

**For The Bulletin Of
June 28, 2020**



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

From Father Robert

The seemingly paradoxical saying “Youth is wasted on the young” is attributed to George Bernard Shaw. Deep wisdom is conveyed in this short statement, and it causes us to reflect not only on our past but even our present, and none of us will be younger than we are today. The comedian George Carlin asked the paradoxical question, “If you try to fail and you succeed, which have you done?”

The Christian Life is marked by paradox, the greatest of which is the God human Jesus. But many more paradoxes abound: death leads to life, to give is to receive, and emptying oneself is the means to fulfillment.

The gospel today reflects some of these fundamental Christian paradoxes as well: “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” This kind of teaching is fairly common among religious wisdom figures, and we shouldn’t be surprised to hear it on the lips of Jesus. Prior to this aphorism, Jesus claims that anyone loves father or mother more than Jesus is not worthy of Him. This may sound off-putting to modern ears. It’s interesting to note that Matthew seems to

have modified his source material for this passage, which likely read something like what we find in Luke 14:26: “If any one comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” The term, “hate” is much stronger than the “love more” we find in Matthew. The point of course is that Jesus ought to be the center and focus of one’s life. Not even family relations should come first.

Those worthy of Jesus are the ones who take up their cross and follow Him. This does not mean to seek out suffering and place oneself in harm’s way merely for the sake of it. It certainly does not give license for Christians to act in obnoxious ways so they can consider the consequences of that behavior “suffering for Christ.” Rather, taking up one’s cross refers to managing any and all of the difficulties and challenges that come with following Jesus. The image of the cross calls to mind violent and public execution at the hands of the state.

Moreover, it foreshadows Jesus’ own end on a cross. His followers should not shy away from such duties that flow naturally from being a Christian. As Jesus did, to gain life we must give it away. This is the ultimate paradox.





The paschal mystery is a paradox par excellence. Suffering and death lead to new life and resurrection. There can be no resurrection without death. There is no new life without casting aside the old. When we listen to the words of Jesus in today’s gospel, we might be especially attuned to the notion of paradox, expressed in the saying about find out lives – for to find our lives, we must lose them. WE surrender ourselves to the will of God and thereby find ultimate meaning and purpose. As St. Augustine said, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in You, Lord.”

When we busy ourselves with projects, deadlines, and goals that give us a sense of urgency and meaning, we might be missing the quintessential meaning of our lives, which may be found in stillness and quiet. It’s the paradox reflected in the U2 song “Running to Stand Still.” During this 13th Sunday in Summer’s Ordinary Time we might pause to consider our ultimate purpose and meaning. Are we running to stand still? Are we restless until we rest in the Lord? Only by giving over our very selves will we receive even more. By embracing the cross, Jesus experienced exaltation and new life, showing us the way to the same.

If you find these paradoxes difficult to comprehend, understand, and accept, you are not alone. They definitely raise questions for further reflection and meditation.

- In the first reading from the second book of Kings, we find an example of hospitality in the care given to Elisha. How does hospitality figure into the life of your family?
- The psalmist proclaims, “Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.” For which of God’s blessings are you particularly thankful today?
- St. Paul urges the Romans to think of themselves as “dead to sin and alive for God in Christ Jesus.” Within your daily life, what are the actions or habits that show you are a person “Living for God?”
- Jesus tells His disciples, “Whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.” What does the cross look like that you are called to carry?



For the past several weeks, our Reopening Committee has been working to prepare for the reopening of the church for in-person worship. We have studied the Directives/Guidelines from both the County as well as the bishop. The diocese has required the development of a plan, that when written, is to be submitted to the bishop for his review and approval. Once his approval has been given, we are then allowed to set a date when the church will once again be able to be used for liturgies on the weekend and weekdays,

including baptisms, weddings, funerals, and reconciliation.

This past Wednesday, our plan was presented to the Committee for their review and approval before being sent on to the bishop.

Some of the aspects of the plan include the recruitment of volunteers who will be vital when the church reopens: parking lot security and direction (cars will be parked in every other stall), ushers/greeters, cleaning teams.

Parishioners will also be asked to make reservations for the liturgy they wish to attend in order to not go over the allowed number of people in the building. We may not exceed 100 persons, including our priests, liturgical ministers, music ministers, ushers, which means approximately 85 parishioners may make reservations for each liturgy.

Parishioners will be required to wear masks and bring their own personal hand sanitizer. Social distancing is required; married couples and families may sit together, however all others will be required to observe the 6' distancing requirement. Ushers will direct seating so it is very possible you will not be seated in your usual place.

Only our organist and one cantor will lead the music for liturgies. Singing will be limited to the acclamations (psalm, gospel acclamation, the acclamations surrounding the Eucharistic Prayer).

The offering baskets will not be passed through the pews; the Presentation of the Gifts will not take place in the usual way but the gifts of bread and wine will be placed on the Credence Table from the

beginning of the liturgy; we may not hold hands at the praying of the Lord's Prayer; there is to be no touching at the Sign of Peace, just a bow to one another; Holy Communion will be distributed at the conclusion of the liturgy; parishioners will be ushered from the church to assure distancing is observed; and there cannot be any gathering, greeting, or grouping before or after each liturgy. Cleaning teams will then sanitize and disinfect the worship space, all surfaces, and bathrooms between each liturgy.

