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THE CHURCH OF SAINT BONIFACE

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

August 18, 2019



The Task of a Prophet: to root up and tear down
 (Jeremiah)

From the Desk of the Pastor

This past Wednesday we met as Pastors of the Christian Churches in Lunenburg (Pilgrim Covenant, United Parish and Saint Boniface). We periodically meet to catch up and look ahead. The issue of Gun Violence came up. Naturally what unities us all: our Faith and the Gospel, stands for 'Life,' reaching out to dispersing, the poor and the stranger. We are for compassion and mercy, not hate and not violence. This is what Jesus is, period! We have decided to do something *beyond thoughts and prayers*. We assigned ourselves the task to go back to our leaders in our respective communities and talk about this. No Politics! Just the Gospel. We are also planning a 'vigil against violence', probably this October. We will give you the details very soon.

I was at one of the nearby college campuses last week and I could see activity beginning. Orientation student leaders coming in, teachers and staff getting things ready. We wish all returning students and those who work at colleges or schools, a good year. Next weekend do not miss our 'Back to School Mass' outdoors and a parish cook out.

"I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing" (Luke 12, 49). When was the last time you got near or actually saw fire? On the news? At a barbeque or bonfire? At an oven pizza place behind the counter or do you have one of those fake fireplaces at home? Has it occurred to you how rarely we see fire or anything blazing today? Fire for the ancient people of the Scriptures must have been a common reality, used in domestic life (to cook, warm or heat the house, to give light at night, to scare wild animals). Fire was also a weapon of war.

Fire always had another significance, however, far different and unique from the above. It was a symbol of the Divine presence. It was used in worship and prayer. The word of God is referred to as fire (Jer.5, 14; 20, 9; 23, 29), the Burning Bush (Ex 3, 1-17); fire can represent both the peace and calm of God but it can also be unsettling and bothersome, a spirit or energy that compels one to change and transform. It purifies. It burns. And where it does 'burn' it transforms. The challenge is not to let it extinguish in us.

Jeremiah is one who has been singled out as a bearer of the 'word of God' (a prophet). He is to speak this word that is 'fire' to his own people. It is a word that is 'truth' that his people cannot take. And they make sure he will be silenced. He is put to death in exile by his own people. The Word of God is always very unsettling to those in power or those who profit from systems of dominance. What Jeremiah speaks, however, is 'the word of God' that truly happens as he proclaimed it. Judah is destroyed and the people are led into exile. If only they had listened to this albeit 'bitter burning word' they would have changed their fate.

Everything that Jesus speaks and does is like 'fire.' It bothers, it unsettles the establishment of the time. It unsettles the disciples. It calls for radical conversion and vigilance. Jesus often seems to go against conventional wisdom. But if his word is taken, believed and lived, it brings life. Jesus therefore rightly says, he comes to bring division and conflict so as to prepare us to make good discernment, where the will of God is done. Are we ready to let the word of God, 'burn' in us? Unsettle us?

What if hedge fund managers let the word of God burn in their conscience? Make them see not only profit but the good of humanity, the fair distribution of resources? What if political leaders let the word burn in them? How they would use their power differently! What if, in our homes and parishes, we let the word of God 'burn' in us? How would we relate to others?

Yes, let us let the word of God be 'fire', let it burn! Let it transform and disrupt us.

A blessed week in the Lord.

Fr. Anthony



BLESSING OF BACKPACKS & RETURNING STUDENTS

Please Join Us for a Special Outdoor Mass on Saturday, August 24, at 4:00 p.m.

Students: bring your backpacks to be blessed!

Parish picnic and BBQ to follow the Mass.

Saint Boniface Church

817 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA 01462

Parish Office: 978-582-4008 email: stbonifaceparish@verizon.net

Discover St. Boniface ~ Visit our website: www.StBoniface-lunenburg.org

Parish Office Hours

Monday / Wednesday / Thursday 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (closed 12:00 – 1:00 PM)



The Celebration of the Eucharist

Sunday: 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM

Saturday Vigil: 4:00 PM

Summer Sunday Mass schedule: 9:00 AM

(Begins Memorial Day weekend, ending Labor Day weekend)

Weekday Masses: 8:00 AM, Wednesday/Thursday/Friday

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (Confession) Saturday 3:00 - 3:30 p.m. or by appointment.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM Adults are baptized at the Easter Vigil as part of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Infant and child Baptisms are by arrangement.

FIRST EUCHARIST Preparation begins in grade one and includes classes, retreats, and home instruction. Children receive First Eucharist in grade two.

CONFIRMATION Our Confirmation program begins in the 9th grade; students are confirmed in the spring of the 10th grade. For young adults who have been baptized but not yet confirmed, contact the parish office.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY It is the policy of the Diocese of Worcester that a couple should contact the parish at least one year prior to the anticipated date of their wedding to allow sufficient time to carry out the various steps of the marriage preparation process. It is important that arrangements be made with the church before plans are made with reception halls, caterers, etc.

