

**For The Bulletin Of  
June 28, 2015**

**THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY  
IN SUMMER'S ORDINARY  
TIME**

*From Father Robert*

Who among us, when seriously ill, does not chase after every means possible – both medicinally and spiritually – to be healed? We avoid sickness because it limits, diminishes, discourages, and/or depresses us.

In this Sunday's gospel a woman has had an illness for twelve years and Jairus's twelve-year-old daughter is dead. We would expect the woman and Jairus to go to any length to overcome their tragedies. And, they do. Both Jairus and the "woman afflicted with hemorrhages" have faith that Jesus would heal. What, really, is their faith? Simply in Jesus' power to heal? Even to raise from the dead? This they and the crowd would know from hearsay or other encounters with Jesus.

However, the faith that saves is not based on physical miracles. Nor is the faith that saves merely an intellectual consent to revelation. The faith that saves is an act of coming to Jesus.

Faith in who Jesus is and what He can do brings us to act. Jairus approaches Jesus directly, kneels before Him, and asks for healing for his daughter. The "woman afflicted with hemorrhages" dares not approach Jesus directly; she simply wishes to "touch His clothes" to be cured. In both cases their faith gave them the courage to approach Jesus and raised their expectation that He had the

power to heal. Our faith, too, gives us courage and expectation. What do we do with it? Our first challenge is to come to Jesus with open hearts.

Both healing events in the long form of this Sunday's gospel disclose great faith and trust in Jesus on behalf of the petitioners. On the other hand, the disciples were critical of Jesus, and the crowd gathered in Jairus's house ridiculed Him until the raising of the child to life left them "utterly astounded." The faith of Jairus and the woman stand in opposition to the hardheaded realism of the disciples and the crowd. Coming to Jesus and encountering Him always changes experience, situations, expectations. It is precisely Jairus's and the woman's faith, that a new situation with a different outcome would be ushered in by the presence of Jesus, that opened the door to the new life Jesus offered. These humble petitioners make visible the faith to which the disciples, the crowd, and we are called. They teach us that faith is an act of seeking Jesus.

The crowd is "utterly astounded" after Jesus raises Jairus's daughter back to life. The miracle cued them into the new situation. The challenge of this gospel is that we must see a new situation in all of life's circumstances, precisely because Jesus is present and so absolutely nothing is the same. The challenge is to see the little "miracles" that happen every day in our lives simply because God has as much care for us as Jesus had care for Jairus's daughter and the woman. God always can bring something new out of the ordinary, out of pain, out of even death. The Good News of Jesus' life and mission is that suffering and death are not hopeless

situations, but out of them come life. All we need is faith and trust in Jesus. All we need to do is come to Him.

### ***Living The Paschal Mystery***

It is difficult to develop a spirituality that is open to the constant in-breaking of God's life, to the constant Presence of the risen Jesus to us. Our own faith must grow in a way that enables us to see God present and at work in all circumstances of our lives. Even something so ordinary and simple as getting over a cold and feeling good again is a sign of God's Presence which brings us a healing touch. By recognizing these signs of God's Presence we are able to see new possibilities, have new expectations, and hear Jesus' command, "Go in peace."

How are you challenged by today's scriptures?

- Those who live a deep faith life and through their example call me to grow in my faith are...
- I struggle with faith when...
- Because of my faith, my expectations are...My faith moves me to act in these ways...

### ***About Liturgy: Liturgical Expectations, People, and Situations***

Liturgy always challenges us to examine our expectations of God, the faith community, and ourselves. If we come looking for what liturgy is not supposed to do, we tend to go away disappointed, often lashing out at the people who work hard to help liturgy unfold gracefully and prayerfully.

