



JULY 30, 2023 | 17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

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ST. THERESA'S

312 Tazewell Ave.
Tazewell, VA 24651

ST. ELIZABETH'S

160 Merrick Lane
Pocahontas, VA 24635

ST. MARY'S

1122 Farmer Street
Richlands, VA 24641

ST. JOSEPH'S

1007 Independence Rd.
Grundy, VA 24614

My child-like understanding of God

WHO IS GOD? This is the primordial question that confronted man since the beginning of time. Our longing and search for God continue until today. It is a personal thing. Each and every one of us has his/her own faith experience to share.

In my case, when I was still a child, I had reasons to believe that I was “exceptionally brilliant” (I meant it as a joke). I had been very sure of myself—in what I wanted and what I believed. To prove my point, at a very young age I was able to express and believe without any hint of a doubt the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. I had not entered school at that time yet.

During that time of my innocence, I found it exciting and delightful to join summer catechism classes. We were taught the basic doctrines of our Christian faith. It is always amusing and such fun to look back at our childish experiences. I remembered that

every time our teacher or anybody would ask me who or what God is, I would confidently answer, “God is one, in three Divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” In all my innocence, I believed that I perfectly understood who God is, and the Church’s doctrine of the Holy Trinity. “So, was I not brilliant?”

But eventually (perhaps unfortunately) I learned that it is not that easy to understand the Holy Trinity. There is more to it far beyond my simple understanding. As I mature in wisdom, the more the understanding of God eludes me. Truly, “the more you know, the more you do not know.” The more you study God, the more it becomes vague and unclear. The more you analyze it that you may believe, perhaps the more reasons you will begin to doubt.

Over the years, much has been said about God or the Holy Trinity. It has been the subject of much discussion and debate. Many a times, it has caused confusion and misunderstanding between peoples of various positions and among equals: bishop against a fellow bishop, priest against a fellow priest, church against church. They throw accusations against each other. A lot of people, holy and heretic alike, were condemned because of contrasting views regarding the Trinity. God alone knows what became of them today.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is very complex and complicated. It is a profound mystery.

From the time of the apostles, through the era of the Patristic Fathers, with the awesome intellect of modern thinkers and up until today, no one has claimed to have fully understood the Holy Trinity. Great theologians gave very beautiful insights and deep reflections; however, they succeed mainly in complicating the doctrine all the more. Indeed, reason alone can never be able to comprehend it. God as a Trinitarian God can only be known through the light of Divine Revelation. We can only be very sure of it through faith. As I contemplate on this, I come to understand well what Jesus meant when He said “I assure you that whoever does not accept the reign of God like a little child shall not take part in it. (Mark 10:15)”

We do not need theological brilliance in order to advance in our belief in God or the Holy Trinity. What we need most is to be humble and accept with much faith and firm conviction that God is what He truly is: one in three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. For in the end, God will judge us not according to the degree of our theological brilliance but how we put into concrete the firmness of our belief. We should consider for this the faith of a child. It is not hard to believe for a child. The children’s sense of faith is very strong and determined. In their innocence, they recognize their dependence on someone greater than them, first to their parents and ultimately to God. As such, they never doubt



Fr. Renier Supranes

God's almighty power and greatness. They are amenable to God being their only hope for salvation.

So, who is God? To answer this, let us take as a model the character of a child. We should take away our biases in order to assent with certainty and confidence to the great mystery. With childlike confidence and trust, let us therefore believe in the omnipotence and greatness of God. Let us worship and glorify Him as He so deserves. Our understanding of the Trinity should focus on its most basic truth: God is all-knowing, all-powerful, all loving. He is one in three distinct Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



PRIEST ADMINISTRATOR

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OFFICE MANAGER/ BOOKKEEPER

Lydia St. Peter

OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Fri 9:30AM – 2:30PM

Please call the parish office to make arrangements for the **Sacraments of Baptism, Anointing of the Sick or Holy Matrimony** as well as funerals. **Reconciliation** is available from 30 minutes before a scheduled Mass.

