

The Work of the People

The Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

In this time of pandemic and the struggle for racial equality it is no surprise that many of us can be confused and uncertain. When will all of this end, we may ask? What can I do in this time of great anxiety. The questions are many and the answers are in short supply. One of the things we all can do is turn to God in trust and with the belief that God is at work in all of this seeking to bring about good. We can turn to God in prayer. Prayer is a very powerful act because it connects us with the One who is at work in our lives and in our world every minute of every day. Please remember to pray for those in need.

On this Sunday we hear from the Prophet Ezekiel. A prophet is like a watchman appointed to herald the advance of a country's enemies by blowing a trumpet. God appoints Ezekiel as the watchman for the house of Israel. The watchman's task is to speak the truth to others and lead them from their evil inclinations. Should the watchman not do that, he is liable for the person's injury or death. But the persons who simply do not heed the watchman's words or the sound of the trumpet, are responsible for the consequences that befall them.

In the reading from Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome we hear today that Christ's own love shown for us through his Death and Resurrection means that love is now the fulfillment of the law. Following the letter of the law no longer satisfies, but rather embracing fully the commandment to love one another does. Love is the opposite of evil. When we love our neighbor as ourselves, we fulfill the law as Jesus did, for he is Love, the Love whom God calls us to imitate.

We skip ahead a few chapters in Matthew for this Sunday's Gospel reading where we find Jesus teaching his disciples how to handle a situation in which a person sins against them. Jesus instructions initially follow the pattern of Ezekiel's words from the First Reading in which a disciple is to speak honestly with the person who sinned. If the sinner does not listen, then a small group of people comes to address the situation as in trial. Failing resolution, then one is to tell the Church which, Jesus instructs, is to treat the sinner as he treated tax collectors and Gentiles.

The reflection for this Sunday is from Paula Huston who is a Camaldolese Benedictine oblate and the author of two novels and seven works of spiritual non-fiction.

Many years ago a close friend betrayed me. A teaching position I'd long been aiming for suddenly opened up at the university where I taught, but when I turned to my friend and colleague for advice on how to get the job, he was evasive and noncommittal. Only when someone else had been hired did I find out why: my colleague had recommended I not even be considered for the post. Baffled and furious, I took an early retirement, declaring to myself that I never wanted to see him or the campus again.

Fifteen years later, I bumped into him at a funeral. I was shocked at how old and careworn he looked. Before I could stop myself, I was embracing him, my eyes filling with tears of . . . what? Could this be love I was feeling?

Love is the energizing force behind biblical teachings that forbid us from harming others. At first, we try our best to obey those rules because we are afraid of what will happen if we don't. Then, after what seems a lifetime of learning how to set aside our temptations toward envy, vengefulness,

and self-pity, something new begins to reveal itself in us. We realize that we are no longer capable of wishing evil upon our neighbor, no matter what he has done. The law has been fulfilled in us.

As I hugged the friend who had once betrayed me, the room seemed suddenly awash in the light of Christ.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 1 Cor. 5:1-8/Lk. 6:6-11

Tuesday: Mi 5:1- 4a or Rom 8:28-30/Mt. 1:1-16, 18-23 or

Wednesday: 1 Cor. 7:25-31/Lk. 6:20-26

Thursday: 1 Cor. 8:1b-7, 11-13/Lk. 6:27-48

Friday: 1 Cor. 9:16-19, 22b-27/Lk. 6:39-42

Saturday: 1 Cor. 10:14-22/Lk. 6:43-49

Sunday: Sir. 27:30; 28:7/Rom. 14:7-9/Mt. 18:21-35

CELEBRATE MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

It has been a joy for the Diocese of Erie to recently honor through prayer and gifts those couples celebrating milestone anniversaries. Congratulations to:

James/Frances Peters - 62 yrs.

Robert/Louise Brunot - 61 yrs.

James/Karen Samson - 60 yrs

Gerald/Harriet McLaren - 50 yrs

Charles/Judith Metzler - 50 yrs.

John/Cynthia Weber - 50 yrs.

David/Anna Dieteman - 25 yrs.

Keith/Lori Kolin - 25 yrs.

