

# *North American Martyrs Church*

**February 4, 2024 Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**PASTOR**

Rev. Frederick D. Fraini, III

**OFFICE STAFF**

Lisa Burkitt

**Mass Schedule**

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, & Friday 7 a.m. Saturday 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (Vigil) Sunday 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.



**Parish Office**

The parish office is located in the Church Hall and open Monday -Friday 9 am-2:30 pm

**BAPTISMS**

Please contact the parish office for assistance or visit <https://namartyrsauburn.org/baptism> for detailed information and to obtain the Godparent Baptismal Testimony Form

**MARRIAGE**

Contact the parish office at least one year in advance of the wedding date to make arrangements

**ANOINTING OF THE SICK**

If you have family members who are ill, anticipating surgery, or weakened because of prolonged illness or advanced age, contact the parish office for assistance

**COMMUNION CALLS**

Parishioners who are sick or disabled may call the parish office to arrange for the Holy Eucharist to be brought to them at home

**CONFESSIONS**

Saturday 3 - 3:45 p.m. or by appointment

8 Wyoma Dr. Auburn, MA 01501 | [www.namartyrsauburn.org](http://www.namartyrsauburn.org) | 508 - 798- 8779



### Mass Intentions

#### Saturday, February 3rd, Saint Blaise

8:00am Katherine Korkus

4:30pm V. Robert Hoey by the Hoey Family

#### Sunday, February 4th, Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:30am Arthur & Rita Lindberg by the Lindberg Family

10:30am Rev. Edmund F. Falvey

#### Monday, February 5th, Memorial of Saint Agatha, Virgin and Martyr

7:00am Peg Tumeinski by Lisa Burkitt

#### Tuesday, February 6th, Mem. of St. Paul Miki & Companions, Martyrs

7:00am Frederic Dupre

#### Wednesday, February 7th, Saint Colette

7:00am Special Intention

#### Friday, February 9th, Saint Jerome Emiliani

7:00am Rev. Father Micheal Sheridan

#### Saturday, February 10th, Memorial of Saint Scholastica, Virgin

8:00am Father Jon Bakkellund

4:30pm Ed Binnall 9th Anniversary by his wife, Elenor

#### Sunday, February 11th, Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:30am Barbara Vaitkunas by Peter & Maureen Morse

10:30am Kathy Stasaitis, 1st Anniversary, by her family

### STEWARDSHIP January 28, 2024

Sunday Collection	\$3120.00
Monthly Renovation	20.00
Solemnity of Mary	10.00
Funeral	300.00
Catholic Home Missions	216.00
Kateri's Kitchen	530.00
Candles	39.00
Online Giving	722.33
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$4,957.33</b>

*Thank you for your generosity!*



### Feast of St. Blaise

The Blessing of the Throats will take place this weekend after all Masses.

### Religious Education News

Parents please watch your emails for updates as we continue to resolve some maintenance issues in the hall!  
We hope to resume classes this Sunday!

For the complete schedule please visit our website:  
<https://namartyrsauburn.org/religious-education>



Ava Blazis, Kayla Bowes, Eric Baumgarten, Michele Burke-Pellegrini, Steve Cenedella, Louie Costagna, Frank Cole, Shirley Connor, Jonathan Corey, Christine Cote, Gail Craig, Brianna Croteau, Patricia Darrah, Jacob DeCarolis, Derosas Family, Ellie Devereaux, Kevin Dobson, Elaine Doherty, Sadie Dutton, Paul Dyke, David & Pat Faucher, Connie Flynn, Joan Fouhy, Bob Fuller, Suzanne Gird, Lori Girouard, Therese Gosselin, Deacon Jim Graves, Jim Groves, Mary Hannon, Robert Hehir, Elijah Johnson, Kim Johnson, Maureen Jones, Edward LaConto, Jean LaConto, Roger & Rosalie LaCroix, Larry, Donna & Michael Langevin, Paige Lariviere, Michael Leung, Peter Letourneau, Richard Levansavich, Sr., Audrey-Lynn Marron, Bill Martin, Michael McGrail, Sue Morizzo, Max Mullen, Gary Nickerson, Mary Lou Paulli, Peggy Patenaude, Kaise Pinard, John Power, Theresa Power, Anthony Real, Edward J. Rutkowski, Joseph Sbrogna, Raymond Scanlon, Dan Slavinskas, Scott Staruk, David Tatro, Jake Thibeault, David Toomey, Bonnie Turner, Michael Young & Tracy Williams.  
For all the men and women serving in our country's military.

## KATERI'S KITCHEN



This weekend our food pantry is seeking donations of:  
**Cookies & Crackers**

Donations can be left by Kateri's Kitchen  
or in the basket at the front of the church.

