

JUNE 13, 2021

11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The Church of

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Office staffed T, W and Th, as we are able.

We continue to offer three masses each week to enable people to attend while maintaining appropriate social distancing. The Sunday 9:30 am mass continues to be live streamed on our Facebook page. We are also offering a Saturday 5:00 pm mass and a Sunday 12:00 pm (noon) mass.

Although state capacity restrictions have been lifted, we must still maintain six feet of physical distancing between groups, which means that our attendance is still limited. The 9:30 mass is the most popular. When your schedule allows, please consider attending one of the other two services.

Attendance at mass is still NOT required. Please make choices that keep you and the community safe.

Fr. Joe and the staff hold you all in our prayers, and ask that you pray for us and for all the essential workers who are striving to keep things running.

We support the quality, faith-based K-8 education at

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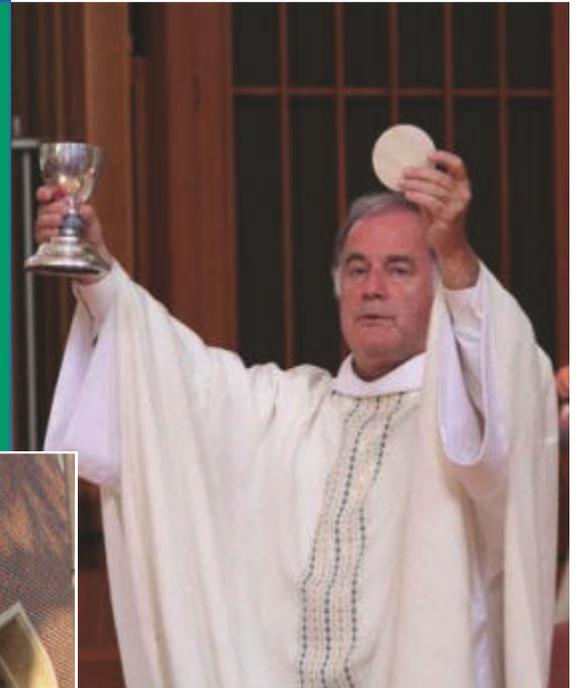
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Jesus calls us
to look with
new eyes
at the world
that surrounds us.



Say YES to
love and peace.
Amen! Alleluia!



This week at St. Albert's

(masses and intentions are in **BOLD** type)

*During the pandemic, we are offering **three** masses per weekend to help attendees maintain social distancing. Fr. Joe is still celebrating private daily masses for the intentions below.*

Saturday, June 12 –

5:00 pm mass Kathy Post †

Sunday, June 13 –

9:30 am mass – Joe Messenbrink †

12:00 pm mass – John Arndt †

Monday, June 14 – James Otto †

Tuesday, June 15 – John Roban †

Thursday, June 17 – Mark Larson †

12:00 to 3:00 pm Crafters in the Social Hall

Friday, June 18 – Barbara and Dean Santos ††

Saturday, June 19 –

5:00 pm mass Virginia Rengel †

Sunday, June 20 – Father's Day

9:30 am mass – John Roban †

12:00 pm mass – Bill Brown †

In our prayers

We remember those who need healing, including Michael Callaghan, Joan Ellison, Curt Huovie, Ben Wilkie, Steve Bach, Anne Marie Christiansen, Marianne Green, Copper Schadow, and Kira & Baby Girl Walstrom.

Please add a prayer for those who have died, including Mark Larson.

Due to HIPAA privacy standards, hospitals and care centers cannot notify us of your need for our prayers or visits unless you direct them to call.

If you or someone you know would like to be included in our prayers, or have the Sacrament of the Sick, or communion brought to you, please let the office know at 612-724-3643. Messages are checked regularly.

A request for mass-goers:

Because the 9:30 am Sunday mass is getting so popular, we ask that those who arrive first fill in the MIDDLE designated spots in a pew. This will help keep all available spots accessible. Please cooperate with ushers who may ask this of you. Thanks!

To request that the Eucharist be brought to you at your home, please contact Fr. Joe at 612-245-3345, or Jim Curran at 612-483-1546. Volunteers will mask and safely deliver communion to you.

