

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners,

A number of you mentioned that you found my homily last Sunday helpful so I am printing it here.

With my prayers,
Fr. Conley

Today we give thanks for Christ our Lord and the King of all creation. Jesus on trial before Pontius Pilate said: "My kingdom does not belong to this world." Unlike the kingdoms and governments of this world, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Jesus Christ our King, is not established through force and violence. The rule of Jesus Christ our King is established through the conversion of hearts. King Jesus wants us to choose His rule over our lives. Through the Gospel Jesus tells us what the kingdom of God is like. In the kingdom of God people's lives are governed by love and mercy and compassion – not by violence, greed and hate. Jesus shows us a picture of what the world can be like, what our lives can be like, and asks us to choose between the ways of the world and the kingdom of God. This choice is the real battle that takes place in our hearts because it is only when the hearts of individual people are converted to choosing the will of the Lord that the kingdom of God will be established in this world.

Our individual conversion will take place only when, as Jesus says in today's Gospel, we listen to his voice and accept the truth about our lives. And what is this truth that we must accept in order to be converted – in order for the kingdom of God to be established in our hearts? This truth is that God is God and we are not.

This truth should be fairly obvious but we as human beings have been rejecting it since the moment that Adam and Eve chose to eat the forbidden fruit. They of course were tempted by Satan who told them that the forbidden fruit would make them as powerful as God. And that is the real sin behind all of our sins. It is the sin of rebellion against the reality that we are creatures and God is our Creator. It is the sin of not fully trusting that God is our loving Father and we are his children - creatures before God our Creator. Underneath our sinfulness and the evil things that we choose to do, is the deadliest of all the deadly sins, – the sin of pride. In our pride, every one of us wants to be in control of our lives in order to get what we want. We each want to rule our world. We each want to be God. And when it doesn't happen, we react with anger and frustration like children who can't get their way.

Several years ago a grandmother shared with me her experience of dealing with the disobedience of her five-year-old granddaughter. The little girl responded to her grandmother by saying, "You're not the boss of me!" I laughed when I heard this story because the little girl was the sweetest thing, all "sugar and spice and

everything nice." But inside her heart there was rebellion and defiance of anyone who would stand in the way of getting her way. That's us brothers and sisters in our relationship with God. Until we are fully converted, that is what we all say to God in our heart of hearts when we don't get our way, "You're not the boss of me!"

At the beginning of Mass when we confess our sinfulness by saying "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault"- the "most grievous fault" we are repenting of is our willfulness – our rejection of God's will for us. This is our deepest sin. We yell at God, "You are not the boss of me!" but of course He is. He is because ultimately God's will is always done whether we like it or not. God can take our rebellion and disobedience and make them work for his good purposes. So when it comes to doing God's will the only question for us is whether we are going to find our peace in His will for us or foolishly fight against it. Are we going to allow his will to carry us forward or vainly try to swim against it.

The kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ comes, when we joyfully choose that his will be done in our hearts as it is done in heaven. When we stop rebelling against his will and choose to trust him when he says that in his will is our peace, then the Lord will truly be King of our hearts and we will be at peace. We must put our faith in the words of Scripture which says "all things work for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

An image comes to mind which I think expresses what I'm trying to say. I think we have all seen or perhaps even been part of a situation when a child who can't get his way works himself up into a temper tantrum. The child is yelling and crying and thrashing around at all the same time because his mother or father does not give him what he wants. Eventually his mom or dad will wrap their arms around him and hold him until he stops fighting. Then, as he feels the loving arms of his mom or dad around him, he becomes peaceful, and whatever it was that he wanted so badly is forgotten in love's embrace.

This is how the Lord wants us to respond to his will – to recognize that his will, even when we don't understand it and it's hard to accept, is always his loving will and will always be what is best for us. Jesus wants us to choose to say with Him and with full sincerity, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in me and on earth as it is in heaven."

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PRAISE & WORSHIP We will have a praise and worship gathering this Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30 PM and dinner will be served. Everyone is invited to come and join us for Spirit-filled praise of our Lord. For more information contact Fr. Conley.

