

**For The Bulletin Of
June 11, 2017**



TRINITY SUNDAY

From Father Robert

Welcome to Summer's Ordinary Time! We might feel exhilarated, exhausted, or a combination of both as the major seasons of the Liturgical Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Triduum, and Easter – are over for another year. Filled with the Holy Spirit, we go forward to the counted weeks in Summer's Ordinary Time. The Sundays of this time begin with today's feast in honor of the Trinity and followed by the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ reminding us of the core of our faith in God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – a communion of divine Persons and the source of our life together, the Body and Blood of Christ.

The lengthy period of the counted weeks in Ordinary Time offers us an opportunity to step back and reflect on the meaning of our faith as a whole. Unlike the previous seasons and major feasts of the Liturgical Year, Ordinary Time allows us to reflect on the mystery of faith in its entirety every time we gather for the celebration of Eucharist. The church remembers the witness of many saints during this time, allowing us

to see how our faith journeys intertwine with theirs. Lest Ordinary Time become tedious and uninteresting after the initial respite from the intensity of the high liturgical seasons, we ought to let the question of how we are to live as disciples here and now resonate with us as we discern daily how to follow Jesus in the interim before He comes again in glory.

As the momentum of Ordinary Time increases with the approach of the end of the Liturgical Year and the concluding celebration of Christ the King, the scriptures compel us once again to live out the twofold commandment to love God with our whole heart, mind, soul, and love our neighbor as we love ourselves. The Lord invites us to stay awake – an instruction that looks forward to Christ's second coming and to the beginning of a new Liturgical Year with Advent. The Master invites us to share His joy by sharing the talents He has given us. This leads us to the crowning solemnity of Christ the King.

We proclaim Christ victorious! Christ sits on His glorious throne. It is He Who will judge and separate the righteous from the unrighteous. Yet our responsibility as disciples is not over. Christ the King continues to call us to follow, to feed, to provide drink, to visit prisoners, to care for the least among us. Our church and our world depend on us accepting this call to discipleship. Our living out of the Paschal Mystery is a statement of gratitude for the grace of salvation given by God in Jesus through the Holy Spirit. We do not rest in our life of discipleship until we finally rest with all the souls of the faithful departed in God's eternal life and love.

From “*The Sourcebook*,” published by Liturgy Training Publications, Archdiocese of Chicago.

Today’s Feast – Reflecting On The Gospel

Dance is a rhythmic movement of the body. Most often we dance to music. We are delighted to dance with another (or others). Most couples in love choose to dance. We dance at weddings. Some cultures dance at funerals. It is touching to observe even very young children begin to sway and stomp their feet to the beat of music in their own child-dance. Dance brings delight, communicates, is expressive of an inner life.

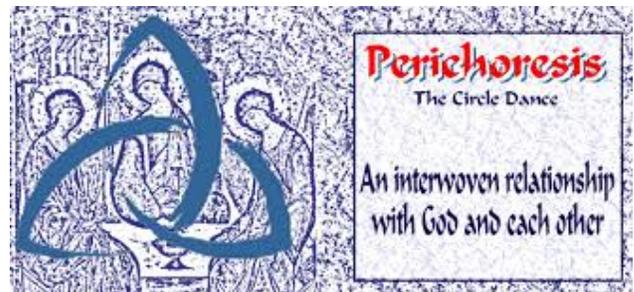
While we usually don’t think of the three Persons of the Trinity as being for all eternity in a love-dance, a Greek term in theology actually tries to capture this. The term is *perichoresis*. It refers to the inner-penetration of the three divine Persons with one another. God, however, is not static but dynamic, is the source of all life, is undiminished love. We can well imagine that God’s delight in the divine Self and in the humans made in the divine image spills over in an eternal love-dance. *Perichoresis* is the music of God’s heart evident in the delight of creation.

The Holy Trinity desires that we humans participate in this love-dance. We are destined to be with God now and forever. God chose to create and redeem humanity in an unequalled act of love. The readings today reminds us that God is gracious, sharing divine Life with us: “God so loved” us that God “gave His only Son” so that “the world might be saved.” Yes, God sent the Son so that we might have Life. Divine Life and love extend beyond the inner intimacy of

the three Persons of the Holy Trinity to us in an eternal, shared love-dance drawing us toward a fuller share in God. This is salvation: a share in God, in God’s Life, in the divine *perichoresis*.

The mystery of the Trinity calls us to go both beyond ourselves and deeper into ourselves – to an intimacy with God that delights us and brings us to share that delight with others. And so the Trinitarian grace, love, and fellowship is manifested in our midst. God is triune mystery, but even more mystery-laden is that God shares divine Self with us in such a gracious manner and “receives us” as God’s very own.

