

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

From the Pastor's Desk

The readings for last Sunday and for today concern the end times and caution us to be attentive and watchful. We are encouraged to be ready to welcome the bridegroom/master upon his return. Even though we do not know when he will return, we are to be ready to welcome him. In last Sunday's reading the bridegroom came at midnight and the attendants were asleep. There is always this detail about slumber, being lulled into drowsiness and inattentiveness. Although it may be difficult, we still need to be attentive as we look forward to his return because we know he will return. As it is, it always seems is only when we are not paying attention and doing what we are supposed to be doing that we are caught off guard. I call it "Murphy's Law".

As you know, last week we read the parable of the ten virgins of which five were wise and five were foolish. The wise virgins brought flasks of oil with them and the foolish virgins who did not bring extra oil for their lamps. It should be noted that the parable did not say they were dumb or stupid. They were foolish. This reflects a deeper problem of which foolishness is a manifestation. These individuals were quite capable of providing for themselves. It goes with the job as it were. Their foolishness speaks to the issue of thoughtlessness or laziness. In spiritual matters we call this by the strange word, "*sloth*". Sloth is deadly.

At the beginning of the month, with the feast of All Saints we are reminded as followers of Christ our need to have the desire to become a Saint. Alternately the greatest tragedy in life is not to desire becoming a Saint. Becoming a Saint is not easy. It requires honest work as we cooperate with the grace of God in this sinful world. If it were easy, everyone would be saint and there would not be anything notable about it. Studying the Lives of the Saints we know that there is no doubt about it; becoming a saint is not easy. The work of a Saint is to faithfully love God and to love our neighbor in imitation of Christ. Love is the hardest work in this life because it is the *work of God* done in a sinful world. Love is the greatest and most difficult work that needs to be done in this world. "God is Love" as St. John reminds us. The work of God is most needed and most difficult because we live in a sinful world that opposes God. Likewise, it is the most important, meaningful and fulfilling work that we will ever do in this world. The desire to be a Saint is the desire to do this most important work in this life no matter how difficult that work may be. We do it for the love of God and Neighbor.

People give the automatic answer when asked what the opposite of love is: "hate". It only seems natural that hate is the opposite of love. For the most part hate is contrary to love. Yet we can look at this from another angle. I had mentioned this once before and I want to say it again about this different angle for the opposite of love. This angle was presented in the non-fiction bestseller book "*People of the Lie*." According to the author M. Scott Peck, he presents this angle in terms of energy. His imagery presents the exchange between love and hate that involves emotional energy on both sides. It takes a lot of energy to love. It also takes a lot of energy to hate. For him, this "*energy*" should be considered a positive thing. Since it takes energy to love or to hate, there is something positive here in the form of energy being exchanged: even though the energy is directed against each other. This love/hate connection tends to be at the level of the passions. The passions are powerful energies. There is 'give and take' between the two. There is an exchange of energy. Where there is energy there is the possibility for something constructive to emerge. What appears to be an endless exchange of energy in fact has a tendency of energizing both sides. His conclusion points to a manifestation of *anti-energy* that would be the opposite of the "energy" of both love and hate: *indifference*.

There is such a reality that takes energy and returns nothing in response. This taking of energy would deflate and kill the energy flow as it were. In this case the opposite of love would be the taking of love and giving nothing in return; not even hate. This should be considered as the opposite of love and perhaps the opposite of hate as well. Indifference is the opposite of energy itself. In this sense the author Peck proposes that the opposite of love is not hate but rather anti-energy: *indifference*. Indifference essentially says, "I don't care!" It is *anti-energy*. There is no energy in indifference. Indifference takes energy but does not give anything in return. It drains energy and does not respond. It drains the life out of all it touches. Indifference is selfish and self-absorbing. People who are indifferent or just do not care drain our energies. They draw the life right out of us. One thing we can say about hate is that at least one cares enough about something to hate or better to take an opposite position. There is energy there. Where there is energy there is the possibility of transformation or resolution.

