



The Importunate Neighbor

the scene of the parable in today's gospel reading

Luke 11 presents Jesus, after teaching his disciples to pray in the words and spirit of the Lord's prayer, exhorting them to persevere in prayer, even if there seems not to be an answer.

Painted (1895) in oil on a panel by William Holman Hunt (1827-1910)

the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

the 17th Sunday in the Year

July 24, 2016

Saint Bernadette Parish

Saint Mary Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701
(740) 654 • 1893

602 Marietta Street
BREMEN, OH 43107
(740) 569 • 7929

[stbernadetteparish . net](http://stbernadetteparish.net)

Sacramental Life

BAPTISM

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnast will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. The next session will be **in September**. *Take the class before the child is born*. If you are expecting, call Kathy to register for the class.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; they are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. *Both godparents need to be practicing Christians, at least one a practicing Catholic*. If you don't *attend Sunday Mass regularly*, there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass. If you can't come (health, severe weather, employment requirements, etc), speak to your confessor. He will help you.

PENANCE

The priest is available for Penance

- at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
- at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

In addition to Advent and Lenten Penance Services, every Catholic priest is available whenever there is a need. There are Penance opportunities for parochial school children *four times during the year so that they will learn the beauty of frequent confession*. The Church's law requires us to receive the sacrament of Penance at least once a year.

ANOINTING AND CARE OF THE SICK

The Sick receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick *when dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age*.

We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you for "health of mind and body."

And, we are happy to bring Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the homes or hospitals of the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to *call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long* since the sacraments were last available.

HOLY MATRIMONY

Couples wishing to marry sacramentally should contact the parish office six months before they wish to celebrate the sacrament. Why so long? Because *this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation*. And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation. She tries to support couples through the years of their married life. For this reason our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn how, watch the weekly bulletin.

Our Parishes

AT BOTH PARISHES

Fr Thomas Kessler	pastor	(614) 634-0499	wnthomaskessler @icloud.com
Kathy Kehnast	pastoral coordinator	(740) 654-1893	stbernparish @yahoo.com
Angie & Kent Kerns	religious education	(740) 654-2588	kwkerns @gmail.com
Julie & Chase Stalford	youth ministry	(740) 808-7294	maristellaspirt @gmail.com
Nikki Schmelzer	bookkeeper	(740) 654-1893	businessstbparish @yahoo.com

AT BREMEN ST MARY PARISH

Ben Factor	liturgical music		b_factor @lancaster.kl2.oh.us
Jim Schmelzer	maintenance chair		
Tyna Fox-Schmelzer	religious education	(614) 371-7702	schmelifox @earthlink.net
Bremen St Vincent de Paul		(740) 569-3710	
The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule. Hours are 9-11 AM, Tu. 602 Marietta St, Bremen, OH 43107		(740) 569-7929	

AT ST BERNADETTE PARISH

Deacon Mark Scarpitti		(740) 438-3970	dcn.mark @frontier.com
Deacon Jeff Carpenter		(740) 681-9918	carpenter.277 @osu.edu
Ann Essman	pastoral minister	(740) 653-9347	aessman001 @att.net
Steve Huber	facilities coordinator	(740) 654-3137	shuber57 @yahoo.com
Liz Latorre	liturgical music	(740) 243-1872	lizlatorre @gmail.com

The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.
Hours are: 9 AM-1 PM, MWThF; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu.
1343 Wheeling Rd NE, Lancaster, OH 43130

AT ST BERNADETTE SCHOOL

Pam Eltringham	principal	(740) 654-3137	peltring @cdeducation.org
Barb Huber	secretary	(740) 654-3137	bhuber @cdeducation.org

Saint Bernadette School is at 1325 Wheeling Rd, Lancaster, OH 43130-8701
www.stbernadetteschool.com

stbernlan
@cdeducation.org

let us pray

ON THE 17TH SUNDAY

O God, protector of those who hope in you, without whom nothing has firm foundation, nothing is holy, bestow in abundance your mercy upon us and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may use the good things that pass in such a way as to hold fast even now to those that ever endure.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

AND WITH POPE FRANCIS IN JULY

His universal intention is about indigenous peoples
That indigenous peoples,
whose identity and very existence are threatened,
will be shown due respect.

