

26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



September 27, 2020

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ez 18:25-28 | Phil 2:1-11 or 2:1-5 | Mt 21:28-32

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

I've always had a bit of a recalcitrant streak. Ask me to do something, and I'll happily oblige. Order me to do something, and I'll set my jaw. So, I can relate to the first son's knee-jerk reply when told (not asked) to work in the vineyard. "I will not." Yet, despite this initial reaction, the first son obeyed his father's command. He "changed his mind and went." I didn't see it at first, but this parable is not about a clash of wills but obedience – not blind obedience, but choosing to turn over our lives to the will of the Father. The longer version of Paul's Letter to the Philippians illustrates this beautifully, challenging us to imitate Jesus: "He humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." As human beings, we have the freedom to choose to place God's will and the needs of others before our own. It doesn't mean being a doormat, but rather having a healthy humility and willingness to "change our minds (and hearts)" to better conform to the example of Jesus. As the *catechism* reminds us in this gem about obedience: "The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just." (1733)

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Have you ever kicked a bad habit, such as eating too many sweets, falling down the social media rabbit hole, or failure to floss? I've occasionally pulled it off (well, for a few days anyway), but I find it's much tougher to change habits of my mind and heart. In today's Gospel, the first son *changes* his mind, and his heart. This is what Jesus asks of us as well: a change of heart and mind toward love and obedience, wherever it is needed in our lives. For starters, it could mean taking a few moments to pray for guidance each morning before jumping full-speed ahead into our personal agenda. We can ask God to show us how to align our lives more closely with his will for us – through prayer, reading the Scriptures, and reflecting on areas in our lives that need an overhaul. Our "yes" to working in the vineyard begins by attending to what God has shown us, and leads us to even greater freedom in Christ.

PRAY Need a spiritual jump-start? Pray the Daily Examen, an ancient practice from St. Ignatius Loyola of peacefully reflecting on the events of the day in order to detect the presence of God's Spirit and discern his will for you.

Today is also the Feast of St Vincent de Paul.



St Charles SSVP would like to thank most sincerely all who have continued to support them during recent months. We welcome any monetary donations, which can be placed in an envelope marked SSVP, and either dropped in the donation box in church or in the letterbox at the presbytery. Your continued support is vital in enabling us to help out in our local community. For assistance or information please call 07896 154093.

Hour of Mercy 2020

Bishop John Keenan and The Friends of Divine Mercy Scotland invite YOU to an Hour of Mercy and Reconciliation on **Tuesday 29th September 2020**, at **The Diocesan Divine Mercy Shrine St Mary's Parish Paisley, 163 George Street, PA1 2UN. Time: 6:00pm**

This is a wonderful opportunity for those who have not gone for confession since the

lockdown. Priests will be available for confession. To book your ticket following this link <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/2020-hour-of-mercy-tickets-121449513765> or call the chapel house 01418892602 or email StMaryPaisley@rcdop.org.uk

Peter's Pence Collection - 4th October 2020

The Peter's Pence collection is a gesture of solidarity. Through it, every member of the faithful can participate in the activity of the Pope as Pastor of the universal Church. It is an activity that also supports the most needy and ecclesial communities in difficulty who approach the Apostolic See for help. To donate to this special collection, please visit https://www.mygivinghub.com/detailed/donate?charity_id=1086351

First Communions & Confirmations

St Charles Primary School have already been in touch with parents/guardians to update on the proposed times for the First Communions that had been planned for the spring. It is hoped that details can be given soon concerning plans for those who should have received the Sacrament of Confirmation at Eastertide. We will strive to make the possibilities known as soon as possible.

Mass Bookings

Mass Booking for the coming week will normally become available on a Friday evening. These can be made through using the link on our website or by phoning 07593 825035. Since only about one eighth of our parishioners can get to Mass each weekend, please consider allowing others to have an opportunity secure a booking for Mass.

