

For The Bulletin Of July 5, 2020



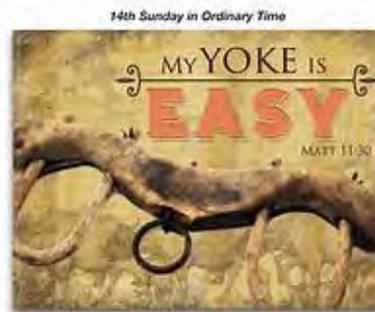
From Father Robert

As we journey with Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, we encounter Him teaching, preaching, praying, and praising. In today's gospel, He seems to do all at once. The passage opens with Jesus addressing God as "Father, Lord of heaven and earth." In some ways, this prefigures the language later creeds will use and that we proclaim in the Nicene Creed when we say "One God, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth." The phrase "heaven and earth" may also call to mind the opening verse of Genesis, though there the first term is plural: "heavens and earth." The phrase is used to mean all of creation. The Father is the Lord of all creation. It is His handiwork and there is nothing that stands apart from it that is not under His dominion.

The relationship between the Father and Son is intimate and dynamic. Jesus beckons the disciples into this relationship with the invitation "come to Me." The term "yoke" that follows would have brought up the image of Mosaic Law. Of course, a yoke is a type of wooden harness, bar, or frame used to keep oxen or cattle driving in the same direction, at the urging of a master. Wisdom is sometimes referred to as a yoke (Sirach 51:26), as is the law, but not in a negative way. In the New Testament (not only in Matthew but elsewhere), Jesus' ways are also referred to as a yoke.

Jesus tells His disciples that He Himself is the yoke, meek and humble of heart. The rest He promises comes from emulating His ways, His attitudes, His dispositions, and His general way of being in the world. The disciple is yoked to Jesus, and the disciple finds this to be a lightness in his or her way of being. The yoke is not burdening or overbearing.

When we are followers of Jesus, when we imbibe His attitudes, our lives will not be burdened but filled with joy, or as Pope Francis might refer to it, the joy of the gospel.



Living The Paschal Mystery

Bearing a yoke would not seem to be an enjoyable experience. But Jesus gives us this image in today's gospel reading and nearly subverts it. The yoke of Jesus, the One Who is meek and humble of heart, is itself easy; the burden is light. This seems to be a different image than "Take up your cross and follow Me." In today's gospel, we learn that when we are true disciples of Jesus, we conform to the person himself. So, conformed, we find any burden not to be a burden at all.

To live the paschal mystery with Jesus is to live with the knowledge that we are His. He has already won the victory. Secure in this relationship with Him, we need only act as He would in the world, as another Christ to serve the needs of those around us. Any setback or death we experience will find new life due to the same Lord we serve.

This is good news, and a spiritually rewarding way to live the paschal mystery.

As we continue in the School of Discipleship of Summer's Ordinary Time, the scriptures continue to raise questions for us on this journey:

The prophecy of Zechariah reminds us of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem: "See, your king shall come to you, a just savior is he, meek and riding on an ass." Where are you being called to follow the example of Jesus and humble yourself?

Today's psalm concludes, "The Lord lift up all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down." Within our world, who are the groups or individuals who are "bowed down"? How might He be calling us to care for them?

St. Paul reminds us that we are given life by "God's Spirit that dwells in you." Where have you noticed the Spirit working within you and leading you to greater life?

Jesus lifts up the "little ones" as a model for those who truly desire to understand the mystery of the kingdom of God. Who have been the "little ones" along your faith journey who have taught you the way of the kingdom?



June 26, 2020

**Notice During the Covid-19
Outbreak**

In solidarity, we at the Interfaith Peace Project stand together in these times of heart break and upset. Some of you may have lost friends or family members. Some of you may have lost your job and your income; some may be working overtime to help with the crisis. Some of you may be home and alone and some may be trying to figure out a new way to live. Please let us know how we can help. If you would like a phone appointment with any of us, give us a call. You may call or email Tom at:

Father Tom Bonacci
peace@thomaspbonacci.net
925-787- 9279



LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

by Thomas P. Bonacci, C.P.

There is a dispute about the disputes going on in the streets. Some think the protesters are too confrontational. Some think they need to learn patience and accept reality for what it is. Even high-powered politicians and governmental leaders have called the protesters "anarchists" and "thugs" out to destroy everything we hold dear. Others, myself included, think the protesters are the "cry of the poor and oppressed" demanding justice and fairness in our basic institutions. What are we to make of this situation? How might we be open and honest even in this time of uncertainty?

