



THE 20TH SUNDAY IN SUMMER'S ORDINARY TIME

From Father Robert

“We’re not going to play with you!” the kids on the playground said to the new student. It was a shocking thing for the teachers to hear, as they had been speaking to the students about welcoming and creating an environment where we all “get along.” The taunts certainly did not conform to the mission of the Catholic school. Clearly, more work would need to be done before the new student would feel welcome. The teachers hoped they could address the situation before the new student left and found a different school.

In today’s gospel, a Canaanite woman comes up to Jesus and asks for His mercy, not for her but for her daughter. Now, Canaanites were people displaced a millennium before the time of Jesus, when the Israelites took possession of the land. The Israelites even enslaved some of the Canaanites in those early years. It was “easy” to look down on a Canaanite, as they were not considered part of God’s chosen

people. Jesus’ behavior, like that of the disciples, can seem a bit shocking. Jesus initially refuses to acknowledge the woman, and the disciples seek to have her dismissed. Jesus finally does speak, only to say that He was “sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” That is, He was not sent for a Canaanite, even if her daughter was suffering. At this point in the story, it’s good for us to pause and not attempt to explain away this type of attitude. In fact, other times in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says that He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In this gospel, the message of Jesus goes out to all nations only after the resurrection. But during the earthly ministry of Jesus, it seems non-Israelites, non-Jews, were not part of His mission.

Even so, the woman persists. She does not back away. Jesus replies, effectively reiterating what He had said initially, though using a rather insulting term: “dogs.” No matter, the woman continues, accepts the insulting metaphor, and says even dogs get the scraps. Finally, Jesus relents, and with a word the woman’s daughter is healed. Many commentators focus their attention on Jesus’ words and actions in this scene. But we may also consider this from the point of view of the woman – the outsider, the excluded. She persists and she ultimately receives what she sought, not something for herself, but for her daughter.

Today, we are living in the post-resurrection world. Therefore, when we are in a position to include, to welcome, to invite, let us do so. This might mean welcoming a new child on the playground, an outsider who has moved to the neighborhood, or even a non-citizen or one who does not share our ethnic identity. The inclination to exclude and not to help is strong. It’s overcome in the resurrection.



Living The Paschal Mystery

The resurrection gives power and new life. After the resurrection, Jesus tells His disciples to go to all nations, teaching and baptizing. The scene from today's gospel let us know that the earthly ministry of Jesus was not characterized in that way, at least not as Matthew presents it. But now that Christ has been raised from the dead, all are welcome, and all may be disciples. No longer is God's chosen people limited to one group. Instead, by what God has done in Christ, all are chosen and called to be children of God.

The suffering and death of Jesus put an end to a way of thinking that saw God's favor bestowed on a limited group of people. With the resurrection, there has been a *metanoia*, a new way of thinking that embraces inclusion and invitation. Let us be guided by a resurrection way of life that seeks to welcome rather than create divisions. In so doing, we will be living the paschal mystery.

How have our scripture passages today touched your life and heart? What did you hear? What challenges you?

At the end of the First Reading God proclaims "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." What are the different ethnic groups within our parish? How are all included in worship and ministry?

Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord urges His people to "observe what is right, do what is just." Where is justice lacking in our community, our nation, and how might God be calling us to advocate for justice, especially at this particular time in our history?

The Canaanite woman is persistent in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. Where are you being called to persistence in prayer?

Jesus tells her, "Woman, great is your faith." Who has been a model of faith for you in your life?



About Liturgy: Second Chances

Just imagine how difficult it must have been for the Canaanite woman to stand up as an outcast and as a woman to this group of men who obviously seem not to want her there. She must have known that it would be risky to show up, speak out, and make her request, much less talk back and persist if denied! If she were anything like some of us, knowing that we'd be the minority, especially women in a roomful of men with authority – we would have been rehearsing all our lines, preparing what we would do, and rallying up all our courage. In the end, we would still doubt whether or not we should do it.

Now imagine how much courage it might have taken some people coming for liturgy in our church to decide to even come in, where they might feel uncomfortable because they don't know the rituals or

anyone else present. They might feel shame for some past sin they believe is written on their face. Perhaps they might feel like the odd person out in a room (or garden) full of people who don't look or think like them or speak their language.

