ST. COLUMBA
CATHOLIC CHURCH

6401 San Pablo Avenue ~ Oakland, CA 94608-1233
Phone: 510-654-7600 / fax: 510-654-7615
Email: stcolumba1898@gmail.com/Website: www.stcolumba-oak.com

Pastor
Fr. Aidan McAleenan

Clergy Support
Fr. Kwame Assenyoh, SVD
Fr. Hilary Martin, OP

Director of Music
D. Mark Wilson

Director of Faith Formation
Margaret Roncalli

Pastoral Council Chairperson
Margaret Peterson

Office Manager
Maria Creer

Parish Financial Officer
Mary Ellen Morgan

Liturgy
Weekdays - 8:00 AM (Rosary 7:30 AM)
Saturday - 4:00 PM
Sunday - 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM

Office Hours
Monday - Thursday
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM (closed 12 - 1 PM)

Sacraments
Reconciliation
3:30 PM - 4:00 Saturday
Baptism - Contact Margaret Roncalli
Marriage - Contact pastor 6 months in advance

PLEASE CALL THE PARISH OFFICE
For communion/visits to the sick & homebound; mass intentions, prayer request & funerals

St. Martin de Porres Catholic School
Regional School for St. Columba, Sacred Heart, St. Patrick and Cathedral of Christ the Light

K-5 Campus
510-652-2220
675 - 41st Street, Oakland

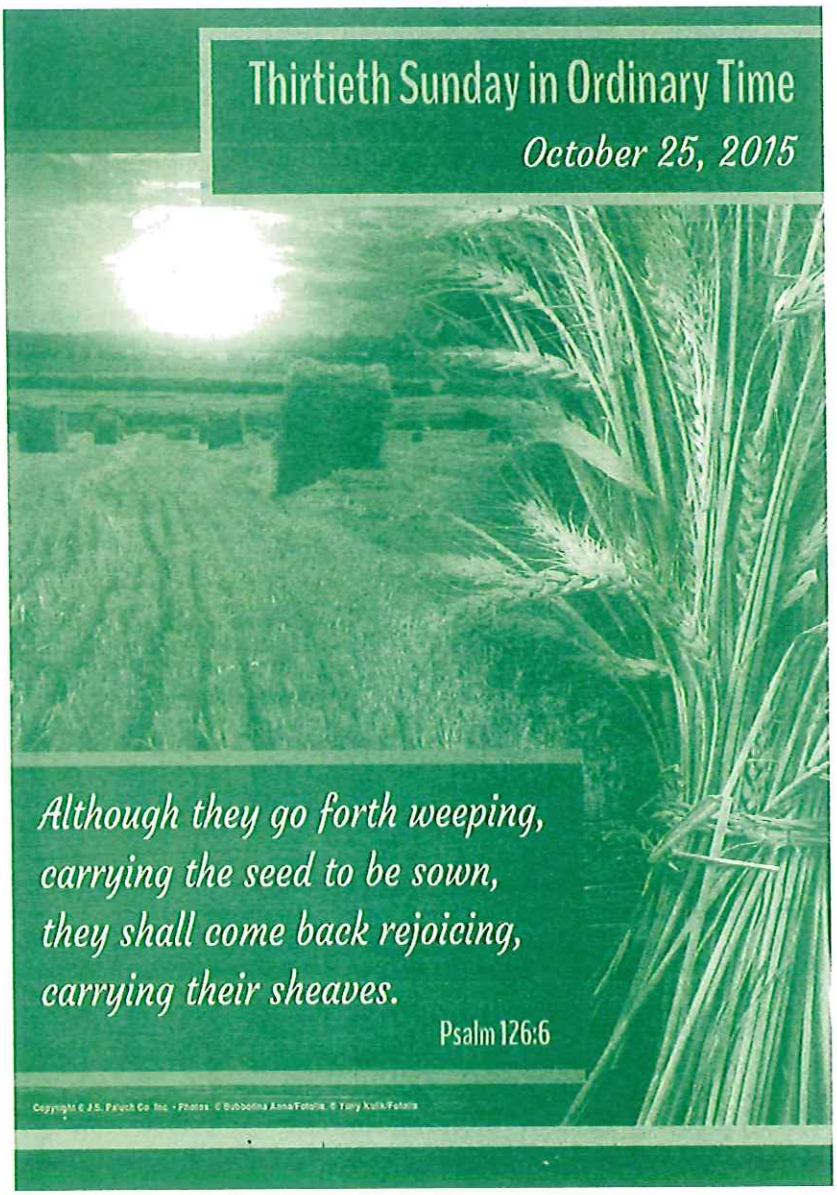
6-8 Campus
510-832-1757
1630 - 10th Street, Oakland
Principal: Dara Northcroft
President: Hollis Pierce-Jenkins

Please turn off Cell Phones before entering Church. Thank you!

