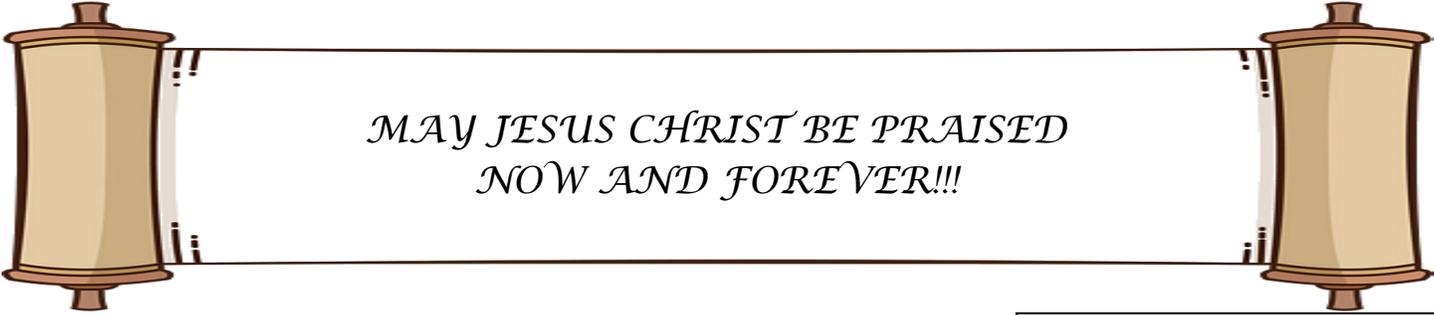


February 03, 2019 – Fourth Sunday Ordinary Time



*MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED
NOW AND FOREVER!!!*

SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

Divine Renovations Old Heresies Made New

Last October, I attended a conference entitled “The Amazing Parish.” One of the keynote speakers at this conference was Fr. James Mallon. Fr. Mallon is a priest of the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth in Nova Scotia, Canada. Fr. Mallon became a best-selling author. His book *Divine Renovation: From a Maintenance to a Mission Parish* Fr. Mallon talks about how he was able to lead a parish from the brink of closing to become a very vibrant Catholic community. I was very impressed with his insights into the current problems that are plaguing the Church and I enjoyed listening to some of his ideas of how to address these issues. As soon as I returned to my hotel room that night, I ordered his book using my smart phone.

In the first few chapters of his book Fr. Mallon talks about the major problem in the Catholic Church today is one of identity – that the Church (us) have forgotten that part of the Church’s fundamental identity is to be missionary and we have replaced this missionary identity with some ancient heresies that have been modernized.

As the early Church tried to understand what it meant that “God so loved the world that he gave [a] his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.” (John 3:16). Many different ideas emerged.

The word “Heresy” became the term the Church uses to label erroneous ways of thinking about God’s relationship with man. For example, a bishop named Arius believed that Jesus was True God and True Man but rather that Jesus was only a “super creature.” The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit rejected this way of thinking and labeled it a heresy. This particular erroneous way of thinking was called Arianism.

The Church over time has become to realize that many heresies keep coming back slightly modified so it appears to be new. Heresies are always wrong and always damage the Church. I think it is important to realize that thinking erroneous thoughts about God’s relationship with human beings does not make one a heretic. As I learned about these heresies in college, I began to realize that sometimes, I find myself unconsciously believing in them. For example, when I think God cannot do something like forgive a sin I or someone else committed I am falling into the fallacy of Arianism because I am believing that Jesus was a super creature who has limited power verses believing that Jesus is God and is capable of doing anything. When I think that I have earned the right to sin, then I have given into the heresy of Pelagianism which states that a person can earn his or her salvation.

Before we reflect on these heresies that are plaguing our Church today, I would like

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Sunday

If you are worried about the people outside, the most unreasonable thing you can do is remain outside yourself. Christians are Christ's body...every addition to that body enables Him to do more. If you want to help those outside you must add your own little cell to the body of Christ who along can help them. Cutting off a man's fingers would be a odd way of getting him to do more work. C. S. Lewis

Monday

“Nearly all vices are rooted in the future. Gratitude looks to the past and love to the present; fear, avarice, lust and ambition look ahead.” — C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

Tuesday

You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending. - C. S. Lewis

Wednesday

Don't judge a man by where he is, because you don't know how far he has come. -C. S. Lewis

to reflect on a couple of quotes from Fr. Mallon's book. Quotes from Fr. Mallon's book will be in bold and my commentary/reflection will be in regular font.