ANNOINTING OF THE SICK Please call the parish office 978-582-4008 or email Fr. Anthony at stbonifaceparish@verizon.net or Nancy Cieri 978-582-6983 nancycieri@comcast.net to arrange these visits.

PRAYER LINE MINISTRY If you or someone you know needs prayers or if you would like to be a part of this ministry of those who pray for the needs of neighbors, please contact Sue Cote 978-582-0404 sj33@msn.com



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL #16480 In Service to One. In Service to all. The members meet in the Parish Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 PM. Any Catholic men over 18 who are interested in joining the Knights should contact Grand Knight James Dijk (978) 534-7956 or Deputy Grand Knight Brian Cusick (978) 534-2326, or you can email the Council at kofc16480@gmail.com.

PARISH STAFF:

Rev. Anthony Mpagi, Pastor	978-582-4008	stbonifaceparish@verizon.net
Jo-Anne Poirier, Administrative Assistant	978-582-4008	stbonifaceparish@verizon.net
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Greg Cucchiara, Building & Grounds	978-400-1294	stbonifaceparish@verizon.net
Louise Nadeau, Sacristan		
Jacque Cronin, Ministry Schedule	978-582-7040	
Nina Charpentier, Dir. Early Childhood/PreK	978-582-7110	

Newcomers to St. Boniface are invited and encouraged to formally register as members of the parish so that so that we can stay in touch with you via email with faith formation news, notice of special events, volunteer opportunities, and more. Registration forms are available at the doors of the church or on our website.

Please note that you must be registered for at least six months before we can issue any verification of your status as a parishioner for godparent or sponsor letters.

MASS INTENTIONS			
Sat	Aug 17	4:00 pm	Peter Charpentier, (3 rd Anniv) by the family
Sat	Aug 24	4:00 pm	Joe Simoneau, by the Knights of Columbus

ST. BONIFACE CHURCH IS LOOKING FOR A FACILITIES

MANAGER St. Boniface is looking for a highly motivated, handy person to work inside and outside of the church. Duties include, but are not limited to, keeping the church and hall clean, maintaining the grounds in all seasons, making small repairs in the church, hall and preschool. Candidates will be able to maintain power equipment, move furniture and set up and break down the church hall. They will work closely with all department heads to keep the facilities in good working order. If you have 20 hours a week to commit to these duties, please call 978-582-4008.

St. Bernard's CCHS

St. Bernard's is accepting registrations for incoming freshmen and transfer students for the 2019 – 2020 school year. We invite you to learn more about STB by visiting www.stbernardscchs.org or by contacting Principal Linda Anderson at landerson@stbernardscchs.org. Online applications are available. *Come and see what is new at STB!*

Collection Report

Weekend August 11, 2019

Sunday Ordinary: 2333 .00
Maintenance: 406 .00
Holy Day: 20 .00
Other: 134 .00

Total Contributions: \$2893 .00

Thank you for your continued support!

Saint Boniface is working to increase its commitment to Social Justice issues.

During the past year a few parishioners have gotten involved in a variety of social action issues. Committee members have attended the town's Dementia-friendly meetings, explored ways we can be more environmentally conscious, and continued our involvement with serving the homeless through volunteer work at Our Father's House and Montachusett Interfaith Hospitality Network.

It would be wonderful if we can get the children/families of our parish more involved and we welcome ideas and leadership to develop more social action outreach.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 26th from 7-8 p.m. in the church hall. Please consider attending and bring your ideas on how to expand our outreach.

For questions contact Allison at allison.lilly@comcast.net. Hope to see you there!

Prayer is not a burden. It is a way to rest.

This week let's look at a common problem: becoming burdened by prayer. Often I find with some of my spiritual directees that their prayer becomes a series of tasks. Many devout Christians end up, with the best intentions, overwhelmed by the great many things that they feel that they have to do in their daily prayer, as if prayer is just a "to do" list. For example, someone might say, "Well, in the morning, I start with the Morning Offering prayer, then I read the Breviary, then I read the Daily Mass readings, then I pray a Rosary for all those people in my life who are sick, then I pray for those who have died recently."



The Virgin in Prayer by Sassoferrato, 1640-1650 (Wikimedia Commons)

Each of those prayer practices can be enriching and helpful. But sometimes people feel overwhelmed by a schedule like that. Frequently people who practice these kinds of routine speak of feeling overwhelmed or burdened or even unhappy. They sometimes come to prayer with a sense of dread, rather than anticipation. In response, I'll usually tell them to drop one or two of those "to do" tasks that they have set themselves. Or leave the most burdensome out every other day.

What might be missing is some quiet, still time with God, where one can just sit and be in God's presence in a wordless way.

Think of your relationship with God as a friendship. If the time you spend with a friend is filled with obligations, you might feel that any chance for spontaneity has gone. You might miss some free-wheeling time with him or her. So if you're burdened with prayer, try to let some things go. "Come to me, all you who are heavy burdened," as Jesus says. He wants to give you rest.