His evangelization intention is about Latin America and the Caribbean
That the Church in Latin America and the Caribbean,
by means of her mission to the continent,
may announce the Gospel
with renewed vigor and enthusiasm.

in both our parishes

mission appeal: priest from india

A priest of the *Marymatha (Mother of God) Province of the Vincentian Congregation in Kerala, India*, has been assigned to preach at the Sunday Masses in both our parishes next weekend.

The Congregation draws its spirit and distinctive character from the life and works, and the Common Rules of St Vincent de Paul who is patron of the Vincentian Congregation. The Congregation has taken as its motto,

“He has sent me to proclaim the Good News to the poor” (Luke 4:18),

which inspired St Vincent de Paul. And the evangelization of the poor, especially the more abandoned, is the pre-eminent purpose of the Congregation. It is realized in *popular mission retreats, preaching ministry, missionary works, and charitable, social and educational apostolate.*

The Congregation, which was *founded in India in 1904*, is present in many places around the world. Each Vincentian adheres to the spirit and example of St Vincent de Paul and commits himself to strive for evangelical perfection, to preach the Gospel to the poor, to care for the abandoned and poor, and to help priests and seminarians grow in knowledge and virtue.

The Marymatha Province of the Vincentian Congregation has 332 professed members (238 priests, one brother, 93 scholastics), 11 novices and 81 minor seminarians. Last year 43 young men entered their minor seminary. Their priests work in the states of Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Delhi in India and in several dioceses in Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda in Africa.

the rcia — who is it for?

Many people today who search for the meaning of their lives turn to our Catholic Faith. The husband or wife of a Catholic may be seeking what will bring a deeper unity to their marriage and family. Someone you know, through some circumstance of life, may have found emptiness but instead seeks meaning. Sometimes someone who is already Catholic wants to look at his or her own personal faith again to find out what it is really all about. It can be anyone, in any circumstance of life.

The RCIA (*Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults*) helps many such folks to find what they are looking for. But many more may not know of this vital resource — unless we tell them. It is not a matter for insistence or pressure. It is a sharing, an invitation, and that won't offend. *The invitation* will be much more attractive when extended by *someone willing to accompany the quester* along the way.

People who have benefitted personally from the RCIA experience are urged to gather with the inquirers, serving as sponsors and mentors of various kinds, helping them to become grafted onto the life of the Catholic Christian Church.

RCIA in our parishes will meet on *Sunday evening for about a month of Sundays*, beginning on August 21. That is only a few weeks away.

Call Kathy at 654-1893 on Tuesday morning at Bremen St Mary or any other weekday morning at St Bernadette for information.

do we know about you?

New Members: To register, completely fill out a “*Form for Registration/Information Changes*,” available in the lobbies

of the church and school or by contacting the parish office, and return it either by mailing to the church office or placing in the collection basket on Sunday.

Parishioners: If you have any changes (address, phone, etc.), fill out a “*Form for Registration/Information Changes*” and mail to the church office or place in the collection basket on Sunday.

Mass times and intentions

at St Bernadette		at St Mary	
4 PM <i>for the people</i>	Saturday, July 23		
	Sunday, July 24	8:30 AM	<i>for the people</i>
11 AM <i>for the people</i>	Sunday, July 24		
8:20 AM <i>Martha Mitroff</i>	Monday, July 25		
	Tuesday, July 26	8:20 AM	<i>Agnes Smith</i>
8:20 AM <i>Juanita Keyes</i>	Wednesday, July 27		
6 PM <i>William Henry</i>	Thursday, July 28		
8:20 AM <i>Eileen Clark</i>	Friday, July 29		
4 PM <i>for the people</i>	Saturday, July 30		
	Sunday, July 31	8:30 AM	<i>for the people</i>
11 AM <i>for the people</i>	Sunday, July 31		

get ready for Mass

If it is something special, we get ready for it. That goes for Sunday Mass. The most important way to get ready is to be in—or get into—the *state of grace* so that we can receive Holy Communion worthily. Then we need to *fast* (a tough word for a very easy task) for at least an hour before we receive Communion. And we could try to prime the pump, as it were, for hearing the Word of God as it will be read that day by *reading and pondering that little portion of the Word* of God. Those are matters of spiritual readiness.

