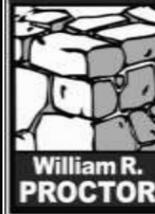


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THE CHURCH OF SAINT BONIFACE

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 16, 2020



*"If you choose you can keep the commandments,
they will save you."*

(Sirach 15:15)

From the Desk of the Pastor

Sunday Reflection: February 16

It is better for you to lose.

What situations in your life have brought you to the clear conclusion that it is better for you to lose?

At the last presbyteral assembly, I ran into a senior now retired priest. Father was not the person I knew; in fact I could not even recognize him. He was always jovial and upbeat, always making jokes and getting people to laugh, but not this time. Cancer had changed all this. He had undergone a major surgery on his lower face where they had to remove the lower jaw. The doctors recommended that this way the only option if he was to have a chance to live.



The seriousness of a medical diagnosis or a life situation could bring one to conclude that it is better to lose this to gain that, and one has to make the "hard" choice often times.

If you and I take following Jesus seriously, it is going to always ask of us more and, yes, to also say more than often "it is better to lose." The symbol of our faith is the Cross. On it Jesus, says it is better to lose than to turn one's back to God's will and one's neighbor.

Decision making can be very hard. Many ask themselves today in a culture where everything seems to be grey, "what is the right thing to do?" The writer Ben Sirach, in the first readings, counsels his listeners that God has given to us a hidden grace that will enable us not to fall into sin. We, of course, are free to say yes or no, but there are consequences to our choices. The best option is God's choice, but with it comes the hard decision to lose in the eyes of worldly thinking.

Saint Paul is okay with not being counted among the elite wise men (preachers) of this age, if this means to preach a Gospel empty of the Crucified Christ. The elite preachers of his time did not want to preach a savior who loses (self-giving), yet the whole point of the message of Jesus is this. Saint Paul chose to lose in order to do the right thing.

For Jesus if following the law meant just a checklist of things that one had to fulfill, or a score of points of who is best at ticking all things or perfecting all the rules, then for him that law is useless. The pharisaic movement was all about legalism and this Jesus did not "buy." Jesus comes to preach a new law (the love of God above all things and one's neighbor as one's self) — anything short of this was no good. The New Law requires of one to be "self-giving." The disciples will have to learn that it is better to lose.

The Christian life will always bring us to the attitude of self-giving, — be less self-seeking, less self-gratifying, less self-centered and more self-giving. This is the lifestyle of Jesus we are challenged to adopt in our lives. We cannot turn our back on God (values) and our neighbor.

A Blessed Week in the Lord!

~ Fr. Anthony

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

(Memorial Day weekend through 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 Dijak (978-534-7956) or Deputy Grand Knight Peter Bak (978-403-5119), 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
Lucy Marcil, Religious Education Coordinator	978-502-7993	lmarcil419@gmail.com
Claire Garrity Neas, Music Ministry	617-823-4237	
Louise Nadeau, Sacristan		
Ministry Schedule	978-582-4008	stbonifaceparish@verizon.net
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	Feb 15	4:00 PM	Michael Horgan, by Harry & Elise Schofield
Sun	Feb 16	8:00 am 10:30 am	Our Parish Family Lawrence Montuori, by Joseph Cronin
Sat	Feb 22	4:00 PM	Joe Simoneau, by the Knights of Columbus Council #16480

THE WAY OF THE CROSS (STATIONS)

6:30 pm Every Friday during Lent

Beginning February 28 led by members of the choir.

EVENING MASS DURING LENT

6:30 PM Wednesdays & Thursdays

Beginning February 27

NOTRE DAME ACADEMY SPRING OPEN HOUSE

Sunday March 22, 2:00 – 4:00 PM

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THERE WILL BE NO DAILY 8:00 AM MASSES ON FEB. 19, 20 & 21

2019 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS: Please contact the parish office if you would like a statement mailed to you.



Substitute Teacher Position

Saint Boniface Early Education School is looking for highly motivated EEC certified substitute teachers on a daily, as needed basis. The children range in age from 2 years, 9 months to 6 years old. Interested applicants can send their resume to ninastboniface@gmail.com or call Nina Charpentier at 978-582-7110.



