



Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time

January 31, 2021



WEEKEND MASSES:
SATURDAYS AT 5PM
SUNDAYS AT 10:30AM

DAILY MASSES:
TUESDAYS &
THURSDAYS 8AM

RECONCILIATION:
SATURDAYS 3:30 - 4:30PM

HOLY HOUR:
WEDNESDAYS 6 - 7PM

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MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, January 30

8:00am: Living and Deceased
Parishioners of Immaculate
Conception Parish
5:00pm: Parishioners of Immaculate
Conception Parish

Sunday, January 31

10:30am: Gretchen Callahan
Jack O'Leary

Monday, February 1

8:00am: Living and Deceased
Parishioners of Immaculate
Conception Parish

Tuesday, February 2

8:00am: Frank Nanini

**Wednesday, February 3**

8:00am: Garrett Collopy

Thursday, February 4

8:00am: Luigi Sorrentino

Friday, February 5

8:00am: Deceased Parishioners of
Immaculate Conception Parish

Saturday, February 6

8:00am: Living and Deceased
Parishioners of Immaculate
Conception Parish

5:00pm: William & Maria Vena
Jim McCarthy

Garrett Collopy

Sunday, February 7

10:30am: Parishioners of Immaculate
Conception Parish

Anna Cortesi

Elzbieta Roza Rudzka

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Father Mike's Homiletter – January 31, 2021 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scripture: Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9; 1 Corinthians 7:32-35; Mark 1:21-28

On Tuesday, as I sit planning this note, I am struck by the beauty of the snowfall outside the window. True, it slows traffic, causes fender-benders, extends commutes, and calls for shoveling when the flakes stop falling, but it also beautifies the landscape, and during the snow storm itself, can often be incredibly calm and quiet. An ideal time for savoring a sense of peace, and meditating on the many gifts of our creator. One of those gifts, brought to mind by our readings this Sunday, is the gift of community.

We use the term, derived from the Latin word for “common”, in many contexts these days. It can refer to facilities available to all, e.g., the community center. But it also refers to a group having common interests or a similar identity. As Christians, that should be us. We should have a common interest in following the example of Jesus Christ, producing in us characteristics which reflect Him, which make Him real and visible in our society. And we should be cultivating that social unity, that sense of community, among ourselves, while inviting others to join us.

Our first reading includes some of Moses' farewell instructions to the people of Israel as they are about to enter the land promised to them by God. Moses will not go with them, but he reminds them of the covenant they have made with God. The people have paused to renew their commitment before traveling on – knowing that if they do not keep faith with God, they will not keep the Promised Land. Moses' instructions involve *a community code of living*: many of the Covenant commands are intended to hold them together and reinforce their identity as God's special people. For example, though not mentioned in our reading, the Israelites were not to charge interest on loans, because a loan would only be needed in an emergency, and to charge a member of the community for a loan when he was in distress was not appropriate. It would not strengthen the sense of belonging and communal concern for the well-being of each and all.

In another context, Paul is also trying to help the Corinthians understand the call to community. Corinth was a city at a crossroads in the Roman Empire, and many characters and ideas drifted through. The new Corinthian Christians got a bit distracted and competitive about whose state in life was better – married, unmarried, etc. Though the excerpt we hear does not fully explain the context, Paul is trying to tell the new Christians that no particular state in life is best for everyone, Christianity is not a competition, and becoming a Christian is not a reason to abandon commitments they have already made. At the time, there was a sense that Jesus' second coming was imminent, so Paul is trying to get the Corinthians *to focus on what is important*, to cultivate a sense of community, not to worry about how they could out-do each other in penitential practices.