There is likely someone in our parish today who, though feeling unwanted, unnoticed, even rejected by the institutional church, has nonetheless decided to persist and give the church a second chance. Will these individuals have to fight to be seen? Will they have to take a risk to be heard? Will we, the people they encounter and words they hear from us, from the homily say, "We see you. Great is your faith!"

Through her courage, persistence, and faith, the Canaanite woman gave Jesus a second chance to change His mind. For some people, even some who may be coming to our parish, it may be the last chance they are giving us to be a word of hope in their time of need. How will we respond?

Crazy Larry by [Pat Marrin](#)

[Spirituality](#)



"Blessed is the man who loves the Lord,
who greatly delights in his commands"
(Psalm 112).

2 Cor 9:6-10; Ps 112; John 12:24-26

There is apparently very little humor in the Gospels if we think of funny in contemporary terms. No slapstick, no pratfalls, no snappy dialogue with a punch line. And in the early church there were few comedians. Except for Crazy Larry. Aka St. Lawrence was a 3rd century Roman deacon martyred during the persecution under the emperor Valerian.

The first Crazy Larry story was that when he was ordered to produce the treasures of the church, he rounded up the poor. For this affront he was grilled alive, and the best Crazy Larry story was that when he was done on one side, he asked to be flipped.

True or not, the stories display the willing spirit of some early martyrs to lose their lives for Christ in order to save them for eternal life. If paradox and reversal are the heart of classic comedy—the triumph of right over wrong, humility over pride, love over death-- then the first generation of Christian martyrs were all comedians who believed that they would have the last laugh.

Jesus' image of the seed that falls to earth was perhaps one of his last parables, shared with his disciples as they passed the fields at spring planting before entering Jerusalem for his final Passover. There could be no harvest without sowing. Jesus was about to fall to the ground in death so that new life could spring forth and be multiplied. What he was asking his disciples to do he would first do himself.

This spirit of self-sacrificing love is the heart of the Christian vocation. Few of us will be martyred for the faith, but each day offers opportunities to come in on empty, to let go of our own advantage to advance another, to listen more than talk, to be

generous to a fault. Life becomes calmer and more fun when we don't need to compete, win or get even to protect our pride. Comedy is another name for freedom and even compassion once we see how unpredictable and paradoxical life really is.

In the end only love really matters.



August 8, 2020

Notice During the Covid-19 Outbreak

In solidarity, we at the Interfaith Peace Project stand together in these times of heart break and upset. Some of you may have lost friends or family members. Some of you may have lost your job and your income; some may be working overtime to help with the crisis. Some of you may be home and alone and some may be trying to figure out a new way to live. Please let us know how we can help. If you would like a phone appointment with any of us, give us a call. You may call or email Tom at:

Tom Bonacci
peace@thomaspbonacci.net
925-787- 9279



**JUST A LITTLE WALK
WITH THEE
A Reflection from the
Christian Traditions
Nineteenth Sunday in
Ordinary Time
Matthew 14:22-33
by Thomas P. Bonacci, C.P.**

All four Gospels in the Christian New Testament tell stories about Peter, a central figure in the band of Twelve fishermen who were disciples of Jesus. As time marched on, the lives of these disciples have mostly been the subject of legend born of the memory of ancient peoples who had the courage to see in a Crucified Jesus their hope. The disciples spent little to no time preserving their legacy, their names, or their significance. Like all truly heroic women and men, they spent their lives in the service of others. Yet, it is precisely such people as these, we seek out for hope and encouragement in our own troubled times.

Matthew's Gospel tells a unique story concerning Peter (see Matthew 14: 22-33). For some reason, this story is remembered as Peter faltering. Many derive comfort from what appears to be Peter's failure to accomplish what he set out to do. We can easily identify with Peter's "failed" effort. Matthew even has Jesus question Peter as to why he doubted. The fact is life is difficult and doubts abound. We need to be gentle with ourselves in times of trouble. We need to be compassionate to others who fear and have doubts. We can identify with them and together we can walk on the rough waters of life.

