

The Church of Saint Boniface

June 13, 2021

## Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time



"And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD,  
bring low the high tree, lift high the lowly tree."

(The First Reading)

## FROM FATHER'S DESK

Guest Reflection by John Foley, SJ

### Eat Up

In olden days farmers would sow seeds in their lands and then simply wait.

**When a crop was ready they would reap it, using a scythe (a "blade").**

A whole process then had to follow. The neighbors would gather with a farmer at each step, to help. They would collect each other's crops into stacks, or "pooks" as they were called, so that by counting pooks each farmer could know how much grain to expect from his harvest. Threshing came next—separating the husks and straw from the grain—followed in the older cultures by "winnowing," which detached the heavier grain from the lighter chaff.

Here is how an Irish friend of mine explained it to me, as we drove around Ireland. By chance it matches the first parable Jesus tells in this Sunday's Gospel:

*A farmer would...sleep and rise night and day, and through it all the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how.*

*Of its own accord the land yields fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.*

The grains were tiny morsels at first, but at the last, they presented a massive display, poised for harvest. The farmer and his friends modestly worked along with this mysterious process.

Jesus says this parable is about the kingdom of God. But he does not explain how.

It recommends modesty, for sure. We Christians must arrange ourselves humbly and trustingly, like the farmers, while the **mystery takes place within our souls. And of course we need to "detach the husks and straw from the lighter chaff."** This would mean pulling ourselves away from distractions and fascinations that drag us away from who we are meant to be. **Distractions such as impressing others, winning all the time, using God's name in vain, criticizing people ... fill out the list.**

But the Holy Spirit of God plants seeds in our souls and quietly begins their growth. Followers of Christ must let the seeds grow at their own rate, and then go on to the next step only when they are ready. Our job had been to prepare the land, which is us, and then see the result that happens "of its own accord."

In a second parable, the quiet status of a seed is apparent. Jesus says that the mustard seed is the smallest and humblest of all the seeds on earth. (In fact it was not, so I am told. Smaller still are the petunia, the begonia and orchid seeds.) But nevertheless, the tiny mustard seed, the size of a pinhead, unassumingly grows to be a great big shrub or even a tree that is taller than a man's head.

**So are we to be humble in a similar way. The Spirit's plantings in our souls will seem exceedingly tiny, even unnoticeable.** Our humility—like the farmers' with the seeds—means waiting, or in other words, being patience. We are fallow lands. We must be ready and anticipating for something greater than ourselves, something the Spirit bestows. This means that **the "largest of plants" will not be you or me, but God—present in our lives and in our communities.** Since God is great and to be loved above all things and within all things, since God is taller than a man or woman's head, so to speak, then he is large enough to found our greatest plans or hopes.

Let us be fallow.

*We must be ready and anticipating  
for something greater than ourselves,  
something the Spirit bestows.*

### A Letter from My Mother

Dear Saint Boniface,

I would like to express my gratitude to you all for embracing me as one of you. For all the time I have spent here, you have blessed me in more ways than you can imagine. The friendship, the love, and the sisterhood you have shown me has been overwhelming. Words are inadequate to thank you all for what you have done for me. Even more importantly, I would like to thank you for taking care of my Son for all the years he has been here at Saint Boniface and accepting him as your own. I am taking with me so many wonderful memories about all of you and my stay here in Luneburg. I will always keep you in my prayers as we shall forever remain connected in the spirit of Christian Love.

With Deep Gratitude,

Jane Mwebe

## MASS INTENTIONS

June 26	4:00 PM	<b>Joseph McBride</b> , 20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary, by his Wife & Daughter
July 11	8:00 AM	<b>Larry Paton</b> , 16th Anniversary, by his family
July 17	4:00 PM	<b>Gregory Bradt</b> , by Debbie DiPerri & Dora Costa

*If you wish to schedule a Mass intention for a loved one, please call, email or visit the parish office for more information.*

PRAY THE ROSARY every Saturday at 3:30 PM in the church, led by members of the Saint Boniface Knights of Columbus.

## SUMMER MASS SCHEDULE

Our weekend schedule will not be changing this summer: Saturday 4:00 PM Vigil Mass, Sunday 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM Please note: there will be no weekday Masses on June 16, 17 & 18, and June 23, 24 & 25.

