



A CATHOLIC MINISTRY
TO PRISONERS

Let's Talk!

A SERVICE OF PAULIST EVANGELIZATION MINISTRIES



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“Help one another. That is what Jesus teaches us.”

Pope Francis visited juvenile offenders aged 14 to 21 in Rome’s Casal del Marmo detention facility on Holy Thursday, March 28. He said Mass, during which he washed and kissed the feet of 12 young people confined there.

Humility and reverence. The foot-washing is a part of the Holy Thursday liturgy. What made this Mass so unique is that it was celebrated by the pope in a prison facility. Normally, the Mass would be said in a great Roman basilica and the pope would most often wash the feet of 12 priests. Pope Francis further broke convention when he washed the feet of two Muslims and two young women, one of whom is Muslim.

Foot-washing is an ancient tradition in Middle Eastern cultures. It was a common practice during Jesus’ time. At the Passover celebration, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-20). It is still practiced in the Middle East today, and is generally done by the lowliest person in the house-

hold. It is considered a great act of humility and reverence for the other.

Help one another. Pope Francis told the young people, “Help one another. This is what Jesus teaches us.”

He also left them with some simple words: “Go forward, alright? And do not let yourselves be robbed of hope, do not let yourselves be robbed of hope! Understood? Always have hope. Go forward!”

When a young man asked him why he came to them, Pope Francis said, “It . . . came from the heart. The matters of the heart do not have an explanation, they just come.”

In gratitude for the visit, the young people gave the pope a wooden cross and kneeler made by them in the facility workshop.



CNS photo/Enrique Garcia Medina, Reuters

A Church for the poor. On his upcoming trip to Brazil July 22-29 for World Youth Day, Pope Francis has another visit with prisoners planned. In keeping with the spirit of World Youth Day, he will meet with young prisoners

who will be brought to the archbishop’s residence for the visit. He will also visit the Rio de Janeiro shanty town of Mangueiras, home to about 35,000 people living in deep poverty.

Care for the poor, prisoners, and needy is becoming a hallmark of Pope Francis’ papacy. He is making it clear that this is a call to all in the Church, no matter who they are, where they are, or state of life.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Pope Francis spoke some special words to prisoners: “Help one another. That is what Jesus teaches us.” Pray about ways you can do this, especially during this time when you are in prison. Helping one another will make this Year of Faith a blessing for you and for others.

Each day of our lives is a new beginning, a new opportunity to say yes to Jesus. May you be aware that God is with you and may you say yes to him in what he asks of you.

Father Frank DeSiano, CSP
President
Paulist Evangelization Ministries

Praying the Mass, Part 2

The Mass Teaches Us to Pray

by Susan Timoney

If you are a lover of Scripture, you may know these words from the story in which the disciples ask the Lord to teach them how to pray (Luke 11). As you know, Jesus responds by teaching them the “Our Father.” It is the fundamental prayer of the Christian life, a prayer we pray at every Mass. It is not just the Our Father that teaches us how to pray. The whole Mass teaches us how to shape our personal daily prayer.

We begin at the end. The Mass is the most important action of the Catholic Church. We gather as God’s people to offer our prayer of thanksgiving and to receive Our Lord in the Eucharist—to receive Christ in order to become *christs*. How does that work exactly? How do we become *christs*? The first step to imagining ourselves as *christs* is to believe that because we are made in the image and likeness of God, we are made good. The natural and permanent reality of the human person is goodness.

Imagine the natural beauty of a newborn infant. We can’t help but smile when we see a baby because we recognize immediately the beauty and goodness of human life. What happens as we grow up is that we make choices and decisions that are bad, some are even sinful. We are good people who sometimes choose to do bad things. The great thinker, Saint Thomas Aquinas writes that sin is a *failure* to see the good or the right thing in a particular situation and a failure to do the right thing. What we do though never changes the goodness given to us by God when he made us in his image and likeness.

continued on page 2

CHURCH CALENDAR

JULY 2013

- 1 Bl. Junipero Serra, priest
- 3 **St. Thomas, apostle**
- 7 **Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 11 St. Benedict, abbot
- 14 **Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 15 St. Bonaventure, bishop and doctor
- 21 **Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 22 St. Mary Magdalene
- 24 **Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 25 **St. James, apostle**
- 26 St. Joachim and St. Anne, parents of Mary
- 28 **Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 29 St. Martha
- 31 St. Ignatius of Loyola, priest