But to go to Mass is to approach the great sacramental mysteries, approaching physically as well as spiritually. Old-fashioned rural Protestants were on to something when they spoke of wearing their “Sunday-go-to-meetin’ clothes.” We could all *dress up* a little bit, not to show off our fancy wardrobe but to “do something beautiful for God.” And think of what we say to our kids before a trip or before a film or a concert: We tell them to *go to the bathroom ahead of time*. Emergencies can happen to just about everybody. And each of us has the health she / he has been blessed with. But with a little extra precaution we could be (and help others to be) even more single-minded about worship and to avoid the procession to and from the rest rooms. Thanks for thinking about all these things.

bremen st mary

ministers at mass at bremen st mary

	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday, July 24 8:30 AM	Joe Young	Sydnee Rogers, Nicole Terry	Neil Boch, Joe & Cathy Young	Joe Young family	Joe Young
Tuesday, July 26 8:20 AM	Jim Schmelzer				Jim Schmelzer
Sunday, July 31 8:30 AM	Susan Foltz	Caden Fyffe, Cody Fyffe	Susan Foltz, Pam Redding, Damian Schmelzer	Leo Kunkler Sr family	Damian Schmelzer

parish contributions

The *St Mary offertory collection* for July 17 came to \$907.

bremen food pantry

The Bremen Food Pantry *needs school supplies to help poor children in our community*. Check the list of needs on the bulletin boards and place your donation in the box in the Parish Hall by Sunday, July 31. This will help the Pantry open house on Saturday, Aug 6, from 9-11 AM. Any family in need can stop by that day at the Pantry to receive school supplies.

summer square dance

St Mary Parish will have a square dance *at Schmelzer's Grove* for the family on Sunday, Aug 14, from 7-9 PM Cost is \$3 @ person.

gardening for our parish

If you would like to *help landscape and maintain the yard of St Mary*, contact Kathy Kehnast to volunteer.

st bernadette

eucharistic adoration

St Bernadette Parish has *solemn exposition* of the Blessed Sacrament at 9 AM on *Wednesdays*. We have commitments for people to keep watch for the time from 9 AM until 1 PM. We could *extend exposition further into each Wednesday*. If you can commit to a regular presence for adoration for an hour from 1-2 or from 2-3, call Kathy at the parish office.

You can come to church to adore Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament *any day during the daylight hours*.

st bernadette school registration

St Bernadette School looks forward to registering students from St Bernadette and St Mary Bremen parishes for next school year. We accept enrollment for new students grades K-5, and 3, 4, and 5-year-old preschool students. Bring a copy of their birth or baptismal certificates. St Bernadette *preschool* offers kindergarten-readiness goals, within a flexible schedule.

Elementary grades (full-day-kindergarten through 5th grade) offer a program of academic excellence and positive experiences. Make St Bernadette School *your "primary" choice for a really Catholic Education!* For information, call the school office at 654-3137.

scholarships

Income-Based EdChoice Expansion Scholarships allow more students to attend St. Bernadette School. Students, meeting the income eligibility (e.g.: family of 4, income \$48,600), can attend St. Bernadette School next fall *at no cost* to parents, thanks to 8000 vouchers available from the Ohio Department of Education. Scholarships are available for kindergartners, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders. This is *a great opportunity for single parents, one-income homes, fixed-income house-holds, and working families*. Every family can explore this possibility. Contact the school office for information.

st vincent de paul: 5th sunday on the 1st sunday

We usually welcome members of the St Vincent de Paul Society *to receive your donations after Sunday Mass* on the fifth Sunday of the month (in those rare months when there is a fifth Sunday). But this month, they have graciously accepted a postponement of their welcome to collect from us because we will have a guest missionary priest — from the St Vincent Congregation of priests and brothers in India. So we are *postponing the fifth Sunday collection until the next Sunday*. Please continue your generous

giving to St VdP. The St VdP Society operates entirely on voluntary donations and on income from their store (viz, not from subsidies by the Church or any government agency). So please be especially generous.