The typical understanding of Peter lies somewhere between his impulsiveness and his overbearing personality. He even confronted Jesus thinking ultimate hardship was impossible for someone like Jesus. As faithful as Peter appeared to be to that degree and more, he would deny he ever knew Jesus. Peter must not be the object of our scorn or indignation for he reveals the difficulties of trying to be faithful in ambiguous and difficult times. Who among us cannot identify with Peter?

In Matthew 14: 22-33, Jesus famously "walks on water" to the shocking delight and bewilderment of the disciples. This famous scene is reminiscent of the Exodus traditions found in the Hebrew Scripture. It may have little to do with miracles concerning lakes and seas and more to do with inviting individuals and communities to claim their dignity and find their freedom. Sometimes we

are more afraid to be ourselves than we are of the latest disaster.

Peter was overwhelmed by the spectacle he experienced wondering if what he was experiencing could possibly be true. Jesus invited Peter, as he invites us, to get out of the securities of our boats and walk on the high seas of life. Peter, alighting from the boat, sank as soon as he forgot the courage it took to leave the security of the boat in the first place.

God bless Peter. He had the courage to try. Sometimes we are so secure in our boats we cling to our false securities until we sink. I pray every day to have the courage of Peter hoping that one day soon I might walk on the waters of life as it is. I fear to take the first step. I would rather sink in my boat than drown in my efforts born of courage. St. Peter, pray for me. I need the courage to at least try.

Thank you, Beloved Community, for all the times you got soaking wet walking on the rough waters of injustice, for all the times you almost drowned walking on the turbulent waters of hatred and prejudice, for all the times you challenged your doubts with your courage.

Knights of Columbus called to redouble efforts to fight racism, violence

Aug 7, 2020

by [Catholic News Service](#)

[People Spirituality](#)



Carl Anderson, CEO of the Knights of Columbus, is seen wearing a face mask Aug. 4, 2020, at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn., on the opening day of the Knights' 138th annual Supreme Convention. During an Aug. 4 convention speech, Anderson asked members to redouble efforts to fight racism, violence and hatred through their principles of charity and unity. (CNS photo/courtesy Knights of Columbus)

NEW HAVEN, CONN. — Every day Knights of Columbus live out the principles of charity, unity and fraternity, and through this daily witness in society, they must redouble their efforts to combat racism, violence and hatred, the top Knight told his confreres.

"Living these principles," Supreme Knight Carl Anderson said, "is the highest expression of patriotism today."

He made the comments in an address the evening of Aug. 4 during the fraternal organization's 138th annual convention, held virtually for the first time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Many of our fellow citizens are still treated differently because of the color of their skin," said Anderson. "Whenever and wherever this happens, it is wrong. And it must be righted."

Anderson recommitted the Knights to its programs in support of Native Americans and to fostering an "honest recounting of their history." He lamented the recent desecration of churches and statues of saints, especially St. Junipero Serra, whom he called a "heroic and saintly missionary."

"Where others seek to divide," said Anderson, "let us promote unity. And where racism festers, let us build fraternity."

"Living in fraternity is what we do every day," said Anderson. "It is this commitment to fraternity that gives us the strength to do the great works of charity that our times demand."

The convention, which had as its theme "Knights of Fraternity," officially opened with an evening Mass Aug. 4 celebrated by Hartford Archbishop Leonard P. Blair at historic St. Mary's Church in New Haven, where Father Michael J. McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus and where his remains are interred.

The archbishop had news of his own to share: Father McGivney's beatification will take place at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford Oct. 31.

The Knights expect COVID-19 restrictions to be in place on the date of the

beatification, and are making preparations to broadcast the Mass to a worldwide audience so the public is able to join the celebration.

Ahead of the Mass at St. Mary's Church, Anderson announced the Knights of Columbus Museum in New Haven will be transformed into the Blessed Michael J. McGivney Pilgrimage Center.

On May 27, the Vatican announced that Pope Francis, who met with the board of directors of the Knights of Columbus in February, had signed the decree recognizing a miracle through the intercession of Father McGivney, clearing the way for his beatification.

Once he is beatified, he will be called "Blessed." In general, confirmation of a second miracle occurring through the intercession of the sainthood candidate is needed for canonization.