AUGUST 2013

- 1 St. Alphonsus Liguori, bishop, doctor
- 4 **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 6 **The Transfiguration of the Lord**
- 8 St. Dominic, priest
- 9 St. Edith Stein, virgin, martyr
- 10 **St. Lawrence, deacon, martyr**
- 11 **Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 14 St. Maximilian Kolbe, priest, martyr
- 15 **Assumption of the Virgin Mary**
- 18 **Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 20 St. Bernard, abbot, doctor
- 21 St. Pius X, pope
- 22 Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 24 **St. Bartholomew, apostle**
- 25 **Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 27 St. Monica
- 28 St. Augustine, bishop, doctor
- 29 Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist

SEPTEMBER 2013

- 1 **Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 3 St. Gregory the Great, pope, doctor
- 8 **Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 9 St. Peter Claver, priest
- 13 St. John Chrysostom, bishop, doctor
- 14 **Triumph of the Cross**
- 15 **Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 16 St. Cornelius, pope, martyr and St. Cyprian, bishop, martyr
- 20 St. Andrew Kim Tae-gön, priest and martyr; St. Paul Chông Hasang, martyr; and companions, martyrs
- 21 **St. Matthew, apostle**
- 22 **Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 23 St. Pius of Pietrelcina, priest
- 27 St. Vincent de Paul, priest
- 29 **Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 30 St. Jerome, priest, doctor

Praying the Mass **The Mass Teaches Us to Pray**

continued from page 1

As Catholics, this is why we have the great gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, to restore us to a state of goodness, to remind us that sin is not what defines us. Rather, sin hides the real person, and it hides the person's goodness.

Praying through the

Day. The second step in becoming *christs* is to think about how we can share Christ with others throughout the day. At the end of Mass, the priest or deacon can choose one of four sets of final words. Two of the choices speak to this idea of bringing Christ to the world. The priest (or deacon) can announce "Go forth, the Mass is ended" or "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."

In both cases, "go" is not meant so much as a dismissal but rather a mission command. We are sent to share God's love with others in word and in deed. Prayer can be prayed both in words and through deeds. You may ask if you are really "qualified" to pray your way through the day, if your way of life is the best place to be a person and place of prayer. There are some obvious points in the day that it makes sense to pray.

At the start of the day. Your day ought to begin in prayer. Just as the Mass is a prayer of thanksgiving, your day can begin in thanksgiving to God for his care and protection and asking him to guide you through the day ahead.

Just as at Mass, we listen to God's Word in the readings, praying with Scripture is a good practice in personal prayer. Reading a small passage and asking God to show you how that passage makes sense in your life is a style of prayer.

Another way to pray is to use the structure of the Prayers of the Faithful in which we offer petitions to God. Each day, you can pray for the Church, for your families and those you love, for those you have hurt and harmed, for the needs of our local community and for the needs of your fellow prisoners.

Praying through the

Day. There are other obvious points in the day that it makes sense to pray. Meal time is one, remembering to give thanks to God for the gift

of food and the people who prepare it for you is another act of thanksgiving.

Another opportunity for prayer, one that we learn from St. Therese of Lisieux, is a prayer for living peacefully with others. Therese lived, enclosed in a monastery with the same group of women—all day, every day (does that sound familiar?). She found that one sister drove her crazy and she found herself thinking bad things about her and avoiding her.

St. Therese asked the Lord to help her with this and the Lord suggested she both pray for her and then look for opportunities to say one nice thing to her each day. St. Therese admitted on some days that this was really hard! We can pray for the people who drive us nuts and the people who wish to do us harm. This is not easy and takes practice. Jesus spoke about the reality that it is easy to pray for our friends, but to be like him—to be a *christ*—means learning to pray for our enemies as well.

Just as at Mass where we offer the gifts of bread and wine and an offering of money and ourselves as gift, our daily tasks can

continued on page 4



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Let's Talk!

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Prisoner Saints

Pope St. Sixtus II and Companions (d. 258) ✠ It was dangerous being a Christian in the early Church. You often paid for your faith with death. The Roman Emperor Valerian began persecuting Christians in 258 A.D., and Pope Sixtus II was among the first to be arrested, briefly imprisoned, and beheaded. If you listen carefully at Mass when the Roman Canon (First Eucharistic Prayer) is said, you will hear the name Sixtus, along with many of the other early martyrs who died for believing in Jesus and the truth he taught. Out of this bloodbath, the Church grew. How true it was then, as it still is, that "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church."

