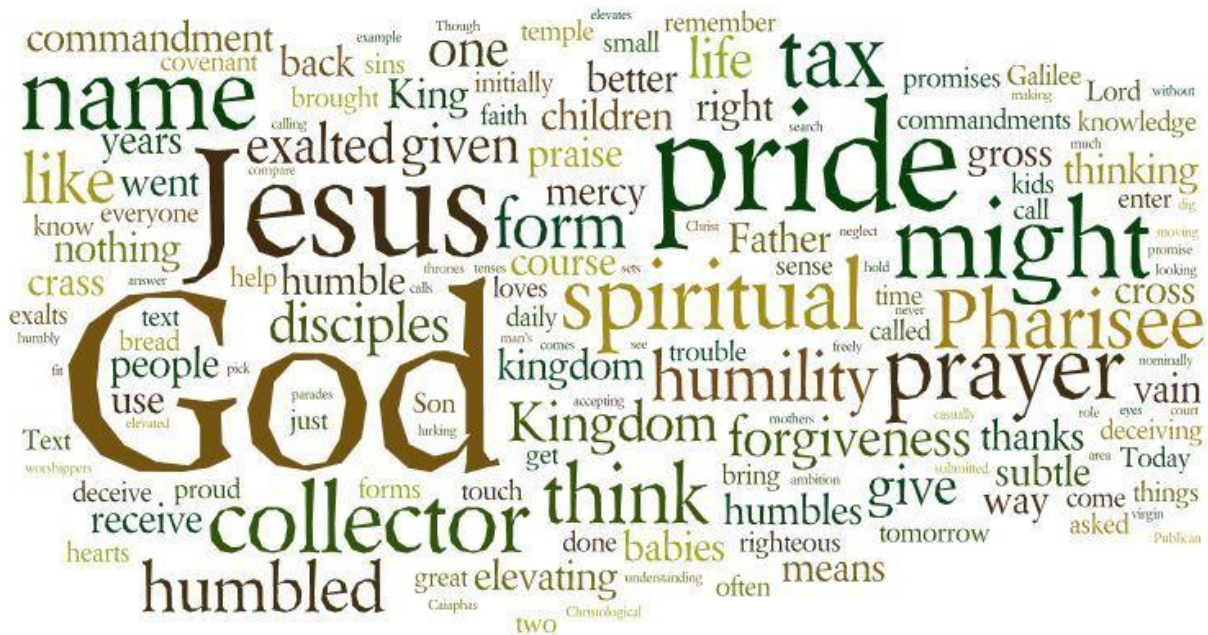


PASTOR'S MEANDERINGS

7 – 8 SEPTEMBER 2019

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY ORDINARY (C)



SUNDAY REFLECTION

God, to You I call.

Help me to find the words to pray and gather in my thanksgiving.

In me, there is darkness: in You is the light.

I am alone: but You never leave me.

I am fainthearted: but You are my help.

I am troubled: in You is my peace.

In me there is bitterness: in You there is patience.

I do not know the way: but You know the way in which You will guide me.

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

STEWARDSHIP: In the Gospel today, Jesus warns us not to give in to hopes of repayment, but to give openhandedly to the poor and needy. That sort of giving mirrors the bountiful giving of God, and Jesus assures us it is blessed indeed!

Henry D. Thoreau

“Humility like darkness reveals the heavenly lights.”

READINGS TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY

8 SEP '19

Wis. 9:13-18: God in wisdom made the earth and the heavens and all they contain.

Humankind cannot comprehend fully the mind of God or what is on earth.

Phlm. 99-10, 12-17: In this short letter, Paul appeals to Philemon to take back his runaway slave, not just as a slave but as a brother in Christ.

Lk. 14:25-33: Luke insists that the follower of Jesus must calculate all the costs and risks of discipleship. Taking up one's cross necessarily involves pain.

St. John of the Cross

"The children of Israel did not find in the manna all the sweetness and strength they might have found in it; not because the manna did not contain them, but because they longed for other meat."

