

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter Bulletin for St. Ambrose Parish

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020



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**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.stambroseyarmouth.ca](http://www.stambroseyarmouth.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.)

**Wondering what to do with your time while being isolated? Want to get connected with other people from our parish? Why not join an online group?**



There is a 14-session series on the Holy Spirit that people can get involved in at St. Ambrose. The goal would be to finish by Pentecost which as you know is 50 days from Easter Sunday. How it works is you watch the video just before your group meets online, then the 4 or 5 of you will join in for a meeting together with questions you can discuss together. There can also be some sharing time about

how things are going. Click on the link to watch an ad for the series.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyhpK-X-onM&list=PLE6t-PqUvPEemaneqIWYbKUn4j8olfe9h](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyhpK-X-onM&list=PLE6t-PqUvPEemaneqIWYbKUn4j8olfe9h)

If you want to be a part of a group, please email us [Stambrosemail@gmail.com](mailto:Stambrosemail@gmail.com)

-Fr. Henry



**QUOTE OF THE WEEK:** Beofre prayer, endeavour to realize whose presence you are approaching, and to whom you are about to speak. -St. Teresa of Avila

**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 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.

**OUTREACH TO PARISHIONERS:** You may have recently had a phone call on behalf of Fr. Henry wondering how people are doing and that he was praying for you at this difficult time. Many numbers have been disconnected or no longer in service. Those of you who have not received a call would you please give the office a call so that information can be updated in our system. Office 902-742-7151



Our sympathy is extended to the family and  
friends of  
Phyllis Joyce Amiro  
Eternal rest grant unto her O Lord and let perpetual  
light shine upon her.

**REFLECTION: The Gift of Understanding**  
***Third Sunday of Easter, Year A***

With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" [Luke 24:31-32](#) (Year A)

These two passages above, from two subsequent appearances of Jesus to the Apostles, produced a unique blessing. In each story, Jesus opened the minds of the Apostles to the Scriptures in a new way. These were ordinary men who were given an extraordinary gift of understanding. It didn't come to them as a result of long study and hard work. Rather, it came to them as a result of their openness to Christ's powerful action in their lives. Jesus unlocked the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven to them. As a result, they suddenly understood truths that could never be learned on their own.

So, it is with us. The mysteries of God are vast and wide. They are deep and transforming. But so often we fail to understand. We often even fail to want to understand.

Think about those things in your life now, or in your past, that have left you confused. You need a special gift of the Holy Spirit to make sense of them. And you need this gift to make sense of the many good things of God found in the Scriptures also. This is the Gift of Understanding. It's a spiritual gift that unlocks the many mysteries of life for us.

Without the Gift of Understanding, we are left on our own to try to make sense of life. This is especially true when we are faced with hardship and suffering. How is it, for example, that an all-powerful and all-loving God can allow the good and the innocent to suffer? How is it that God can seem absent at times from human tragedy?

The truth is that He is not absent. He is centrally involved in all things. What we need to receive is an understanding of the profound and mysterious ways of God. We need to understand the Scriptures, human suffering, human relationships, and divine action in our lives. But this will never happen unless we allow Jesus to open our minds.

Allowing Jesus to open our minds takes faith and surrender. It means we believe first and understand later. It means we trust Him even though we do not see. St. Augustine once said, "Faith is to believe what you do not see. The reward of faith is to see what you believe." Are you willing to believe without seeing? Are you willing to believe in the goodness and love of God even though life, or a particular situation in life, does not make sense?

Reflect, today, upon the Gift of Understanding. Believing in God means we believe in a person. We believe in Him even though we find ourselves confused about particular circumstances. But this gift of believing, the gift of faith, opens the door to a depth of understanding that we could never arrive at on our own.

**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 May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</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.

*Lord, give me the Gift of Understanding. Help me to know You and to understand Your actions in my life. Help me to especially turn to You in the most troubling moments of life. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## **Seeking Jesus**

### ***Monday of the Third Week of Easter***

Jesus answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you." [John 6:26-27](#)

This Scripture goes straight to the heart of our priorities in life. What are you working for? Are you working hard for the "food that perishes" and only working slightly for the "food that endures for eternal life?" Or vice versa?