This gospel posits three possible life-outcomes: might not perish, might have eternal Life, might be saved. These outcomes are why the Father sent the Son. The Spirit empowers us to receive God’s love, to believe in the Son, and to yearn for divine Life. But we must *choose* to believe. Do we? We must *choose* to dance. Do we?



Living The Paschal Mystery

It is awesome to think that God invites us to share in such a great mystery as the Life of the Holy Trinity! It seems as though God’s graciousness never ends – not only with sending the Son, but further with inviting us into the divine *perichoresis*. In this context of shared Life and love we might think of the

simple, ordinary ways we reach out to others – a smile, a helping hand, a kind word – as ways we actually manifest the mystery and majesty of our triune God. Such love as this can only be matched by those who share in divine Life. We are to be in relationship with each other as the three divine Persons of the Holy Trinity are in relationship with each other. This sounds impossible to us humans who experience hurts, broken relationships, lack of graciousness so much of the time. Perhaps this is why the mystery of the Holy Trinity has been revealed to us: as God’s beloved who have been saved by the Son and given Life in the Spirit, as those created in God’s image, as those who dance with delighted hearts.

The challenge of today’s readings is to move them from the doctrinal level to the “heart” level.

- I experience God’s love and Presence when... This helps me love and be present to others in that...
- I experience God as loving trinity of Persons when...
- What helps me choose to believe in the Son and His saving mission is...



About Liturgy: The Greeting At The Beginning of Eucharist

The end of today’s second reading is one of the greeting that the Presider may choose to use after the Sign of the Cross at the beginning of Eucharist (“The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all”). The other two choices given in the *Roman Missal* are also taken from Scripture: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:3) and “the Lord be with you” (Ruth 2:4). Our response (“And with your spirit”) is also from scripture (Galatians 6:18), though it is a paraphrase. The General Instruction to the Roman Missal gives us the reason for this greeting: “by means of the Greeting the Presider signifies the presence of the Lord to the assembled community. By this greeting and the people’s response, the mystery of the church gathered together is made manifest” (No. 50).

In actual practice, it seems as though the greeting as we hear it in the second reading is the one most often chosen and perhaps this is as it should be. This is the only one of the three greetings that expressly names all three Persons of the Holy Trinity. This emphasizes for us not only that the “Lord is present” but that the *Trinity* is present. All liturgy is trinitarian; that is, all three Persons of the Holy Trinity help form us into the Body of Christ, the church. Care must be taken that this greeting isn’t something we respond to by rote. It is a reminder that we celebrate liturgy because the Holy Trinity is present and calls us to share in this divine action.

Memorial Service



This coming Friday, June 16th, at 10:30 a.m., we will celebrate a Memorial Funeral Liturgy for Zeke Loretto, beloved husband of Lena. A luncheon reception, under the direction of St. Martha's Guild, will follow in the parish hall. The Committal will take place at 2:15 p.m. that afternoon.

*Eternal Rest grant unto him, O Lord,
And let Perpetual Light shine upon him.*



Next weekend, June 17th and 18th, we will observe the Father's Day Weekend with a special blessing for all Fathers, Grandfathers, Great Grandfathers, Godfathers, Foster Fathers, Step-fathers, and all those men who so lovingly nurture and give life. Also, if you wish, there are Father's Day Novena Cards available on the credenza. Simply fill it out, include the stipend, and the cards will be placed at the Tabernacle for the following nine days.

Thank You

...to those who cleaned the church and parish hall for last weekend: **Jun Bajet, Angela Bueno, Emilia Freking, Rose Salamanca, Carole Miller, Heather Hatteroth, and Steve Rojek.**

...to those who cleaned and maintained the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall: **Robert Goncalves, Harlan Young, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, and Steve Rojek.**

...to **Dilcia Aparacio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens.

...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week:

Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan Young, Rowena Cayaban, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Belen Farin, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.

...to **our counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections.

...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week: **Harlan Young, Melodye Costanza, Yvette Young, Joe Fanfa, Bev Iacona and Rowena Cayaban.**

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week's donations: **Frank Russo and Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Bob Carvalho, Carole**

Miller, Dave Costanza and Dilcia Aparicio.

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keep watch over our vehicles during weekend liturgies: **Don Benson, Steve Rojek and Bob Goncalves.**

The uncertain future of parish life

One of the most striking things in **America's** article (Mar. 6) about St. Michael's, in Axtel, Kan., is how atypical the parish is in today's Catholic Church. Having a stable population in a small town, with a pastor who has been there for some time and knows everybody by name, is not representative of most parishes. But recent books about parish life and leadership give us a more comprehensive picture.