MASS TIMES

SATURDAY

4PM – St. Joseph's
6PM – St. Mary's

SUNDAY

9AM – St. Elizabeth's
11:30AM – St. Theresa's

TUESDAY & FRIDAY

10AM – St. Theresa's

Cover image:

A.N. Mironov, *Parable of the Pearl*, 2020

Why do Catholics venerate relics

By Michael R. Heinlein, *simplycatholic.com*

ALTHOUGH more than a common part of Catholic culture and practice, the veneration of relics has been practiced less during the last 50 years or so. But that seems to be changing in recent years, as a number of saintly relics have been traversing the United States, attracting large numbers of the faithful. Relics seem to be making a comeback, and in a big way.

And yet the veneration of relics in the Catholic tradition can be misunderstood easily. At first glance it can appear to be displaced praise. Critics would falsely claim that praise or worship is accorded to the relic or saint rather than God himself, who, of course, is rightly the only subject of all worship.

A proper understanding of relic veneration, however, is best achieved with an appropriate approach. It would simply be incoherent to think that a Catholic or Christian would offer praise and worship to anyone other than God. And yet, honoring the saints — and their relics — is also an important part of what we do.

In order to develop a proper understanding of the place of relics in the Christian tradition, it might be helpful to consider them within a different context — that of family. It's not uncommon for many people to honor the memory of their loved ones by keeping pictures of family around the house. Nor is it uncommon to keep cherished belongings of our deceased loved ones, like grandma's jewelry or grandpa's Bible. These belongings likely are treasured, and treated with honor and reverence. They're kept in safe and honorable places. They're well-packaged when we move. They're often handed on from one generation to the next. These secular "relics" assist us in recalling the person and his or her life, and the memories that remind us of who they were and what they were about.

It is not rare to honor remnants of relatives' bodies, or those of notable people. Often parents will keep first teeth that are lost or save clippings of their child's first haircut. We build monuments to great men and women, and set up grave markers to memorialize them. And so it seems almost second nature for us to honor members of our family and those dear to us as well as the objects that belonged to them.

And so why wouldn't a similar reverence translate into our family of the Church? The saints are those men and women from our family who are deserving of our honor for their life of spiritual greatness. Moreover, they have put on Christ in baptism and become members of his body.

Catholics see the members of the Church as members of a family. Of course, as human beings — composites of body and soul — the Church honors their bodies after death. We, of course, do this as well in our families when we visit and decorate graves on birthdays, death dates or holidays. Made in God's image and likeness, we recognize the dignity of the human person by honoring their earthly remains — that is why the

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CAN CATHOLICS RECEIVE COMMUNION AT A NON-CATHOLIC CHURCH?

The answer is no. The reason is this: The Church teaches that to partake of Communion in any Christian tradition is publicly to declare one is in full agreement with what that tradition teaches or holds. Therefore, if you, a Catholic, were to share in the Communion of a non-Catholic tradition, your action would bespeak a falsehood.

For the same reason, the Church does not allow non-Catholics to receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord in the Eucharist. This prohibition has nothing to do with the spiritual state of non-Catholics. In fact the rule exists for the protection of the integrity of non-Catholics who happen to be present at a Eucharistic celebration. It prevents them from unwittingly, but still symbolically, making a public statement that is untrue.

THE TABLE

**AUGUST 5, 9 AM-2 PM
MAIN STREET UMC**

What does it mean for us in the 21st century to sit with our brothers and sisters of various Christian traditions at the Table? At this conference, we will address this and related questions. Topics covered include:

Ministry: Inviting Others to the Table
The Domestic Church: The Table in Our Families
The Table: Can it unite us in 2023?
Panel on the Lord's Supper

With special guest Fr. Eric Anokye!

Tickets are \$15 at the door and include admission, a locally catered lunch, childcare on site, and access to a display area highlighting ministries in area churches.

