

For The Bulletin Of
August 9, 2020



THE 19TH SUNDAY IN SUMMER'S ORDINARY TIME

From Father Robert

In the year 1300 the church in Rome celebrated one of the first “holy year” feasts that would come to mark each centenary, then each 25 years, and occasionally each year ending in 33 (the traditional age of Jesus) or even 83 (the traditional age of Jesus plus 50!), as in 1833, 1933, 1983. In 1300, pilgrims descended on Rome for this holy year, as they would for centuries thereafter. As part of the commemoration, two years prior the mosaicist Giotto di Bondone was commissioned to create the *navicella* (the little boat) that depicts the scene we read in the gospel today for St. Peter’s Basilica. Centuries after di Bondone, during the time that St. Peter’s Basilica was completely renovated, the *navicella* was nearly destroyed. It was ultimately restored and moved to the portico of the renovated Basilica where it can still be seen today. Often visitors and pilgrims walk right under it without knowing it’s there. When one stands under the portico, looking out to the piazza, the mosaic is directly overhead, on the inside panel of the exterior wall of the façade, facing the Basilica.

The episode in the gospel of Jesus walking on the water appears in two other gospel accounts, but Matthew has a unique version of the story. It is only Matthew that has Peter on the water with Jesus, and then sinking due to a lack of faith. Of course, Jesus rescues Peter and that is the moment depicted in di Bondone’s mosaic at St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

It doesn’t take much imagination to see in this story that the boat represents the church (Matthew is the only gospel to use the term “church”) and that Peter, as leader of the twelve himself, is reliant upon Jesus. In fact, the entire boat is buffeted by the storm but does not sink. When Jesus comes aboard, the storm subsides and the waters are calm.

We are told that this happened during the fourth watch of the night (between 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.). Modern people might wonder what the twelve were doing on the water at that time of the night, especially during a storm. The answer is that Jesus had commanded them to meet Him at the other side. The Sea of Galilee is about thirteen miles long by eight miles wide. So even to traverse the shorter distance could have been treacherous, especially at night.

As for those of us in the boat today, we can expect turbulence much like the disciples themselves experienced. Though Peter was willing to step outside the boat, his faith was little, not enough for him to stand on his own. His immediate cry for help was heard and he was saved. We may take comfort in knowing that those in the ship will be safe even if the journey is bumpy. And the Lord is there to save us when we cry out.



Living The Paschal Mystery

We might wonder why Jesus commanded His disciples to set out by boat at dusk to meet Him on the other side. It does not sound like a very wise or prudent request, and especially so after the storm arose. Nevertheless, the disciples follow the advice of their master. Rather than meet them on the other side, during the darkest part of the night, the disciples experience Jesus walking on the water to in the midst of the wind and storm. Impetuous Peter seeks to walk on the water also but he is unable to do so due to his lack of faith. In the end, the Lord calms the storm and joins the disciples in the boat.

When we experience turbulence and storms, we may be reassured that the Lord is near. When we call, He answers. He will join us and the storms of life will subside. Is it any wonder this story has been read for centuries as an allegory for the relationship between Christ and the church? The boat may protect us from the storm but we still experience the effects of the storm. It is only Jesus Himself Who can calm the waters.

Each week's scripture passages raise questions and issues for us as we continue our journey in the "school of discipleship." What questions do this week's passages raise for you?

In your life, where do you experience the quiet presence of God?

Today's psalm prays, "Lord, let us see Your kindness, and grant us Your salvation." Is there a situation in your life right now that would benefit from kindness?

St. Paul writes to the Romans, "I speak the truth in Christ; I do not lie." When has the truth spoken to you in love brought new growth and flourishing?

In the gospel, Jesus calls out to the frightened disciples, "Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid." When have you needed courage to follow Jesus in the life of faith?



About Liturgy: Church Would Be Great If...

There's a joke that says, "Church would be great if it weren't for all the people." It's meant to be funny, but, unfortunately, I know we've met some people for whom it's serious. How often have we witnessed parents at Liturgy with one or more little ones who are noisy or unsettled getting the "look" or an unkind word from someone nearby? Or worse? More than one homilist has stopped his homily to publicly ask specific parents to take their child out because the child was being too noisy.

There is a beautiful nuance that we get in the juxtaposition of today's scriptures. In the first reading, we hear that the Lord was not in the wind, the quake, or the fire. Yet in the gospel, Jesus was indeed *right there* in the midst of the storm itself.

Whatever is happening around you does not determine God's presence. God is *always* present. The key is what you are paying attention to and what you are looking for. If you look only toward your own comfort and ease, and pay attention to your own quiet amid your storms, then you will miss the Lord right in front of you. You *will* be distracted by disruptions around you. However, if you look right into the very thing that is disrupting your life and seek out the presence of Jesus there, more than likely you will find the Lord and see God's kindness, as the psalmist today begs. The infant's cry will no longer be an intrusion but an invitation to give God thanks for the gift of life and the gift of this family who, in the midst of their own storms, have sought out the presence of Jesus in your midst.



