

For The Bulletin Of
20 June 2021



THE TWELFTH SUNDAY IN SUMMER'S ORDINARY TIME

From Father Robert

Mark is writing his gospel for a community suffering persecution. Christians who feared that any day they might be overwhelmed by either the waves of their own cowardice and infidelity to Jesus, or blown off their Christian course by the fear of imprisonment and death. They could be tempted to believe that Jesus is “asleep” and cares nothing for them. In different contexts, we too are familiar with the storms that can brew in our own heart. The struggle between fear and faith is a constant of Mark’s gospel, continuing until the very last verse, but that we have, a Gospel according to Mark, witnesses to the final triumph of faith. Among these disciples are men who know this sea well and for them to be afraid shows that their fear was humanly well-founded. Although they have seen Jesus’ power over the chaos that overwhelms people’s bodies and minds, this crossing had been Jesus’ idea, and their cries to Him sound more like accusations of His lack of care for them than proclamations of their faith in Him.

In the image of Jesus peacefully asleep in the storm-tossed boat there may be the

memory of Jonah fast asleep in the bowels of the ship while God hurled great winds and waves at the vessel carrying the disobedient prophet away from his calling to the conversion of Nineveh. Jonah has to resort to the much more dramatic and drastic solution of allowing himself to be tossed overboard before God will calm the storm. In contrast, Jesus rises from sleep, and the brief and powerful words of this most obedient prophet of God are enough to restore order out of chaos. Jesus rebukes the wind and the sea in the same way as He had “rebuked” or exorcised the “unclean spirit” and healed the tortured psyche of the man in the synagogue in Mark’s account of Jesus’ first miracles. And there comes a great calm.

Jesus’ authority over the natural world confronts our faith in an unsettling way. As Michael Casey writes: “we do not mind a man forgiving sins, because the supposed effect is invisible and beyond proof. Cures can be dismissed as merely ‘psychological.’ Our weak faith can dodge the question if there is some possibility of a ‘rational’ explanation. The nature miracles are different. They confront our faith directly” (*Fully Human, Fully Divine*).

Jesus’ authority over the storm reveals Him as Lord of Creation, and recalls the divine authority over the chaotic waters “in the beginning” and when God divided the waters to allow the people of Israel to pass from slavery into freedom. This divine prerogative is also praised in a number of the psalms, including Psalm 107, which is today’s psalm. But the disciples are looking and not perceiving, listening and not understanding, despite the privileged instruction Jesus has given them. Jesus’ command of peace and stillness over the wind and waves assures the disciples safe crossing, but their crossing from fear to faith

is at a perilous beginning point. At least Jesus seems to suggest that the journey is possible. “Do you not yet have faith?” But the disciples turn to one another, not to Jesus, with their questions about His identity.

The Jesus Who has risen from the sleep of death is the faithful hope of every disciple and post-resurrection community. Often the storms sweep down on us as suddenly as the wind and waves on the Sea of Galilee, and we find ourselves unprepared for sickness, for a terminal diagnosis for ourselves or a loved one, for the upheaval of personal relations, the painful work of retrenchment. The mass media brings tragedies into our homes, and we may find ourselves saying, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” Yet Jesus is present in the storms and will bring us to the shore of new beginnings and new initiatives.



In the first reading God speaks to Job of the work of creation. How does the natural world reveal God’s glory and majesty to you?

God addresses Job from the midst of a storm. How have times of suffering led you to grow in faith?

St. Paul tells us, “Whoever is in Christ is a new creation.” How does our parish call us to newness of life?

In the gospel Jesus calms the sea and wind, telling them, “Quiet! Be still!” What storms in your life are you being called to entrust to the Lord?



About Liturgy: Here I Am Lord

Very few of us experience God in such an obvious, tangible way as do the disciples in today’s gospel. A five-year-old child saw a sketch of a person with hands raised in prayer in a missalette that was open on his father’s lap. It was accompanied by a caption, which he asked his father to read to him. “Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will” was the caption, quoting Psalm 40 from that Sunday’s scripture. Without telling anyone, he decided that this image and these words must be teaching him a new way to pray, that by taking this posture and saying these words, he would experience an immediate and clear response from God: “Well, today I want you to clean your room, help with the dishes after dinner, and try not to pick on your sister too much...”

Monday morning, he went out in the backyard to give it a try. Unsurprisingly, though he had the posture correct and prayed the words with all the fervor any five-year-old could muster, there was obvious and immediate answer to his declaration. Further, no matter where he stood in the backyard, no matter how often he appealed to God, no answer came.

Prayer, especially the gathered liturgical prayer of the church, doesn't operate like that. This is not to say God is not communicating to us, trying to answer our prayers in accordance with God's will. Inasmuch as we might experience individually God's voice in a communal prayer, the whole of the community also experiences God, Jesus sharing Himself by His presence in Word, Sacrament, in the presider, and the assembly itself. The answer to our prayers, whatever they are, at liturgy is always relationship with God and with one another.



About Liturgy: The Orans Posture, With Hands Uplifted

The raising of hands is a most ancient prayer practice. The US Conference of Bishops document "Praying with Body, Mind, and Voice" states, "Early Christian art frequently depicts the saints and others standing in this posture, offering their prayers and surrendering themselves, with hands uplifted to the Lord, in a gesture that echoes Christ's outstretched arms as He offered Himself on the Cross" (*Orans*). The name itself means "prayer," as in the litany response "pray for us."

There is much debate about whether the orans posture is reserved, always and

everywhere, for a priest. The Book of Blessings directs that while the ordained minister speaks words of blessing with arms outstretched, a layperson does so while keeping hands folded. The orans position is prescribed for priests in certain other moments – the eucharistic prayer, presidential prayers – it's never mentioned for a deacon, at least at Eucharist. Some take this to be evidence that the orans posture is meant, always, for the priest alone. Others, employing a different but valid logic, suggest that at appropriate presidential moments, anyone can utilize the orans posture. Many liturgical rites may be rightly led by any layperson, who is not, in any liturgical law that I know of, barred from utilizing orans for presidential prayers (collects, for instance). Some go so far as to suggest the orans posture is okay for anyone anywhere, noting the silence of the rubrics when it comes to the assembly (compared to the mountains of rubrics for presiders and other liturgical ministers).



Today we honor fathers, grandfathers, great grandfathers, foster and adoptive fathers, godfathers, living and deceased, and all the men who exercise a fatherly role. May God richly bless you for who you are and all you do. Happy Father's Day!



...to all our parishioner volunteers who have done so much to help in the last week:

Our Cleaning Team who cleaned and prepared the church and bathrooms for the weekend: **Al Cosce, Jun Bajet, Carole Miller, Angela Bueno, Reno and Thelma Benasfre, Rose Salamanca, Jean Rogers, and Steve Rojek.**

Our Parking Lot Security Team: **Don Benson, Jose Perez, and Tony Gumina.**

Our Knights of Columbus: In the morning, over a dozen Knights knocked out the Contra Loma street cleanup in record time, and then immediately went over to the church to help set up the venue for the Mini Relay for Life event. This included cleaning off a large section of the parking lot, assembling 4 canopies, and arranging many tables and chairs. Many more Knights came back at 5 pm for the actual Relay event, providing parking lot security, pitching in with water distribution and trash management, and generally cheering on the walkers raising money for cancer. It was a wonder to behold! Thank you to: **Tony Onate, Tony Gumina, Bill Saunders, Jack Goncalves, Ron Yarolimek, Dave**

Simpson, Bill Barbanica, Rich Confetti, Don Benson, Walter Schlueter, Phil Hadsell, Joe Stahl, Bob Plurkowski, Jose Perez, Charles Frank, Mark Costanza, and Chip Sharpe. Wow! Quite a list. It was a proud day for Council 12587.

