

The Church of Saint Boniface
August 30, 2020
22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time



“What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world
and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?”

(Matthew 16:26)

FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR

LOSING IS FINDING (The Way of the Cross)

What is it that prompts such an immediate harsh and hard answer to Peter by Jesus? It sure looks like a nerve has been touched! But isn't this the Peter who gets answers right (just last Sunday: Who do people say that I am?...)? Isn't this 'Peter, the rock' on whom Jesus will build his Church and the gates of the netherworld cannot touch? Isn't this Peter the one who gets the 'keys to the Kingdom?' How then can he be 'Satan'—the adversary, the enemy, the one who stands in Jesus' way? Why and how?

*He turned and said to Peter,
"Get behind me Satan!
You are an obstacle to me.
You are thinking not as God does,
but as human beings do."*

(Matthew 16,23)

There is of course something more to Peter's misplaced boldness to take Jesus aside and rebuke him. This is not a minor mistake. Peter is taking the opposite direction to God's plan by his gesture. Peter wants to repress God's way with a better, more nuanced solution or plan. Peter's plan is an easier one with less or no suffering. You see, whenever Jesus mentions 'Jerusalem' it gets under the skin of the disciples. Jerusalem is a place of events. It is that place where Jesus will lose it all—suffer greatly, be killed and on the third day be raised. But who wants to be part of a failed project? The disciples are not excited about a 'loser' Savior (Messiah). Nobody follows losers, right? So for Peter Jesus does not have to go through with his 'so called God's plan.' Peter has something better. He will take care of this. Peter is thinking not as God does but as human beings do.

Peter's rebuke of Jesus can be traced back to the third temptation of Jesus in the desert:

Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, And he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me." At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written: "The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve." (Mat 4, 8-10)

The tempter's philosophy of living is one of 'gain' and 'profit.' You can get all you want in life if you don't have to forfeit anything (worse for anyone). You don't have to 'suffer or lose.' The strategy is 'gain,' 'get ahead'! On the contrary, God's plan must and requires 'the cross,' losing is the path to finding glory. The way of Jesus demands 'self emptying' for others. Do you see the clash that prompts Jesus' reaction? Hence, Jesus goes in the Gospel to teach his great lesson on discipleship. The conditions of discipleship are: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (Mat 16, 24-26)

Do not follow Christ if you are going to repress God's way for what you think is better! You may as well be your own savior, you see! It is about embracing the self emptying way of Jesus.

Jeremiah the prophet learns this the hard way. Jeremiah discovers that being a prophet is about 'rooting up and tearing down' one's approach to life. He reaches this after undergoing a deep interior crisis. The results of his ministry are miserable. All that his message attracts is mockery, loneliness and laughter. "You duped me O LORD"; "the word of the Lord has brought me derision and reproach all day," he says. Yet Jeremiah truly in the inside of his being has been called and touched by the word of God. He cannot run away from it. It is a 'consuming fire' and, yes, it will bring with it persecutions and loss, but there will be fruits because it is GOD's message not his.

The lesson of this weekend's reading is 'to lose is to find.' We must adapt this self emptying manner of life. There has to be a sacrificial quality to our lives as disciples/followers of Christ. In our daily lives whenever the Life and Mission of the Gospel is in the balance we must be ready to give in, surrender, and 'lose' that mission be accomplished. And the mission of Jesus is to bring 'life' to others.

Our mission in the world as Christians takes a whole new perspective when we seriously adapt Jesus self emptying way or quality to our daily living. We live for more than self, we look beyond just 'my gain' or 'getting ahead' or 'my accomplishment.' Couples lose themselves for each other to find themselves. Parents who refuse to endanger their family's welfare by seeing their children not their careers, as top priority, lose but actually find. Leaders who aim to promote the common good, not their personal interests, find themselves by losing themselves. Losing is finding.

Take this all you and eat it, this is my body which is given up for you. In the Eucharist and living the Eucharistic way, we will find that losing is finding. Are you then, 'really' ready to follow Christ?

A Blessed Week in the Lord!

