



Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time August 21, 2022

Strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees. Make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be disjointed but healed.

— Hebrews 12:12-13

GOD'S PEOPLE GATHER

Our readings today remind us of the larger story of the Bible, of God's purposes and promises for the world. Because of humanity's rejection of God, as told in Genesis, human communities were first dispersed. Isaiah proclaims that one day God will gather these communities to be healed and reconciled with God. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus echoes Isaiah and teaches that all peoples in God's promised future "will recline at table in the kingdom of God." Notice that in Isaiah, the nations coming to God do not lose their ethnicity or unique identity. They bring their own distinct cultural gifts to God's table. Each people has its unique history with God, has received distinct blessings from God, and each is accountable to God. Today, we live in a global and multi-cultural Church. When God's diverse peoples gather in worship today, may we honor and celebrate each other's gifts and blessings.

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PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Reflection question:

How can I know what God commands?

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READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 2 Thes 1:1-5, 11-12; Ps 96:1-5; Mt 23:13-22
 Tuesday: 2 Thes 2:1-3a, 14-17; Ps 96:10-13; Mt 23:23-26
 Wednesday: Rv 21:9b-14; Ps 145:10-13, 17-18; Jn 1:45-51
 Thursday: 1 Cor 1:1-9; Ps 145:2-7; Mt 24:42-51
 Friday: 1 Cor 1:17-25; Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 10-11; Mt 25:1-13
 Saturday: 1 Cor 1:26-31; Ps 33:12-13, 18-21; Mt 25:14-30
 Sunday: Sir 3:17-18, 20, 28-29; Ps 68:4-7, 10-11; Heb 12:18-19, 22-24a; Lk 14:1, 7-14

TEMPTATION

The average number of times that people say "no" to temptation is about once, weakly.

—Anonymous



Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated!

For the month of August offerings: PLEASE put in Mass collection basket or mail to St. Philip/St. Teresa Parish, P. O. Box 339, Occidental CA 95465. Or donate at our website www.stphilipstteresa.org via Paypal or card. Please include your offering envelope # [if you have one].

8/14-15: summary provided soon. 8/21: Capital Expenditures.



Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: TBA
 Finance Council [FC]: TBA
 Liturgy Committee [LC]: TBA
 St. Teresa Ladies Guild: Contact Diane, 823-6044
 St. Philip Ladies Guild: Every 3rd Friday. Details 874-3812

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule 2022

8/20 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Brendan Smith
 8/21 Sun. 8am Mass
 8/21 Sun. 9:30am Mass for the People
 8/21 Sun. 11:15am Mass
 NO Tues 9AM Mass on 8/23 while pastor away
 8/24 Wed. 9am Mass for James Geving
 8/26 Fri. 9am Mass for Sayra Hodges McHargue
 8/27 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Brendan Smith
 8/28 Sun. 8am Mass
 8/28 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ John Patrick Brennan
 8/28 Sun. 11:15am Mass for the People

Prayer Requests: Please leave a message at 707-408-2650.

Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N., Diane K., River M.; Nikkie; Mr. C., Michelle, Christian A., Peter B., Samantha S., Gary E., Frederick K., John Geving, James Geving, Lawrence Steiner

RURAL FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE for August 2022

On Tuesday, August 9, a large group of 71 families, were welcomed to our distribution and selected fresh produce, milk, eggs, poultry, beef, fish or vegetarian items, commodities, snacks and bread. All who are in need are welcome to receive nutritional support from our Program.

We have opened the hall to in-person shopping for our clients. Many clients prefer to choose specific foods from our program for their families. It also allows volunteers and clients to re connect post pandemic. Many of our clients are also helping to reduce our costs by bringing their own reusable shopping bags. Each month we typically use over 300 paper bags to package the food our clients receive. Your continued donation of handled paper bags and egg cartons is much appreciated.

If you are aware of a family which needs nutritional assistance, please let them know about our program. Leave a message at the parish office, (707) 408-2650 to get a call back with additional information and to answer your questions. This program is funded through monthly Rural Food Collection, private donations and the dedicated, awesome volunteers. Thank you for your generous donations as we strive to meet the nutritional needs of all attendees at our food distributions.

RURAL FOOD VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES in the Parish Hall and parking area:

Saturday, September 10, 9:00-10:00 am repackaging; Monday, September 12, 9:00 – 11:00am set up; and Tuesday, September 13, 7:30 – 11:00am food distribution

The Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time [C]

By [frhoisington](#)

Endure your trials as "discipline"; God treats you as sons.

In today's Second Reading, Saint Paul speaks about the "trials" involved in spiritual discipline. He also refers to discipline as training. Writing to the Hebrew Christians, he explains: *"At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain, yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it."*



The verb "train", like the verb "try", is simple and not very exciting. To train for a new job at work, or for a new position on the team, or for the role of altar server at Holy Mass, is very simple. In fact, it's pretty routine. But routine is at the heart of success. Trial runs are trials of a sort, even if not exactly the type of trial that St. Paul is writing about in the Second Reading.