Also, please join me in thanking our five brothers who rendered an invaluable service last Tuesday to a most worthy organization in very difficult conditions. **Steve Rojek, Walter Schlueter, Tony Onate, Brian McCoy, and Leo Rivera** spent yesterday afternoon in the blazing sun to clean 150 chairs for our friends at St. Vincent de Paul in Pittsburg as they prepared to host a community event in their hall. The chairs had been gathering dust and grime for years, and needed a deep cleaning.

These five brothers endured the scorching heat to deep clean their inventory of chairs with bleach, scrub brush, and pressure washer, enabling our friends at St. Vincent de Paul to host their event with pride. As always, the staff were effusive in their thanks and admiration for our support of their charitable mission.

Personally, thank you Steve, Brian, Tony, Walter, and Leo for representing our Council in a most favorable - nay, heroic - light.



Beginning tomorrow I will be attending a Fire Chaplain Academy to continue my formation and education in this ministry and then at the end of the week, I will be driving up to Lake Tahoe to preside for the memorial service for the father of one of my firefighters. I will be returning on Monday, 28 June. We are blessed to have Father Richard to preside and preach next weekend in my absence.

Can the US bishops grasp Pope Francis' ecclesial vision?

14 June 2021

by [Michael Sean Winters](#)



Having doubted Jesus' instruction to lower the nets, and then seeing the enormous catch of fish they achieved, Peter says to the Lord, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinner." Pope Francis calls these words "an inheritance that the first Pope left to the Popes and the Bishops of the Church." (Wikimedia Commons/Vassil)

When Cardinal Reinhard Marx published his remarkable and unexpected [letter of resignation](#) as archbishop of Munich and Freising on June 4, religion reporters, theologians and members of the hierarchy jumped on the phone to try and make sense of it. [Some writers](#) foolishly rushed into print with analysis. But one thing emerged from those discussions: Everyone thought Pope Francis would necessarily have to accept the resignation.

Last week, Francis [did not accept](#) the cardinal's resignation. Again he surprised us. Not only that, his response to the German cardinal was so spiritually rich, and so provocative in its understanding of the source of episcopal authority, it could well serve as the starting point for the discussion the U.S. bishops will have at their spring meeting later this week. The pope's vision might yet save the bishops' conference from its worst instincts.



Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich and Freising addresses Pope Francis during an audience in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican April 4, 2019. (CNS/Vatican Media)

Marx's resignation was, as the cardinal explained, prompted by his felt need to take responsibility for the church's "catastrophic" mishandling of the clergy sex abuse crisis. Even though he himself has not been charged with covering up abuse, Marx said

he intended to resign "to make clear that I am willing to personally bear responsibility not only for any mistakes I might have made but for the Church as an institution which I have helped to shape and mold over the past decades."

In refusing the resignation, the pope concurred with Marx that the church's mishandling of sex abuse allegations was a "catastrophe" and he reflected on the need to avoid simplistic remedies.

He [wrote](#), "The ostrich policy does not lead to anything...sociological isms, psychological isms are useless." He warned against relying on efforts to protect the reputation of the church or to consider overmuch what the media thinks.

He uses the Spanish word "*fecundo*" to say that "taking responsibility" for the crisis is the only fecund way forward. We usually translate *fecundo* as "fruitful" but the word "fecund" is more precise, containing the ideas of abundant fertility and new growth.

The most powerful section of the letter, however, focuses on St. Peter's words to Jesus in Luke's Gospel ([5:8](#)). Having doubted Jesus' instruction to lower the nets, and then seeing the enormous catch of fish they achieved, Peter says to the Lord, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinner." Francis calls these words "an inheritance that the first Pope left to the Popes and the Bishops of the Church."

Francis returned to this passage at the conclusion of this extraordinary letter:

If you are tempted to think that, by confirming your mission and not accepting your resignation, this Bishop of Rome (your brother who loves you) does not understand you, think about what Peter felt before the

Lord when, in his own way, he presented the resignation: "Get away from me, I am a sinner," and listen to the answer: "Tend my sheep."

Actually, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus goes on to tell Peter he shall become a fisher of men and the "tend my sheep" line is found at the end of the [Gospel of John](#). But no matter. The point is clear: The apostolic mandate — and only true guide for a bishop or any Christian — is to begin with the self-knowledge that I am a sinner and turn to the Lord who alone brings forgiveness of sins.

On Wednesday, the U.S. bishops will begin a three-day meeting on Zoom. They, too, are in crisis. Yes, like the church in Germany, the self-inflicted wounds of clergy sex abuse have robbed the bishops of much of their moral authority. But their immediate problem is not that. Nor is it that a Catholic in the White House does not support criminalizing abortion. Nor is it that some Catholics do not understand the finer points of eucharistic theology.

No, the problem the U.S. bishops face is that they are at each other's throats.

Our bishops face a choice: Do they want a real dialogue, which will require waiting until they can meet in person in November, or do they want to force the issue and further divide the conference?

At their upcoming meeting, they can't really begin to heal the divisions that have emerged. Zoom calls are ill-suited for the kind of interpersonal communication essential to overcoming estrangement. So the proposal by Archbishop José Gomez, the conference president, to proceed with a vote on drafting this contentious document on the Eucharist, as if a Zoom meeting is not really different from a regular one, and as if

the [divisions](#) this issue has exposed were not more conspicuous and deeper than any in recent memory, is an example of playing the ostrich.

The bishops need to sit down together, face-to-face, in small groups and larger ones, and work through these divisions. That will be hard work, the kind of hard work the bishops did when they drafted a [pastoral letter on peace](#) in the 1980s. The kind of hard work the bishops did when they drafted a [statement](#) on the issue of Communion and politicians in 2004. As I pointed out [recently](#), those documents emerged from a discussion that started with bishops expressing very divergent views, yet the final votes on the texts that emerged were 238-9 and 183-6 respectively.

Our bishops face a choice: Do they want a real dialogue, which will require waiting until they can meet in person in November, or do they want to force the issue and further divide the conference? The Vatican has [made it clear](#) that they want a genuine dialogue, not a Zoom call, as I expect the nuncio's talk will make clear.

A significant number of bishops have [written](#) to Gomez urging delay. If he proceeds, he will have no one to blame but himself for caving to the culture warriors who are placing politics ahead of theology and who are willing to break the U.S. bishops' conference to achieve their goals. The U.S. bishops should read the pope's letter to Marx — and re-read Francis' [letter](#) to them as they began their retreat in 2019, which touched on some of the same themes. The pope understands that unity among the bishops is a sign of proper discernment, and the lack of such unity is a sign of a willfulness that will not prove ecclesially fecund.

Francis also understands something else that our U.S. bishops need to grasp. They began this push for a document by forming a "[working group](#)" to consider how to handle Joe Biden's presidency, that is, they started by examining the sin of another. Francis encourages them to start by examining their own sinfulness. That is the path to restoring the credibility of the church. That is the only path.