So, as you can see, worship is going to be much different from what we are used to here at St. Ignatius of Antioch. I know that change is difficult and challenging, but with open hearts and minds, and with gratitude for the privilege of being able to worship once again in our church building, our hope is that you will respond with a positive spirit to what is being asked of us in order to return to in-person worship.

We will keep you informed of our progress towards an opening date once everything is in place, teams have been recruited and trained, all requirements for the reopening have been met, and the permission of the bishop has been granted.

Again, thank you for your patience with the process. In the meantime, we are grateful that the liturgy continues to be recorded by **Lisa Lombardo** and then posted on our parish You Tube channel which is available on our website, left hand side, just above the Facebook links. The You Tube presentation is excellent! The sound and picture are clear and are a great improvement from the previous form of live-streaming. Again, we are

your desire. This breaks my heart. The Liturgy and the New Testament witness to the solidarity the Risen One enjoys with the beauty and splendor of creation. Now that wounded Body will hurt all the more.

We cannot help but think of all the immigrant children and their families and relatives who suffer separation, deportation, and possible death. These are our sisters and brothers in Christ. They are members of our one human family. When they suffer and die, we suffer and die. They are the Body of Christ whose Blood we need to cherish. If they are lost, we are wounded.

We cannot help but think of the people marching in the streets witnessing to a new consciousness. As the Liturgy of the Church proclaims, we are but one human family. Together we live and move and have our very being in the presence of God. We are no less than the Body of Christ whose Blood must be held precious. There are many gifts in this one Body and those gifts are you, each and everyone.

So, if you are on the verge of birth or the threshold of death, precious are you. If you are from here or there, or look like this or that, precious are you. If you are old or young, delicate or robust, rich or poor, precious are you. If you are failed or successful, afraid or courageous, certain or uncertain, precious are you. If you are you, precious are you. Together we are the Body of Christ whose Blood is sacred. Nonetheless, remember the Body of Christ is always ascending, always growing, always surprising in

every flower that grows, every bird that sings, every child who laughs, every person who cries, and everyone you will ever meet.

Many of us come to the Table of Christ's generous self-giving to be nourished by the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation. May we become what we eat and be transformed by what we drink.

Thank you, Holy Community, for being the loving presence of Jesus in this World.

Father Tom Bonacci, CP, Interfaith Peace Center

The Christian's role in social and environmental justice

Jun 22, 2020

by [Samantha Panchèvre](#)



READ

Chapter 6, section 3: Ecological Conversion

In this section, Pope Francis empowers Christians by offering "suggestions for an ecological

spirituality grounded in the convictions of our faith" (217).

He makes the case that Christians need to undergo a profound, interior "ecological conversation," or the process whereby the effects of our relationship with Jesus Christ becomes evident in our relationships with the world around us. Francis explains: "The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent... Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience" (217).

Furthermore, for meaningful change to occur, ecological conversions need to go mainstream within Christianity. "Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds... The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion" (219).

REFLECT

Spirituality is at the center of true ecological conversion.

Christians are well-positioned to lead on matters of social and environmental justice because we are called to live like Jesus, who

emphasized caring for each other and the environment. Having a strong sense of spirituality is what can keep us inspired, even after the good intentions behind our commitments may start to fade. Francis describes this type of inspiration as an "interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity" in his 2013 apostolic exhortation, [*Evangelii Gaudium*](#).

In *Laudato Si'*, Francis says: "As believers, we do not look at the world from without but from within, conscious of the bonds with which the Father has linked us to all beings. By developing our individual, God-given capacities, an ecological conversion can inspire us to greater creativity and enthusiasm in resolving the world's problems and in offering ourselves to God 'as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable' (*Romans 12:1*)" (220).

ACT

So, how can you align your spirituality with the imperative to care for our common home? A 2018 blog post by Annelise Hardegee, a Christian stay-at-home mom, [suggests](#) the following: "It's time to stop putting our focus on fighting against science, but instead, seeing science as a revelation of the mysteries and glories of God's creation. Find those beautiful and interesting things around you that glorify God and start trying to find ways to protect them."

Source material:

 [Laudato Si': Chapter 6, section 3](#)

Blind to equality yet?

Jun 19, 2020

by Sister Joan Chittister



An advocate for racial equality is livestreamed in Phoenix during the "Peaceful, Prayerful Protest" June 13. The Spanish banner in the cellphone reads "Black Lives Matter." (CNS/Tony Gutierrez)

Back in the quiet of their homes, the world is awash in questions.

The first question: What is going on? And what supports it?

The answer: What's going on?! Racism is going on! Everywhere.

But what do you mean, *racism*? The woman was clearly troubled. "Things were so good. I thought this was all over. And now look at this: Looting and brick throwing and fire. I don't mind if they protest. They have a perfect right to protest. But like this? Are we going backwards?"

