

## For The Bulletin Of 22 August 2021



### The 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

#### *From Father Robert: Reflecting On The Gospel*

The time of decision-making has come for those listening to Jesus' bread of life discourse. It is not only His opponents, but His followers, His own disciples, who are scandalized by His words. They complain that it is an intolerable teaching, too hard, too offensive to accept. They have been nourished at the table of Torah wisdom and are not prepared to accept any new spiritual food. Surprisingly, after all the talk about "flesh," Jesus now says that it has nothing to offer.

But here Jesus is saying that from a purely *human* point of view (especially one's own) what He has been saying makes no sense. He will not conform to the expectations of those who want to judge Him according to their own superficial experiences. Jesus descended from heaven to speak the words of spirit and life in a way no one else can, but some of those listening to Him would like to see Him ascend to heaven as the Jewish tradition held that their revelatory

ancestor Moses had ascended. Jesus leaves His followers free, neither asking them to stay nor giving them permission to go. Their choice, this crisis moment, is personally theirs...and ours.

Then Jesus asks those who are still with Him one of the most moving of gospel questions: "Do you also want to leave?" It is Simon Peter who answers, and for the first time in John's gospel someone explicitly accepts Jesus for the most foundational and significant of reasons: because HE is the Holy One of God Who offers them the words of eternal life. Today's Lectionary portion finishes here, no doubt to conclude the bread of life discourse on a positive note, but we also need to hear the last two verses, to realize that even at the moment of this profession of profound faith, the church is haunted by the reality of betrayal that lurks in the background and is always a tragic possibility for any of Jesus' disciples. One night Peter will huddle in the dark corner of denial, and Judas will betray his master. To continue with Jesus is an ongoing struggle with the possibility of right or wrong decisions for or against Him.

There are times when we, too, may have felt like walking away from the Eucharist: tired of words about it that seem empty of spirit and life, bored with poor celebrations of it, some of us leaving because change is too slow, others because it is too fast. Basically, we are like the people listening to Jesus in this gospel, and like the community for whom John wrote his gospel: we can be tempted to want Jesus to conform to our expectations of how He should be present in and to His church in word and sacrament; we are intolerant of His willingness to be present in the poverty of so many eucharistic liturgies – which is not to say that we do not do all we can to have good liturgies. But perhaps our greatest betrayal is our failure to

realize that when we are not in communion with our sisters and brothers we fail to be in communion with the Body of Christ. Peter's response – "Master, to whom shall we go?" – faces us with the memory of the Servant Jesus Who went to death, Who gave His full human reality, His body and blood for us, so that we might share in His eternal risen life.



### *Some Questions For Further Reflection*

In the first reading Joshua challenges the people, "Decide today whom you will serve." Can you identify a moment in your life when you first chose to serve the Lord?

Today's psalm reminds us that "the Lord is close to the brokenhearted." How have you experienced God's presence in times of sorrow and grief?

St. Paul instructs the Ephesians, "Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ." How do you seek to live this out in your daily life?

In the gospel, we hear of many disciples returning to their "former way of life" after being shocked by Jesus' words. Which of Jesus' teachings is most difficult for you to follow faithfully?

Heartfelt   
**THANKS**  
**TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!**

To our volunteer parishioners who arrive early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare both the sanctuary and the bathrooms for the weekend and the week ahead: **Jean Rogers, Aduago Nnaji, Al Cosce, Carole Miller, Jun Bajet, Angela Bueno, Mency Osborne, Finian Anyanwu, and Steve Rojek.**

To those who volunteer helping in the parish office: **Melodye Costanza, Bev Iacona, and Alicia Perez.**

To the members of our **Counting Teams** who faithfully count and bank the Sunday collections.