As we welcome more people to in-person mass:

- * **We are continuing to offer three Masses** each weekend for those who wish to attend in person at 5 PM Saturday and at 9:30 and noon on Sunday. We also continue to livestream the 9:30 AM liturgy. Anyone with symptoms or recent exposure to COVID-19 must remain at home.
- * **ONLY Front center church doors are open, along with the elevator entrance. (One household at a time in elevator.)**
- * **You may attend any of the three services**, but we encourage you to attend at 5 PM Saturday or noon on Sunday if you have the flexibility. The 9:30 AM Mass is the most popular, and we have recently come close to capacity limits. We have not yet had to turn anyone away due to overcrowding, but seating is more readily available at 5 PM and noon.
- * **Masks are no longer required**, although of course they are still permitted. If you want a mask, we have disposable ones available.
- * As appealing as our music is at masses with cantors, we still ask you **NOT to sing for now, even if you are wearing a mask**. Singing is unfortunately one of the most effective ways to transmit the virus.
- * **Please sit in marked spaces with members of your group only.** Your group can include any number of people from any number of households. However, other people may not be comfortable sitting in close proximity, and so we ask that you continue to maintain physical separation from other groups. We have marked three spaces in each open pew which are spaced out to ensure that people remain six feet apart. Please sit at one of these spaces. Larger groups may need to occupy two spots. Please Do not sit in an available spot if you cannot maintain six feet of separation from people who are already seated in that pew.
- * **We now permit seating in every other pew** rather than every third pew. This allows us to increase our capacity while still maintaining extended separation between groups.
- * During the **sign of peace**, please continue to wave or otherwise greet people outside of our group without physical contact.
- * We have been blessed recently with all kinds of weather, as Minnesota IS the "theater of seasons." **Please dress appropriately** for a church that will have its front door and all of its windows open even when we would normally be running the air conditioning. Also, please do not close or adjust the windows. We may run the air conditioning during extreme heat but will keep the windows open when practical.
- * **We have resumed the distribution of communion during its proper place in the liturgy.** You may return to your seats after receiving communion. If you are not comfortable with this, you may also leave immediately after reception.
- * Please **exit the church immediately after the dismissal** and move away from the front doors to ensure a path for other people to exit. The only people remaining in church will be staff and volunteers who are cleaning the church in preparation for the next service. You are welcome to have conversations outside with appropriate physical distancing.

“What makes your heart sing?”

The elevator ride from the third floor to the first floor did not take too long, but it did provide me a little extra time to read some of the wonderful signs posted on the elevator walls. “Live your life and forget your age” got my attention, especially since I was visiting a nursing home filled with elderly women and men. As I was getting off the elevator, another sign caught my eye: “What makes your heart sing?”

Walking across the lobby, an older man was singing to no one in particular: “I’ll be seeing you in all the old familiar places.” As I walked by him, he smiled and said: “Sonny Boy, isn’t life just wonderful? What song would you like to sing with me today?” Politely declining the opportunity to sing a duet number of “Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, zip-a-dee-ay,” I found myself humming “I’ll be seeing you in all the old familiar places” all the way to the car. Suddenly, my eyes welled up with tears as I remembered so many family members and friends who had died. I recalled a time when I walked into the living room and found my mother crying. Quietly sitting down next to her, she motioned with her finger to her lips to be quiet. When the tune on the radio was finished, she said: “Let Me Call You Sweetheart” was your father’s and my favorite song.” At that time, my father had been dead for twenty years.

Today we are celebrating the Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time and have received a wonderful invitation, through the gospel of Mark (4:26-34), to enter the imaginative world of Jesus’ preaching. While there is no historical record of Jesus singing, Jesus was a great storyteller. He spoke in parables reflecting the intersection of the extraordinary reign of God with the ordinary world of human beings. Parables, like metaphors, juxtapose something that is familiar to the listener with something that remains fuzzy or unfamiliar. The parables used by Jesus often signaled his fulfillment of the messianic hope found in the Old Testament. Comparing the Kingdom of God (less known) with a mustard seed (better known), Jesus provoked thoughtful images of the Kingdom of God as a place where people would grow into something that would be wonderful and extraordinary: *“With what can we compare the Kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so the birds of the air can make nests.”*

In Jewish prophetic and apocalyptic literature, the sheltering tree (the greatest of all shrubs) was often perceived as the Kingdom of God, offering security and protection. Inviting his listeners to enter into the parable of the mustard seed, Jesus provided a sense of imperceptible hope that would grow into a full blown understanding of salvation. The teaching device of the parable and the imagery used (in this case, agrarian) would provide a source of enlightenment and truthfulness for the ordinary listener.