Peace and harmony

Mission & Vision

Through African American traditions, we are moved by the Spirit to serve.
WE KNOW WHO & WHOSE WE ARE!



TRUE BLINDNESS

Bartimaeus caused a stir. Normally he sat by the side of the road being a "good blind beggar." But one day Jesus passed nearby. Bartimaeus jumped up and called out to Jesus. We can imagine him turning toward the direction of the commotion and noise. Bartimaeus probably had his arms outstretched as he shouted out to the son of David.

The people who knew him were embarrassed by his outburst. They tried to hush him up and get him to sit back down by the roadside. Their actions spoke volumes: "Bartimaeus, you're not fit for Jesus." But it was okay for them and other "sighted" people to follow Jesus. In today's readings, we learn that true blindness is not a condition of our eyes but of our hearts.

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Pope Francis' Prayer for Jubilee Year of Mercy

The Jubilee Year of Mercy will run from Dec. 8, 2015 to Nov. 20, 2016 and Pope Francis has composed a special prayer for the year. In prayer, the Holy Father entreats the Lord to make the Jubilee of Mercy a year of grace so that the Church, "with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind."

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him. Show us your face and we will be saved. Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money; the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.

Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God!" You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified. You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind. We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy, you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen

ATTENTION PARISHIONERS
REMEMBER THESE DATES

November 1, 2015 - All Saints Day
November 2, 2015 - All Souls Day
November 1, 2015 - Ministry Budget Deadline
November 14, 2015 - Zydeco Dance
December 18, 2015 - Christmas Concert
December 27, 2016 - Kwanzaa Celebration
January 30, 2016 - Mardi Gras Gala
February 10, 2016 - Ash Wednesday

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time; Priesthood Sunday; World Youth Day
Wednesday: Ss. Simon and Jude
Saturday: Halloween; Blessed Virgin Mary

We welcome all who come to celebrate with us. If you would like to register or if you need to update your information, please complete this registration form and place it in the collection basket, return to office or send us an email. Be Blessed!

Name_____

Address_____

Phone Day_____ **Eve**_____

City_____ **Zip**_____

E-mail Address_____

☐ **New Parishioner**

☐ **Change of Information**

☐ **Moving: Remove from list**

☐ **Please Call me - best time** _____

☐ **I would like to serve as** _____

_____

St. Columba Directory of Staff & Ministries - Who and Whose We Are!

Fr. Aidan McAleenan – Pastor
510-550-4026

D. Mark Wilson - Director of Music
510-550-4027

Margaret Roncalli – Faith Formation Dir.
stcolumbafaithformation@gmail.com
510-550-4058

Maria Creer – Office Manager
MariaCreer.mgr@gmail.com
510-550-4060

Joanne Dickerson-Harper – St. Vincent de Paul
stcsvdp69@gmail.com
510-550-4059

Margaret Peterson – Pastoral Council Chairperson
Contact through the Parish Office