**LENT BEGINS ON FEBRUARY 26
(ASH WEDNESDAY)**

Fishermen's Morning Mass, 6:30 AM

Evening Family Mass, 6:30 PM
(Parents: bring the children!)

Lenten Theme this Year: *We Wait in Joyful Hope*

COLLECTION REPORT

WEEKEND OF FEBRUARY 9, 2020

SUNDAY ORDINARY: \$2,485.00

MAINTENANCE/FUEL: 790.00

OTHER: 0.00

Total Contributions: \$3,275.00

Thank you for your continued support!

GRAND ANNUAL APPEAL:

**To date, 73 families have
pledged a total of \$48,120
toward our goal of \$50,000.**



The Perspective of Justice

Law of Love

The focus of today's liturgy is "obedience to God's word." We are challenged to "keep the commandments, to walk in the law of the Lord."

In order to keep the commandments, we must first know what they are and then we must understand them correctly. Jesus deals with this problem in the Gospel. The Jews had a law about murder, but they had misread it to mean that one was in the clear as long as one was not actually, personally killing someone. Jesus challenged his Jewish followers to follow the correct interpretation of the law, which meant that they were not to be the kind of people who would kill or would do anything that leads to someone else's death.

We Christians believe that God's "command of perfect love" obliges us to do what is just and right. It is not good enough to stay out of trouble; we must work at setting things right in the world. It is not good enough to give food to the hungry; we must work at making ours a society in which people do not go hungry.

"Give me discernment, that I may observe your law and keep it with all my heart."

The responsibility for alleviating the plight of the poor falls upon all members of society. As individuals, all citizens have a duty to assist the poor through acts of charity and personal commitment. But private charity and voluntary action are not sufficient. We also carry out our moral responsibility to assist and empower the poor by working collectively through government to establish just and effective public policies.

US Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, 1986: 189

— GERALD DARRING

THE FLU AND THE LITURGY

Each year, with the arrival of the flu season, your pastor is concerned with limiting the transmission of pathogens, particularly at Mass. These questions and answers have been developed by the Office for Worship of the Diocese of Worcester and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Additional information on influenza outbreaks is available from www.CDC.gov/flu.

If I am sick with the flu, am I obliged to go to Mass?

No. Those who are seriously ill or contagious with the flu should stay at home, lest they pass the flu on to others. Such an illness is a legitimate reason to miss Mass and they are not under an obligation to attend.

What else should individuals keep in mind?

Individuals who are feeling unwell or believe they may be will with diseases which are communicable, such as a cold or the flu, are well advised to refrain from receiving the Precious Blood as their saliva could transmit the pathogen to their fellow communicants. In such circumstances, communicants should carefully consider receiving Holy Communion under the form of bread alone. Those who are not feeling well should refrain from receiving from the chalice, and should receive Holy Communion under the form of bread alone to avoid transmitting any illness.

What about the distribution of Communion under both kinds?

Holy Communion distributed under both the species of bread and wine is recommended by the Roman Missal as "a more complete form as a sign" (GIRM no. 281). When considering the distribution of Holy Communion, however, it should also be borne in mind that even when Holy Communion is distributed under the form of bread alone, the communicant still receives the Lord entirely, in his Body, Blood, soul and divinity. There are, indeed, circumstances when Communion under both kinds is not the best choice.

***All are urged, in their charity, to keep the sick in their prayers
and to use common sense, especially during the cold and flu season.***

Spirituality of the Readings

WHAT ARE RULES FOR?

It takes a while to grow up.

When I was a boy, I and my brother, who was older by four years, heard a reading at Mass that included the Hebrew word *raqa*. The reading told us that one must not say *raqa* to his brother, since it meant “Thou fool,” and would be will be answerable to the Sanhedrin. Obviously the moment we left church we began to say, with impunity and humor, *raqa, raqa, raqa* to each other, since we were brothers in the strict sense of the word.

Jesus took the various laws, in all their externality, and drew out their inner roots. This unusual word *raqa* is used in today’s Gospel (or at least in the “long version”). Jesus does not say it lightly, as the years have helped me see.