At this start of the third millennium, the ecclesial model bequeathed by the Catholic Reformation of the 16th century has lost credibility. If you examine one of the artistic highpoints of Renaissance Rome, the [dome of St. Peter's Basilica](#), the inside of the drum on which the dome sits has an engraving — the letters are 2 meters high! — that reads, "*Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum.*" You are Peter, and upon this rock I shall build my Church, and I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. The idea was that Peter's confession of faith in [Matthew 16](#) was the basis of the power and prestige of the papacy.

Francis instead proposes, in his letter to Marx, that in our day it is St. Peter's confession of sin in Luke 5 that grounds the apostolic credibility of his office and the office of bishop. It is after Peter has failed — and failed again and again, even denying Jesus three times — that the risen Lord gives him his final commission: "Tend my sheep."

It is this quality of discernment by the pope that makes him attractive to us moderns, that cuts through the suspicions and the anxieties we have acquired, the loss of trust, the indifference, the busyness. It is this quality that distinguishes true faith from its facsimiles. It is this quality that contains the power to renew the church.

Let us hope the bishops of the United States will use their virtual meeting this week to hear the challenge, and the hope, in the vision offered them by the successor of St. Peter.

Wednesday, 16 June 2021

Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation

From the Center for Action and Contemplation



Week Twenty-Four: Shadow Work The Shadow in Christianity

We can patiently accept not being good.
What we cannot bear is not being considered
good, not appearing good.

—St. Francis of Assisi

*If you are willing to bear serenely the trial
of being displeasing to yourself, you will be
for Jesus a pleasant place of shelter.*

—St. Thérèse of Lisieux

*The two Christian mystics quoted above
have helped me to escape the trap of
perfectionism which always leads to an
entrenched shadow. The wise Benedictine
Brother David Steindl-Rast describes this
common ploy:*

In its enthusiasm for the divine light,
Christian theology has not always done
justice to the divine darkness. . . . We tend to
get trapped in the idea of a static perfection
that leads to rigid perfectionism. Abstract

speculation can create an image of God that
is foreign to the human heart. . . [A God that
does not contain our shadows.] Then we try
to live up to the standards of a God that is
purely light, and we can't handle the
darkness within us. And because we can't
handle it, we suppress it. But the more we
suppress it, the more it leads its own life,
because it's not integrated. Before we know
it, we are in serious trouble.

You can get out of that trap if you come
back to the core of the Christian tradition, to
the real message of Jesus. You find him, for
instance, saying, "Be perfect as your
heavenly Father is perfect" [Matthew
5:48]. *Yet he makes it clear that this is not
the perfection of suppressing the darkness,
but the perfection of integrated
wholeness. [Richard: Emphasis mine.]*
That's the way Matthew puts it in the
Sermon on the Mount. Jesus talks of our
Father in heaven who lets the sun shine on
the good and the bad, and lets the rain fall
on the just and the unjust alike [see Matthew
5:45]. It's both the rain and the sun, not only
the sun. And it's both the just and the unjust.
Jesus stresses the fact that God obviously
allows the interplay of shadow and light.
God approves of it. If God's perfection
allows for tensions to work themselves out,
who are we to insist on a perfection in which
all tensions are suppressed? . . .

[As Paul writes,] "By grace you have been
saved" [Ephesians 2:8]. That's one of the
earliest insights in the Christian tradition:
it's not by what you do that you earn God's
love. Not because you are so bright and light
and have purged out all the darkness does
God accept you, but as you are. Not by
doing something, not by your works, but
gratis you have been saved. That means you
belong. God has taken you in. God embraces
you as you are—shadow and light,

everything. God embraces it, by grace. And it has already happened.



Touchstones for the Life of Faith

Posted on [14 June 2021](#) by [Jack Jezreel](#) in [News & Press](#)

This month's spiritual reflection is an excerpt from a "bearings letter" that is part of JustFaith Ministries' "Engaging Spirituality" program, which helps participants deepen their prayer life and spirituality for the work of justice and compassion. This reflection has been shortened from its original version. For more information about Engaging Spirituality, [click here](#).

The author, Marie Dennis, is a mother of six, a grandmother, a secular Franciscan, and a member of Assisi Community in Washington, DC. She also serves as a Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace. An active participant in international movements for peace and social justice, she was the first lay person to be elected co-president of Pax Christi International. She has traveled extensively in Latin America, Africa and Asia. A founder of the Jubilee Movement in the U.S., she holds a degree in moral theology and has authored several

books on peace and the spirituality of social justice.

Touchstones for the Life of Faith

As a U.S. woman trying to follow Jesus in the chaos of these early 21st century years, I am haunted by the story of Lazarus – hungry, in rags and unnoticed – sitting at the gate of a rich man's opulence. Believing that Lazarus' story is a painfully accurate metaphor for our own times locally and globally, I struggle to live in a manner that narrows the gap between my own location in life and the dwelling place of the majority of God's children – and to walk lightly on the earth. Maintaining a lifestyle that is authentic and consistent with what I claim to believe about social justice and the integrity of creation is my greatest challenge.

One of the most wonderful gifts of my life has been the opportunity to visit Maryknoll missionaries in different corners of the world. There I've seen great beauty and strength – and life on the edge of survival from miserable poverty, violent conflict, brutal repression and, increasingly, from the local consequences of global warming and environmental destruction. I've tried to bring the stories I've heard there, and the reality I've seen, back home to impact the way we live and the way we, as a nation, are present in the world.

Closer to home I've seen a similar – if less extreme – reality: rural and urban poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, homelessness, lack of health care. A few long-term relationships with neighbors who are trapped in unrelenting poverty keep me acutely aware of my own privilege and of the danger that I will drift off into an unthinking and unseeing space on the wealthy and comfortable side of the chasm.

The fundamental challenge in my life has to do with right relationships, personal and societal. What does my lifestyle have to look like if I am going to build and maintain right relationships with people on the margins of our world? Do I give quality time and attention to maintaining these relationships and other important relationships in my life?

Over the years I have come to think about this challenge in terms of four characteristics of life: accompaniment, relinquishment, solidarity and community. These are the answers that seem most evident to questions about how white, middle-class people of faith in the U.S. should respond to the just demands of impoverished people around our world – and to the cry of the earth.

By accompaniment I mean the holy practice of walking with people who are afflicted and vulnerable– individuals for sure, but also communities, ethnic or racial groups and societies that are on the receiving-end of systemic injustice or war. I mean crossing all kinds of borders and boundaries to experience life with others– stepping out of familiar places and being uncomfortable in order to see with new eyes. I mean moving to the cadence of an impoverished person’s step to understand better their challenges and ideas– without immediately proposing solutions or dampening creativity.

Occasionally, I have had the opportunity to really accompany others– in Central America during the civil wars there– or in our neighborhood at times. I received the gift of accompanying my mom in her last difficult years of life. But so much of the time I visit the troubled places of our world, including war-zones and places of extreme poverty, visiting Maryknoll missionaries or as part of a delegation. So much of my time is spent in places of privilege and centers of power, like Washington DC, that I struggle

with the disconnection and worry whether I have drifted off the discipleship path.

By relinquishment I mean the next step– letting go of what we have in excess of need, to break the vicious cycle of accumulation and waste in a world of want. Gandhi admonished his followers to “Live simply so that others may simply live.” To figure out what that means is difficult, when new goods that we “cannot live without” come over the horizon every day, and we are told so often how much our economy depends on us “shopping!” Too much of our “essential stuff” is made on the backs of workers on the other side of the world. Too much “essential stuff” is depleting and destroying the earth, our only home.