And she meant it. For her, things have been good. Where did all this come from — all of a sudden? How can we allow "these people" — as if they were not "our people" — to destroy the good?

The second question: I thought we solved this. What happened to start it again? Then there's this question: Why does it just keep coming up?

Let's look at those questions a little. *How long has this been going on?*

First, never mind the racists around the edges. After all, there will always be someone who's insulting someone somewhere.

Right. Forget them. Let's start with the important things: like the church, for instance.

In that case, in the 16th century, theologians supported the theology of limitation — that God created some people inferior to others who were to be enslaved for their own good. They argued the morality of white racism and its righteous control over those — the natives — who had no capacity to receive the faith, they said, or live human lives. *Despite the quality and artistry of the civilizations they had built before us.*

This conquest and enslavement of whole peoples is a seedbed of white shame that has lasted for decades, for centuries, and must finally be weeded out now.

One man, Dominican Fr. Bartolomé de Las Casas, debated those ideas at the highest levels of church and state until 1537 when Pope Paul III issued *Sublimis Deus*, declaring that Indians were rational and in 1542, King Charles V [promulgated the New Laws](#) that outlawed the enslavement of Indians.

How long have these ideas been in our DNA? For centuries, all documents to the contrary. And do you notice? No one wrote a document saying that white superiority is a myth, a sin, a crime against humanity. Only that slavery was forbidden.

The white scandal of natural superiority marked the Western World and has never

been foresworn. Worse, it lives in pockets up and down all the Main Streets of the White World yet — all proof to the contrary.

**What happened to bring this up again?
We thought it was solved.**

Systemic racism has marked every institution, every major social system since the first slave boat arrived in U.S. ports and the first slave trading began in the public markets. More, it has only gotten worse over the years.

From the moment of emancipation on, [law was used](#) to control even the occupation of freed slaves who were confined to agriculture, domestic work, and service jobs — just what they had been doing before emancipation. But none of those occupations were protected by the labor legislation that dealt with jobs in other categories. No laws defined the wages, benefits, working conditions or protection from discrimination in agriculture, or domestic help, or service jobs. Which means that a whole population of people were enslaved without being enslaved. There simply was no real "getting ahead."

[Jim Crow laws](#) managed to erase most of what were meant to be the gains that came from emancipation. As in no drinking at white water fountains in the heat of the day. So slaves were enslaved without being enslaved. Go figure.

Later, even after the move for new civil rights legislation in our own time, the system managed to get around them. Medical care was refused to the neediest people in the United States by doctors who wouldn't accept the little health care blacks had access to for their children.

Inner city schools were under-resourced and teachers denied the materials they needed to develop their classroom preparations. In the end, then, it also affected higher educational opportunities for children who would then lack that background.

Real estate was ghettoized. Once agents popularized the notion that one black family in a neighborhood lowered the value of every other house on the block, blacks couldn't buy a house there, however much they tried or however hard they worked.

Ask Cesar Chavez what that lack of equal protection did to farmworkers in California, for instance. Or waiters and waitresses whose income has been reduced to getting tips rather than be able to depend on living wages. Let alone a job.

But most shameful of all were the run amok police departments that trapped blacks in their blackness. They stopped African American drivers and arrested them on bogus charges; they stopped blacks and seized their property, their time, and their freedom until they were finally released on no charges at all; they stopped blacks and arrested them on "suspicion" of nothing or gave double the attention to half the drugs that whites carried and with double or more the prison time; and they stopped and, we know with our own eyes now, they killed blacks — with impunity.

When did it begin? Centuries ago. When will it end? Maybe now. Maybe now that whites, too, are finally seeing the sin of it all and are embarrassed by it, pained by it, ashamed of it.

But, from where I stand, don't be sure that change can be taken for granted, that it will

move another inch unless we keep up the pressure to save our own souls if nothing else.

The fact is that sin is very hard for sinners to see. For instance, let me use another example. A little example. A tiny example that you may at first consider meaningless. To see what we have done as a church to counter systemic slavery, I went to the Catholic catechism to see what it said about certain kinds of social sin.

"Consideration of racism is grounded in fundamental scriptural beliefs: equal dignity of all people, created in God's image; and Christ's redemption of all," writes Jesuit Fr. Fred Kammer in the Jesuit Social Research Institute article "[Catholic Social Teaching and Racism](#)." He continues, "The Catechism of the Catholic Church spells this out: 'The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it.' "

And the U.S. bishops' conference document, "[Brothers and Sisters to Us](#)," states: "Racism is not merely one sin among many; it is a radical evil that divides the human family."

Get it? Read it carefully. We're all about equality — and we can't even get them to slip in the notion that, [as the catechism says](#), "the equality of men *and women* rests essentially on their dignity as persons."

Keep going. Don't think it's over. Don't give up. Don't give in — and maybe someday blacks and whites, men and women will get those questions answered and the equality we promise, as well.

[Joan Chittister is a Benedictine sister of Erie, Pennsylvania.]