To our Knights of Columbus who cleaned Contra Loma Blvd. last Saturday morning: **Bill Saunders, Leo Rivera, Tony Onate, Tony Gumina, Dave Simpson, Dave Costanza, Jose Perez, Walter Schlueter, Chip Sharpe, and Larry Demonteverde.**

To our Adult Acolytes who so beautifully enriched our liturgies last weekend for the celebration of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary: **Dave and Sharon Simpson, Pam Confetti, Frank and Monika Kauer, Crispina Malosonan, William Necor, Rose Necor, and Dilcia Aparacio.**

To the **Members of our Choir** who also helped to enrich our liturgies last weekend singing "acapella" so beautifully.

To **Dilcia Aparacio** who faithfully launders and irons all the Sacred Linens each week.

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

The Gospel of John today tells us about Jesus being true to His mission, even if it costs Him disciples. He speaks what He hears from the Spirit and because He is true to the Spirit's teaching, He loses people who He had called friends. He, like us, experience loss and separation. Like Him, we must go on and be who we are called to be by grace.

“The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life.” As we grow older, we realize that the substance of our life is the purpose for which we exist. It may be raising a family. It may be ministering to the sick. It may be caring for the poor. Each of us has a purpose, and find meaning through living in and through that purpose. We used to call it “a vocation,” and we used to think that only priests and nuns had one of those. But as we have grown in faith, we realize that all the baptized have a specific calling to serve the Lord. Frederick Buechner says that “vocation is the place where our deepest gladness meets the world's greatest hunger.”

In these hard times of loss and grieving, we are called on to cherish that purpose. One of the great gifts of Jesus is that He experienced loss and suffering. In the garden He struggled to accept the cross as the will of the Father. We, too, must accept the process of the stages of death and dying defined by Dr. Kubler-Ross: denial, anger, bargaining, despair, and finally acceptance. Refusing to go through these stages will only find us stuck. If we want to move on in life and complete our purpose, we must struggle through these stages. We must open our hearts to this process. It cannot be rushed. One moves through them at one's

own pace. Often it takes two years or more to complete. “No one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father.” God determines the process. We have to let go and be there with Jesus. We must honor the losses.

These are hard experiences. Jesus asks us as He asked Peter, “Do you also want to leave?” And we respond in faith, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” Our job is to listen and say yes to what we are called to experience. We practice being in the present moment. Our faith leads us forward into the unknown with grief as our common bond.

Many writers have spoken of this period as a time of cleansing and moving forward into a new and unknown world. It will not be as it has been in the past. What we thought of as normal is no more. We can look on this with sadness or we can look on it as a creative opportunity to build a new and exciting future, a future that cares for the earth and each other. One thing is certain. Jesus is with us. He will never abandon us. We may feel lost and alone, but we are not. His words are Spirit and life. We are together as a faith community looking forward in hope.

To contact Carolyn, email her at:  
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***St. Ignatius of Antioch Catholic Youth  
Organization***

St. Ignatius of Antioch Lions invites BOYS & GIRLS 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade to participate in our CYO Program.

**BASKETBALL**

3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders are invited to sign-up starting August 5, through September 1, 2021. For more information contact Brenda at 510-812-6670. To sign up go to <http://st-ignatius-of-antioch-cyo.sportngin.com>

***Sharing Our Faith***  
***From Shelli Daviess, Faith Formation***  
***Coordinator***

Faith Formation Catechists are the heart of our faith. You do not need to be a certified catechist to teach. Please consider sharing your faith with a group of children this year. In-Person classes begin September 22 and 23, 2021. All grades are taught one time per week from 6:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m., from September 22, 2021 through May 5, 2022.

The prayer of St. Francis says, “it is in giving that we receive,” ask any catechist and they will assure you that you will get more than you give. St. Ignatius of Antioch Catholic Church Faith Formation will provide catechists with resources and training that help people become successful. The main goal of a catechist is the growth of faith for the children they work with.