august blood drive

Our next St Bernadette Blood Drive happens Saturday, Aug 13, from 9 AM-2 PM. *This summer has been a hard one for blood donations in the US*. Besides the normal slowdown in donations, natural disasters such as flooding in Texas and West Virginia have reduced the supply. Consider donating the gift of life. Age for donation is 16 (with parental signature) and up. Lunch and cupcakes as usual! To make an appointment to donate call Joyce Guenther at (740) 974-5040 or go to www.redcrossblood.org (sponsor code SBP). If you can't donate blood, *volunteers are always welcome*, and it's a good way for students to get community service hours.

ministers at mass at st bernadette

	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	
Saturday, July 23 4 PM	David Shonk	Clara & Susan Craaybeek, Eve Darfus	Tara Craaybeek Susan Garrett Kathy Kehnast	Denise McGuire Brad Rider Craig Shaw
Sunday, July 24 11 AM	Scott Wood	Collin McCrady, Caroline Messerly, Dominic Neighbor	Nancy Griffith Ben Peters Larry Sanford	Teresa Scarpitti Valerie Shaw Julia Whitehead
Monday, July 25 8:20 AM	David Shonk	Emma McCrady, Lexi Utz	Pat Dreyer	Kathy Kehnast
Wednesday July 27 8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Drew & Avee Solt	Mary Guinan	Mary Jane Vajen
Thursday, July 28 6 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Dominic & Emeline Neighbor	Lee Guinan	Mary Guinan
Friday, July 29 8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Kendall Cox, Joey Mannella	Jim & Rita Merk	
Saturday, July 30 4 PM	Terry Carpenter	Mallory, Mason & McKenzie Ortiz	Joyce Guenther Jim Kuhn Becky Kuhn	Mickey Steyaert Shelia Taylor Kathy Wagner
Sunday, July 31 11 AM	Patrick Gins	Ashlyn & Brennan Quaintance, Jack Tencza	Pat Dreyer Lee Guinan Jim Merk	Rita Merk David Shonk Becky Wickham

parish contributions

The *St Bernadette offertory collection* for July 17 came to \$5,069.

in the diocese of columbus

from the chair

Bishop Campbell takes your questions from 5-6 PM on Tuesday, Aug 2, during his live monthly call-in show. Call St Gabriel Catholic Radio AM 820 at (614) 459-4820 to ask your question about the Catholic faith and growing in holiness.

parish picnic in somerset

St Joseph Parish in Somerset hosts a parish picnic on Saturday, Aug 6, with a chicken and pork dinner served from 4-7 PM, bingo, games, a raffle, music, family fun, and square dancing at 8 PM.

retrouvaille

If your marriage is troubled and stressed, unloving or uncaring; if

you have grown cold and distant; if you are separated, or are thinking about it, don't give up. **Retrouvaille** (a French word that means "rediscovery") is a **program to help heal and support** married couples experiencing difficulties, loneliness or pain. It is also for separated or divorced couples wanting to try again. The next program is Aug 1-3. For information call (614) 296-9704 or visit www.retrouvaille.org.

spousal prayer: a way to marital happiness

A Retreat for Married Couples happens on Saturday, Aug 27, from 9 AM to 4 PM at Immaculate Conception Church in Columbus. It features celebration of Mass and a reflection by Bishop Frederick Campbell and presentations by Deacon James Keating, author of **Spousal Prayer: A Way to Marital Happiness**. Cost is \$65 per couple, which includes a light breakfast, lunch and *Spousal Prayer* book. For information and to register, call (614) 241-2560.

help needed

The Sisters of Children of Mary just excavated 4 acres of land and they need help **clearing trees and building permanent pastures** for their cows at their convent **in Newark**. Any day is fine. Call (740) 323-1977. Find information at www.childrenofmary.net.

officiating classes

Officiating classes **for football, volleyball, and soccer** will be held at St Mary Magdalene School in Columbus starting Monday, July 25, at 6 PM. Cost is \$125; to register, visit www.officials.myohsaa.org. For information, contact Julius Palazzo at (614) 276-9373.

