

**For The Bulletin Of  
September 13, 2015**

**THE 24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN  
ORDINARY TIME**

*From Father Robert*

Self-identity is a big deal in our society. Knowing who we are enables us to journey forward through life with confidence, a sense of direction and purpose, an accurate assessment of our capabilities as well as our weaknesses. In today's gospel, Jesus' question to His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" was not about His seeking His own self-awareness. It was a question put to the disciples that would reveal to them more deeply Who He was and why He came among them. In Peter's response, "You are the Christ," we meet a high point in Mark's gospel. We are invited to struggle more deeply Who Jesus is. We are invited to prepare ourselves for what faithful discipleship entails.

Yes, Peter acknowledges that Jesus is "the Christ," but misses the deeper point. From Jewish tradition Peter has a preconceived notion of Who Jesus is and also of Who "the Christ" would be – as the "anointed one," the Messiah, he would be a great king, overthrow Roman domination, and restore the powerful Israel of old. But this is not "the Christ" who Jesus came to be. Jesus' self-awareness is revealed ever so fully: He is "the Christ" Who will "suffer greatly," "be rejected," and "be killed." Jesus also makes something else explicit – disciples must also "take up their cross" if they are to follow Jesus. The disciples are hardly prepared to grasp the demands of following Him.

Jesus is called "the Christ" – Peter is called Satan. Salvation confronts human resistance. Peter had a certain image, belief, expectation of what "the Christ" was to be, to do. Suffering, rejection, and being killed had nothing to do with Peter's Christ. But they have everything to do with the Christ of God. Without a right understanding of "the Christ," we cannot, with Him, rise to new Life. Alone, the demands of discipleship would be impossible, the struggle beyond us. But with God as our help, we can begin to think as God does, not as humans. And how does God think? Not in terms of beating, buffets, pain, ridicule, or even death. God thinks in terms of life and love. God thinks in terms of salvation. God only wills for us what is good for us and what brings us to new Life. We take up our own cross daily because this is the way to a share in risen Life.

*Living The Paschal Mystery*

Today's gospel makes explicit the parameters of discipleship: self-denial, bearing hardship. It makes equally explicit why in the world anyone would follow Jesus: because this is the way to have Life. Herein is a clear gospel presentation of the paschal mystery: it means death and new Life, it means making a choice, it means that we, too, must embrace this way of living if we are to receive the gift of salvation Jesus offers.

It is no small coincidence that this gospel begins with the question of Jesus' identity and then ends with the cost of discipleship. Identity and discipleship are inextricably related because who we are, our own self-awareness, shapes how we follow. Our identity through baptism is that of Body of Christ; by being united

with Him in identity, we are also united with Him in His life, death, and resurrection. Unlike Him, we will not die on a cross. Like Him, we are called to be followers who give themselves for the good of others.

As we begin the journey to the 34<sup>th</sup> and last Sunday of the Liturgical Year, our readings, prayers, and music will gently guide us to reflect on what is most important in life, where we have been, where we are now, and where we wish to be in the future. How have today's scriptures helped to shape that journey?

- When I think in human terms, I resist "the Christ" in that...For me, "the Christ" is...
- Jesus' call to carry the cross means that I must...
- Times when I have embraced the necessity of losing my life to experience new life have been...

#### ***About Liturgy: Turning Point***

Today's gospel from Mark is one of this gospel's two structural climaxes. The other occurs in Chapter 15, when the centurion at the foot of the cross exclaims, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" In both instances Jesus' identity is revealed in the context of His suffering and death. These climaxes highlight the overall thrust of Mark's gospel with its focus on Jesus' identity and the demands of discipleship.

This Sunday also marks something of a turning point in our own journey through the Liturgical Year. We are into mid-September, a time when the new school year has begun, vacations are over for the most part, the feel of fall is beginning to creep in, and we have a sense of "hunkering down." However well we have paid attention or however

much we have learned through our journey through Mark's gospel during Ordinary Time of this Year B, it is never too late to ask ourselves two questions: Have we encountered Jesus and learned more of Who He is for us? Have we learned better how to shoulder the cost of discipleship, discovered new ways to be faithful, and recognized that in the very dying – in conforming ourselves to Jesus in our own style of self-giving – we are already rising to new Life?