In his address, Anderson credited Father McGivney, with a "spiritual genius" for bringing men together as brothers who care for others through lives of charity.

Anderson suggested that Father McGivney's beatification is timely since he understood well the pain of prejudice and discrimination as religious bigotry in the 19th-century targeted Catholics. However, the priest and his contemporaries identified a uniquely American way forward.

"They saw in the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment a path offered to them that could be found in no other country," said Anderson. He cited a similar insight expressed by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., who placed hope in the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence because they constitute a "promissory note to ... every American."

Anderson also used his address to deliver the Knights' annual report, which shows that Knights donated more than \$187 million and volunteered more than 77 million hours of service valued at more than \$2 billion.

The organization responded to the pandemic with the Knights' locally driven "Leave No Neighbor Behind" program to help neighbors most vulnerable to the illness, as well as blood drives and support for food banks in the U.S and Canada. Other initiatives included million-dollar lines of credit to dioceses in financial trouble and financial aid to the Vatican's Bambino Gesù hospital for children in Rome.

Those programs are being carried out in tandem with the Knights' ongoing activities for the disabled via Special Olympics and programs to help the needy, including Coats for Kids and disaster relief.

Despite the economic downturn due to the virus, Anderson reported insurance sales of \$8.4 billion over the past 12 months with agents adopting a virtual business model since the start of the pandemic. With nearly \$27 billion in assets under management, he said, the Knights of Columbus is meeting both its financial obligations and its charitable goals.

In April, the Knights of Columbus was one of six companies to receive the highest ranking in a Standard & Poor's review of North American life insurance companies. The rankings released April 6 give the Knights an AA+; in the categories of "outlook," "business risk profile" and "financial risk profile," the Knights are considered, respectively, "stable," "very strong" and excellent.

Other insurance companies among the six are Guardian Life Insurance Group and New York Life Insurance Group.

Anderson had a final word about Father McGivney's beatification and how it is both a cause for joy and a call to higher standards of charity, unity and fraternity.

"We step forward together," he said, "as Knights of Columbus—'Knights of Fraternity'—to continue our great work."



Latest Food Bank News From Werner Hoch

I just received a letter from the Food Bank thanking all of us for volunteering and helping feed the people who need us the most during these trying times. Here is part of that letter:

“We cannot express how much your support during this challenging time means to us. We are thankful for you, our volunteers, now more than ever. Your willingness to assist us, is a reminder of how wonderful our volunteers are. This is an uncertain time for all of us, and along with your help, the Food Bank is doing our part to help ensure that the needs of our community are being met.

We want to thank everyone who has volunteered since the Covid-19 pandemic reached our state. We could not do the work we do without our volunteers. When an emergency occurs, our volunteers leave

their homes and work with us to lend a hand. We are so fortunate to have both dedicated and first-time volunteers who respond when there is an emergency.”

I was touched by their kind words to all our volunteers. In 90 plus degree heat, we cheerfully gave out the goodies that were on the truck. Well, our driver, erected a sunshade for us on the sunny side of the truck. How thoughtful was that! We gave out 6 different items, including a beautiful cantaloupe, apples, carrots, and other items. Realizing how hot it was that Friday, we still were able to help 37 families and that included 8 new families.

I cannot thank Father Robert enough for letting us help all the needy families in our vicinity. Just in case it is another hot day on the next Friday, August the 21st , the food truck may park in the lower parking lot as there seems to be more shade for us helpers. Again, thanks to all. Werner , 🏠

EMAIL/TEXT SCAM ALERT NOTIFICATION



The Diocese of Oakland warns the public of an ongoing phishing scam involving emails and texts purportedly from Bishop Barber, diocesan priests or parish/Chancery staff.

This scam has hit many parishes across the United States, as well as other faith communities. The Federal Trade Commission provided [information on this scam](#) in July 2019. The email or text purports to be from a person the target knows, such as one's pastor, a parish staff member, the bishop or someone else from the Church. If the target responds to the fake email or text, the sender will follow up with a request for some sort of monetary assistance, often for gift cards, Google Play cards or iTune cards.