men's retreat at the shrine

The Catholic Laymen's Fall silent retreat happens at St Therese Retreat Center from 6 PM on Friday, Sept 9, through noon Mass on Sunday, Sept 11. In reflection sessions, **Fr Stephen Hayes OP** will help men to appreciate the value of the medieval crusades by developing his theme "**Taking up the Cross: Becoming Modern Crusaders for the New Jerusalem of Christ**." Cost is \$130. For information and registration contact Charles Kielkopf at (614) 268-0175 or kielkopf.1@osu.edu.

get your marriage in shape

Are you exercising and dieting, jogging, swimming, and playing tennis to stay fit and trim? What are you doing to keep your marriage in good shape? Why not **try a Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend**? The next two weekends in central Ohio are Aug 5-7 and Nov 11-13. For information or to register, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit www.wmecolumbus.org.

bishop's annual appeal 2016

"be his hope to others"

Here are the results at our parishes after thirteen weeks.

households participating	St Bernadette	St Mary
total pledged	\$ 38,180	\$ 21,210
average gift	\$ 271	\$ 348
total paid	\$ 19,130	\$ 5,845
parish BAA goal	\$ 43,136	\$ 12,703

The Appeal **supports our parish schools of religion and the education of our future priests and deacons, and many families in need of our help**. Your gift and your prayers will help to make this year's appeal a success. The Diocesan Goal is \$6,300,000. Every contribution counts; every dollar that we raise over the stated goal will be returned to our parishes to benefit our communities directly.

Last year St Bernadette pledged slightly over and collected slightly under the goal. Bremen St Mary pledged well over the goal and has received the rebate from the diocese. But the diocese has needs and so do the parishes.

We know **we can reach the goals** and support the diocese as well as go over and support the parishes. It requires thoughtful consideration and prayer, with everyone giving according to our ability. We are blessed with much; let us remember the needs of others, as well as the needs of our own parishes.

catholic youth summer camp

Catholic Youth Summer Camp (CYSC), a ministry based in our diocese, is a 6-day and 5-night experience providing students with a week full of **high adventure activities and high adventure faith**. CYSC is open to all students entering grades 6-12, and there are 8 sessions available this summer. CYSC offers a truly Catholic and safe environment with daily catechesis that awakens faith and builds missionary disciples. A week at camp includes daily Mass, adoration, reconciliation, small group conversations, worship, service, and authentic community. For information, visit www.cysc.com.

in the deanery

fisher fall festival

The Fisher Fall Festival happens Friday, Sept 9, from 5-10 PM and Saturday, Sept 10, from 5-11 PM. Enjoy inflatables, children's games, adult games of skill, K of C Fish Fry, Bob's Backyard Barbeque, a beer garden, and other entertainment. Contact Eileen Gundelfinger at (740) 277-7063 with questions.

help lancaster st mary athletic association

The Saint Mary School Athletic Association is still looking for some **more parental involvement for next school year**. Terms are for two years beginning at the August meeting and all Saint Mary School parents (grades K-8) are eligible to apply. Visit the Athletics page (saintmarylancaster.com/athletics) to learn about the roles and responsibilities of the association. Applications can be downloaded; deadline is Monday, Aug 1. Contact Cheryl Cale with questions at ccale@saintmarylancaster.org.

confessions & weekday Mass nearby						
These times sometimes change, though, so call ahead						
parish	confessions	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri Sat
Bremen St Mary	8 am Sunday		8:20 AM			
Lancaster St Bernadette	5:30 Thursday 3 PM Saturday; 8:30 AM on 1 st Sat	8:20 AM		8:20 AM	6 PM	8:20 AM 1 st Sat 9 AM
Lancaster St Mary	4 PM Saturday	7 AM	9 AM	7 AM	9 AM	
Lancaster St Mark	5:30 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	6 PM	8 AM	8 AM
Sugar Grove St Joseph	½ hour before Mass	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	NOON	8 AM
Circleville St Joseph	4 PM Saturday	9 AM	7 PM	9 AM		9 AM 10 AM
Logan St John	4 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM		8 AM 9 AM



living mercy in a jubilee year

mercy: beating heart of the gospel

Do you have these works of mercy *memorized yet*? How are you going to remember to practice each one?

Pope Francis writes that *“Mercy is the beating heart of the Gospel” (Misericordiae Vultus)*. We seek God’s mercy because we know he *is full of mercy* and is overflowing with *generous with his mercy*. His only *requirement is that we, in turn, be merciful*.