If you would like additional information about being a catechist for grades 1-8 or for our confirmation program for grades 9-12, please contact Shelli Daviess, Faith Formation Coordinator at 925-778-0768 ex. 305 or email me at:

[daviesszoo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:daviesszoo@sbcglobal.net)

*Proverbs 22:6, Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

## Expansion Update

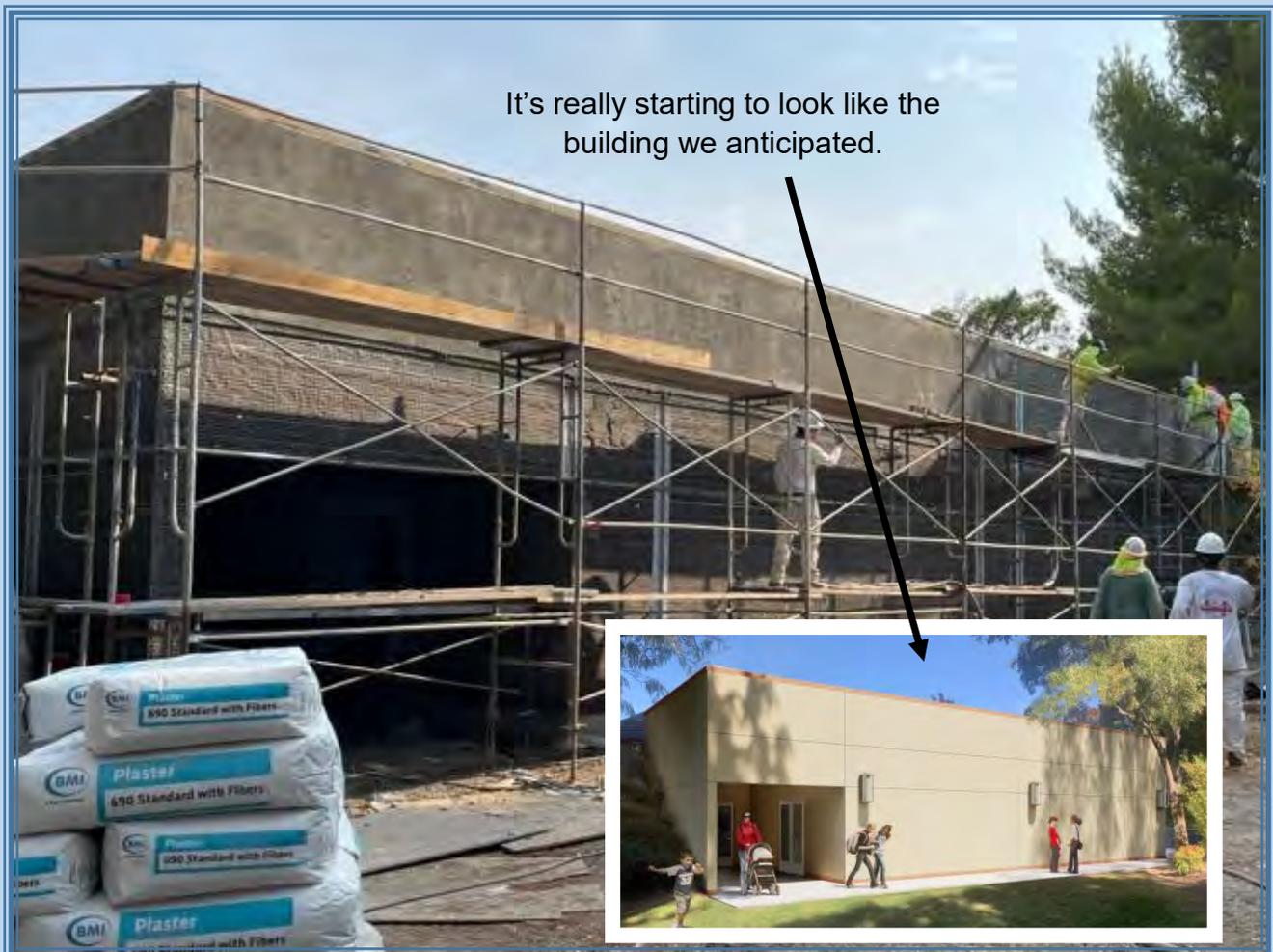
August 20, 2021

The 4th progress payment of \$195,094 was paid to Oliver & Co. As of August 19, the parish Expansion Fund balance stands at \$511,106 (\$153,931 on deposit locally and \$357,175 on deposit with the diocese). All payments to Oliver & Co. are paid from funds on deposit with the diocese.