It is truly unfortunate cyber criminals will attempt to exploit the generous nature of our community. Sending emails or texts asking for cash or gifts cards is not how priests, parishes or the Diocese of Oakland seeks financial assistance for our work. If you receive an email or text from a trusted church personnel asking for assistance,

confirm by calling that person and do NOT respond to the email or text.

If you or someone you know paid a scammer with a gift card, report it as soon as possible. Call the card company and tell them the gift card was used in a scam. Here is [contact information](#) for some of the gift card companies that scammers use most often. Then, tell the FTC about it at ftc.gov/complaint. Your reports may help law enforcement agencies launch investigations that could stop imposters and other fraudsters in their tracks.

Report gift card scams

Amazon

- Call 1 (888) 280-4331
- Learn about Amazon gift card scams [here](#).

Google Play

- Call 1 (855) 466-4438
- Report gift card scams online [here](#).
- Learn about Google Play gift card scams [here](#).

iTunes

- Call Apple Support at 1 (800) 275-2273, then say "gift card" to be connected to a live representative.
- Learn about iTunes gift card scams and how to report them [here](#).

Steam

- If you have a Steam account, you can report gift card scams online [here](#).
- Learn about Steam gift card scams [here](#).
-

MoneyPak

- Call 1 (866) 795-7969
- Report a MoneyPak card scam online [here](#).

St. Clare of Assisi

By Patrick Marrin

Spirituality



“Their angels in heaven always behold the face of my heavenly Father” (Matt 18:10).

Ezek 2:8—3:4; Matt 18:1-5, 10, 12-14

When we place the life of St. Clare in the historical context of the 13th Century, we are reminded just how turbulent the times were in the church as groups like the Cathars and Albigensians challenged the wealth of the bishops and clergy with their own witness to great austerity. Even as Sts. Francis and Dominic were organizing the mendicant orders, the first formal inquisitions were violently suppressing these other popular movements as heretical.

Distinguishing the new orders from these groups was achieved by giving the Dominicans and Franciscans papal approval to bring them under Rome’s authority. When St Francis welcomed 18-year-old Clare into his group in 1212, he had to place her and her followers in Benedictine monasteries at first to protect their status as religious. St. Clare of Assisi

lived out her life enclosed in a convent, surviving Francis by 27 years until her own death in 1253.

Despite hagiographic efforts to romanticize this period, the extreme personal sacrifice embraced by Clare and Francis to affirm the poverty of Christ shows how urgent was the need for reform in order to restore the church's authentic Gospel mission. As prophets, they undertook the obedience exhibited by Ezekiel in today’s first reading by consuming a scroll they declared sweet as honey that in effect confronted the official church with its failures and need for conversion.

In today’s Gospel, by placing a child in the midst of his disciples, Jesus was also confronting their successors, the popes and bishops, with Clare and Francis as models of the true Christian spirit. Their simple holiness revealed the face of the heavenly Father in contrast to the distorted values that had infected the official church at the time.

The cost of discipleship has not diminished. Evil times require heroic courage to counter the effects of wealth and corruption on whole cultures and systems that cause great harm and suffering to so many. Examples of sacrifice and service to oppose war, racism and poverty are needed to confront institutional failure and the complicity it fosters. We honor the saints by praying to imitate them.

When Jesus saw that his disciples needed to renew their hope in the power of God to use them to do the impossible, he placed a child in their midst and said, “Here is your model and your motivation.” Whoever recovers in themselves the wonder and innocence of a child will find the Spirit of God. Whoever welcomes and cares for those who are as

vulnerable as children will know the power of God to create a world worthy of them.

St. Clare of Assisi, pray for us.

Listen to the Church, not LifeSite, when casting your vote

AUGUST 9, 2020 BY
SEAN P. DAILEY

LifeSite News, the allegedly Catholic pro-life webpage, wants you to vote Republican this fall; to re-elect President Trump. To that end, it published **an article in late July** asserting, “No Catholic can vote for Joe Biden.”

Mr. Biden is two things: Catholic and pro-choice. So, the Catholic Right will be working doubly hard this year to make sure Catholics do the right thing (in the Catholic Right’s estimation) and vote for Mr. Trump.