I want to see

by [Pat Marrin](#)



"The measure with which you measure will be measured out to you" (Matt 7:2).
2 Kgs 17:5-8, 13-15a, 18; Matt 7:1-5

As someone who has worn glasses since childhood, I appreciate the idea that our view of reality depends on the lenses we wear. No one is fully objective, free of prejudging (prejudice) or biases shaped by learned assumptions or past experiences that color our perceptions. Language itself defines our worldview. We see what we expect to see, want or need to see. Witnesses to the same event report things differently and are convinced that their version is correct. How many political arguments arise because otherwise intelligent people simply can't believe how anyone could hold views an opponent is espousing.

Jesus was keen to observe how vision determined everything else. People judged others for the same faults they had. Some couldn't see past their own interests, saw only enemies or were blind to obvious truths. Restoring physical sight was one of the key miracles he worked for the blind and one of more frustrating conditions he encountered in many religious leaders. The

poor and the simple could see what was hidden from the wise and learned.

Discipleship is about learning to see, and faith is the gift of deeper insight that enables believers to see the meaning of things and events. Empathy is the ability to see yourself in another, especially someone who is suffering. Historically, the widespread practice of slavery was possible only because conquering people convinced themselves that others were subhuman and could be owned and used as work animals or abused freely because they lacked human feelings or personal rights.

When Jesus asked blind Bartimaeus what he wanted, he answered with the most basic prayer we can pray: "Lord, I want to see." His life up to that time had been in darkness, crying out to a passing world. When Jesus opened his eyes, Bartimaeus' life began again as he left the sidelines and followed Jesus, who was on the road to Jerusalem. It is likely that this former blind man was with Jesus when he completed his mission on the cross and was revealed by his resurrection.

To pray for sight is risky, for we may see what we have avoided or could not bear to see about the world and our complicity in structures of disparity we benefit from. Poverty is a modern form of slavery, cheap labor and environmental destruction factored into a low consumer prices and higher profits. Comfort, convenience and entertainment for some requires the exploitation of others.

Besides the larger patterns of oppression that become visible when our eyes are opened, we may find small conversions occurring every day as we learn to see people who were formerly invisible, stereotyped, labeled, insignificant or threatening. Once

they become real people, relationships are possible. Our world expands as we discover more diversity but also the common humanity we share with everyone.

Ultimately, those who learn to see begin to recognize the image of God everywhere and in everyone. When this happens, we are not far from the Kingdom of God.

Debate the issues; don't destroy the statues

Jun 24, 2020

by [Michael Sean Winters](#)



A vandalized statue of St. Junipero Serra in San Francisco is seen June 19. (CNS/Reuters/David Zandman)

"History is written by the victors," we are told and of course that is true in one sense. But history is actually written by historians, and their interpretations and reinterpretations of events change. It is why a consequential historical personage like Queen Elizabeth I or Habsburg Emperor Maximilian I or Abraham Lincoln requires many biographers. It is why each subsequent generation of the peoples whose history is

bound up with these great historical figures must revisit their lives and pose new questions to them. It is why, over time, we learn that their flaws were often as great as their achievements.

Statues are a part of history's account and they tend to be only slightly less malleable than historiographical changes. Sir William Francis Butler was apparently the first person in English to [write out the sentiment](#) that "it is the victor who writes the history and counts the dead," and the tale is instructive. He was referring to the unknown number of members of the Gordon clan killed in the [Battle of Culloden in 1746](#), the last serious attempt to reclaim the British throne for the Catholic Stuarts. The United States is dotted with towns named for the victor of the battle, the Protestant Duke of Cumberland, who lent his name to mountains and to a mountain pass, as well as to Prince William County in Virginia. There are Cumberland Counties in Maine, New Jersey and North Carolina.

In England, his reputation declined with the revival of interest in Scottish history and letters (as well as the diminishment of the perceived threat of Catholicism), and a statue to him in London's Cavendish Square [was removed in 1868](#), not quite 100 years after it was erected. By then, Cumberland was no longer a Protestant hero but [the "butcher" of Culloden](#).

In the late 19th century, Britons might have been willing to tear down the duke's statue but there was no effort, and could have been no such effort, to strip his name from its American associations where anti-Catholicism was still pronounced. This was the era of anti-immigrant "[Blaine Amendments](#)," which aimed to keep public support from Catholic schools. Catholics were still routinely discriminated against in

the U.S. into the first half of the 20th century. [Oregon's Compulsory Education Act](#), a thinly veiled attempt to shut down Catholic schools, was passed in 1922, with support from that state's Masons and Ku Klux Klan. Six years later, when [Al Smith](#) became the first Catholic to run for the presidency, Protestants distributed palm cards in Florida [that read](#), "If he is chosen President, you will not be allowed to have, or read, a Bible."

So, when the Knights of Columbus erected a statue to Fr. Junipero Serra in what is now downtown Los Angeles in 1932, [a statue that was torn down last weekend](#), as when they [erected statues to Christopher Columbus](#) throughout the land in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they were taking a symbolic stand [against the Klan and its nativism](#). They were saying that there were Catholic roots in this land, some of which went back as far as the Protestant roots. They were saying that Italian-Americans and Mexican-Americans belonged here as much as Americans whose ancestors hailed from Protestant lands.

