It means that Jesus has placed in our hearts His own merciful heart and we love with His love. Charity is a gift from God that enables us to reach out to and care for others in ways that are far beyond our own abilities. Charity is divine action in our lives and it is necessary if we want to be welcomed to the feast of Heaven.

Reflect, today, upon whether or not you can see the heart of Jesus alive in your own heart. Can you see Him acting in you, compelling you to reach out to others even when it’s hard? Do you say and do things that help people grow in holiness of life? Does God act in you and through you to make a difference in the world? If the answer is “Yes” to these questions, then charity is certainly alive in your life.

Lord, make my heart a fit dwelling place for Your own divine heart. Let my heart beat with Your love and let my words and actions share in Your perfect care for others. Jesus, I trust in You.

Sharing in the Master's Joy

Saturday of the Twenty-First Week of Ordinary Time

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’” [Matthew 25:23](#)

This is a story about two things. First, it’s a story about the fidelity we are called to have in this life to the service of the will of God. Second, it’s a promise of Jesus’ fidelity back to us, both here on Earth and, ultimately, when we meet Him at the time of our death.

What a blessing it would be to hear Jesus say those words to us upon the completion of our lives here on Earth. “Well done, good and faithful servant...Come, share your master’s joy.” This begs the question, if you were to die today, what would our Lord say to you? If you are not immediately confident that in His mercy, He would say these words above, then today is a good day to make some changes in your life.

A good spiritual practice is to live today in such a way that we are consciously preparing for that glorious meeting with Jesus. What “responsibilities” has He entrusted to you in this life and what are you doing with them? Are you seeking to place all your gifts at the service of the Gospel and the spreading of charity? Are you diligent in giving of yourself to God and His holy will? Hopefully there is no hesitation in your answer. If there is, this is a sign that God may want more of you here and now.

One of the biggest problems we can struggle with in this world is the temptation to seek worldly satisfaction here and now, at the expense of building up Heavenly treasure. But why? Why seek momentary and superficial satisfaction here and now and risk losing eternal joy?

Reflect, today, upon the ultimate goal that you should have in life. This is the goal of being fully prepared for that glorious encounter with our Lord as you pass from this life to the next. Heaven may seem a bit intangible right now, but when the time comes to meet Jesus face to face, it will not be intangible in the slightest way. Instead, you will immediately be made aware of every detail of your life here on Earth. Your fidelity, day in and day out, or the lack of fidelity, day in and day out, will become either the source of your eternal joy or the source of eternal regret.

Lord, help me to keep my eyes on You and Your holy will. Free me from selfish and momentary goals in life so that I can seek to serve You only in the way that produces joy to Your heart. Help me to keep my eyes on Heaven and to daily prepare for that eternal meeting with You. Jesus, I trust in You.

~My Catholic Life

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