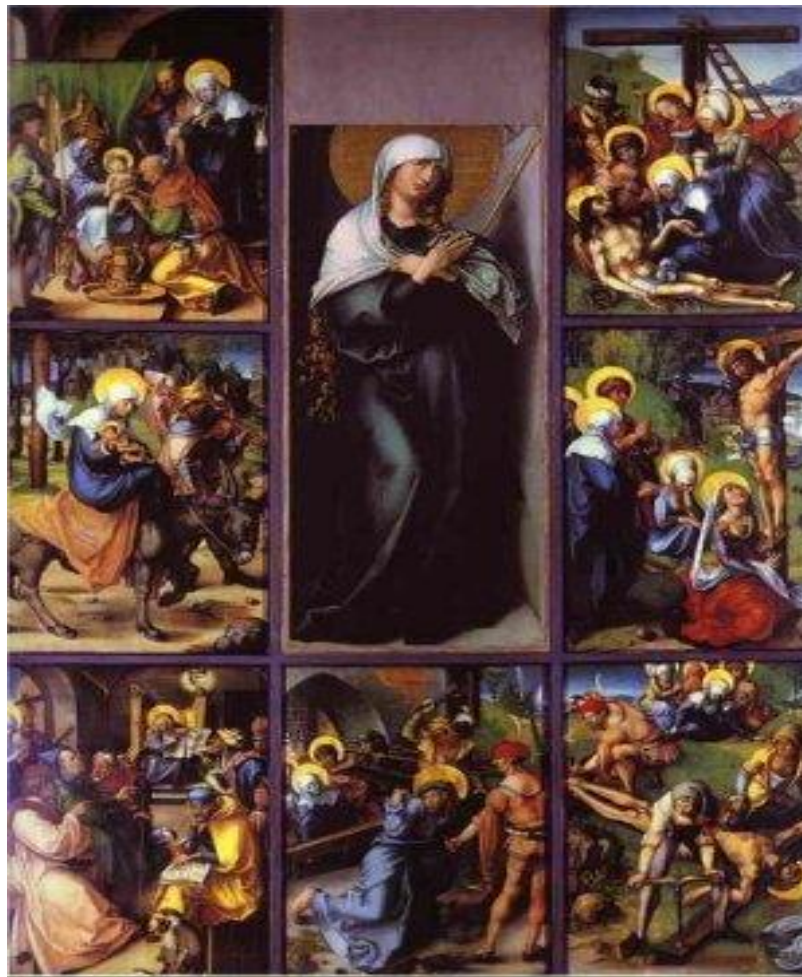
PAPAL INTENTION FOR SEPTEMBER

The Protection of the Oceans. That politicians, scientists and economists work together to protect the world's seas and oceans.

MONTHLY THEME FOR SEPTEMBER

September is dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows

"Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." Luke 2:34-35



The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, shown below, is the earliest known altarpiece by Albrecht Dürer. The central panel depicts the sorrowful Mother after the Crucifixion. Around her are seven panels with detailing of the scenes from the life of Christ that make up the Seven Sorrows of Mary (from top left): The Circumcision and Prophecy of Simeon; the Flight into Egypt; Loss of Child Jesus for Three Days, Jesus on his Way to Calvary; the Crucifixion, Body of Christ and Lamentations; the Burial of Christ

Dürer highlights **Our Lady of Sorrows** intense sufferings in his astonishing altarpiece. As foretold by Simeon, she was pierced by the sword of sorrow as she stood at the foot of the Cross.

Each month of the liturgical year is devoted to a particular Catholic tradition, usually centered on a Feast during that month. As August is the Month of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, September follows as the Month of Our Lady of Sorrows.

We see this theme of joy followed by affliction mirrored in the liturgical calendar in two September Feasts – the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14 and the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows on September 15. Happy the heart of the blessed Virgin Mary! She, without dying, earned the treasure of martyrdom beneath the Cross of our Lord for her anguish. Dürer has forever memorialized this event.

The name of Our Lady of Sorrows centers on the extraordinary and bittersweet suffering the Blessed Mother experienced during Christ's Passion. As seen in the artwork above, her agony is composed of "The Seven Dolors," that pierced the Heart of Mary. Dürer's portrayal of each event encompasses the central figure of Christ's sorrowful Mother.

During this month of September, we are drawn into the spiritual martyrdom that the Blessed Mother experienced during the physical martyrdom of Jesus. The evils of sin are manifest but conquered through intense suffering. The Blessed Mother's tears of anguish reflect God's washing away of sin. If you haven't ever prayed the Seven Sorrows chaplet, you might want to consider exploring this devotion.