FRIDAY IS THE FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH. We will have adoration of the Blessed Sacrament following the 9:30 AM Mass and concluding with Benediction at 8 PM. Volunteers are needed to sign up for adoration between the hours of 3 and 7 PM. The sign-up sheet is in the foyer.

SATURDAY IS THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION. MASS FOR THE FEAST IS AT 9:30 AM. We will have our regular afternoon schedule.

ST. MARY'S HEALING PRAYER MINISTRY

The mission of our healing prayer ministry is to help people to have a personal encounter with the Lord and experience his healing love. We do this by praying with people who are seeking physical, emotional and spiritual healing. Our healing prayer ministry is founded on our confidence in God the Father, who was given us every spiritual blessing in the heavens; Jesus Christ the Son who has redeemed us by his blood; and the Holy Spirit who fills us with the fire of his love. Persons seeking prayer from the healing prayer ministry will be given the opportunity to make an appointment with a prayer team for one or two confidential prayer sessions. To make an appointment to meet with one of our healing prayer teams, please contact Kaye Oliver at 240-682-0646 or Sam Oliver at 301-848-3206. Email can be sent to Samuel_Oliver @comcast.net.

ONLINE CONTRIBUTIONS-GREAT FOR EVERYBODY!

Would you like to make your donations electronically? We utilize web bill pay, set up through your individual bank for online donations at St. Mary's, because there are no hidden costs or fees associated with giving, for the donor or for the church. For more information on how to set up online donations through your bank, please contact our Parish Accountant [Lisa Shumaker](mailto:Lisa.Shumaker@comcast.net) by phone at 301-870-2220 Ext. 11 or by email at smbacct@comcast.net.

YOU DON'T DESERVE TO BE ABUSED

Domestic violence refers to a pattern of violent and coercive behavior by one adult over another in an intimate relationship. It can consist of repeated severe beatings or subtle forms of abuse, including threats and control. If you experience any form of abuse, please know that there is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233. To learn more about domestic violence, please visit www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace.

RELIGIOUS GOODS STORE NEEDS HELP

We need some help to work after the 12 Mass. Please call Ellen Walls at 301- 579-2557 or Fay Adriani at 301-645-3531.

THANK-YOU, THANK-YOU!!!

The **Social Concerns Committee** would like to report that our Thanksgiving Basket Program was a great success again this year. We were able to help 47 families. We wanted to thank all in our parish for donating food and money at our special collection and throughout the season. Thank you to the children from St. Mary's and T.C. Martin School along with the children from the St. Mary's Youth Group, Ignite and the Confirmation Group who collected food and money, sorted and prepared the boxes and made beautiful cards and decorative rocks for the recipients. There was so much energy in our school hall from all the children that participated. We are so proud of our youth! Thank you Henry Middleton for supplying us with so much fresh wonderful produce.

The Boy Scout Troop 2421 and Cub Scouts Pack 900 also collected food from the neighborhoods and in front of the grocery stores. What a big help they were for our food supply! We had a record number of volunteers to help this year's program run very smoothly. Catholic Charities donated nine turkey dinners that we used to help out our larger families. Together as a parish, schools and community, we once again served those in need, just as the Lord asks us to do everyday.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:

SUN: 8am Donald Bollich, 10am Parishioners

12N: Fr. Robert DeGrandis, SSJ, **MON:** 8am Gary

Edward Williams, **TUES:** 8am Enith Borgestede, **WED:**

8am Sally O'Neill, **THURS:** 8am Frank Marasco, **FRI:**

9:30am Gary Edward Williams, **SAT:** 9am Msgr. Tom Duffy, 4pm William & Christine Clements.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY

PRAYERS: Stephen Balenger, Anna Bankins, Mary Bowes, Deacon Gene Burroughs, Quint Burroughs, Brenda Callahan, Joe Cross, Agnes Curtis, Chuck Davis, Susan Welch Day, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Keith Van Gadson, Arlene Gandolfi, Kevin Gardiner, Martha Gehring, James Gibson, Zynae Green, Irma Johnson, Angie Kalnasy, Regina Kijesky, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Mary Reeves, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Jean Turner, Eva Washington, Beth Weise, Pat Werner, Brice Zimmer.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND:

\$8,480.75. The unidentified donations totaled \$668.25. We received \$5.00 for our School Support.