Bonnie Lovette – Health Cabinet
nicu18@aol.com

Maurice Harper – Youth Ministry
mhj663673@gmail.com
415-385-8307

Bernardine Joseph - Church Bulletin
berniecjoseph1943@gmail.com

Parish Email
stcolumba1898@gmail.com

Chris Reyes - Parish Website
www.stcolumba-oak.com

African American Committee
Altar Servers: Herve David
Art/Environment: Francine Peters
Board of St. Columba Development: Fr. Aidan McAleenan
Bread Bakers: Sr. Marian Castellucci, Laurenteen Brazil
Cantor/Musicians: D. Mark Wilson, JoAnne Evans, Nancy Pope-Angulo, Jerry Donaldson
Detention/Jail: Buzz Sherwood, Cat Willett
Eucharistic Ministers: Elaine Lemay
Ezinulo Committee: Suzette Warren & Joanne Dickerson-Harper
Family to Family: Darryl Jones
Finance Officer: Mary Ellen Morgan
Friends of SMdP School: Edna Webster Coleman, Joanne Dickerson-Harper & Regina Wilkerson
Gospel Choir/Liturgical Dance: Alice McGaugh
Health Cabinet & HIV/AIDS Ministry: Bonnie Lovette, RN MS PNP & Andria Johnson MD
Homebound Out Reach: Marianela Carter
Hope for Haiti: Elena Gaudet, Judy Luce
Hospitality: Grace Marie Landrio
Junior Daughters: Darcell Purefoy
Knights of St. Peter Claver: Andrew Peters
Ladies of St. Peter Claver: Dolores Hill
Lectors: Kathleen Lopes
Liturgy: Fr. Aidan McAleenan
Memorial Crosses: Rich Laufenberg
OCO: Andrew Peters
Sacristan: Venus O. Manuel
Scholarship Committee: Thomas Schafer
Scripture Study: Gillian Small
Ushers: Russell Lopes
Volunteers (Office) - Maria Creer
Women's Group: Millie Jones & Lucy Castro

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

All the great things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope.
- Winston Churchill

Funtunfunefu Denkyemfunefu
("siamese crocodiles")

Democracy, unity in diversity

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Rom 8:12-17; Ps 68:2, 4, 6-7ab, 20-21; Lk 13:10-17
Tuesday: Rom 8:18-25; Ps 126:1b-6; Lk 13:18-21
Wednesday: Eph 2:19-22; Ps 19:2-5; Lk 6:12-16
Thursday: Rom 8:31b-39; Ps 109:21-22, 26-27, 30-31; Lk 13:31-35
Friday: Rom 9:1-5; Ps 147:12-15, 19-20; Lk 14:1-6
Saturday: Rom 11:1-2a, 11-12, 25-29; Ps 94:12-13a, 14-15, 17-18; Lk 14:1, 7-11
Sunday: Rv 7:2-4, 9-14; Ps 24:1-6; 1 Jn 3:1-3; Mt 5:1-12a

Catholic Cruises and Tours

Come Sail Away on a 7-night Catholic Exotic Cruise. Prices begin at $1045 per couple which includes all port fees and taxes. Daily Mass and Rosary offered. Deposit of only $100 per person will reserve your cabin.

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WHY IS IT

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under an ADVERTISED blanket
on an ADVERTISED mattress
and pulls off ADVERTISED pajamas
bathes in an ADVERTISED shower
shaves with an ADVERTISED razor
brushes his teeth
with ADVERTISED toothpaste
washes with ADVERTISED soap
puts on ADVERTISED clothes
drinks a cup
of ADVERTISED coffee
drives to work
in an ADVERTISED car
and then ....
refuses to ADVERTISE
believing it doesn't pay.
Later if business is poor
he ADVERTISES it for sale.

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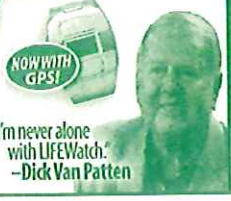

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–Dick Van Patten

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Faith Formation

Nea on-nin no sua a, ohu
Knowledge / life-long learning

RCIA is Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Are you seeking Baptism? Or wanting to **become Catholic**? Have you wondered how to complete **Confirmation** preparation? Please see Sr. Evelyn after 10:30 Mass. If you have questions about the process of adult initiation contact Margaret Roncalli in the parish office at 510-550-4058 or at stcolumbafaithformation@gmail.com. Several adults have been asking about Confirmation— it's never to late to complete one's initiation as a Catholic!

People of St. Columba: Do you know someone wanting to learn about joining the Catholic Church? Be a disciple— you too can evangelize! Invite interested friends and neighbors to come with you to church.

The Synod of Bishops on the Family in Rome (Oct 4-25) Today ends the Bishops Synod on the family. They have been discussing, praying and listening to testimony. As they complete their meeting and draft their responses, let us pray that the pastoral needs of all families throughout the world may be addressed.

Faith Formation for Families and Students

Upcoming Dates

Oct 25 CLW—during 10:30 Mass
All-Family Faith Day — hall at 12:30

Nov 1 Sac prep–Rel Ed room (children) at 9am
Sac prep–Reconciliation room (older children)
Sac prep– parish hall (parents)
CLW—during 10:30 Mass

If you have questions about First Communion and Reconciliation please contact Margaret Roncalli at stcolumbafaithformation@gmail.com or at 510.550.4058.

