

The Church of Saint Boniface
September 6, 2020
23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time



**"If your brother sins [against you],
go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.
If he listens to you, you have won over your brother."**

(Matthew 8:15)

FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR

TAKE THE PLUNGE, BE INVOLVED!

What is the most recent thing you have done to 'save' someone else's life? A thing that required you a heavy personal involvement or sacrifice, a thing that you 'took on' as a responsibility (away from the limelight) — you committed yourself to 'deliver' that person from a situation. You decided 'to be involved' to the end at whatever cost. And all this was not sentimental.

The salvation of a soul or the other is at the heart of this weekend's reading. The readings challenge the believer to 'be involved,' to save others. In the first readings the Prophet Ezekiel is appointed watchman for the house of Israel. What does this mean? On the hills of Palestine, watchmen (lookouts) had always been important (1 Sam 14, 16; 2 Kgs 9, 17); they kept the city safe at night and called out the safety of the city like a sentry. The prophet as watchman of God observed the impending doom of the nation as well and announced the danger to a sleeping and indifferent people, so that they can be saved. The watchman saves his own life by being alert to the dangers of others. He is to be involved in the dangers of others.

Let us for a moment step out of our own situations and think and transpose ourselves to the dangers of others. What dangers do you think people confront, families or individuals? Here are some I think of: hunger, famine, poor education, low esteem, early death, inequality, addictions, poverty, spiritual desperation, etc. How might you take the plunge and be committed, be involved to save these other's lives? Might your inaction fail them, too? We, the Christian and believer are 'watchmen.' Will you turn away from this role and why?

Our present day society or community has identical problems to Matthew's community. Not many 'agree' on anything at all or in common. The society is always split among various camps and ways of thinking. But belonging to a Christian community meant being involved. In case of personal wrongs done, fraternal correction was encouraged. You were to do this privately. The purpose is not to humiliate others. Christian were to work hard to win or get others back, to forgive and reconcile. The common good was a constant pursuit: "for where two or three are gathered in my name, I am in their midst" (Mat 18, 20). The responsibility of others (being involved) is the foundation of Christian living.

How can we work hard in today's society to cultivate the same attitudes and approach in today's gospel? What fails us? Do your personal wrongs/mistakes define your life? Should they for others? What is the status of forgiveness and reconciliation in society today?

Saint Paul brilliantly summaries the Christian principle of living: "Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ...'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no evil to the neighbor" (Rom 13, 10). Our families, single lives, community life, personal lives must realize the message of Christian involvement. We must let the message of Eucharist permeate other dimensions of our daily living.

A Blessed Week in the Lord!

*Thus says the LORD:
You, son of man, I have appointed watchman
for the house of Israel;
when you hear me say anything,
you shall warn them for me.
If you do not speak out to dissuade
the wicked from his way,
I will hold you responsible for his death.*

(Ez 33, 7-8)

— Father Anthony

MASS INTENTIONS

Sept. 6	9:00 AM	John McShane , by his wife
Sept. 9	8:00 AM	Shawn O'Malley , by Mary O'Malley
Sept. 10	8:00 AM	Billy Barnoski , 7th Anniversary, by Mary O'Malley
Sept. 13	10:30 AM	Robert Bourgeois , by his wife
Sept. 17	8:00 AM	Leon Tarbell , by Maureen Wasel

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 30	
– Sunday Offering	\$2,577
– Fuel/Maintenance	150
– Other	48
Total	<u>\$2,775</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



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.



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.

Yard Sale/Raffles for Charity

Saturday, Sept. 19, 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

To support the Battered Women's Shelter

\$5 table rental (bring your own)

16 Clearview Ave., Fitchburg

Call/text Cheryl @ 978-855-1712

or email Cucch54@yahoo.com

Defusing Conflict

Our ancestors in the faith and Mediterranean culture in general are prone to conflict. (The technical word is *agonistic*, deriving from the Greek for battle, struggle, contest.) From experience they know that conflict is dangerous because it can escalate to violence and result in **bloodshed, starting a blood feud that wouldn't end until everyone was dead.**

For this reason, they utilize a wide array of strategies to defuse conflict. One is to fume and threaten with no intention of ever carrying out the threat. The cultural belief is that words are better than action.

Another strategy for defusing conflict is to turn the other cheek rather than engage in tit for tat, or eye for eye (Matthew 5:38-41). This strategy is not popular among **Americans. Popular wisdom advises, "Don't get mad, get even," and the rising tide of violence in this country suggests that many citizens follow this cultural wisdom.**

The conflict arises because "sin" is an interpersonal offense.

Today's Gospel passage presents three more strategies for conflict resolution. The advice is intended to head off conflicts between insiders; it is not intended to govern relationships with outsiders.

