



August 17, 2025 | The Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

312 Tazewell Avenue, Tazewell, VA, 24651

(276) 988-4626 | parishoffice@holyfamilyswva.org | Facebook: search Holy Family SWVA

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 Unleavened Bread for Holy Communion?

Historically, it seems clear that Jesus would have used unleavened bread at the Last Supper. The ancient Jews were instructed to use unleavened bread during the feast of Passover. This is scripturally and historically linked to the fact that, in their hasty exodus from Egypt, there was no time to fully knead the dough and allow the bread to rise before baking it (see Dt 16:3). Thus they baked it quickly without yeast.

The Passover meal that commemorated the Exodus was therefore to be eaten with unleavened bread (see Ex 29:2; Nm 9:11).

Theologically and spiritually, yeast, or leaven in the New Testament, is often equated with sin, impurity and hypocrisy (see Mt 16:6; Lk 12:1). And thus unleavened bread comes to symbolize sincerity, purity and integrity.

CHRIST BRINGS DIVISION

By Fr. Renier Supranes

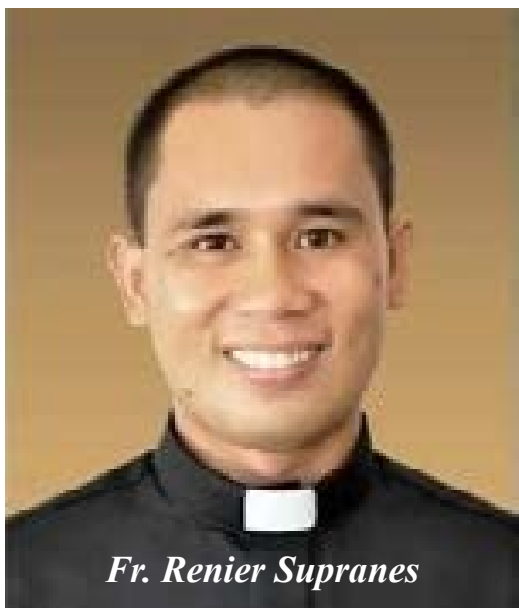
It seems that the Gospel this Sunday is very disturbing. In the Gospel, Jesus shocks His disciples when He declared: “Do you think I have come to bring peace? No, I tell you, but rather division.” These words are unsettling. Is not Jesus the Prince of Peace? Is He not the God of love and unity? Why does He speak of causing division? Surely, there should be a reason why Jesus said those things?

Jesus said those things in the context of discipleship and our commitment to follow Him. He is warning us about the demands and the cost of discipleship. Discipleship is not a safe and easy life. Christian life can truly be difficult and challenging. We will face trials in living our faith. Anyone who stands up and defends the truth as an authentic witness of Christ will face challenges, misunderstanding and persecution. Some will even face death. That is part of being a Christian.

Commitment to follow Jesus means taking a stand on certain things; sometimes that stand sets us in opposition with other people. Commitment to follow Jesus will cause persecutions and struggles; sometimes it will even put us in opposition with those whom we love, like our own families as Jesus warns in today’s gospel. The Christian’s commitment to follow Jesus and the Father must take priority over everything else, even commitment to our own family.

It is difficult and painful for us when family members oppose us for our commitment to the Lord, but it is worse to pretend to be united with them while remaining in the darkness of sin. No one, especially the Lord, wants to separate parents from children and split families apart, but it is better to provoke division, even division in the family, than to let error and sin enslave us and our loved ones. It is better to provoke division if it is the family that leads us to sin, or if it is the family that hinders us from following Jesus. That is the reason why Jesus said He did not come to bring peace but division.

Following Jesus requires making a choice, and every choice is also a kind of division. To be a disciple is to accept Jesus and reject what is contrary to His teachings. It is to follow Him and walk away from occasions of sin. When we choose Jesus, we stand for Him, dedicating ourselves to His commandments of love, of mercy and of forgiveness. We set aside hatred, violence, revenge and indifference. When we commit ourselves to Jesus, we follow Him all the way to the cross, even if it means separation from those who are close to our hearts.



Fr. Renier Supranes

Luke 12:49-53

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I have come to set the earth on fire,
and how I wish it were already blazing!
There is a baptism with which I must be baptized,
and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished!
Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth?
No, I tell you, but rather division.
From now on a household of five will be divided,
three against two and two against three;
a father will be divided against his son
and a son against his father,
a mother against her daughter
and a daughter against her mother,
a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

PASTOR

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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:

Rembrandt, *Jeremiah Lamenting the
Destruction of Jerusalem*, c. 1630

The Eucharist: Your Last Meal

Fr. Samuel Keyes, *catholic.com*

“Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom” (Luke 12:32, DRE).

