

**Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 30, 2020**

Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

— Romans 12:2

THE CROSS OF JESUS

The perception of a cross changed dramatically after Jesus' crucifixion. Before that event, death on a cross was not only horrible, it was degrading. It was a penalty reserved only for the most wretched of criminals. The word "glory" would not have found its way into the same sentence containing the word "cross." But all that changed with Jesus. Over time, believers began to venerate and honor the cross. They painted, sculpted, and carved images of it. Many lost their own lives for their association with it. Today our reverence for and relationship with the cross recalls little of the contempt originally associated with it. As it has been through the ages, it is our perception of the cross that determines how we follow Jesus.

--J. S. Paluch Co.

SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT (540-604) September 3

Imagine, fourteen hundred years after death, boasting a best-selling CD! Yet outside the Church and within, Gregorian chant is enjoying a renaissance. Still, the timeless sacred music that bears his name is but part of Gregory's legacy. Renouncing civic service for monastic life, Gregory's administrative and diplomatic skills prompted continual summons from the cloister. Papal ambassador and advisor, he was eventually elected pope himself, renowned as a wise steward of the church's material possessions, generous benefactor of the poor, sponsor of missionaries, and promotor of monasticism. His liturgical enrichment of the Church endures not only in Gregorian chant, but in eloquent homilies still gracing the Liturgy of the Hours, the "Gregorian Canon" (Eucharistic Prayer I), and his spiritual classic, *Pastoral Care*, once presented to new bishops at ordination. Of countless impressive papal titles—Supreme Pontiff, Vicar of Christ, Successor of Saint Peter, Prince of the Apostles—the title still so cherished that it heads official documents is the one Gregory coined to describe his papal ideal: Servant of the Servants of God. Together with being designated "the Great," a fitting epitaph.

-Peter Scagnelli, ©J. S. Paluch Co.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday:	1 Cor 2:1-5; Ps 119:97-102; Lk 4:16-30
Tuesday:	1 Cor 2:10b-16; Ps 145:8-14; Lk 4:31-37
Wednesday:	1 Cor 3:1-9; Ps 33:12-15, 20-21; Lk 4:38-44
Thursday:	1 Cor 3:18-23; Ps 24:1bc-4ab, 5-6; Lk 5:1-11
Friday:	1 Cor 4:1-5; Ps 37:3-6, 27-28, 39-40; Lk 5:33-39
Saturday:	1 Cor 4:6b-15; Ps 145:17-21; Lk 6:1-5
Sunday:	Ez 33:7-9; Ps 95:1-2, 6-9; Rom 13:8-10; Mt 18:15-20

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Tuesday:	World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation
Thursday:	St. Gregory the Great
Friday:	First Friday
Saturday:	First Saturday; Blessed Virgin Mary

Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated!



For the month of **August** offerings:

PLEASE 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. *Include your offering envelope # with your donation.*

8/30: Rural Food. 9/6: Diocesan Seminarians.

Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: TBA Zoom

Finance Council [FC]: TBA Zoom

Liturgy Committee: TBA Zoom

St. Teresa Ladies Guild: Contact Diane, 823-6044

St. Philip Ladies Guild: Contact Penny, 559-367-7403

Every Friday, Centering Prayer: cancelled for now

Coffee & Goodies: cancelled for now

Mondays & Wednesdays-Seniors Lunch at 12noon: cancelled for now

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

All Mass Intentions requested before Covid-19 mid-March closure are now being rescheduled for Sunday outdoor Masses. New requests will be appended to later in the 2021 calendar.

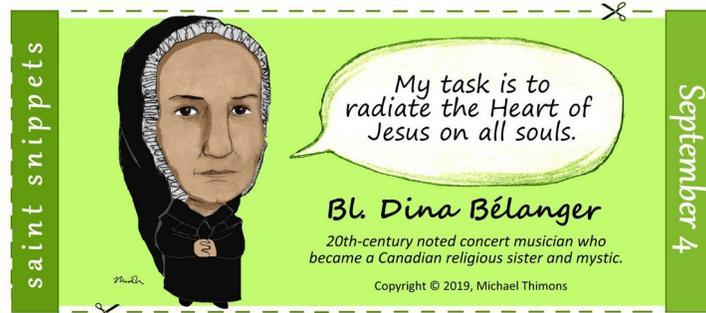
8/30 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Eugene DeMartini

8/30 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Marcella & Joseph Kiefer