Children are invited during the Offertory procession at Masses place their donations in the food basket.

## NORTH AMERICAN MARTYRS AUBURN LENT 2024

Prayer · Fasting · Almsgiving

Daily Mass will be celebrated Monday thru Friday at 7am & Saturdays at 8am

February 14, Ash Wednesday:  
Mass will be celebrated at 7am, Noon and 6pm

Confessions: Mondays 6pm until the last penitent & Saturdays 3-3:45

Stations of the Cross: Fridays 6pm

Bible Study: Mondays 6pm

Parish Mission: 6pm on Tuesdays  
February 20th & 27th, & March 12  
Guest Speaker Rev. Father Paul Shaughnessy, SJ

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Safe Environment Notice: Our parish follows the guidelines of the national charter for the protection of children & young people approved by the US Bishops & Diocese of Worcester policies. If you have been abused or victimized by someone representing the Catholic Church, please believe in the possibility for hope and help and healing. Contact Judith Audette, L.I.C.S.W., Victim Services Coordinator. A report can be made by phone to 508-929-4363 (a 24 hour confidential voicemail is available.)

## Is Saint Paul against Marriage? No...

Dear Parish Family,

Last weekend, I received a number of parishioner questions regarding Saint Paul's comments regarding the Sacrament of Marriage. Our diocesan patron's words on marriage have sparked debates for centuries. However, this is the first time I have noticed such debates arise on the parish level. As your pastor, I find this to be both edifying and intriguing. Edifying because we would all benefit from understanding more, and intriguing because it demonstrates to me that parishioners are listening!

The reading from 1 Cor 7:32-35, in which Paul writes:

*"An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided. An unmarried woman or a virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy in both body and spirit. A married woman, on the other hand, is anxious about the things of the world, how she may please her husband."*

It appears as if St. Paul is saying it is more pleasing to God for people to remain single than to get married. Indeed, you'll find many who argue for the Church's tradition of celibate clergy and consecrated religious referencing this passage. An unmarried man or woman is in many ways less encumbered by worldly concerns and freer to devote their life to doing the Lord's work. But does this mean marriage is bad, or that married people are not capable of holiness? Hardly.

As always, context is important. Catholics do not "proof text" the Bible, constructing doctrine by taking a single verse or passage in isolation. We read each part of scripture in the context of the whole. So let's examine the context of this passage in St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

At the time of St. Paul's writing, Corinth was a young church, and it was a church in trouble. The city of Corinth was a flourishing commercial center, with people coming and going from all over the Mediterranean. It was wealthy, extravagant, and something of a tourist destination with a reputation for immorality. Starting a Christian church there would be a bit like trying to start a new congregation in Las Vegas. There was a lot in Corinth in terms of negative influences that could lead new Christians astray. The constant influx of new people from foreign lands also exposed the Church there to many different religious and philosophical ideas, many of which were incompatible with Christianity.

When Paul wrote his letter, the Corinthian church was only about five years old and had already begun to be divided into different factions. It was plagued by scandal, lawsuits, heresy, sloppy liturgy and sexual immorality. St. Paul addresses all of these concerns in this letter, offering corrections.

This particular passage is part of a larger section in which St. Paul deals with issues the Corinthians were having with marriage. In this section, St. Paul states, "Now concerning the unmarried, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy" (1 Cor 7:25). St. Paul is telling the Corinthians (and us) that he's not laying down any hard and fast rules, only giving his opinion. As valuable as this Apostolic opinion is, it is by his own admission advice and not law.

What St. Paul advises is that people who enter the Church (at this early date the Church was growing primarily through adult converts) should remain as they are. Married people should remain married. Unmarried people should remain unmarried. Remember that people in the early Church generally assumed Christ's return was imminent. In light of that assumption, contracting a new marriage was seen as less important. Paul says, "the appointed time has grown very short; from now on let those who have wives live as though they had none" (1 Cor 7:29).

But even while advising unmarried people to remain unmarried, St. Paul makes a point of clarifying, "But if you marry, you do not sin" (1 Cor 7:28a). In other words, he is not talking about a matter of the moral law, but rather offering his practical advice. "Those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that" (1 Cor 7:28b).

And he's not wrong. Married people do have to be concerned with pleasing their spouse. And when children come, they have to be concerned with caring for them, as well. This is as it should be. It's not a bad thing. However, it does make one less free for certain other kinds of work.