**The Floral Arrangement at the Altar today is placed to the Glory of God and in honor of the Wedding Anniversary of Mark and Tina Costanza and In Loving Memory of all those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001 by David and Melodye Costanza.**

#### ***Carolyn Krantz Welcomed To Pastoral Staff***

I am very pleased to share with you that **Carolyn Krantz, M.Div.**, is becoming our second Pastoral Associate and will work in the area of Social Justice Education and Advocacy.

Carolyn brings a wonderful background as a Pastoral Associate from her many years in that position at our neighboring parish of St. Peter Martyr in Pittsburg.

She also was an employee of Catholic Charities of the East Bay and most recently, has been offering various classes for us here at St. Ignatius of Antioch.

She worships regularly with us at our Sunday 8:00 a.m. Eucharist. Like **Peter Degl'Innocenti**, she will work without receiving a salary and is donating her time to facilitate our parish's

involvement with the many social justice issues that are before us. Please join me in welcoming Carolyn to the Staff!

### ***Neighborhood Clean-up***

Last Saturday was our monthly Neighborhood Clean-up and the site that was targeted was Gentrytown Park and the surrounding streets. Our parish had an excellent and the most members from any organization! Many thanks to those who joined me: **Grand Knight Bill Barbanica, Marla Plurkowski, Paul Burgarino, Joanna Burgarino, Carole Miller, Stephen Rojek, Olivia Rojek, and Mary Rocha.**

### ***Our Concert Series***

In my Insert last week, I shared with you that the next in the series of Concerts is a program for Organ and Brass. Unfortunately, I did not know that because of Don Pearson's health, that concert has been postponed until sometime in October or November. I apologize for this and hope it does not cause any undo inconvenience. Please watch both the bulletin and my Insert for updates as to when the next concert will take place.

### ***Fr. George Griener, S.J.***

Next weekend, we will joyfully welcome back to the parish **Fr. George Griener, S.J.** as our homilist. I know you will warmly welcome him at each of our liturgies and express your heartfelt appreciation for his presence and preaching.

### ***Liturgical Ministry Faire***

At each liturgy next weekend, we will have our annual Liturgical Ministry Faire. This is your opportunity to sign up for a variety of ministries, including Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers,

Sacristans, Altar Servers, Adult Acolytes, the Parish Choir, Instrumentalists, Art & Environment Committee, Liturgy Committee, Ushers, Children's Liturgy of the Word Catechists, and Greeters.

Please begin to pray as to how God is calling you to serve Him and our parish community in one of these ministries. Training will be provided for all ministries.

### ***Adult Faith Formation – “The Rites to Die Right!”***

Once again, I will be presenting an Adult Faith Formation program/seminar on “The Rites to Die Right.” It will take place on Wednesday evening, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. in the parish hall. There is no cost to attend.

The session will focus on the church's pastoral care of the sick, it's presence at the time of death, related rites, and the three principal movements of the Order of Christian Funerals: The Vigil, Funeral Liturgy, and Committal. Issues around cremation and disposition will also be addressed. You will not want to miss this informative and entertaining workshop.

For those of you who may not be aware, I am also a Licensed Funeral Director in the State of California, License No. #1598, and am able to bring a unique perspective to the issue of selecting a mortuary/funeral home/cremation society to serve you at the time of the death of a loved one. Please mark your calendars accordingly and plan to attend.

***The Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz***

Our Filipino Community will celebrate the Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz de Manila at the 10:00 a.m. Eucharist on Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup>. Members of the Filipino Community will participate in the various liturgical ministries, including Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, and Altar Servers. Following the liturgy, a light reception will take place in the parish hall. Please plan on joining us as we honor the first canonized saint of the Philippines.

***A Letter To Francis, Bishop of Rome***

This past week, I received a very powerful letter from Fr. Aidan McAleenan that is addressed to Francis, Bishop of Rome. I am sharing both his letter to me and the priests of our Diocese as well as the letter to Pope Francis.