9/6 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Emily & Joe Palmer

9/6 Sun. 9:30am Mass Art & Sheila Hansen

Prayer Requests: Leave a message at 707-408-2650. Teresa K., Pat K., Thomas T., Susan B., Lorri McC., Sarah, Clifford J., Terri A., Fred P., Theresa S., Sara, Mary Anne P., Barbara, Dave C., Jim P., William, Parson P., Dave, Mary O., Bill Z., Daniel, Sally T., Mary K., Michael D., Richard M., Kathleen, Peter, Rosa S., Susan B., Joyce D., Anita C., George H., Mimi H, Steve, Barry, Lorrin K., Hugh P., Robert S., Britney N., Jacque W., Rebecca A., April K., Jacinta G., Leo A., Ed C. family, Kathy R., Donna W., Jim K., Sherry S., Papke family., Gail F., Marie N., Christine, James, Pat P., Gerry, Loren



"Reflections on the Liturgy" Each week, parishioner Patrick Griffith writes one or more reflections on Scripture, including the Liturgy for the coming Sunday. The objectives are to tie Scripture into our daily lives and address spiritual and moral issues of the world around us. The reflections can be found at <http://thesoulprosper.blogspot.com>. Selected reflections have also been recorded and posted on the parish website.

Notes from Our Pastor...

1. In response to our parish "Fast Fund-Raising Idea" and as per the letter addressed to you as "Dear Parishioners and Friends...", I am happy to announce that we will be reaching our goal of \$51,900 by the end of this month including the matching grant of \$25,600 from the anonymous donor. Thanks to all those who have already contributed to this campaign, and my deep appreciation and gratitude to Bill McCann and the present parish councils' members and their friends for their tireless efforts. I now humbly appeal to all other parishioners to come forward with your generous donations by the end of this month of August to realize our goal. Let us all make this a successful campaign. Fr. Bala, Pastor

2. Our parish is in need of a new Volunteer to be in charge of the Department of Safe Environment for children and teenagers. Interested persons please come forward and contact me for further information, either in person or through my email: govindu77@gmail.com. Hoping to get good response soon, Fr. Bala



Who is Jesus Christ in these challenging times? [A reflection by Ken Canedo](#)

More than twenty weeks have passed since my community went into lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic. I haven't been to my office in all this time and, like so many workplaces, we have conducted our meetings and tasks with ZOOM-like zeal.

We stopped gathering for Mass at my parish while priests and staff took a crash course in television production to conduct livestream liturgy. Is there any better way to learn how to swim than by being thrown into the pool? Slowly, as restrictions were lifted, our parishioners were allowed to return to Sunday Mass, but only 25 at a time. We stretched out First Communion over several liturgies in May. I played piano at each liturgy, and after the final Mass I had to go to my car in the church parking lot and have a good cry. They were tears of emotional release. First Communion is supposed to be the happiest day for a Catholic child, but these kids had to come to the altar wearing masks along with their white silk gowns and white

shirts and ties. Even so, I could see the joy in their shining eyes.

Many friends were looking forward to graduation and all the festivities leading up to it. They had to resort to drive-in diploma ceremonies and other creative alternatives. I marveled at their youthful enthusiasm, despite the disappointments.

My brother became very sick and needed surgery, and for a time we feared he may have contracted the virus. I asked for prayers from my friends worldwide and had many sleepless nights of worry. But my brother recovered, and my family thanked our friends and our God for their love and support.

George Floyd was killed at the hands of police brutality, and cities burned in response as protestors called for change in the systemic racism that still permeates our institutions.

Politics are now truly extreme. Social media is a gutter of negativity as everyone talks while nobody listens. The meanness and lack of compassion have driven me off Facebook. I find myself more easily irritated, and my fuse is shorter. My emotions run quickly between peaks and valleys. I have trouble answering the simple question, "How are you?"

A lot of people have lost their jobs. Friends or their relatives have died from COVID. Many could not be with their loved ones at time of death, and they were unable to even have a funeral.

So much in our world has changed so fast. Such is life in the year of our Lord 2020.

In the year of our Lord. We reckon our calendar around what is considered the pivotal turning point in time, the birth of Jesus Christ. Events are either Before Christ (BC) or *Anno Domini* (AD, "the year of our Lord"). All of which begs the question that is posed in last Sunday's Gospel from Matthew 16:13-20: Who is Jesus Christ?