LifeSite is leading the charge. Mr. Biden’s faith, LifeSite says, “is completely foreign to vast swaths of Catholics.” While Mr. Biden veers further and further Left, he creates an “evermore distinct contrast with President Trump’s strong pro-life, pro-family record.”

Maybe LifeSite thinks Mr. Trump bedding a porn star just after his third wife gave birth to his fifth child, and then **paying hush money to the porn star**, constitutes a “strong pro-life, pro-family record.” I do not, but then what do I know?

The case against Joe Biden

LifeSite enlists the aid of three priests, Fr. Frank Pavone, Fr. Michael Orsi, and Fr. Stephen Imbarrato, all of whom repeat the usual canards about pro-choice Catholic politicians. Fr. Pavone would have us believe he can see into Mr. Biden’s soul:

“This leads to the conclusion that a person like this should not even try to receive Communion,” Fr. Pavone told LifeSiteNews. “In fact, he doesn’t want to, because to exclude the unborn is to exclude Christ; so you may want ‘Communion,’ but you don’t want actual union with Jesus.” Fr. Imbarrato goes so far as to call Mr. Biden an anti-Catholic:

“He is a walking and talking scandal to his Catholic faith and has rightly been refused the Eucharist because he persists in ongoing mortal sin thus separating himself from communion with the Church. He scandalizes the Catholic faith in so many ways that objectively he actually seems “anti-Catholic” in his beliefs.”

And Fr. Orsi of course blames the bishops for their “scandalous failure to sanction Biden.” Fr. Orsi references a 2004 memo from then Cardinal Ratzinger to then-Cardinal McCarrick, **Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion: General Principles**:

“Accordingly, a 2004 Memorandum from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, signed by Cardinal Ratzinger, states, ‘a politician consistently campaigning and voting for permissive abortion laws’ the politician’s pastor is to inform him that he should not receive Communion,” noted Fr. Orsi. LifeSite then brings us back to Frs. Pavone and Imbarrato:

“As for voting, not only can Catholics not vote for Biden in good conscience, but they can’t vote for Democrats, period. And neither can anyone else,” Fr. Pavone told LifeSiteNews.

“The devil has made his home among the leadership of the Democratic Party for some time now, and found it a most hospitable

environment,” Fr. Orsi wrote in a widely read analysis earlier this year.

“It’s time to stop pretending we can be neutral. The Democrat Party has set itself up against the Church, against the unborn, and against America,” said Pavone. “They do not deserve one ounce of power in this country, and anyone who gives it to them shares the guilt of all the evil they do. And that starts with our religious leaders.”

Fr. Imbarrato declared simply, unequivocally, “No Catholic can vote for Joe Biden.”

Enlisting one more crackpot

Just in case LifeSite’s Catholic crackpots don’t get the point cross, LifeSite then quotes a Protestant crackpot, Mr. Trump’s spiritual advisor, televangelist **Paula White**:

“President Trump has been a staunch defender of people of faith, and the Evangelical community is fired up and ready to rally behind him in November,” said Pastor Paula White, spiritual adviser to President Trump. “While Joe Biden radically shifts further away from the American values that Christians hold dear, President Trump continues to fight for our religious freedoms and the principles of faith that make our country great.”

If **putting children in cages, coddling white supremacists, trampling the Constitution**, and presiding over one of the **biggest public health disasters in U.S. history** are what constitute “the American values that Christians hold dear,” then I certainly hope Mr. Biden radically shifts us further way.

A radical suggestion

But never mind that. I have a radical suggestion of my own: how about we, as

Catholics, ignore both Protestant and Catholic crackpots, and instead listen to the Catholic Church? For starters, it is interesting that Fr. Orsi quotes from Cardinal Ratzinger’s **2004 memorandum**.

Fr. Orsi is correct in his reference to the 2004 memorandum. But as Fr. Orsi himself says, the issue is between Mr. Biden and his pastor. Neither Fr. Orsi nor anyone else has any say in the matter.

As for whether a Catholic may vote for Mr. Biden, did Fr. Orsi read the footnote at the end of the memorandum?