My Brothers,

For more than 20 years plus St. Columba has been a beacon of light on the issue of racism in our city and our country. Through the African American Series these and other issues of social justice have been addressed.

This summer we, the community of St. Columba engaged the PICO/OCO program "A Year of Encounter with Pope Francis".

The topics included, care for the poor, mass incarceration, racism, immigration and much more. We had up to 50 people come out to engage this program that prepares us for the Pope's historic visit.

Out of this we discerned that we should invite the Holy Father to address the difficult issue of racism by apologizing to Black Catholics and people of color for the injury they have suffered at the hands of the dominant culture in the United States.

The Holy Father, while in Latin America just a few short months ago apologized to indigenous peoples for their treatment at the hands of the Church.

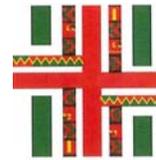
I invite you to read and pray with us that the Holy Father will in fact prayerfully reflect and act on this invitation with the goal of healing and moving forward as an American family.

Peace

Fr. Aidan

--

Aidan McAleenan  
St. Columba Catholic Church



**St. Columba  
Catholic Church**

6401 San Pablo  
Avenue

Oakland, CA 94608

His Holiness, Pope Francis  
Apostolic Palace  
00120 Vatican City

September 2, 2015

Most Holy Father,

We, the Roman Catholic community of Saint Columba in the Diocese of Oakland, California, heartily welcome you to our country, the United States of America.

We write to request that, during your visit to us this month you lead the universal Church to openly acknowledge and officially apologize to African Americans for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the enslavement of and acts of racial injustice against people of color, -events that have stained our history from the founding of our country, through the passing of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's to the present day.

Our reasons for making this request are as follows: First, it is well documented, especially by the late Fr. Cyprian Davis, OSB, in his award-winning book, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*, that European-American Roman Catholics, including bishops, religious congregations, and laity both owned and sold African slaves. Second, history also shows the bishops of the United States resisted calls for the abolition of slavery. Third, African American's, Catholic and non-Catholic, are often troubled and even scandalized after reading such histories of the Church. Fourth, many African Americans continue to feel estranged in the Church that does little to actively speak out forcefully against racism or acknowledge their history, experience, culture, pain and most of all their joyful and spirit filled contribution to the life of the Church.

To this date, the Bishops of the United States have seldom, if ever,

acknowledged or apologized for this tragic history and continuing complicity in racial injustice.

In light of the pain present in the black Catholic family in the United States, there is need for an acknowledgement of the sin of racial slavery and structural injustice practiced and /or tolerated by all too many members of our beloved Church, both lay and ordained.

It is our belief, as a multicultural parish family celebrating in the context of African American Spirituality, that an apology in light of Gospel and the Year of Mercy would place the Church in the path of righting the wrong.

Additionally it would allow African Americans and other people of color to practically experience the practice of the mercy God within our Church. It would be a powerful demonstration of our faith's conviction that we are all made in the image and likeness of God and are therefore all equal in dignity and valued in God's sight.

In the end, an official apology would launch the racial healing that is long overdue in U.S. Catholicism and the world we all live and share.

We love you and respect your prayerful decision on this request. We pray that God strengthens your ministry as Chief Shepherd of our Church and protects you on your journey to our country.

Yours in the "Joy of the Gospel",

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Fr. Aidan J. McAleenan". The signature is written in dark ink and is enclosed within a thin, hand-drawn oval border.

Fr. Aidan J. McAleenan, Pastor

I applaud and thank Fr. Aidan and the Parishioners of St. Columba in Oakland for their courage in writing this letter and for all they have done and continue to do as a “light shining in the darkness” in Oakland and in our Diocese.

Fr. Aidan and members of his parish are traveling to the East Coast for the World Meeting on the Family and I hope that our Holy Father will have read and responds to their request.

### ***Our Parish Feast Day and Parish Festival***

Each year, the weekend of the Feast Day of our Patron, St. Ignatius of Antioch, is a major celebration for our parish community. This year, that celebration falls on the weekend of October 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Please wear RED for the liturgies that weekend and then plan to join us for the festival in the parish tent, the Food Court, games, prizes, and the Grand Raffle.