All-Family Faith Day *TODAY!*

(Oct 25)is our next gathering of "the village" at 12:30pm in the parish hall. This is a time of shared food and prayer, learning and fun; a time for families to deepen their faith together. All families are welcome.

Infant Baptism Preparation

Are you planning for the baptism of your baby? The next preparation class for parents and godparents will be Thursday, November 5 at 6:30pm. To register contact Margaret Roncalli at stcolumbafaithformation@gmail.com or at 510.550.4058 .

Please pre-register before attending.

KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

— A Resource for Families —

This link — www.faithandsafety.org — is a resource guide from US Conference of Catholic Bishops offers guidance on best use of the internet, cell phones and video games safely, as well as protecting children's privacy.

Strangers & Predators Online Kids can easily encounter predators online; and predators know the places kids hang out online and how to develop online relationships with them. In this section, we cover the patterns typical of online predators, the likely places where kids can encounter them, how you can minimize the risks of your child becoming a victim, and how to respond if you sense that your child is being targeted by an online predator. [For the full article go to www.faithandsafety.org/strangers-and-predators1predators1.]

Reflecting on the Word

From today's Gospel reading: *Jesus said to Bartimaeus: "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master I want to see."*

Reflection: Bartimaeus has no possessions except for his cloak. But he even casts that aside to get up and come to Jesus. He is a powerful symbol for us: what little he has he puts aside to get closer to Jesus.

So we ask ourselves:
Is there some possession or some way I am living that keeps me from getting closer to Jesus?
How shall I begin to change?

St. Columba Gifts of Treasure Update

WHO AND WHOSE WE ARE!

Monthly Goal	**$30,000.00**
Weekly Goal	**$7,500.00**
Special Collection Church Organ Fund	$2,500.00
10/04/2015	$9,747.84
Special Collection Catholic Voice	$544.57
10/11/2015	$4,509.32
Special Collection St. Martin de Porres	$819.99
10/18/2015	$7,413.73
Special Collection World Mission	$672.69

October 25, 2015

Mass Intentions for the week

Saturday 4:00 AM Dorothy Curtis
Saturday 4:00 AM Edwina Ronchelli
Sunday 8:00 PM Damian Joseph, Sr.
Sunday 10:30 AM Mary O'Leary Ronchelli

POSSIBILITIES

All things are possible for one who believes, more to one who hopes, even more to one who loves.
--St. Lawrence

For list of weekly lectionary reading, please review www.usccb.org

If you have a request for the prayer list below, need to update a request or remove a request, please contact: Parish Office: 510-654-7600
stcolumba1898@gmail.com

Please pray for the sick, especially for the special intention of our beloved hospitalized, homebound & Elders:

Paul Avril, Grace Bentley, Edna Boatwright, Thomas Boutte, Gerri C. Brandt, Tanya Bursey, Corrine Carroll, Varitia Castro, Donald Coleman, Jr., Eugene Craft, Emily Cry, Audrey Dave, Eli Dinan, Richard Dewath, Gloria Jean Ducksworth, Juanita Estrellas, Velma Fowler, Lynda Grasser, Bill Green, Maud Green, Carolyn (Tont) Greenidge, Robert Heard, Kenyatta Jackson, Fernando Jening, Betty Johnson, Michele Johnson, Jackie Jones, LaeCharles T. Lawrence, Sr., Judy Leaks, Laneshia Lawrence Jones, Helen Koci, Margaret Lewis, Michel Magana, Mary Maluccio-Hobbs, Herman Marigny, Jr., Dave Marshall, Sr., Freddie Martin, Jr., Sherry McCowan, Marie McKechnie, Charlyne (Teenie) Monroe, Donya Monroe, Creswell Morris, Alvin Muldrow, Son Nguyen, Cheryl Olivier, Marie Owen, Edward Redd, Frances Redd, Joel Rivera, Gary Rohweder, Bill Ronchelli, Eunice Royal, Henry Royal, Kristi Sahlman, Addie Sample, Connie Sanderfeur, Joyce Scotlan, Eddie Thomas, John Tully, Henry Wellington, Jr., Kennrick Wharff, Susan Wiley, Kenneth Wilkins, Yvette Valencia-William, Shirley "Mimi" Winn, Phyllis Adele