— Father Anthony

MASS INTENTIONS

Aug 29	4:00 PM	Leon Tarbell , by Edith Carey
Sept. 6	9:00 AM	John McShane , by his wife

SUMMER MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday 4:00 p.m. | Sunday 7:30 a.m. & 9:00 a.m.
8:00 Morning Mass Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

REGULAR MASS SCHEDULE BEGINS SEPT. 12/13

Saturday 4:00 p.m. | Sunday 8:00 a.m. , 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. (new!)
8:00 Morning Mass Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

COLLECTION REPORT

Week of August 23	
- Sunday Offering	\$1,685
- Fuel/Maintenance	30
- Other	20
Total	<u>\$1,735</u>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Many parishioners have been making their weekly offerings online. It's secure, convenient and easy to make one-time or recurring donations at www.stboniface-lunenburg.org



- Are you an adult 18 years and above and have not received the Sacraments?
- Are you an adult interested in getting Baptized?
- Are you a non-catholic Christian who would like to become a Catholic?

RCIA begins October 2020. Call and register at the Parish office or contact Lucy Marcil.

PARISH DRIVE-IN MOVIE !



Saturday, Sept. 26 at 8 PM



Our parish food drive for the month of September will benefit Saint Francis of Assisi Food Pantry in Fitchburg.

Non-perishable items most needed:

- Canned Meats • Canned Tuna Fish • Soups
- Cereal • Pasta • Pasta Sauce

Please leave donations below the statue of Mary near the altar before Masses, or during parish office hours on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



GRAND RAFFLE TICKETS

Please return sold tickets with stubs and donations in the offertory basket at the church entrance or to the parish office. If you would like additional tickets, please call or email the parish office.



*“God forbid, Lord!
No such thing shall ever
happen to you.”*

True Honor

The verse that immediately follows today’s reading helps us better understand what preceded: “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom” (Mt 16:28).

Present Orientation

Mediterranean people of antiquity were primarily oriented toward the present. It is difficult and sometimes impossible for them to think “future.” The best they could imagine would be called “forthcoming.” The birth of a baby is a forthcoming event for an already pregnant mother. A harvest is a forthcoming event from a crop already planted and growing.

Jesus could not turn away from the ominous destiny he began to perceive on his own horizon. This perspective is starkly evident in Jesus’ stated conviction that those who heard him speak would still be alive when God would bestow his gifts upon that very generation through the mediation of the Son of Man.

Jesus died, was raised, and ascended to the right hand of the Father. And still the Son of Man has not come into his kingdom. It is the long delay (now centuries old) that sparked a vague idea of a real “future” among some Mediterranean Christians.

Peter Challenges Jesus

In his own lifetime, Jesus was able to read the handwriting on the wall. He had made an ever-growing number of powerful enemies. Their desire to have him put to death was no secret.

After learning from his disciples that others held him in high repute, ranking him along with Elijah, John the Baptist, and other worthies, Jesus could not turn away from the ominous destiny he began to perceive on his own horizon.

But when he stated the obvious to his disciples, Peter took him aside and said he had other plans for Jesus. Peter and Jesus now engage in a common Middle Eastern strategy revolving around honor: challenge and riposte. One person makes a claim to honor, another person challenges that claim. The first person must defend or vindicate his claim or he will be dishonored, shamed.

Jesus’ claim to honor is that God wills his suffering and death at the hands of his enemies (he must die), but that God will bestow even greater honor by raising him from the dead.

Peter’s challenge is: “God forbid it” (Mt 16:22). Jesus has just enunciated God’s honorable will, and Peter seeks to divert Jesus from fulfilling it. He wants God to change it. Jesus perceives that Peter is testing his loyalty to God, his very claim to honor.

Jesus’ riposte (a fencing term describing a sharp, swift thrust after parrying an opponent’s lunge) is to call Peter a “satan,” a tester of loyalties. Jesus continues the insult by reminding Peter that he sees only the human way of thinking and doesn’t understand God’s plan.