One thing governmental, political, civic, and religious leaders could do is foster an atmosphere of dialogue and honest engagement. All too often we "take sides" without knowing the issues or the real-life experiences of other people. Policing and media agencies must be alert to those who seize these situations for less than

honorable reasons. One thing is abundantly clear. We, as a Nation, must recognize and confess our sins. For too long, we have enabled the marginalization of women, dehumanized asylum seekers, abused immigrants, robbed indigenous peoples, endangered LGBTQ people, hurt prisoners, fostered racism, and dismissed the poor. It is difficult to recognize these sins if you have never been the object of the hatred and destruction they cause. Now is the time to repair the damage and transform the World.

Religious leaders of all Faiths are attempting to bring about reconciliation through mutual understanding and shared experience. Interfaith organizations throughout the World are engaging in serious dialogue to bring about systemic change in all our institutions. Nonetheless, spiritual leaders know that their most important obligation is to hear what some might call "the spirit" moving in our World today. Most often, the "spirit is moving" when people stand up and speak out for what is, right, just, true, and beautiful. Religious institutions, like all institutions, must confront any destructive way of living or thinking that compromises the well-being of others they perceive as different from themselves.

The time has come to be inspired by the protesters who walk in the ways of the prophets of old and now. We must come together and cherish one another with mutual respect and love. For which one of us is free if another is enslaved? Which one of us is loved if

another is hated? Which one of us is truly alive, if another cannot breathe?

Thank you for all the times you crossed the street to meet and cherish another person. Thank you for all the times you invited yourself to be disturbed so you might walk in the ways of justice and understanding. Thank you for moving beyond name-calling and labeling others in demeaning and hurtful ways. Thank you for caring. We can do this together.

75th Anniversary of the United Nations

Internationally, we are observing the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations. The UN Charter of June 26, 1945 states the following;

Article 1
The Purposes of the United Nations are:

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on

respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;

3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and
4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

We find in the stated purposes of the UN Charter a clear statement of what it means to be a practicing interspiritual person. The Interfaith Peace Project encourages all people to read and explore the United Nations' Charter and the Declaration on Human Rights. It is time for us to let go of the politics of hate which invites people to fear one another. Humanity forms but one human community with differences that are precious gifts meant for the inspiration and transformation of us all.

The time has come for us to let go of the politics that defines human well-being in terms of wealth and profit. The human dignity of each and every person must be cherished and upheld in our laws, religious organizations, and governmental institutions.

The time has come for us to realize that we are citizens of the Earth with a responsibility to care for one another. Indeed, the time has come for us to work for global peace and understanding by meeting the people in our neighborhoods, places of worship and commerce with respect, understanding, compassion, and, perhaps even, love.

The Interfaith Peace Project

The power of love and the need to rest

by [Samantha Panchèvre](#)

[Spirituality](#)



READ

Chapter 6, sections 5 and 6

In the middle of chapter 6, Pope Francis discusses the important work of love. Yes, love counts as work. He begins by describing how care for nature is a lifestyle, and of the intentional work that's required to love our enemies in order to create "universal fraternity." Then he declares: "We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it" (229).

Francis continues: "Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also 'macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones'" (231).

It takes time and effort to engage politically, especially to do so consistently so that we can shape the institutions and systems around us. Yet, Francis says: "Not everyone is called to engage directly in political life. Society is also enriched by a countless array of organizations which work to promote the common good and to defend the environment, whether natural or urban. Some, for example, show concern for a public place (a building, a fountain, an abandoned monument, a landscape, a square), and strive to protect, restore, improve or beautify it as something belonging to everyone" (232).

In a similar vein, Francis also reflects on the importance of rest: "Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world... We tend to demean contemplative rest as something unproductive and unnecessary, but this is to do away with the very thing which is most important about work: its meaning. We are called to include in our work a dimension of receptivity and gratuity, which is quite different from mere inactivity. Rather, it is another way of working, which forms part of our very essence. It protects human action from becoming empty activism; it also prevents that unfettered greed and sense of isolation which make us seek personal gain to the detriment of all else... Rest opens our eyes to the larger picture and gives us

renewed sensitivity to the rights of others. And so the day of rest, centred on the Eucharist, sheds it light on the whole week, and motivates us to greater concern for nature and the poor" (237).