Relinquishment, I think, also means letting go of privilege and destructive power that accumulate too easily for some of us and undercut our capacity for right relationships with those on the margins.

This is the highest mountain for me to climb. No matter how many times I think I have finally pared down to the bare essentials, in terms of what “stuff” I have, down the road a piece I inevitably find myself with more than I need to live simply. And I am constantly aware how much my way of life rests on privilege. The tragedy is that just being a “white-person” makes that so.

Solidarity is a much more developed concept. It was a favorite virtue of Pope John Paul II and is most appropriate and possible in our shrinking world. Solidarity is active engagement in struggles of other people for a more dignified life and for a more just and sustainable world. It is, I think, grounded in our encounter with the reality of a broken world and, for followers

of Christ, it is shaped by the values of the Gospel.

Solidarity grows out of accompaniment and is nourished by relinquishment. And while it is easy to stay busy, responding to one social or environmental concern after another, genuine solidarity is much rarer. I wonder sometimes if the virtue of solidarity really permeates my own work for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. Do I give careful enough attention to the experiences, ideas and strategies for social or environmental transformation coming from impoverished communities? Do I reflect deeply enough on the actions I promote, to ensure that they are in harmony with the vision of marginalized peoples? Do I integrate theological reflection into the action planning I do?

The challenge to accompany human beings on the margins, and our now threatened earth; the challenge to relinquish what we have in excess that breaks our relationships with these people and the rest of creation; the challenge to move beyond lifestyle changes to act in solidarity with others for a more just and sustainable world; the challenge to live in community— these are the challenges with which I struggle the most as I strive to live a life of integrity.

Our experiences of reality, where life is made vulnerable by injustice and violence, open us to the Spirit moving in ways unique to each of us. Seek out those experiences by crossing borders. Let go of whatever separates you from forming right relationships with impoverished or marginalized people. Accept invitations to action on behalf of justice toward a better, more sustainable world. Nurture friendships. Join a community— pray together, act together, learn together, discern together, maybe even live together. Take one step at a

time. Keep your life firmly rooted in the reality of life on the margins and open your ears to the cry of the earth.

Thank you, Catholic theologians, for your work for the church

17 June 2021

by [NCR Editorial Staff](#)

[Theology](#)



A collage of photos from conventions of the Catholic Theological Society of America in recent years (Courtesy of CTSA)

In 1997, just five years before The Boston Globe would make his name synonymous with episcopal cover-up of sex abuse, Cardinal [Bernard Law](#) of Boston [penned a column](#) in his diocesan newspaper in which he called the Catholic Theological Society of America "a theological wasteland."

His chief concern: that the professional association of Catholic theologians in the U.S. had become overrun with "advocacy for theological dissent."

Tension between the church's theological thinkers and its episcopal leaders goes back much further than this association's founding in 1946. Certainly, the church's history reveals many examples of theological "dissent" that eventually came to be accepted as orthodox teaching. That CTSA's

members and leaders have not shied away from debating innovative ideas is to be commended in an academic society.

This year, as the Catholic Theological Society of America marks its 75th anniversary, we would like to thank the association — as well as all Catholic theologians who analyze, explore, research, write and share their thinking about God, which is what theology is, after all.

A theologian's work can be lonely and thankless, with the added challenge of juggling teaching, grading and other academic service while trying to attend to research and writing. The occasional accolades of publishing an article or book, or receiving recognition for one's work are few and far between.

This spring, NCR reported on virtual gatherings of three groups of U.S. theologians: [the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States](#) (ACHTUS), the [College Theology Society](#) and the Catholic Theological Society of America. (And we eagerly anticipate this fall's planned gathering of the [Black Catholic Theological Symposium](#).)

From breakout sessions on "The Latinx Catholic theologian in the ministerial trenches" to case studies of sexual harassment and abuse of graduate students at Catholic institutions, to a panel discussing a theology of retirement, the work of these theologians addresses current problems and grounds discussion about solutions in thoughtful consideration of our tradition.

There is debate about how "relevant" theological work should be. Some argue that purity or expertise suffers at the hands of popularization or activism. [Natalia](#)

[Imperatori-Lee](#), in her plenary presentation at this year's CTSA convention, noted that for today's predominantly lay theologians, academic purity might now be an "objectivist fiction."

Theologians are not only academics, she noted. "We are parents, community members, people who vote and run for office. ... Some, like me, are members of marginalized communities and/or allies to those communities who have suffered unjustly in church and society."

Latinx theology, Imperatori-Lee noted, begins with people's everyday experience of God. "Theologians bring the joys, hopes, dreams and anxieties of the world to their work," she said.

"The academy cannot afford to cut itself off from popularization and activism, and neither can the church, because for many of us it is our real lives, the lives of our parents, the lives of our communities."

Echoing themes of many of the convention's workshops and seminars, Imperatori-Lee reminded her fellow theologians of the purpose of their work. "Who is our theology for?" she asked. "God doesn't need our theology. Is it for ourselves and our careers? The universities? The academy or the church? Or is it for the victims of history, the suffering, marginalized and the erased?"

Even as it celebrated its own 75-year history, the Catholic Theological Society of America challenged its members to remember who they do theology for. Speaker [M. Shawn Copeland](#) had strong words for the need for significant action on issues of inclusion and racial justice on the part of fellow theologians.

"As the world's largest professional association of Catholic scholars, have we done enough to grapple with the systemic white racism that permeates our nation, our church, our parishes, our colleges and universities and seminaries? I think not," she said. "We must do something now!"

As the U.S. bishops' conference squanders its authority with political maneuverings disguised as discussion of "[eucharistic coherence](#)," we are grateful for the work and witness of these theologians. Rather than a wasteland, we see a fertile place of promise and hope.

US bishops vote to limit debate on controversial Communion document Pope Francis' US representative urges dialogue and unity

16 June 2021

by [Christopher White](#)



Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of

Catholic Bishops, speaks during the opening of bishops' three-day virtual spring meeting June 16. (CNS/Bob Roller)

On the opening day of a closely watched and at times chaotic virtual meeting of the U.S. Catholic bishops on June 16, a majority of U.S. prelates voted to limit discussion on whether to proceed with drafting a [contentious document](#) regarding Communion and pro-choice Catholic politicians.

Following months of [open discord](#) among the bishops about the necessity of such a document, the prudence of advancing it in a virtual format and a Vatican intervention [urging caution](#), Pope Francis' U.S. representative encouraged unity and dialogue, telling the U.S. bishops that "If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together."

"The starting point, therefore, cannot be to shame the weak but to propose the One who can strengthen us to overcome our weaknesses, especially through the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist," said Archbishop Christophe Pierre, who has served as the papal nuncio to the United States since 2016.

"We are not a church of the perfect but a pilgrim church in need of the mercy offered generously by Christ," the nuncio said.



Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, gestures June 10, before recording his address to be delivered the first day of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' spring meeting. (CNS/Bob Roller)

Plans for a document on Communion that specifically addresses Catholics politicians [were announced](#) following the election of President Joe Biden, only the second Catholic president in U.S. history. The bishops are [currently scheduled](#) to vote on June 17 whether to allow the doctrine committee of the U.S. bishops' conference to begin drafting the document.