In St. Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians (5:6-10), he encouraged the community to *“walk by faith, not by sight.”* The on-going tension of Paul’s belief in the imminent return of Jesus and the eschatological reality facing the community created a mixed message in determining the return of the Second Coming of Jesus. Living in the belief that Jesus would return to the community, Paul kept alive a hope that invited the Corinthians to remain committed to living a moral and ethical way of life *“while they were in the body and away from the Lord.”* Paul, like Jesus, was a teacher and preacher who used parables to enrich the imaginations of his listeners. Both Paul and Jesus were patient with their “remedial disciples” who did not always get the initial message of salvation. However, the creative use of many parables proved to be an effective way to reveal what the Kingdom of God was like. Both Paul and Jesus used a variety of agrarian, fishing, culinary and, especially for Paul, sports parables that would engage audiences in revelatory experiences of the Kingdom of God. The

initial basis of conversion was often found in the “magical transformation” of the listeners’ imaginations.

In our first reading (Ezekiel 17:22-24), the Prophet Ezekiel uses the parable of a majestic tree planted by the Lord God, in order that it *“may produce boughs and good fruit and it will become a noble cedar.”* The parable used by Ezekiel is an apt symbol for the Kingdom of the Messiah. Jesus would prove to be the fulfillment of the messianic promise and the revelation of the inscrutable plan of God. The themes of patience and perseverance characterized the parables of Jesus, Paul and Ezekiel and continue to invite us, even as modern-day skeptics, to “hang in there” while awaiting the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.

It was Pope John XXIII who would employ the parable of “opening the windows of the Church” during the Second Vatican Council to allow the fresh air of the modern world into the hermitically sealed confines of a musty and theologically stale Church. Currently, Pope Francis has “reopened the windows” of the institutional Church allowing a breath of fresh theological air to enliven the conversation with the modern world. Recognizing the need to rediscover the Kingdom of God in the midst of the secular reality of our world, Pope Francis has filtered the conversation through the virtues of mercy and joy. Pope Francis, like Jesus, Paul and Ezekiel, is a storyteller who searches for parables that will be most helpful in revealing the Kingdom of God. With fierce opposition from ultra conservative quarters, Pope Francis has maintained a position of keeping the windows open, the dialogue fresh and an attitude characterized by respect and joy, despite his virulent critics. Imagining a world blessed by peace and justice allows us, even in the most cynical of times, to enter the parables pointing to the promised Kingdom of God.

You are more than welcome to accompany me when I go back to the nursing home, ride the elevator and pick-out the “bon mot” of your choosing. Who knows, might you find the right sign that refreshes your drooping spirits? In a world of uncertainty and a pandemic that surrounds us, the elevator might prove to be a modern-day parable/metaphor for the on-going ups and downs of ordinary life. Answering the question “What makes your heart sing?” is more than just a rhetorical question. All of us need to find and identify the places and people who can make our hearts sing with hope and joy.

The parables of Jesus, not unlike the serendipitous signs on an elevator, offer us insights from which it is impossible to retreat. Scattering our doubts and fears, the parables of Jesus grant us everything we have been searching for, even when we are uncomfortable in accepting the truth. Seeking out the truth of imagination, Jesus’ parables can plant the mustard seed within us and allow us to become “the greatest of all shrubs.” What a remarkable gift to receive the extraordinary grace and imaginative presence of hope in our ordinary lives. As the little old man in the lobby said to me, “Don’t you just love life?” I challenge you to find the right parable that will allow you to do exactly that and find a tune to match the song in your heart.

*Peace,
Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.*

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