Pastoral Letter
On the Recovery of Parish Life after Lockdown.
September 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want to write to you as lockdown relaxes and our schools return after summer holidays, and as our churches recommence public Masses and plan for the full resumption of parish life in the months ahead.

Above all, I want to commend and thank our parish priests and you, our parishioners, for coming together so marvellously and getting through the lockdown as a strong family of faith. I know how difficult life has been for you behind the scenes and yet, despite so many anxieties and upsets, your response in faith has been quite exemplary.

I want to thank our parish priests for their heroic efforts in reaching out to our sick and dying, in burying our loved ones and ensuring you were involved and comforted during their funeral rites. I thank our priests who reached out to you online and ensured you could participate in parish Masses and Devotions, or who buoyed you up in your faith with online Teachings and Reflections.

I want to thank you, too, for the equally heroic way you supported our priests and parishes by attending online Masses, or sending in your offertory collections or helping to get parish websites and bulletins up and running.

It is difficult to express our gladness as our churches opened for private prayers and public Masses, nor the joy of our first gatherings for Sunday Mass. Many of you immediately came to Mass, made possible by the generosity of our priests who put on extra Masses so that as many of you as possible could attend. I warmly encourage them to keep up this practice until the restrictions are relaxed. It was also down to the gargantuan efforts of parish volunteers who got booking systems up and running and supplied an army of volunteers to sanitise our churches.

As our schools have reopened, our parish priests and Head Teachers, both Primary and Secondary, have worked together in the most impressive way to see to First Holy Communion and Confirmations that were postponed in lockdown. I can honestly say I have never seen our parishes, schools and parents work so well together, and with one heart, to ensure our young ones experience their Big Day of receiving the Sacraments. By all accounts these celebrations have been truly beautiful occasions.

I also commend Monsignor Gerry Gallagher, Fr. Paul Brady, Canon Tom Boyle and our Office staff who kept us well advised and up to date on infection control protocols coming from the Scottish Government and the Bishops Conference. It is to their credit that, God willing, there have been no cases of infection in our churches.

Truly, I believe our parishes have grown stronger than ever during this terrible Pandemic and I thank God for this great blessing.

Now of course, allowing for the virus to be kept in check we are beginning to think of parish life getting back up and running as fully as we can.

We have been blessed to have had well-resourced online provision for Mass during lockdown but we know nothing replaces our in-church participation when it is possible. Here, I think of grandparents who told me of their comfort at seeing and chatting to their grandchildren socially through *Facetime* during the lockdown when they could not meet up in person. This online connection with their families was an unexpected blessing of new technology and, frankly, who knows how they would have coped without it. But, as soon as they were allowed to see their grandchildren in person they jumped at the opportunity, and could not express their joy at meeting them in their homes and give them a hug.

I think it is the same with our Sunday Masses, the heart and soul of our life as a Christian community. While we were not able to be in church, our online Masses have been such a godsend. Yet nothing compares to being in church for Sunday Mass with our parish family and receiving Jesus physically in Holy Communion. That is why, while for Catholics not in a condition to come to church our online Masses will be an ongoing blessing, for healthy Catholics who can come to church they can never be a substitute.

Now we look forward to some recovery of our parish life with the safe return of ministries like RCIA, parish groups and associations like SSVF and Legion of Mary, and Prayer and Devotion groups and the like.

Our own Diocesan Office has produced a Revised Calendar till the end of 2020 and our watchword is that: *The show goes on*, even if in different ways and with a new blend of online and in person ministries and gatherings. In that regard I want to commend all those parishes who have their Parish Councils meeting online to produce their own Parish Pastoral Plans till the end of the year.

All in all, we can be well satisfied with how we have risen to the challenge of the Pandemic as a Church so far. Let us keep it going through prayer and dedication to our parishes so that we can return to full parish life as soon as God wills and all the better for this unprecedented experience.

With every blessing.

Bishop John