Football players get tired and maybe even bored with running the same plays over and over and over again. Why do the same plays have to be run so many times? Most adults know the answer to that question from the experiences of life. Unfortunately, many won't admit that the principles of discipline—that is, the connection between trial, training, and success—have any connection to the life of Christian prayer.

What role does discipline have in the experiences of Christian prayer? Discipline is needed in all three stages of prayer. First, there are the prayers that are spoken, like the Rosary or the Liturgy of the Hours. Second is the prayer called meditation, where one reflects on some mystery of the Faith or some truth about God.

Finally, there is the prayer which leads to communion with God Himself: what the Church calls contemplation. Within all three of these forms of prayer, discipline is needed.

Yet some people believe that contemplation does not demand discipline. They think of contemplation being as simple as going outside on a sunny day and soaking in the rays of the sun. Prayer for them is simply basking in the warmth of God's love. The obvious problem with this analogy is that there are these things called clouds in the sky.

So also are there clouds in the life of prayer. In fact, at times there are also thunderclouds, lightning, and hail. This is true even in the prayer lives of the saints. The best guides in this regard are St. Teresa of Jesus (also known as St. Teresa of Avila) and St. John of the Cross.

But apart from the inclement weather of prayer, even more difficult to accept for those who want their prayer life to be sunny and 72° seven days a week is the fact of God's silence. Why does

God sometimes respond to our efforts at prayer with silence: that is, by offering us no response whatsoever?

In her book titled *The Interior Castle*, St. Teresa of Avila speaks about the "interior and exterior trials" that God sets between Himself and the faithful Christian, and which call for disciplined commitment to prayer. She describes the exterior trials of gossip, persecution, and "the severest illnesses". At greater length she describes interior trials. Within one of these interior trials, she explains: "The Lord, it seems, gives the devil [freedom] so that the soul might be tried and even be made to think it is rejected by God." Regarding such trials, St. Teresa admits that "there is no remedy in this tempest but to wait for the mercy of God."

As she describes this discipline of waiting for the mercy of God, St. Teresa notes that "at an unexpected time, with one word alone or a chance happening, [God] so quickly calms the storm that it seems there had not been even as much as a cloud in that soul And like one who has escaped from a dangerous battle and been victorious, it comes out praising our Lord; for it was He who fought for the victory. ... Thus, it knows clearly its wretchedness and the very little we of ourselves can do if the Lord abandons us."

In human endeavors—whether reciting multiplication tables, running passing plays, or hitting a high note on the trumpet—discipline leads us to become smarter, stronger, and more skilled. But in the life of Christian prayer, discipline teaches us how to rely not chiefly on ourselves and our talents, but on God and His mercy.



Women of St. Philip & St. Teresa:

SAVE THIS DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2022

The joint women's guilds will have a morning of reflection with Fr. Christopher LaRocca.

9am Mass at St. Philip Church will be followed by discussion and reflection in St. Philip Hall.

Morning tea/coffee and snacks will be provided. (Bring your own lunch if you wish to continue the discussions over lunch.)

This is a good opportunity for all Catholic women (from our parish and elsewhere) to grow deeper in their faith and find friendship with one another. Contact Antoinette at 707-874-1501 for details and to RSVP.

Swiss bishops' Synod report



[The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Lungern, Switzerland](#)

By [AC Wimmer](#)

CNA Newsroom, Aug 16, 2022



On Monday, the Swiss Bishops' Conference published a document for the upcoming [Synod on Synodality](#) in Rome reporting the Catholic Church was seen as suffering from clericalism —as well as "denying equality to women" and excluding "people with LGBTQ identity."

"Several official church positions on the role of women in church and society, on sexuality and lifestyles are perceived as pejorative and exclusionary," the Swiss report said according to [CNA Deutsch](#), CNA's German-language news partner.

"The Synodal Assembly of Switzerland, held on May 30, 2022, in Einsiedeln Abbey, finalized the report based on comments and requests for adjustments," the bishops explained.

"This assembly had the task of combining the reports that emerged from the diocesan phase of the synod into an overall national report."

The document says nothing about the number of participants in the surveys that were to be part of the worldwide synodal process.

In Germany, the "number of faithful who participated in the survey on the World Synod of Bishops in the dioceses" had been only "in the lowest single-digit percentage," [reported](#) CNA Deutsch.

"In Switzerland, the debates and the synodal questionnaires raised awareness of the importance of baptism for the life of the Church," the bishops [said](#).

"It was emphasized that a synodal church increasingly recognizes 'the royal, priestly and prophetic dignity and vocation' of the baptized."

Two points, in particular, were emphasized, namely "overcoming the experience that many people are excluded from full participation in the life of the church" and a critical examination "of the clericalism that still exists in some places."