N.B. A Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in evil, and so unworthy to present himself for Holy Communion, if he were to deliberately vote for a candidate precisely because of the candidate’s permissive stand on abortion and/or euthanasia. When a Catholic does not share a candidate’s stand in favour of abortion and/or euthanasia, but votes for that candidate for other reasons, it is considered remote material cooperation, which can be permitted in the presence of proportionate reasons.

A Catholic may in good conscience vote for Mr. Biden “for other reasons” besides Mr. Biden’s pro-choice beliefs, and “in the presence of proportionate reasons.” Indeed, a Catholic may in good conscience vote for any pro-choice Democrat.

What Vatican II says

I also would direct LifeSite and its three priests to the Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes*, specifically, to point no. 27, which, in part, reads:

Furthermore, whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or wilful self-

destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, **attempts to coerce the will itself**; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are supreme dishonor to the Creator.

(emphasis added)

Let me emphasize: any attempt to coerce the will, which is what LifeSite and its three priests are up to, “violates the integrity of the human person” and constitutes a “supreme dishonor to the Creator.”

Vote your conscience

No Catholic is bound to listen to any priest (or deacon) who lies and who commits emotional blackmail such as this, especially as one of the three priests in this article, Fr. Pavone, likely isn't even **a priest** in **good standing**.

My brother and sister Catholics: listen to the Church, not these people. Vote your conscience. If your conscience tells you to vote for Mr. Trump, well, ok, though I'd suggest you review the Gospels, particularly Matthew 5-7 and Matthew 25:31-46. And maybe Matthew 22:39 and John 13:34-35 for good measure.

But if your conscience calls you to vote for Mr. Biden, then do so with a clear conscience. And do not let anyone, priest or layperson, bully you into violating your

conscience. Those who do that are the ones who flout Church teaching, not you.

In my name by **Pat Marrin**

Spirituality



“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them”
*Matt 18:20).

Ezek 9:1-7; 10:18-22; Matt 18:15-20

Today's Gospel appears to address conflict in the early church by applying some of the sayings of Jesus about forgiveness.

Matthew writes for a community made up of both Jewish and Gentile converts, and despite Jesus' emphasis on reconciliation, situations were arising that required intervention and mediation that did not always resolve the problem. If quarrels threatened to divide the community, it was sometimes better to eject people from the group. What came to be known as “excommunication,” especially over theological questions, was already a factor in the early church.

Because reconciliation is part of the mission of the church, internal division has always been a serious problem. Historically, the conflicts that continued to split the church

into numerous sects, traditions and denominations have been one of greatest obstacles to Christian witness. Ecumenical dialogue is an ongoing project quietly trying to bridge numerous gaps in theology and institutional cooperation.

Today's passage ends with some of the most reassuring words of Jesus about what it takes to be the church. If even two believers can agree on something, their prayer will be answered. If even two or three gather in the name of Jesus, he will be with them. This promise affirms the vision captured in one of e. e. cummings' best-known poems, "i am a little church," which describes the power of an ordinary seeker to live the mystery of God's presence in the world.

i am a little church (no great cathedral)
far from the splendor and squalor of
hurrying cities

-i do not worry if briefer days grow briefest,
i am not sorry when sun and rain make April
The great resilience of the Gospel is that it exists in every heart that welcomes it, and it survives even when institutional attempts to organize its mission falter and fail to live up to its spirit. Believers have had a chance to experience being little churches during the pandemic. The need for community has been obvious, but the essentials of faith must be held by each of us to inform what we become together. The longing to be together is itself the fruit of a personal renewal of the heart that has been going on for many during this difficult time of separation. Jesus is the center that holds us together, and he is always available wherever there is prayer and even small groups gathering in his name.

*Justice Corner by Carolyn Krantz,
Pastoral Associate*

As I watch the news, some part of me wishes that I would be carried away on the wings of melody, to dream of better times, times of peace and contentment, of artistry and discussion of wholesome ideas and tranquil thoughts. I sit in the tumult of the world, with death in every community, uncertainty with every breath, and the violence of the racial legacy of our country staring us down. Someone said, "Keep your eye on the purpose, not the circus."