Given the high stakes nature of the proposal, [Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski](#) of St. Louis, Missouri, began the meeting by introducing a motion to amend the agenda to allow any bishop to speak on the wisdom of drafting such a document ahead of the vote.

"This topic and its implications are so far reaching and putting limits on the amount of time given for our discussion will not help us," he said. "I urge that this opportunity be offered for all who wish to speak, so that the fullest discernment be achieved at our meeting."

Rozanski's motion prompted a lively debate with more than 20 bishops weighing in for and against the proposal. That debate upended the meeting's agenda, resulting in it

going over schedule by an hour. Prior to Rozanski's intervention, retired Bishop Michael Pfeifer, emeritus of the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas, also suggested, unsuccessfully, the additional agenda item of addressing what he described as Biden's plans to allow for infanticide and forcing all Americans to pay for abortions.



Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski of St. Louis, Missouri (NCR screenshot)

Several bishops expressed concern that the conference had not heeded a [May letter](#) from Cardinal Luis Ladaria of the Vatican's doctrinal office instructing the bishops' conference to engage in "extensive and serene dialogue" before moving forward. Bishop Shawn McKnight of Jefferson City, Missouri, said Ladaria's letter was "not just one among many" and "every bishop who wishes to speak to this matter should be given the opportunity."

Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas disagreed, describing the proposal as a "delaying tactic." Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklahoma City suggested the motion was a "filibuster" attempt.

Even as many bishops struggled to operate the virtual meeting technology, including wrestling with how to unmute themselves, unintentionally requesting to speak and navigating audio issues, a number of bishops reiterated their belief that the proposal should be tabled until the bishops could meet in person again in November.

Despite noting that at least seven other bishops were waiting to speak on Rozanski's motion, U.S. bishops' conference president Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles said the bishops' were already behind schedule and called the discussion to a conclusion.

With 59% voting against it, the bishops voted down Rozanski's motion to allow any bishop who wishes to speak before voting on whether to begin drafting a document on the Eucharist.

As the debate over the church's sacraments has roiled the bishops' conference in recent months, Nuncio Pierre told the body that "Holy Communion is not merely a 'thing' to be received but Christ Himself, a Person to be encountered."

"A Catholicism that confuses itself with a mere cultural tradition or which cannot distinguish itself from other proposals, including political or ideological ones that are based on certain values, will never be convincing to this generation or to new ones," he said. "Jesus Christ is a Person, not a concept."

During his lengthy [eight-page address](#), Pierre reiterated the word "unity" more than 20 times, saying that unity is required both among the bishops, as well as with Pope Francis. He implored the U.S. prelates to embrace the pope's model of encounter and dialogue, adding that "the goal of this dialogue should be unity and not merely doctrinal and juridical unity."

Following Pierre's remarks, Gomez delivered a presidential address in which he said the church was not "immune from the pressures of division" and that it must "guard against the temptation to think about the church in simply political terms."

"Unity in the church does not mean conformity of opinion or that bishops will never disagree. The apostles argued passionately," he said. "They disagreed over pastoral strategies and methods. But never about the truth of the Gospel."

He went on to add that the church's "unity is made real and visible in the Eucharist."

During a press conference following the first day of the three-day gathering, Bishop Kevin Rhoades, chair of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine, again insisted that the proposed document and upcoming vote was not about Biden or any one particular Catholic.

"This is important for every Catholic, not just Catholic politicians," he said.



Christopher White
Christopher White is NCR national correspondent. His email address is cwhite@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter: [@CWWhite212](https://twitter.com/CWWhite212).

Ahead of Communion document vote, Pope Francis' US allies urge delay

Despite insistence that document is not political, Biden's name repeatedly raised

17 June 2021

by [Christopher White](#)



Cardinal Wilton Gregory of Washington, D.C., speaks June 17 during the second day of the bishops' three-day spring assembly, held virtually due to concern over COVID-19. (NCR screenshot)

Pope Francis' closest U.S. allies made a last-minute and at times desperate appeal to their fellow U.S. Catholic bishops not to charge ahead with plans to draft a [divisive document](#) regarding Communion and pro-choice Catholic politicians ahead of the bishops' much anticipated June 17 vote.

"The proposal before us presents us with a stark and historic choice," said Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey.

"Voting in the affirmative will produce a document, not unity. Voting against it will

allow us to work together in dialogue to forge a broad agreement on the serious questions embedded in the issue of eucharistic worthiness."

"Our very identity as an episcopal conference calls us to vote no, and I will vote no," said Tobin, who is one of only two Americans on the [Vatican's Congregation for Bishops](#), which is tasked with advising the pope on which Catholic priests to appoint as bishops across the world.

Tobin said that any effort to support the "categorical exclusion of Catholic political leaders from the Eucharist based on their public policy positions" would force the bishops' conference "into the very heart of the toxic partisan strife, which has distorted our own political culture."

The bishops voted on whether to greenlight the document during the second day of virtual meetings; the results are scheduled to be announced on Friday, June 18.

Should plans for the document be approved, the final document will require a two-thirds majority of the conference to approve it at their November meeting. An [early test vote](#) on Wednesday revealed a divided conference, a possible indicator that with the current makeup of the bishops' conference, the bishops could struggle to pass the final document, unless some of the more controversial elements of the proposal are eliminated or altered.

Cardinal Wilton Gregory of Washington, D.C., the most recent American to be elevated to the church's College of Cardinals by Francis last November, also advocated for a delay.

"The choice before us at this moment is either we pursue a path of strengthening

unity among ourselves or settle for creating a document that will not bring unity, but may very well further damage it," he said.

"The strength of our voice in advancing the mission of Christ has been seriously weakened," he lamented.

[Bishop Robert McElroy](#) of San Diego said, "The proposal presented to us today lays the groundwork for a fundamental shift in the conception of how bishops should present our faith in public discussion."

"The shift would make the denial of the Eucharist a significant element of our teaching office in contemporary society," he warned.

More than 40 bishops spoke over the course of a more than two-hour virtual debate, offering yet another glimpse into a deeply divided U.S. hierarchy.

Bishop Kevin Rhoades, chair of the conference's Doctrine Committee, took great pains to insist the proposal for the document was not political, nor was its intent to single out pro-choice Catholic politicians.

Yet those claims seemed to be repeatedly contradicted during the course of the debate, with some of the most vocal advocates for the document specifically citing Catholic President Joe Biden and Catholic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi as why they believed it was essential that the conference advance plans for the document without delay.

"It's not the bishops that have brought us to this point, it's really, I think, some of our public officials," said Kansas City, Kansas, Archbishop Joseph Naumann, who chairs the bishops' pro-life committee.

"Our president talks about it [abortion] as a right," he said, adding, "This is a Catholic president that is doing this."

Bishop Liam Cary of Baker, Oregon also added his support in favor of the Communion document because "we've never had a situation like this where the executive is a Catholic president who is opposed to a teaching of the church."

Despite [repeated pleas](#) for dialogue during the meeting's opening day from the pope's representative to the U.S., Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Bishop Thomas Daly of Spokane, Washington, told bishops he wondered if "dialogue is an excuse to delay."

"I'm a little bit cynical about the worry about time," countered Bishop Robert Coerver of Lubbock, Texas. "There seems to be a rush to this." He added that he feared concerns about 2022 and 2024 election years may be in the minds of some bishops.

Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich, also a member of the Vatican's Congregation for Bishops, spoke against the proposal, saying that a number of the committee chairs of the bishops' conference had made it clear their motivation for the document was to target Catholic politicians.

"Those who are insisting that we need to do it immediately really reveal what this is about," he said. "They want us to make statements to do something about politicians who hold positions that are contrary to our teaching. And let's not fall into that trap."

At a press conference following the debate, Rhoades said he would not weigh in on whether Biden should be allowed to receive Communion and said that such judgments were not the purpose of the document.



Bishop Kevin Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine, is seen during a news conference June 17 during the bishops' spring assembly. (CNS screenshot)

"We will be looking at that whole issue of Eucharistic consistency and the way the church's law is, that is for his own bishop," said Rhoades.

D.C.'s Gregory, who is Biden's local bishop, has [made it clear](#) that he would not deny Biden Communion. During the discussion, Gregory delivered one of the most forceful arguments against moving ahead with the document, saying that in nearly 38 years of being a member of the bishops' conference he had not experienced a moment where the conference was facing such a challenge of unity.

Rhoades also rejected the notion that moving ahead with the document would put the conference out of sync with Francis.

"You know I love Pope Francis. I don't see anything that we're doing that would be inconsistent with the teaching of Pope Francis. As a matter of fact, I would like to include some of his teaching in the document," Rhoades said.

He went on to add that the Eucharist is what compels Catholics to defend the unborn, the migrant, the sick and the dying.

"There's an intimate connection between the Eucharist, and our mission to love, and that's, I think, what Pope Francis is all about."

Throughout the course of the debate, several bishops said that perhaps the bishops could first hold regional or provincial meetings to discuss the proposal further before moving ahead. Others recommended, unsuccessfully, eliminating the final section of the proposed document, which is expected to address questions of eucharistic consistency and Catholic politicians.

In particular, Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico, proposed a different document that he suggested be titled "Welcome Home."

He said it "could be an invitation to rediscover what unites us, gives us strength, and sends us forth to proclaim the Good News, to defend human life and dignity, and to serve the 'least of these.' "

"It would be an invitation back to the Eucharist and to the mission we share as disciples of Christ," he said. "It would be a positive, affirming, challenging reminder that we are one family of faith united by the Eucharist and the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

In the end, Rhoades said he did not want to withdraw the committee's current plan but hoped the document, if the bishops vote to move forward with it, would be a "positive document."



Christopher White
 Christopher White is NCR national correspondent. His email address is cwhite@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter: [@CWWhite212](https://twitter.com/CWWhite212).

US bishops' meeting: Disrespect and disunity on full display

17 June 2021

by [Michael Sean Winters](#)



Bishop Kevin Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine, is seen during a news conference June 17, the second day of the bishops' three-day virtual spring assembly. (CNS screen grab)

If there was any question that the U.S. bishops' conference is drowning in bad blood and failed leadership, the answer came early in this week's spring meeting.

After a routine motion to adopt the agenda, St. Louis Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski asked that enough time be allotted so that any bishop who wished to speak about drafting a document on the Eucharist be given the chance to do so. This issue, so obviously fraught, warranted such a discussion, especially because this meeting is virtual, not in-person, the archbishop said.

The response was a shocking breach of episcopal protocol. Kansas City, Kansas Archbishop Joseph Naumann, one of the architects of the "no communion for Joe Biden" push, questioned Rozanski's motives, suggesting his proposal was a "[delaying tactic](#)." Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklahoma City, who serves as the "ecclesiastical advisor" to the rightwing [Napa Institute](#), did the same, calling Rozanski's request for adequate discussion time a "filibuster."

There was a time not so long ago when Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska, would challenge the motives of one of his brother bishops. I do not recall the issue, but I do recall Bishop William Skylstad, then the president of the U.S. bishops' conference, cutting Bruskewitz off and instructing him that, in this assembly, the questioning of a brother bishops' motives was not going to be tolerated and that Bruskewitz should confine his remarks to the issues. In short, Skylstad showed leadership.

Alas, this week, Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez is in the chair serving as president of the bishops' conference, and if you look to Gomez for leadership, you are going to be severely disappointed. When he was named to Los Angeles in 2010, I [held out hope](#) that his pastoral instincts would triumph over the culture warrior attitudes of some of his colleagues. I was wrong.

Gomez has led the bishops to this point. His inability to stand up to the bullies in the conference has crippled it. Now, this man who once said, "[There are no single-issue saints](#)," has allowed the conference to descend into a [functional schism](#). Consequently, when Gomez used his [presidential address](#) to tell his confreres, "It seems to me that in these times when society is so divided, the church has a great duty to more fully reflect the unity that God wants for his creation and his people," the question arose: Is he being disingenuous?

In an organization, unity is more than a word. It takes work, hard work, the work of dialogue. Sadly, as the debate that followed on June 17 showed, dialogue was not to be had. Gomez had thrown in with one side in the dispute, and that side was determined to press ahead at all costs. The cost is disunity.

The debate on Thursday began with Bishop Kevin Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the Committee on Doctrine, discussing the reasons for wanting to draft a document on the Eucharist, but he neglected to mention that the idea had a very specific genesis: The ["working group" set up to deal with Biden](#) recommended such a document.

This failure to acknowledge the reason the group was discussing the issue *now* rendered suspect his subsequent claim that the committee never, ever intended to single out anyone in particular. He assured us that the faith, not politics, was the motivating factor behind the effort to draft this document and to do it now.

Rhoades spoke about the many chances the bishops would have to amend the document, which is true. What he neglected to mention is that once the document is prepared, it becomes the baseline for subsequent

discussion. In 2019, the drafting committee [added the adjective "preeminent" to the bishops' voting guide](#) so that removing it was portrayed as sending the signal that the bishops were retreating on their commitment to the pro-life cause. And, once ratified, "preeminent" became "determinative" for many Catholics who suggested somehow that our faith required us to overlook all the many moral and political failings of President Donald Trump and vote for him for the simple reason that he appointed justices determined to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. The same bishops who pushed "preeminent" in 2019 are pushing for this document now, and you can be sure it will find some way to recommend that bishops deny communion to politicians who support abortion rights.



Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, holds a news conference June 16, 2021, in Washington, the first day of the bishops' three-day virtual spring assembly. (CNS/Tyler Orsburn)

Archbishop Alexander Sample of Portland, Oregon, said that there was nothing in the proposal to contradict the [letter from Cardinal Luis Ladaria](#) of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, because the bishops did not plan to adopt a national policy. But, as a practical matter, what is the difference between a national policy and a set of recommendations? The American Life League and other such

groups would be denouncing bishops who did not apply whatever recommendations emerge, and do so with the kind of zealous interpretation such groups demand. Sample also said the dialogue with political leaders that Ladaria called for had been going on all along, which is true, but he ignored Ladaria's request that the U.S. conference consult with other episcopal conferences.

Many bishops [spoke against proceeding with a document](#). I was especially impressed by Bishop Robert Coerver of Lubbock, Texas, who identified the various points over the past eight months at which the political cart was getting in front of the doctrinal horse. San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy explored the theological complexities in explaining why this process should not be rushed.

Cardinals Wilton Gregory of Washington and Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, spoke movingly about the need for unity. "The choice before us at this moment is either we pursue a path of strengthening unity among ourselves or settle for creating a document that will not bring unity, but may very well further damage it," said Gregory. "Voting in the affirmative will produce a document but not unity," Tobin said.

