



July 13, 2025 | The Fifteenth 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



MASS TIPS

Why do Catholics use Incense and Candles?

Anything you may find used in worship in the New Testament, especially in the book of Revelation, is used in Catholic worship: vestments, lights, incense, chants, processions, and so on.

Candles have the specific symbolism of shedding light, which is both practical and mystical in its meaning. The burning of costly beeswax is also a kind of small sacrifice, and the beautiful Easter proclamation sung over the Paschal candle at the Vigil of Easter expounds. Incense represents the sweet fragrance of prayer and of right teaching, and it also symbolizes purity of heart, since it cleanses the air of any foul odors.

“Go and Do Likewise.”

By Fr. Renier Supranes

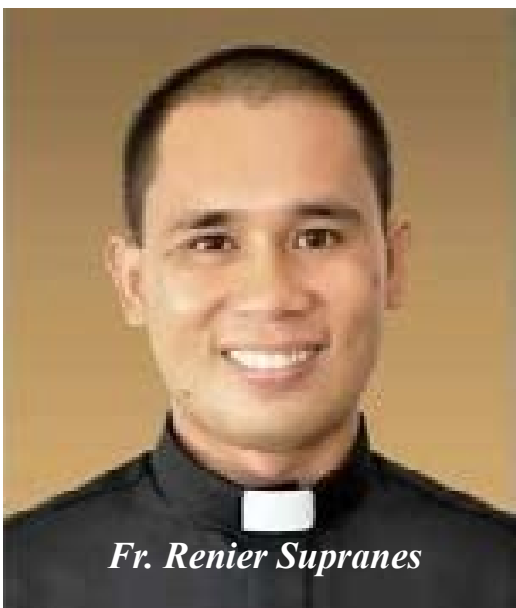
If we are going to summarize today’s gospel in one word, the word is love. The answer of the scholar of the law to his own question, “What must I do to inherit eternal life”, is to love. We must love God above all and love our neighbors as ourselves.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is an answer to how we should love our neighbors. The Good Samaritan in the Gospel did everything for the victim of the robbers: “he approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him.” He even instructed the innkeeper saying, “Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.” The Good Samaritan did not only sympathize, but he had also compassion for the victim. He did not only ease the pain of the victim, but he also assumed the cost, the responsibility, and the burden of caring for him. Loving our neighbor is to help and to heal them no matter who they are and no matter what the cost. We are to do something for others even if our comforts are disturbed.

We must be like the Good Samaritan to others. We must not judge or condemn others, especially the needy, but we must understand them and help them. We must not avoid or ignore the needy, but we must assist them. To love one’s neighbors is not to feel superior over them but to be of service in their predicaments. Our neighbors are neither determined by the color of their skin nor by their social status nor by their blood or religion. Our neighbors are anyone who needs our help and healing. Helping others must have no limits. Loving others must know no boundaries. We must do something for anybody who asks for our help.

The priest and the Levite in the Gospel did not help the man but passed by the opposite side of the road. They failed to give aid and assistance to the victim. They intentionally avoided him. But to love is not to ignore or to neglect. To love is not to abandon or to run away from responsibilities. To love is to assist and to be available for the needy. The priest and the Levite wanted to be clean, but they ended up empty. They were after rituals rather than performance of acts of mercy. They valued ceremonials rather than deeds of charity.

We must do what the Good Samaritan did in today’s Gospel. Jesus, Himself said, “Go and do likewise.” We must help and perform good deeds to the needy, even if he or she is a nobody, even if he or she is bad or different, even if he or she is an enemy. Amen.



Fr. Renier Supranes

Luke 10:25-37

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test Jesus and said,
"Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law?

How do you read it?"

He said in reply,

"You shall love the Lord, your God,

with all your heart,

with all your being,

with all your strength,

and with all your mind,

and your neighbor as yourself."

He replied to him, "You have answered correctly;
do this and you will live."

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus,
"And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied,

"A man fell victim to robbers

as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.

They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead.

A priest happened to be going down that road,

but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.

Likewise a Levite came to the place,

and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.

But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him

was moved with compassion at the sight.

He approached the victim,

poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them.

Then he lifted him up on his own animal,

took him to an inn, and cared for him.

The next day he took out two silver coins

and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction,

'Take care of him.

If you spend more than what I have given you,

I shall repay you on my way back.'

Which of these three, in your opinion,

was neighbor to the robbers' victim?"

He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy."

Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

PASTOR

Fr. Renier Supranes

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(276) 385-7312

OFFICE STAFF

Bookkeeper: Lydia St. Peter

Secretary: Eric Burns

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

DAILY MASS

Tuesday 10am – St. Theresa's

Thursday 10am – St. Mary's

Friday 10am – St. Theresa's

Monthly First Friday Adoration
at St. Theresa's 10am w/Mass

Cover image:

Jacob Jordaens, *The Good Samaritan*, c. 1616

Why Have Incense at Mass?

Luke Lancaster, *catholic.com*

Many people, particularly within our pews, do not know the reasons for the use of incense in worship. Even I, when I was a Franciscan friar using incense as an altar server, often thought, “Why?”

All of us who see incense need to reflect on its purpose, for we don’t do meaningless activities at Mass. When I reflected on its place in Scripture, I found that there is a surprising number of verses on the matter.

The first instance of incense appears over a thousand years before Jesus. It was the major event on Mount Sinai in Exodus 24: God came down as a large cloud over the mountain, with fire, and Moses was called up into the cloud. God did not come down casually with a human face. Nobody could even see him! He was clouded in mystery. Exodus 24:15-18 reads,

Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

This powerful event would have been imprinted onto the consciousness of every Israelite, for God showed up powerfully and mystically. It would have led ancient Israel to have radical respect for God. For people cannot control something that they cannot even perceive! Like a teacher with his students during the first week of class, the cloud literally put the fear of God in them. They recognized the gravity of just whom



they were dealing with. That was the power of a cloud of smoke—it veiled Israel’s vision and thereby increased their awe and respect for God.