Jesus too is conscious of community. He has come to Capernaum, His new home base, His new community, and as is His custom, enters the synagogue on the Sabbath. He begins to teach, and the members of the community are struck by the way he teaches – there is something about His manner which seems more authoritative than the usual instruction. (I suspect that we've all had one or two teachers who somehow compel interest and attention more than others – Jesus must have been like that.) Present in the synagogue is a man possessed by an unclean spirit. Since such people were normally excluded from society, it's not clear how or why he was there. The evil spirit senses Jesus' presence in the community, and he feels – and can't stand to be in the presence of - Jesus' holiness. Since most Jews would avoid interaction with an unclean spirit to avoid ritual impurity, the evil spirit may expect Jesus to leave him to keep his victim miserable. How often have we chosen not to see someone or something we could help? Having just been teaching the Scripture, Jesus does not sit back in academic satisfaction – He puts the Scripture into action. He responds to the demon's taunts – and again, with authority, demands that the demon leave his victim and leave the synagogue. The demon convulses the man, but leaves him. The exit of the demon means the man can once again be part of the community, which is even more impressed by Jesus' power and authority. Needless to say, word gets around the community, and even to wider areas. A wider community.

Something to think about: *community as a Gospel value*. Something to ask ourselves: do we tend to think more about how different each of us are, or about how we are all part of God's special community?

Peace,
Father Mike

Food for Thought...

To believe in the faithfulness of God and in his church is to believe that he will not let it fall asleep, be overwhelmed, lose its vigor and the dynamism of its hope.

Jesus-Maria Asurmendi



4TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

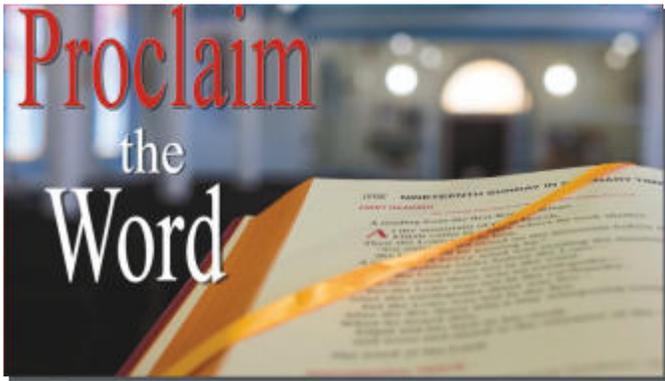
HOLY ONE

He cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" - Mk 1:24

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

“The Lord has given me a well-trained tongue,
That I might know how to answer the weary a
word that will waken them.”

- Isaiah 50:4



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SCAN ME

D. Todd Williamson is the Director of the Office for Divine Worship of the Archdiocese of Chicago. He is a speaker, author and liturgist whose ministerial experience includes teaching and parish pastoral ministry. His most recent publications, *Great is the Mystery*, *the Formational Power of Liturgy*, and *Guide for Celebrating the Rites of Christian Initiation with Adults*, are published by Liturgy Training Publications.



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Celebrate Candlemas Day February 2

Candlemas is another name for the feast of the Presentation of the Lord. Forty days after His birth, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple for the rites of purification and dedication as prescribed by the Torah.

The Presentation is a proclamation of Christ as Lord and Savior, the light who came into this world to dispel sin and darkness. For this reason, traditionally candles have been blessed at Mass this day that will be used throughout the year, hence the name “Candlemas.”

This holy day is also celebrated by Christians throughout the world as the end of the Christmas season. In Hispanic nations, tamales are eaten on this day.

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22-40

You can read more about Candlemas Day at <https://catholicstraightanswers.com/candlemas-day/>

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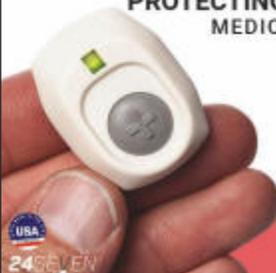
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The Annual Catholic Appeal offers a wonderful opportunity to answer Jesus' call to "Come, follow me ... and bring hope to the world." This is especially important during these trying and challenging times. Many in our parishes are affected financially by the pandemic, and we encourage giving at all levels to support this initiative.

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