Jesus’ exhortations shatter the normal cultural vision of an honorable life and invite his listeners to consider reorienting their lives by means of disorientation. A fitting message for anyone searching for new direction in life.

Editing Your Own Life

The laws of mathematics and physics have forever been one of our great constants. They are predictable and reliable, not given to strange surprises. But now, more and more, scientists are finding that even the laws of physics sometimes offer unexpected surprises and exhibit a freedom that leaves us baffled. Freedom, it seems, is everywhere.

Novelists have always known this. A novelist creates an imaginary character, begins to write a story, and then discovers that this character doesn't always want to follow what the author had in mind for her. She becomes her own person, develops her own attitude, goes her own way, and shapes the story in a way that the novelist never intended. In the end, partly independent of the author, each character writes his or her own story.

He shares how he discerns the real voice of God from the many false, neurotic voices that he, and most everyone else, commonly can confuse with God's voice.

In a new book, *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*, Donald Miller takes this concept and uses it to offer a wonderful challenge within which each of us is invited to edit our own life so as to make our story a better and more noble one.

He does this through a series of autobiographical essays within which he challenges himself to write a better story with his own life and then invites his readers to each edit our own lives so as to build a story which is more interesting and more noble, one which, like a great movie, will leave its audience in tears and longing to do better things with their lives when the final credits roll.

Here's how he describes it:

So I was writing my novel, and as my characters did what they wanted, I became more and more aware that somebody was writing me. So I started listening to the Voice, or rather, I started calling it the Voice and admitting there was a Writer. I admitted that something other than me was showing me a better way. And when I did this, I realized the Voice, the Writer, who was not me, was trying to make a better story, a more meaningful series of experiences I could live through.

His writing is brilliant but deceptive. Because of his particular genre, he can seem almost superficial at times, but, in the end, what you get is a combination of David Sedaris (wit, playful self-effacement), Annie Lamott (earthy, disarmingly direct), Kathleen Norris (outstanding common sense, intelligence), Henri Nouwen (an honest look at yourself) and Ignatius of Loyola (good rules for discernment and a bit of a guide to everything). Donald Miller runs all of this through a blender.

Initially, as I read the first chapters, I was taken only by his language and not by his content. He sounded more the comic wit than the wise elder. But slowly, almost imperceptibly—and this is his genius—depth, idealism, Christian vision, disarming common sense, and his real challenge begin to seep through, becoming clearer and more inviting as his story goes on.

Here's an example of both his writing and his depth. In this passage he shares how he discerns the real voice of God from the many false, neurotic voices that he, and most everyone else, commonly can confuse with God's voice:

As a kid, the only sense I got from God was guilt, something I dismissed as a hypersensitive conscience I got from being raised in a church with a controlling pastor. But that isn't the voice I'm talking about. ... The real Voice is stiller and smaller and seems to know, without confusion, the difference between right and wrong and the subtle delineation between the beautiful and the profane. It's not an agitated Voice, but ever patient as though it approves a million false starts.

The Voice I am talking about is a deep water of calming wisdom that says: Hold your tongue; don't talk about that person that way; forgive the friend you haven't talked to; don't look at that woman as a possession; I want to show you the sunset; look and see how short life is and how your troubles are not worth worrying about; buy that bottle of wine and call your friend and see if he can get together, because, remember, he was supposed to have that conversation with his daughter, and you should ask him about it.

And that Voice, he says, is forever saying to us: "Enjoy your place in my story. The beauty of it means you matter, and you can create it even as I have created you."

In the end, this book is a healthy apologetic for faith, morality, decency, and God, the kind of challenge we badly need today. I was given the book by friend who has a twenty-something daughter who has long protested her doubts about God and, not least, her agnosticism about the church. This young post-Christian, my friend said, found the book on the kitchen table, picked it up out of curiosity, and then read it cover to cover, admitting that she was much challenged by it.

Now that's not a bad endorsement!

— Ron Rolheiser

Not Conforming to the Age

“You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

Our desire for equilibrium fools us. Smooth sailing and steady stability, we suppose, should be the by-products of faith. That's why we often secretly hope to experience a baptism in the Spirit to end all baptisms or a mighty conversion that solves everything once and for all. But like Jeremiah, we soon find out that the calling of God is not the beginning of tranquility.

