

SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The Church of

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Email: info@saintalbertthegreat.org

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 and masks are not currently required, we encourage everyone to participate in ways that are safe and appropriate for them. If you wish to maintain physical distancing, the noon mass has the lightest attendance. We are gradually returning elements that have been missing during the pandemic. We recently reinstated congregational singing and ushers and are working towards the return of lectors and servers.

Fr. Joe, Fr. Jude 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.

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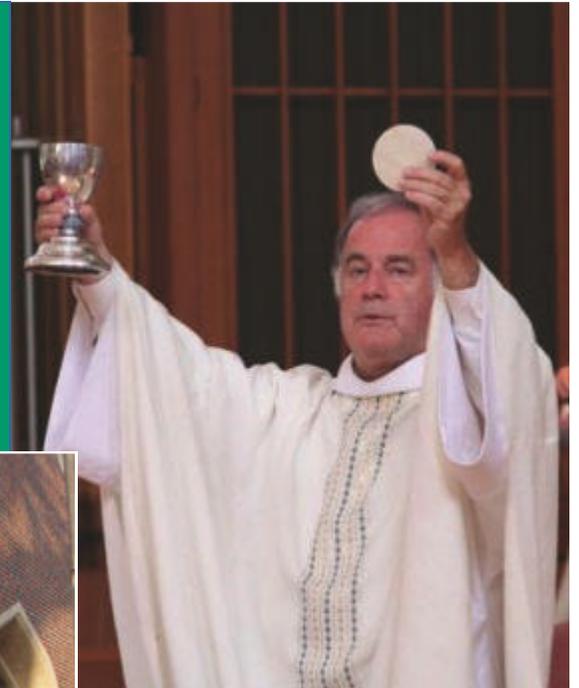
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*"Be strong,
do not fear!
Here
is your God."*



*Say YES to
love and peace.
Amen! Alleluia!*



This week at St. Albert's(masses and intentions are in **BOLD** type)**Saturday, September 4**

5:00 pm mass John Countryman †

Sunday, September 5

9:30 am mass Joe, John & Helen Ziegler †

No Treats today

12:00 pm mass The Poor Claire Nuns of Sauk Rapids †

Monday, September 6 – LABOR DAY

10:00 am Dolores Nelson †

Note mass
time**Tuesday, September 7**

8:15 am Spencer Nelson

9:30 am Staff meeting

Wednesday, September 8**Thursday, September 9**8:15 am mass – Peschong Family
Heidi Brown12:00 to 3:00 pm Potluck lunch, crafting and
conversation in the Social Hall**Friday, September 10**8:15 am mass Marge Nelson
John Rompa Jr. †**Saturday, September 11**

5:00 pm mass John Linsmayer †

Sunday, September 12

9:30 am mass Joe Messenbrink †

10:30 am Treats outside in front of church

12:00 pm mass Pope Francis

THE NEW NORMAL

- * **We will continue to offer three Masses** each weekend for as long as the Sunday noon mass remains popular/practical. We also continue to livestream the 9:30 AM liturgy.
- * **The general dispensation from the Sunday and Holy Day obligation has been lifted.** The dispensation remains available to people at high risk of developing serious illness and for people who care for such individuals. Anyone with symptoms or recent exposure to COVID-19 must still remain at home for the safety of all.
- * **Morning masses in the chapel have resumed at 8:15 am, with the rosary at 8:00 am.** As in the pre-pandemic past, weekday masses will be Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The East door off the back parking lot will be open for weekday masses, along with the elevator entrance.
- * **Use of the front center church doors continues to be encouraged for weekend masses, along with the elevator entrance.**
- * **There are no seating restrictions.** Please respect the desires of those who wish to maintain some physical separation. Hand sanitizer will be available for the foreseeable future.
- * **Masks are no longer required** although of course they are still encouraged for the unvaccinated and anyone with precarious health. The CDC recommends that all people regardless of vaccination status wear masks indoors in counties with substantial viral transmission, which currently includes Hennepin County. We do have disposable masks available.
- * **We invite you to join us in song.** The hymnals are back in the pews, and the hymn numbers are posted on the boards up near the organ. To sing is to pray TWICE!
- * **Give the Sign of Peace** to those near you in ways others appear comfortable with.

