

ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

Fort Yuma, California, P. O. Box 1176, Winterhaven, CA 92283 Tel: 760-572-0283

July 19, 2020 (16th Sunday in Ordinary Time A)

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Email: saintthomasindianmission@gmail.com

Bishop McElroy has given us permission to offer Holy Communion on Sundays as long as the procedure does not go against the order that no gathering is allowed, whether inside or outside the church. **You may thus come to the parish and receive Holy Communion at any time from 8 AM to 9:30 AM after following a streamed Sunday Mass.**

In the morning of Sunday you follow a streamed Sunday Mass by going to the website sdcatholic.org and then click on **Sunday Mass**. Right after the streamed Mass you put on your face mask and drive to the parish; you park your car by the parish hall; get out of the car and stand on the side of your car. A minister of Communion will come to give you Holy Communion. Right after receiving Holy Communion you get back to your car and drive back home.

Create an Atmosphere of Prayer: Before you follow the streamed Mass, you put yourself in an atmosphere of prayer. You may mention your personal intentions; then ask God to forgive all the sins you may have committed: deep in your heart, express your desire for forgiveness from the people that you may have offended and express your sincere forgiveness for all those who may have offended you.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, Almighty God and Father, we worship You, we give You thanks, we praise You for Your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; You are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord, You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of the Father. Amen.

Our Response to the Psalm: *Lord, you are good and forgiving.*

First Reading: **Wisdom 12:13, 16-19**

There is no god besides you who have the care of all, that you need show you have not unjustly condemned. For your might is the source of justice; your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all. For you show your might when the perfection of your power is disbelieved; and in those who know you, you rebuke temerity. But though you are master of might, you judge with clemency, and with much lenience you govern us; for power, whenever you will, attends you. And you taught your people, by these deeds, that those who are just must be kind; and you gave your children good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for their sins.
The Word of the Lord.

2nd Reading: **Romans 8:18-23**

Brothers and sisters: The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.
The Word of the Lord.

Gospel Reading: **Matthew 13:24-43 or 13:24-30**

Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. The slaves of the householder came to him and said, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' His slaves said to him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' He replied, 'No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn."
The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE WORD GUIDEPOSTS

“CONQUER EVIL WITH GOOD”

The mystery of evil in the world continues to baffle many people. “Some evil men do not only exist but even prosper. And we who are trying to be good seem to be the losers!” people wonder. And so they ask: “Why does God wait to punish the evil and reward the just?” The parable of the weeds among the wheat in today’s Gospel gives the answer:

God is waiting to punish the evil and reward the just so that everyone had an opportunity to change their ways. “Let them grow together.” (Mt 13:30). There will be a time to separate the weeds from the wheat. Like the farmer in the parable, that’s how God acts. **God is patient and forbearing with the sinner. With this message goes the warning that we should not be less patient than God.**

Another reason the master wants the weeds to grow with the wheat is that they may turn into wheat after all. **One good way of overcoming the weed is to be strong wheat. “Don’t let evil conquer you but conquer evil with good”** (Romans 12:21).

“THE CHURCH IS A COMMUNITY OF SAINTS AND SINNERS WHO STRIVE TO BECOME BETTER”

Jesus’ words maybe addressed to those who are scandalized today because the Church contains many imperfections. The Lord in the parable of the weeds among the wheat wants to tell us in plain language: The Church is not the community of saints, but rather a mixed community of saints and sinners who strive to become better.

There is no reason to be scandalized. Imperfections and great faults and even sins are to be expected. They belong to the Church too. We have to accept this fact. What is important is that **WE STRIVE TO BECOME BETTER**. That is why we are called a parish, *that is to say*, a pilgrim people, people on a journey, where every step of the way as individuals and as a community is a purification, a changing for the better, a becoming less and less of weed and more and more of wheat, until we reach our final home in heaven.

The one who is scandalized by bad elements in church reminds you of that young man who told his parish priest: “I have stopped going to church; I find so many hypocrites there.” After pausing momentarily, the priest replied, “Son, there’s always room for one more.”

“THE HEAVENLY FATHER BALANCES JUSTICE WITH MERCY”

The tales in Matthew’s Gospel show us how to challenge evil in the world when it befalls us. Jesus told us that he came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Through telling these parables, his listeners understand how he intends to fulfill it. Jesus came that the chosen people would have life to the fullest. He came to show them there is another way to live with and love your neighbor. Mercy flows from Jesus’ words and through his deeds, and now he wants his followers to hear it as the Good News in this week’s parable.