Give them yourselves by [Pat Marrin](#)



“His heart was moved with pity” (Matt 14:15).

Eighteenth Sunday of the Year

Isa 55:1-3; Ps 145; Rom 8:35, 37-39; Matt 14:13-21

The story of the feeding in the wilderness must have been deep in the Jesus tradition because all four evangelists record it. One reason for this was that so many later theological themes about Jesus converged there. The synoptics are close in detail and the fourth Gospel expands the event to make it the basis for the “Bread of Life” discourse in the Book of Signs. The story bridges the Exodus tradition of Moses and manna from heaven to the early church’s celebration of the Eucharist as the new Passover.

Mark’s account, presumed to be the earliest and the source for the others, gets special focus in Ched Myers’ 1988 book, *Binding the Strong Man*, a political reading of Mark that considers the charge that Jesus was mounting a challenge to both the Romans

and the Jerusalem establishment by gathering at an alternate location with 5,000 followers during Passover. Even the arrangement of the crowd in groups of 50 and 100 suggests military order. The fourth Gospel, written much later, knocks down this idea by saying that Jesus fled into the mountains after the miraculous feeding when the crowd tried to make him king (John 6:15).

Matthew ties the withdrawal of Jesus to grieve the death of John Baptist to the tumultuous encounter with the crowd in the wilderness. As the stakes rise at John's brutal execution, Jesus needs time to reflect on his next move. But the appearance of the vast crowd stirs him to pity, confirming that his mission is compassion not conflict, even if it costs him his life. Jesus will forge ahead as the same Spirit that guided him in the desert when Satan tempted him with messianic power guides him again to be the nonviolent Suffering Servant. This is a critical turn in the Jesus story.

When Archbishop Oscar Romero was facing death threats and pressure from both Salvadoran military and his ecclesial enemies in Rome, he would find solace and renewed clarity by going among the people, who would crowd around and embrace him. He said, "With a people like these it is easy to be a shepherd." Urged by some to align with the popular front or to leave the country to save himself, Romero let compassion and nonviolence define his mission, even at the cost of his life.

Jesus fulfilled his messianic role by giving himself to others. The memory of bread in the wilderness found fulfillment in his self-emptying love on the cross as the new Passover, the Paschal Lamb, the Bread of Life. We are asked to multiply this miracle in our own time. When his disciples asked

how such crowd could be fed, Jesus said, "Give them some food yourselves." As they would learn in memory of his own total gift, they knew he had really said, "Give them yourselves."



GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT

**A Reflection from the
Christian Traditions
Eighteenth Sunday in
Ordinary Time**

**Matthew 14:13-21
by Thomas P. Bonacci, C.P.**

The readings for the Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time provide a remedy for any of us suffering from the viral infection known as "consumerism." In this time of pandemic, we have been invited to live with a life-changing sense of simplicity. Many are in withdrawal from those unnecessary things we once held essential to our desires but unnecessary for our lives. We need to be patient with ourselves realizing that compassion for others is the antidote to what ails us. All of us are discovering anew how precious we are to one another as we long for the

day when we can embrace our friends and hug our grandchildren. Suddenly, the question is not "what" is of value but "who" is precious to us.

The Jewish Tradition blesses us in the first reading from Isaiah 55: 1-3. The question is pointedly posed, "Why spend your wages on that which does not satisfy?" Why indeed? As a society, we are recovering from the dangerous subjectivism and greed implied in the question, "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" The question seems to suppose that being "better off" means have more things. The real question does not center around the investment portfolio but the generosity of one's heart. "Are you a better person than you were just a while ago?" True happiness is found in the service of others. Anyone who has ever had a friend or a companion knows the joy of sharing bread with them even at your own expense. True satisfaction is found in self-giving. We need to take account of ourselves. What really satisfies is a life lived with integrity of heart, generosity of soul, and peace of mind.

Jesus challenges his disciples (and us) to be people of extraordinary self-giving. To give of ourselves even when we judge purse and pantry to be insufficient and scarce of necessary provisions. "You give the hungry something to eat!", he exclaimed to his disciples who often feared the guests will outnumber the resources. They were looking for a store while Jesus was inviting them to search the abundance lurking in the depths of their hearts.

Finally, he took their not enough bread and too few fish and gave thanks. Are we not always stunned by people who live lives of gratitude? They are always finding abundance in the midst of scarcity. They have an uncommon courage. Astonishingly, there is more than enough when gratitude gives birth to generosity in the brokenness of the moment. As one man in the street said, "There is always a way to care for someone even if you don't have what you need or want!" The man with nothing was satisfied, in ways many with abundance cannot understand or imagine.