The reason I bring this up is to point out that indifference is laziness. In spiritual terms it is *sloth*. There is no use of energy, especially energy for important things like thoughtful, honest and rewarding work. The "foolish virgins" from last Sunday's Gospel were essentially lazy. When the moment arrived for them to welcome the bridegroom, they looked to the wise virgins to provide oil for them. They were ready to take from the wise with nothing to offer in return. The wise virgins made the thoughtful preparations in that they tried to think ahead and to be prepared. It takes energy to be thoughtful and make the effort to bring extra provisions just in case they may be needed. It takes thoughtfulness and love in considering those who are to be served. It takes energy to desire to be the best at what we do out of love for God and neighbor. It is laziness that says, "I don't care". Indifference never makes an effort.

We hear the word "lazy" again in today's Gospel: lazy in being fearful in taking a risk to use the talents God has provided. It appears to be a common theme as we consider the "end times" which is the central theme for these last two Sundays in Ordinary Time. In this context, it is a time for us to look at our Spiritual/Faith life. We need to consider this business of laziness or more precisely the notion of spiritual sloth. We have to ask the hard questions about our faith life. In essence do we really *care* about personal holiness... heaven... sainthood? We need to seriously look at our lives and take note if we are doing those things that are necessary for our ongoing spiritual growth so that we are prepared for eternal life in the Kingdom. It would be a shame for us if we were too lazy about the most important matters of our faith life and find ourselves not prepared to fit in with the Heavenly Banquet.

I quoted a spiritual writer in last Sunday's column that still rings in my mind. "*There is only one great sadness in life and that is not to be a Saint*". This great sadness is real if we are indifferent toward our Catholic Christian faith. The great challenge or temptation to abandon the faith takes a rather smarmy path. We refer to it as doing nothing, laziness, indifference or spiritual sloth. This is the deadliest formula that can literally take the energy and life out of our faith and spiritual growth. Laziness/sloth is the greatest temptation that appeals to our greatest weakness: our selfish, frail, tired and broken human nature. It is clearly one of the deadliest temptations that can destroy our soul and our desire to be a Saint.

Next Sunday is the Celebration of Christ the King and the last Sunday of the Liturgical Year. Quickly following will be celebrating Thanksgiving Day and then the First Sunday of Advent. The days are flying by! Have a great week. Fr. Ralko

This week we pray Week I of the Liturgy of the hours.

Church Support

November 8, 2020	
OFFERTORY	\$7,955.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$4,066.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	<u>\$1,855.00</u>
Weekly deficit	\$(2,794.00)

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

Catalyst Nights – Students grades 7-12 are invited to a Catalyst Night at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in the activity center on Sunday, November 22nd at 6:00 p.m. The evening is led by the National Evangelization Team (NET), college age missionaries. The night includes dinner, presentations, games, skits, prayer, friends and fun. This is a joint, St. Thomas and St. Nicholas youth event and all are invited.

Bishop Rosecrans High School will be hosting the Annual Board of Directors Meeting on 11/23/20 @ 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. The link will be sent home through DA and found on the Website, www.rosecrans.cdeducation.org

Grief Support Tuesday, November 17th. Come meet our new facilitator, Becky Joseph. The Topic: “Surviving the Holidays”. **Meetings are at 1:00 p.m. and again at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Office Meeting Room.** The meetings are offered twice in one day to afford the maximum number of participants. Perhaps you have lost someone or know someone who is grieving and would like to learn how to help them. Please join us. The program is free and open to all. Social distancing and masks encouraged.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Mt. Olive Cemetery has a part time position available. Duties would include mowing, weed eating, helping to open and close graves, help pouring footers for headstones and snow removal. If interested, please call the Parish Office at 453-0597.

Bishop Rosecrans Athletic Boosters

It’s time again to purchase your Booster Mania tickets for the upcoming year. \$25 each or three tickets for \$60, January 1 is the first drawing, they make a good gift. Questions: Contact Marvin Paul at 740-819-3429.