The report also said synodality would only succeed once "clericalism is overcome and an understanding of the priesthood increasingly develops as an element that promotes the life of a more synodally oriented church."

On clericalism, the 11-page report [said](#): "Criticism of the exercise of power by ministers is ignited by observations of clerical mentality, abuse of power, ignorance of the realities of life and culture in Switzerland, devaluation of women and rejection of people from the LGBTQ spectrum, retreat into individual identity notions of being a priest, lack of attention to people, disinterest in the poor, etc."

In another section, the report also cites minority votes. These are mainly aimed at "questioning the need for a synodal culture for the Catholic Church, not changing the role of priests and the current hierarchical shape of the Church, limiting the influence of lay men and women in the Church, and more preservation and promotion of traditional forms of liturgy, especially the 'extraordinary form.'"

Pope Francis [announced](#) a Synod on Synodality in March 2020 to "provide an opportunity for the entire People of God to discern together how to move forward on the path towards being a more synodal Church in the long-term."

The process to prepare the synod started with consultations at the diocesan level in October 2021. A continental phase is scheduled to commence in March 2023, according to the Synod on Synodality's [website](#). The final and universal phase will begin with the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, on the theme "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission," at the Vatican in October 2023.

- **Appreciation from the Apple Tree Project:**

Thanks to the generosity of our parishioners, we were able to provide new backpacks and needed school supplies to the 46 children from our Rural Food Program. Your donations enable us to make this project happen, and is much appreciated by our parents during these challenging economic times.

- **And from Parish Council about the Parish Picnic 2022:**

Many thanks to the hard-working volunteers and parishioners who made a great success of our first Parish Picnic in three years. About 65 of us gathered in Brad Respini's beautiful redwood grove to celebrate, welcome new members of the parish, and renew old friendships. Everyone enjoyed barbecued hamburgers and chicken, while cheering on the Pinewood Derby cars. A great time - not to be missed next year! -- Parish Council

Meaningful Exhalations

During last Sunday's homily – as usual a solid and sound proclamation by Fr. Jim – my hearing being what it is, I became distracted. I became distracted with what Fr. Jim was *doing* – not so much what he was saying. I heard sound and words coming out of his mouth and I thought: here we are in this expanded interior space of our church building, full of this invisible mixture of oxygen and nitrogen we call “air”. We are all inhaling it and exhaling as simply an exercise of our animal nature. So also Fr. Jim is inhaling it except that when he exhales it, it comes out as words! Sounds that have meaning. He is turning vapor into ideas, images, persuasions energized with meaning, even feeling, convictions. And I thought: that's a miracle; it's a miracle that occurs every day we translate the atmosphere that keeps us alive into meanings that also keep us alive in ways more than biological. For instance when we say, *I love you* or *I have a right to be* or to utter a question like *Why am I here?*

And Fr. Jim was exhaling a whole string of words, sentences. He was turning the atmosphere we live in into an audible constellation of issues, thoughts, needs, insight, hope, faith. Creating a world out of the air we breathe. It's a miracle. And those sounds infiltrate our ears; the sounds out of his mouth transform our brains, our minds, our hearts – indeed alert us to the wisdom of the metaphors, the images he uses. Words issuing from the air we breathe into scenes, pictures, colors . . . within our very minds. And so I sat there thinking, where did all this human capacity to turn our biological function of breathing and exhaling into things so astonishing as words, a homily . . . into a whole dictionary of words, a globe alive with language – out of oxygen and nitrogen? Well, it becomes too much to handle – thought-wise.

But then during last week's Friday Mass following last Sunday's Mass – what did I run into but an Old Testament reading in which the prophet Ezekiel, living in exile after the catastrophe of Jerusalem's fall, envisions a plain covered with dry bones and God asks the prophet: *Can these bones come to life?* To be followed by the command: *Prophesy [speak poetry] over these bones, and say . . . Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! . . . See! I will bring spirit (breath) into you, that you may come to life. . . . From the four winds come, O spirit . . .* And immediately Ezekiel hears a rattling *as the bones came together . . . and sinews and flesh* upon them. *And they came alive and stood upright.*

You can imagine how popular a passage that was among our black compatriots of our both recent and distant past who found hope in this vision in their unique way – as when out of that vision they composed that delightful [spiritual](#):

The foot bone connected to the leg bone, / The leg bone connected to the knee bone, / The knee bone connected to the thigh bone, / The thigh bone connected to the back bone, / The back bone connected to the neck bone, / The neck bone connected to the head bone, / Oh, hear the word of the Lord! // Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk aroun' / Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk aroun' / . . . / Oh, hear the word of the Lord.



Would it be improper to think of ourselves as dry bones needing spirit, breath not simply to inhale but to exhale in words with meaning, energized hope, faith, love – song, humor – no longer toxic, dissonant but euphonic, polyphonic, harmonious?

--Geoff Wood, 8/21/2022