

Pentecost Sunday

Annunciation Catholic Church

Bogalusa, Louisiana

June 9, 2019

Weekly Mass Intentions

Saturday, June 8, 2019 4:00 PM

Mickey Paduda, EJ and Dody Champagne, John Underwood, Rosemary Marx, Tommy Brown, Sheanie C. Mitchell, Irma Lee Callender, Welfare of Julie Lott, Welfare of Jimmy Scroggs, Welfare of Rita Anderson

Sunday, June 9, 2019 8:30 AM

Earl Hughes, Betty Scroggs, Irma Lee Callender, Welfare of Summer Seals, Lou Ann Mayfield, Welfare of Ned Cerniglia, Welfare of Roy Melancon, Jr., Welfare of Scott Lee, Welfare of Joann Thompson

10:30 AM

Annunciation Catholic Church Parishioners

Tuesday, June 11th 8:00 AM

Sheanie C. Mitchell

Wednesday, June 12th 8:00 AM

Bobby Schneider

Thursday, June 13th 8:00 AM

Welfare of Camille White

Friday, June 14th 8:00 AM

Welfare of Marty Paige

Saturday, June 15th 4:00 PM

Mickey Paduda, EJ and Dody Champagne, John Underwood, Tommy Brown, Irma Lee Callender, Welfare of Julie Lott, Welfare of Shane Boler, Welfare of Butch Beets, Welfare of Bert and Rhonda Dykes, Leo White,

Sunday, June 16th 8:30 AM

Earl Hughes, Betty Scroggs, Lou Ann Mayfield, Irma Lee Callender, Sheanie C. Mitchell, Welfare of Vic Haik, Welfare of Joe and Elizabeth Krebs, Bobby Schneider, Welfare of Marvin and Marty Paige

10:30 AM

Annunciation Catholic Church Parishioners

Sanctuary Lamp

*Our Sanctuary Lamp burns
In Memory of:*

Maude Holloway

Last week's Collection

June 1st 2019 – June 2nd, 2019

Loose-Checks and Cash

\$2,281.00

Envelopes

\$2,489.00

Total:

\$4,770.00

Budgeted funds needed to
operate: \$6,299.00

Amount under weekly budget:
\$1,529.00

Thank You for Your Generosity!

Next Second Collection
June 16, 2019
Parish Building &
Maintenance

Of Storms and Divine Grace

Summer in South Louisiana means storms—often violent, terrifying storms. Hurricanes and tornadoes that spin off from them are certainly not uncommon this time of year. Such storms are frightening because of their intensity and potential for destruction, but also because of the sheer helplessness one feels in the face of them. Other than pray and take shelter, there is hardly anything one can do in the face of extremely violent winds or hail. Lightning flashes like a finale of fireworks, the water rises in your yard and inches closer to the slab of your house, wind rips limbs from trees. And in all this, there is nothing you can do to stop it. A storm blindly does what it does with zero concern for human life or property.

In our modern, technologically advanced world, we are not used to such helplessness. For several centuries now, we have exerted the full force of our intellectual powers toward the aim of mastering the forces of nature. We do not like feeling helpless or dependent on anything; we crave control, predictability, and safety. And to a large degree, we have attained it, though perhaps not yet to the extent we think.

But despite all our advances, no one control a storm. A category 4 or 5 hurricane is an unstoppable force, a furious freak of nature. Some of the largest storms can be fill the entire Gulf of Mexico while possessing sustained winds of over 130 miles per hour, the winds from a tornado can rage at over 300 miles per hour. Neighborhoods and even cities are completely flooded. Bark is stripped off of trees and shot like bullets into walls. The earth trembles as if a tremendous freight train were passing by. Cars are thrown hundreds of yards like toys. Houses are utterly disintegrated. For all our technological prowess, there is absolutely nothing we can do in the face of such unbridled power. It is deeply and profoundly humbling.

Storms and the Divine

Humility. That is the word. It is the only justifiable response before the power of nature. But far more so, it is the only justifiable response before the immense power of God. When Moses ascended Mt. Sinai to receive the law from God, it was an encounter with a terrifying reality beyond his control. In fact, scripture describes it exactly like a storm, with thick clouds

covering the mountain and emanating thunder and lightning. When anyone encountered God in scripture or in

church history, it was an experience that left them humbled in the dust. They inevitably cried out like Isaiah, "Woe is me! For I am destroyed" (Isaiah 6:5). No one ever encountered God and felt like they managed it well.

So often we want to control God just like we control everything else in our relatively comfortable modern lives. We turn the faucet, and water flows. We flip a switch, and light comes on. And we often treat God the same way, too, almost like a spiritual vending machine. Many time, eager for an answer to prayer, a spiritual experience, or even to overcome some sin, we try to manipulate God with our prayers. We want to push the right spiritual buttons and get the results we want. We fall into this way of acting even (or perhaps, especially) when our intentions are good. But that's simply not how it works.

You cannot control God any more than you can control the tremendous power of a storm. You cannot domesticate Him or treat Him like a pet. Yet, a simple glance at our worship and prayer reveals that this is exactly what we have tried to do. We have lost a great deal of our awe before God; we have lost a healthy fear of Him. Yes, God is Love and He is our Father, but that does not mean even angels do not tremble before Him. "But the Lord is in his holy temple," scripture says, "let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Habakkuk 2:20).

Fear of God is not a cringing thing, but it is a healthy respect for the immensity of His reality, which is far beyond all words and all imaginings. If we do not humble ourselves before Him, it is only because we have no idea who or what He is.

Ask, Seek, Knock—and Wait

We cannot control God any more than we can a mighty storm. We cannot demand anything of Him, much less that He fix all our problems or provide what we wish, spiritually or otherwise, when and how we want it. We cannot demand God's grace. God is God, and we are not.

So what then are we to do? St. Peter shows us the way: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time" (1 Peter 5:6). We must humble ourselves before the face of God and give up any ideas of controlling Him, manipulating Him, or forcing Him to do what we want. What we can and should do is humble ourselves, repent of our sins, and prepare ourselves. We can till the soil of our souls and wait on the Lord to plant the seeds of grace and bring them to bear fruit. Whatever He sends, we must say like our Blessed Mother, "Let it be done unto me according to your word."

We can fast and pray persistently and with humility. We can call on God with deep faith, but with no expectation of controlling Him, and make our requests known to Him. And He will answer us in His time, exactly how and when He means to.

It is hard to let go. It is hard to relinquish control and to trust that God is God, and we are not. But if we are ever to advance on the spiritual path, we must give up any illusions of controlling God, or anything else for that matter. We must humble ourselves before His face, acknowledging our nothingness before Him. We must repent and cry out to Him with deep faith, asking, seeking, and knocking as we are commanded. And if we are faithful in doing so, in His time, and in His way, He will lift us up.