The pithy warmth of this older translation paints the Father with generosity and love. He gives us his good gifts not because he has to, or because it is reasonable, or correct, but first and finally because it is “[his] good pleasure” (KJV, RSV, et al.). The Father takes delight in giving his children gifts. The Son, in telling us this, shares in his Father’s delight. The disciples are his “little flock,” the sheep cared for and provided for by the Good Shepherd.

It is this relationship of unconditional and unmerited love that stands behind the entire Christian ethical vision. If this is how God looks on us, how God provides for us, we can face trials and persecution, give generously to the poor, do the right thing even when it hurts, and refuse to worry about what happens tomorrow.

But the images given today focus less on moments of crisis—on how to persevere when we’re under attack, resist extreme temptations, or fall into a panic over situations of high anxiety. These stories are all about learning to wait, to stay vigilant, even when the waiting seems long and boring.

One of the Lord’s metaphors, the servants waiting for the master’s return from a wedding, shows a situation of uncertainty. The Fathers often read the master here as Christ coming back after ascending into heaven. We know that he will return, but we do not know when. “No one knows the day nor the hour.” Likewise, we are encouraged to be prepared for a thief coming in the night. Does this mean we aren’t allowed to sleep? That we should be waiting by the back door all the time with a baseball bat?

The difficulty of these scenarios is rather different from the difficulty of crisis. Compare the child who stubs his toe or scrapes his knee who runs crying to Mom or Dad and is quickly comforted with a kiss and a bandage. That’s one thing. It’s another



when Mom or Dad is nowhere to be found, when nothing particularly bad is happening, but there’s a mounting anxiety and uncertainty about what could happen. Perhaps a babysitter or sibling assures him that Mom will be back soon, that there’s nothing to worry about, but he may not even be able to hear such comforts.

Such feelings and worries are more or less natural depending on development, age, and circumstance. Likewise in the Christian life, this is an enormous part of maturity: How do we cope with uncertainty? How do we go on when we’re not sure what comes next? Sometimes we may even be tempted to manufacture some enemy or problem so that we can find a way to focus our energies, but it will not aid us in our need for patient waiting.

These Gospel images about the coming kingdom and the return of the Lord can, if we’re honest, be less attractive than the more dramatic depictions elsewhere about the apocalyptic end of history. At least with the great beast and its blasphemies you sort of know what you’re getting. And maybe that’s part of the point here, because it is all too easy for us to convince ourselves that all this watching and waiting for the kingdom really has nothing to do with us. Peter Kreeft gives us this sharp reminder: “You may think that you will not be alive when that happens, but you are wrong. You certainly will, because you will certainly die, and your death is the end of the world for you, the end of your world, and it is when you will meet Christ.”

Our brief reading from Wisdom is a somewhat cryptic selection in the modern lectionary. Its reference to Passover, though, should recall to us the whole character of the original Passover, which was expectant waiting. The Israelites in Egypt were told to eat with their loins girded, packed and ready to travel. The use of unleavened bread was and remains a powerful sign of this vigilance. There was not even time to let the dough ferment and rise.

In Jewish tradition, at least, the symbol of unleavened bread remained a seasonal sign, a particular remembrance of the Passover. It is interesting, then, that this sign has become, at least for those of us in the Latin Church, an enduring mark of ordinary Christian life. Often it doesn't feel like that. But the Passover of Christ's death and resurrection, renewed and made present at each Mass, suggests that the vigilant expectation of the Exodus should be for us the norm. We should eat this meal as if it were our last. We should prepare for this meal as if it were our last.

And we should take seriously the metaphors given to understand what proper kingdom vigilance means. The fact that a thief may come in the night doesn't mean we never get to sleep or rest or enjoy ourselves. We just need basic precautions: reasonable walls, doors, and prudence. This, in spiritual terms, comes down to seeking true virtue, which is always a balanced mean between opposing vices: we neither become consumed with worry nor become lax. Rather, we focus first on those most basic disciplines that Holy Church gives us: going to Mass, going to Confession, finding ways to practice the works of mercy. In other words, the servants should not leave the house, which is to say the Church, to wander off and do their own thing. If we're staying close to the sacraments, we are placing ourselves in a situation where, like the waiting servants, we are not so distracted with our own temporal affairs that we fail to notice that the Lord is on the doorstep calling for us.

While a proper fear of the Lord may keep us alert, a recognition of the Father's abiding love for

us should in a similar way guard us from falling into needless anxiety. He is not, in the end, a thief in the night! His appearing will only feel like a thief in the night if we forget who he is and who we are. So the ordinary disciplines of the Christian life aren't just some kind of military preparation for battle, they are just the ordinary disciplines of love, the disciplines of staying near to the one who loves us so that we can remember his voice and his calling to us.

