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. Hilary Martin, OP

Director of Music
D. Mark Wilson

Director of Faith Formation
Margaret Roncalli

Pastoral Council Co-Chairpersons
Michelle Batista / Joan Morris

Office Manager
Maria Creer

Parish Financial Officer
Mary Ellen Morgan

Liturgy
Wednesday - Thursday : 8:00 AM (Mass)
Monday: 8:00 AM (Prayer Service)
Friday: 8:00 AM (Communion Service)
Rosary: Monday - Friday: 7:30 AM
Saturday Mass - 4:00 PM
Sunday Masses - 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM

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

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

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
President: Hollis Pierce-Jenkins
Principal: Dara Northcroft

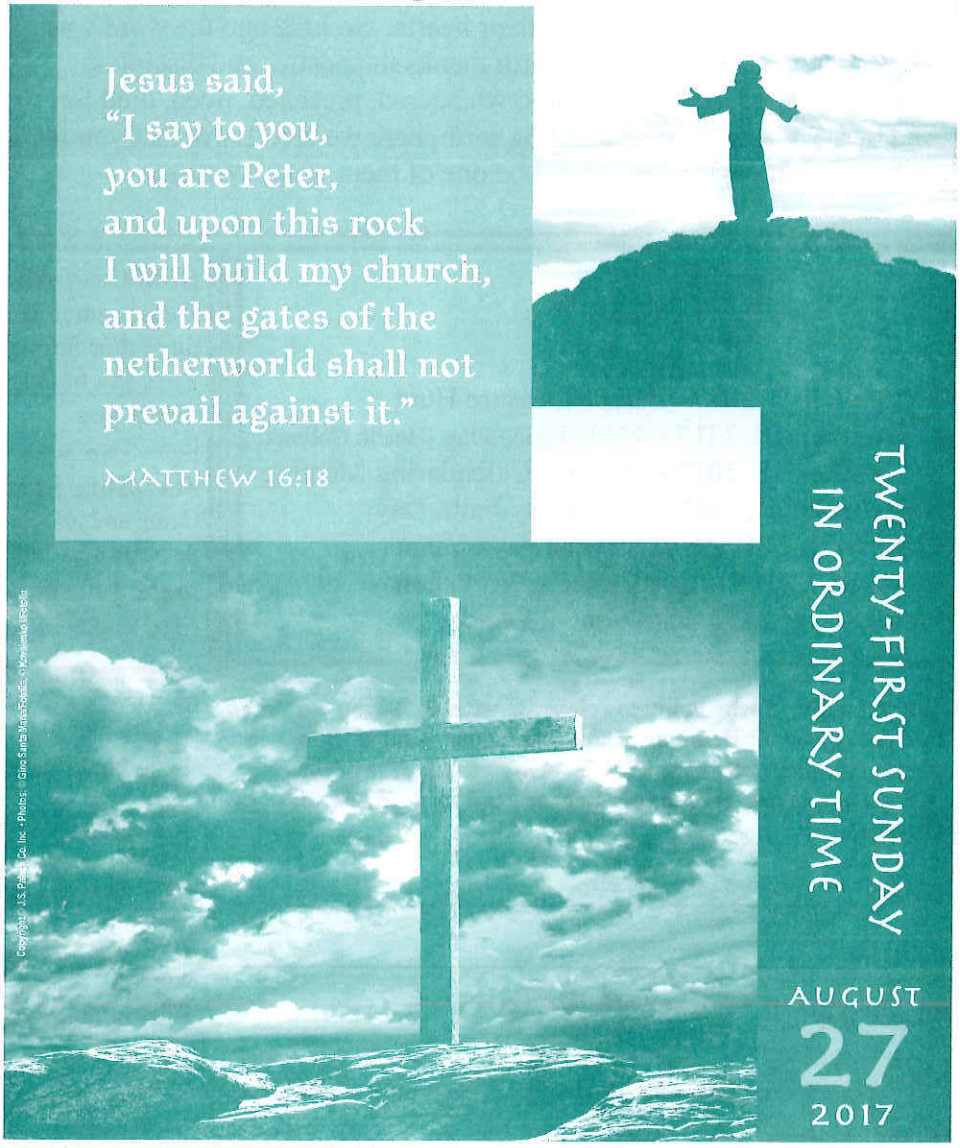
Please **turn off** Cell Phones before entering Church. Thank you!

Unity, human relations

Mission & Vision

Through African American traditions, we are moved by the Spirit to serve.

"Misericordia: Making Mercy Visible"



BE A ROCK

Peter's history as a follower or friend of Jesus is a bit spotty. It might be natural to wonder if Jesus, in giving him the keys to the kingdom, didn't feel a bit like a parent giving a teenager the keys to the family car. But it was at the moment when God's power and presence broke through everything else to raise up Peter's great profession of faith in Christ as Messiah that Jesus chose to establish the bond between the loving, forgiving mercy of heaven and our vocation to be witnesses of that love, mercy, and forgiveness on earth.

Like any parent, Jesus no doubt foresaw the failings, the irresponsible maneuvers or impaired senses, the collisions that the church would be headed for. But, most importantly, he also saw us at that moment as God prefers to see us: capable of manifesting great faith, with a willingness to remain at the feet of Christ to understand what it truly means to be Messiah and Christ. As the letter to the Romans points out to us today, we have not known the mind or the wisdom of God, but God knows us and still chooses to manifest the reign of justice, joy, beauty, and peace through us. Let this be our vocation. Let us always strive to be solid ground on which the church of Jesus Christ can be founded and on which it can continue to be built.