PRO-LIFE NOVENA

BEGINNING Friday, 30 August and ending Friday, 25 October

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Private adoration

6:30 p.m. -7:00 p.m. Novena prayer

NOVENA

Succinctly, a novena is a nine day period of private or public prayer to obtain special graces, to implore special favors, or make special petitions. (Novena is derived from the Latin *novem*, meaning nine.) As the definition suggests, the novena has always had more of a sense of urgency and neediness.

In our liturgical usage, the novena differs from an octave which has a more festive character, and either precedes or follows an important feast. For example, in our Church calendar we celebrate the Octave before Christmas, where the recitation of the "O" Antiphons during vespers help us prepare for the birth of our Savior, e.g. "O Sacred Lord" or "O Flower of Jesse's

stem.” We also celebrate the Octaves of Christmas and Easter, which include the feast days themselves and the seven days that follow, to highlight the joy of these mysteries.

The origin of the novena in our Church’s spiritual treasury is hard to pinpoint. The Old Testament does not indicate any nine-days celebration among the Jewish people. On the other hand, in the New Testament at the Ascension scene, our Lord gives the apostles the Great Commission, and then tells them to return to Jerusalem and to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. Acts of the Apostles recounts, “After that they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet near Jerusalem— a mere Sabbath’s journey away. Together they devoted themselves to constant prayer” (Acts 1:12,14). Nine days later, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles at Pentecost. Perhaps, this “nine-day period of prayer” of the apostles is the basis for the novena.

Long before Christianity, the ancient Romans celebrated nine days of prayers for various reasons. The author Livy recorded how nine days of prayers were celebrated at Mount Alban to avert some evil or wrath of the gods as predicted by the soothsayers. Similarly, nine days of prayers were offered when some “wonder” had been predicted. Families also held a nine-day mourning period upon the death of a loved one with a special feast after the burial on the ninth day. The Romans also celebrated the *parentalia novendialia*, a yearly novena (February 13-22) remembering all departed family members. Since novenas were already part of Roman culture, it is possible that Christianity “baptized” this pagan practice.

Whatever the exact origins may be, the early Christians did have a nine-day mourning period upon the death of a loved one. Eventually, a novena of Masses for the repose of the soul was offered. To this day, there is the *novendialia* or Pope’s Novena, observed upon the death of the Holy Father. Similarly, many parishes have novenas beginning on All Souls Day to pray for the faithful departed.

In the Middle Ages, particularly in Spain and France, novenas of prayers were offered nine days before Christmas, signifying the 9 months our Lord spent in the womb of our blessed Mother. These special novenas helped the faithful prepare for the festive, yet solemn, celebration of the birth of our Lord. Eventually, various novenas were composed to help the faithful prepare for a special feast or to invoke the aid of a saint for a particular reason. Some of the popular novenas still widely used in our Church include those of the Miraculous Medal, Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Joseph, and St. Jude, to name a few.

It is difficult to say why we do not find novenas as much a part of public worship now as before Vatican II. I remember asking this question to an elderly priest, who basically said that he remembered people who would skip Mass yet attend the weekly novena. As Catholics, the primary focus of our spirituality and public worship should be the Holy Eucharist and the Mass. With the advent of the liturgical renewal and the increased participation of the congregation at Mass, perhaps this is why novenas fell by the wayside.

Also, some people I think have hurt the cause of novenas because of superstition. In every parish I have been assigned, I have found copies of a St. Jude novena which basically states that if a person goes to Church for nine days and leaves a copy of the novena to St. Jude, then the prayer will be granted— sort of like a spiritual chain letter. This is dispensing machine Catholicism: just as a person puts the coin in the vending machine and presses the button to get the desired soda, here a person says the prayers, goes to church, and is supposedly guaranteed that the request will be granted. So much for God’s will. What is really sad these

days is that the person simply Xeroxes the letter; one would think they could at least hand-write it. Worse yet, I usually have to pick up these letters which are left all over the Church. Nevertheless, novenas still hold a legitimate place in our Catholic spirituality. The *Enchiridion of Indulgences* notes, "A partial indulgence is granted to the faithful, who devoutly take part in the pious exercise of a public novena before the feast of Christmas or Pentecost or the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary" (#34). Here the Church is again emphasizing that the novena is a pious, spiritual exercise to bolster the faith of the individual, and that the individual should be truly devout, always remembering the goodness of the Lord who answers all of our prayers according to His divine will.

