



23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time for St. Ambrose Parish

September 6, 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 September 5-13, 2020

Sat. 4pm Parishioners

Sun. 10am Alcide Landry **and** Clint Blanchard

Wed. 9am Frances Surette **and** Dora Jacquard

Sat. 4pm Allan Boudreau **and** Catherine Jackson

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 Sunday at 9:00am and the following 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.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.)

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.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS NEWS: Monthly Meeting: Tuesday September 15th, 2020 all members invited

6:00pm executive meeting and 7:00pm general meeting. Please note there will be no supper at this time.



Weekly soup kitchen will reopen on September 1st, 2020.

FOOD BANK: This weekend, September 5th & 6th, is our turn to support the Yarmouth Food Bank. Non-perishable goods and monetary donations are appreciated. There will be someone there to receive goods prior to the 4pm mass on Saturday and the 10am mass Sunday morning.



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.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK: A child is not a vessel to be filled , but a lamp to be lit. ~Hebrew proverb



REFLECTION: Reconciling with Another

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

“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.” [Matthew 18:15](#)

This passage above offers the first of three steps Jesus offers to reconcile with someone who has sinned against you. The steps Jesus offers are as follows: 1) Speak privately to the person. 2) Bring two or three others to help with the situation. 3) Bring it to the Church. If after trying all three steps you are not able to reconcile, then Jesus says, “...treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector.”

The first and most important point to mention in this process of reconciliation is that we should keep the sin of another quiet, between them and us, until we have sincerely tried to reconcile. This is hard to do! So often when someone sins against us, the first temptation we have is to go forth and tell others about it. This may be done out of hurt, anger, a desire for revenge, or the like. So, the first lesson we should learn is that the sins another commits against us are not details we have a right to tell others about, at least not at first.

The next important steps offered by Jesus do involve others and the Church. But not so that we can express our anger, gossip or criticism or to bring them public humiliation. Rather, the steps of involving others are done so as to assist another in repentance, so that the person in error sees the gravity of the sin. This takes humility on our part. It requires a humble attempt to help them not only see their error but to also change.

The final step, if they do no change, is to treat them like a Gentile or tax collector. But even this must be understood properly. How do we treat a Gentile or tax collector? We treat them with a desire for their continued conversion. We treat them with continued respect, while at the same time acknowledge that we are not “on the same page.”

Reflect, today, upon any relationship you have that requires healing and reconciliation. Seek to follow this humble process given by our Lord and continue to remain hopeful that the grace of God will prevail.

Lord, give me a humble and merciful heart so that I may reconcile with those who have sinned against me. I forgive them, dear Lord, just as You have forgiven me. Give me the grace to seek reconciliation in accord with Your perfect will. Jesus, I trust in You.

A Disturbing Sin

Monday of the Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time

“Stretch out your hand.” He did so and his hand was restored. But they became enraged and discussed together what they might do to Jesus. [Luke 6:10-11](#)

This is a very disturbing passage. Over and over again we find that the scribes and Pharisees acted with much intentional and calculated malice. Here they were looking for anything they could try to accuse Jesus of

doing. And what do they find they can accuse Him of? They witness Him doing a miracle on the Sabbath day. And they act as if this is a sin on the part of Jesus. Seriously?

The reason this passage is so disturbing is because those who were the religious leaders of the time were clearly only interested in themselves, and Jesus was getting in the way of their self-importance. He was becoming more popular and respected than the scribes and Pharisees and they were filled with envy.

One important point to learn from this passage is that the sin of envy lead us to irrationality and foolishness. This sin blinds us and leads us to think and say foolish things. This is what the scribes and Pharisees did. Who in their right mind would “accuse” Jesus of doing something as good as healing on the Sabbath? Only those who have become blind by envy.

Though this passage is disturbing, it should hopefully become disturbing in a helpful way. It should be an opportunity for each of us to look at our own lives and to examine the relationships we have. Do you see envy present in any of those relationships? Do you see yourself acting and thinking in an irrational way at times towards this person or that?

Reflect, today, upon any tendency you may have to be like the scribes and Pharisees. Know that their actions were included in the Scripture to teach us about this ugly sin we sometimes struggle with. Let the disturbing part of it motivate you to work toward freedom from envy in your life.