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

In the tangled but fascinating history of penance in the Church, the Irish "tariff" system helped us survive the collapse of the old system of public canonical penance and prepared the way for a new system that emerged in the twelfth century. The old form was unrepeatable, public, dealt with serious community matters, and regulated by the bishops as chief reconcilers. The new form had a more intimate setting of penitent and confessor, was extremely repeatable, and applied to everyone. The old canonical form was closed to children, who were hardly capable of the very grown-up sins listed, or their demanding remedies. The old form was likewise closed to clerics, who were protected in a sense by the very nature of the discipline. In the new Irish form the penitent directly named sins, or answered direct questions by the priest. Sometimes, the penitent would recite a long formula accusing him- or herself in a general way of all sorts of sins, even from the distant past. Next, priest and penitent together would lie prostrate before the altar and recite several of the psalms with penitential themes. Finally, the priest would pronounce a judgment, deciding what form and duration the penance should take, normally insisting that the person return for reconciliation once the penances were completed.
--Rev. James Field, Copyright (c) J. S. Paluch Co.

900 Emails

Fr. Thomas Vander Woude learned that a young couple expecting a baby that had been diagnosed with Down syndrome planned to abort the child. So he proposed a deal to them: he would find a couple to adopt the baby, and the mother would carry the child to term. A posting on his parish's Facebook page led to more than 900 couples emailing in and volunteering to adopt the child, and hundreds of others called!

"I was taking calls for about three hours straight, just talking to people who are willing to adopt this little baby they never knew about until that morning," David Dufresne, a seminarian who volunteered to answer phones at the parish, told the Washington Times. "I was really inspired by the goodness of people and what they would do to save a life."

This story is a striking reminder that the Church's teaching on the sanctity of every person — no matter his or her age or ability — is not just a theory or philosophical position. It is meant to be lived. We can all work to build what St. John Paul II called "a culture of life" — whether that means lobbying for expanded rights for unborn children or showing young families in our communities unwavering support.

For Reflection

What does it look like on a daily basis for your family to live out our shared mission of love?

When has living your faith led you to make decisions that are countercultural?

THEME TEN:

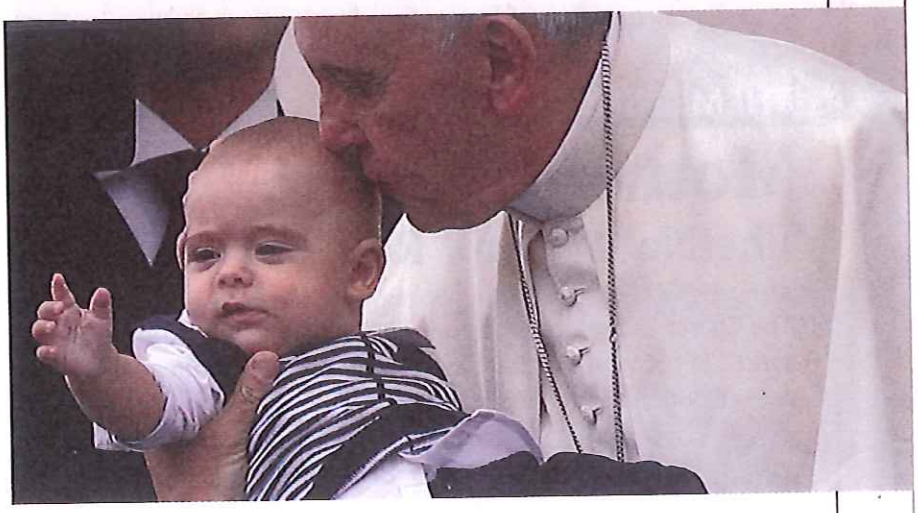
Choosing Life

"God made us for a reason. His love is our life mission. This mission enables us to find our true identity. If we choose to embrace this mission, we will have a new perspective on many issues, not just the family. To live the mission of the domestic church means that Catholic families will sometimes live as minorities, with different values than their surrounding culture. Our mission of love will require courage and fortitude. Jesus is calling, and we can respond, choosing lives of faith, hope, charity, joy, service, and mission."

— *Love Is Our Mission: A preparatory catechesis for the World Meeting of Families*

"The victims of this [throwaway] culture are precisely the weakest and most fragile human beings — the unborn, the poorest, the sick and elderly, the seriously handicapped, et. al. — who are in danger of being 'thrown away,' expelled from a system that must be efficient at all costs."

— Pope Francis, Address to a Delegation from the *Dignitatis Humanae* Institute, December 7, 2013



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Creator God, you are author of every single life. Help us to view all people as you see them and to build a culture of love where all are valued and no life is in danger of being "thrown away." Amen.