REFLECT

We clearly have a lot of work to do. Earlier in this series, I've spoken about the importance of voting for politicians that truly care about protecting the most vulnerable members of society, supporting the working poor, committing to international developmental goals, and protecting the environment and biodiversity.

However, taking action doesn't always have to be political. Consider the community actions laid out by the pope above. Francis also says this: "Around these community actions, relationships develop or are recovered and a new social fabric emerges. Thus, a community can break out of the indifference induced by consumerism... In this way, the world, and the quality of life of the poorest, are cared for, with a sense of solidarity which is at the same time aware that we live in a common home which God has entrusted to us" (232).

All this means that God's work can come in many forms. What are you called to do?

ACT

If you don't already take one day a week to completely rest (without any serious work commitments), consider adopting one. Like the pope says above, you can still be productive on "rest" days if you're undergoing spiritual contemplation. Every week, use this time to consider the parts of your life that need more love. Maybe you need to be kinder to yourself, or maybe it's a family member or a friendship that needs tending to. Maybe it's your politics or the

businesses you support with your money. If you can reflect on this weekly and then take action, you will not only create more inner peace but perhaps a better world too.

Source material:

 [Laudato Si': Chapter 6, sections 5 and 6](#)

BLACK LIVES MATTER: STATEMENT OF BISHOP BARBER

Father Aidan McAleenan and I agree, Black Lives Matter.

How I and other leaders in the Catholic Church increase awareness of that truth among Catholics and in our communities is a conversation that is overdue and must begin immediately.

I am on a journey, as are we all, learning what I can do as the shepherd for our diocese, in helping our parishioners change our actions to meet our words and our professed faith.

As the bishops of the United States explained in our [2018 pastoral letter against racism](#), "Racist acts are sinful because they violate justice. They reveal a failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the neighbors Christ calls us to love (Mt 22:39). ... The cumulative effects of personal sins of racism have led to social structures of injustice and violence that makes us all accomplices in racism."

I believe to eradicate racism requires a conversion of each person's mind and heart,

which means we must start from our belief in a God who loves each one of us, indiscriminately and irrevocably.

In our pastoral, “Open Wide our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love,” the bishops rely on our ancient teachings to offer a path forward. We must do justice, love goodness and be humble (Mi 6:8). This requires each of us to acknowledge our failures, to restore right relationships, to pursue peace building and humility.

We have a long way to go in our journey, and I vigorously deny telling Father McAleenan “Black people should be happy with the way the church and this country has treated them.” Instead, I offer some ways we have begun this journey toward a conversion of minds and hearts:

- Celebrating the [Votive Mass "for the Preservation of Peace and Justice"](#) on Tuesday, June 9, the day George Floyd was buried, during which priests and parishioners knelt with me for eight minutes and 46 seconds.
- I am in constant communication with the other bishops in California. Together, we created a [video reenacting the Stations of the Cross](#) to draw attention to the sin of racism and ask God’s help in eliminating it. Each station in the video was taped at a location with rich racial significance. The sixth Station of the Cross was taped at the Fruitvale BART station in Oakland where Oscar Grant was killed. The Way of the Cross is an ancient prayer, allowing people to enter into Jesus’ final outpouring of love.
- Last year, I brought Bishop George Murry, SJ, one of the then-leading black Catholic bishops, to give a retreat for the priests of the diocese and offer the homily for the Chrism Mass

(<http://www.catholicvoiceoakland.org/2019/04-29/inthisissue1.htm>).

- The history of slavery and structural racism in this country has created long-standing inequities in all areas of society, from health (look at COVID-19), to housing, education, law enforcement, and employment.

The [Catholic Campaign for Human Development](#) is the major domestic anti-poverty, social justice program of the Catholic Church. Last year more than a [quarter million was given to local organizations](#).

But much, much more needs to be done.

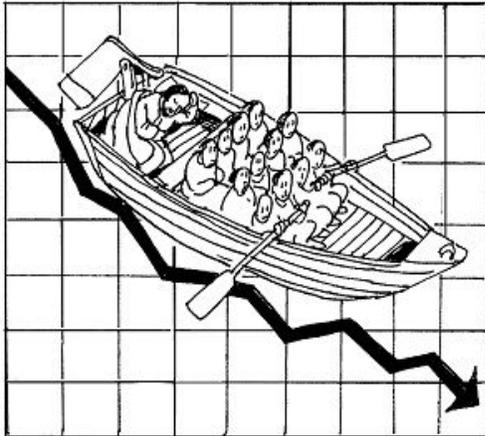
I welcome all people of good will, including Father McAleenan, to join in this effort so we can answer this urgent call to love one another as Christ loves each of us, “For there is no place for racism in the hearts of any person (Open Wide our Hearts).”