Are you receiving Saint Boniface *ParishConnect* emails? The weekly “Sunday Post” and important announcements are sent to parishioners via our ParishConnect email. If you have not been receiving these communications we encourage you to sign up on the home page of the website, or simply email the parish office and indicate that you would like to join the list. Usually, only one or two messages are sent per week. You will have the option to unsubscribe at any time.

Care Net Baby bottle drive: Please return filled bottles to Saint Boniface by June 27. Thank you for your support.

Registration for Religious Education is now open. GRADES 1-10 If your family is already a member of our program, you do not need to reregister. ONLY new families are required to fill out the registration form. No payment is due at this time. Register online at [www.stboniface-lunenburg.org/registration](http://www.stboniface-lunenburg.org/registration)

Teachers are needed at all grade levels. Please contact Lucy Marcil (978-502-7993 or [lmarcil419@gmail.com](mailto:lmarcil419@gmail.com)) for more information if you are interested in teaching.



~ 2021 Baccalaureate Service ~  
Congratulations to Our High School Graduates!

## COLLECTION REPORT

June 6	
– Sunday Offering	\$ 4,139
– Fuel/Maintenance	402
– Religious Education Program	45
– Other	166
Total	\$ 2,309
May ACH/Website Donations	\$ 5,747

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Give to our parish whether you're in the pews or not! 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](http://www.stboniface-lunenburg.org)

## THE YEAR OF SAINT JOSEPH

### Men's Faith Sharing Program at Saint Boniface

Next meeting Thursday, June 17, 7:00 PM

Topic: the spirituality of Saint Joseph



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### About Your Pledge

- During the months of May and June we are asking for your pledge amount to give throughout the next 4 years.
- Pledges are not legally binding but rather are an indication of your giving intention.
- Your gift does not need to be given at one time, but payments can be made over the next 4 years either monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually.



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Chaplain Emil Joseph Kapaun is one of many soldiers who laid down their lives for us Americans. He did so while ministering to thousands of American GIs when he served as a Catholic priest for the Army during World War II and the Korean War.

Born April 20, 1916, on a farm in Kansas, Emil was ordained for the Diocese of Wichita in Kansas in 1940. In 1943, he was appointed auxiliary chaplain at the Herington Army Airfield in Kansas.

The following year, Fr. Kapaun became a military chaplain at Camp Wheeler in Georgia, where he and another priest ministered to 19,000 soldiers. He was then sent to India and would sometimes travel nearly 2,000 miles to reach soldiers and local missions across the Burma Theater. He was promoted to the rank of Captain in January 1946. He quickly earned a reputation for being a fearless soldier who risked his life to minister to the men on the front lines.

In the Korean War in the 1950s as a chaplain in the 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, he poured heart, soul, and strength into caring for the spiritual, mental, and physical welfare of his fellow soldiers. At one time, Kapaun and his assistant learned of a wounded soldier stranded in the middle of enemy fire. They immediately went out to **rescue him and saved the soldier's life. This courageous act** earned Fr. Kapaun the Bronze Star Medal.

When the Chinese Army invaded at the Battle of Unsan, Fr. Kapaun braved enemy gunfire again and rescued nearly forty soldiers—for which he received the Medal of Honor in 2012, over sixty years after his death. The Chinese then captured him (he had a chance to escape and did not take it, preferring to stay with his men) and several other American soldiers, sending them to a prisoner of war camp. He continued to minister to the POWs, shared his food with them, and gave them the will to live and persevere. While in the camp, Fr. Kapaun contracted pneumonia and developed a blood clot in one of his legs. He grew weaker daily, but still held a forbidden service on Easter Sunday in 1951 in defiance of the Communist captors.

Chaplain Emil Joseph Kapaun died on May 23, 1951, one of twelve American chaplains to die in Korea. Pope St. John Paul II named him a Servant of God in 1993, the first step in the process of canonization. *Fr. Emil Kapaun, pray for us!*

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*We walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Cor 5:6)*

## Imperceptible Life

A tiny sprig is planted. It becomes a mighty cedar to shade and shelter life.

We scatter seed on the ground. We sleep and rise day after day. Through it all, the seed sprouts and grows without our knowing how it happens. First the sprout, then the ear, then the ripe wheat.

Life, like faith and love, resists most measurement.

A mustard seed, among the smallest of the earth, slowly rises and erupts. It unfolds to reign as the largest of shrubs, ample enough for birds to nest and hatch in.

The reign of God, this matter of faith, hope, and love, this kingdom for the ages, need not measure well in isolated moments. It is a living and growing thing.