Tip for Daily Living

Spend some time this week reflecting on how you navigate sharing your values with other friends, families, and co-workers with different beliefs.

Our Sunday Visitor

To learn more about the World Meeting of Families visit worldmeeting2015.org

WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES 2015 Philadelphia

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THE FAMILY *Fully Alive*

The World Meeting of Families is a gathering of Catholic families from around the world for a week of prayer, faith formation, and celebration of the gift of family. In preparation for the gathering, Catholics are invited to reflect on ten major themes from Church teaching. This insert focuses on the ninth and tenth themes.

THEME NINE:

Mother, Teacher, Family: The Nature and Role of the Church

"The Church has institutional forms because she must work in the world.... In the words of Saint John XXIII, she is our mother and teacher, our comforter and guide, our family of faith."

— *Love Is Our Mission: A preparatory catechesis for the World Meeting of Families*

"As a mother who teaches her children to speak and so to understand and communicate, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith in order to introduce us to the understanding and the life of faith."

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 171

Loving God, send your Holy Spirit upon us to form our families and our Church as places ever more deeply marked by tenderness, mercy, and compassion. Amen.

Tip for Daily Living

If there's someone in your life who feels disconnected from the faith, invite that person to join you for Mass one week.

Love Holds Everything Together

The mother of four kids under nine years old, Jackie has a lot on her plate. There are the custodial tasks: diapering, scrubbing glitter-glue off the rug, walking the dog, bandaging wounds, and blowing noses. Then, there is the tougher stuff: dealing with girls who tease an eight-year-old because her lunch is weird; handling the boy who's harassing the five-year-old on the bus; comforting the three-year-old who says no one will play with him. "You do things for your kids that you would never do for other people, because it comes from love," Jackie says. "The actions may be difficult or tiring, yet they are not work, because they are done out of love."

Renata Sedmakova / Shutterstock.com, Shutterstock

For Reflection

When have you felt like you are a part of a family of faith?

How can the Church be our mother even though her leaders and people are imperfect?

One of the reasons the image of Church as mother is striking is because, like the family, the Church is busy, messy, imperfect, beautiful, holy, and a community where love holds everything together. And, also like a family, for the Church to thrive, her members are called to use their own gifts and talents for the good of all.

Share

As a young seminarian I spent a summer working in a retreat house. The priest directing the house had a curious hobby: he polished stones. During long, solitary walks he would watch for small stones that looked interesting, and when he found one that looked as if it might have value, he would bring it back to his workshop. There he had a small barrel-drum that was itself filled with small, very hard stones. He would take the stone he had found, his potential gem, and place it inside the barrel-drum, add some water, seal the drum tightly, and turn on an electric motor that would slowly rotate the drum. After several weeks of this, he would open the drum and search for his little stone. Many times he would find that it had simply disappeared, the weeks of grinding having reduced it to gravel and sand. If the stone, however, had value, he would find it now, polished, gleaming, a gem with all its rough edges rubbed off and all useless gravel and sand knocked out of it.

There is something in that image about our lives in family and community. There used to be an expression in popular spiritual literature: *Families and communities are schools of charity.* I remember reading it as a novice many years ago, and very naïvely and very badly misunderstanding it. My simple thought then was, *Yes, that makes sense! When you live within a family or some other community, it gives you a lot of chances to practice patience, forgiveness, and understanding—as you deal with other people's faults!* How wrong I was! What that expression suggests is not, first of all, that we grow in charity and maturity

by putting up patiently with other people's faults, but that real relationship, actual interaction within family and community, deflates our fantasies, makes us see reality, punctures our self-centeredness, and against every protest, denial, and rationalization we can muster, shows us how selfish and immature we often are.

We cannot live very long within any community—marriage, family, religious community, or genuine friendship—without becoming aware of our faults and narrowness. We either begin to grow up, or we leave. Sadly, today the temptation is most often to leave. The misguided theory is that we grow mature by growing away, especially away from the family and community within which, by circumstance, we find ourselves. The idea is that we will be happy—and available for real family and friendship—if we are free spirits, soaring, unattached, unencumbered.

I remember a young nun to whom I once served as spiritual director. Before entering the convent, she had lived alone in her own apartment and was quite popular. She had many friends and was, to her own mind, quite a mature, giving, and unselfish person. Not long after joining a religious community, where she lived in close quarters with other novices and those directing the novitiate, she began to experience major problems with her relationships. She was often at odds with her peers and her directors, who, tactfully and otherwise, told her that she was somewhat self-centered and immature. She was particularly frustrated because often the tensions arose over very petty things.

