

Pastor's Pen

The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time—Ordinary Time began after the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord and will continue until Ash Wednesday, February 18th. Hopefully, we won't have a snowstorm on that day like we did last year! During Ordinary Time, there is no particular aspect of the mystery of Christ that is celebrated, unlike the Christmas Season that has just concluded. Ordinary Time honors the mystery of Christ itself.

I will resume offering a commentary on the second reading of the Sunday Mass. I may decide to do something different for Lent, but I still have plenty of time to think about it. Today, we begin a continuous reading from the beginning of the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians and will read from this letter until Lent begins.

In St. Paul's day, Corinth was a trade hub. Significant material wealth was concentrated there along with the newest ideas and novel spiritual practices. Corinth was a cosmopolitan city known for its decadence and debauchery. Nestled within it was a Christian community populated by gifted individuals. St. Paul wrote to this community to encourage them to foster unity by showing them their common bond in Christ and with Christians everywhere.

The letter opens with a prescript typical for St. Paul's time which includes the sender, the recipients and a salutation. St. Paul sent the letter to the church in Corinth as an apostle, hence establishing the authority of the letter, and in this case, along with Sosthenes, a brother in Christ. Part of the naming of the recipients of the letter included a reminder that the addressees have been sanctified, that is baptized, in Christ. As such, they were called to holiness, a life that was consistent with the teachings of Christ. They were to desire graces from the Holy Spirit which would cause them to grow in holiness. While addressing the Corinthian church, St. Paul reminds them that they were one without anyone who call upon the name of Jesus. Christ is Lord of all. In other words, he is telling the Corinthians that they are not the one and only Christian community that exists.

The salutation St. Paul uses is one that the priest can use as Mass begins. It is, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." I've used it over the year-and-one-half that I have been with you. It seems that this salutation wasn't used much before I arrived, because you hesitate to respond, "And with your spirit." I will keep using it so that you will eventually learn it.

So, what does the salutation mean? St. Paul is invoking God's grace to be upon the Corinthians, and when I use it at Mass, I am doing the same thing. Grace is a manifestation of God's love which has an effect in many and various ways. God's grace, for example, brings about healing and forgiveness, the growth in virtue, is the source of holiness in a person through the sacraments and an ongoing connection with God. God's grace is like a white light that is refracted in a prism. His grace, the white light, is his love, and the refracted colors are the effects of his love in an individual's life.

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Another part of the greeting is a bestowal of peace. Peace with God the Father comes about through the Lord Jesus Christ's obedient death on the cross. Jesus' sacrificial death for our sins reconciled us with the Father and brought about peace since the division between God and humanity was healed. When St. Paul calls Jesus, Lord, that evokes both his death and resurrection. He is the victor over sin and death and every knee shall bend and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

There is more that could be said, but that is enough for now. Isn't it amazing what we can learn and how we can be encouraged to grow in holiness in three short verses from a letter written by St. Paul? Praise God! Oh, and "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!" "And with your spirit!"

Journey in Faith—As the Archbishop discerns the new pastorates for the archdiocese, please note the following:

- This is a time of prayer for the archdiocese. You are invited to pray especially for the Journey in Faith (JIF) process on the second Wednesday of every month. You can pray the Rosary or offer devotional prayers for the intention of the JIF process. We have Eucharistic Adoration twice monthly, and you could include JIF in your prayers when you visit the Blessed Sacrament. Here are the Wednesdays you are asked to keep JIF as your special prayer intention:
 - January 14
 - February 11
 - March 11
 - April 8
- There have been newly posted Frequently Asked Questions on the JIF website (dbqjourneyinfaith.org). Stay up to date to stay informed.

**Upcoming Lenten Mission:
Special 3-Day Workshop at
St. Patrick Parish Center
February 1st, 2nd, & 3rd
6:00 to 7:30 PM**

Jonna Schuster will be leading a powerful 3-Day Mission at St. Patrick on February 1st, 2nd, & 3rd, 2026. Jonna is the co-founder and director of Catholic Revival Ministries, a California-based platform for teaching and coaching on how to purposefully collaborate with our Living God for a life imbued with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

With a master's degree in moral theology from Christendom Graduate School, a B.F.A. in graphic design from the University of Illinois, and 20+ years experience in professional ministry, Jonna is a seasoned public speaker, podcaster, and author of *Hearing God's Voice*. (Her book will be available at a discounted price during our Lenten mission workshop).

This special workshop is a wonderful opportunity to prepare your heart and deepen your faith as we approach the holy season of Lent. Light refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP so we can plan accordingly. Sign-up on our website! stpatrickcommunity.com/3-day-mission-hearing-gods-voice or scan the QR code:



Plan to attend this wonderful event and be renewed together in Christ!