Confrontation

The conflict arises because "sin" is an interpersonal offense. In societies where honor is the core value, it is very easy to **sin against another, to offend another's honor. People learn from an early age the potentially fatal consequences of such an offense.**

If someone thinks another person has shown dishonor, the offended party is advised to confront the sinner in private (**"when the two of you are alone"**). **The reason for this privacy is to avoid placing the suspected offense within the official arena of honor and shame, that is, the public eye**

If the perception of dishonor has been mistaken, or the alleged dishonor unintentional, the conflict has been successfully defused in private. No one has lost face.

Negotiation

The second strategy is to take along two or three negotiators or witnesses (Matthew 18:16). Now the situation is semiprivate and becomes a legal matter (see Deuteronomy 17:1-7 which requires more than one witness).

The Greek word in Matthew 18:19 translated as "anything" literally means "legal case, litigation." **The witnesses are fully aware of the seriousness of their role (see Exodus 20:16; Acts 6:13) and the consequences of bearing false witness (Deuteronomy 19:15-21). Whatever they decide is legally binding.**

The hope is that the negotiators or witnesses will succeed where individual efforts failed. Honor must be repaired or restored in order to avoid the next step.

Adjudication

The final strategy now fully engages the cultural values of **honor and shame. The matter is related to "the church,"** that is, the entire community. The event has become fully public and publicized. In matters of honor and shame, the community is the final arbiter.

If the offender chooses to disregard the community's judgment, the consequence is excommunication. To be considered as "a Gentile and a tax collector" is to be designated an "outsider." The recalcitrant sinner is thrown out.

The force of excommunication is lost on American individualists who have little allegiance to any group, including family. **Americans prefer to "go it alone" and "do it my way." "See if I care. I gotta be me!" Not so our Mediterranean ancestors in the faith. Without community one is effectively dead.**

The Judgment

The plural "you" in Matthew 18:18 means that all disciples of Jesus have authority to bind or loose, that is, to settle conflicts and legal cases between community members. When the community gathers in Jesus' name to hear a legal case, Jesus is there. When the community agrees, the Father in heaven agrees.

How shameful a thing is conflict among Christians.

— John J. Pilch



The Debt of Love

We are a church, an assembly of people gathered to do the work of God. This work brings us together around the table of the Lord and sends us out to renew the face of the earth.

The task that faces us in the world is awesome, and the obstacles are formidable. The only way we can succeed is by staying together, with Jesus in our midst, and our staying together must involve community efforts to correct our faults. When there is racism or sexism in our church, we must confront them and work to eliminate them.

When economic injustice is found in our church institutions, we must speak out against it and work to eliminate it. When militarism makes its way into the fabric of our community, we must stand up for peace and proclaim the gospel message of nonviolent change.

Owe no debt to anyone except the debt that binds us to love one another. An essential component of that love should be the help we give each other in overcoming the shortcomings that get in the way of our becoming a universal sacrament of salvation.

We must serve the Church and love her as she is, with a clear understanding of history, and humbly searching for the will of God who assists and guides her even when at times he permits human weakness to eclipse the purity of her features and the beauty of her action. It is this purity and beauty which we are endeavoring to discover and promote.

Pope Paul VI, Ecclesiam Suam, 1964: 49

— Gerald Darring

Saints of the Week

September 7.

BLESSED FREDERIC OZANAM

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam proved to be a leader who helped others help the poor. He also formed a newspaper to push the cause of justice. In 1833, he founded the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, which continues to the present day.



September 8.

NATIVITY of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Affirming the humanity of Jesus, the Church celebrates the birth of Mary, his mother. While Scripture does not record the birth of Mary, the apocryphal Protoevangelium of James notes the development of Christian piety around Mary's parents and her birth.



September 9.

SAINT PETER CLAVER

A native of Spain, young Jesuit Peter Claver left his homeland forever in 1610, to be a missionary in the colonies of the New World. He sailed into Cartagena, and began a ministry to the slaves brought there from West Africa, as well as becoming a moral force in the city of Cartagena.

Saint Peter Claver is the Patron Saint of African Americans, African Missions, Colombia, and Interracial Justice



September 10.

SAINT THOMAS of VILLANOVA

Saint Thomas was from Castile in Spain and received his surname from the town where he was raised. After joining the Augustinian friars at Salamanca, he became prior and then provincial of the friars. He sent the first Augustinian friars to the New World.



September 11.

SAINT CYPRIAN

Saint Cyprian played an important role in the development of Christian thought and practice in the early Church. He was a noted speaker who became a Christian as an adult. He was ordained a priest within two years of his conversion and was then chosen the Bishop of Carthage.

Saint Cyprian is the Patron Saint of North Africa.



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.* 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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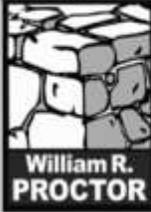
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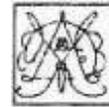
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