In the seventeen years that I have been a priest in the small patch of the world that is eastern Canada, I have witnessed no lack of pain in those who are "the living stones" of God's house. To begin with, there is the all-too—common pain of seeing so many family members and others walk away from the Church, from faith in Christ and even from faith in God. This pain is especially acute in the lives of so many of our parishioners who have witnessed the wholesale apostasy of their entire family. Bewildered, faithful ask, "What did I do wrong!" as they struggle with children and grandchildren who are indifferent or hostile to the Church and faith. So many tears have been shed. St. Monica has never had so many spiritual children seeking her intercession for their wayward sons and daughters.

The most important lesson, I learned in my battle with depression is that ignoring my pain and issues does not make them go away. I may not know why I feel the way I do or why I am in the situation that I am in but I know that unless I acknowledge it, I will never make any steps to get better or to improve my situation.

The Church for better or for worse has to admit that we have a problem. More and more Catholics are leaving the Catholic Church for one reason or another. My parents were faithful Catholics who attended Mass every Sunday, I believe my grandmother was a living saint and yet most of my brothers and sisters do not practice. While they are responsible for their own actions, I also at the same time cannot assign full blame to them. Their experience of growing up Catholic was not the most positive experience. I still have memories of watching a religion teacher scold one of my siblings for not have the Our Father memorized.

Our faithful people have every right to ask us shepherds what they did wrong, because they honestly do not know. They did for their children what their parents did for them. There is nothing more natural than this. The problem was that no one told them the rules had all changed. Like a rugby match that, without warning has become a soccer match after half-time, so many suffer from the experience of being penalized without knowing why. Everything they did for their children would have sufficed if it has still been 1956, but that age might as well have been a thousand years ago. Our people need to have this pain addressed, and they need to find the Lord's peace.

The game has changed. I can complain about it or I can do my best to adjust. The Good News is still the Good News, and I am still challenged to share it with others. The challenge today is not to share it with those who have never heard of Jesus but rather the challenge today is to share it again with those who have heard of Jesus but now have the wrong impression of Jesus and the Catholic Faith. In many ways, we are like the Apostles

We now find ourselves in a situation like that of the first Christians. It is once again unpopular to be a Christian. It is risky, costly, difficult, fulfilling and exciting. It is a time of rediscovering the essential identity of all the baptized to be missionary disciples, called to follow Jesus and make him known. It is time for all who follow Jesus to heed the call to maturity and to be equipped for service within the community of the church that takes them far from the altar from which they are sent every Sunday (See Questions to Ponder below image of Good Shepherd)

Thursday

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that." — Martin Luther King Jr

Friday

The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us. - C. S. Lewis

Saturday

You were set aside by God because he knows that you are capable of great things!



Questions to Ponder:

1. What am I going to do to help bring people back to the Church?
2. Do I think people leave the Church willfully as a revolt or more because they are lost because they did not receive proper teaching, or both?
3. How is the modern Church like the Church at the time of the Apostles?
4. What do you think of when you hear the word "Evangelization?"
5. How can I meet people where they are?



BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

February 3 2019 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 72 Gospel LK 4:21-30

Jesus began speaking in the synagogue, saying: "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?" He said to them, "Surely you will quote me this proverb, 'Physician, cure yourself,' and say, 'Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.'" And he said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went away.

Spiritual Ponderings:

I was watching a police drama on television and two of the characters were going over the rules for engaging someone who is acting hostile. They used the phrase "Connect, Respect, Protect." The idea being to try to make some sort of connection with the person (see them as a friend), respect them as an individual, and at all times protect people. In today's Gospel we see that this is the way that God has chosen to interact with humanity. He has made a unique connection with us through His Son. He continues to Respect our freewill by not forcing Himself upon us and finally He protects His Son and us (by keeping His plan for salvation intact and by not calling down divine wrath upon those who tried to kill His Son.

Spiritual Questions

1. How do you connect with God?
2. How do you connect with others?
3. How do you respect God?
4. How do you respect others?
5. How do you protect yourself from others?



A Prayer For Our Leaders

We pray that government leaders in the United States may heed the words of Thomas Jefferson who said: "The care of human life and happiness and not their destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good government." May our leaders stop working to build up a culture of death and begin to build up a culture of life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.