Bay Cities Pyrotector (the alarm system vendor) began preliminary work this week. The new fire alarm system will serve the new kitchen, the parish hall, the sanctuary and the parish offices. Final installation is pending. Water heaters are scheduled to be installed on the roof in the next 10 days. We are still awaiting a firm ship date for the walk-in cooler.

The stucco finish coat is completed and the scaffolding is scheduled to be removed in the next week. Exterior painting is scheduled for September. Interior painting of the new storeroom and the food pany is underway.

Rich Confetti is working with PG&E regarding the replacement of the existing gas meter with a new one capable of providing needed gas service to the new kitchen.





View in the kitchen standing in front of the ranges looking towards the parish hall.

Exit from kitchen to exterior.

Serving window.

Exit from kitchen into the parish hall.

Entrance into the food pantry.

A large stainless steel work table with a hand sink will occupy the foreground.

View in the kitchen looking towards the food pantry.

Air conditioner/heater (heat pump).

The walk-in cooler will be located in this space.

Entrance into the food pantry.

Exit from kitchen into the parish hall.



View in the kitchen standing in the food pantry door looking towards “**appliance row**” (2 six burner ranges with ovens, deep fryer and griddle). The hood system is located in the upper right. The open doorway in the left background is the kitchen exit to the exterior. The serving window is visible at the far left and the stainless steel work table be located in the center area..



# Catholics have no grounds to claim exemption from COVID vaccine mandates

17 August 2021

by [Jason T. Eberl](#), [Tobias Winright](#)

## [Coronavirus](#)



A local resident receives a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine during a vaccination event for adolescents and adults outside the Bronx Writing Academy school in New York City June 4. (CNS/Reuters/Mike Segar)

Concerns regarding recently instituted or expected mandatory vaccination policies for COVID-19 by various governmental and institutional authorities, including [Catholic health care systems](#) and [universities](#), have been voiced by the [Catholic Medical Association](#), the [National Catholic Bioethics Center](#) and the [bishops of Colorado](#).

These statements either critique the mandates themselves, casting them as a form of authoritative overreach, or call for wide allowance of religious/moral exemptions. There is, however, [no sufficient moral reason](#) for Catholics to request such an exemption. Furthermore, as [Pope](#)

[Francis](#) has affirmed, there may be a *moral obligation* to be vaccinated for COVID-19 unless one has a medical contraindication. Such an obligation is fundamentally grounded in the Gospel's call for each of us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves ([Mark 12:31](#)). Insofar as loving oneself entails a moral obligation to use proportionate means to safeguard one's own life and health, Christians are called to love others by taking proportionate means to safeguard *their* lives and health. As St. Thomas Aquinas exhorts in his commentary on St. Paul's [Second Letter to the Thessalonians](#):

It is prescribed that a human being sustains his body, for otherwise he murders himself. ... Therefore, one is bound to nourish his body, and we are bound likewise with respect to all other things without which the body cannot live.

Epidemiological data clearly shows that the best way to fulfill this moral duty is through [vaccination](#) and, further, that the currently available vaccines are proportionately [safe and effective](#) even if they have not yet (but will likely soon be) fully approved by the FDA. COVID-19 vaccination is thus an appropriate means of fulfilling our moral obligation to promote the common good, as stressed by recent requests by [New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan](#) and [San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy](#) that priests not sign conscientious exemption forms.

Invoking the concept of the "common good" immediately raises red flags for those, such as National Catholic Bioethics Center [President Joseph Meaney](#), who emphatically assert each person's right and obligation to follow their own conscience in deciding whether to be vaccinated. There is an evident ["culture war"](#)

[ideology](#) underlying Meaney's position and that of the [Colorado bishops](#).