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Today' s Good News ~Living with Christ

"In every place your faith in God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything" (1Thessalonians 1:8). This morning I went to Mass in a nearby convent chapel. The Dominican priest preached eloquently and clearly. The sisters, mostly young, chanted behind us, their rosary beads clattering each time they stood up and sat back down. We were young and old in the congregation, alone and with families. Some joined in the singing and prayer strongly, and others softly, still others softer yet—in their hearts. So long ago the word was spoken, then shared, sounding forth thanks to apostles and disciples: chanted, painted, sculpted, taught, whispered, preached, lived, died for. And here we are. Thanks to going forth, here we are. Lord, that you for faithful, joyful witnesses. May I be one of them. **Amy Welborn**

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Monday: St. Augustine

Tuesday: The Passion of St. John the Baptist

Friday: World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation;
First Friday

Saturday: Blessed Virgin Mary; First Saturday

World Peace Day

September 2, 2017 - Parish Treasure Hunt
September 10, 2017 - World Peace Day (Health Cabinet)
September 18, 2017 - Ministry Calendaring Meeting
September 24, 2017 - All Family Faith Day
October 1, 2017 - SVDP Jambalaya Dinner
October 7, 2017 - Proclaimer's Workshop
October 14, 2017 - Old School Dance

Bulletins / Announcements

Please remember to submit all information for the Bulletin and/or Sunday Announcements **no later than Tuesday before 10:00 am/inserts before 4:00 p.m.** Thank you.

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Scripture Study

Come and join Scripture Study every Thursday evening with Sr. Amora at 7:00 pm in Mother Lydia's Chapel. For more information call Gillian Small at (510) 501-9726 or ggms@att.net

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** _____

_____
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Faith Formation

Nea on-nin no sua a, ohu

"one who does not know can know from learning"

Knowledge / life-long learning

Faith Formation for Families and Students

Faith Formation at St. Columba is a generation-integrated, family-based process for raising our children in the faith of our ancestors. There are three parts to Faith Formation (Religious Education): (1) Children's Liturgy of the Word (2) All-Family Faith Days and (3) Sacramental Preparation classes. Together all of these are necessary for the whole of helping our children grow in their faith.

Registration for all the parts of Faith Formation, including Youth Group, Confirmation and First Communion, is taking place now. **The last day to register is Sept 1st.** Our goal is to get all our young people registered and participating in the activities of "growing in faith," that is, deepening their relationship with Jesus.

If your children have not received any of the sacraments, if they have not attended any regular religious education classes, you should seriously consider enrolling them in our Faith Formation activities. We do not have weekly classes; we do not have drop-off Saturday classes; we do not have exams to measure their knowledge. What ***we do have*** *are regular opportunities to grow in knowing Jesus, in understanding the treasure of our faith, through the gathering of families, through the weekly readings for children (Children's Liturgy of the Word) and through St Columba-based activity booklets and resources. We ask parents to be involved also. Since everything is on Sundays it makes it very do-able for families.*

If you have questions about First Reconciliation, First Communion or Baptism, contact Margaret Roncalli at stcolumbafaithformation@gmail.com. For questions about Confirmation and teen activities contact Maurice Harper: mhj663673@gmail.com.

RCIA is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

You, too, are invited… Are you seeking Baptism? Or wanting to become Catholic? Are you a Catholic adult seeking to complete Confirmation? Or wonder about what the Catholic Church stands for? Contact Margaret Roncalli at stcolumbafaithformation @gmail.com.

Sacraments of Initiation*: Baptism-Confirmation-Eucharist— these three are all part of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. "In the sacraments of Christian initiation we are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. We receive the Spirit of filial adoption and we are part of the entire people of God in the celebration of the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection.* —from RCIA #1

Please pray for our catechumen David Nguyen who prepares for baptism and Easter sacraments next year. And please keep our inquirer, Bobby Coleman, in prayer as well.

Reflecting on the Word

From today's Gospel reading: [Jesus said to Peter] "And I say to you, you are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld will not prevail against it."

Reflection: How can we live the life Jesus invites us to — the life of a disciple?
It requires what Jesus congratulated Peter for, and what Jesus would build up in us, a "rock-like faith." It is a faith that we have as a gift from Christ and it will not succumb to the "gates of the netherworld," evil will not overcome us.

So we ask ourselves: As a Christian, what is the most powerful force against your faith you confront on a regular basis?
What aspects of your faith help you in your struggle to stay faithful?

Fr Jude Siciliano, OP

KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

EBAN *"fence"* symbol of love, safety and security

Attention Ministry and Committee Heads!

There are requirements for you in relation to our Safe Environment project: listing all your members and making sure they are trained.
Every year each committee/ministry must submit to the parish office a complete list of members, including any new members. This gives the Safe Environment Site Coordinator (Margaret Roncalli) the data for screening all parish ministry/committee participants through the Megan's Law website (a national requirement). All information is kept confidential.

What's needed:

- List of members with this information (name, address, zip, phone, email)
- Each member completing a Safe Environment workshop on-line (by October 31) or at onsite workshop.