Consider our present situation. We may be disappointed we cannot do what we would like to do. We cannot be with family and friends as we so desire. The feelings and reality of separation are actually our generous self-giving that others may be safe. Our sense of loneliness is born from our love and care for one another. Our desire to walk in the streets protesting injustice is the sign of our solidarity with all those witnessing to a new birth of what it means to be a people, a family, a neighborhood, a Nation, and a World. This is the abundance of love in the midst of heartbreak and uncertainty.

Blessings to you, Holy Ones, who in this moment of brokenness, dare to courageously share the bread of your self-giving with the broken-hearted of this World.

Fr. Tom Bonacci, C.P.

Water walker

by [Pat Marrin](#)

[Spirituality](#)



"During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them, walking on the sea" (Matt 14:25).

Jer 28:1-17; Matt 14:22-36

Today's Gospel about Jesus walking on water in the dark before dawn to save his disciples during the storm has all the marks of a post-resurrection appearance story. Matthew's use of the lake crossings as Jesus' way of rehearsing his disciples to trust in his presence after his death is another way to describe the paschal mystery of St. Paul. Disciples learn to navigate the waters of death because Jesus has made the passage already. The story follows the miraculous feeding to link the resurrection to the Eucharist. Each time the church breaks the bread, it remembers the death of the Lord and receives the pledge of future glory, risen life.

The drama of Jesus' intervention on behalf of his frightened disciples is heightened by the hour. They have been fighting the storming all night, and it is in the fourth watch, the final watch, when he comes to

them. He has seen them in prayer on the mountain, already reunited with God but alert to their needs.

Like other appearance stories, they first think Jesus is a ghost, and he chides them for their lack of faith. How long did it take for believers in the early church to trust that the boat would not sink, even when it faced real storms? Peter, the leader of the disciples, is given a cameo in the story. Typical of Peter, he braves stepping out of the boat to walk to Jesus but loses his courage and has to be rescued. All baptized disciples are invited to be water walkers.

This Gospel is worth sitting with in prayer, letting our imaginations rehearse our own response to the threats and feelings so vividly described. The early church came to faith through crises that taught them to pray and trust that Jesus was always with them. We, too, grow in faith and courage by having our faith tested. An occasional sleepless night of worry can remind us just how dependent we are on God alone. No other power can rescue us from existential freefall.

God is our faithful "companion," a word that means "one who shares bread with us." Whether in life or in death, our union with Jesus Christ is *viaticum*, a Latin name for the Eucharist that means "with you on the way."

Blind guides by [Pat Marrin](#)



“If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit” (Matt 15:1-2, 10-14).

*Jer 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22; Matt 14:22-36 or
Matt 15:1-2, 10-14*

The current focus on racism will provide many history lessons for young people who may never have heard about the signs on drinking fountains for white and “colored” people. These Jim Crow era restrictions make explicit the kind of “purity” standards whites imposed to enforce racial separation.

The purity laws during Jesus’ time also masked caste separation in Jewish society. The scribes and Pharisees exhibited their superiority with elaborate rituals of hand washing before dining. In doing this they also avoided contact with the “unwashed” poor, who could not observe this level of cleanliness in ordinary circumstances.

Jesus upends the claim that failure to practice ritual purity rules renders someone unclean by saying that it is not what goes into our mouths but what comes out of them that defiles us. Evil thoughts and words reveal an evil, calculating heart. The scribes

and Pharisees put on a good show of social piety, but their private lives and hidden deceits and violent intentions are the real measure of their fidelity to the Law. Jesus’ remarks challenged these religious elites, but instead of debating him, they complained to his disciples.

Like the prophet Jeremiah, Jesus does not spare these backdoor hypocrites, and he warns his disciples that they are “the blind leading the blind.” This is a direct challenge to those who called themselves guides and teachers, but it is just the wind up to the full-throated critique Jesus launches against them in Chapter 23 of Matthew’s Gospel. Jesus reserves his deepest indignation for those who lead others astray. Their greatest fault was to misrepresent God, who is merciful to the poor, while inflating themselves as wise and important. We are not accustomed to this side of Jesus, but behind his indignation was his great compassion for ordinary people, especially the poor and the weak, whose suffering is often caused by proud and powerful people who love to make their importance and authority felt. These so-called spiritual experts did not know God themselves, and they prevented others from finding God. They multiplied rules and piled them on the shoulders of others while neglecting the essentials of justice and love.

As disciples of Jesus, we are challenged to pray for pure hearts and to imitate his compassion for the oppressed, excluded, discriminated against and abused. The more we know Jesus the more we will know God. And if the Gospels show us the real Jesus, then even in our merciful God there must be room for some indignation for those who harm the most vulnerable and innocent among us.