Fordham University theologian [Charles Camosy](#) provides more informative support for this view by citing the Second Vatican Council's declaration [Dignitatis Humanae](#), which stipulates that conscience should not be coerced. However, Camosy neglects to note *Dignitatis Humanae's* further stipulation: "In the formation of their consciences, the Christian faithful ought carefully to attend to the sacred and certain doctrine of the Church."

One of the church's highest doctrinal authorities, the [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#), has affirmed unequivocally that one may receive any of the currently available COVID-19 vaccines in good conscience.

There is a concerning subjectivism inherent in such absolutist calls for conscience exemptions in the current circumstances. The present assertion of personal political rights is not all that different from the "[expressive individualism](#)" that Carter Snead rightly critiques as being at the heart of American public bioethics, underlying advocacy for abortion and physician-assisted suicide among other morally contested practices.

While every person should follow their conscience, [even if their conscience is in error](#), this personal moral obligation does not [excuse](#) every act if one's conscience is misinformed by voluntary ignorance. Nor does it warrant respect in all cases by public authorities who, engaging in prudential reasoning, are charged with devising laws and policies that promote the common good — whether restricting access to abortion to protect the unborn, disallowing assisted suicide to safeguard vulnerable terminally ill

patients, or mandating vaccination to promote the physiological, social and economic health of civil society.

The [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) defines the "common good" as "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily." Though among those conditions are included freedom of conscience and religion, the catechism also emphasizes "the *social well-being and development of the group itself*" and stipulates that "it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of the common good, between various particular interests."

The catechism concludes: "It is the role of the state to defend and promote the common good of civil society."

Not only is the proper role of the state to promote the common good, but [Aquinas](#) further contends, "Legislators make men virtuous by habituating them to virtuous works by means of statutes, rewards and punishment."

Far from being intrusive government overreach into an inviolable sacrosanct realm, it is precisely the proper function of governmental and institutional authorities to adjudicate competing claims among individuals in light of what will promote "the progress of persons" and thereby cultivate a virtuous citizenry. Pope Benedict XVI further affirms in [Caritas in Veritate](#) that promoting the common good requires concrete action on behalf of others:

To love someone is to desire that person's good and to take effective steps to secure it. Besides the good of the individual, there is a good that is linked to living in society: the common good. It is the good of "all of us",

made up of individuals, families and intermediate groups who together constitute society [*Gaudium et Spes*]. It is a good that is sought not for its own sake, but for the people who belong to the social community and who can only really and effectively pursue their good within it.



Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the papal almoner, wears a yellow vest as he assists with a COVID-19 vaccination clinic for the poor at the Vatican March 31. (CNS/Vatican Media)

The expressive individualism implied by Meaney's absolutist position — a right-wing mirror version of the "my body, my choice" rhetoric of abortion rights advocates — runs counter to the conversion to which the eucharistic liturgy calls us. As [Benedictine Fr. Virgil Michel](#) aptly puts it:

The development of a true culture, i.e., the realizing of the best possibilities in human nature, is essentially a social phenomenon, as we have seen. Now the liturgy presents us with the divinely established model of social intercourse between men [sic] under the guidance of Christ. While it safeguards all the values of human personality, it uses the energies of God Himself for sloughing off all the excrescences of individualism, thus elevating all that is good in man above the narrowness of individual selfishness, of snobbery, or of extreme love-blind nationalism, into the catholic sympathy of

Christ for all men, for all things human, for all that is good in God's world.

Catholicism is not a religion that promotes the glorification of the individual in asserting their political rights over others. Rather, a distinctly Catholic stance holds that respect for the intrinsic dignity of each human person is inextricably bound up with the social ethic expressed in the sacrament of Communion and articulated by the magisterium.

Benedict XVI further notes in *Caritas in Veritate* that the teaching of [Humanae Vitae](#), by emphasizing both the unitive and procreative meaning of sexuality, "is not a question of purely individual morality" but rather evinces "the *strong links between life ethics and social ethics*." Benedict concludes:

The Church forcefully maintains this link between life ethics and social ethics, fully aware that "a society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized" [Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*].