By when:
list by **September 15** (in and Excel format to be sent to all ministry and committee chairs by email)

What's New? On-line registration is now the way to be certified and receive your completion certificate. So whether you attend a workshop at St Columba or elsewhere, or do the training online you must go to Virtus to register.

Safe Environment Workshop requirements

This is the year St Columba as a whole parish will undergo ***retraining to certify everyone*** in a ministry or on a committee. **Each committee chair or ministry head** is asked to (1) update the membership roster, and (2) ensure that each one has completed the workshop.

So much of this can now be done online, visiting Virtus at http://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/ and registering. In the upper left corner of the page is the place to sign in (as registered user) or to sign up as a first-time registrant.
As soon as we have a schedule you will be informed of the onsite workshops being offered as the alternative to completing online. There are other parishes offering on-site classes:
Protecting God's Children for Adults at:
Our Lady of Lourdes (Oakland); Thu, Sept 7, 7PM, (2 hrs);
St. Theresa (Oakland), Wed, Sept13, 6:30 PM (2 hrs);
St. Felicitas (San Leandro), Thu, Oct 19, 7PM.

These locations recommend no children attend. To register go online to http://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/.

Everyone must complete Safe Environment training by October 31.

St. Columba Gifts of Treasure Update

WHO AND WHOSE WE ARE!

Monthly Goal	**$30,000.00**
Weekly Goal	**$7,500.00**

07/16/2017	$5,097.82
07/23/2017	$5,439.55
07/30/2017	$6,687.07
St. Vincent de Paul 07/30/2017	$1,003.93
08/06/2017	$5,466.65
08/13/2017	$7,400.56
08/20/2017	$6,590.66

August 27, 2017

Mass Intentions for the week

Saturday	**4:00 AM**	Elvira Dureza
Sunday	**8:00 AM**	Ramona Houston-Graves
Sunday	**10:30 AM**	Lance Brown
Sunday	**10:30 AM**	Ken Silva
Sunday	**10:30 AM**	Armetta Whitmore

ONLY ONE

God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.
--St. Augustine

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

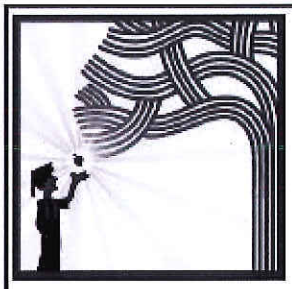
If you have a request for the prayer list below, need to update a request or remove a request, please contact: Parish Office: 510-654-7600 stcolumba1898@gmail.com

God lay Your healing hands on all who are sick, and have compassion on all who are suffering, so they may be delivered from all painful situations in their lives

Perry Amos, Jr., Gwendolyn Anderson, Mario Augabella, Tomas Bachicha, Ernest Barden, Dolores Barial, Melanie Baymon, Grace Bentley, Edna Boatwright, Nicolas Bosworth, Thomas Boutte, Gerri C. Brandt, Rose Brooks, Tanya Bursey, Varitia Castro, Lucille Cole, Marty Cole, Donald Coleman, Jr., Elwood Cox, Eugene Craft, Emily Cry, Stephen Davenport, Dale Davis, Richard Dewath, Darrell Dillard, Eli Dina, Margaret Dorsey, Gloria Doyle, Gloria Jean Ducksworth, Juanita Estrellas, Christian Ewing, Keona Folsom, Velma Fowler, Lynda Grasser, Maud Green, Carolyn (Tont) Greenidge, Daniel Curtis Hart, Robert Heard, Joyce Herbert, Ramona Hill, Kenyatta Jackson, Rosa James, Theresa Jeffrey-Clark, Ken Jelie, Fernando Jening, Betty Johnson, Michele Johnson, Jackie Jones, Michelle Thomas Jones, Charlotte Sophia Kelly, Frank Knight, Helen Koci, Vaniel Landrio, Jr., LaeCharles T. Lawrence, Sr., Judy Leaks, Arthur Levine, Margaret Lewis, Michel Magana, Mary Maluccio-Hobbs, Herman Marigny, Gergie Martin, Gloria Martin, Sherry McCowan, Maureen McCracken, Fatima McCray, Valerian Millet, Charlyne (Teenie) Monroe, Donya Monroe, Mary Ellen Morgan, Alvin Muldrow, Son Nguyen, Cheryl Olivier, Patricia Payne, Clark Pittman, Violet Pittman, Lessie Prejean, Edward Redd, Frances Redd, Lexington Reyes, Nicholas Reyes, Joel Rivera, Gary Rohweder, Kenneth Roussell, Eunice Royal, Betsy Sahlman, Addie Sample, Connie Sanderfeur, Joyce Scotlan, Laura Scotlan, Alexis Sims, Carla Dillard Smith, Sr.,Greta, Sr. Claire of Assisi, Catherine Steadman, Eddie Thomas, John Tully, Stanley Webster, Henry Wellington, Jr., Kennrick Wharff, Kenneth Wilkins, Eloise Williams, Yvette Valencia-William, Sally Williams, Shirley "Mimi" Winn, Debbie Wood, Ha'vy Woodard, Phyllis Adel Woodward

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

Eucharistic Prayer II is a popular choice for Mass since it is both simple in structure and short. It is written with a preface, which is the section after the dialogue "The Lord be with you . . . Lift up your hearts . . . Let us give thanks," which introduces all the Eucharistic Prayers. The preface states the reason for the eucharistic assembly on that occasion, and there are dozens of them covering almost every imaginable gathering for prayer, some specific to feasts, others for Masses for the dead or for other needs. The preface attached to the second Eucharistic Prayer may be dropped in favor of a more appropriate choice, especially one of the prefaces for weekdays. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal says that Eucharistic Prayer II is best suited for weekdays or "special circumstances." In practice, however, it has become the common Sunday prayer because of its brevity and its comfortable familiarity. It also includes an optional phrase for adding the name of a deceased person remembered in the Mass, and therefore is often prayed at funerals. Article 50 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy specified that the rites are to be simplified and restored "to the vigor they had in the tradition of the Fathers." The rebirth of this ancient Roman prayer is a worthy response to this call.
--Rev. James Field, Copyright (c) J. S. Paluch Co.