Feast Day: August 7

Pope Francis' Prayer Requests for July/August/September

JULY

General. *World Youth Day:* That World Youth Day in Brazil may encourage all young Christians to become disciples and missionaries of the Gospel.

Missionary. *Asia:* That throughout Asia doors may open to messengers of the Gospel.

AUGUST

General. *Parents and Teachers:* That parents and teachers may help the new generation to grow in upright conscience and life.

Missionary. *The Church in Africa:* That the local Church in Africa, faithfully proclaiming the Gospel, may promote peace and justice.

SEPTEMBER

General. *Value of Silence:* That people today, often overwhelmed by noise, may rediscover the value of silence and listen to the voice of God and their brothers and sisters.

Missionary. *Persecuted Christians:* That Christians suffering persecution in many parts of the world may by their witness be prophets of Christ's love.

Pope Francis invites all people to join him in praying for these intentions.

Blessed are those persecuted for righteousness...

by Deacon Dennis Dolan

Deacon Dolan was unable to complete an article for this issue. We think you will find this article helpful which as printed in Let's Talk in January 2007.

Peaches: Deke, how about those "persecuted for righteousness"? How can that be blessed or happy?

Me: OK. First, let's be clear that "righteousness" is justice. It is what God was after in the whole Old Testament. It's the message of the prophets—to act justly. Now, if you actually live the way of Jesus—and not just talk it to death!—you can expect to get some "push back" from what the Bible calls "the world." The system of the world based on injustice isn't going to welcome justice.

Peaches: So if you live the beatitudes, you're going to get persecuted because you're messing with the system. I just don't get why God would let that happen to someone trying to do the right thing.

Me: Well, because God made us all free. And even though the folks of the world choose to persecute, that persecution works to further destroy the system!

Persecution is actually how the gospel is spread. When you are persecuted for justice, there are always people who can see that. The lines are clearly drawn between good and evil at that point. Some in the crowd, who are watching but saying nothing, are being touched by the truth of the gospel.

Peaches: That's when you're really being Christ-like, huh?

Me: Absolutely. The more the gospel is "driven out," the more the evil of the system is exposed for driving the just person out. Then, the more the gospel takes root and spreads.

Peaches: Like the mustard plant in the parable?

Me: Yep. The more you cut it back the thicker it grows back in.

Peaches: So the "blessed" part is that you get your reward in heaven?

Me: Well, sure, that's true. However, you also get it even in the midst of the persecution as it's happening.

Peaches: How? Persecution doesn't sound like fun to me!

Me: No. It's not fun. But Jesus isn't promising fun. He's promising blessedness and happiness,

which refers to deep down contentment and joy that is always there even in that difficult situation of persecution.

Peaches: Once again, how do you figure that?

Me: True happiness and joy like the beatitudes mean we are rooted in our relationship with God which doesn't change. Would you believe me if I told you that the average person in the U.S. never had it so good as they do today?

Peaches: Yeah, sure, but there's an awful lot of complaining going on.

Me: Exactly, because having a lot of stuff and happiness are not the same thing.

Peaches: Yeah. That's true. I guess after a certain point after the basics are covered, money and possessions don't buy happiness.

Me: Right. And those persecuted for the sake of justice or righteousness are blessed because we humans need to have meaning in our lives more than we need our extra stuff. That's where happiness comes from! Doing justice connects us to God, one another, and the truth of human existence that we are all in this together!

Peaches: So the satisfying happiness comes from the practice of justice.

Me: Right and even persecution can't take happiness away from those who live justly. And power, fame, and fortune can't give us satisfying happiness even without persecution. It's just a trick of the devil!

Peaches: Yeah. You know, sometimes I watch the rich and famous on "Access Hollywood" or read "People Magazine." I always think that if they are so happy, why are they numbing up with drugs or alcohol? Why are they O.D.ing? Why can't they keep a marriage together? Why are they doing rehab? They've "got it all"! Shouldn't they be happy already with their fame and money?

Me: "By their fruits, you shall know them."

Peaches: Yeah, happy should look happy. And no one going into rehab is happy no matter what they got, I can guarantee you that!

Me: There it is. Who are you going to believe: the media or your own eyes?

Deacon Dennis Dolan is chaplain at York Correctional Institution, Niantic, Conn. and is a member of the Diaconal Mission Service Team of the Diocese of Norwich.