Vandalizing a statue erected for such reasons is as objectionable as it was to [toss the Pachamama statue into the Tiber](#) at last year's Amazon synod. If we are to debate whether or not Serra and Columbus still deserve a place in the American pantheon, let us debate the issue, not destroy the statues. Let us be mindful that what we might view as objectionable, others may cherish, and not because they are racists.

Four years after Serra's statue was erected in Los Angeles, a statue of Jefferson Davis was [installed in the rotunda of the state capitol in Kentucky](#). It goes without saying that erecting such a statue at such a time was not intended as a rebuke to the KKK, indeed there is no explanation for erecting such a

statue that does not, perforce, include a defense of white supremacy. Nor can we excuse Davis' views by saying they were widely held: In the 1860s, when Davis led the Confederacy, most of the world had come to recognize that slavery was evil.

I deplore vandalism, but no one should shed a tear for the removal of Confederate statues erected to nullify the emancipation of the Black Americans that the Civil War had accomplished. On both points, the record of the man and the motives of the statue-builders, monuments to Davis should be removed.

Serra came rather late in the spiritual conquest of Mexico, a conquest that was marred by violence from start to finish. If I were an Indigenous person, I would resent Serra and his fellow friars enormously because their arrival marked the beginning of a cultural genocide. There is no denying this. Serra, of course, did not look at it that way, not because he hated the native peoples. He didn't. It is one of the conundrums of evangelization in the Americas that it was benighted and paternalistic in the extreme, but no one who has read anything about the subject can doubt that the friars thought they were helping their Indigenous charges, that they sincerely loved them, and that many of the native peoples at that time loved them in return.

For example, in the late 16th century, according to the *Historia Ecclesiastica Indiana* written at the time by Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta, the Dominican Fathers took over the mission at Cuauhtinchan, the natives rebelled. They stripped the church of its ornamentation and attempted to starve the Dominican friars out by refusing to supply them with food. Why?

They demanded the return of the Franciscan friars who had first converted them.

I am no expert on the California missions, but from what I know of the missions there, and more broadly about how white Europeans interacted with native peoples, however problematic things got with Catholic missions, things got much worse for the native peoples when English-speaking Americans arrived and secularized the missions. The history of Spanish conquest was often brutal, but only the English took an exterminationist approach.

Serra evangelized in ways we would never think to do today, but if we had lived when he did, we are fooling ourselves if we think we would have evangelized in ways markedly different from those he employed. We should never examine such cases anachronistically, judging him by the standards of our day, not by the standards of his own time, in order to make him into a bad guy. It is wrong to simply tear down his statue on his own merits, and even more so when you consider the reasons that statue was erected in the first place, to demonstrate that Spainard Catholics were a part of the American story.

It is an odd fact of Western culture that while we nod when told the victors write history and see that they are the most likely to be memorialized in stone and statuary, nonetheless the most common human image in Western art is not a scene of victory: The crucifix does not portray human victory. Statues of the risen Lord or of the empty tomb are not unknown, but they pale by comparison to the sheer number and variety of crucifixion portrayals. Further, it is a remarkable fact that it is this image of the crucified that has so often moved the hearts of the serfs in Russia and the slaves in Alabama and the Indigenous of Chiapas.

Remarkable, too, that images of his mother have found such a prominent place in the spiritual devotion of the poor throughout history.

Monday, at Mass, the [Gospel of the day](#) was from the seventh chapter of Matthew:

Jesus said to his disciples: "Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye?"

In our multicultural society, we need to invite each other to discuss what constitutes a beam and what a splinter. America's puritanical streak often wears the mask of moral reformation, from the Salem witch trials in the 1690s and Prohibition in the 1920s, but the Gospel points us in a different direction. Those of us who are white Christians have a moral obligation to sympathize with the sadness an Indigenous person feels when he or she sees a statue of Columbus or Serra, but no one is obligated to applaud historical anachronism. The vandalism of the statues should stop. And we should all contemplate this humbling fact: None of us knows what things we do now will, 200 or 300 years hence, be viewed as barbaric or inhumane.

[Michael Sean Winters covers the nexus of religion and politics for NCR.]

How to live life to the fullest

Jun 24, 2020

by [Samantha Panchèvre](#)

[Spirituality](#)

READ

Chapter 6, section 4: Joy and Peace

In this section on joy and peace, Pope Francis encourages a Christian spirituality that includes a "contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption." He explains: "To be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfilment. Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little." Furthermore: "It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack" (222).

Then, the pope says we should avoid temptations to dominate others and to accumulate pleasures. He explains: "Such sobriety, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating. It is not a lesser life or one lived with less intensity. On the contrary, it is a way of living life to the full... Happiness means knowing how to limit some needs which only diminish us, and being open to the many different possibilities which life can offer" (223).