So what we need to do is go to God, humbly seeking his mercy saying “please” and gratefully saying “thank you”. You know in what need of his mercy you are—even when the mercy given isn’t exactly what you had in mind (“You don’t always get what you want, but sometimes you get what you need!”). And you know better than to forget to say a grateful “thank you”.

But *crucial to that thanksgiving is actually living mercy yourself*. The Church helps us along in that by teaching us the works of mercy. To live mercy, we must rediscover both

the *spiritual works of mercy*,

- *counsel the doubtful* • *instruct the ignorant*
- *admonish sinners* • *comfort the afflicted*
- *forgive offences* • *bear patiently those who do us ill*
- *pray for the living and the dead,*

and the *corporal works of mercy*,

- *feed the hungry* • *give drink to the thirsty*
- *clothe the naked* • *welcome the stranger*
- *heal the sick* • *visit the imprisoned*
- *bury the dead.*

Learn all 14 by heart. Have trouble memorizing? Post them where you’ll see them often, on your refrigerator or your mirror or someplace. But most of all make it your daily practice to live them. Examine your conscience about them. It’s not always easy. But anyone can do it. The works of mercy are a must for anyone who seeks to follow Christ. They will bring you joy ... and bring you to eternal joy.

some ideas

natural family planning awareness week

July 25 to 31 is a time for a national educational campaign of the USCCB Natural Family Planning (NFP) Program. NFP is the *methods used to achieve and, when there is a serious reason, to*

avoid pregnancies. It is based on observation of the naturally-occurring signs and symptoms of a woman’s menstrual cycle. By respecting *the love-giving and life-giving nature of marriage*, NFP *can enrich the bond between husband and wife*. The best way to learn NFP is from a qualified instructor — one who is certified through an NFP teacher-training program. Although medical professionals are gradually learning more about NFP and becoming more supportive of patients who wish to use it, they are not always trained to teach NFP and don’t always realize its moral significance. When couples are taught by competent teachers, understand the methods, and are motivated to follow them, *NFP can be 99% successful in spacing or limiting births*.

Effectiveness depends upon the spouses’ carefully following the method. Our diocese has some qualified instructors, certified by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. For information contact the Marriage and Family Life Office at (614) 241-2560 or FLOmailbox @ colsdioec . org. Instructors hold several workshops a year, each course of which comprises five sessions.

what marriage means ... why it matters

This union between a man and a woman is one of the most talked about, written about, and discussed topics in human history. This coming together—with all its love and its difficulties—means sharing, caring, committing; being loyal, combining strengths, building up, and above all, staying centered on God. Today, despite an increase in cohabitation, divorce, and unmarried childbearing—marriage still does matter. It matters despite attempts to redefine it or change its essential meaning. **What marriage means is really why it matters: It provides an opportunity for two people, working together, to become the people that God created them to be.** Marriage is all about growth and change. Unconditional acceptance—in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer, despite a world of differences and the ups-and-downs of daily life—nurtures love: for oneself and for one’s spouse. Just as two heads are better than one in dealing with challenges, two hearts are certainly better at loving together through whatever problems life has in store. Your spouse’s interests can help expand your own. The benefit of husband and wife time cannot be overrated—especially when a couple becomes a family. There’s nothing surprising about the benefits to a marriage of shared fun, or the positive impact a happy home has on children. Marriage is a celebration of your love. This is true in your love for one another, your love for family and friends, and your love for the wider community. **Marriage means the most when it reflects God’s love.**

“What Marriage Means/Why Marriage Matters,” Christopher News Noted (Adapted)

the Church’s plan for reading God’s word this week

Sat	July	23	Seventeenth Sunday	Genesis	18:20-32	Colossians	2:12-14	Psalms	138	Luke	11:1-13
Sun	July	24									
Mon	July	25	St James	2 Corinthians	4:7-15			Psalms	126	Matthew	20:20-28
Tues	July	26	Sts Joachim & Anne	Jeremiah	14:17-22			Psalms	79	Matthew	13:36-43
Weds	July	27		Jeremiah	15:10-21			Psalms	59	Matthew	13:44-46
Thurs	July	28		Jeremiah	18:1-6			Psalms	146	Matthew	13:47-53
Fri	July	29	St Martha	Jeremiah	26:1-9			Psalms	69	John	11:19-27
Sat	July	30	St Peter Chrysologus	Jeremiah	26:11-24			Psalms	69	Matthew	14:1-12
Sun	July	31	Eighteenth Sunday	Ecclesiastes	1:2-2:23	Colossians	3:1-11	Psalms	90	Luke	12:13-21