"It must be the community that's causing this," she told me

during one of our sessions. "I was never a petty, selfish person when I lived alone!" Then, when I asked why she continued to stay in the convent if that was the case, she replied: "Because, in my better moments, I know that if I ran off now and got married, probably most of the things that are happening here would begin to happen again! Some of this stuff would catch up with me again. When I lived alone it was lonely, but it was easier. You didn't have to live your life under a microscope. But you could easily fool yourself, too!"

What was happening to her in that community? The stone was being polished! She was being churned in the barrel-drum that is called family, community. The other stones were knocking some rough edges off of her and rubbing her free of considerable useless gravel and sand. It was painful and humiliating for her, but she was learning the most valuable lesson of all, how to share your life in reality as opposed to fantasy. She was in a school of charity. She was being purified.

Family and community aren't boring; they're terrifying. They're too full of searing revelations; there we have no place to hide. In family life, our selfishness and immaturities are reflected back to us through eyes that are steady and unblinking. Staying within them is often the hell that leads to heaven.

Share! The Eucharist, as a spirituality, invites us into community and family. To live out the Eucharist in daily life is to share our everyday lives with each other.

Some years ago I participated in a workshop on Zen prayer. The woman leading the sessions, a longtime devotee of Zen who sat in private meditation for several hours each day, was describing some of the spiritual insights she experi-

enced during those prayer sessions. At one point I asked her, "When you are sitting for those long periods in private prayer, how would you compare what you experience there with what you experience at your family table?" Her answer: "There is really no comparison! During my prayer times I touch transcendence. Mealtimes with family or friends are nice, but they aren't prayer."

I said nothing in response then, but I'm Christian enough to not be comfortable with her answer. Scripture tells us: "God is love, and whoever abides in love, abides in God, and God in him or her."[16] As it is referred to in this passage, love does not refer in any particular way to romantic love. The text is not saying, "Those who fall in love, abide in God," though that may often be true, too. The passage might well be translated in this way: "God is shared existence, and those who break open their lives and gratefully share them with others already live inside of God."

Theologians tell us that God is as much a verb as a noun. God is a trinity of persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For Christians this is more than a simple dogma that we are asked to accept, even if we don't understand it. It is something that invites us to a whole way of life: God is a family, a community of persons sharing life together in such a way that a spirit, an energy of gratitude and joy, flows out of that shared life. We are asked to do the same—to share our lives with one another in such a way that joy and gratitude flow out as an energy that nurtures others. Life in the spirit is, quite simply, life shared with others.

Sometimes when I preach on the trinity, I make a sugges-

tion to people: If you want to try to understand the trinity, don't isolate yourself with triangles or shamrocks and try to figure out how three can be one and one can be three. Instead, sit down at table with family or friends, let the food, wine, and conversation flow, and simply *experience* the trinity. God is found not just in the silent innermost depths of our hearts; God is found, too, in the experience of sharing life.

Jean-Paul Sartre once suggested that community is hell. On a given day, the tensions inherent within community life can certainly make that seem true. However, in our better moments, we all know that the reverse is the truth: alienation and aloneness are hell; shared life is heaven.

The Eucharist is an invitation to us not just to come together in church to celebrate a sacred ritual that Jesus left us. The Eucharist invites us to commit ourselves, inside our families and communities, to share all aspects of our lives with others.

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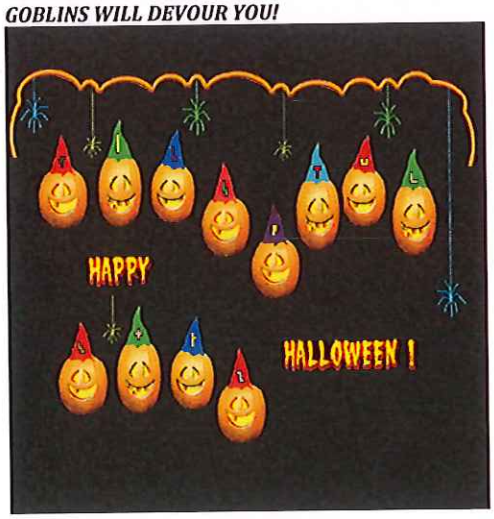

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