Members of our Grand Raffle Committee are available each weekend before and after each liturgy to help you acquire raffle tickets for this year’s Grand Raffle prize. It is our hope that every registered family will participate by purchasing at least one book of tickets. If every family participates, we will certainly shatter previous year’s goals. Thank you for all you will do make this year’s festival and Grand Raffle a success.

### ***Thank You***

...to our faithful volunteer parishioners who come early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare the church and parish hall for the weekend: **Steve Rojek, Angela Bueno, Jun Bajet, Mercy Osborne, and Rose Salamanca** and to those who come, not only on

Saturday morning, but also Sunday afternoon and all throughout the week to clean and maintain the bathrooms in the church and parish hall: **Robert Goncalves, Steve Rojek, Mary Ewing, Gino Ramos, Geri Abaya, and Harlan Young.**

### ***From the St. Vincent de Paul Society***

Dear Fr. Robert and Parishioners, Thank you so much for your continued financial support for St. Vincent de Paul. Your donations of money, food, and volunteer labor are very much appreciated by our ministry and all those who benefit from your generosity.

## **Five things to look for during the papal visit**

[Thomas Reese](#) | Sept. 3, 2015

The pope’s visit to the United States is going to be a whirlwind affair with scores of events and activities. In the midst of this papal storm, here are five things to focus on.

### **First, Francis the man.**

This will be America’s first opportunity to see the pope up-close and personal. He is going to be treated like a rock star, but he is no ordinary celebrity. What people will notice is that, for the pope, the visit is not all about himself. It is about the Gospel message of God’s love and compassion and our responsibility to respond to that love by loving our brothers and sisters, especially the poor. In other words, he is not selling himself; he is selling the Gospel message of Jesus.

Americans are not used to humble celebrities; the phrase is an oxymoron. But for Pope Francis, it is all about others.

So the first thing to watch for is the pope's interaction with people, especially the sick, the poor and the marginalized. This pope preaches not only with words, but with actions. I am willing to go out on a limb and predict that his poll ratings will be up after the visit because even those who disagree with him like and respect him.

### **Second, Francis the prophet.**

A prophet is someone who comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable. He speaks truth to power.

As archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, he once told a church full of politicians and government officials on a civic holiday that they should put aside corruption and take care of the poor. They were so angry that they did not come back the following year but found a more hospitable church for their celebration.

Everyone is looking forward to what the pope will say to a [joint session of Congress](#) Sept. 24. Will he urge them to care for the poor, welcome the immigrant, work for peace, protect the environment, and cherish life?

His documents [Evangelii Gaudium](#) and ["Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home"](#) are hard-hitting attacks on libertarian capitalism, globalization, and a consumer-based economy. Simply quoting himself would be a striking message to Congress that would upset many comfortable people who like the status quo.

### **Third, Francis the peacemaker.**

Ever since Pope Paul VI [spoke to the United Nations in 1965](#), it has become a tradition for popes to make a substantive address at the U.N. This is an opportunity for the pope to lay out his international agenda, to call for peace and reconciliation among peoples. Francis has already shown himself to be a consummate diplomat by mid-wifing an agreement between Cuba and the United States that has restored diplomatic relations.

It will be interesting to hear what he has to say about Cuban-U.S. relations while he is in Cuba before flying to the United States. Could the Castro regime be smart enough to put some high-profile political prisoners on the pope's plane? This would reduce congressional opposition to repealing economic sanctions and shield Cuba from appearing to cave in to American pressure.

Papal addresses to the United Nations traditionally focus on peace and development, but Sept. 25, Francis will undoubtedly add a plea for the environment, in line with his encyclical [Laudato Si'](#). He knows that tough negotiations are ahead at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris at the end of the year.

He will remind the world that it is facing a global crisis of apocalyptic dimensions, and all nations must make sacrifices for the common good. For the pope, this is a moral issue because it will affect the lives of people, especially the poor. He will also speak about refugees and religious freedom.

#### **Fourth, Francis the pastor.**

The pope is coming not just to talk to government officials and the United Nations. He is also coming to inspire the Catholic faithful and their bishops. He comes to preach and break bread with them.