Lord, I do want to be free of the sins of pride, envy and jealousy. Help me to see these in my life, to repent of them and to replace them with Your mercy and love. Jesus, I trust in You.

Praying Before You Act

Tuesday of the Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time

Jesus departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named Apostles. [Luke 6:12-](#)

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That morning, after Jesus had spent the night in prayer, He made some pretty major decisions. He chose His first twelve bishops, the Twelve Apostles. It’s interesting to note that He made this decision only after spending the night in prayer.

In a sense, Jesus did not “have” to pray. But He did. He prayed because this is who He is. He is the Son of the Father and His most important relationship was the one with the Father in Heaven. Thus, His prayer was one that was natural to His divine life and essence. Spending the night in prayer, separated from everything but His Father, was a normal expression of His perfect love and communion with the Father.

But His time in prayer was also a normal way for Him to prepare for the decisions He would make the next day. Again, it’s not that He *needed* to pray so as to make the right choice. Rather, His prayer was simply part of the divine process of making the right choice. It was a way of daily surrendering His human nature to the will of the Father in perfection so as to continue daily living the Father’s will in this world.

Jesus also sets a wonderful precedence for us. We, unlike our Lord, to pray in order to know and fulfill the will of the Father. We do not walk in perfect harmony with God each and every day and each moment of the day. Thus, while Christ’s prayer was an earthly expression of Him living who He already was, our prayer is a surrender to whom we are called to become. We must become Christ, striving to live in perfect communion with Him and in accord with the perfect will of the Father.

Reflect, today, upon the need you have to spend time in prayer so as to enter more deeply in union with our Lord. Reflect, especially, upon the importance of doing so prior to making the various decisions you need to make in life. Pray before you act and allow our Lord to be the one who enters into your life and directs you in accord with His holy will.

Lord, give me a heart that longs to be with You in prayer, each and every day. Help me to daily surrender my entire life to You without reserve. As I surrender my life, I thank You for entering in and directing all my actions. My life is Yours, dear Lord, my life is Yours. Jesus, I trust in You.

The True Blessings

Wednesday of the Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time

“Blessed are you who are poor...
Blessed are you who are now hungry...
Blessed are you who are now weeping...
Blessed are you when people hate you...
Rejoice and leap for joy on that day!” (See [Luke 6:20-23](#))

Are the above statements typos? Did Jesus really say these things?

At first, the Beatitudes can seem quite confusing. And when we strive to live them, they can be very challenging. Why is it blessed to be poor and hungry? Why is one blessed who is weeping and hated? These are difficult questions with perfect answers.

The truth is that each Beatitude ends with a glorious outcome when fully embraced in accord with the will of God. Poverty, hunger, sorrow and persecution are not, by themselves, blessings. But when they befall us, they do offer an opportunity for a blessing from God that far surpasses any difficulty the initial challenge presents. Poverty affords one the opportunity to seek out the riches of Heaven above all else. Hunger drives a person to seek the food of God that sustains beyond what the world can offer. Weeping, when caused by one’s own sin or the sins of others, helps us seek justice, repentance, truth and mercy. And persecution on account of Christ enables us to be purified in our faith and to trust in God in a way that leaves us abundantly blessed and filled with joy.

At first, the Beatitudes may not make sense to us. It’s not that they are contrary to our human reason. Rather, the Beatitudes go beyond what immediately makes sense and they enable us to live on a whole new level of faith, hope and love. They teach us that the wisdom of God is far beyond our own limited human understanding. Reflect, today, upon the incredible wisdom of God as He reveals these, the deepest teachings of the spiritual life. At very least, try to reflect upon the fact that God’s wisdom is far above your wisdom. If you struggle to make sense of something painful and difficult in your life, know that God has an answer if you but seek out His wisdom.

Lord, help me to find blessings in the many challenges and hardships of life. Rather than seeing my crosses as evil, help me to see Your hand at work in transforming them and to experience a greater outpouring of Your grace in all things. Jesus, I trust in You.

Love Your Enemies

Thursday of the Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time

Jesus said to his disciples: “To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” [Luke 6:27-28](#)

These words are clearly easier said than done. When it comes right down to it, when someone acts in hate toward you and mistreats you, the last thing you want to do is love them, bless them and pray for them. But Jesus is very clear on the fact that this is what we are called to do.