Primarily Liturgy is about enacting in our present situation and lives the dying and rising mystery of Christ (the Paschal Mystery). In the here and now we

celebrate the mystery into which we were plunged at baptism and which defines our daily living. As members of the Body of Christ, we are to live with the self-giving care, compassion, and openness to new life that Jesus demonstrated in His life. This is not always easy, especially when we want to make liturgy something very personal which satisfies our own prayer, aesthetic, and relational needs. Liturgy, then, calls us to come to each celebration as if for the first time. It calls us to drop our preconceived notions and expectations – derived from countless liturgical experiences – and be open to each celebration as a new encounter with God and each other. The satisfaction of liturgy must come much less from our own personal needs and tastes and much more from our surrendering ourselves to God's action within each of us and within the community as a whole.

If we form ourselves in an attitude that each liturgy is new, then we have prepared ourselves for whatever surprises God may have in store for us. Liturgy is rarely an emotional high, nor should it be. But it is always an opportunity to encounter God and each other in faith, celebrating what is defining for us: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and our participation in that saving mystery.

### ***Stand Down On The Delta***

At our Pastoral Council meeting last Tuesday evening, **Forrest Towe**, one of our Council Members, brought up that he is a part of the team that is organizing the "Stand Down On The Delta" event September 11 – 15, for homeless veterans. The five-day event will have tents providing temporary shelter, temporary housing assistance and

education, health screenings, dental care, DMV services, hair-cuts, legal aid, fresh food and pet care. The Contra Costa District Attorney's Office will be on hand to work with veterans who may have criminal records that prevent them from obtaining work. Planning for this event has been on-going for the last two years.

Forrest shared with us that there is a need for 695 sets of underwear: tee shirts, boxers/briefs, and crew socks (both black and white). He asked if we as a parish would support this need and we responded positively that we would. I have also invited our YLI members along with the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, and our CCISCO partner churches to join us in this effort. We will extend the invitation to participate to neighboring councils of each of the above organizations to join us in making this effort successful.

You may begin to collect the needed items now and then they may be brought to the church at the liturgies on the weekend of September 5 and 6 (or before). Forrest and the members of our Pastoral Council will transfer them to the Contra Costa County Fairgrounds here in Antioch for the Stand Down Event.

The event is expected to draw more than 300 homeless and at-risk veterans. Thank you for your generosity in supporting this outreach to our veterans.

### ***Gifts and Memorials***

Throughout the year, various individuals approach me and ask about providing Gifts and Memorials for the church. These donations provide for vestments, liturgical furnishings, floral

arrangements, the liturgical environment, and sacred vessels. A present opportunity for a Gift or Memorial is the designation of the new Presidential and Diaconal Chairs. Hand-fashioned by our parishioner, **Oscar Jovel**, Master Woodcraftsman, they complete and complement our liturgical furnishings and are made from mahogany, gold leafing, and black leather cushions. For further information as to how you can make these appointments a Gift or a Memorial, please contact me.

### ***Summer Stewardship***

With summer upon us, many of our parishioners will be away for well-deserved vacations. While we are able to go away, our bills and financial obligations do not! Please be sure to send in your tithes/contributions faithfully in order to help us keep current with bills, staff salaries, and maintenance. Your on-going financial support is greatly appreciated.

Our Finance Council will be presenting the Second Quarter Financial Report in late July.

## **US church grateful for Pope Francis' 'marvelous' encyclical**

[Brian Roewe](#) | Jun. 18, 2015

Happiness, hope and gratitude greeted [Pope Francis' long-awaited encyclical](#), "*Laudato Si'*, on Care for Our Common Home," in the U.S. church after its official release Thursday afternoon in Rome.

"Very excited, very pleased," said Patrick Carolan, executive director of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN). "It's a wonderful, awesome, hopeful document."

Social Service Sr. Simone Campbell, executive director of NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobby, said her "heart is singing" because the encyclical shows how interconnected everything is.

"Pope Francis puts this in a holistic context," Campbell said. "It allows us to see the integration of issues of housing and cities and violence, all in the context of ecology and the environment."

For Dan DiLeo, project manager of the Catholic Climate Covenant, his hope and excitement for a global response to climate change peaked after reading the encyclical, he said in an op-ed piece.