His meeting with the American bishops in Washington on Sept. 23 will be especially interesting. Many people complain that the Francis revolution is not succeeding in the United States because many of the bishops and clergy are not onboard. They just don't get it. What will he say to them?

For a [preview](#), one might look at what Francis said to the bishops in Brazil when he visited there.

In his [July 27, 2014, address to the Brazilian bishops](#) and his [address the next day to the Latin American Episcopal Conference](#), Francis set forth his ecclesiology, his pastoral priorities for the church. He talked of training ministers who could warm people's hearts, of being a church of mercy and forgiveness, of empowering women in the church, of developing a proactive mindset, and of empowering the laity to share in the church's mission.

Do we give the laity, he asked, "the freedom to continue discerning, in a way befitting their growth as disciples, the mission which the Lord has entrusted to them? Do we support them and accompany them, overcoming the temptation to manipulate them or infantilize them?"

#### **Finally, Francis on message.**

Many people are going to try to manipulate the pope's visit for their own

agendas. Democrats and Republicans, environmentalists and pro-life activists, bishops and victims of abuse are all going to say that their issues are the most important. Spin doctors will pontificate; critics will say he doesn't know what he is talking about.

The inevitable goofs and stumbles of any major visit will take attention away from his message, but Francis has shown a remarkable ability to stay on message despite the circus that surrounds him.

He will focus on God's compassion and love, and on our responsibility to love one another.

His priorities are helping the poor, protecting the environment, and bringing peace to a troubled world.

Some people will find this teaching hard and "no longer walk with him" (John 6:66). This should not surprise us. The teachings of Jesus met opposition and created controversy. Being true to the Gospel will also make Francis controversial, but that will not stop him from fulfilling his prophetic and pastoral mission.

[Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese is a senior analyst for *NCR* and author of *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church*. His email address is [treesesj@ncronline.org](mailto:treesesj@ncronline.org). Follow him on Twitter: [@ThomasReeseSJ](#).]

## Francis' annulment changes stress prompt decisions, power of local bishops

Joshua McElwee September 8, 2015  
[Vatican City](#)

Pope Francis has substantially and significantly altered the process for those seeking annulments of marriages in the Catholic church, eliminating sometimes lengthy and redundant judicial procedures and empowering local bishops to make judgments on their own in "particularly evident" cases.

The changes -- announced at the Vatican Tuesday with release of two formal documents signed by the pope known as *motu proprio* -- reflect a decided and new shift in delegating power from the church's central command to local prelates around the world.

They also may represent the most public difference yet between Francis and his predecessors John Paul II and Benedict XVI, who had widely sought to limit the number of annulments in fear of creating a sort of back-door divorce process for Catholics.

In a short introduction to the new changes, Francis explains that he wanted to balance the church's timeless worry to provide for the salvation of souls with "the enormous number of faithful that ... too often are detached from the juridical structures of the Church at the cause of physical or moral distance."

"In total harmony with these desires, I have decided to give with this *Motu proprio* arrangements that do not favor

the nullifying of marriages but the promptness of the processes," states Francis, so that "the heart of the faithful that wait for the clarification of their state may not be oppressed for a long time by the darkness of doubt."

An annulment in the Catholic church is a decree from a church tribunal that a marriage between two persons was invalidly contracted. Such a decree is often sought by persons who are seeking to celebrate a different marriage. The changes announced by Francis modify the procedures for obtaining annulments in two key ways: Eliminating a sometimes lengthy process requiring a second judgment on all annulment decisions and allowing local bishops a so-called "shorter" process to personally judge on cases considered particularly straightforward.

The changes also, in a new take on a since-abandoned practice, allow any first appeals of annulment decisions to be made at the local level instead of at the Vatican. Appeals from smaller dioceses will now be made at metropolitan archdioceses, which are the archdioceses that are normally closest to the diocese in question.

In his introductory letter for the decree altering the processes for the Latin-rite church -- the church community most recognizable throughout the world as Roman Catholic -- the pontiff states that he recognizes the new procedures, especially those allowing decisions by bishops, might worry those concerned about Catholic teaching on the indissolubility of marriage.