Even Jesus needed to learn. White Christians can, too.

by [Pat Marrin](#)



“I was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 15:24).

Jer 31:1-7; Matt 15:21-28

This story is awkward because of Jesus’ apparent rude behavior. Scripture scholars and preachers bend over backwards to explain that Jesus only refused to speak to the Canaanite woman and then called her a dog to test her faith. Another possible interpretation is that this was in fact a teachable moment for the human Jesus that expanded his understanding of his mission. This possibility can challenge our understanding of Jesus.

By the fourth Gospel, Jesus is fully aware of his divine identity, and so nothing he says or does is unintentional or without deeper significance. But the earlier Gospels, beginning with Mark, let Jesus learn and grow into this awareness led by the Spirit and by his experience. In Mark’s much

shorter account of this north of the border encounter (7:24-29), when the woman begs Jesus to heal her daughter, he uses a common racial slur Jews had for pagans as “dogs.” When she throws the metaphor back at him, he is surprised by her faith, and she gets her wish. God is apparently at work in people outside of Israel. How remarkable it is that the Spirit chose a pagan woman to teach Jesus, a Jewish man, this lesson.

Matthew enlarges the story for his own purpose. His faith community in Antioch was predominantly Jewish converts but fast attracting more and more pagan converts. He uses the story to show his Jewish members that Jesus was open to the expansion of God’s Kingdom beyond Israel. Matthew heightens the drama by calling the woman a Canaanite, the traditional enemies of the Hebrews when they entered the region with Joshua. God’s original “Chosen People” now includes their former enemies and, potentially, the entire world.

The importance to us of seeing Jesus learn and grow as part of his human development and obedience to the Spirit is that we, too, must grow and change. For white Christians, acknowledging cultural prejudices and deep social formation about race has become a critical threshold to cross, especially for those who think they can’t possibly be racist.

The early church was born in traumatic transition from its Jewish roots to universal diversity, carrying a Gospel that was open to Canaanite women, Roman centurions, good Samaritans and God-fearing Greeks. Jesus’ Semitic appearance, closer to today’s Egyptian than the European faces found in religious paintings hanging in U.S. churches and funeral homes, should make us wonder if even our mental models of Jesus and the

early church are reliable. It is an exercise in stretching our imaginations and faith.

If Jesus could grow from firmly believing that he was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel to surrendering his life on the cross to save the whole world, we can open our lives to everyone as equal in dignity and worth and bearing the image of God Jesus revealed as the divine face of humanity.

Transfigured Thursday, August 6, 2020

by [Pat Marrin](#)

[Spirituality](#)



"His face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light" (Matt 17:2).

Transfiguration of the Lord

Dan 7:9-10, 13-14; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Matt 17:1-9)

The huge chemical explosion that destroyed the port and a large portion of the city of Beirut yesterday was a reminder of the massive destruction human beings are capable of wreaking by careless neglect or with intent. But it pales before the memory of the atomic bomb exploded over the city of Hiroshima 75 years ago today, August 6, at the end of WWII.

That fiery birth of the nuclear age was highlighted, by design or ignorance approaching blasphemy, on the Solemnity of the Transfiguration as the culmination of the "Trinity" Project that created the bomb named "Little Boy," delivered by an American B-29 named "Enola Gay" after the pilot's mother. The central theophany of Jesus' life, revealing him as God's Beloved Son, sent to save the world by fulfilling the Law and the Prophets, was made inseparable from the use of an atomic weapon in the history of human warfare.

Like the Gospel's description of Jesus transfigured into radiant light, the flash incineration of 60,000 to 80,000 human beings left shadows like photo negatives on pavement and the walls of buildings. The estimated death toll would reach 200,000 by 1950. A dwindling number of survivors continue to be represented at the annual commemoration of the bombing, at which millions of folded paper cranes sent by children from around the world decorate the memorial site as a prayer for peace.

The Gospel for today's solemnity has so many points of entry into the mystery of Jesus and his mission. Like the three disciples with Jesus, we are invited into the paradox of light and shadow that surrounds him. He will be bathed in light before he descends into the darkness of his suffering and death, abandoned by his own disciples, even some of those present at the transfiguration. The voice from heaven will be silent as he cries out from the cross.

The central question for human beings is as old as the choice put before the people in Deuteronomy 30:15: "This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life." It is a choice not just for governments

or scientists, but one each of us makes in his or her heart each time we interact with others or decide how we will devote our time and energy to our families and communities, what we will value, support and work for. The small folded cranes are the voices of children who ask only for a future. Having already and too often seen the curse of conflict and the terrible cost of war, how can we not work for the justice that brings peace?