"After finally reading *Laudato Si*, I am absolutely convinced that Francis will indeed inspire humanity to save ourselves from ourselves and avoid catastrophic climate change. And I am unexpectedly peaceful about it," he wrote.

In the 184-page document, Francis outlined his vision of the global environmental state, one in which climate change is a reality and where excessive behaviors in consumption, profit and growth require recalibration and reassessment. The encyclical is divided into six chapters: the current state of the planet; the Gospel of creation; human roots of the ecological crisis; integral ecology; approaches and actions; and ecological education and spirituality.

"The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change," Francis wrote. "... I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet."

Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley, one of the Francis' closest advisers, said he welcomed "with joy and gratitude" the encyclical, noting that as the first pope to take the name of St. Francis of Assisi, the pope carried the saint's spirit and wisdom throughout the document.

O'Malley, a Capuchin Franciscan, identified two ideas emanating throughout *Laudato Si'*: the environment as a common home that "needs immediate protection and healing at the global, national and local levels of life"; and those most in danger of environmental degradation are those already poor and vulnerable.

"This constant linkage throughout the encyclical of the dual need to respect and protect 'Our Common Home' and the need to respect and protect the dignity and lives of the poor may be regarded as the distinctive characteristic of this powerful message of Pope Francis. Both of these themes have been evident since the beginning of Pope Francis's pontificate but this letter joins them with new depth and specificity," the cardinal said in a statement.

### **Returns church to its roots**

Franciscan Sr. Dawn Nothwehr, a professor at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and author of *Ecological*

*Footprints: An Essential Franciscan Guide for Faith and Sustainable Living*, said the encyclical returns church thinking to its roots.

"In reality, this is nothing new in all of Christianity," Nothwehr said. "If you go back to our Jewish roots, that's a very holistic approach. Look at Leviticus ... in all those early mandates, the legal was not separate from the moral. We're deeply turning back to some of those themes."

Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., described the encyclical in a single word: "Marvelous!"

"Pope Francis shares with us in this encyclical how [church teaching on the environment] applies to us in the modern world. We live in an increasingly connected world, and *Laudato Si'* shares in a remarkable way really how profound this connection should and must be," he told *NCR* in an email.

What especially resonated with Skylstad were aspects of *Laudato Si'* that addressed relationships people have with and for one another (particularly the poor) and humans' relationship with and responsibility for the environment.

"One of the great challenges in our world community today is the need for a revolution in relationships. Pope Francis does a remarkable job in challenging all of us. No one is to be excluded," he said.

The bishop served as director of the 2001 Columbia River pastoral project, a joint endeavor of U.S. and Canadian bishops that examined a bevy of environmental issues in the Pacific

Northwest. He said the encyclical addresses many of the same issues as that pastoral and reinforced the bishops' work in the Columbia watershed.

"In addition, our world community is becoming much more sensitive to environmental degradation and the urgent need to do something about it. The high degree of interest in anticipating this document indicates a common concern about how we need to take care of the environment and the significant challenges we face in doing so," he said.

On the issue of climate change, Skylstad said the pope did not "shy away" from the expected controversy or in providing "recommendations to spur fresh political and economic thinking."

"In our polarized world, his teaching in this encyclical transcends the political controversy with a moral foundation for action, not a set of political prescriptions," he said.

Dan Misleh, executive director of the Catholic Climate Covenant, said it appeared the pope had the climate in mind throughout the encyclical, even outside the sections that addressed it directly.

"It seems like that was fairly prevalent even if it wasn't stated over and over again, although it appeared quite a bit," he told *NCR*.

### **Conversation changing 'from fear to love'**

Maryann Cusimano Love, a fellow at the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of

America, said the pope is changing the climate conversation "from fear to love."

"Francis calls us home, to love our neighbors and our common home, our gift from God. Yes, he calls us to energy conversion, but from energies of despair and denial to God's sustainable energy of generous love and sharing," she said.