THE GRADUATION ADVOCATE

A publication of Oakland Serves

MENTORS NOW WANTED AT SKYLINE

This fall Skyline High School will begin our pilot program using mentors provided by Oakland serves. As past readers know, ours is a program designed exclusively for students identified by teachers and administrators as at risk of dropping out, and we have been working a long time to find a school willing to give it a test. Now we have that school. Skyline will introduce the program in the Pathway of courses devoted to Community Health and Education, under the direction of James Barbuto. Mr. Barbuto and other Skyline teachers and administrators will select students who clearly need such a program, and ask then to sign on. Oakland Serves will provide trained mentors, work with the school to determine matches (mentor to mentee) and help coordinate the program. Records will be kept and improvements made.

MENTORS FOR MCCLYMONDS HIGH SCHOOL

Oakland Serves is also meeting with key leaders at McClymonds who are interested in our program. These discussions are just beginning, but it does seem possible we will be able to begin a second pilot at this school as well. If that comes to pass, we will definitely need a larger corps of trained mentors.

MENTORS FOR OAKLAND

Our pilots are intended to be test for the future. We believe Oakland owes all its students the best possible education, and that the citizens of Oakland have a vital role to play in helping teachers and administrators to achieve that goal. We think it is good to complain when this is not done, but even better to find a way to help make the change that is needed. Oakland Serves works for the day when all the children who enter the Oakland Unified School District receive what they need to stay in the system and earn their high school diplomas, well prepared to take the next step to college or career.

We know that mentoring works and are ready to offer it to those who may among the hardest to reach; students who have been identified a likely to drop out of school. It will give these students help with their homework, personal encouragement, job internships with pay, the chance to set up a college trust fund, and motivational seminars. This is a program that tells students in need that their community cares about them, values them, and will help them turn their lives around.

All these pieces are important, but none more so than steadfast mentoring. The scholarly literature is in full accord with this (see the "Library" page on our website, (www.oaklandserves.org). Mentoring can help get the homework done, teach habits of good performance, and build self-esteem. On site mentoring, done one-on-one, has special advantages: Mentors can work with teachers and counselors to get help for issues beyond their own capacities. Students receiving individual mentoring will not be surrounded either by others who constantly outshine them in performance or who are also in academic trouble. They are valued for themselves alone.

To do this job wee, Oakland Serves needs to build the best possible corps of qualified mentors for this special challenge., This issue of The Graduation Advocate invites every one of its readers to help us do that.

Is this article calling out/speaking to you? Do you have that special talent? Can you become a mentor for students needing a mentor?

St. Paul of the Shipwreck Catholic Church Invites You To

Women of the Bible

Women in the Hebrew Scriptures Tell Their Stories

Artwork of "Deborah Under the Palm Tree" by Adriene Cruz

A two-day Bible Study Retreat for men and women presented by "Sister" Toinette Eugene, PhD

Friday	6 pm	Registration and Refreshments
September 15	7-9 pm	Welcome and Session 1 – Eve
Saturday	9 am	Gathering
September 16	9:30 am	Session 2 – Sarai and Hagar
	11:15 am	Session 3 – Deborah and Jael
	12:45 pm	Lunch
	1:15 pm	Session 4 – Ruth and Naomi
	3:00 pm	Session 5 – Hannah
	4:30 pm	Wrap-up
	5:00 pm	Closing Ritual and Blessing

Photo by Debra Greenblat

Toinette M. Eugene PhD

Dr. "Sister" Toinette Eugene has been a longtime friend and supporter of St. Paul of the Shipwreck Parish in San Francisco. She is a theological ethicist who is well known both locally and nationally for her academic expertise, publications, and presentations in the areas of Black Catholic Theology, social spirituality, and for her leadership in responding to issues of cultural diversity, and sexual and domestic violence. Dr. Eugene holds a PhD in Religion and Society, and an MA in Theology and Education earned at the Graduate Theological Union and at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California. Her BA degree is in English Literature from the University of San Francisco.