O we of little faith

by [Pat Marrin](#)

[Spirituality](#)



“Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?” (Matt 8:25).

Amos 3:1-8; 4:11-12; Matt 8:23-27

As the church commemorates the first wave of persecution and martyrdom of Christians under Nero in Rome, the Scriptures remind us that God has always been with believers in crisis. Even when God seems absent, faith will bring us through any storm.

One detail in the dramatic story of the storm on the lake while Jesus sleeps in the boat may have come from 1 Kings 18, as Elijah taunts the priests of Baal when their god does not answer their shouts because perhaps “he is taking a nap and must be woken up.” Matthew has Jesus scolding his own disciples for panicking during the lake crossing: “O you of little faith!”

The prophet Elijah was famous for commanding powerful rainstorms filled with thunder and lightning. What Elijah could summon Jesus can calm. Each of the lake crossing stories in Matthew is a master class in faith. Jesus is rehearsing the Paschal Mystery with his disciples so that when they

experience his death, they will trust that he has overcome death with new life. When he seems to be asleep in death, they will believe that his resurrection is decisive and that he is always with them through any storm or trial.

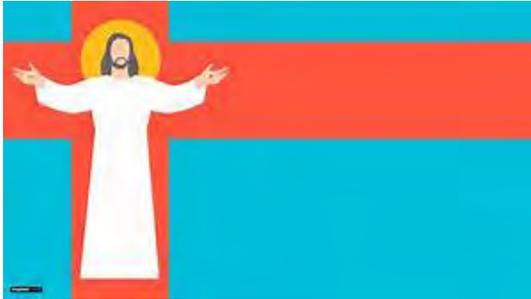
The Lectionary also introduces Amos, one of the early 8th century BCE prophets known for his fierce advocacy for justice. Amos was a shepherd and dresser of sycamores. His peasant origins and familiarity with the simple realities of farming and herding give his voice an edge over the professional prophets with their smooth-talking support for the status quo. Amos preaches during a time of prosperity that masks underlying corruption and abuse of the poor.

Jesus’ message of mercy is built on the demand for right relationship and justice. There will be no peace without justice. The disciples are schooled in both mercy and justice. They are not spared the risks and dangers of confronting injustice when they preach conversion. There will face storms but also trust that Jesus is always with them.

Our times require prophets who tell it like it is. When we want comfort and reassurance, God asks us first to face the storm and pray for an increase in faith. Faith arises out of crisis, challenge and even doubt. Biblical faith is rooted in the Exodus, when the People of God learned to keep going when there seemed no way forward. Suddenly a path will open up and God will be there. The church was born out of the dark night of loss and despair when Jesus was crucified and his disciples scattered in terror.

Only with first light and the faith of the women did Easter become clear. Jesus’ last breath from the cross was the first breath of his Holy Spirit, filling them with new life

and inspiring the mission to share the Good News. It is not Jesus who needs to be awakened, but we who need to trust and go forward.



Discovering a 'great grace' in the time of COVID-19

Jul 1, 2020

by [Michael Wright](#)

[Spirituality](#)

This article appears in the [Laudato Si'](#) at [Five](#) feature series. [View the full series.](#)



The author reports that the COVID-19 lockdown has resulted in less traffic on the usually well traveled road by his home. (Michael Wright)

As a social worker who focuses on environmental justice, I've found the

COVID-19 crisis to be extraordinary, in more ways than the obvious. Months of lockdown have afforded time to consider what it really means from a socio-environmental perspective. As tragic and challenging as the pandemic has been, it has yielded many environmental benefits. Social distancing has significantly reduced travel and purchasing, lowering demand for energy and raw materials, which has reduced emissions and other pollution. Less driving also means less traffic noise, which my family and I have appreciated: We live along a rural road that is usually well traveled, but has been relatively quiet lately. As a result we, and everyone else, have had a taste of what our world *could* be if we were to drive less, consume less and pollute less.