A society that, through its governing authorities, fails to employ proportionate measures to curtail the [spread of a deadly virus](#) and its [mutation](#) into even more virulent and deadly forms effectively devalues and violates human life. Duly-appointed civil authorities have not only the right by virtue of their office, but the duty to promote the common good by whatever measures that prudential reasoning informs their consciences are required, so long as

such measures are proportionate to the end at which they are aimed.

In the present case, given the [clear evidence](#) of mutations and rising infections due to the prevalence of unvaccinated persons, as well as the safety and efficacy of the available vaccines, vaccination mandates fall under the legitimate authority of civil and institutional leaders fulfilling their moral obligation to promote the common good — and we, as individual citizens, fulfill ours by adhering to such mandates without invoking dubious claims of "conscientious exemption."



Jason T. Eberl

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Tobias Winright

Tobias Winright is an associate professor of health care ethics and theology at St. Louis University, and he edited *The T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Ethics* (T&T Clark, 2021).

## What will it take to accept the truth about

# global climate change?

18 August 2021

by [Daniel P. Horan](#)



Miami's skyline is seen before the arrival of Hurricane Irma Sept. 9, 2017. The scientific community has concluded that what we have been witnessing in recent years in terms of extreme droughts, heat waves, wildfires, flooding and other destructive weather phenomena is only going to worsen in the decades ahead. (CNS/Reuters/Carlos Barria)

Those of us who have been following the ravaging consequences of global climate change for some time were not surprised by the [major report issued last week](#) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In short, it is "terrifying," as one headline in [The New Yorker accurately described it](#).

The gist of the findings is that the persistent [denialism](#) and widespread inaction on the part of many nations and global corporations over decades has set in motion an irreversible sequence that will result in the planet's warming "[intensifying over the next 30 years](#)."

We have done this to our planet and we, as a species, are responsible.

As The New York Times reported, "This report is the sixth assessment of climate

science by the U.N. group, and unlike previous reports, this one dispenses with any doubt about who or what is responsible for global warming. 'It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land,' the report says in its very first finding."

No words adequately express the magnitude of my frustration when I think about the unjustifiably willful ignorance that so many of our fellow humans insist on maintaining in the face of the [greatest threat to life](#) in human history. There is no longer any room for reasonable doubt about the human role in climate change, which we have witnessed firsthand and from which devastating consequences continue to take life and property.

Pope Francis anticipated the conclusive results of this latest IPCC report six years ago in his encyclical letter "[Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home](#)," when he dedicated an entire chapter to the theme "The Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis," and opened it with these bold lines:

It would hardly be helpful to describe symptoms without acknowledging the human origins of the ecological crisis. A certain way of understanding human life and activity has gone awry, to the serious detriment of the world around us. Should we not pause and consider this? At this stage, I propose that we focus on the dominant technocratic paradigm and the place of human beings and of human action in the world.

As I read through this recent IPCC report and reviewed the coverage of it, I found myself struggling with how to respond. On the one hand, the last thing I wanted to do was to write yet *another* column about global climate change. For those who may feel that my attention to this matter is as

familiar as the tune on a broken record, know that I am equally aware of my [continual return](#) to this [theme](#). It is tiresome, not because the subject matter is unimportant, but precisely because the opposite is so true and yet nothing seems to change. Frankly, there is absolutely nothing else more important — no niche issue, political agenda, personal crusade, or narrowly defined "life issue" supersedes the urgency and importance of global climate change.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of such persistent confusion (at best) or malice (at worst) that motivates the [denialism](#) of so many within our human family to disregard the existential threat to us and all life on this planet compels me to use what means I have to keep drawing attention to this terrifying reality. We have to keep speaking about this, writing about this, and [protesting the inaction and apathy](#) of our governmental leaders and community members. We have to do *something*.



Environmental activists protest outside the White House in Washington June 30 to demand President Joe Biden stop fossil fuel projects and put "climate justice" at the heart of his infrastructure plans. (CNS/Reuters/Evelyn Hockstein)

Sometimes I find myself at the doorstep of despair, wondering what it could possibly take for those who willfully and actively refuse to accept basic facts, the truth of science, the evidence of ecological destruction in our own backyards, to see the world as it actually is and not what their chosen spin doctors and fiction narrators would have them believe.