Bishop Rosecrans High School Golf Team Square Board Fundraiser

Based on OSU men’s basketball scores for the 2020-21 season. \$25.00 per square. Payout is \$20 per halftime score and \$30 for final score. Please make checks payable to BRHS and mail to 1040 E. Main St., Zanesville, OH 43701

*Names will be assigned when squares are sold. Winners will be notified each week of the season. For more information contact Ed Johnston, enjedj@yahoo.com or Seth Thompson, sthompson@cducation.org



THE GIVING TREE



Every Advent we place a Giving Tree in the Church vestibule. It contains paper ornaments with gift items to be purchased for needy families. This year we will be giving the gifts to the Muskingum Valley Clinic for children, Heartbeats, Transitions, and our own homebound St. Nicholas Parishioners. Please pick an ornament, buy the requested item, wrap and securely fasten the ornament tag to the package. All packages must be returned to the church by **December 13th**. You are always so generous, and we thank you for helping others this holiday.



BLANKET DRIVE

Everyone loves a warm blanket on a cold night. The Good Samaritan Nurses Alumni are collecting clean blankets, new or gently used. We do this as a memorial to our nurses who have passed away. The collection will start on **December 1** and end on **December 31**. Place the blankets in the box provided in the lobby at Genesis. Blankets are given to Eastside Community Ministries for their clients. If you need more information call Carol Kohler 740-453-9123. Thank you.



33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

My Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore, I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

PRAYER FROM FR. THOMAS MERTON

ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS

St. Nicholas Church has a convenient way to make your regular offerings. With our electronic giving program, you can easily set up a recurring giving schedule. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. Even when something prevents you from attending services, our church will continue to receive your contributions on an uninterrupted basis. To become an electronic giver, call or visit the church office or our website: stnickparish.org.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with those serving our country currently and with their loved ones at home. We pray for a safe homecoming and that the world may one day be at peace.

PLEASE REMEMBER ST. NICHOLAS PARISH IN YOUR WILL. CALL THE PARISH OFFICE AT 453-0597 FOR MORE DETAILS.

Please join us each Monday at The St. Nicholas Parish Office Chapel at 2:00 p.m. as we gather to pray the Rosary asking Our Lady's Intercession for the many needs of our nation, community, and parish.

What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, November 16, St. Margaret of Scotland

8:00 a.m., Mass: *Dee Joseph, Church*

2:00 p.m., Rosary: *Parish Office*

TUESDAY, November 17, St. Elizabeth of Hungary

9:00 a.m., Mass: *St. Thomas Intention, Church*

1:00 p.m., Grief Support: *Parish Office*

6:30 p.m., Grief Support: *Parish Office*

WEDNESDAY, November 18, The Dedication of the Basilicas of SS. Peter and Paul

9:00 a.m., School Mass: *Jerry Davis, birthday, Church*

6:30 p.m., RCIA: *Parish Office*

THURSDAY, November 19

8:00 a.m., Mass: *St. Thomas Intention, Church*

7:00 p.m., Adult Children of Alcoholics: *Church Basement*

FRIDAY, November 20

8:00 a.m., Mass: *Agnes & Charles Jalbrzikowski, Church*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

SATURDAY, November 21, The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, *Church*

5:15 p.m., Mass: *Mr. & Mrs. Fred Sullivan, Church*

SUNDAY, November 22

8:15 a.m., Mass: *St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church*

9:15 a.m., Sunday School: *Parish Office*

10:45 a.m., Mass: *Dan Rapol, anniversary, Church*

Readings for Week of November 16

Mon.	Rv 1:1-4; 2:1-5	Lk 18:35-43
Tues.	Rv 3:1-6, 14-22	Lk 19:1-10
Wed	Rv 4:1-11	Lk 17:11-19
Thurs.	Rv 5:1-10	Lk 19:41-44
Fri.	Rv 10:8-11	Lk 19:45-48
Sat.	Rv 11:4-12	Lk 20:27-40
Sun	Ez 34:11-12, 15-17	Mt 25:31-46

Cantor Schedule Nov. 21 & 22

5:15 Kerby Staker

8:15 Ryan Teti

10:45 Kevin McCarthy