Cultivating sobriety and humility are linked to environmental protection too, since the absence of such virtues causes a number of imbalances. Francis writes: "It is no longer enough to speak only of the integrity of ecosystems. We have to dare to speak of the integrity of human life, of the need to promote and unify all the great values. Once we lose our humility, and become enthralled with the possibility of limitless mastery over everything, we inevitably end up harming society and the environment" (224).

REFLECT

To live life to the fullest, Francis insists we must cultivate inner peace.

Our spirituality can help us determine what peace looks like. Francis offers this view: "Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good because, lived out authentically, it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life. Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise, interminable and nerve-racking distractions, or the cult of appearances? Many people today sense a profound imbalance which drives them to frenetic activity and makes them feel busy, in a constant hurry which in turn leads them to ride rough-shod over everything around them. This too affects how they treat the environment. An integral ecology includes

taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us, whose presence 'must not be contrived but found, uncovered'" (225).

ACT

Finding inner peace is no small task. Thankfully, the pope offered some pointers when he wrote about mindfulness, or the practice of approaching life "with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next, which accepts each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full" (226).

A simple example of being mindful is giving thanks before meals. Francis writes: "That moment of blessing, however brief, reminds us of our dependence on God for life; it strengthens our feeling of gratitude for the gifts of creation; it acknowledges those who by their labours provide us with these goods; and it reaffirms our solidarity with those in greatest need" (227).

[Learn more about mindfulness](#) through this in-depth guide. It offers evidence for the many benefits (including healthy minds, bodies, and relationships) and offers guidance for how to be mindful in your everyday life. Then it describes specific habits for improving focus at work, combating anxiety, alleviating depression, improving parent-child relationships, and helping teachers in the classroom. At the end, there are recommendations for how to teach mindfulness to children and teens, as well as apps, podcasts, and books.

Source material:

 [Laudato Si': Chapter 6, section 4](#)

***Justice Corner by Carolyn Krantz,
Pastoral Associate***

In today's Gospel, Jesus is trying to create the culture of His new movement. One must separate oneself from the culture one grew up in. A follower of Jesus must embrace the cross. The crucial line is, "Whoever gives a cup of cold water to one of these little ones...will not lose his reward."

As Christians, we search out these "little ones"—the poor, the dispossessed, the despised of the world. We stand with them, we die with them. Sociologists say that when one is young, one cannot recognize the birth culture. It is like a fish who does not know it's in water. It is not aware of the element that gives it food and life. But when we grow older and rub shoulders with others and travel to distant places, we begin to grow in awareness of the culture that birthed us. We begin to analyze its good and bad qualities. We make choices for change. Other parts of the world have different foods, dress, customs and religious practices. They are not better or worse, just different. As an adult, we begin to look at the beliefs and values that underlie these customs.

"Culture in its broadest sense is our fundamental symbol-expression. It is our corporate task; and it takes part in all of our existential reality—our incompleteness and contingency, our brokenness and ambiguity, our sin and grace, our pathologies and peak experiences."(1) These current days have challenged us to examine all aspects of the American culture we are living. In doing so we are discovering all its lights and shadows. We see the sacrifice of essential workers and the brutality of some of our laws and customs. We are learning aspects of our history that make us proud and others that are shameful. To be followers of Jesus demands that we look critically at the water

in which we are swimming and make a shift in our thinking.

It is crucial that we use water as our baptismal symbol. Baptism calls us to adhere to a culture that looks differently at the poor and choose the "fundamental option" that liberation theologians talk about. It calls us to have "an morality which is rooted in our covenantal relationship to God" and "an acceptance of our ontological poverty rather than in a trust of power, security, escape, magic, and their seductions."(P. 71) It calls us to see all humans as our brothers and sisters regardless of differences. It calls us to look at the suffering of others and be one with them in the struggle for decency. "Recognizing the sacramental presence of Christ in the poor demand as much the eyes of faith, if not more than, seeing Christ's sacramental presence under the sign of bread."(p.83)

In times of unrest and change, it is this seeing of Christ that makes all the difference for us. We throw ourselves into the arms of God as Jesus did on the cross. When there are no answers, we must listen and know that the answers may be beyond us into the future, but in Christ all our questions will be resolved. It demands a vulnerability, an understanding of our smallness limited by our historical and spacial confinement. We trust that God will help us grow into the shape and form of the Christological Body to which our Baptism calls us. We must be salt of the earth so that Justice will roll down upon this time. What is this "being in Christ" asking of you in this time? How are you called to be the salt of the earth?

Kavanaugh, John Francis. *Following Christ in a Consumer Society*, (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books), 1989. p.59.

***Parish Perspective by
Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pastoral Associate
The Heat and The Cool***

Welcome to summer. Even though we've had triple digit temperatures within the last few months, it is now officially hot weather time. I can remember the times our parish has gone through without the aid of air conditioning (AC). There were times in the past when one of the AC units would go out in the church. Come Sunday that particular section affected would see the participants fanning themselves with whatever they could find in the pews or with what they were smart enough to procure before Mass started.