Nuclear era that began in 1945 poses moral questions for the 21st century

Aug 6, 2020

by [Dennis Sadowski, Catholic News Service](#)



A Dongfeng-41 intercontinental strategic nuclear missiles group formation is seen Oct. 1, 2019, in Beijing. (CNS/Reuters/Weng Qiyu)

CLEVELAND — The Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed by atomic bomb explosions 75 years ago this August, hastening the end of World War II. And while a nuclear arms race emerged during the 1960s before arms control agreements took hold in the 1970s and

1980s, such weapons have not been deployed in warfare since.

Nuclear disarmament advocates want to keep it that way. But they are becoming increasingly concerned that despite significant reductions in nuclear arsenals by the United States and Russia, a new arms race threatens to upend the progress made over the last half-century.

What alarms people such as Bishop John E. Stowe of Lexington, Kentucky, bishop president of Pax Christi USA, is that the threat nuclear weapons continue to pose to the world is "off the radar screen for so many people."

"We haven't sensed the urgency about the nuclear question for a while," he told Catholic News Service.

With climate change in recent years and now the rise of the coronavirus pandemic, the push for racial justice and worldwide economic upheaval commanding attention, "the public consciousness on nuclear weapons is not there and the immediate threat is not seen," agreed David Cortright, director of policy studies at the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies.

Cortright and other observers contend arms control has lost momentum in recent years as treaties that limit the size of arsenals collapse, nonstate actors seek out a nuclear device to legitimize their status, deep-seated polarization keeps politicians apart, and political instability in some countries exposes existing stockpiles of weapons to rogue parties.

Yet, for disarmament advocates there is little reason to abandon hope. They have resisted and organized against anti-disarmament

voices for decades. More recently they have had Pope Francis and his repeated castigation of nuclear weapons propelling them forward.

Throughout his papacy, Francis has appealed to the world's nine nuclear weapons-possessing nations to dismantle their arsenals for the good of humanity. In January, while giving his annual address to diplomats accredited to the Vatican, he reiterated his call for a world without nuclear weapons, saying "true peace cannot be built on the threat of a possible total annihilation of humanity."

"These weapons do not only foster a climate of fear, suspicion and hostility," he said. "They also destroy hope. Their use is immoral, a crime not only against the dignity of human beings but against any possible future for our common home." His words echoed the message of his 2015 encyclical on care for the earth, "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home."



Nagasaki, Japan, showed scant signs of recovery four years after an atomic bomb was detonated

over the city Aug. 9, 1945. (CNS/Milwaukee Journal Sentinel files/USA TODAY NETWORK via Reuters)

Advocates have suggested it is time for the world to heed the pope's words. They also urged bishops' conferences worldwide to become more vocal in supporting the pope's stance.

Marie Dennis, senior adviser to the secretary general of Pax Christi International, based in Brussels, Belgium, said the pope's consistent instruction has made an impression on a slowly growing contingent of people worldwide. She said she is inspired by the work of young people who are tying the existence of nuclear weapons to other threats to the planet including climate change, famine and extreme poverty.

"When you get outside of the United States, there is a lot of energy to get rid of these weapons," she told CNS. "There is a global recognition that we've got to do something different."

Dennis' Pax Christi colleague, Mary Yelenick, cited the adoption in 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by 122 United Nations member states as a sign that the world wanted to tell the nuclear powers their vision must change.

Yelenick, the organization's main representative at the U.N., said passage of the treaty became possible when the U.S. diplomats apparently wrote off the effort and failed to attend sessions at which the pact was discussed. Without U.S. officials present, other nations freely discussed their concerns and realized that their stance on prohibiting nuclear weapons was widely shared, she said.

The treaty goes into effect when 50 nations ratify it. The U.N. reported in mid-July that

38 nations have done so, with the Holy See being among the first.

The Vatican's moral stance on nuclear weapons extends back to the papacy of St. John XXIII and has been an important voice for the world to hear, said Jesuit Fr. Drew Christiansen, professor of ethics and global development at Georgetown University.

He called for the U.S. to end its isolation on nuclear weapons and other issues that have international consequences. "We're not seeing each other as part of the human family," he said.

Francis' efforts on disarmament also can guide the world as it observes the 75th anniversary of the bombings, Christiansen said, urging that thinking about the end of World War II must focus on more than an Allied victory.

Christiansen also suggested the anniversary be seen through the lens of broader religious values and the views of people around the world.

"It seems to me out of that, different attitudes can come, an attitude of listening to those who suffer at times of war," he said, including those in the military suffering post-traumatic stress disorder and the hibakusha, the Japanese survivors of the atomic blasts.



People carry the remains of a statue of Mary that survived the atomic blast over Nagasaki, Japan, as they march through the streets of the city Aug. 9, 2012. (CNS/Reuters/Kyodo)

"With that can come some reconciliation," Christiansen said. "We can also come to consciousness of the destructiveness of nuclear weapons. Therefore, we see we need to control them, and assess how the world has gotten in the last few years in respect to the revival of the nuclear arms race."