“You duped me, O Lord, and I let myself be duped; you were too strong for me, and you triumphed.” Jeremiah would live to be mocked, laughed at, derided. Eventually, he told God he'd had enough. To no avail. “It is like a fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow weary holding it in, I cannot endure it.” The gift of prophecy required a life of resistance.

Even Peter had a hard time accepting the cost of discipleship. Within moments of his confirmation as leader, he is protesting the struggle, the pain, the failure, and the rejection that Jesus foretells. ***“Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”***

Following Christ costs the follower. What must be paid is a willingness to let go of our hunger for security, approval, and comfort; to take up our own cross of love and give ourselves away, to abandon our images of success and schemes of self-indulgence.

We live in an age when, by all cultural accounts, our faith is foolish. Our ritual is weirdly transcendent. Our vows appear to be unkeepable promises, our sacraments quaint. The practices we aspire to are held in high suspicion.

How often do our church, our preaching, our practice, merely ape the culture's love of money, power, and privilege? The way of faith reaches too high; its paths are too arduous.

Yet in daunting times, let us recall Peter, who himself endured the same. Peter does “get behind” Jesus but does not give up because of his failure. He follows to Jerusalem, even though he fears. He follows to Gethsemane, even though he sleeps there. He follows to the Passion, even though he hides. He waits for Christ in the upper room, even though he is shamed by his betrayals.

May the church that Peter once led, despite all its harrowing trials, have faith to do the same.

— John Kavanaugh, SJ

Saints of the Week

August 31. SAINTS JOSEPH of ARIMATHEA and NICODEMUS

We know little about Saints Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus except what we find in scripture. We do know that they were Jewish men of some standing who were not afraid to express their respect for Jesus. Each in his own way played a role in the life of Jesus that required courage and showed some understanding of who Jesus was.

Joseph and Nicodemus are Patron Saints of Funeral Directors and Pallbearers



September 1. SAINT GILES

One of the 14 Holy Helpers of Germany, Saint Giles was a popular saint in Germany, England, and elsewhere. While we know little about him, his wide popularity attests to his holiness.

Saint Giles is the Patron Saint of Beggars, The Disabled, Disasters and the Poor



September 2. BLESSED JOHN FRANCIS BURTÉ and COMPANIONS

Victims of the French Revolution, these blesseds witnessed to their faith by refusing to take a civil oath which amounted to a denial of the faith. On a single day in Paris, 185 people were martyred.



September 3. SAINT GREGORY the GREAT

Saint Gregory became pope at the age of 50. In his new role, he had much to do both within and outside the Church. Gregory proved to be a capable shepherd, addressing many ecclesial and civil issues with a firm, steady resolve. *Saint Gregory is the Patron Saint of England, Epilepsy, Musicians and Teachers.*



September 4. SAINT ROSE of VITERBO

Saint Rose achieved sainthood in only 18 years of life. She had shown a great desire for prayer early in life, and joined the Secular Franciscan at the age of 10. Rose preached in the streets and was very generous to the poor. *Saint Rose is the Patron Saint of Florists and Flower Growers*



September 5. SAINT THERESA of CALCUTTA

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta was born in Albania, but is known for her work in India. A member of the Sisters of Loreto, she felt a call to live among the poor. While working with the poorest of the poor in India, she founded the Missionaries of Charity who continue her work.



Saint Boniface Church

817 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA 01462

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

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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.* 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 Peter Bak (978-403-5119) or Deputy Grand Knight Claude Poirier (978-660-3202), or email kofc16480@gmail.com.

PARISH STAFF:

	<i>phone</i>	<i>email</i>
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	cmkakosgarrity@aol.com
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 we may stay in touch with you with faith formation news, notices 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.

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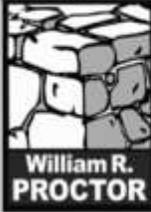
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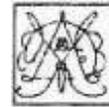
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