Then came the years when thieves would cannibalize our perfectly good units, leaving us with a pile of scrap; all for a few dollars' worth of copper. When we finally had all the AC units sheltered within sturdy iron fencing and cages the thieves turned to stripping the copper wire out of the main conduits leading to the church. That not only caused havoc with our cooling processes but cost us a small fortune in damages to sensitive office equipment that suffered from the sudden electrical shutdown. Not only did we have to pay again for the wire but ponied-up the cost for an alarm system for the wire itself.

Through all this tribulation we sweated it out, literally, and perhaps only mildly comforted by the remembered sound of Marilyn Monroe singing the song *Heat Wave* from the movie *There's No Business Like Show Business*. In the past, we have delved into the spirit of things tropical with our "Hawaiian Shirt Day" two or three times each summer. That was a cool and colorful way to beat the heat and break-out of the rut of wearing seasonal liturgical colors (i.e. Green for summer).

There are still the traditionalists, especially the ladies, who bring elegant and beautiful hand-held fans to cool themselves when the heat build-up gets to be a bit too much. Likewise, there are the high-tech folks who come with the electric fans that emits a spritz of water to supercool the recipient.

As we fondly remember the "hot times" and how we dealt with them. Keep in mind that the harsh times never last forever. Lets us try to keep cool when we would rather explode like a firecracker. The toughest heat we have to bear is the heat we generate within ourselves. The flames that would burn us the most are the very ones we kindle ourselves.

Stay cool, physically and spiritually.





June 2020

Hope Solutions Opportunities for Involvement



Fall 2020 Backpack Drive: Would you like to bring a smile to a child's face this fall? Join us in the Annual Backpack Drive. Help equip formerly homeless and low-income students for a successful 2020-2021 school year. With your support, 410 students in Contra Costa County will be ready to start the school year with a positive outlook. The details, including a new process, collection and drop-off guidelines, will be available in the next two weeks. If you and your community are interested in participating in our fall 2020 Backpack Drive, please contact Sandibel Arnold at sarnold@hopesolutions.org.



Summer Camps 2020: Due to COVID -19, Hope Solutions will be hosting our first Virtual Summer Camps. We are looking for volunteers that are interested in teaching or sharing a skill with the children in our program. We are in need of volunteers who are able to pick-up and deliver materials to the children in our program across Contra Costa County. We are also in need of volunteers that are able to provide technical support during Summer Camps. If you would like more information on how you can help us on this new adventure, please contact Sandibel Arnold at sarnold@hopesolutions.org.



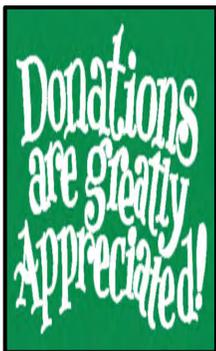
Volunteers to Pick Up and Deliver Beds: Transporting beds to new residents throughout Contra Costa County is a great challenge during these times. A volunteer that can pick-up mattresses and platforms (both in boxes) from our Pleasant Hill office and deliver them to various resident's households throughout Contra Costa County is needed. Deliveries will be PORCH DELIVERIES ONLY, no need to set up beds. If you are able to help, please contact Sandibel at sarnold@hopesolutions.org.



Furnishings: Every month we have families and individuals moving into homes. We try our best to provide furnishings and household items. We are looking for furnishing donations and this month we are in need of a few items, such as cleaning supplies, kitchen kits, bath towels, dishes, pots and pans, and silverware. We are also in need of \$25 gift cards to Target for new families moving into homes. For a complete list of furnishings needed this month, please take a look at the attached Furnishing Request sheet [here](#).



Face Masks: Are you a sewer? If so, we need your help. We are looking for volunteers to sew face masks for our residents. If you are interested in making face masks for our program but movement restrictions are holding you back, we can arrange to drop off materials and pick up completed masks at your residence. If you are interested in sewing face masks for our residents, we encourage you to use these patterns: <https://tinyurl.com/sfwstpy>. Please contact sarnold@hopesolutions.org or call 925-788-3676 to make arrangements for materials.



Seeking In-Kind Donations:

- Feminine hygiene products of all kinds
- Diapers size 1 through 6 and baby wipes for families in our programs
- Cinemark or Fandango movie passes to give to families who participate in our programs
- Welcome Kits for new families moving into permanent housing (laundry basket filled with cleaning supplies, key chain, and \$25 gift card to FoodMaxx or Safeway)
- Paper products (plates, cups), snacks, copy paper for after school programming
- Cleaning Supplies for our multi-site clients (Comet, Windex, Simple Green, buckets, mops, etc.)

Stay Informed! Get all the latest news about Hope Solutions and the housing landscape in Contra Costa County. Read stories about our impact, and the many residents we serve together. Sign up for our mailing list here: <https://tinyurl.com/lgdp3gs>



St. Ignatius of Antioch Church Group to France

Day 1: Sun Aug 29, 2021

Welcome to Paris

On arrival at Charles de Gaulle Airport, a group transfer is provided to your hotel. After checking in, the capital's grand boulevards and world-famous landmarks are yours to explore. Join your Travel Director and fellow guests for a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant.