Michael Wright (Provided photo)

All this is unfolding as we mark the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical "*Laudato Si'*", on Care for Our Common Home." This historic yet under appreciated document covers many issues brought to the fore by the coronavirus epidemic:

environmental degradation, "compulsive consumerism," social injustice, and the "rapidification" of society. Many, including my family and I, have come to realize that what we really *need* is not necessarily what we usually *want*. This is especially true when it comes to wasting resources and energy that, as Francis puts it, "leads to the planet being squeezed dry beyond every limit. ... [Our] 'use and throw away' logic generates so much waste, because of the disordered desire to consume more than what is really necessary" (106, 123).

This time of shared crisis affords us a serendipitous opportunity to grow beyond ourselves by considering how our actions can affect others and creation itself: "Concern for others, and the rejection of every form of self-centeredness ... attune us to the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us." (208) My family and I have always tried to live as low-carbon as possible, in small ways like composting and hanging clothes to dry, and in big ways like solar power and geothermal heating and cooling. Due to this time of full-family lockdown, however, we've found ways to live even more sustainably: driving and buying less, cooking more than usual, and scheduling no-meat and bean-entree dinners each week. We've also reduced the duration of showers and frequency of grocery shopping. To avoid buying products that contribute to tropical deforestation, like those with palm oil, we've found many that are "rainforest safe" (see rainforest-alliance.org) We're also planting more: Although we have only a couple of small gardens, even this can decrease our dependence on "long-distance" produce. By reducing our own emissions, we're incrementally helping the climate, "a common good, belonging to all and meant for all" (23).



More publicly, I have decided to advocate even more for environmental justice and "care for creation" than I have in the past. With climate change once again relegated as a "background" issue, I hope to do more to help build social consensus to address it, despite the current focus on the pandemic. Indeed, it has become clear that we as a society *can* work together to solve a global crisis, however challenging. So coming together as one human family to reduce pollution and solve climate change is in fact possible — and imperative if we are to survive as a species. "Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start ... to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts" (205).

If any good can come out of this shared human experience that is the coronavirus epidemic, it may be that we find we don't need to consume, spend or move about as much as we thought we did, and that a new age of caring for creation is at hand. It seems we have been given a great grace: an opportunity to *choose* to better appreciate and care for creation, of which we are a part.

As Francis so eloquently states, "Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a

charity ... social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a 'culture of care' which permeates all of society" (231). Ultimately, this current crisis may help us to finally realize that caring for life is intimately dependent on caring for "our common home."



Solar panels on the author's home in southeastern Pennsylvania (Michael Wright)

[Michael Wright is a retired NASA engineer, a licensed social worker and the author of a number of articles and publications about the environment, including [Ten Things Pope Francis Wants you to Know about the Environment](#). He is a member of the Climate Psychology Alliance of North America.]

The joy of our hope

Jul 1, 2020

by [Samantha Panchèvre](#)

[Spirituality](#)

This article appears in the [Digging Into Laudato Si'](#) feature series. [View the full series.](#)



READ

Chapter 6, section 9: Beyond the Sun

While the last section of *Laudato Si'* may be short, it's full of hope. Pope Francis references the mystery that awaits us when we return to our "common home in heaven" and live eternally, "face to face with the infinite beauty of God" (243).

Until then, we must use our time on Earth to "come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will be taken up into the heavenly feast." He adds: "In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God... Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope" (244).

And remember we are not alone: "God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him!" (245).

REFLECT

It takes a lot to take care of not only yourself and anyone who depends on you, but also to care for family, check in on friends, and address issues facing your community. On a macro level, there are systemic processes that drive social inequality and environmental ruin, and they can only be resolved when a committed majority cares enough. This is why the message of hope and unifying towards a common goal – to build a more just and sustainable world, where all people live with dignity – is just as important as building awareness.

ACT

Meditate over this final prayer from the conclusion of *Laudato Si'* whenever you need some inspiration:

A Christian prayer in union with creation

Father, we praise you with all your creatures.

They came forth from your all-powerful hand;

they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love.

Praise be to you!

Son of God, Jesus,

through you all things were made.

You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother,

you became part of this earth,

and you gazed upon this world with human eyes.

Today you are alive in every creature in your risen glory.

Praise be to you!

Holy Spirit, by your light

you guide this world towards the Father's love

and accompany creation as it groans in travail.

You also dwell in our hearts

and you inspire us to do what is good.
Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,

teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you.

Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made.

Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love

for all the creatures of this earth,

for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.