James Martin, S.J. | August 12, 2019

Please join us for our 3rd Annual



Saint Boniface Oktoberfest Celebration September 28, 2019 – 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

- German and American Food
- Kids' Activities and Games (with Prizes)
- Micro Brews and Wine
- Craft Vendors
- White Elephant Sale
- Raffle Baskets

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Encountering God offers peace. It can also be disruptive.

By: Michael Simone | July 26, 2019



In the Hebrew Scriptures, divine fire represents the presence of God. Sometimes fire composed God's body, as in Ez 1:27 or 2 Sm 22:9. Sometimes, fire was all that appeared when God appeared, as in Ex 19:18 or Dt 4:11-12. Beings and objects of fire could visit the earth to accomplish the divine will, as in Ex 3:1-5 and 2 Kgs 2:11. Finally, fire was an essential component of worship, serving as a kind of gate that transmitted offerings from the earthly to the heavenly realm (Jgs 13:20; 2 Chr 7:1-3). In all these cases, fire represents divine presence and action.

Divine fire always demanded a transformation and response. In some cases, an encounter with divine fire inspired deeper faith. Moses became a divine messenger after his encounter with the burning bush, and Israel's encounter with divine fire at Carmel led them back to the faith of their ancestors. Divine fire protects Jerusalem in the prophecy of Zechariah (Zec 2:5), and fire purifies garments affected by leprosy (Lv 13:47-58). Those who approached God's fiery presence impiously, however, found the experience destructive. Divine fire took the lives of Aaron's sons (Lv 10:1-3) as well as the arrogant officers sent to arrest Elijah (2 Kgs 1:9-15). In each case, fire represents divine presence and elicits an irrevocable response from those who encounter it.

On his journey to Jerusalem, Jesus takes stock of the transformation and disruption that his ministry has caused, and he recognizes in it the effects of divine fire. The disciples who continue to follow him have grown stronger in faith and understanding. People from the crowds who turn to him for healing have come away whole. But more and more people are finding him a disruptive presence and rejecting him and his message. Like the divine fire of the Hebrew Bible, Jesus' presence elicits a response from all who encounter him.

Christ continues to challenge, reaching out today through the sacraments, the Scriptures, the church and the poor. In each case, the call requires conversion of heart. Many will find the Gospel's affirmation that God is present and still at work to be deeply consoling. This consolation can free many from fear and transform them into servants of God's kingdom.

For others, however, such an encounter will be disruptive. The peace that Christ offers does not affirm or support the status quo. Those of us who benefit from the world as it is may come away from Christ's presence feeling scorched. If, through good discernment, we can recognize the divine presence even in those challenging encounters, we will find in it a divine fire that purifies and does not destroy.

Every heart turned to Christ brings a little more of the fiery divine presence into the world. In his own day, Jesus found that his words and actions burned some, but cleansed and inspired many others. Likewise, as we continue his mission today, we must remember the power of the message we bear. Bound up in every word is the divine presence that blazed on Sinai and transformed Israel. We are now God's fire, purifying, healing, protecting and opening a way between heaven and earth.

This article also appeared in print under the headline "Send Down Your Fire," in *America: The Jesuit Review Magazine* August 5, 2019 issue.

SAINTS OF THE DAY

Saint John Eudes

August 19. Saint John Eudes was a noted preacher and confessor. He founded several seminaries because he saw the need for clerical formation. He also founded a couple of religious communities to address the needs that he saw. Saint John had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Stained glass window in Saint-Pierre de Dourdain | photo by GO69



Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

August 20. Wanting to be a simple monk in the quiet of a monastery, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux was called upon to be a very active member of the Church in his day. Preacher, reconciler, adviser, healer—just a few of the roles he was called to play. A man of many talents, he used his abilities for the service of the Church.

Stained glass representing St. Bernard of Clairvaux | photo by Jastrow (2006)



Saint Pious X

August 21. A man of humble background, and wanting to maintain a simple lifestyle, Saint Pius X endured the trappings of the papacy as best he could. Known for encouraging frequent reception of Holy Communion, and concerned about world affairs, he led the Church in holiness and grace. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest popes of the 20th century.

Portrait of Pope Saint Pius X | Library of Congress | Tryphosa Bates-Batcheller



Queenship of Mary

August 22. The notion of a queen is somewhat foreign to American ears, but this feast of Mary recognizes her role in the Kingdom of her Son, Jesus. If Jesus is king, Mary is certainly queen. And the title—or its surrogate—goes back centuries in the Church, as Mary has been praised for her position in the Church and among the people of God.

Virgin of the Deliverance | Ernest Hébert



Saint Rose of Lima

August 23. A member of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, Saint Rose of Lima lived a life of penance and holiness at home under the disapproving eyes of her parents. They wanted her to marry, but Saint Rose felt another calling. While her lifestyle raised some eyebrows, at her death the city of Lima recognized her sanctity.

Saint Rose of Lima with Child Jesus | anonymous