Cost is $30 per person and includes refreshments on Friday evening, lunch on Saturday, and course materials

Pre-registration required at www.stpaulofthesshipwreck.org/registration.html

Payment by check or cash due in Shipwreck office no later than September 11, 2017

For directions and parking visit www.stpaulofthesshipwreck.org/contact.html

St. Paul of the Shipwreck • 1122 Jamestown Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94124 • 415-468-3434

Rev. Daniel Carter, Pastor • Rev. Mr. Larry Chatmon, Deacon • Rev. Mr. Sergio Gomez, Deacon

Save The Date
Multicultural Wellness Walk
Redwood Regional Park

Saturday, September 23, 2017
Location: Redwood Regional Park
7867 Redwood Road
Oakland, CA 94619
Time: 9:00am - 1:00pm

Register Online

https://multiculturalwellnesswalk.eventbrite.com

Or Contact

Ali Haynes, ahaynes@ebparks.org, 510-544-2200
or Deanna Yee, dyee@samuelmerritt.edu, 510-869-8229

East Bay Regional Park District
www.ebparks.org

Regional Parks Foundation

thrive KAISER PERMANENTE

SAMUEL MERRITT UNIVERSITY
ETHNIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

2017 St. Columba Walking Wellness Campaign in Collaboration with Samuel Merritt University Ethnic Health Institute will run from September 1, to October 31, 2017

Watch for Walking Wellness Campaign Posters around the Parish soon.

All are welcome to sign up with Elizabeth Mack 707.554.2858 or maxlo34@sbcglobal.net. Participants will have the opportunity to win walking wellness cash incentives for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place to the Church that walks the most average miles together. Participants will also receive several other resources that promote walking. St. Columba is a walking and hiking Church, we will pool our miles together and win this Challenge.

Many Thanks to our Backpack Drive benefactors from St Vincent de Paul Conference!

Because of your generosity, we were able to accommodate 35 school children last week with backpacks filled with school supplies and little surprises inside. This week, we will be able to donate the balance of supplies to families who missed the distribution last week.

Again, we thank you for your support to St Vincent de Paul projects that benefit those in need in our community.

Gratefully,

St Vincent de Paul Conference

St Columba Catholic Church

Not a Novelty

The Eastern Orthodox Case for Deaconesses

By Carrie Frederick Frost

May 18, 2017

Publia (Poplia) the Confessor and Deaconess of Antioch (Menologion of Basil II)

I watched with interest in August 2016 when Pope Francis made good on his promise to convene a commission to study the female diaconate. I was especially attentive to this development because I am a supporter of the renewal of the order of deaconesses in my own church—the Orthodox Church. Later last year I was astonished when one of the self-governing churches of the Orthodox world, Alexandria, decided to revive the female diaconate in Africa and proceeded to consecrate five women as deaconesses this past February. These moves by the Synod of Alexandria surprised those of us in the United States working on this issue—we did not know the female diaconate was even under consideration by the African church. Rarely does anything happen this fast in the Orthodox world.

That we were unaware of support for the female diaconate in Africa is evidence of two Orthodox realities. First, our church is fragmented: we do not yet have established international mechanisms for theologians and historians, or even hierarchs, to communicate with one another. Second, the autocephalous Orthodox churches throughout the world are self-governing, which means that any one of them could decide to revive the female diaconate tomorrow and ordain a deaconess the next day.

As my Catholic sisters and brothers await the report from Pope Francis's commission, we in the Orthodox Church are waiting to learn more about the ministry of the new deaconesses in Africa. The Synod of Alexandria has not yet published an official description of their duties, but it has informally suggested that these women will assist with missionary work, such as catechism and baptism, as well as conducting services in mission parishes that have no regular priest. We are also waiting to see if another Orthodox church will follow in Alexandria's footsteps, and to find out what the female diaconate will look like in other parts of the world.

We know at least one thing already: it will not be a novelty. There is ample evidence of a female diaconate through the twelfth century in the Orthodox Church—a fact of great importance in a tradition that zealously values precedent. From the third century on, there are several extant texts that include or mention ordination rites for deaconesses. From these texts, we know that deaconesses were ordained at the altar during the Divine Liturgy, that they received the Eucharist with the other ordained orders and had an *orarion* (deacon's stole) placed over their necks, and that their bishop laid hands on them.

There are also ample records of women who were deaconesses in the Christian East, starting with Paul's esteemed benefactor Saint Phoebe in the middle of the first century. (Though the term Saint Paul uses to describe her is somewhat ambiguous, the Orthodox Church has long presented Phoebe as a deaconess in its prayers, hymns, and iconography, which often shows her holding a diaconal censor.) We still have detailed records of some of these women: Saint Olympias, the friend and confidant of Saint John Chrysostom; Saint Nonna, the mother of Saint Gregory the Theologian; Saint Irene of Chrysovalantou, an abbess of the ninth century. At the height of the Byzantine Empire, one could find deaconesses in many places, including Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Thessalonica.

The precise historical roles and responsibilities of deaconesses are less clear. The language of a surviving eighth-century ordination rite is broad: "Bestow the grace of your Holy Spirit also upon this your servant who desires to offer herself to you and fill her with the grace of the diaconate just as you gave the grace of your diaconate to Phoebe whom you called to the work of ministry." Deaconesses were said

FIRST ARCHERY LESSON

a February rain
has soaked the grass
and the hay bales
no one shooting but me
as my teacher watches
I fumble with the arrow
and drop it
but when I reset it
and shoot it hits straight
on to the bullseye
and I fumble again
with the second
and again it falls
on the wet grass
but when I try again
it splits the first
right in the center
of the bullseye
my teacher shrugs
doesn't smile
says I do it all the time
but for me
forever after
never again

—Ellen Cooney

Ellen Cooney was born in 1948 and grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, and Montclair, New Jersey. She lives in San Francisco, California, and has written ten volumes of poetry published by Doir Press.

to serve their bishops by being available for "many things," as noted in the third-century Christian treatise, the *Didascalia apostolorum*. Surviving lists of their duties include: assisting with female baptism; administrative work, such as management of church properties; processing and chanting during liturgy; and many ministries to other women, such as catechetical instruction, spiritual advising, charitable care of widows, ministry to the ill, and bearing the Eucharist to the homebound. The job description of deaconesses changed according to time and place, adapting to new needs. But then, so did the job descriptions of deacons, priests, and bishops.