So also our lives. Life is slow and subtle. Love takes time to show and grow. In life, little acts count. In fact, that is what a life is all about, a long parade of moments deceptively inconsequential. Children grow before our eyes. But they age imperceptibly. We recognize growth only after it has happened. The full truth of the child is seen after the child is child no more.

We ask ourselves: have we made progress? We are almost never aware of it. Only with effort and discipline do we become fully conscious. If we keep a journal, now and then we are startled when we peruse past entries. Worries, fears, preoccupations of the previous year seem to have evanesced. The greatest terrors and strongest urgencies of five years ago now surprise, embarrass, or encourage us. Why was it that I could not gauge it as it was lived?

Life, like faith and love, resists most measurement. As it develops, it is rarely noticed. We seem not to do these things by sight. Our changings are unmarked as they happen. This is why, perhaps, a daily examination of our awareness can be so life-enhancing. Examination applies the lens of believing to the blur of daily particularities. It is to notice in faith, to pay attention lovingly, gratefully.

Like sowers, we scatter our activities, our tiny acts of faith, flung out far and profligate, some taken by the wind, all landing somewhere. We sleep our nights and do our days, and the growth takes place. We may not even be conscious of the flowering. Sometimes, we suddenly come to see the child now strong and true, the sapling broad and expansive.

**“We continue to be confident. We know that while we dwell in the body we are away from the Lord. We walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Cor 5:6)**

— John Kavanaugh, SJ



*Should the believer settle for the outsider interpretation  
or strive to gain the insider understanding?*

## Seed

Jesus seemed especially fond of using parables. In its form, the ancient Middle Eastern parable is a simile, that is, an explicit comparison of one item to another. Jesus' parables tell his listeners what God is like by comparing God's being or behavior to something familiar and known in the culture.

The reason why parables were and are difficult to interpret is because they point out how things are similar but also different. In other words, God is similar to, yet different from, whatever is presented as the point of comparison.

### *Kingdom of God*

**Many parables begin with the phrase “the kingdom of God is like...” The English phrase is unfortunate because Jesus is not describing a place (kingdom) but rather a person (God). Many scholars prefer to translate: “The reign of God is like...” In other words, a parable describes, or presents a scenario that illustrates what happens when God is totally in charge of life.**

### *Seed*

To understand the parable about the sown seed (Mk 4:26-29), a Western reader must be familiar with a very fundamental, ancient Middle Eastern conviction (common to all **peasant societies**): **“All goods are finite in quantity, that is, limited in number, and already distributed.”** In other words, there is no more where this came from.

Any Middle Easterner who suddenly realized an increase in goods was considered a thief, because one peasant's gain usually meant another peasant's loss. Recall how the woman who lost a few coins rejoiced and invited friends to a party that cost more than the value of the rediscovered coins (Lk 15:8-9). It was imperative to demonstrate that she had not stolen the coins from another person or found what someone else had lost.

Yet peasants recognized certain yields, like livestock, a good crop, and children as exceptions. These increases were viewed as imponderable but very welcome gifts from God. Even so, a limited-good culture expected that anyone who realized a sudden windfall should immediately share it with others rather than store it up for personal use in the future (see Lk 12:16-21). To keep it for one's personal benefit manifested greed.

In Mark's first parable today, the man is ignorant and perhaps even slothful. After planting the seed, he does nothing to help it along. He neither tills, weeds, nor irrigates the crop.

Yet the earth itself brings forth the harvest.

What is God's reign like? If it depends upon human effort, one risks failure. If humans choose to trust God instead of relying upon themselves, unimaginable success can result. The choice is up to the one who hears the parable.

### *Mustard Seed*

This parable presents a slight variation on the previous one. Mark makes the parable botanically correct: the mustard seed becomes a shrub, sometimes rather large, but it never grows into a tree (see Lk 13:19). Yet Mark notes that the shrub has large branches and that birds can make nests in its shade.

The listener is challenged to imagine how great the kingdom will be: will it be small and selective, only admitting a few? or will it look small (like a shrub) but actually be large enough to shelter varieties of birds?

The choice is up to the listener.

### *Conclusion*

The puzzling remark about Jesus teaching the crowds in parables but explaining things in private to his disciples casts the parables into yet another light. To appreciate this light, a reader needs to understand the importance of secrecy in the ancient Mediterranean world.