That Francis did not mince words in addressing climate change -- "It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day" - - didn't surprise Misleh given the pope has at his disposal one of the top scientific academies in the world in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

"That scientific information is easily accessible to him and to many others, and so he took it to heart and said, There is a limited amount of time to deal with this, we better hurry up," he said.

Misleh and several others who spoke to *NCR* saw as a central theme of *Laudato Si'* the emphasis on the interconnections among people across geography and generations and among the various environmental and societal issues Francis addressed.

In his discussion of "integral ecology," Francis links one of Catholic tradition's largest theological themes -- all are intimately one in God's being -- "with the nitty gritty of loving our neighbor and caring for the smallest and most vulnerable creatures," said Alex Mikulich, a research fellow at the Jesuit Social Research Institute at Loyola University New Orleans.

"We all share one life, one earth. One cannot and will not thrive unless all

thrive in the interdependent and interconnected web of life," he said.

"[Francis] points to not just the environment in a silo of its own, but how the problems that we're having with the environment and the climate are affecting the people of the world. So not just the environment for the environment's sake, but really in how our fellow human beings are being affected by it," said Janine Walsh, FAN communications coordinator.

"He framed it the way the Franciscans do, so we're really happy about that, in that it's about all of creation," Carolan said.

Along those lines, Carolan said for him, one of the more powerful aspects of the encyclical addressed the connections between the largest emitters of greenhouse gases and those most impacted.

"The warming caused by huge consumption on the part of some rich countries has repercussions on the poorest areas of the world, especially Africa, where a rise in temperature, together with drought, has proved devastating for farming," Francis wrote.

The pope called not only for a scaling back of fossil fuel usage, but also for a cutback on consumption among developed countries.

"We all know that it is not possible to sustain the present level of consumption in developed countries and wealthier sectors of society, where the habit of wasting and discarding has reached unprecedented levels. The exploitation of the planet has already exceeded

acceptable limits and we still have not solved the problem of poverty," he wrote.

That message is an important one for Americans to deeply consider, Misleh said, but also one that may be hard to digest. He said the pope appeared to be describing a richness in getting away at times from technology, which can distract from interpersonal connections with family, neighbors and the poor, but also distract from addressing real problems.

"We've got such a culture of waste, where every six, eight months there's a new cell phone on the market. And why? Why are we continuously grabbing that new cell phone when the old one is working just fine?" Walsh said.

### **Nobility in little daily actions**

Conversations about actions have to address the global, community and individual levels, Carolan said. In *Laudato Si'*, Francis heralded the small steps as a piece of environmental solutions: "There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions."

Carolan noted that the simple acts common to scaling back energy usage -- turning off lights, choosing a bike or public transportation, eating local or occasionally abstaining from meat -- can reduce individuals' consumption and carbon footprints but also help change mindsets.

While she loved the encyclical, Franciscan Sr. Ilia Delio, visiting professor at Georgetown University, said she also fears it will produce little

change in that it falls short of providing a model for how things should be.

"He's saying, Here's a negative, we are destroying ourselves, we are destroying our planet. But I've never seen anyone change because of a negative, except when they're children being disciplined by their parents," she said. "We change because of allure. So what's the attraction to us? Without that, I think people are going to say, 'Great guy, great points,' but they're not going to change."

Looking ahead, events are already planned to ensure that the encyclical conversation doesn't end with its release. FAN has planned a Meatless Fridays campaign, while the Catholic Climate Covenant has mailed and emailed homily helps to each of the 17,000-plus parishes in the country to use during four Sundays this summer.

The covenant has also planned a series of programs -- including regional events in Florida, Iowa and New Mexico and a theology and ministry conference at CUA ahead of the bishops' annual meeting in November -- to carry the encyclical conversation through Francis' U.S. visit in September and the United Nations' climate negotiations in December in Paris.

"Keep the dialogue going, keep the encyclical in people's minds and talk about not only what the encyclical means but what the local impact or local solutions might be," Misleh said.