Are you on the “Friday Blast” list?

During the Covid-19 quarantine, the parish began a weekly email on Fridays with attachments of the weekly Bulletin and the weekend's scripture readings. We use it as well for updates on news that may have occurred since the Bulletin's Wednesday printing, as well as poems and other inspirational messages.

We began by using all the email addresses we have on file. If you don't receive “The Blast” and would like to, please email Erin at e.sim@saintalbertthegreat.org.

In our prayers

We remember those who need healing, including Roger Cole, Ben Wilkie, Ron Mandery, Dick Martin, Genevieve Strauss, Joan Ellison, Tim Moore, Jo and Dennis Neal, John Syverson, Gretchen Cimaglio, Laine Dahlberg, Jo Groth, Ralph Heikkila, Joe Gollish and Mary Gustafson.

Please add a prayer for those who have died, including Mark Henry (brother of Robin Henry), and for the hundreds of thousands around the world who are victims of natural and man-made disasters.

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.

Call Fr. Joe at 612-245-3345 or Jim Curran at 612-483-1546 if you would like the Eucharist brought safely to you at home.

“See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.”

In the Buddhist tradition, the origin of the phrase, “See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil” is associated with an ability to not dwell on evil thoughts. In Japan, the phrase is simply regarded as a “Golden Rule.” While the origin of the proverb is unknown, the history is traditionally associated with the spread of Buddhist teachings from India to China and then Japan. In the world of artistic representation, the depiction of the proverb is usually in the form of “three wise monkeys,” one of whom is covering his eyes, another his ears and the third his mouth. The source that popularized this pictorial maxim is found in a carving located over a stable door in Nikko, Japan and dates to the 17th Century. Other figurines dating back to the 7th Century give credence to the ancient philosophy of this “moral dictum.” The bottom moral line of advice: Curb the spread of evil by not listening to evil rumors, by not looking on evil things, nor repeating evil things through gossip.

It has been said that the one notable exception of Mahatma Gandhi's principle of “non-possession” was jeopardized by his fondness for a small statue of the three wise monkeys. Gandhi's ability to possess the philosophy of the “three wise monkeys” and to incorporate them in his moral life allowed him the freedom to eventually let go of the statue, but not the statutes that would govern his moral life. In some depictions of the three wise monkeys there is a fourth monkey who symbolizes the principle of “do no evil.” While the addition of this monkey would embody Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence, one theory for the absence of the fourth monkey is that he left the other three for a career in politics. Our current Republican and Democratic wrangling in Washington, D.C. might give us some insight into this theory.

Oddly enough in the Western World, the proverb refers to a lack of moral responsibility on the part of those who refuse to acknowledge evil. In many ways, the three wise monkeys become symbols of denial and provide an avenue of non-involvement, a kind of “do nothing” philosophy. Covering one's eyes, ears and mouth to the impropriety of evil that surround moral situations can easily lead to another to another image: The Elephant in the living-room. Monkeys are bad enough to clean up after in the living room, but try an elephant!

The readings for the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time provide a nice transition for the adventures of the “three wise monkeys.” While there is no explicit mention of monkeys in the readings, the behavioral aspects of “seeing, hearing and speaking” find their way into our moral imaginations. In the reading from the Prophet Isaiah (35:4-7), the prophet encourages faith in a God who will save us: *“The eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy.”* In other words, God will rescue us from our moral turpitude by opening our eyes to the evil that surrounds us, by allowing us to hear the truth spoken by God and to find a voice that can speak the truth. Interpreted from an Eastern perspective, we are invited to see, hear and speak of the evil in the world, but not perpetuate it. From a Western perspective, we are invited to accept evil by not denying its presence. In both cases, there is an “awakening” to a moral responsibility that invites a conversion of the senses to see, hear and speak the truth.