Temperance is keeping life in balance

God gives us many gifts for our pleasure. A sign of a mature person is knowing when we have done enough or have had enough of those gifts from God to satisfy us and not to harm us. These gifts can be abused when used in excess or lead us to miserly lives when underappreciated. Temperance is the virtue that helps us achieve balance in our lives so that we can be all that we are called to be. When we act childishly, we use the gifts wrongly.

Finding balance in life. God's gifts help us see his goodness and that they help make life pleasant and worth living. The good things include food, drink, music, sports, and intimacy in the proper context, among many things.

As an example, Catholicism, unlike some faiths, does not reject the use of alcohol or question pleasure. However, we need to avoid the extremes of excess and stinginess in using the gifts. Some people say there are no limits, thinking it is fine to live with no restrictions. This attitude of extreme excess is typified by the belief that "If it feels good, do it." The other extreme is that we should reject these good gifts and not use them to avoid the temptation of abusing them.

Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953), an English Catholic writer very popular for many years, summed up the Catholic perspective on the balance of temperance quite nicely: "Wherever the Catholic sun doth shine, There's always laughter and good red wine. At least I've always found it so. *Benedicamus Domino!*" Belloc is implying that God's gifts of food, drink, music, friendships, and others, bring pleasure to life.

The virtuous person seeks balance in the use of these gifts. Thus, we see temperance as good as we avoid the extremes. St. Paul, for example, tells Timothy to "Have a little wine for the sake of your stomach" (1 Timothy 5:23). At the same time, scripture says, "Do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery" (Ephesians 5:18). Balance is what we seek, which differs for each person.

True to ourselves and to others. So what is the problem if our lives are out of balance? We can look at two dimensions: first, what it does to us; second, what it does to our relationships.

In excess, many of the good things intended for blessing can *harm us*. Drinking to excess can result in unstable behavior and alcoholism. Smoking can lead to lung cancer. Eating too much can lead to obesity and many health issues. Improper sexual activity can lead to diseases and hurting other people.

Unbalanced lives can also *harm others*. We are called to live in relationship with others. This is in our families, with friends, in the larger community. When our lives are out of balance and we fail to practice temperance, we can use others for our pleasure. The extremes of excess and being miserly can damage relationships which should be the bedrock of our families. Drunkenness destroys families and friendships. Stinginess undermines love. Larger than life personalities overwhelm while shallow personalities fail to nourish and build. When we overwhelm or withhold in relationships, we can hurt

The Moral Virtues

- **Prudence** helps us decide in every situation which action is really the best for us and to decide to do that. Sometimes it may mean "tough love" is necessary!
- **Justice** is the virtue which leads us to be honest and true to God and neighbor and to give what is due to them.
- **Temperance** helps us be moderate with bodily pleasures so that we don't drink or eat too much, or too little for that matter.
- **Fortitude** (also called courage) helps us to overcome fear or indifference and do what is called for in any situation.

others, especially in our families, to whom we have a duty to give love and friendship.

Living temperately. As you choose to grow in virtue, keep this in mind. First, *examine your life* each day to see if you are balanced in the things that give sensual pleasure. Are you doing things that lead to poor health, hurt the ways you relate to others, or stand in the way of being what God is asking of you? Second, *seek the guidance* of a priest or trusted Christian to help you, especially when you have nagging questions about some situations. Third, *act* on what you see. Fourth, *review your actions* to see if the outcome seems wise. In all of this, don't immobilize yourself into inaction.

God gives us good gifts. Let us not abuse them. As we seek to follow Jesus and live the good life, we can enjoy these gifts if we do so in a balanced way.

~ Anthony Bosnick

The Mass Teaches Us to Pray *continued from page 1*

become gift as well. We can offer up our tasks, even those most boring. Making our work a prayer makes our work a gift to God. A simple prayer as we do our work turns work into sacrifice.

To do our chores and our work well, with a good attitude—conscious that we can do it for God—is a way of being *Christ*s. It reveals a respect for ourselves and a respect for those who depend on our doing a good job. As Christians, we believe that all workers, no matter what job they do, have dignity, not because of the work but because of who the person is.

The last word. Near the end of the day, it makes sense to recognize our failings and take advantage of the gift of God's forgiveness and mercy. If we are not ready to admit our wrongdoing or ready ourselves for God's mercy, we can pray to be led one step closer. We can end our day with this simple prayer: *Protect us Lord as we stay awake, watch over us as we sleep, that awake we may keep watch with Christ and asleep rest in his peace.*

Dr. Susan Timoney works with parishes in the Archdiocese of Washington to grow as communities of faith. She writes frequently on spiritual topics and leads retreats for lay people.

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