For some reason, we can easily become obsessed with working for the "things" of this world. In the passage above, people were looking for Jesus because He had fed them the day before and they were hungry again. They were looking for food, literally. Jesus gently rebukes them, taking this as an opportunity to point out the real reason they should be seeking Him. The real reason is that He wants to provide the spiritual food of eternal life. What is the food Jesus wants you to seek? That's a question you must let our Lord answer in your heart. There are two key questions we should ponder here so as to let Him answer us. First, "What do I want in life?" Spend time with that. Spend time all by yourself and try to be honest with this question. What do you want? What is your heart's desire? If you are honest and if you let yourself face your desires you will most likely find that you have some desires, or even many, that are not put in your heart by Christ. Recognizing what these desires are is the first step to discovering what the true food is that Jesus wants to give you.

The second key question is this: "Are you seeking Jesus for the right reason?" When we are sick, we seek a doctor for a cure. When a child is hurt, this child often runs to a parent for comfort. This is OK. We do the same. When we are lost and confused, we often turn to God for answers and help. But, ideally, we will eventually seek God for more than just healing or comfort. We will ultimately seek God for the reason of love. We will seek Him simply because we love Him and want to love Him all the more.

Reflect, today, upon your desire to seek Jesus, or lack thereof. When you can begin to seek out Jesus simply because you love Him and want to love Him more, you are on the right road. And as you walk down that road, you find it is a road of the utmost delight and fulfillment.

*Jesus, help me to seek You. Help me to seek You for the help and healing I need. But more than that, help me to seek You out of love. My Jesus, I do love You. Help me to love You more. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## **Hunger and Thirst for the Eucharist**

### ***Tuesday of the Third Week of Easter***

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst." [John 6:35](#)

Wouldn't it be nice if you were never hungry or thirsty again? What's fascinating is that Jesus uses these very natural human experiences to teach us about Himself. He uses natural hunger and thirst to teach us that we long to be satisfied spiritually. And there is only one way to satiate these spiritual longings...through Him.

It is a good spiritual practice to reflect upon your natural longings as an analogy for your spiritual longings. Naturally speaking, we regularly get hungry and thirsty. We eat and drink, but several hours later we hunger and thirst again. This is a cycle we cannot avoid. Our body continually craves food and drink.

The same is true on a spiritual level. We cannot pray once and satisfy our spiritual longings forever. We cannot simply believe in Jesus and then be satisfied forever. Why? Because prayer and unity with Jesus is something that must take place daily throughout your day.

The Eucharist offers insights into this hunger and thirst in that it provides us with our "daily" food. It is a gift that we must daily seek. Some of the Sacraments are given to us only once (Baptism and Confirmation). But the Eucharist is a gift that we must continually consume and long for. The fact that we must continually go to

Mass and receive the Eucharist tells us that our Christian life is not something that can be fulfilled by one definitive decision. Rather, it's something that needs daily nourishment and fulfillment.

What do you do to satisfy this Christian longing each and every day? Perhaps you cannot attend Mass every day, but do you seek to fulfill your Christian desire for Christ each and every day? Do you seek Him who is the Bread of Life every day? Do you seek to satiate your thirst with Christ each and every day?

Loving Jesus and following Him is a decision that must be renewed not only each day, it must also be renewed throughout your day. It must be renewed as often as you become physically hungry and thirsty.

Reflect, today, upon these natural longings you have for food and drink to continually remind yourself of your much deeper spiritual longing for Christ. Praying to Him, listening to Him and receiving Him into your soul is the food that satisfies like nothing else. Jesus is the true Bread of Life and your true Spiritual Drink. He is what you are made for. Let Him satisfy your deepest desires in life!