Enlighten those who possess power and money

that they may avoid the sin of indifference,

that they may love the common good, advance the weak,

and care for this world in which we live.

The poor and the earth are crying out.

O Lord, seize us with your power and light,

help us to protect all life,

to prepare for a better future,

for the coming of your Kingdom

of justice, peace, love and beauty.

Praise be to you!

Amen.

Will they know we are Christians?

by [Pat Marrin](#)

[Spirituality](#)



“They begged Jesus to leave their district”
(Matt 8:34).

Amos 5”14-15, 21-24; Matt 8:28-34

Whenever Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee with his disciples, they found themselves in the area called the Decapolis, a borderland of ten cities east of Palestine established and administered by the Romans. Gadara was one of the cities, and Jesus encountered the two demoniacs there, living in the cemetery among the tombs and terrorizing the neighborhood. The demons recognized Jesus’ authority and begged to be cast into a large herd of swine.

The details of the story demonstrate Jesus’ Lordship even over the occupying Romans and the pagan regions they controlled. The swine, considered unclean by Jews, were perhaps being raised for export to Rome, so when Jesus casts them into the sea he was striking at the interests of the Roman Empire, a provocation to both its imperial

control and theological pretensions regarding the divinity of the emperor and the superiority of Roman religion.

What is most striking about the story is that when Jesus comes with the power to liberate its people by driving out evil spirits, they beg him to leave their district. They are in the grip of the religious and economic benefits of imperial control. They reject the redemptive offer of Jesus for fear of losing those benefits and incurring Roman disfavor. Matthew’s story is presented as a miracle story, but its intent must have been clear to those who could decode the challenge to Rome. In Mark’s account, the demons identify themselves as “Legion,” a military allusion (5:1-20).

Our distance in time from the context of the early church can make us forget the dangers of preaching liberation and values out of step with the dominant culture. The Gospel has consequences. Jesus did not die for preaching love and the early church was not persecuted for keeping to itself. Jesus was executed as a dangerous subversive and the church was attacked for refusing civic allegiance by offering incense to Roman gods. It was scapegoated as a visible community of outliers who modeled a different society in which their pacifism and faith in Jesus raised suspicions and offended public sensibilities.

Discipleship challenges us to be out of step when normalcy means indifference to inequality or remaining silent in the face of injustice to minorities or those at the margins of society. The core of the Gospel is not just the creed and the catechism, but a checklist of attitudes and actions described clearly in the Beatitudes (Matt 5) and the Corporal Works of Mercy (Matt 25). For living these we will be recognized as followers of Jesus.

***Justice Corner by Carolyn Krantz,
Pastoral Associate***

There is a disturbance in our lives. Things are not the same. People use the phrase, “back to normal,” but it isn't. We are all masked but the virus hasn't gone away. In Star Wars, Yoda says, “I feel a disturbance in the force.” Now we know what that feels like.

There is a pattern in life that many psychologists and spiritual writers speak of: construction, deconstruction and reconstruction. Now we are seeing that pattern before our eyes. In human emotion, construction appears life-giving. Deconstruction appears death-giving and reconstruction brings new hope. Get the picture? Life, death and resurrection. This is a pattern that all of us recognize in the life of Jesus and in our own lives. Now we see it on a worldwide scale.

In the United States, well over half of our adult citizenry are between the ages of 18-35 (U.S. Census). These are the men and women that will reconstruct our society in this new era. What is the music of this new way of being in the world? What instruments predominate? The flexibility of horns? The sweetness of the strings? The strident character of the percussion? How will this orchestra play the melodies of the future?

In early life, provided that one is blessed with the basics of food, clothing, shelter, and parental care, our parents help us weave a pattern that becomes a beautiful whole. This is a person that has learned values and principles. We may falter here and there, but the cloak of our personality remains fairly untraced. Like Joseph's “coat of many colors,” it is recognizable as our character. If one has a difficult childhood, that cloak becomes tattered, the threads are broken,

holes appear and patterns are broken. Some humans become so wounded that the cloak of their character is no longer recognizable.

Through Baptism, God weaves a pattern of integrity based on oneness with the Gospel teachings. We recognize this pattern in ourselves and others. It shows forth honesty and hope in all circumstances. We see people's character in their willingness to serve others. We see it in the protesters that are willing to march peacefully for justice. We also see the torn cloaks of those who loot and destroy, those who lie and cheat with money and those who want to hold on to the privilege of whiteness. All of this is laid out for us in the daily news.