An upright and honorable farmer sets out to plant seed for his hoped-for bountiful harvest, which supports his family and helps him pay his hired hands. All seems to be going well. However, the farmer and his hired help are not aware that jealousy and envy come in darkness to mix bad seed with the good seed. No one sees the harm they have done until the seeds begin to sprout. What they observe is that the wheat and the weeds are growing together. The farmer ponders what options he has in this situation. Does he seek revenge and strike back at those responsible for this wicked deed?

Ruling out vengeance, he seeks another way. The farmer does not let the climate of “an eye for an eye” control his choice. He chooses another path – perhaps a more difficult one. He walks away from the road of revenge.

By walking away and choosing a different road, the farmer finds a treasure of goodness rather than violence where no one gains. With this ending, we find ourselves in a new world – the Christian world or the New Testament – we find a kingdom that acts with compassion and mercy, exactly as our heavenly Father acts, who hopes we do the same: “But though you are master of might, you judge with clemency, and with much lenience you govern us” (Wisdom 12:18).

Questions to ponder: How does God’s patience with the weeds change the way I act toward others? Has the Church’s abuse scandal lessened my faith in the Church? Do I see God as lenient when it comes to my failings? In my faith life right now, what do I see, more of weeds or wheat?

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

God created us to live together, to care for each other, and to pray for each other. Confident that our Compassionate God hears our prayers, let us pray.

We pray for the Church. For the work of the church in the world: to proclaim the Gospel, serve those who are forgotten, heal the sick, teach the ignorant, and pray for the salvation of all human beings . . . we pray.

We pray for peace. For those who show us the paths to peace: for missionaries and diplomats; for travelers who create friendships; for all those who seek peaceful solutions to conflict . . . we pray.

We pray for those who are in prison: for mercy for those who are ready for another chance and for compassion for those who are tempted to despair; for those who want to live good lives but don't know how to begin . . . we pray.

We pray for the men and women in our Armed Forces, that they be protected from all harm and succeed in their mission to serve and protect . . . We pray.

We pray for the suffering: for those living with depression, anxiety, autism, obsessive-compulsive disorder; for those who are hospitalized due to the corona virus and other illnesses, and for all those who take care of them — doctors, nurses, family members . . . we pray.

We pray in particular for those who have been recommended to our prayers: for God's blessing of good health upon John Inman, Tito Carrillo, Michael Fox, and Gloria Rodriguez . . . and for the safety of Ofelia Figueroa and other hospital staff who are working directly with Covid patients . . . we pray.

We remember those who have died, especially +Lester Stone, +Eddie Marquez, and +Gabriel Numkena who passed away only this passed week . . . (*other names*). May the Heavenly Father bless them with eternal life. We pray also for their respective families and all others who mourn their loss. . . we pray.

Good and gracious God, strengthen the love that unites communities in peace and joy. Grant that our community may know the unity that is the sign of your presence. We pray always in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



June 2020

1. Contributions, counted and deposited:

June 9th — \$ 420.00
June 30th — \$ 1,614.00
June 2020 Online giving — \$1,300.00

2. Donation from +Cleve Burton's IRA — \$ 1,690.02
(deposited in our Building Fund Bank Account)

Dear Parishioners,

As you all know, last January 2020 I wrote to Bishop McElroy asking him to grant me the status of Retired Priest effective July 1, 2020.

I stated my desire to focus on taking proper care of my personal health issues and other concerns and interests and at the same time continue to be of service to the diocese by making myself available to cover for Sunday Masses only, whenever needed.

Moreover, I mentioned that once granted the retired status, I would like to live alone, by myself, and so instead of staying with other priests – retired or not, in a big priests' house or rectory, I would prefer to rent a modest apartment preferably in the Imperial Valley, perhaps near or within El Centro in order to be readily available to cover for Sunday Masses whenever needed in any one of the churches in the area.

Weeks after I sent my letter, Bishop Dolan, in the name of Bishop McElroy, talked to me and presented me an offer aimed at making me continue to serve the diocese actively and at the same time take care of my personal health issues and other concerns and interests.

I readily accepted the offer that I continue as Pastor of St. Thomas Indian Mission but this time the focus will just be on the Sunday ministry.

There will be no office hours and no weekday meetings; even the Finance Council which I will meet four times a year, will be held on Sundays.

The present Finance Council is hereby dissolved. I will be forming a new Finance Council, some members of which may be from the just dissolved one.

Once the pandemic is over, God willing, I will announce the rest of the details or specifics.

With my priestly blessing,

Fr. George of the Desert

Pastor

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