Though the fate of the unready servants is a hard warning, the promise to the servants who stayed ready is quite remarkable: "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them." Perhaps it goes without saying, but this is a very unusual scene! The Master becomes the servant.

Again, the hard words of warning should not appear to us as some great angry reminder of God's wrath, but rather of the extremity of the Father's love. It is this enormous condescension that warrants our constant attention and love in this life, for our faithfulness will be rewarded in a way that far outstrips its worth.

Let me close with one of Gerard Manley Hopkins's great reminders of this theme—his little poem "Easter Communion," written just before his entrance into the Catholic Church. Here, he suggests, the Lenten disciplines do not somehow balance out the joys of Easter; rather, they give way to the overwhelming goodness of God's triumph:

*God shall o'er-brim the measures you have spent
With oil of gladness, for sackcloth and frieze
And the ever-fretting shirt of punishment
Give myrrhy-threaded golden folds of ease.
Your scarce-sheathed bones are weary of being bent:*

Lo, God shall strengthen all the feeble knees.

Again hear these words of the Lord: "*Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom.*"

Mass Intentions

08/16 SATURDAY

4PM Charlotte Stanley † by Doug Vance

6PM Elisabeth Repp †

08/17 SUNDAY

9AM Andrew Satmary †

11:30AM Elisabeth Repp †

Stewardship of Treasure

Donations Received for August 10 (Week 06)

CHURCH	ATTENDANCE	OFFERINGS
St. Joseph's	16	\$180
St. Elizabeth's	27	\$545
St. Mary's	15	\$705
St. Theresa's	63	\$1,776
Total	121	\$3,206
Budgeted Yearly Collection		\$16,152
Yearly Actual Collection		\$19,636
Amount Over/Under Budget		\$3,484
Outside Donations		\$4,978

OUTSIDE DONATIONS—THANK YOU!

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

St. Francis, Staunton, VA: \$3,378

Virginia Beach, VA Donor: \$100

BUILDING & MAINTENANCE FUND

St. Joseph's: \$85

St. Mary's: \$175

St. Theresa's: \$722

Please Pray for

Nick Ulate

Frannie & Rayburn Minton

Sue Bailey

Christian Lambert

Shane Neal

Pete Belcher

Lucas Boyd

Chris Jessie

Junior Aiken

Jeanne Hash

Lara Marshall

Carol & Jim Shumate

Andrew Satmary

Christian Marshall

Alice Godin

Roger Empson

Dreama Ritter

Chris Lambert

Clinard Coleman

Joan Harrison

Joe & Yvonne Blevins

Amelia Proffit

Maurice Law

Bill & Jo Testerman

Josh Cornwell

The Dalton Family

Scotty Hagerman

Galileo Molina

Beth Cieversten

John Shumate

Doug Vance

Jody Hamilton

Annette Pike

Sharon Mullady

Veronica Ross

Skip Reynolds

Allen & Melody James

Betty Tabor

Joseph Romeo

Sara Griffith

Chuck Blevins

Juanita Sharrock

Bob Robinette

Rick & Beth Wright

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Brenda Pierallini

Michael Kroll

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Welcome to our new Members, Luke & Tiffany Aust, and Monica Asbury!

A Message from Frannie Minton at St. Joseph's

“Thank you Holy Family parish, Fr. Renier, Eric, Lydia, St. Joseph's Parishioners; Rocco, Rayburn, and Doug Vance for all you did and continue to do for Charlotte Stanley's Wake and Celebration of Life Funeral Mass. May God Bless each of you, is my prayer.”

- Frannie Minton



Taller de Liturgia
NIVEL 1

Invitamos a todos los Ministros Extraordinarios de la Eucaristía, los Proclamadores de la Palabra, y a todos quienes quieren aprender más sobre Jesús Sacramentado y nuestros roles como fieles en la fe.

23 AGOSTO
9:00am - 3:00pm

ST. ANNE CATHOLIC CHURCH
316 Euclid Avenue | Bristol, VA 24201

COSTO: \$20 (Incluye desayuno, almuerzo, y materiales)

Spanish Mass Workshop hosted at St. Anne's in Bristol

The Office of Ethnic Ministries in our Diocese will be hosting a workshop on the Mass (Taller de Liturgia) at St. Anne's in Bristol on August 23, 9am to 3pm for the Hispanic communities in Southwest Virginia. The workshop will be in Spanish, and anyone who completes it will receive a certificate of completion for the level 1 workshop.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

August 20: Troy Smith | **22:** Greg & Cindy Deskins (anniversary)

***“My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord;
I know them, and they follow me.”***

- John 10:27

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