Meal: Welcome Dinner with Wine

Hotel: Le Meridien Etoile Hotel Paris, 9 nights

Day 2: Mon Aug 30, 2021

Morning at leisure, Churches & the Louvre

Enjoy a leisurely morning before joining your group in the afternoon for a guided visit with your Local Expert of the Louvre (subject to availability). Walk to nearby Saint-Eustache, one of the most visited churches in Paris distinguished by its dimensions, works of art and its great organ. Continue to La Madeleine, a Roman Catholic Church with the design of a Greek temple. Enjoy the afternoon at your leisure then rejoin your group this evening for a cruise along the Seine river with dinner included (early dinner scheduled at approximately 18:00).

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

Day 3: Tue Aug 31, 2021

Depart for Lourdes

Pack your overnight bag and depart for the train station this morning for your first class rail journey to Lourdes. After arrival, get settled into your hotel before joining the group for an evening candlelight procession followed by dinner at your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Hotel Dinner with Wine

Hotel: Mercure Lourdes, 1 night

Day 4: Wed Sep 1, 2021

Mass and Healing Baths, return Paris

This morning, view the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes before coming together for mass. Visit the nearby healing baths, inspired by one of the apparitions where Virgin Mary told Bernadette "Go and drink at the spring and wash yourself there!" and has since been a source for renewal and healing for millions of pilgrims. Depart this afternoon on your first class rail journey back to Paris.

Meal: Breakfast

Hotel: Le Meridien Etoile Hotel Paris

Day 5: Thu Sep 2, 2021

Food Market Walking Tour

Later this morning, join your Local Expert for a walking tour of a popular Parisian market. Sample fresh cheeses and learn some of the best kept secrets of French cuisine during this immersive experience. Join us for dinner tonight at Le Procope, the oldest café in Paris (availability permitting). Le Procope was conceived in 1686 and has had continuous operation since, welcoming prominent writers and intellectuals, this historical café is not to be missed.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

Day 6: Fri Sep 3, 2021

Eiffel Tower & the Sacred Heart of Paris

Ascend the Eiffel Tower (subject to availability) for spectacular views of Paris. Continue to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Paris, commonly known as Sacre Coeur, the second most visited monument in Paris dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Meal: Breakfast

For more information please contact:

Linda Grelli - Sr. Travel Agent
Black Diamond Travel

Tel: (925) 754-5340 Email: linda@blackdiamondtravel.com

Day 7: Sat Sep 4, 2021

Palace of Versailles

Tread in the footsteps of French nobility and explore the opulence and splendor of Versailles (subject to availability). Join a Local Expert as you wander through the palace's extraordinary Hall of Mirrors, the Apartments and Battles Gallery. Stroll through the picturesque Royal Gardens and visit the Petit Trianon to see first-hand how the French Royal Family lived in private before discovering Marie Antoinette's Hamlet and the Royal Chapel. Enjoy dinner this evening at a local restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

Day 8: Sun Sep 5, 2021

The D-Day Beaches

Discover the Normandy region and the D-Day beaches with our Local Expert on this full-day tour. We'll visit the dramatic battle-scarred cliffs of Pointe du Hoc; the American cemetery at Omaha Beach and the almost-intact gun battery at Longues-sur-Mer. You'll also enjoy the superb new Operation Overlord Museum before continuing to Arromanches for views over Gold and Juno Beaches.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 9: Mon Sep 6, 2021

Luxembourg Gardens & Churches

Start your day with your Local Expert with a visit to Luxembourg Gardens, sprawled in front of Luxembourg Palace and conceived in the 17th century. Walk to nearby Saint-Sulpice church, the second largest church in the whole city. Continue to Saint Germain, Paris's oldest church, before visiting the royal chapel of Saint Chapelle, once home to the Kings of France until the 14th century. This evening, join your Travel Director and companions for a memorable Celebration Dinner.

Meals: Breakfast, Celebration Dinner with Wine

Day 10: Tue Sep 7, 2021

Au Revoir Paris

After breakfast, it's time to bid Paris au revoir as you prepare to return home after a memorable break in one of the world's greatest cities. A group transfer is provided to Charles de Gaulle Airport, private transfers available at an additional charge.

Meal: Breakfast

St. Ignatius Church Group to France

10 days/9 nights

Below rates are per person, land only, based on double occupancy with final price determined by traveling group size.

35 - 39	paying guests	\$3,600
30 - 34	paying guests	\$3,700
25 - 29	paying guests	\$3,850
20 - 24	paying guests	\$4,050
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT	paying guests	\$1,260

The above pricing is land only, international airfare is at an additional cost. Travel insurance is optional and in addition to the above prices, please refer to insurance rates below.
 For trips totaling \$3,501 - \$5,000: \$289 per person
 For trips totaling \$5,001 - \$7,500: \$399 per person
 For trips totaling \$7,501+: \$499 per person

Deposit due at time of booking (non-refundable): \$200 per person, + insurance cost if taken, payable by check