The big question about the female diaconate in the Christian East is why it diminished so rapidly in the late Byzantine era. Was it monastic influence? During this period, liturgical rites that included rubrics for deaconesses were replaced with rites from male monasteries that lacked such rubrics. Was it geopolitical forces? There was enormous pressure from the Crusades and the Ottoman Turks, and this destabilized the church, perhaps in ways that undermined the female diaconate. Was it a revival of Christian concern with Mosaic law—but only as it applied to women? During this era menstruation and childbirth were linked to impurity for the first time in the Christian East. Whatever the reasons for the decline of the order, no decree or canon law ever prohibited it.

Just as there is ample historical evidence of the female diaconate, so there are also plentiful and authoritative calls for the renewal of the female diaconate in recent Orthodox history. The Russian Church was poised to renew the female diaconate on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution. Multiple pan-Orthodox consultations have formally called for the female diaconate to be revived, including one in Rhodes in 1988 that was convened by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. In 2004, the Church of Greece decided to "bless" (rather than ordain) deaconesses, and has since blessed a few nuns. In the past decade or two, several Orthodox organizations advocating for deaconesses have sprung up: Saint Catherine's Vision, Orthodox Deacons, and Saint Phoebe Center for the Deaconess (of which I am a board member). Prominent historians and theologians continue to urge the Orthodox Church to consider the revival of the female diaconate—including perhaps the most influential living Orthodox theologian, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware.

At the same time, there has been an upsurge in ordinations of male deacons, as the Orthodox Church has discovered more ways to make use of the diaconate. This follows centuries of decline. In the Christian East, the role of the deacon had withered over time till deacons were little more than liturgical assistants. This decline may have been the result of the disentanglement of church and state in many parts of the Orthodox world. When church and state overlapped, deacons often worked as administrators. As soon as the state had its own non-ecclesial administrators, deacons suddenly had less to do. Now, however, the male diaconate is again being remembered as a boon to parish life and a ministry unto itself, rather than just a procedural stage on the path to priesthood. This is why several North American Orthodox seminaries have established diaconal training programs.

Deaconesses would also be a boon to parish life. Even in twenty-first-century America, a woman can often go where men are either not as welcome or not as comfortable. Deaconesses could minister to other women in cases of miscarriage, infertility, sexual and domestic abuse, for example. An order of deaconesses would also help the Orthodox Church recognize and make use of women's gifts. Today, Orthodox

women are lawyers, artists, theologians, chaplains, doctors, real-estate agents, historians, educators, scientists, and so on. It is discouraging to see their gifts embraced and put to use in the world but not in the church. The Orthodox woman who works as a chaplain at my local jail ought to be able to bring Communion to Orthodox inmates. Imagine the inspiration of seeing her ordained at the altar so that she could do just that.

With so many calls for renewal of the female diaconate and so many needs that could be meet, why would anyone oppose it?

First, some claim that there is no longer any need for a female diaconate. In the early church, these opponents say, deaconesses anointed and baptized unclothed female converts, but today this function is all but obsolete since few adults enter the Orthodox Church. This objection simply overlooks the many other duties of the diaconate.

The second claim is that, if the Orthodox Church were to ordain women to the diaconate, this would inevitably lead to the ordination of women to the priesthood, which would in turn lead to a massive decline—just as, in this view, the ordination of women has led to the decline of the Anglican Church. This claim overlooks too many important differences between the culture and theology of the Orthodox Church and those of the Anglican Church. More fundamentally, it disregards Orthodoxy's robust understanding of the diaconate as something more than a way station to the priesthood. Nor is it clear that the Anglicans' difficulties can all be attributed to the ordination of women. That doesn't mean that Orthodox Christians should ignore the experience of other churches, but we must take into account the many relevant differences between our tradition and theirs.

The same critics assert that seeing deaconesses at the altar would have an unconscious effect on the faithful, leading to thoughtless support for female priests. There is no doubt that the effect of seeing women serve would indeed be powerful, but the critics underestimate the sophistication of the faithful. They forget that icons of deaconess saints, the celebration of their feast days, and the remembrance of their lives in hymns already surround the faithful, who have internalized this rich legacy. In fact, there is no movement in the Orthodox Church to ordain women to the priesthood, nor has there been anything like a sustained exploration of the matter; the theological spadework simply has not been done. There is plenty of precedent in the Orthodox Church for a female diaconate, none for a female priesthood. Nor is there any support for a female priesthood from the faithful or clergy. This means we ought to be able to discuss the female diaconate on its own merits without confusing the issue.

Finally, some critics worry that reviving the female diaconate—or even acknowledging its history—would erode the Orthodox Church's understanding of men and women as meaningfully different. Given the many ways in which the Orthodox Church's theology, homiletics, iconography, and hymnography support a vision of man and woman as equal but not equivalent, the ordination of deaconesses seems unlikely to compromise this vision. Not ordaining deaconesses may even undermine the Orthodox claim that men and women each have distinctive charisms. For to make this claim while ordaining only men to holy orders skews the entire church toward the masculine charisms. Ordaining deaconesses would allow the distinctive female charisms to benefit the whole church. Refusing to ordain them, lest this be misunderstood as a capitulation to secular trends, sends the wrong message, a message of fear rather than faithfulness.