The really instructive comments, however, came not from the bishops who rose to oppose the document, but from those who spoke in its favor. No matter how hard Gomez and Rhoades tried to convince everyone that this was not about politics, one bishop after another got up and insisted this was all about President Joe Biden.

Bishop Liam Cary of Baker, Oregon, bless his heart, gave the game away, saying, "We've never had a situation like this where

the executive is a Catholic president who is opposed to a teaching of the church."

So, it is about Biden.

No matter how hard Gomez and Rhoades tried to convince everyone that this was not about politics, one bishop after another got up and insisted this was all about President Joe Biden.

If there was any doubt, Naumann made clear it was the politicians who forced the bishops' hands, and then proceeded to argue Biden had essentially invented the idea that abortion was a right, although the language of the *Roe* decision, written in 1973, used that language. Bishop Thomas Daly of Spokane, Washington, doubled down on the political nature of the document and, what was different from the others, dragged up [the McCarrick report](#), which he criticized for being incomplete.

Huh?

One of the emerging memes among conservatives is to mention McCarrick's and Biden's name in the same breath as often as possible. Bishop Donald Hying of Madison, Wisconsin, did not mention McCarrick, but he did mention that many people in his diocese want the bishops to address the Biden situation.

So, how is this not about politics? The attempts to blame the media for politicizing the issue were as laughable as they were predictable.

I am not much of a fan of the adjective "sophisticated." Sometimes, simple and rustic are much to be preferred. Still, the lack of theological sophistication on display during the debate was shocking. Watching

"Mother Angelica Live" reruns does not count as ongoing theological formation.

As I write, we do not know how the vote went but I suspect the proponents of drafting a document won the ballot. But they have lost something far greater than a single vote. They have divided the conference in ways it has never been divided in my lifetime, perhaps ever. And it is difficult to see how they will ever build back a spirit of communion and affective collegiality.

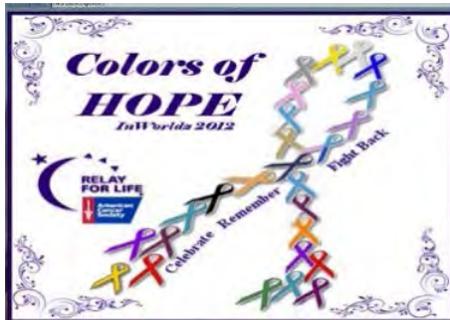
As the universal church begins a [profound exercise in synodality](#), the United States is saddled with a bishops' conference that is not only divided on issues but is filled with men who can scarcely contain the contempt they have for one another. So much for knowing Christians by their love!



Michael Sean Winters

Michael Sean Winters covers the nexus of religion

Relay for Life Mini Walk Against Cancer



Held on Saturday, June 12, 2021, St. Ignatius of Antioch Relay for Life Team Team Captains Alicia Perez and Maryann Peddicord

On Saturday, the 12th of June, our St. Ignatius of Antioch Relay for Life Team held its first ever mini relay walk against cancer. Fifty parishioners, friends, and family members participated in four hours of walking around the back-parking lot of our church.

Chip Sharpe greeted our walkers with lovely songs to entertain us before the start of the event. At 5:30 PM we welcomed our guests and explained our team's many years (21 years) of commitment to raise funds for the American Cancer Society. It began with the Harvesters, headed by Brian and Vicki McCoy. Jamie Rackley, one of the Delta Relay for Life Coordinators, presented information on the main Relay for Life Event to be held June 26th with a drive thru from 10 AM to noon at Purpose Built in Oakley and then virtual continuation of the event from 1 PM to 9 PM.

At 6 PM Chip sang Amazing Grace while our walkers lead by Maryann Peddicord and Caitlin and Mike Pineda took the first lap with our memory book. During the 4-hour event, the book was continuously carried by one of our walkers. Maryann and I were deeply touched by participants who handed us donations as they walked. We actually took in \$698 in donations for American Cancer Society!

The raffle numbers were called out at 7 PM for the fabulous raffle prizes donated by our parishioners. All the proceeds from the raffle (\$595) were also donated to the American Cancer Society.



A total of \$121 was donated at our luminaria table that was set up for our guests. The Luminaria ceremony began at 8 PM with a poetry reading and prayer. Glow sticks were used in place of candles

and participants were handed glow sticks to place inside luminaria bags as they walked. Each luminaria bag, about 80 of them, was dedicated In Honor Of or In Memory Of a loved one touched by cancer.

At 8:30 PM we had our closing ceremony, which included appreciation and gratitude to all who helped organize and bring it to life! Thank you to the following for their support: First and foremost **Father Robert** for his blessing in letting us use the back parking lot; our fellow Knights headed by **Grand Knight Chip Sharpe** for their help in setting up and taking down the canopies, tables, and chairs: **Tony Gumina, Dave Simpson, Rich Confetti, Don Benson, Walter Schlueter, Joe Stahl, Tony Onate, Bob Plurkowski, Jose Perez;** to **Chip Sharpe** for sharing his beautiful voice with his singing throughout the event; **Jane Sharpe and Marla Plurkowski** for their help selling raffle tickets, **Alicia and Raquel Carrasco** for help with the luminaria table; **Jamie Rackley** helped with the Relay for Life information table; **Jose Perez and Bob Plurkowski** for setting up the water stations.

Thank you to the following for the snacks, water, and raffle prize donations: **Sherri Phillips, Irene Sanchez, Margie Rognlien, Vince and Kathy Augusta, Brian & Vicki McCoy, Marlene Rideau, Helen Worley, Alicia Solano, Ron Yarolimek, Fina Villalpando, Monica Russo Olsen, Reggia Desmond, Patti Zupo.**

May God Bless each and every one of you who participated in this Mini Relay walk. We raised a total of \$1,414 at this event, which brings our team total to \$10,959 so far for the American Cancer Society. Thank you so much for your continued support over the years!

*Justice Corner by Carolyn Krantz,
Pastoral Associate*

The first line of the Epistle could be a model for our lives. “The love of Christ impels us.” (1 Cor. 5:14) When we do our nightly reflection, we can ask ourselves if the love of Christ is what got us through the day. This is how the “new creation” comes to be. It is up to us to build the kingdom, to put love in the world where there is hatred.

We are almost through COVID. “The old things have passed away,” but what are the new things that have come? What is different today from the time before COVID?

For me there is a deeper understanding of the preciousness of life. There is a greater desire for connectedness and decency. There is an appreciation for those trying to bridge the differences of opinion and a greater desire to be one of those reaching out to those in need. When differences occur, I pray for the courage to find healing words.

The Gospel today also helps us to understand the power of God in a time where life is stormy, when things seem confusing and impossible to comprehend. In these times I repeat the line from Job, Chapter 38, “Where were you when I created the earth!” We do not know the mind of God. We can only open our hearts to the Spirit to lead us to the next step of the journey.

The Gospel repeats a story that reinforces this understanding. The disciples are in a boat. The weather becomes a squall on the lake. Jesus is asleep. In fear they wake Him up with, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” They have seen him perform miracle after miracle and yet he allows the storm to overtake them. They are angry and afraid. He responds, “You have

seen me do the works of God, so why are you afraid?" He could ask us each the same question. How many of us have been frightened over health and economic conditions the past year? Do we not yet have faith?