REAL PRESENCE JESUS PRESENT IN THE EUCHARIST



Another important thing that we should understand about the Catholic Mass is that Jesus is present in the consecrated Eucharist. This is in accordance to the doctrine of transubstantiation which states that the bread and wine become Jesus at a certain point during the Mass. The bread and wine retain their appearance but are actually transformed into the body and blood of Christ.

The 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops asserted "that the liturgy must favor the sense of the sacred and make it shine forth. It must be permeated by the spirit of reverence, adoration, and the glory of God." To foster such a spirit, the Church has prescribed certain gestures and actions, especially toward the Blessed Sacrament.

The practice of genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament, whether enclosed in the tabernacle or exposed in a monstrance, is a beautiful sign of adoration. This physical act of genuflection symbolizes our heart bowing before the Lord who is substantially and really present in the Eucharist. St. Ambrose (d. 397) said, "The knee is made flexible by which the offense of the Lord is mitigated, wrath appeased, grace called forth," and Alcuin (d. 804) later added, "By such a posture of the body we show forth our humbleness of heart."

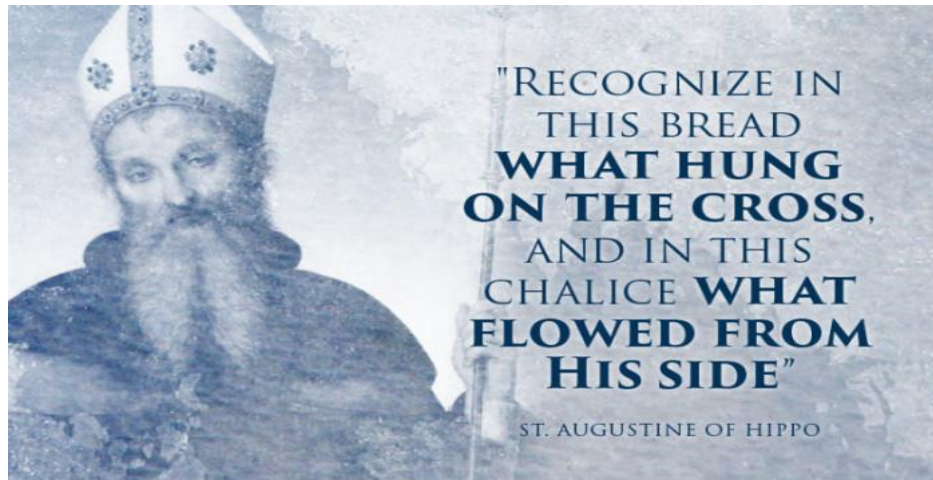
Following the same line of thought, kneeling also holds a special place in fostering a proper reverence. Going back to our Lord's time, the Jewish people often stood while praying; however, when the occasion was solemn, the petition urgent, or the prayer was offered with great fervor, then the person humbly knelt before his God to pray. For instance, when Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, the gospel reads, He "went down on His knees and prayed..." (Luke 22:41).

Concerning the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass, the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* stipulated that the congregation stand during the Eucharistic Prayer except for the consecration. As a matter of fact, the *General Instruction* only specified kneeling during the consecration (#21), which accounts for the observed difference in some other countries. However, the Holy See extended permission to local Bishops' Conferences to adapt gestures and postures to meet the sensibilities of their own people as long as the meaning and purpose of the part of the Mass were not diminished. Therefore, in 1969, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops decided to retain for parishes in America the practice of the congregation kneeling through the entire Eucharistic Prayer, after the recitation of the Sanctus until after the Amen. Moreover, we kneel after the Agnus Dei until the time to receive Holy Communion, and most people kneel out of reverence while they make an act of thanksgiving after receiving Holy Communion. To me, this practice of kneeling seems most appropriate during the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass, for "in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered Himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an un-bloody manner" (Council of Trent).

Concerning the reception of Holy Communion, the Sacred Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship in *Inaestimabile donum* (1980) permitted the faithful to receive Holy Communion either kneeling or standing according to the norms established by the local Bishops' Conference. In each diocese, kneeling or standing to receive Holy Communion is established by parish custom.