Is this behavior by climate-change deniers what Sigmund Freud meant by the "[death drive](#)," that inherent and often unconscious tendency toward self-destruction? Or is it something far simpler: the inability for people to think on a scale of such enormity, so that climate change escapes the ability to be comprehended by those who do not have the time or interest to consider the complex realities and consequences it presents?

Whatever the underlying cause of some peoples' refusal to accept the truth, persisting down the path of inaction, the recent IPCC report offers those with "eyes to see and ears to hear" ([Matthew 13:16](#)) a grim reality check. As a result of our pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere for more than a century, the planet [has already](#) "warmed about 1.1 degree Celsius (about 2 degrees Fahrenheit) since the 19th century." The scientific community has concluded that what we have been witnessing in recent years in terms of extreme droughts, heat waves, wildfires, flooding and other destructive weather phenomena is only going to worsen in the decades ahead.

More troubling is the longer-term consequences of what we have done and what we have failed to do as a species. Namely, as The New York Times [summarized from the report](#), "The enormous ice sheets in Greenland and West Antarctica will continue to melt at least

through the end of the century. Global sea level will continue to rise for at least 2,000 years."

When Pope Francis, drawing on the earlier teaching of Pope John Paul II, talks about the need for intergenerational solidarity and justice, this is the kind of consequential impact the pope has in mind. Francis says in *Laudato Si'*, "The notion of the common good also extends to future generations." He adds:

Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world. The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. We need to reflect on our accountability before those who will have to endure the dire consequences.

What the IPCC report reveals is that we are exercising the opposite of intergenerational solidarity, behaving with a kind of hubris, selfishness and generational solipsism that is condemning future generations — your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and beyond — to a world characterized by what Francis bluntly referred to as "desolation and filth."

I do not know what it will take for some people, including self-identified Christians and even many religious leaders, to accept the basic truth of our dire circumstances, and then do something about it. As the United Nations Secretary General [António Guterres described](#) the IPCC report, this news is a

"code red for humanity," adding: "The alarm bells are deafening."

We have very little time and fewer and fewer options to make any meaningful impact on the course of planetary history, but we can at least put some effort into trying.

If people will not be convinced by the blunt facts expressed with concern by the global scientific community such as we saw this week, then I worry nothing will. And if that is true, I have no idea how will we individually and collectively answer for the gravity of our persistent and willful "[ecological sin](#)."



[Daniel P. Horan](#)

Franciscan Fr. Daniel P. Horan is the director of the Center for Spirituality and professor of philosophy, religious studies and theology at St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana. Follow him on Twitter: [@DanHoranOFM](#).

# Traditional Latin Mass advocates prove Pope Francis was right to suppress the old rite

16 August 2021

by [Michael Sean Winters](#)



A sacramentary is seen on the altar during a traditional Tridentine Mass July 18 at St. Josaphat Church in the Queens borough of New York City. (CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz)

In the weeks following Pope Francis' *Traditionis Custodes*, the motu proprio rendering his decision to [revoke](#) the permissions to celebrate the traditional Latin Mass contained in the 2007 motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum*, there has been a great deal of wailing and gnashing of teeth by those who champion the old rite. Many of them have proven why Pope Francis was right to do what he did: The traditional Latin Mass had become an incubator for division. Schism is in the air along with the incense.

The traditional Latin Mass had become an incubator for division. Schism is in the air along with the incense.

Top of the list is Michael Brendan Dougherty, of National Review, for an [op-ed in the New York Times](#). Dougherty gets a lot wrong for someone who claims to be a journalist. He suggests that Gregorian chant only flourished after *Summorum*, but I worshiped at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington since 1985 and we had Gregorian chant at every 10 a.m. Mass. They also have it at St. Paul's Cambridge outside Boston. And

St. Clement's in Chicago. And in lots of churches.