But the pope says he wanted to offer the new process to bishops so that it can "be

applied in cases in which the accused nullity of the marriage is sustained by arguments particularly evident.”

“It has not escaped me how an abbreviated judgment might put at risk the principle of indissolubility of marriage,” the pope continues. “Indeed, for this I wanted that in this process the judge would be composed of the bishop, that in the strength of his pastoral office is, with Peter, the best guarantee of Catholic unity in the faith and discipline.”

The Vatican announced the changes Tuesday by releasing the two official documents, given the Latin names of *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus* ("The Meek Judge, The Lord Jesus") and *Mitis et misericors Iesus* ("The Meek and Merciful Jesus").

The first document addresses and modifies the annulment procedure for the Latin-rite *Code of Canon Law*; the second for the canons governing the Eastern-rite Catholic churches. Both texts are currently available only in Latin and Italian.

The changes, signed by Francis on Aug. 15, are to go into effect Dec. 8, the opening day of the upcoming Jubilee Holy Year for Mercy and the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council.

Francis’ decree for the Latin rite churches effectively updates and changes canons 1679-1691 in the church’s *Code of Canon Law*. The pope also attached to that decree 20 new “procedural rules” for bishops dealing with annulment cases, saying he wanted

to offer them as “other instruments” for tools in their work on those matters. Among other significant changes in the decrees: Francis also mandates that annulment procedures be made free of charge around the world, and also asks that bishops create some sort of structure in their dioceses that can guide and help separated Catholics considering divorce and/or annulment.

In his attached “procedural rules,” Francis gives examples of when a bishop might be able to decide an annulment on his own authority without using the normal process of the church tribunal.

Included in those examples: When there was a clear lacking of faith on the part of one of the persons consenting to the marriage, when one person was in another undisclosed relationship at the time of marriage, or when one party procured an abortion -- indicating that they were not open to the procreation of life.

Francis states in his preface to the Latin-rite decree that he hopes bishops will be close to the annulment processes in their dioceses so that they can offer “a sign of *conversion* of the ecclesiastical structures, and do not leave the judicial function in matrimonial matters completely delegated to the offices of the curia.”

The pontiff also states that he is allowing appeals of annulment decisions to be made to the metropolitan archdioceses as “a distinctive sign of the synodality of the Church.”

Announcement of the changes of the annulment procedures comes less than a month before the opening of a special

global meeting of Catholic bishops, known as a synod, at the Vatican Oct. 4-25.

Francis has called two back-to-back synods for 2014 and 2015, to focus on issues facing families in contemporary society. The discussions have centered partly on the Catholic church's pastoral practice towards those who have divorced and remarried without first obtaining annulments, who are currently prohibited from taking communion in the church.

Reform of the annulment process also comes with unusual speed for the Vatican, as the pope only first appointed a commission to study the matter in August 2014.

Francis states in his preface to the Latin-rite decree that he is partly making the changes to the annulment process on the suggestion of the bishops at the 2014 synod, who he says "requested more rapid and accessible processes."

The pontiff's decision to remove the until-now necessary, and sometimes lengthy, second judgment on all annulment decisions echoes an ability the U.S. Catholic bishops had from 1970-83, when they were allowed by the Vatican to dispense that obligation for certain cases.

That ability -- which was sharply criticized by some at the Vatican who thought the U.S. bishops were applying the dispensation too liberally -- was removed with the publication of the 1983 edition of the *Code of Canon Law*.

The number of annulment procedures initiated in the U.S. has dropped sharply

in recent decades. According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, the processes initiated in the U.S. went from 60,691 in 1984 to 23,302 in 2014.

At a Vatican press conference announcing the annulment changes Tuesday, one church prelate said they represented the most substantial changes to the church's marriage law in centuries. Msgr. Pio Vito Pinto, dean of the Vatican's highest appellate court, said they are probably the biggest changes to the church's marriage law since the pontificate of Pope Benedict XIV, who led the Catholic church from 1740-1758.

[Joshua J. McElwee is *NCR* Vatican correspondent. His email address is [jmcelwee@ncronline.org](mailto:jmcelwee@ncronline.org). Follow him on Twitter: [@joshjmac](https://twitter.com/joshjmac).]