The Catholic Church can have major influence on efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons if priests and bishops follow the pope's lead, said Kelsey Davenport, director of nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association.

"Right now with the international community so polarized, with the United States and Russia sparring on myriad issues, high level leaders with moral authority can play an important role in trying to mediate between the two sides in calling for action and trying to suggest concrete steps to reduce risk," Davenport explained.

"Historically Catholics have played an important role in steps that have reduced nuclear risk and the church can do so again," she continued. "But we need a broad call to action, and if the Catholic community is hearing the pope's message on nuclear disarmament from the pulpit that can go a long way in encouraging individuals to recognize their own responsibility in pushing nuclear disarmament."

Stowe noted that the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, Aug. 6, falls on the feast of the Transfiguration. He said the miraculous event that revealed Jesus' divine nature to a handful of apostles offers an opportunity "to assess where we are" on the possession of nuclear weapons.

Grassroots efforts have been undertaken to tie prayer to action for raising awareness about nuclear weapons. Pax Christi of Northern California, for example, has introduced an annual Mass for peace and remembrance of the victims of nuclear war.

Last year's liturgy in November, the first of what member Pierre Thompson said he hopes will be many, offered attendees a chance to reflect on the pope's words on nuclear weapons and their harm to people.

"The usage of nuclear weapons [in Japan] as well as the continued testing over the years has caused a great deal of harm to people, to the environment," Thompson told CNS. "The whole system of preparing for nuclear war also causes harm because it diverts resources from other important causes like health and education."

He said victims of nuclear weapons extend beyond hibakusha to include people forcibly removed from Pacific islands to allow for atomic testing and residents of the former Soviet Union, as well as India and Pakistan,

two nations that have nuclear-tipped missiles pointed at each other.

Thompson said Masses for peace, sharing the pope's teaching and other programs can serve to help Catholics overcome complacency and indifference.

"I see this has very fertile ground," he said.

Nowhere Man

by [Pat Marrin](#)



"What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit himself?" (Matt 16:26).

Nahum 2:1.3, 3:1-3, 6-7; Matt 16:24-28

Ambitious, self-seeking people do not forfeit their lives all at once but in small surrenders of their true selves for a counterfeit one to gain some perceived advantage. Over time they become that false self, like celebrities created by a publicist, a politician with a

persona designed from polling data and a voting record built on doublespeak. No wonder some public figures fight to stay in office at all costs, for without its trappings they become the lonely, fearful “Nowhere Man” of the Beatles song.

*He's a real nowhere man
Sitting in his nowhere land
Making all his nowhere plans for nobody*

We are all capable of pursuing this makeover, why Jesus tells his disciples not to trade themselves to gain what passes for success, importance or power. The paradox of loss and gain is evident in many of his sayings: The first shall be last and the last first; service is the key to leadership; greatness comes from humility. Jesus models this inversion by his own descent into meekness to reveal the self-emptying God who is the opposite of the self-aggrandizing prince of this world Jesus met in the desert, the liar who promised him everything if he would only kneel to acknowledge him.

God is love, and the heart of the paradox is that by losing ourselves in others we become who we are meant to be, images of God. Who has not glimpsed this reality? A single act of genuine love is worth the whole world. Greater love than this no one has than to lay down one’s life for another. On the other hand, an act of betrayal, dishonesty, violence or hate alienates us not just from the world but from ourselves. We cannot come home again, pray or find peace and self-acceptance until we right the wrong and restore this most intimate connection to God, self and neighbor.

Today’s Gospel actually ends where yesterday’s Gospel of the Transfiguration begins. Jesus says that some of his disciple are about to see the full glory of what self-

emptying love looks like. He will take Peter, James and John up the mountain to witness his divine affirmation and his meeting with Moses and Elijah before his descent to Jerusalem to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. By taking up his cross and losing his life, Jesus will claim eternal life not only for himself but for us. What the disciples see on the mountain will be accomplished in the paradox of his crucifixion on Golgotha.

No one finds their life all at once, but in the day-to-day moments of letting go of self for the sake of love, the small courtesies that gradually form us in Christ, whose image affirmed us the day of our baptism. Taking up the cross of who we are is how we become our true selves, useful in community, available for service, part of the larger mystery of the church. If we do this, we will save our lives.

Expansion Project Update

On Friday, July 31, our architects, Loving and Campos, submitted permit drawings to the Building Department in Antioch and to the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. Our kitchen design will be submitted to the County Health Department within the next 30 days.

These are important steps forward in our long journey to achieve the goal of a new kitchen and expanded parish hall. Much remains to be done as the Expansion Committee works to finalize construction documents so our contractor can provide a final construction bid.