THE PRAYER, MAJESTIC QUEEN OF HEAVEN

Majestic Queen of Heaven and Mistress of the Angels, thou didst receive from God the power and commission to crush the head of Satan; wherefore we



This Week's Trivia

True or False

1. T or F St. Thomas Aquinas was called the "Dumb Ox" by his classmates.
2. T or F St. Ignatius of Loyola had his conversion experience on a hospital bed after surviving a cannon ball.
3. T or F One of the titles of St. Joseph is the "Terror of Demons"
4. T or F St. Luke was a doctor

humbly beseech thee, send forth the legions of heaven, that, under thy command, they may seek out all evil spirits, engage them everywhere in battle, curb their insolence, and hurl them back into the pit of hell. "Who is like unto God?"

O good and tender Mother, thou shalt ever be our hope and the object of our love guide our lost brothers and sisters back to your Son.

O Mother of God, send forth the holy Angels to defend me and drive far from me the cruel foe.

Holy Angels and Archangels, defend us and keep us.

Last Week's Answers

True or False

1. T Miriam was Moses's sister.
2. T Ruth was Jesse's mother.
3. T There are 150 Psalms
4. T St. Matthias followed Jesus from the beginning.

DUC IN ALTUM:

CAUTION

Only read this section if you want to go deeper in your faith

CAUTION

Think about the following seven reasons why Catholics fast and then think about fasting on a day when the Church does not require it to.

- 1) From the beginning, God commanded some fasting, and sin entered into the world because Adam and Eve broke the fast.
- 2) For the Christian, fasting is ultimately about fasting from sin.
- 3) Fasting reveals our dependence on God and not the resources of this world.
- 4) Fasting is an ancient way of preparing for the Eucharist—the truest of foods.
- 5) Fasting is preparation for baptism (and all the sacraments)—for the reception of grace.
- 6) Fasting is a means of saving resources to give to the poor.
- 7) Fasting is a means of self-discipline, chastity, and the restraining of the appetites.

CATHOLIC PRAYER:

CHRIST, THE WAY OF CONVERSION COMMUNION, AND SOLIDARITY IN AMERICA

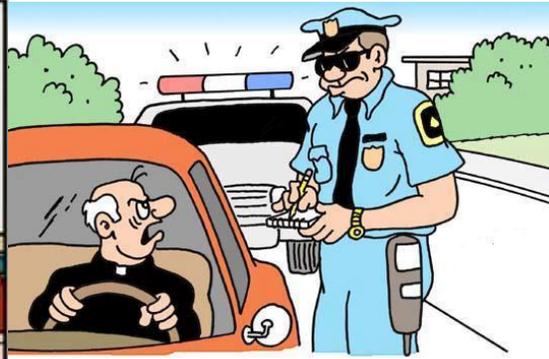
We thank You, Lord Jesus, because the Gospel of the Father's love, with which You came to save the world, has been proclaimed far and wide in America as a gift of the Holy Spirit that fills us with gladness. We thank You for the gift of Your Life, which You have given us by loving us to the end: Your Life makes us children of God, brothers and sisters to each other. Increase, O Lord, our faith and our love for You, present in all the tabernacles of the continent. Grant us to be faithful witnesses to your Resurrection for the younger generation of Americans, so that, in knowing You, they may follow You and find in You their peace and joy. Only then will they know that they are brothers and sisters of all God's children scattered throughout the world. You who, in becoming man, chose to belong to a human family, teach families the virtues which filled with light the family home of Nazareth. May families always be united, as You and the Father are one, and may they be living witnesses to love, justice and solidarity; make them schools of respect, forgiveness and mutual help, so that the world may believe; help them to be the source of vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life, and all the other forms of firm Christian commitment. Protect Your Church and the Successor of Peter, to whom You, Good Shepherd, have entrusted the task of feeding Your flock. Grant that the Church in America may flourish and grow richer in the fruits of holiness. teach us to love Your Mother, Mary, as you loved her. Give us strength to proclaim Your word with courage in the work of the new evangelization, so that the world may know new hope. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America, pray for us!

 Humor

Bits 'n Pieces



David Letterman: The Early Years



" SHOW ME IN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WHERE IT
SAYS ANYTHING ABOUT SPEEDING ! "