*Lord, I do long for You. I long to be satisfied. Help me to turn to You at all times and in all things. Help me to always remember that You are what I need and You alone satisfy. Jesus, I trust in You.*

### **Never Rejected, Always Loved!**

#### ***Wednesday of the Third Week of Easter***

"I will not reject anyone who comes to me." [Jn. 6:37](#)

This little line says much about our Lord's Divine Mercy. It is a line repeated often in St. Faustina's Diary of Divine Mercy and it's a statement that many people need to hear.

Why is this important to hear? Because, very often, we can carry the burden of rejection. Without even realizing it, there are many who have experienced rejection in their life and, as a result, are afraid to be vulnerable in a relationship out of fear of being hurt. Once you have been hurt in a relationship, you proceed with caution. This hurt can come from a family member, spouse, friend or anyone we've tried to reach out to in love only to receive hurt and rejection. And that hurts.

Jesus' words are especially important because they help to reassure us that Jesus is trustworthy. It is true that we can come to Him, open our hearts to Him, become completely vulnerable to Him, and He will treat us with the utmost tenderness, respect, kindness and care. Jesus will treat us with more care than we even treat ourselves!

Reflect upon these words of Jesus today. Say them over and over. "I will not reject anyone who comes to me." Know that He wants you to come to Him and to open your heart to Him completely. Doing so will allow Him to manifest His love for you and enable you to trust Him beyond what you ever imagined possible.

*Lord, I want to come to You in my sufferings and rejection. I know You are the Divine Healer and will bring comfort to my soul. Help me to trust You and to let You love me. Jesus, I trust in You.*

### **Drawn to Jesus**

#### ***Thursday of the Third Week of Easter***

Jesus said to the crowds: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day." [John 6:44](#)

This Scripture passage reveals to us a wonderful spiritual principle we need to understand and live if we are to grow close to God. It's the principle of being drawn to Jesus by the Father.

First of all, it's important to understand the first part of what Jesus says: "No one can come to me unless..." This tells us that coming to Jesus in faith, growing in that faith, and growing in our love of God is not something we can do on our own. Coming to faith is a response to God's action in our life.

This is important to understand if we wish to establish an authentic relationship with Christ because it reveals to us the fact that we have to let God take the first step in that relationship. When we let Him do this, it's our responsibility to then respond.

Of course, this does not mean we just sit back in a passive way waiting for God to reach out. God is constantly reaching out, constantly speaking and constantly drawing us to Himself. So, our first responsibility is to tune

into His gentle “wooing.” This comes in the form of gentle promptings of grace inviting us to turn more completely to Him and to surrender more fully each and every day.

In our busy world it’s so very easy to let ourselves become distracted by the many competing voices. It’s easy to hear the pulling, and even pushing, of the world and all its enticements. The world has become quite good at penetrating our short attention spans and offering quick satisfactions that ultimately leave us empty.

But God’s voice and His invitation are quite different. They are found in interior silence. However, we need not be in a monastery in order to achieve this interior silence. Rather, it’s achieved by faithful periods of prayer each day, and a formed habit of turning to God in all things. It’s achieved when we respond to God’s calling, and then do it again, and again, and so forth. This builds a habit of being drawn, hearing, responding and being drawn in even closer so as to respond again.

Reflect, today, upon how well you listen to God. Try to find at least a few minutes (or more) of silence today. Close your eyes and listen. Listen to God speaking to you. When He draws you, respond to Him with much generosity. This is the best choice you can make each day!

*Lord, please draw me in, draw me close and help me to recognize Your voice. As I hear You calling, help me to respond to You with much generosity. My life is Yours, dear Lord. Help me to desire You all the more. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## **The Conviction of Jesus**

### ***Friday of the Third Week of Easter***

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his Flesh to eat?” Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood, you do not have life within you.” [John 6:52-53](#)

Certainly, this passage reveals much about the Most Holy Eucharist, but it also reveals the strength of Jesus to speak the truth with clarity and conviction.

Jesus was facing opposition and criticism. Some were upset and challenging His words. Most of us, when we find ourselves under the scrutiny and wrath of others, will back down. We will be tempted to be overly concerned about what others say about us and about the truth we may be criticized for. But Jesus did exactly the opposite. He did not give in to the criticism of others.