Thank you to all who continue their Expansion Project pledge payments. If you haven't yet pledged, you are invited to do so. Please call the parish office for a pledge form. You can make your pledges by check, EFT or credit card.

Fly Me to the Moon Raffle Mailing

Thank you to the crew who helped setup and assemble the Grand Raffle mailing last Monday while maintaining appropriate social distancing: **Kathy & Vince Augusta, Don Benson, Stevie & Tom Catchings, Mel Costanza, Beth & Richard Enea, Vicki & Brian McCoy and Maryann Peddicord.**

Justice Corner by Carolyn Krantz, Pastoral Associate

How does one deal with change? It is a constant in our lives, but we often spend useless time trying to defeat it. Life, and culture are like a great impressionistic painting. We can concentrate on one square inch or we can step back and look at the whole with all its brilliance. “The imagination that produces hope is fluid, permeable and catholic, always stepping back...and then plunging in again, convinced that there is something still more to discover, seeking after a greater sense of the whole.” *

To deal with change, we must first be present to the moment in which it occurs. We must SEE it. There is surprise and possibly worry. How do we incorporate this change into the whole? How will we shift our way of doing things? What course corrections need to be made? Our emotions rise up and feelings come forth. It is important to ACKNOWLEDGE THESE FEELINGS. We might feel loss for what was. We might feel confusion and disorientation, but we can't stay there. We must bring our imagination into the picture and see possibilities for the future. How does this change fit into the whole of our lives? What do we need to let go and what should remain constant?

LETTING GO is the next step. When COVID came, we had to let go of our old ways of doing things and welcome a Zoom

based world. Computer meetings have replaced in-person meetings. What we hold on to is the fact that it is important to get everyone's input before decisions are made. If we stay with the swirl of newness, new patterns will emerge. It is like sitting in the hot tub with all the jets on. We close our eyes and enjoy the feel of it. Gradually the body relaxes and muscles become less tense, and the way becomes clear.

We can spend useless energy fighting change or we can look to the future with our imaginations. What do the changes of the current time require of us? What do we have to risk in order to bring about a new world? Nothing less than our lives in Christ. We are being asked to transform our world into a place of acceptance and love. Like the early church, we see the whole world out there waiting, the whole canvas ready to be painted. Like St. Paul, the change at first blinds us. We look to the sages of the past for direction. We pray in the confusion and wait for the Spirit to tell us what our part is in this new beginning.

WAITING is the last step and it is a hard one. Most of us don't wait very well. This is a time of learning how to wait with grace rather than anxiety. That is where our faith comes in. We know Jesus is with us, but we must wait on His inspiration to move forward. Remember he often comes in a gentle breeze rather than an earthquake, but he can quiet any storm.

I heard a song recently. The words were: “My body and your body are one in the Divine.” We are to go forth knowing and acting as the one Body of Christ. That is what St. Paul did. He imagined one body, “whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free.” Let your faith define you.

Try to spend a day without judging. Just

take it in. When I wake up, I often repeat, “Relax into the day.” Be together with your loved ones and all the problems. Listen for direction to move forward. Write down the possibilities.

Living with change involves risk. Thomas Edison tried 1000 times to invent the light bulb. He succeeded on the 1001 try.

*Christopher Pramuk, *Hope Sings So Beautiful*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), P. 106.

Justice Corner by Carolyn Krantz, Pastoral Associate

We are in a new time. It first appears chaotic, but as the scientists of chaos theory will tell us, chaos appears to be random, but it is not. Patterns begin to emerge from the flux of the chaotic state. We are to look with God's eyes for patterns that emerge from what appears to be random and unpredictable. In many experiments, new patterns occur in the swirl. Chaos is the ground of creativity, they say. Like the early Church when the Spirit descended, things are changed. We are to remain open and receiving. We may wish for more stability, for things to be as they were in the past, but stability breeds stagnation, and the Spirit is anything but stagnant. What patterns are emerging from the current events in our lives? What aspects of our lives are changed by these new patterns?

A newscaster recently said, “Covid is not an agent of change but an accelerator of change.” We already had internet and the ability to relate electronically. The virus just accelerated it. This is also true with the liturgy. We already had the principles of Vatican II, now we are about to embark on changes that will allow us to return to church and will also keep us safe. It will not be “business as usual.” We have all missed

being together for worship. Reopening will not be the same as before, but it will allow us to capture that spirit of community that we have so missed. The following offers some thoughts about what is essential and what we can let go. The challenge is to discover where the Spirit is leading. What is essential to the faith. What patterns are emerging? Here are some thoughts about what we should keep:

- The connection to Jesus in His Pascal Mystery, His death and rising reenacted in the Eucharist. Even through the live stream, we have tried to continue that.
- The connection to Jesus teaching in the Word, especially the Beatitudes and Matthew 25, “I was hungry and you gave me to eat.” This is what calls us beyond ourselves to serve others. This is what we have witnessed in our healthcare community.
- The Body of Christ-being together as a faith community witnessing to a converted world.