I’d argue that this event was recalled nearly every day in the Tabernacle and Temple rite of burning incense. For God commanded Aaron, Israel’s first high priest, to create a cloud of incense within their sacred space every morning and every night (Exod. 30:7-8). As biblical scholar L. Michael Morales says, incense is a smokey cloud, like on Sinai (99). It was as if Israel replicated God’s past mighty presence on Sinai into a memorial.

The same is true with the Catholic Church’s utilization of incense today. It brings us back thousands of years to the time of Moses and ancient Israel, who got to behold the miraculous and stupefying face of God. The Church’s reasoning seems to be that if the Jews did this all the time, and Jesus did not come to abolish, but to fulfill (Matt. 5:17), then shouldn’t we do the same?

I’d argue that we also need a visible reminder of God’s presence. The Jews knew that the human heart is forgetful. They literally kept a piece of Scripture above their foreheads (called phylacteries) to avoid forgetting it, and

they likewise kept the Sinai event consistently before their eyes and noses. We should as well. Just as incense reminded them of God's smokey presence and his past deeds within salvation history, and increased their sense of awe and respect for him, it can do the same for us.

There is so much more. Consider Numbers 16, where the Israelites murmured after Korah rebelled against Moses and Aaron's priestly authority . . . and suddenly died. God swiftly intervened in vindication of his chosen priestly authorities, and he dealt the temporal punishment of a deadly plague to those murmuring. In response, Moses told Aaron to grab some incense to cover the people as a means of "atonement" (Num. 16:46). When Aaron did this, he "stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped" (v. 48). This suggests that those on the side of Aaron who had the incense around them did not die, whereas everybody else without the incense did. Incense literally protected the Jews from God's just punishment for their sins!

Yet how did it protect them? To this, I would apply what the early Christians said about incense. They said that the sweet smell of incense cloaked the foul-smelling sins of the people. The ancient liturgy of St. James says, "Accept from us, thy unprofitable servants, this incense as an odor of a sweet smell, and make fragrant the evil odor of our soul and body, and purify us with the sanctifying power of thy all-holy Spirit." Incense brought atonement in Numbers 16 because of the truth that anybody covered with incense smells blameless and sweet to the Holy One. This can help atone for sins.

Eschatology (the end things) is connected to incense as well. For if God dwells in the clouds of heaven, then incense brings us into heaven. When the prophet Isaiah saw a heavenly vision of God, he saw the surroundings "filled with smoke" (Isa. 6:4). The Psalms refer to God being

surrounded by clouds (97:2). Jesus ascended into heaven on a cloud (Acts 1:9). If heaven, our eternal destination, is cloudy or smokey or "incensey," and the Mass is heaven on earth, then incense and Mass would go hand in hand.

In fact, whenever Scripture talks about the place of heaven, it seems always to be fuming with smoke or incense. The heavenly liturgy found in Revelation is full of it. The "four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Rev. 5:8). If we add up all those bowls of incense, it totals to at least twenty-eightthurifers at the Mass in heaven (and we often complain at just one!). This was probably why the early Christians burned incense in their liturgies. It was found in Revelation and was a handy symbol for prayer rising up to and being received and attended to by God. Incense reminds us of the heavenly things.

There is more to talk about, such as the three Magi offering baby Jesus frank-incense (Matt. 3) and the prophet Malachi predicting that every place will have incense offered to God (1:11), but I think that's enough for one article. Incense veils our vision of God, increases our respect for him, reminds us of him, memorializes his past deeds, atones for sins, and reminds us of our true home in heaven.



Mass Intentions

07/12 SATURDAY

4PM Lydia St. Peter by Doug Vance

6PM For the intentions of Ellen Guanlao and family

07/13 SUNDAY

9AM

11:30AM

Stewardship of Treasure

| Donations Received for July 06 (Week 01) | | |
|--|------------|-----------------|
| CHURCH | ATTENDANCE | OFFERINGS |
| St. Joseph's | 4 | \$170 |
| St. Elizabeth's | 23 | \$865 |
| St. Mary's | 32 | \$725 |
| St. Theresa's | 56 | \$775 |
| Total | 115 | \$2,535 |
| Budgeted Weekly Collection | | \$2,692 |
| Ahead/Behind Goal | | (-\$157) |
| Outside Donations | | \$1,700 |

OUTSIDE DONATIONS—THANK YOU!

Newport News, VA Donor: \$200

St. Michael's, Glen Allen, VA: \$1,500

ST. MARY'S BACKPACK MINISTRY DONORS

St. Mary's Backpack Ministry was awarded a grant from the John C. Fricano Foundation in the amount of \$10,000.00. This money will go a long way to help feed our students in need!

2025 ANNUAL DIOCESAN APPEAL

As of July 8th: 40 donors surpassed our \$10,700 goal with \$16,462.00

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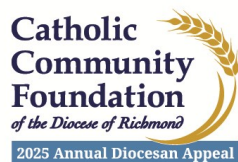
FINANCE COUNCIL:

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

Parish News & Events

Welcome to our new Members, Kevin & Maureen Blackler!

2025 Annual Diocesan Appeal



Your gift to the
Annual Diocesan Appeal
supports Fuel & Hunger

Scan to donate or visit
RichmondCatholicFoundation.org/Appeal



Birthdays & Anniversaries

July 16: Grayson Richardson | **17:** Fr. Eric's Ordination Date (anniversary)

18: Steve & Sandy Hankins (anniversary)

***"Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life;
you have the words of everlasting life."***

- Cf. John 6:63c, 68c

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