Some confusion arises concerning whether it is proper to genuflect before receiving Holy Communion. The Sacred Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship did state, "When the faithful communicate kneeling, no other sign of reverence towards the Blessed Sacrament is required, since kneeling is itself a sign of adoration. When they receive Communion standing, it is strongly recommended that, coming up in procession, they should make a sign of reverence before receiving the Sacrament. This should be done at the right time and place, so that the order of people going to and from Communion is not disrupted" (*General Instruction*, #11). This "strong recommendation" seems most appropriate for those places that do not kneel during Mass except for the consecration; in those cases, the faithful would practice a common gesture of genuflection or bowing. However, given that in the United States Catholics kneel during the entire Eucharistic Prayer and also after the Lamb of God until the time of receiving Holy Communion, this practice of genuflection or bowing has not been mandated.

These regulations help unify the worship of a congregation as well as foster in the individual both a proper reverence while participating at Mass and devotion toward the Blessed Sacrament. The *General Instruction* asserted, "A bodily posture common to all who are present is a sign of their unity with each other as a congregation; it expresses the mental attitude and dispositions of those taking part and enhances them" (#20).

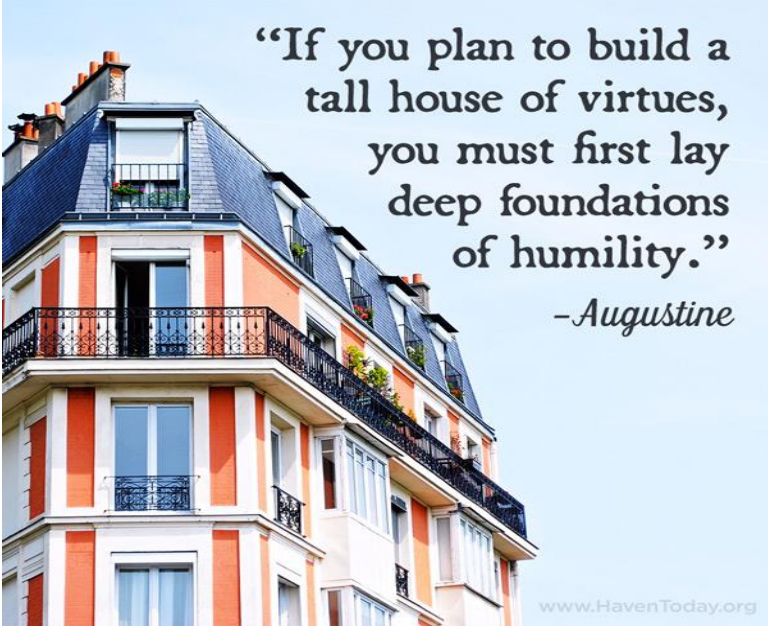


PASTOR'S UP-COMING SCHEDULE

- Saturday 31 Aug Funeral Mass for Jamie Kelly 11:00 a.m.
Vigil Mass of 22nd Sunday 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday 1 Sep Masses 22nd Sunday
7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. Brig 7:50 p.m.
- Monday 2 Sep Labor Day Office closed
Mass 8:30 a.m.
- Tuesday 3 Sep Mass 8:30 a.m.
St. Brides Correctional Facility Mass 5:30 p.m.
- Wednesday 4 Sep Mass 6:30 a.m.
Confessions 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.
Mass 8:30 a.m.
Amazing Grays' Mass 11:00 a.m.
Indian Creek Correctional Facility Mass 6:00 p.m.
- Thursday 5 Sep Mass 8:30 a.m.
Confessions 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.
Mass 6:30 p.m.
- Friday 6 Sep First Friday
Mass 8:30 a.m.
Adoration 5:00 p.m.
Benediction Pro-Life Novena sponsored by KoC 6:30 p.m.
Mass 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday 7 Sep Mass 8:30 a.m.
Confessions 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Vigil Mass 23rd Sunday 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday 8 Sep 23rd Sunday
Masses 7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. Brig 7:50 p.m.

FUTURE EVENTS

- Saturday 21st Sep Blessing of Animals in Honor of St. Francis 10:00 a.m.**



“If you plan to build a
tall house of virtues,
you must first lay
deep foundations
of humility.”

-Augustine

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