Main St UMC (118 Main St, Tazewell, VA 24651). For questions, contact Bond Strong at 276-202-5567 or sarahbondstrong@gmail.com

mass intentions

Date Intention

7/29 SATURDAY

4PM Health of pope & Church by Doug Vance

6PM Naomi Clifton ☩

7/30 SUNDAY

9AM

11:30AM

stewardship of treasure

Donations Received as of July 23 (Week 4)		
CHURCH	ATTENDANCE	OFFERINGS
St. Joseph's	6	\$170
St. Elizabeth's	24	\$810
St. Mary's	14	\$567
St. Theresa's	45	\$2,274
Total	89	\$3,821
Outside Donations		\$2,290
Year to Date Received		\$13,702
Goal		\$11,308
Ahead/Behind Goal		+ \$2,394

OUTSIDE DONATIONS—THANK YOU!!

St. Michael, Glen Allen, VA: \$2,290

ST. MARY'S BACKPACK PROGRAM:

Clinch Valley Medical Center: \$80

please pray for

Louise Serreno*	Chris Lambert
Gerry Hankins	Virginia Dy
Clarence Moore	Mary Muncy
Lexi Cox	Cindy Lambert
Sarah Wall	Helen Petro
Tammy Bennett	Clinard Coleman
Margaret Wasilewski	Joan Harrison
Nic Ulate	Joe & Yvonne Blevins
Frannie & Rayburn Minton	Kyle Brown
Sue Bailey	Jeffrey Parkhurst
Christian Lambert	Sarah Walters
Shane Neal	Everly Duns
Pete Belcher	Amelia Proffit
Lucas Boyd	Maurice Law
Ralph Heldreth	Zac Carter
Chris Jessie	Dennis & Frances Savage
Leo Brown	Nancy Jo Testerman
Carolina Ferrare	Donnie Neal
Junior Aiken	Josh Cornwell
Jeanne Hash	John Shumate
Lara Marshall	Doug Vance
Carol & Jim Shumate	Russ Hatfield
Andrew Satmary	Connie Pace
Glenn Harrison	Jody Hamilton
Donna Petro	Jeanne Ameli
Christian Marshall	Bella Tester
Tina Rocchetti	Annette Pike
Alice Godin	Everett Neese
Randy Snyder	Sharon Mullady
Bryan Gunter	Veronica Ross
Michael Beavers	Skip Reynolds
Natalie Dodge	Danny McNamara
Roger Empson	Louie Negroni
Dreama Ritter	Angela Dalton
Marco Warner	Anna Wright

council members

PARISH COUNCIL:

Tonya Hylton, Frannie Minton, Ralph Shawver, Barbara Jones, Donna Lambert, Maria Farris, Debbie Parkhurst

FINANCE COUNCIL:

Kathy & Bob Buchanan, Randy Bolling, Doug Vance, Anne Danko, Jim Talbert, Jackie Shawver, Lydia St. Peter

parish news & events

First Friday Adoration: Please join us next Friday, August 4 at 10AM at St. Theresa's as we resume First Friday Eucharistic Adoration followed by Mass..



A couple of photos from St. Joseph's Vacation Bible School!!

birthdays & anniversaries:

AUGUST 1: Eric Burns | **4:** Travis Crouse, George Keczan

Blessed are you, *Father, Lord* of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.
-Mt 11:25



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(Pastor's Notes, cont.)

Church demands of proper disposal of a person's remains (burial of body or cremains).

Within this context, then, we should understand that relics are meant to be honored and venerated, not worshipped. In fact, the saints lead us to fuller worship of God in spirit and truth. By honoring their memories, bodies and belongings, we give thanks to God for the saint's holy witness. Relics are physical, tangible, concrete reminders that heaven is obtainable for us — so long as we recognize what made the saints holy and work to apply those qualities to our lives. When venerating relics we express gratitude to God for those members of our spiritual family. In the presence of the relics we recall their holy lives and we pray for the grace to achieve what they've achieved — eternity with God in Heaven.