Great Catholic Parishes by William E. Simon Jr., based on interviews with 244 pastors of parishes designated as healthy and vibrant, identified four essential qualities that these communities have in common: sharing leadership; fostering spiritual maturity and planning for discipleship; "excelling" on Sundays; and evangelizing in intentional, structured ways.

Over 80 percent of the pastors interviewed had some form of structured shared leadership, and many praised their professional lay leaders as among their most valuable assets. (There are about 40,000 lay ecclesial ministers active in parishes today.) Fully 90 percent of the pastors identified the

spiritual growth of their parishioners as the biggest strength of their parishes, and many of them made use of some widely available programs. (Simon lists a number of these but surprisingly omits Renew International.) Spiritual growth increases participation in parish life and leads to a greater sense of discipleship.

On the third essential practice of great parishes, 76 percent of the pastors described vibrant, welcoming Sunday liturgies as crucial. But these require thorough planning and a well-organized group of volunteers. Hospitality and attention to the needs of children are also critical to success on Sundays. The problem is that so many Catholics no longer attend Sunday Mass on a regular basis (more on that below). Finally, slightly more of the pastors mentioned evangelization as an area needing growth than listed it as a strength. Many felt that the whole parish needs to be on board to sustain an evangelizing culture, and many mentioned Pope Francis as a model of evangelization.

Rethinking Parish Structure

William J. Byron, S. J., reinforces the notion that parish leadership must be shared in his recent book *Parish Leadership: Principles and Practices*, but he adds that the leadership must integrate Catholic social teaching in the life of the parish for it to be effective. (He also provides an excellent, succinct summary of Catholic social teaching in his second chapter.) For Byron, parish leadership, especially the pastor, must be "servant leadership" rather than the top of a pyramid, as the latter is abnormal and corrupting.

A much more comprehensive study of Catholic parishes is *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century* by the staff of the

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), led by Charles E. Zech. Synthesizing data from a number of recent surveys, the authors use the 1989 Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life as a baseline of comparison. Trends that had begun at that time have continued and intensified, but the operative word in both studies is *change*. Following are the most significant changes in the last 30 years:

—The U. S. Catholic population has moved from the Northeast and upper Midwest to the South and Southwest, leaving empty, old and decaying physical plants in urban centers in the Northeast (e.g., Buffalo closed 97 parishes between 2000 and 2010) and large populations in the South are without churches (Atlanta added 10 new parishes during the same period). People move but parishes do not. Overall, the number of parishes in the United States declined from 19,559 in 1990 to 17,337 in 2015 while the Catholic population increased proportionally, remaining at about 25 percent of the total U.S. population. There is a clear mismatch between the people and the physical plants.

—Although the priest shortage had already begun by the time of the Notre Dame study in 1989, it has accelerated since then. In 1990, there were just over 34,000 diocesan priests in the U.S.; in 2014 there were 16,462 active diocesan priests. In 2014, 3,448 parishes were without a resident priest. Parish leadership has been supplemented by permanent deacons (there were more than 18,000 in 2014) and an amazing increase in lay ecclesial ministers (up to almost 40,000 in most recent estimates).

—There have been significant decreases in Mass attendance and participation in the sacraments. More than 100 million in the United States in 2014 were baptized Catholics and more than 78 million self-identified as Catholic, but only 18.7 million attended Mass on a weekly basis. Another 38 million attended Mass about once a month. In 1965, 55 percent of Catholics attended Mass weekly; that was down to 41 percent in 1985 and 24 percent in 2010. Younger Catholics and millennials are especially unlikely to attend.

—There has been a major increase in cultural/ethnic diversity in the American church. In the 1980s, foreign-born Catholics were just above 10 percent of the U.S. Catholic population; in 2014 this category had increased to 25 percent, or 16.8 million people. Much of this immigration is from Latin America, but there are also foreign-born Catholics from dozens of countries across Asia and Africa. About a third of all Catholic parishes serve a particular racial, ethnic, cultural and/or linguistic community, and some serve two or more of these communities. This has contributed to “parish hopping,” or “parish shopping.” In any case, cultural diversity represents the future of the church in the United States.

As a result of all of the above, there is a widespread reconfiguration (closing, merging, and clustering) of parishes underway in the United States, with a concomitant change in the expectations of leadership. Sometimes this entails a single priest pastoring several parishes; other times it means a team of priests who share responsibility for several parishes; and in still other cases parishes are entrusted to deacons or laypersons (the number in this category peaked at

566 in 2004) or to parish life coordinators (369 in 2015). Parishes are becoming larger and more complex—a far cry from the rural parish in Axtel, Kan.!