I know Jesus brought mercy and inclusiveness. They were part of His every word, every action. I know He often went off to the mountains to pray. COVID and "stay at home" has given us an opportunity to do more of that. Is our time any different than His? He was deluged with sick people, occupied people, disciples that wanted to strike back at the Romans. Yet He managed to stay in the center of His Father's heart. He managed to see through everything to the truth.

Recently I went with family to the Antioch Marina. I forgotten how nature can restore our ailing souls. My prayer was,

"Thank you Lord for wind and waves
whitecaps and fresh sea air for curling bark
and winding paths for black berries off the
bush for windmills and rocking boats and
the power of trains pulling people and
freight for small flowers in the grass and
loving hearts to enjoy it!

In these long months of COVID, civil unrest and uncertainty about elections, try to get away to nature and let it heal your weary spirit. We have so many beautiful parks and marinas that are in close proximity. Nature lets us know that life continues, that a loving God does not desert us. The sun rises on the

just and unjust, on the wheat and the weeds, of the good fish and bad to use examples from previous gospels, but the sun does rise! Nature gives us reason to hope.

In today's readings, through the healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter, Jesus reflected the wisdom of the Isaiah that welcomes all truth seekers into God's house. These readings are calling on us to expand our souls to include all people, especially those that are "foreign" to us. To do this, prayer is necessary. If all of us pray for mercy, mercy shall be ours. But we must pray from a place of humility. "Even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the master's table." There are many catholic traditions that encourage this, such as repeating, "Lord, Jesus have mercy on me, a sinner," and other practices that encourage us to ask for mercy. But are we consistent in this request?

We must become a force that can channel that mercy to the world. Try saying the word "Mercy" over and over and picturing as you say it, all the places in the world that are so in need. Start close to home picturing family and friends. Then extend outwards to the local community. Then extend the circle to our country, then to other parts of the world, broken families, war torn regions, favelas of our southern neighbors, the dying all over the world. Picture those who are serving others from the healthcare community, non-profits, essential workers, etc. Put Christ's mercy into the world today and all this week. Channel God's mercy into the universe. Everyone needs a "scrap" of mercy to have the courage to continue.

***Parish Perspective by
Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pastoral Associate
We Are Alive Again!***

It had been months since I'd last set my alarm clock, but I wanted to make sure I

didn't oversleep this Sunday. I was to be an usher at the second "Live" Mass and was giving myself plenty of time to be there by 8 am. After parking I made a bee-line to Fr. Robert's office, said "good morning" and he handed me off to Steve Rojek and Don Benson for duty assignment. In the parish hall I met Steve, Gino, Don, and a few others who were busy transporting the chairs, candlesticks, microphones, carpet, and everything else needed to conduct the Mass on the back lawn. I joined right in and soon everything was ready to go. Other volunteers and trusty Knights of Columbus members were manning the parking lot activity, check-in table and forehead temperature scanning post.

Soon parishioners were showing-up and it was time to escort them to places marked on the lawn by large dots of white paint. Everyone had a place of their choosing, up front, in the middle, and (in true Catholic fashion) the back. I recognized a large number of people from the usual 8 am Mass. I guess early birds will always be early birds. My dreadful fear of having forgotten their names was completely unfounded as I addressed each by name successfully. It was great to interact with people again. One lady, Pat, who had a sit-down chair-walker with four wheels on it wanted to sit under the tree for shade. Another usher warned her to be wary of the big above-ground roots. As we neared the tree she said, "My, they are big roots!" I replied, "Oh, just put that thing into four-wheel drive and go right over them" and she did!

It was so good to see people again! It was so good to be able to talk to them again. As sufficient as live-streaming and radio broadcast can be when absolutely necessary they can never replace live worship. Looking into the living eyes of fellow believers who come together to worship the

living God through his Son can not be replaced by a TV set. What we missed in the beginning of the lock-down and began to forget during the long months after was rekindled in the souls of the people who made every effort to attend.

We were able to laugh again. When the noise from street traffic began to distract parishioners, Fr. Robert encouraged everyone to think of the rushing sound as water flowing over a rocky brook in the mountains. When a motorcycle roared along and couldn't in anyone's imagination be thought of as a brook, Fr. Mangini made a comical quip that brought laughter to all. We were Church again. We are alive again.