In the Letter of James (2:1-5), the healing Word of God opens our world to conversion. James is adamant about removing the hypocritical moralistic blinders that allow for inequitable behavior in the church community. Chastising a community that allows “acts of favoritism,” James calls for a radical realignment of perspective (an opening of one's eyes) that allows the community to “hear the cry of the poor” and not stand in judgment of people. James does not let the community members off the hook and demands that they reverse their “natural inclinations” by treating all brothers and sisters as equal members of the community. Every community

acting on the principles of Jesus must see, hear and speak the truth. There is no room for “monkey business” in James' theology.

Our gospel reading brings Jesus back to his home territory, around the Sea of Galilee, where a crowd in search of healings greets him. Matthew's gospel (15:29-31) parallels Mark's account (7:31-37) in demonstrating healings of “the three wise monkeys” whose “eyes, ears and mouths” have been compromised. In both gospel accounts Jesus liberates the blind, the deaf and the mute by restoring their senses to be able to see, hear and speak the truth. While Jesus' methodology for “hands on healing” might be questionable in the antiseptic practice of modern medicine, the net results of his interventions allow people to proclaim: *“He has done all things well; he even makes the blind see, the deaf hear and the dumb speak.”* The remarkable aspect about Jesus' method for healing is its sensuality. Through intimacy and touch, the incarnate God's presence is felt. In touching the eyes, ears and tongues of the sick, Jesus invites them to see, hear and speak of the healing presence of the messianic promise come true. The prophetic words of Isaiah ring true: *“The eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped and the tongues of the mute sing for joy.”*

Many years ago, I had the privilege of teaching and traveling in India and in discovering a fair number of artistic representations of the three wise monkeys. In visiting the holy city of Varanasi, located along the banks of the sacred River Ganges, I came face to face with the “sacred monkeys” in the temple of Hanuman. A lesser Hindu god, Hanuman is dedicated to caring for the sacred monkeys. The ornate temple was filled with screeching monkeys. Noted for their less than wise behavior, these mischievous creatures are known for their kleptomaniac abilities to routinely steal tourists' backpacks and cameras. While I was taking a photo of an ancient statue of the “three wise monkeys,” one less than sacred monkey was scampering away with my backpack. Catching up with the culprit, I put my left foot on the backpack and the tug of war began. Eventually, I dropped-kicked the sacred monkey with my right foot squarely in his derriere and he sailed into the air qualifying, no doubt, as the first sacred flying monkey. His screams brought his pals to his rescue as I beat a hasty retreat out the door of the sacred temple only to find myself surrounded by a band of lepers who were begging for money.

I am not sure what Jesus or Mahatma Gandhi would have done in this situation, but I must say all my senses came to bear on the problem and I did the wisest thing possible. Rather than let the monkeys make a monkey out of me, I embraced the lepers and searched for Jesus among them. In retrospect, it was one of the scariest moments of my life, but one of the most freeing as well. My eyes, ears and mouth were opened to finding the incarnate Christ amid one of the greatest metaphors for evil, leprosy. In the final stanza of a poem entitled, “i thank you God for most this amazing day”, the poet e.e. cummings offers a cornucopia of sensual metaphors that capture the elusive reality of God's unimaginable presence in ordinary life: “how should tasting touching hearing seeing breathing any — lifted from the no of all nothing — human merely being doubt unimaginable You?”

The screaming monkeys remained in their temple as I walked back to the sacred River Ganges surrounded by men and women in search of healing and, in their midst, I could see no evil, hear no evil or speak no evil. It was an enriching theological moment for me and, I must say, an enriching moment for the lepers who were the recipients of all the rupees (money) I possessed.

Peace, Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.

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