

saint **John fisher** chapel

UNIVERSITY PARISH

July 4, 2021 ● *The 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

A Kean Perspective: "A Grateful Community"

Happy Fourth of July! There is an important lesson in today's readings about appreciation and healthy gratitude. The first reading of Ezekiel introduces the theme of the prophet in the local community. The gospel then depicts the cool reception Jesus had in his hometown area where there is a strange intentional downplaying of Jesus' prophetic career.

The adage of "familiarity breeds contempt" comes to mind when I think about the way the hometown locals respond to Jesus' return. What is interesting to me is that they actually recognize the quality of Jesus' preaching and teaching in the synagogue. What they cannot do is be appreciative and grateful for this holy man simply because he grew up under their noses. Why do they have such resistance to acknowledging the gifts of Jesus? That is a puzzle which is hard to know fully for us who are so many years removed.



They were amazed at His style, and it appears that they understood His message, too. Jesus' preeminent theme was announcing that the Kingdom of God was in their midst, which was another way to say that He was the Messiah. When Jesus announced this theme, it led to the "unleashing" of the Holy Spirit for the working of many miracles – proof that what Jesus was saying was true. However, these signs and wonders did not occur in Jesus' native place, and Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith. Those present in the synagogue were astonished at Jesus' teaching yet they had no appreciation for the person of Jesus, no gratitude for the amazing things that were happening all around Him – all because He grew up in their town. They lacked gratitude for God in their midst. They were amazed, but their hearts were not changed.

Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving are all holidays where we think of our amazing country, and what it has done for the world. The United States was the dominant force in the previous century's two world wars that defeated the scourge of fascism. In the middle part of the century, the United States checked the flood of communism that is still a lingering beast. We've sent a dozen men to the moon, and we have tried to be the world's caretaker for many very serious problems. Have all these things been done perfectly? Of course not! Neither we the people of the United States nor our history are anywhere near perfect, but there are a lot of amazing successes in there, too. In a world that tends to dwell on the negative, the virtues of appreciation and gratitude are more important than ever. Blessed Solanus Casey held that gratitude is the virtue that leads to holiness... That is a good lesson for today.

The people in Jesus' native place were blind. They strove only to see limitations and fabricated negative aspects to Jesus' ministry that weren't even there. They worked hard in their minds to resist the opportunity for the grace and miracles which Jesus offered. They preferred to try and boss Him around. Such a negative perspective and a preoccupation with being mean changed them and left them immune to hope's positive effects. That is why it is important for us to remember the good, for it helps us to be better people. We don't deny the wrongs of the past, but as children of the Light, we do ourselves harm by denying clear moments of righteousness.

-Fr. Jim Kean

ST. JOHN FISHER CHAPEL

UNIVERSITY PARISH

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MASS TIMES

Tuesday:

12:15pm Mass

Wednesday:

12:15pm Mass

Thursday:

7:15pm Mass

Friday:

12:15pm Mass

Saturday:

8:30am Mass

Sunday:

10:00am & 6:00pm Mass

CONFESSION TIMES

Tuesday, 1:05-1:50pm (Drive-thru)

Thursday, 6:00pm in Church

Saturday, 9:00am in Church

PRAYER & DEVOTIONS

Eucharistic Adoration

1:00pm every Tuesday

6:00pm every Thursday

Parish Rosary

8:00am every Saturday

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Amos 7:12-15

Psalm: 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

Gospel: Mark 6:7-13

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

7/4/21 at 6:00pm - For America

7/6/21 at 12:15pm - Jule Robinson

7/7/21 at 12:15pm - Repose of the Soul of
Dcn. Andrew Fairbanks

7/8/21 at 7:15pm - Repose of the Soul of
Rev. Alfred Miller

7/9/21 at 12:15pm - Stella and Raymond

7/10/21 at 9:00am - Debbie Brodeur

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FINANCE UPDATE

OFFERTORY REPORT

Lori Rafferty

Our Offertory is the primary source of funds for our day-to-day operations. Donations through our online giving program are deposited daily.

For the week ending June 20, 2021:

Envelopes: \$1,236

Electronic: \$3,192

Total: \$4,428

For Fiscal Year July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

YTD Offertory Collected: \$282,916

YTD Offertory Budgeted: \$414,000

Over/(Short) from Budget: (\$131,084)



GUEST WRITER

"A BIGGER BOAT"

Fr. John Carlin

We began last week looking at our conscience, this great gift of God that not only helps us to discern right from wrong, but allows us to recognize the voice of God Himself. We also mentioned the necessity of a habit of prayer for a proper examination of conscience. This week, we consider the sacrament of confession and what can help us to desire it.

The sacrament of confession is a beautiful thing. It is one of my greatest joys as a priest to absolve sins; to meet people at that place where God shows mercy to His people. It is actually what my name means in Hebrew – "John" or "God has shown mercy". The penitents coming to confession are tired, exhausted from carrying around the guilt or shame of their sins and they just want to let it go. It is awe-some to witness God healing His people and restoring their hope, their faith, and their trust in Love. It is a gift and a responsibility God has entrusted to me to forgive sins. But this gift is not primarily for me. I cannot forgive my own sins. Priests also have to find another priest when they want to go to confession, so that they too can confess and receive absolution. We always have to ask for forgiveness of our sins – we can't absolve ourselves. We can't save ourselves. There is only one redeemer, Jesus Christ, and we all need Him.

But what helps us to desire confession? What motivates us to seek God's mercy and get our courage up to admit our sins? – because it does take courage. It is said that more people fear public speaking than death – so, they would rather be in the casket than giving the eulogy. I think a similar fear exists for many people in going to confession, especially if we have had a bad experience. It is a very vulnerable place for us as penitents and if a priest is harsh or careless with that vulnerability, it can hurt people even more and create more fear of exposing our weaknesses to the Lord and seeking His healing mercy. Just as a doctor treating a painful wound must take care not to cause more harm to the patient, so the priest must be gentle with the penitent so that the Divine Physician and healer of souls might restore our strength.

It takes courage to be vulnerable with a priest and it takes humility to confess our sins to someone who is himself fallible. But these are necessary virtues in the spiritual battles we face every day. Some believe it improper to confess to another human being and that all that is needed is to confess directly to God in prayer. But, while it is true that God always hears our prayers, God knew exactly what He was doing when He entrusted the power of absolving sins to fallible men. For, by confessing to God in the safety of our room, it is too easy for us to hear only what we want to hear and deceive ourselves into thinking we are better/worse than we really are. But confession to a priest naturally takes us out of our comfort zone, helping to strengthen our courage while forcing us to look honestly at ourselves, helping us to grow in humility and trust in the Lord — for if this imperfect priest can still love and forgive what I've done, how much more our perfectly loving Heavenly Father.

What helps us to desire confession is an awareness of our sinfulness. We know we are weak and broken, that we do not love God as we ought and we want to be better. But, while it can seem like dismissing our sins or explaining them away should make us feel better, it doesn't heal our hearts, but only diminishes our hope for being a better person. It is rather by increasing our awareness of our sinfulness and confessing our sins that we grow in love and become more the beautiful person God made us to be. Like the woman washing Jesus's feet with her tears, Jesus says, "her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little" (Lk 7:47).

Hence, the primary purpose of examining our conscience is to increase our awareness of our sinfulness so that, in desiring to love, we seek the sacrament of confession so that we can be healed and grow to love God all the more. Next week, we will look at some tools to help us better know our sins and examine our conscience more thoroughly.

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