## **Why Pope Francis' encyclical matters**

[Thomas Reese](#) | June 18, 2015

Some of the most frequently asked questions I have gotten from journalists this week: Why does the encyclical matter? What impact will it have? Why is it getting all this attention?

Let's start with the last question: Why is it getting all this attention?

The encyclical, "[Laudato Si', On Care for our Common Home](#)," is getting lots of attention for two reasons.

First, there is a growing consensus around the world that we need to take better care of the environment. Scientific consensus exists that climate change is happening, and human activity is causing it. People are growing in their awareness of environmental problems, but they also see that so far, the world has done little to respond to the crisis.

The second reason the encyclical is getting so much attention is because it is from Pope Francis. The pope is admired, respected, and even loved all over the world by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Everyone is fascinated by this pope, and he has an ability to communicate in simple language that average people can understand.

It is true that previous popes spoke or wrote about the environment and global warming, but their message rarely got through to the public for two reasons.

First, the media were much more interested in writing stories about popes and condoms than stories about popes and the environment.

Second, in the last two papacies, papal statements tended to read like academic dissertations. The church has never been

very good at communicating Catholic social teaching, whether it has been on justice, peace or the environment.

Francis, on the other hand, writes more like a journalist than an academic. Anyone who can read a newspaper can read this encyclical and get something out of it.

In other words, the encyclical is getting so much media attention because it is on the right topic, at the right time, by the right person.

### **Why does the encyclical matter?**

The encyclical matters because it is an authoritative message by one of the world's great religious leaders. The encyclical will stimulate homilies and discussions in parishes around the world. It will become a source of inspiration and ideas for activists, preachers, teachers, theologians and authors who will echo and develop the pope's message.

In his encyclical, the pope begins with looking at the facts: What have we been doing to the earth? He then argues that how we treat the earth, how we respond to climate change, are moral questions -- in fact, some of the most important moral issues of our time.

Those who argue that the pope should stick to faith and morals and not political issues don't seem to think there are any Catholic moral issues outside the bedroom. What can be a more important moral issue than one that could cause the death and displacement of millions of people?

The encyclical is also an invitation to dialogue. The pope does not claim to have all the answers. The more specific his policy recommendations, the less authoritative he becomes. He is inviting economists, business people, public officials, environmentalists, inventors and religious leaders to all come together for a conversation on how to protect the environment. Anyone with a good idea is welcome.

The encyclical also matters because it puts the Catholic church firmly behind the environmental movement. With the pope's embrace, the environmental movement goes mainstream. They can no longer be denigrated as tree-huggers and Gia worshippers.

Despite its efforts, the environmental movement has had only limited success. Frankly, people are not going to change their lifestyles to protect polar bears. But if history shows us anything, it is that religion can motivate people to do extraordinary things. Religious motives can move people to self-sacrifice, to give up their own self-interest for a greater good. The environmental movement needs believers of every faith who are motivated by their religious convictions to protect God's creation.

### **What impact will the encyclical have?**

The pope is calling the world to a conversion that will have a huge impact on how we live, how our economy works, and how governments operate. "Revolutionary" is almost too weak a word. It will require an extraordinary change in human vision and behavior to accomplish this peaceful revolution. It will require sacrifice from everyone, especially those who are rich and

powerful, who are enjoying the fruits of the status quo.

Doing what the pope asks will not be easy, but the pope encourages us to trust in a loving God and a powerful Spirit that can renew the face of the earth. His encyclical is remarkable in that it does not depend primarily on fear to motivate people to care for the earth. Rather, he emphasizes love as the motivating force.

We cannot expect the encyclical to miraculously change human attitudes and behavior overnight. Rather, the encyclical is the beginning of a process that will go on for years. It requires that each of us get involved for the long haul. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

As a social scientist, I am very pessimistic that we can avoid an environmental catastrophe, but as a Christian, I have to have hope. Francis' encyclical strengthens that hope.

### ***Thank You***

...to **Monika Kauer** for the beautiful mum plants at the Icons of Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word and St. Joseph with the Child, Jesus.

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