It’s inspiring to see that, when Jesus was faced with the harsh words of others, He responded with even greater clarity and confidence. He took His statement about the Eucharist being His Body and Blood to the next level by saying, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you do not have life within you.” This reveals a man of the utmost confidence, conviction and strength.

Of course, Jesus is God, so we should expect this from Him. But nonetheless, it is inspiring and reveals the strength we are all called to have in this world. The world we live in is filled with opposition to the truth. It’s opposed to many moral truths, but it is also opposed to many of the deeper spiritual truths. These deeper truths are things such as the beautiful truths of the Eucharist, the importance of daily prayer, humility, abandonment to God, putting God’s will above all things, etc. We should be aware of the fact that the closer we grow to our Lord, the more we surrender to Him, and the more we proclaim His truth, the more we will feel the pressure of the world trying to steal us away.

So, what do we do? We learn from the strength and example of Jesus. Whenever we find ourselves put in a challenging position, or whenever we feel as though our faith is being attacked, we must deepen our resolve to be all the more faithful. This will make us stronger and turns those temptations we face into opportunities for grace!

Reflect, today, upon the way that you react when your faith is challenged. Do you back down, give into fear and allow the challenges from others to affect you? Or do you strengthen your resolve when challenged and allow persecution to purify your faith? Choose to imitate the strength and conviction of our Lord and you will become a greater visible instrument of His grace and mercy.



*Lord, give me the strength of Your conviction. Give me clarity in my mission and help me to serve You unwaveringly in all things. May I never cower when faced with the challenges of life but always deepen my resolve to serve You with all my heart. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## **The Profound Teaching of the Holy Eucharist**

### ***Saturday of the Third Week of Easter***

As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer walked with him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, “Do you also want to leave?” Simon Peter answered him, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” [John 6:66-68](#)

What a perfect response from Peter. The context of this story is quite fascinating and revealing. Jesus had just completed His beautiful and profound discourse on the Holy Eucharist stating clearly that His flesh is real food and His blood is real drink and that unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood you have no life in you.

As a result of His teaching on the Eucharist there were many who “returned to their former way of life and no longer walked with Him.” In other words, Jesus’ teaching on the Eucharist was difficult for many to accept and believe.

Interestingly, after Jesus speaks this profound teaching on the Eucharist, and after many leave Him as a result, He does not backpedal or change what He said. Instead, He asks His Apostles if they wish to leave also.

This question by Jesus to the Apostles is important to understand. By asking it of them in a very direct way, Jesus is giving them complete freedom to choose. He does not pressure them to believe what He just taught. This is significant because the level of detachment that Jesus offers is a way of inviting a completely free acceptance, on the part of the Apostles, of His glorious teaching on the Eucharist. They are truly free to accept or reject it. It is this freedom that allows them to radically deepen their faith in Jesus.

Peter speaks up and gives a wonderful response. “Master, to whom shall we go?” These words of Peter reveal clearly two things. First, this was a difficult situation in that people were walking away from Jesus. But secondly, Peter and the other Apostles were aware that they must believe despite the difficulty. Just because many left Jesus and refused to accept His words was no reason for the Apostles to leave Him, also. In fact, we can hear in Peter’s words a manifestation of faith that they have come to believe in Jesus so completely that leaving Him would be utter foolishness. Where would they go? Why would they leave? Peter reaffirms his faith in Jesus even though following Him at that moment was not the “popular” thing to do.

Reflect, today, upon your own level of commitment to Jesus. Know that you are completely free to follow Him or to leave Him. But if you choose to follow Him, do not do it half way. Know that Jesus’ words are powerful, challenging and demanding. He wants you to believe in Him and follow Him with your whole heart and with profound commitment. Jesus alone has the words of eternal life and we must accept and believe those words with all our might.

*Lord, to whom else shall I go if I do not follow You? You and You alone are the one whom I choose to believe in and follow. Help me to embrace all that You have taught and help me to freely choose You each and every day of my life. Jesus, I trust in You.*