Paulo/Rebecca Leandro - 25 yrs.

Dennis/Tammy Mott - 25 yrs.

Scott/Stephanie Zilhaver - 25 yrs.

2020 CATHOLIC EDUCATION COLLECTION

The 2020 Catholic Education Collection will take place on September 19-20. This important collection supports lifelong faith formation for all generations throughout our diocese. Please give generously and know that half of what you give will remain here at the parishes to support our own religious education and faith formation programs. The envelope is in your collection packet with the weekly offertory envelopes - Catholic Education Collection.

SIGN INTERPRETED MASS

A Sign Interpreted Mass for the Deaf is held every Sunday at 11:00 am at St. Joseph/Bread of Life Community Church, 147 W. 24th St., Erie.

*“Lord,
help me to watch over my family.
I trust in your protection.”*

WORSHIP

Monday, September 7
 8:00 am + Robert A. Adams (Family)
 Tuesday, September 8
 8:00 am + Sue Quick (Shawn Pflieger)
 Wednesday, September 9
 8:00 am + NO MASS
 Thursday, September 10
 8:00 am + Rita Windsor (daughter Kathy)
 Friday, September 11
 8:00 am + Bob Pflieger (Shawn Pflieger)
 Saturday, September 12
 4:30 pm + Killie Blakemore (Kathleen Lipkovich)
 Sunday, September 13
 8:00 am + AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 Bob Brunot (John & Kay Weagraff)
 9:30 am + AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 Living & Deceased Parishioners

PARISH EVENTS CALENDAR

Tuesday, September 8
 After Mass - St. Anthony Novena
 Saturday, September 12
 3:30 - 4:15 pm - Confession
 Sunday, September 13
 Before Mass - Confession - ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 After Mass - Confession - ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA

A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

The key word in today's gospel is "listen." We cannot change another person; not alone, not with others and not with a whole Church. All we can do is state our position and "if he listens to you" then he/she can take the steps necessary to change themselves. Change comes from within.

*"Jesus,
 help me always to stay firmly
 connected to you."*

STEWARDSHIP - ST. BERNADETTE MISSION

Offertory	\$395.00
Candles	37.00
Maintenance	<u>200.00</u>
TOTAL	\$632.00

Catholic Services Appeal
 Pledged: \$5,565 Paid: \$5,265

MISSIONARY COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,
 One of the last things Jesus said to his friends before his ascension was, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." (Mt. 28:19). This Great Commission is at the heart of our Catholic Christian faith. We are to proclaim the Gospel and spread the Good News to all who need to hear it. This is what we call evangelization. It begins at home with our families and extends throughout all the earth.

Every summer the Diocese of Erie joins dioceses around the world in the annual Missionary Cooperative program - in which Catholic missionaries come on a weekend to each of our parishes to educate us on the work they do, and take up an optional second collection to support that work. This year the coronavirus caused all of our scheduled missionary visits to be cancelled. Yet the Church's missionary work must continue. I am inviting pastors to choose a weekend this summer to dedicate their homily specifically to the Church's missionary work. They will then take up an optional collection. That collection will be the weekend of September 12th & 13th for St. Anthony of Padua and St. Bernadette Mission. All of the funds donated to this special second collection will be evenly divided among the missionary groups which had planned to visit the Diocese of Erie this summer. Thus, our generosity will allow them to continue their work amidst the challenges of this pandemic.

Evangelization is at the heart of the Christian life. Every year we learn about and support international missionary work through the Missionary Cooperative Plan. In this difficult year, I invite you to please continue to pray for the Church's missionary work and contribute to it as you are able. You and your families remain in my prayer.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
 The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
 Bishop of Erie

NOTE: The envelope for the Missionary Collection is in the back of the collection envelope box, titled Missionary Co-Op. Please use it for the above collection. Thank you.

STEWARDSHIP - ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA

Offertory	\$394.00
Maintenance	234.00
Candles	37.00
CSA	91.00
Latin Mass	<u>295.00</u>
TOTAL	\$1,051.00

Catholic Services Appeal
 Pledged: \$26,086 Paid: \$23,636

CHURCH NAME: ST. ANTONY OF PADUA

CHURCH NO.:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