Honor requires that outsiders should learn nothing damaging about insiders. Hence, secrecy is an important strategy for family groups. Yet it is also socially unacceptable because others will suspect that those who keep secrets are plotting to damage their honor. A troubling dilemma.

Jesus' parables spoken to the public (the outsiders) carry one meaning, but explained to his disciples (the insiders) carry another (e.g., compare the interpretation in Mk 4:10-20 to the parable in Mk 4:1-9).

Should the believer settle for the outsider interpretation or strive to gain the insider understanding? The choice is up to the listener!

— John J. Pilch



## Confidence

It is difficult at times for Christians to maintain their hope in the coming of the Kingdom. The power of evil seems overwhelming, and the world presents itself as a formidable foe. The weapons of prayer and good works seem insignificant in a world of multinationals and intercontinental missiles.

**Paul assures us, however, that “we continue to be confident,” and “we are full of confidence.”**

What is the source of this confidence? It comes from having a God “who is our hope and our strength, who brings low the high tree and lifts high the low tree.” Having a God who makes the withered tree bloom gives us the courage to continue in the face of overwhelming odds.

It also helps to know that the Kingdom is not like the world, which prides itself on its longest bridges and tallest buildings and biggest cities and most powerful armies. The image of the Kingdom is the mustard seed, “the smallest of all the earth’s seeds.” In the Kingdom, one does not have to be president or king to make a difference; the smallest person is great and powerful. In the Kingdom, you don’t have to lead successful military campaigns to change the course of history; the smallest action has unlimited potential.

*There is no justification for despair or pessimism or inertia. Though it be with sorrow, it must be said that just as one may sin through selfishness and the desire for excessive profit and power, one may also be found wanting with regard to the urgent needs of multitudes of human beings submerged in conditions of underdevelopment, through fear, indecision and, basically, through cowardice.*

Pope John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 1987:47

— Gerald Darring

## Saints of the Week

June 14.

**SAINT ALBERT CHMIELOWSKI**

Saint Albert Chmielowski was a talented painter and a Secular Franciscan. In mid-life, he founded the Brothers of the Third Order of Saint Francis, Servants to the Poor, who worked with the poor and homeless. Known also as the Albertine Brothers, this community was renowned for depending completely on alms.



June 15.

**SAINT MARGUERITE D'YOUVILLE**

Enduring a seriously dysfunctional marriage and being left a widow, Saint Marguerite d'Youville did not give in to despair. Rather, she founded the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, the “Grey Nuns,” rescued a failing hospital, and cared for the sick. Not even the destruction of the hospital by fire drove her to despair.



June 16.

**SAINT JOHN FRANCIS REGIS**

Known for his long hours of prayer and notable ability to communicate, John Francis Regis served the people of France during a “dry” period, when the faith and the Church seemed in decline. He conducted missions to counteract the malaise. He succeeded in converting many people and bringing others back to the faith.



June 17.

**SAINT JOSEPH CAFASSO**

At a time when rigorist ideas were rampant in the seminaries of Italy, Saint Joseph Cafasso proved to be a moderate, leading the students to the best of Catholic thought without going to extremes. He also encouraged them to join the Secular Franciscans and develop a love for the Eucharist. Saint Joseph Cafasso is the Patron Saint of Prisoners and Prussia.



June 18.

**VENERABLE MATT TALBOT**

Perhaps no one has done more to address the issue of alcoholism than Venerable Matt Talbot. An active alcoholic himself, he designed a program of support that has helped millions. Many are thankful. Venerable Matt Talbot is the patron saint of Alcoholics, Recovery from Substance Abuse and Addictions, and Sobriety.



# Saint Boniface Church

817 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA 01462

Parish Office: 978-582-4008 email: [stbonifaceparish@verizon.net](mailto:stbonifaceparish@verizon.net)

Discover St. Boniface ~ Visit our website: [www.StBoniface-lunenburg.org](http://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 Mass schedule will remain the same as above for 2021  
until further notice.

Weekday Masses: 6:30 PM Wednesday | 8:00 AM 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 9<sup>th</sup> grade; students are confirmed in the spring of the 10<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:stbonifaceparish@verizon.net) or Louise Nadeau at [dinalou1@comcast.net](mailto:dinalou1@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](mailto: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](mailto:kofc16480@gmail.com).

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### PARISH STAFF:

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Nina Charpentier, Dir. Early Childhood/PreK	978-582-7110	

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**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, the parish office, 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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