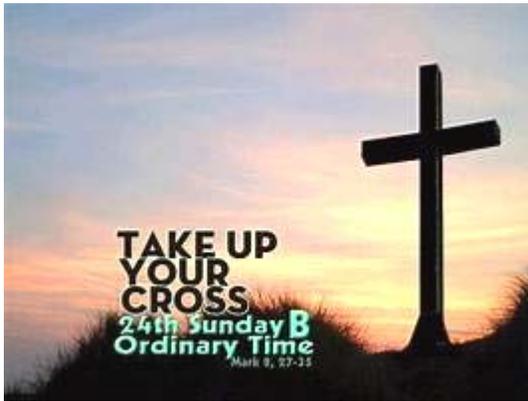


For The Bulletin Of September 16, 2018



From Father Robert

There is a story of the US civil rights era where one person told another how much he admired Martin Luther King Jr. The second person responded that there was a group who was going to march with Dr. King. If he was an admirer, would he like to join them in the march? “No,” the first person said. “I could get hurt doing that. I’m an admirer, not a follower.”

Jesus tells the crowds that to be one of His followers one must be ready to “take up His cross, and follow Me.” Jesus does not need admirers. But He does want followers. And those followers might get hurt. In fact, they are told to take up their cross. The Christian life is not likened to a recliner, but a cross. As founder and leader of this movement, Jesus foretells His own suffering and death. This is met with incredulity on Peter’s part so much so that he rebukes Jesus! True to form, Peter’s rebuking of Jesus comes on the heels of his confession that Jesus is the Christ. It seems Peter misunderstood the implication of his own confession. This should be a warning for us too who confess Jesus as Christ, Lord, or any

other title we choose. Our own understanding of who Jesus is, and what He is to do, may not conform to the reality of who Jesus is, and what He is to do. Though Peter had been one of the first disciples called by Jesus, and had witnessed His ministry up to this point, he still misunderstood.

This story of “Peter’s confession” forms the centerpiece of the Gospel of Mark. Not only is it in the literal center of the gospel but it is also the narrative center as well. We the readers learned in Mark 1: 1 that this is the gospel of Jesus *Christ*, the Son of God. Now in chapter 8, for the first time in the gospel, a human being (Peter) recognizes Jesus for Who He is, the Christ. Not until the death of Jesus will another human being (the centurion) recognize Jesus as Son of God, the second title of Jesus from Mark 1:1. This becomes a literary way of expressing Jesus’ identity. He is Christ, and He will suffer and die. Only after doing so can He be fully understood as Son of God.

Nowhere in the Hebrew Scriptures, what we call the Old Testament, does it say that the Messiah would die, much less even suffer. This is likely why Peter rebukes Jesus after Jesus says He will suffer and die. Peter thinks Jesus has it all wrong: the Christ is not going to suffer, but will rule triumphantly. Jesus, however, knows otherwise. Jesus can only be the Christ, the Son of God, by suffering and dying on the cross. His disciples are called not to be mere admirers, but to take up their crosses and follow Him.

Living The Paschal Mystery

It’s so much more convenient and easy to be an admirer of Jesus rather than a

follower. But Jesus is not calling admirers. He wants those who will take up their own cross in following Him. Our crosses will be those burdens we carry by doing justice, as Jesus did. We will bear our crosses when we tend to the sick, shelter the homeless, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give drink to the thirsty, and more. In classical Catholic terms, we refer to these as the corporal works of mercy. Performing these acts of mercy takes us outside of ourselves. It places others' needs before our own. We die to self so that others might live. Following Jesus is not about convenience, easy living, or mere admiration. We only need to see the image of the cross to be reminded of that. As Jesus had His cross, we, too, have ours. To be His disciples, we are to take it up and carry it.

How do you hear today's gospel? Is it too much? How will you respond?

- In what ways can you “crucify” your own interests for the sake of others?
- How do your actions sometimes give conflicting answers to Jesus' question in today's gospel: “Who do you say that I am?”
- In whom have you seen the face of the crucified Christ?
- What is the most difficult and challenging cross that you carry? Has it ever been a means of resurrection in your life?
- Has “knowing” Jesus ever posed a serious challenge to you?



About Liturgy: Liturgy and Social Justice

Sometimes there is a debate among people in our church about which is more important, liturgy or doing works of justice. We hear this dichotomy in phrases like, “As long as I love others, I don't really have to go to Liturgy;” or its opposite, “As long as I go to Liturgy, I'll be a good Catholic Christian.”

The truth, however, is that both worship and social justice are necessary because both are really one and the same action. One cannot love others as Christ loved us without giving praise to God in the gathering of the assembly. This is because the very command of Jesus, if we wanted to remember Him, was to “do this” that is, eat and drink of His Body and Blood. Furthermore, one cannot give true worship to the Father without living as Jesus lived. This is because the very command of Jesus, if we wanted to gain the life he promised, was to “take up your cross, and follow me,” that is, love the outcast, dine with the sinner, reconcile with the enemy, and put aside your needs and lose your life in order to save it.

What we do on Sunday in the Eucharist is the mirror reflection of how we live our lives in service to those in need throughout the week. How we serve others wherever we go in our daily lives reflects the authenticity of our prayer on Sunday. For Christians, proclaiming the Word, sharing the Eucharist, serving those in need, and carrying our cross with joy in the world is one continuous act of worship and discipleship.

John Paul II said it this way: “We cannot delude ourselves: by our mutual love and, in particular, by our concern

for those in need we will be recognized as true followers of Jesus. This will be the criterion by which the authenticity of our Eucharist is judged.”



Neighborhood Clean Up

Last Saturday was the monthly Antioch Neighborhood Cleanup. We met along the DeAnza Trail off of Desrys Avenue. It was a small group, possibly due to the very warm weather, however we still accomplished a great deal. I am grateful to **Jon and Ofelia Langhirt** for joining me. Please know that you are always welcome to join us on the first Saturday of each month, weather permitting, in cleaning up a specific neighborhood somewhere in Antioch. It’s a great way to get to know our city, its neighborhoods, and our neighbors! Please see the Antioch PD website for details in advance of each month’s cleanup.



Congratulations to **Clem Bushman, Charles Frank, Jeff Boatright, Michael Bacchus, Rey Dollete, Hugo Quintanilla, Antonio Quintanilla, Hector Quintanilla, Bill Hatteroth, and Harlan Young** who completed the Fourth Degree exemplification on

Saturday, September 8th. For more information on how you can join our Knights of Columbus Council, just ask any of the men sporting their identifying green polo shirt and Knights of Columbus badge.



...to those who faithfully clean and prepare the sanctuary and parish hall for each weekend: **Mency Osborne, Carole Miller, Emilia Freking, Angela Bueno, Heather Hatteroth, Al Cosce, and Jean Rogers.**

...to those who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall throughout the week: **Steve Rojek, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, Mary Teresa Chandler, Harlan Young, and Father Robert.**

...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, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, 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:

Jeannine Ford, Melodye Costanza, Yvette Young, Alicia Perez, Beth Enea, Kathy Augusta, Harlan Young, Joe Fanfa and Bev Iacona.

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

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Dave Costanza (Lead), Carole Miller, Vince Augusta, Richard Enea and Sherry Webb.**

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



The Art & Environment Committee invites you to join them for the annual change of environment from Summer's Ordinary Time to Fall's Ordinary Time. Many hands are needed to change the panels besides the Icons, place pumpkins, and prepare the trees. Coffee and pastries will be available in the morning and lunch at midday. I hope you will plan to join us Wednesday, September 26th, at 9:15 a.m. in the church.