In the midst of some direct persecution or malice done to us, we can easily be hurt. This hurt can lead us to anger, desires for revenge, and even hatred. If we give in to these temptations, then we suddenly become the very thing that hurt us. Sadly, hating those who have hurt us only makes things worse.

But it would be naive to deny a certain interior tension we all face when we are confronted with harm from another and the command from Jesus to love them in return. If we are honest, we must admit to this interior tension. The tension comes as we try to embrace the command of total love despite the hurt and angry feelings we have.

One thing this interior tension reveals is that God wants so much more for us than to simply live a life based on our feelings. Being angry or hurt is not all that enjoyable. In fact, it can be the cause of much misery. But it doesn’t have to be. If we understand this command of Jesus to love our enemies, we will start to understand that this is the path out of the misery. We will start to realize that giving in to hurt feelings and returning anger for anger or hate for hate only makes the wound deeper. On the other hand, if we can love when we are mistreated, we suddenly discover that love in this case is quite powerful. It’s love that goes way beyond any

feeling. It's true love purified and given freely as a gift from God. It's charity at the highest level and it is a charity that fills us with an abundance of authentic joy.

Reflect, today, upon any wounds you carry within. Know that these wounds can become the source of your own holiness and happiness if you let God transform them and if you allow God to fill your heart with love for everyone who has mistreated you.

Lord, I know that I am called to love my enemies. I know that I am called to love all those who have mistreated me. Help me to surrender to You any feelings of anger or hate and replace those feelings with true charity. Jesus, I trust in You.

Noticing the Sins of Others

Friday of the Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time

“Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?” [Luke 6:41](#)

How true this is! How easy it is to see the minor faults of others and, at the same time, fail to see our own more obvious and serious faults. Why is this the case?

First of all, it's hard to see our own faults because our sin of pride blinds us. Pride keeps us from any honest self-reflection. Pride becomes a mask we wear which presents a false persona. Pride is an ugly sin because it keeps us from the truth. It keeps us from seeing ourselves in the light of truth and, as a result, it keeps us from seeing the log in our own eye.

When we are full of pride, another thing happens. We start to focus in on every small fault of those around us. Interestingly, this Gospel speaks of the tendency to see the “splinter” in your brother’s eye. What does that tell us? It tells us that those who are full of pride are not so much interested in putting down the serious sinner. Rather, they tend to seek out those who have only small sins, “splinters” as sins, and they tend to try and make them seem more serious than they are. Sadly, those steeped in pride feel far more threatened by the saint than by the serious sinner.

Reflect, today, upon whether or not you struggle with being judgmental toward those around you. Especially reflect upon whether or not you tend to be more critical of those striving for holiness. If you do tend to do this, it may reveal that you struggle with pride more than you realize.

Lord, humble me and help me to be free of all pride. May I also let go of judgmentalness and see others only in the way You want me to see them. Jesus, I trust in You.

A Rock Foundation

Saturday of the Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time

“I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, listens to my words, and acts on them. That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when the flood came, the river burst against that house but could not shake it because it had been well built.” [Luke 6:47-48](#)

What does your foundation look like? Is it solid rock? Or is it sand? This Gospel passage reveals the importance of a solid foundation for life.

A foundation is not often thought about or worried about unless it gives way. This is important to reflect upon. When a foundation is solid it often goes unnoticed and there is little concern during storms at any time. The same is true of our spiritual foundation. The spiritual foundation we are called to have is one of deep faith grounded in prayer. Our foundation is our daily communication with Christ. In that prayer Jesus Himself becomes the foundation for our life. And when He is the foundation of our life, nothing can harm us and nothing can keep us from fulfilling our mission in life.

Contrast this with a weak foundation. A weak foundation is one that relies upon oneself as the source of stability and strength in times of hardship. But the truth is that none of us are strong enough to be our own foundation. Those who attempt this approach are fools who learn the hard way that they cannot endure any storm life throws at them.

Reflect, today, upon how well the foundation of your life has been built. When it's strong, you can give your attention to many other aspects of your life. When it's weak, you will continually be doing damage control as you seek to keep your life from falling apart. Recommit yourself to a life of deep prayer so that Christ Jesus will be the solid rock foundation of your life.

Lord, You are my rock and my strength. You alone support me through all things in life. Help me to rely upon You even more, so that I may daily accomplish all that You call me to do. Jesus, I trust in You.

~My Catholic Life

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