Witnessing my married friends, I can attest to the fact that it is difficult. With spouses, children, and mortgages, they are less free than a celibate priest, nun, or even a single lay person, to devote themselves to ministering to others. A single young adult missionary on a college campus would be free to have 1:00am conversations with students at the coffee shop. They are not. They have children who need to be tucked into bed, and a spouse who would like to spend time with them. A religious sister or brother might receive a call from their superior telling them they are needed in another city, or even another country, and they can freely answer that call. Uprooting your life to answer a missionary call is not nearly as simple with a family.

Then there is the cost of supporting a family. Ministerial jobs generally don't pay very well, and so many married people employed in ministry have to find other means to support their family (even Lisa Burkitt has a second job!). An individual living alone requires much less financial support.

These are all very good reasons why the Church advocates for celibacy among clergy and consecrated religious. But does any of this mean marriage is bad, or that married people are not called to holiness? Absolutely not!

Some of the Christians in Corinth did believe marriage to be bad, suggesting even married Christians be celibate, refraining from sexual relations with their spouses. To these people, St. Paul agrees that celibacy is good, but says that it is wrong for spouses to withhold sexual relations from one another “except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote your selves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control. I say this by way of concession, not of command. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another” (1 Cor 7:5-7).

The call to celibacy is a special gift from God. St. Paul had that call, as do countless priests and consecrated religious, as did Jesus. But not all have this call. The call to marriage is also a special gift from God, one that St. Paul elsewhere calls “a great mystery.” One of the most beautiful statements about Christian marriage comes from St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, in which he writes, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church” (Eph 5:31-32). St. Paul speaks of the Church as the Bride of Christ, and of Jesus as the Bridegroom. Marriage, understood properly, is a living icon of the relationship between Jesus and the Church, between God and Man. The most frequent image used in the gospels to describe heaven is a wedding feast.

Marriage is good, because marriage is designed by God. The Catechism teaches, “The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator” (CCC 1603). Pope St. John Paul II called marriage “the primordial sacrament,” as its origins can be traced back to Genesis, when God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen 2:18) and “therefore a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Gen 2:24). To underscore the importance of marriage as a means of sanctification, John Paul II canonized more married saints during his pontificate than any pope before or since.

The Second Vatican Council is very clear that every human person is called to holiness, not just priests, monks and nuns. The Council Fathers spoke of a “universal call to holiness” and made sure to include married people in this call.

“Christian spouses, in virtue of the sacrament of Matrimony, whereby they signify and partake of the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and His Church, help each other to attain to holiness in their married life and in the rearing and education of children. By reason of their state and rank in life they have their own special gift among the people of God” (Lumen Gentium 11).

Marriage is all about learning to live your life in service to another. Married people have to be self-sacrificing, placing another’s needs before their own. Married people must learn what it is to forgive and to ask forgiveness. Married people — if they are to be good wives and husbands — must learn to take up their cross and follow Christ. These are lessons anyone striving to grow in holiness must learn, whether married or celibate. But those lessons will be learned in different contexts.

Another issue the early Church in Corinth was facing was the problem of mixed marriages. Often a husband or a wife would convert to Christianity, but their spouse would not. Some wondered whether this was justification for divorce or separation. St. Paul advocated that such a couple remain together, if both parties are agreeable, because an unbelieving husband or wife could be consecrated by their believing spouse (1 Cor 7:14).

A married person is concerned with pleasing their spouse. And if their spouse is not a Christian, then it will be difficult to also be concerned with pleasing the Lord. But if husband and wife are both Christians, this constitutes a sacramental marriage in which both parties are concerned with pleasing the Lord and one another. If husband and wife want to please each other, and both are concerned with pleasing the Lord, then there can be no conflict between their marriage and their call to sanctity.

In conclusion, by praising celibacy, St. Paul is not saying marriage is bad — in fact, the opposite is true. It is precisely because marriage is good that celibacy is so praiseworthy. If marriage were evil, then forgoing it would simply be the moral thing to do. But enduring the hardship of giving up something good for the sake of a greater good is truly praiseworthy. The men and women called to celibacy in the Church forsake marriage in this life in anticipation of the mystical marriage of heaven. Make no mistake; those who choose this make a real sacrifice. And just like Christ’s sacrifice, it is offered for the redemption of others.

I will end by offering this quote from St. John Chrysostom:

“Whoever denigrates marriage also diminishes the glory of virginity. Whoever praises it makes virginity more admirable and resplendent. What appears good only in comparison with evil would not be truly good. The most excellent good is something even better than what is admitted to be good.”

God Love You!

Father Fraini





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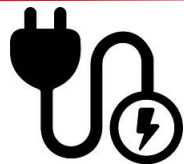


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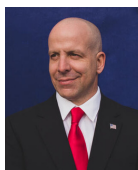
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