We cannot get through this period without deep reflection on the Christ-pattern that our Baptism has provided for us. We must take time to rest in Jesus. What is falling apart (Deconstruction)? What pieces can we place on the beginnings of the new cloak we must build (reconstruction)? I am constantly amazed that we at St. Ignatius of Antioch are hopefully expanding our capacity to serve others with the new kitchen and hall in the middle of the deconstruction around us. That has to be the work of the Spirit. We are meant to witness to our faith in Jesus' resurrection (reconstruction) and our own. “Come unto me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”

***Parish Perspective by
Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pastoral Associate
Missionary Starfish***

As time marches on I find myself falling ever more frequently into the old joke about entering a room and not remembering why I went in there. If we can remember what our Church was focused upon before the Corona virus and social disorder outbreaks occurred, we will remember about becoming a Church of missionary disciples. One of the keys to

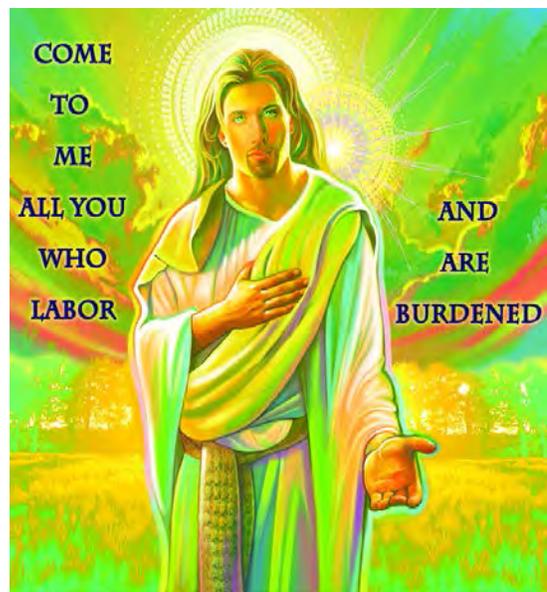
becoming a socially aware and justice centered Church is to apply the active concept of missionary discipleship to the current problems we face and to maintain a flexibility that will enable us to apply missionary discipleship to serious future events.

The question is and always will be, “How do we live as missionary disciples to solve monumental social problems, to mitigate the turmoil it leads to, and to change the hearts and minds of people to a holy and socially just Church?” We can easily understand that the more a society is involved in the works of a holy and just Church, the less crime, violence, and discrimination of all types there will be. The more holy and God centered people there are, they are less likely to commit acts of injustice. The primary goal, therefore, is to not give up on missionary discipleship but increase our efforts to build Church and a more holy society where all life is respected far more than it is now.

Most of the power of the Church to effect change lies with the bishops. They can become the pinnacle of morality and social justice if they choose to do so. But we have power too. We can change people we encounter one at a time; the “starfish” effect. Thousands of starfish may wash ashore and if you but throw one back into the sea it makes a big difference for that one. We have seen hundreds of thousands of starfish on TV lately. Some are peaceful and can make their own way back to the sea. Some are leading others away from the sea and some just don’t know where to turn and blindly follow the crowd. We can help. People are talking. What we say can lead people to the life-giving sea of God’s kingdom on earth.

We have work to do and it’s more than picking up the pieces of broken glass from

the streets. It’s picking up the lost and searching souls who are desperately seeking a reason and way of living in this imperfect world. Violence is not the answer. Peace, love, forgiveness, they are always the answer. They can be summed-up in one word: Jesus. Offer Jesus to the hungry and they will eat.





St. Ignatius of Antioch Church Group to France

Day 1: Sun Aug 29, 2021

Welcome to Paris

On arrival at Charles de Gaulle Airport, a group transfer is provided to your hotel. After checking in, the capital's grand boulevards and world-famous landmarks are yours to explore. Join your Travel Director and fellow guests for a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant.

Meal: Welcome Dinner with Wine

Hotel: Le Meridien Etoile Hotel Paris, 9 nights

Day 2: Mon Aug 30, 2021

Morning at leisure, Churches & the Louvre

Enjoy a leisurely morning before joining your group in the afternoon for a guided visit with your Local Expert of the Louvre (subject to availability). Walk to nearby Saint-Eustache, one of the most visited churches in Paris distinguished by its dimensions, works of art and its great organ. Continue to La Madeleine, a Roman Catholic Church with the design of a Greek temple. Enjoy the afternoon at your leisure then rejoin your group this evening for a cruise along the Seine river with dinner included (early dinner scheduled at approximately 18:00).