This is not an exhaustive list but an essential one.

The Diocese has sent out an extensive list of how reopening should be done. We cannot shake hands, or receive communion in the cup. We cannot sit in our usual pew and must arrive early to get our temperature checked. It will be different! We will fumble at the start. It will depend on all of us working together with patience. It will require leadership beyond clerical persons. It will require the input of our youth who are the future of the church. We will not have the church full or the whole choir singing, but Eucharist will be Eucharist and we will again be a community coming together.

Let us pray that we may continue to build this new church. It is not without purpose that we at St. Ignatius of Antioch are expanding our facilities in this time. We are People of hope.

***Parish Perspective (Best Of) by
Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pastoral Associate
A Harsh Everything***

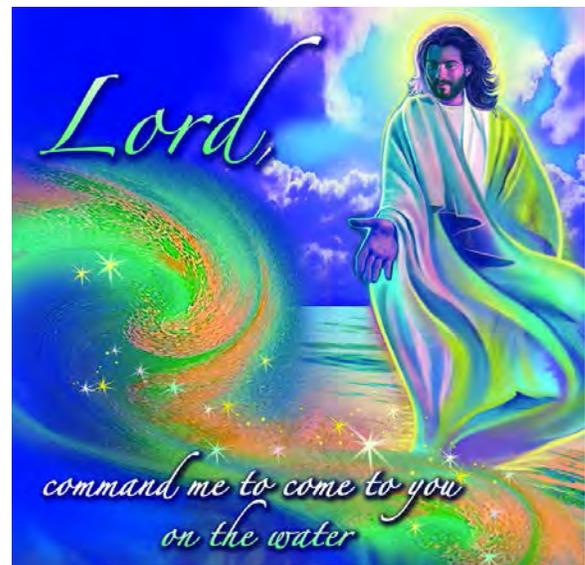
Last week during one of the Growing In Faith Together (GIFT) sessions on Thursday morning, a question was raised about the gospel passage that has Jesus telling the disciples he must suffer, die, and rise again. Peter saying, "God forbid Lord, no such thing shall ever happen to you." Jesus replies, "Get behind me Satan. You are thinking as men do, not as God does." Those are pretty harsh words and I don't think any of us would care to hear them directed at us. But to Jesus' ear, Peter's words are equally harsh. Words that take us away from what God has planned for us to do are harsh to hear and often strike deep into the heart. There are many biblical passages that have been called "hard sayings."

Take the parable of the workers in the vineyard who start at various times of the day yet receive the same wage at the end. "Unfair!" we cry! It is difficult to comprehend on the surface, especially since we live in a capitalistic society where most people work for an hourly wage. But from God's view what He offers is everything he has. Everything he has is offered to the first person who does his work. Everything is offered to the second, third...and right down to the last. We think the first should get more, but there is no "more" to give. They all get everything there is to give! Again, in the parable of the prodigal son, the father speaks to the older son after the return of the younger saying, "All I have is yours..." There is no more inheritance to divide and

everything will go to the older son. There is nothing more the father can give either son.

We go through life thinking a lot of things just don't seem fair or fall into line with our own personal sense of justice, who should get what, who should be what, who should have what, who should suffer, and who should plunder.

But there is always hope. Here is common ground for us to stand on. There is faith. Our profession of faith is our most common ground. Every time we proclaim it, with meaning in every word, we testify to the power and promise of God that in the end, on His day there will be perfect justice. All the wrongs will dissolve into nothingness as we his children will be given the wage, he gives to all who do his work, that is...EVERYTHING!



Two Long Running Outreach Efforts Going Virtual

For more than a decade, St. Ignatius of Antioch parish has conducted two drives during the summer months:



The Mary Project in support of
Birthright of Brentwood

and



The Backpack Drive in support of
the students of St. Peter Martyr



Due to the risk caused by the ongoing pandemic, these two traditional outreach efforts are going virtual. Rather than collecting specific items for donation to these organizations, we are collecting cash donations between now and Sunday, August 15, 2020.



If you would like to support this effort this year, please make your check payable to St. Ignatius of Antioch. Write **“SUMMER OUTREACH”** on the memo line. All funds received with this designation will be split 50/50 and forwarded to Birthright of Brentwood and St. Peter Martyr the week of August 16.

If you prefer that your donation to go to one organization or the other, please write:

“BIRTHRIGHT OUTREACH” or

“SCHOOL OUTREACH” on the memo line.

Thank you for supporting these two long running efforts. We look forward to filling the church with diapers, clothes and other baby items for Birthright and backpacks and school supplies for St. Peter Martyr in 2021.