What would a female diaconate look like today? It would revive the historical roles of deaconesses that are still relevant while also adapting to the church's current needs, as is happening at this very moment in Africa. My ideal vision of the female diaconate in our own time and place would involve allegiance to a bishop, formal ordination, and commitment to *diakonia*—some type of ministerial service, as a chaplain, parish administrator, spiritual advisor, or pastor to women. Ideally, deaconesses would be paid for their services to the church, both to demonstrate that their work is valued and to prevent overwork. A deaconess ought to be vetted, educated, and trained by her bishop.

Then there are the questions of eligibility: How old do deaconesses need to be? Do they need to be married, or unmarried? Early canons stated that a deaconess must be at least sixty; canons from the fifth century lowered that age to forty. These canons are still on the books, but canon law in Orthodoxy is largely particular to time and place. Today it would make sense to make the minimum age for deaconesses the same as that for deacons: twenty-five. As for marital status, there is historical evidence of both celibate and *married* deaconesses. There were even cases of celibate married deaconesses, who were ordained to the diaconate when their husbands became bishops or monks. Today it would make sense to adopt the same discipline for deaconesses as for deacons: that they remain married if already married, and celibate if not.

A women's diaconate would demonstrate that there is a place in the Orthodox Church for women to serve in roles of leadership. Seeing deaconesses offer their gifts to the church, serve at the altar, preach, and be recompensed for their work would demonstrate that women's gifts really are as important as men's, in practice as well as in theory. Just as importantly, it would show that the Orthodox Church is more concerned with fidelity to its own traditions than with keeping up resistance to secular trends. In short, it would demonstrate confidence, not capitulation. ■

Carrie Frederick Frost *is a professor of theology at Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary, a mother of five, and a board member of Saint Phoebe Center for the Deaconess.*

DIOCESE OF OAKLAND
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNICATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 19, 2017

Bishop Michael Barber joins other faith leaders in responding to hate marches

Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ, is joining other local faith leaders in encouraging acts of kindness and peace in response to recent events, including the horrific tragedy that happened in Charlottesville, VA, Aug. 11-12. He has issued the following statement:

> Hatred has no place in the hearts and minds of Christians. Our love of Christ compels us to treat people of all races and nationalities as our brothers and sisters, with generous kindness and sincere love. I ask all Catholics in the Diocese of Oakland to join me in praying for those who have been harmed or threatened by the evil ideology of racism. May they be delivered from hatred by our unrelenting embrace of solidarity and unity, and may our children especially be healed from the violence and terrible words and images they have witnessed these days. May the Word of Life replace words of fear and intimidation.

The rector of the Cathedral of Christ the Light, Father Jay Matthews, will be Bishop Barber's official representative at an interfaith prayer service of peace, "Standing Together," to be held Aug. 26 at 4 p.m. at Temple Beth Abraham, 327 MacArthur Blvd. Bishop Barber joins Rabbi Mark Bloom in inviting the public to come together as a community of peace and love. For more information on the prayer service, please contact Rabbi Bloom at (510) 832-0936.

The Diocese of Oakland serves two counties in the East Bay region, Alameda and Contra Costa, and has 84 parishes, 16 pastoral centers, nine high schools, and 39 elementary and middle schools.

###

Addressing the Sin of Racism

The following is offered as a way to assist Priests and Deacons to address the recent events in Charlottesville, Virginia in particular and the sin of racism in general. The below is prepared as a resource for preparation of homilies for Mass or prayer vigils. They seek to keep in mind the readings for the 20th and 21st Sundays of this year as much as possible. However, the universal message of Christ's call for us to be one (John 17:21) *is the underlying theme, which allows the resources to be used at other times as well.*

The Problem

- Recent events in Charlottesville have caused many to realize the extent to which the sin of racism inflicts our nation. We witnessed this past week a vile replay of history at its worst. White Supremacism, Anti-Semitism, Neo-Nazism, Fascism, and Racism are evil and have no place in our nation, neighborhood, or heart.
- Racism persists in many hidden ways. However, the events in Charlottesville exposed how crude and blatant racism is. We must call out the sin of racism.
- Racism is real. Its effects are in each of us, in our Church, and in our nation. Racism and its most extreme expression in White Supremacism are toxic diseases that underlie countless forms of division, violence and hatred.
- [20th Sunday: Jesus points to this sin by using the thoughts of the people, who saw the Canaanites as their bitter enemy. But faith in Christ brings healing and mercy to all.]
- [21st Sunday: The sin of racism can be seen as one of the "gates of the netherworld," but the Church, founded on the rock, shall conquer the evils of this world.]
- Almost 40 years ago, the Bishops of the United States wrote a Pastoral Letter on Racism. Among the many things they discussed was the fact that "Racism is a sin: a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father."
- The fundamental problem is this: too often we are apt to group people as either "us" or "them." And when we see another as "one of them," we tend to act out of fear – a fear of the unfamiliar and a fear that they will somehow harm us. This is the root from which racism too easily springs.