Obviously, human beings do grow up and a progression takes place. A progression I mean from the uncomplicated, grinning approach to the commandments, to a place from which we can truly have understanding, and—if we can hang on into true maturity—to an experience of the insides of the commandments.

That progression is one way of looking at the readings for this Sunday.

In the First Reading, the writer speaks in very plain terms, as a father might speak to a son or daughter.

*If you choose,
you can keep the commandments; they will save you.
If you trust in God, you too shall live.*

These ancient words echo one of the first books of the Jewish testament:

*I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.
Choose life, that you and your descendants may live,
by loving the LORD, your God, heeding his voice,
and holding fast to him. (Deut 30: 19-20)*

Though my brother and I were boys, we would have understood. We would have recognized “life and death, good and evil.” God was showing us how uncomplicated it is, how un-mysterious and remote for anyone to understand.

Eons later, Jesus came along. The people had already taken the commandments seriously, but now Jesus gave nuance and fullness to them. They became “a wisdom to those who are mature, ... God’s wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages. ... ” (Second Reading)

So, one by one, Jesus took the various laws, in all their externality, and drew out their inner roots.

Like this:

- *One external injunction had been against killing.* The inside of that law is, do not even act out of anger for your brother or sister. Not even the word *raqa* should be spoken.
- *You shall not commit adultery.* The inside of that law is: be pure enough to not even glance lustfully at a woman.
- *Divorce.* The interior law is, stay faithful and loving within your marriage relationship, not just do not separate.
- Finally, *oaths.* We could talk of these for pages, but here just realize that today people do use oaths, such as, “... in the name of God, ... ” or “OMG,” (which stands for O, MY GOD!), or e.g., “By God, I will never let you. ... ” You hear such slang everywhere, movies, television, high schools, grade schools. Jesus diagnoses these usages simply: you are trying to make up for your weakness by putting almighty power behind your words. He tells them he has a better way. Just say yes or no, and mean it. Or, to say it another way, be real.

Jesus did speak to children, but here it is to us adults. He is offering us the Spirit, and, as St. Paul tells us, the Spirit “scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God”!

Watch Jesus as you progress through life. The inside of the law is written in his heart. As you and I grow up, let it be written in ours too.

— JOHN FOLEY, SJ

SAINTS OF THE DAY February 17 – 22



The Seven Founders of the Servite Order

February 17. Rather than just talk about the problems of the day, the Seven Founders of the Servite Order did something about it—they consciously left all and formed a new religious congregation to address the issues. They put their money where their mouths were.



Blessed John of Fiesolo

February 18. Blessed John of Fiesolo, a Dominican Friar, is also known as Fra. Angelico. He is famous for his devotional artwork and used his talents to praise God through paint. All talents can be used to praise God.

Blessed John of Fiesolo is a patron saint of Christian artists.



Saint Conrad of Piacenza

February 19. Saint Conrad offers a different slant of holiness. Married, he and his wife opted to live separate lives—she as a Poor Clare and he as a Franciscan hermit. All this after he set a fire which was spread by the wind and destroyed the nearby fields, forests, and town.



Saints Jacinta and Francisco Marto

February 20. Two young children who died early in life, Jacinta and Francisco Marto, gained the attention of the Church and world when Mary appeared to them at Fatima. Without being martyred, they became witnesses and messengers of God’s goodness.

Photo of Lúcia Santos, Francisco and Jacinta Marto / photo by Joshua Benoliel



Saint Peter Damian

February 21. If it hadn’t been for an elder brother taking him under his wing, Saint Peter Damian may have taken a very different path in life. But with his brother’s guidance, he matured into a holy man, monk, and bishop. A man of prayer and devotion, Saint Peter Damian was also a spiritual writer.

Detail of Cardinal Peter Damian recruits young hermits in the maps room of the Vatican Museums / photo by Livioandronico2013Ecumenism



Chair of Saint Peter

February 22. Every cathedral has a “cathedra,” a bishop’s chair that is used only by the bishop when he presides in the cathedral. It is a symbol of his authority as chief teacher and liturgist of the diocese. So, today we celebrate the authority of the chief bishop, Saint Peter and his successors, the popes.

Chair of Saint Peter | photo by Lawrence OP