He applauds "British cultural luminaries" who wrote to Pope Paul VI asking him to retain the old rite. Dougherty seems especially impressed that the authors cited the rite's inspiration of countless works of art, that their letter "doesn't even pretend to be from believing Christians." That is an odd, utilitarian encomium for someone so wrapped up in the worship of the Almighty.

Dougherty exhibits a fixation on the tabernacle. These were never "torn up," as he asserts, but were sometimes relocated to a more peaceful chapel where prayer before the Blessed Sacrament was just as possible as before, sometimes more so. I do not deny there were a few iconoclastic disasters after the Council, but they were anecdotal not systemic. Dougherty thinks it is somehow important that the tabernacle be on the altar of sacrifice, but why he thinks this is not clear. Are day-old consecrated hosts somehow more divine than the hosts the priest just consecrated?

It is these sentences, however, by which Dougherty unwittingly proves Pope Francis was correct:

*Pope Francis envisions that we will return to the new Mass. My children cannot return to it; it is not their religious formation. Frankly, the new Mass is not their religion.*

There you have it. For all his effort to distance himself from "schismatics" earlier in the commentary, he shows he is determined to make his children schismatics in the end. Religion is not, for him, about binding oneself to the community of the faithful that has been faithful to the Lord's command to "do this in memory of me" through the centuries. Religion is not about

fidelity to the tradition of faith and its authoritative leaders. It is about vindicating his tastes. His iteration of cafeteria Catholicism might be high-brow in his own eyes, but it is still cafeteria Catholicism.

First Things was a hotbed for dissent against Pope Francis' decision. The worst was the [column by Martin Mosebach](#), which demonstrated a truly remarkable ignorance of actual Catholic teaching, even while claiming that those committed to the old rite exhibited "a serious and enthusiastic devotion to the complete fullness of Catholicism."

Did they? I would think accepting the teaching and the rite of an ecumenical council would be part of the "fullness of Catholicism."

Mosebach also demonstrated a complete misunderstanding of liturgical history when he wrote, "Tradition stands above the pope. The old Mass, rooted deep in the first Christian millennium, is as a matter of principle beyond the pope's authority to prohibit. Many provisions of Pope Benedict's *motu proprio* can be set aside or modified, but this magisterial decision cannot be so easily done away with."

Has he even heard of the liturgical movement, which began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and led to the Constitution of the Divine Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, at Vatican II? The Council – and several popes previously, including the conservative Pope Pius XII and the reactionary Pius X – were constantly renewing our liturgical forms. Pius X lowered the age for First Communion and encouraged frequent reception by all. Pius XII brought back the Easter Vigil, which changed not only our Holy Week liturgies but our ecclesiology: The emphasis on baptism and the baptized at

Vatican II would have been unimaginable if Pius had not restored the Easter Vigil.

George Weigel, also at [First Things](#), did invoke Pius XII and made a great deal of sense in his defense of the Novus Ordo. But he complained that *Traditionis Custodes* "was theologically incoherent, pastorally divisive, unnecessary, cruel — and a sorry example of the liberal bullying that has become all too familiar in Rome recently."

All too familiar? I seem to remember Weigel's hero St. Pope John Paul II having professors removed from their academic chairs because they fell afoul of his interpretations of Vatican II. I actually think some of the removals were warranted and have no problem conceding that Rome has the right to rule on such matters. But if *Traditionis Custodes* is bullying, and bullying is bad, wasn't John Paul II guilty of it also? Or is it just "liberal bullying" that irks Weigel? Most people wonder why Francis has been so willing to tolerate opposition from his own cardinals and others in the curia who seek to undermine his initiatives.

The morning the news broke about Pope Francis' decision, I [voiced my concern](#) for those who were devoted to the old rite but did not buy into all the ideological nonsense that often came with it. But in the weeks since, Francis has been proven right. The traditional Latin Mass led to a distorted ecclesiology and, at least in America, opened a new battlefield in the culture wars. If you doubt the pope was right, you have only to listen to his critics.



Michael Sean Winters

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



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