The Answer

- The answer is Christ, who proclaimed the oneness of the human family.
- The answer is Christ, whose Church is a "house of prayer for all peoples" (Is. 56:7).
- The answer is Christ, who came to heal the divisions of sin and death.
- The answer is Christ, who commands us to do what is right and just (Is. 56:1).
- The answer is Christ, who prayed to his heavenly Father, "so that all may be one…" (John 17:21).

- The answer is Christ's Kingdom where there are no divisions; where there is no separating us from them, and where there is no fear of harm from "them."

What are we called to do?

- The answer is Christ, and Christ calls for our conversion. His first words in the Gospel are, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 4:17).
- The recent events, and indeed the events unfolding over the last few years, days and hours all point to the need that we, as a nation, as a people, have for conversion.
- Conversion requires prayerful self-reflection. As a nation, we need to self-reflect on what aspects of our communal and civil structures actually divide and separate us. How are they covertly racist? As a Church, we need to self-reflect on how we have been unwelcoming to the stranger, the person of a different race, or the immigrant. We need to self-reflect on how we have not challenged the sin of racism enough. More so, we must listen to persons of a different race and listen to the immigrant. And when we think we have listened, we must listen again. We must hear the story and begin to share the journey more deeply. Let us come together in the love of Christ to better know one another as sisters and brothers.
- *And in order for our nation and our church to be healed of the sin of racism, each one of us needs to reflect and be healed.* We may not think of ourselves as racist, or being prejudiced, or intolerant but is that entirely the case? Intolerance and bias can hide in our attitudes and arrogances. Where are the places in our own heart that might harbor hostility, concealed discrimination and prejudice?
- Conversion requires courageous and ongoing self-reflection, it requires each of us to examine our conscience humbly before Christ.
- We must be contemplative enough to allow the Lord to work in the depth of our heart on these issues.
- So each of us needs to ask questions such as:
    - How have I been silent on the events of the past weeks?
    - How have I been silent on racism?
    - How have I participated in words or actions that denigrate others?
    - What am I not seeing in myself, ignoring about myself that is contrary to love of neighbor, even those I do not know?
    - What fears do I knowingly or unknowingly hold about people that are different from me?
    - How do I consciously or unconsciously act on those fears? In my choices, my beliefs, my actions, my attitudes?
    - How have I failed to do what is right and just?
    - Have I failed to ask Christ to heal me of all prejudice?

General Intercessions

Presider: Having professed our faith, we now confess the need of our nation, the need in our neighborhoods, the need in our own hearts for mercy, forgiveness and healing.

1) We pray for our Church, that the Holy Spirit give us a fresh outpouring of His Gifts that we may stand up to protect our sisters and brothers threatened by the evil ideology of racism. We pray to the Lord…

2) We pray for our Government and its leaders, that they may have the strength and determination to reject all forms of racism, division and violence. We pray to the Lord…

3) We pray for all people of different races and of nationalities who know the pain of rejection, prejudice and discrimination. May they be delivered from hatred by our unrelenting embrace of solidarity and unity. We pray to the Lord…

4) We pray for those who harbor hate in their hearts, in their attitudes and in their actions. May the light of Christ cast out their aggression and fear. We pray to the Lord…

5) We pray that a spirit of nonviolence and calm may prevail in our cities and in our hearts. We pray to the Lord…

6) We pray for our children. May they be healed of the violence and terrible words they have heard these days. May the Word of life replace words of fear and intimidation. We pray to the Lord…

7) We pray for those injured in Charlottesville, may the healing hand of Christ renew their strength and deepen their peace. We pray to the Lord…

8) We pray for all those who have died throughout history at the hands of others driven by hatred and fear. We pray to the Lord…

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Ladies of St. Peter Claver: Dolores Hill
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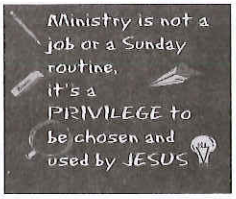

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

The Science of Mind is intensely practical because it teaches us how to use the Mind Principle for definite purposes, such as helping those who are sick, impoverished, or unhappy.
- Ernest Holmes

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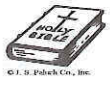
READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 1 Thes 1:1-5, 8b-10; Ps 149:1b-6a, 9b; Mt 23:13-22
Tuesday: 1 Thes 2:1-8; Ps 139:1-6; Mk 6:17-29
Wednesday: 1 Thes 2:9-13; Ps 139:7-12ab; Mt 23:27-32
Thursday: 1 Thes 3:7-13; Ps 90:3-5a, 12-14, 17; Mt 24:42-51
Friday: 1 Thes 4:1-8; Ps 97:1, 2b, 5-6, 10-12; Mt 25:1-13
Saturday: 1 Thes 4:9-11; Ps 98:1, 7-9; Mt 25:14-30
Sunday: Jer 20:7-9; Ps 63:2-6, 8-9; Rom 12:1-2; Mt 16:21-27



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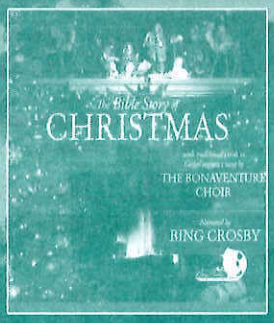

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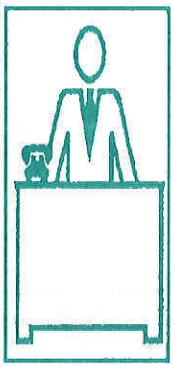

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