As a church community we are about to complete our expansion project. We have had faith that God will bring this to completion so that we may build more community in Antioch. There were many times that this seemed impossible, yet "Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" We, like the disciples, are filled with awe and thanksgiving that it is so.

There are some lessons here. When events in our lives frighten us, we can fall back on our trust in Jesus. When we feel like God has deserted us, we can remember that God's plans are bigger than ours. If "the wind and the sea obey Him," can we not say yes to the things that terrify us, knowing that "the whole world is in His hands." This calls on us to surrender completely.

"Take, Lord, receive, my liberty
My memory, understanding
My entire will
Give me only your love and your grace
That's enough for me."
(St. Ignatius of Loyola)

The time after COVID demands complete surrender; surrender fears, surrender confusion, surrender loss of loved ones, surrender our plans and dreams, so that God may shape us and build our future. Are we able to live us to what God is asking of us now?

Attention Eucharistic Ministers

Steve Andreatta and Shelli Daviess will host a Eucharistic Ministers Training following the 10:00 am Liturgy on Sunday, June 27th.

All current Eucharistic Ministers are encouraged to attend. We also welcome all parishioners that would like to join this special ministry.

Handouts will be available, and we will be reviewing Fr. Robert's Eucharistic Minister Guidelines, as well as the cleaning of sacramental vessels and the monthly calendar. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Steve and Shelli look forward to seeing you! You may contact Shelli at (925) 584-0843 or email her at daviesszoo@sbcglobal.net.



St. Ignatius of Antioch Knights of Columbus #12587

PICK UP YOUR GRANDMA'S PIES AT THE DRIVE-THRU ON SATURDAY, JUNE 26th from 1:30 to 2:30 pm.

The Knights of Columbus would like to thank the many families who purchased pies during our Spring Pie Sale. Please remember to bring your voucher with you to help facilitate the pickup process.

Also, since we have no freezer at the church, please make arrangements for someone to pick up your pie(s) if you are unable to drive through yourself.

If you have not received your pickup voucher, please email kofc12587@gmail.com as soon as possible so that we can get it to you. We sincerely appreciate your continued support.

Expansion Update

June 17, 2021

The kitchen wall framing has wrapped up. Trusses for the kitchen roof are in place and are now covered with plywood decking. Rough electrical and rough plumbing work will continue over the next 10 days.

The 750 gallon grease interceptor was delivered and installed. Antioch inspected and approved the framing and underground sewer and grease interceptor piping. Backfilling the exposed sewer lines and the grease interceptor is complete.

Rich Confetti and Don Benson met with Bay Cities Pyrotector, the company that will install the new fire alarm system. This portion of the project will require some work in the sanctuary to install fire detection equipment.

The second progress payment of \$179,965 to Oliver & Co. has been completed. A request for approval of the \$33,221 third progress payment to Banis Restaurant Design has been submitted the Diocese.

Work to replace the existing tile roof is still on target to begin before the end of June.



View of the plywood decking that covers the new kitchen roof trusses. The existing tile roof is visible in the upper left corner.

New doorway from the parish hall into the new kitchen.



Serving window viewed from the parish hall looking into the new kitchen.





Careful installation of pre-cast concrete 750 gallon grease interceptor

Covering grease interceptor and exposed sewer lines.





St. Ignatius of Antioch

June 4, 2021

Dear Parishioners,

Construction is well underway on the Expansion Project. The expanded parish hall and the new modern kitchen will certainly enhance our ability to minister to and meet the needs of our community. I am deeply grateful to the 294 active families that have pledged or donated to this project since November 2019. As you drive down Contra Loma Boulevard, the tremendous progress is clearly visible with the wood framing of the new kitchen.

Because of your generosity and the generosity of those who came before, the parish was able to retire the parking lot loan last October. In 2009, this loan balance was over \$670,000 and now, for the first time in my tenure as your pastor, the parish is actually debt free.

In the six short months that it will take to complete this project, the parish will fully deplete the money in the expansion fund and in the parish reserve fund. It is my hope that we will emerge from this project debt free by having sufficient pledges to cover any loan from the Diocese. This will allow the parish to use our operating funds to grow our ministries and programs for our community as well as elevate the celebration of Eucharist.

As we emerge from the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic, I recognize that many in our community have yet to recover from the loss of income over the past 15 months. I continue to pray that all of our families will be fully restored.

If you have made a pledge to this project and are financially able to do so, I ask that you continue to honor your commitment. If you haven't had to opportunity to make a pledge but are in a position to do so now, please contact the parish office for information and a pledge form. Forms are also available on the credenza at the rear of the sanctuary.

Over the years, parishioners have confided in me that they would donate only after ground is broken and construction actually begins. I certainly respected and understood their concerns. Now with construction well underway, I hope that you will prayerfully consider stepping forward now.

At the suggestion of the Expansion Committee, I offer this opportunity to all . . . if you would like to make a new donation at this time and designate your donation for a specific purpose such as an appliance for the new kitchen or another Expansion Project related item, please contact the parish office.

Your Shepherd and Pastor,

Handwritten signature of Father Robert in blue ink.

Father Robert



HOPE
Lives Here

Our Mission

Catholic Charities East Bay works with youth, children, and families to promote resilience, strengthen families, and pursue safety and justice for all.

What we do

We provide **housing, legal immigration, and mental health** services to people of all cultures, ethnicities, backgrounds, and faiths.

Our Programs

Housing: we provide low-income families and seniors facing eviction and homelessness with back rent, security deposits, and utility assistance in Alameda, and Contra Costa Counties.

Immigration Legal Services: We help clients earn lawful working status and follow a path to citizenship through Legal Consultations, Family-Based Visa Petitions, Permanent Residency Application and Renewal, U.S. Citizenship, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Unaccompanied Minors, and more.

Mental Health:

Experience Hope in Schools and Communities – We work with students, schools, and community groups serving young people, to provide culturally responsive approaches to overcome the challenges presented by pervasive violence at schools in Oakland Unified and West Contra Costa Unified School Districts.

Day Star – We provide education and mentoring to connect youth who are surviving or are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC) to adult mentors, to increase awareness, and to decrease demand.

Crisis Response Services – We provide grief counseling and family support services to surviving family/friends of loved ones lost to homicide in Oakland.

Family Support Services – We work with parents and children referred to us by Contra Costa County Children & Family Service to strengthen families, improve child well-being, and help children stay safely with their families in their home.

TRUE Academy – We help young people (ages 14 to 18) within the Alameda County juvenile justice system learn strategies to safely and productively think and respond in situations of stress, fear, and conflict.

Founded in 1935 to serve people who reside within the Diocese of Oakland.

An affiliate of Catholic Charities, USA, one of the largest social services networks in the country

Our Locations

Oakland- 433 Jefferson St

Richmond- 217 Harbour Way

Concord- 2120 Diamond Blvd #220

Contact Us

(510)579-3100

Our Impact in 2020

- **36,000** people received essential services.
- **914** households received housing assistance.
- **23,570** people were provided food during our food distributions.
- **463** people were helped enter the path to citizenship.
- **10,000** people helped with \$500 gift cards totaling \$5 million in assistance (DRAI, funded by the State of California).
- **54** families received support services who had lost loved ones due to homicide.
- **84** families received in-depth services who were referred to us by Contra Costa County Family and Children Services.