When Speaking Up Is a Virtue

A lady once told me about a relative, an elderly woman, who stopped with her son at a truck stop. She saw a big menacing man wearing a tee shirt with a supposedly humorous but thoroughly obscene slogan. She went up to him and told him that he should be ashamed of himself. Would he want his mother to see him wearing a message like that? He should go home and change it right now or at least go to the rest room, take it off and turn it inside-out so it couldn't be read. What would the man do?, her uncomfortable son wondered. Be violent? abusive? derisive?

In fact, the son saw the man a few minutes later, wearing the shirt inside out, so that the slogan didn't show. He was looking at least as embarrassed as the son had felt.

The question is: Did the lady have any business butting-in to what, after all, didn't appear to be any of her business? Wasn't she being nosy? Prudish? Wasn't she imposing her moral standards on someone else over whom she had no authority? I think the answers to those questions are important for all of us.

It's one thing to argue that the law should not tell a person what slogan he may or may not have on his tee shirt. In that sense the man may have a right to his tee shirt vulgarity. But even if we say that, it doesn't mean she has no right to confront him. Nor does it mean that she may not have felt a duty to do that great work of mercy: To admonish the sinner.

The other person's rights, if there are such rights involved, don't automatically trump our rights, yes, even our duties. And these are at stake when we are faced with people who abuse their civil rights and thereby create an affront to a society.

None of us want to be thought of as nosy or prudish or judgmental. But sometimes we need to take a stand for what is right. Doing that at the right time matters, too. The virtue of prudence helps us to determine if the time is right. Are we likely to make the problem worse? Are we going to be effective? These are weighty considerations. But prudence belongs with courage. We may be inclined to answer those good questions in a cowardly way. The virtue of fortitude figures into the picture, too. The beautiful thing about courage is not that a person feels no fear, but that a person, who may be trembling with fear, decides to act in the right way, no matter what.

Sometimes a Christian needs to speak up, to say what needs to be said, even when the resulting effect is in question. Sometimes a parent needs to ask an adult child about church attendance. Sometimes a friend needs to confront a friend about alcohol or drug use or about marital infidelity. The slogan about friends not letting friends drive drunk is worth thinking about. I may be afraid of hurting a friendship if I speak up. But a real friend will take away the keys. Difficult moments may follow. But if the friendship disappears, it was not a real friendship. And in any case, there is a need to speak up.

A long time ago a single mother told me about how she had told her teenage son that he had to leave home. He was abusing drugs, and was becoming dangerous to his younger brother. She told me her minister had encouraged her by speaking of "tough love," the love that a mom (or any person) expresses to the loved one, even at the risk of a lasting breakup of a vitally important relationship. To have done otherwise, this mom told me, would have made her an "enabler," a person who, without wanting to, was just facilitating the bad behavior of her son. That story happens to have had a happy ending: The son grew up to be a respectable citizen, a good husband and father, a son who deeply appreciates what his mom did for him when she took the horrible risk involved in throwing her son out of the home. But when she threw her son out, she couldn't know anything but heartbreak. She took a very big risk.

The old lady in the truck stop was dealing not with someone dear to her but with a complete stranger. She wasn't going around the store correcting anyone who annoyed her (the kid with the ball cap on backwards, the one who was buying cigarettes or was talking noisily on the cell phone or who hadn't washed lately). She chose her battle more carefully. The vulgar slogan on the shirt was not merely a matter of tastes or preferences. It was an affront to civilized life. It was something that someone needed to do something about.

I think the old lady was a hero, at least for a few moments. And I think that the mom who refused to be an enabler was a person of real courage. I think we need to ask ourselves if we are willing to show that kind of love in our lives. Or if we would rather just leave well enough alone.

—Father Kessler

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