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

Day 3: Tue Aug 31, 2021

Depart for Lourdes

Pack your overnight bag and depart for the train station this morning for your first class rail journey to Lourdes. After arrival, get settled into your hotel before joining the group for an evening candlelight procession followed by dinner at your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Hotel Dinner with Wine

Hotel: Mercure Lourdes, 1 night

Day 4: Wed Sep 1, 2021

Mass and Healing Baths, return Paris

This morning, view the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes before coming together for mass. Visit the nearby healing baths, inspired by one of the apparitions where Virgin Mary told Bernadette "Go and drink at the spring and wash yourself there!" and has since been a source for renewal and healing for millions of pilgrims. Depart this afternoon on your first class rail journey back to Paris.

Meal: Breakfast

Hotel: Le Meridien Etoile Hotel Paris

Day 5: Thu Sep 2, 2021

Food Market Walking Tour

Later this morning, join your Local Expert for a walking tour of a popular Parisian market. Sample fresh cheeses and learn some of the best kept secrets of French cuisine during this immersive experience. Join us for dinner tonight at Le Procope, the oldest café in Paris (availability permitting). Le Procope was conceived in 1686 and has had continuous operation since, welcoming prominent writers and intellectuals, this historical café is not to be missed.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

Day 6: Fri Sep 3, 2021

Eiffel Tower & the Sacred Heart of Paris

Ascend the Eiffel Tower (subject to availability) for spectacular views of Paris. Continue to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Paris, commonly known as Sacre Coeur, the second most visited monument in Paris dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Meal: Breakfast

For more information please contact:

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Black Diamond Travel

Tel: (925) 754-5340 Email: linda@blackdiamondtravel.com

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Day 7: Sat Sep 4, 2021

Palace of Versailles

Tread in the footsteps of French nobility and explore the opulence and splendor of Versailles (subject to availability). Join a Local Expert as you wander through the palace's extraordinary Hall of Mirrors, the Apartments and Battles Gallery. Stroll through the picturesque Royal Gardens and visit the Petit Trianon to see first-hand how the French Royal Family lived in private before discovering Marie Antoinette's Hamlet and the Royal Chapel. Enjoy dinner this evening at a local restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

Day 8: Sun Sep 5, 2021

The D-Day Beaches

Discover the Normandy region and the D-Day beaches with our Local Expert on this full-day tour. We'll visit the dramatic battle-scarred cliffs of Pointe du Hoc; the American cemetery at Omaha Beach and the almost-intact gun battery at Longues-sur-Mer. You'll also enjoy the superb new Operation Overlord Museum before continuing to Arromanches for views over Gold and Juno Beaches.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 9: Mon Sep 6, 2021

Luxembourg Gardens & Churches

Start your day with your Local Expert with a visit to Luxembourg Gardens, sprawled in front of Luxembourg Palace and conceived in the 17th century. Walk to nearby Saint-Sulpice church, the second largest church in the whole city. Continue to Saint Germain, Paris's oldest church, before visiting the royal chapel of Saint Chapelle, once home to the Kings of France until the 14th century. This evening, join your Travel Director and companions for a memorable Celebration Dinner.

Meals: Breakfast, Celebration Dinner with Wine

Day 10: Tue Sep 7, 2021

Au Revoir Paris

After breakfast, it's time to bid Paris au revoir as you prepare to return home after a memorable break in one of the world's greatest cities. A group transfer is provided to Charles de Gaulle Airport, private transfers available at an additional charge.

Meal: Breakfast

St. Ignatius Church Group to France

10 days/9 nights

Below rates are per person, land only, based on double occupancy with final price determined by traveling group size.

35 - 39	paying guests	\$3,600
30 - 34	paying guests	\$3,700
25 - 29	paying guests	\$3,850
20 - 24	paying guests	\$4,050
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT	paying guests	\$1,260

The above pricing is land only, international airfare is at an additional cost. Travel insurance is optional and in addition to the above prices, please refer to insurance rates below.
 For trips totaling \$3,501 - \$5,000: \$289 per person
 For trips totaling \$5,001 - \$7,500: \$399 per person
 For trips totaling \$7,501+: \$499 per person

Deposit due at time of booking (non-refundable): \$200 per person, + insurance cost if taken, payable by check