What kind of men are the priests?

These changes in parish life in the last 30 years pose significant challenges to parish leadership for the foreseeable future. Are we in fact preparing men for these changing forms of leadership? Another recent study of seminary formation at the theologate level by Katarina Schuth, *Seminary Formation: Recent History, Current Circumstances, New Directions*, gives a picture of what we can expect. Analyzing a wealth of data leads to some disturbing conclusions.

Schuth writes, “The capability of the church in the United States to meet the spiritual needs of the growing and changing Catholic population depends on the qualities and numbers of men and women preparing for ministry.” For the past 20 years there have been barely 500 ordinations a year; meanwhile the Catholic population has grown from 47 million to 71 million since 1967. This mismatch is one of the factors in the reconfiguration of parishes and will only increase as the older clergy die or retire.

There has also been increasing emphasis on priestly identity and ministry, with seminarians taking courses separately from lay students (which is more true in diocesan seminaries than in schools of theology operated by religious orders). Furthermore, it seems that most bishops chose seminaries where this is so. Keeping seminarians separate from lay students is hardly helping to prepare them for collaborative leadership when they are ordained. There is a

generational divide between the older priests who exemplify the “servant leader” model and younger ones representing the “cultic model” who see themselves as set apart from their lay colleagues.

In one of the book’s commentaries, Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I., a longtime seminary rector, mentions that today’s seminarians are not being prepared to be spiritual guides, to give one-on-one spiritual direction or to guide people in prayer and discernment. (Recall that spiritual growth is the second essential characteristic of *Great Catholic Parishes*, mentioned above.). He is also concerned that today’s seminarians do not have enough contact with the poor and are less interested in ecumenism and interfaith dialogue, being inclined to minister only to their own kind.

Taken together, these books raise some basic questions: Is the People of God ecclesiology of Vatican II being eclipsed by an older, more hierarchical ecclesiology among seminarians and younger priests? What model of church is operative for them?

And with only 18 million out of 78 million self-identified Catholics attending weekly Mass, is the territorial parish the only or even the most suitable basis for Christian communities today? Some years ago, Karl Rahner pointed out that “the parochial principle has never governed alone in the *history* of the Church’s pastoral ministry,” and he goes on to mention wandering apostles, the monasteries, the missionary migration of monks, the mendicant orders, the sodalities and confraternities and other forms of “extra parochial” ministry. In today’s highly mobile and urbanized societies, which increasingly

include Asia and Africa, geographical proximity is not the basis of communal life. In contrast to the small town in Kansas mentioned above, people living in urban high-rises or in sprawling suburbs do not even know their neighbors. City parishes are so large that there is no sense of “neighborly togetherness.” The territorial parish today is not what it was in the past.

Some dioceses have been trying to imagine some combination of worship communities, resource communities and small communities for education and evangelization. The goal should be the pastoral care of all of the people, not the maintenance of earlier forms of ecclesial organization. Should we continue to build new large physical plants which will be empty 30 or 40 years from now? We need a new, creative, more imaginative approach to serving the pastoral needs of the people of God than the parochial principle inherited from the village and agrarian societies of the past. Axtel, Kan., is not a model for tomorrow!

Antioch Shelter Project (ASP)
Current Status – June 2017

Please pray for our June 8th meeting with the new Antioch City Manager, Ron Bernal, as we seek ways to move forward with the city regarding an emergency shelter for women and children.

Pray specifically for an agreement to use city property on Delta Fair Blvd. This property was zoned for an emergency shelter for women and children by Antioch City Council in the fall of 2016. In April 2016, Antioch City Council unanimously directed the previous City

Manager to work out an agreement for the shelter.

Once we get an agreement and an approved building design, we will launch our fundraising efforts to make this shelter a reality! Home Aid Northern California has provided a pro bono architect, Ralph Strauss, to help us with this design and city approval. Home Aid will be attending the June 8th meeting with us.

Please pray for God’s clarity regarding your role with the growing homelessness problem in greater Antioch and East Contra Costa County, especially among single mothers and their children.

Our website: www.antiochcasherter.org has our current information. Or follow us on Facebook: Antioch Shelter Project. Tamika’s phone number is 510-384-4292 and Gary’s is 206-962-1496. Our email address is: antiochsp@gmail.com. Let us know if you have any questions, suggestions, or are interested in helping.

Blessings,

Gary Kingsbury
Antioch Shelter Project
206-962-1496