We get a lot of information about Jesus from various sources: the Church and sacred Scripture, family and friends, television evangelists, the Internet, even rock operas and Broadway musicals. There does seem to be a basic general acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as an iconic person in human history, as a wise philosopher who influenced the course of Western civilization through his teachings and the zealous work of his followers. But Jesus is so much more.

Notice how Jesus turns the question around to his disciples, and to us: "Who do YOU say that I am?" Peter responds, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." In the very next verse, Jesus calls Peter the "rock" of the Church. His confession of faith is in the name of the Church.

Who do I say that Jesus is? Can I respond like Peter? Do I truly believe that Jesus is the Christ, the anointed, that is, chosen of God? Do I believe that Jesus is God's Son, and that this God is a living God? Especially in this year of our Lord 2020?

These days, I think our faith is being put to the test. Many people have experienced hardships and sorrows that make my litany of woes look lightweight in comparison. Through

all that we have endured and will continue to endure, can we still say, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God?” In our trials and uncertainties, Jesus is there, holding us up personally and in our community of faith, the Church. Even in the face of death, Jesus is with us. The living God can be found in the midst of our bleakest circumstances. Little things, like the shining eyes of a child, the prayers of friends, or forgiveness, can emerge out of the blue and bring great joy. Many of us missed the Easter Vigil this year. One of my favorite prayers from the Vigil liturgy is said by the priest when he traces a cross on the Easter candle with a stylus:

*Christ yesterday and today,
the Beginning and the End,
the Alpha and the Omega.
All time belongs to him,
and all the ages.
To him be glory and power,
through every age and forever. Amen.*

Ken Canedo is an author and composer whose liturgical music has been published in various hymnals and missals since 1978. His articles have appeared in Today’s Liturgy and Ministry & Liturgy. He is the author of two books on the history of contemporary Catholic music: [Keep the Fire Burning](#) and [From Mountains High](#). He works at OCP as a Music Development Specialist, and he is longtime pastoral musician at Holy Trinity Church in Beaverton, Oregon.

We’ll find strength in letting go the ‘littleness’

By [Mary Marrocco](#) August 7, 2020

One of many arresting moments in J.R.R. Tolkien’s masterfully gripping *The Lord of the Rings* involves Merry, one of Frodo’s three hobbit friends who accompany him on his journey to destroy the ring of power. Merry finds himself at the centre of a great battle, with one of the Nazgul (dread servants of the Enemy) bearing down on the King whom Merry has sworn to serve. When the King is struck down, with horror all around him, Merry starts to crawl away. Something inside calls him to return — but “his will would not answer” and he keeps fleeing in the other direction.



Merry discovers something he cannot let go, even at the cost of all he most longs for. His will clings to that something so desperately it keeps him crawling wildly in the mud.



In his self-revelatory *Confessions*, St. Augustine of Hippo, whom we commemorate Aug. 28, examines his own spiritual experience. He describes the agony of being unable to take the final step towards Christ — paradoxically, since

belonging to Christ is his deepest longing and need. What was the stumbling block? Why would his will not answer what his soul longed for?

We are asked in many ways: What are the “riches” you would not give away in order to go where God asks you (Mark 10:22)? Who is the one you cling to more than to Christ (Matthew 10:37)? What is it you would want to keep rather than receive the cloak Elijah throws around you (1 Kings 19:19)?

If we risk listening to the question, we may be surprised at the answer. At first we might think of our stomachs, our physical safety, our most treasured possessions, our most beloved people. Indeed, these can be difficult to let go, even for a greater love. And yet there may be other, more hidden things we cling to, often unaware.

Once long ago, when I was hurt by someone, I remember telling another friend I would not forgive the one who hurt me even if it meant extra time in Purgatory! It took me a while to see just who was being harmed by that decision, and that my own pride would keep me out of Heaven. Author L.M. Montgomery tells the story of a man whose son had hurt him and who therefore omitted, when praying the Lord’s Prayer, the petition to forgive others: “I can still see him, kneeling there, leaving it out.” Perhaps if Elijah had thrown his cloak around that man, the man would have said: “Let me go first and get my resentment, to make sure I can bring it with me.”

Perhaps Merry was not so much clinging to safety — crawling away didn’t make him safe — as to his smallness, his ability to be overlooked. (Hobbits, or “halflings,” were not only smaller than most races but also unknown to them.) A couple I worked with discovered they had opposite reactions to the experience of being overlooked. One spouse was angry and upset when overlooked, after a childhood of being lost in the background. The other, for whom (as a child) invisibility was a place of safety from getting hurt, was relieved when overlooked. The first was reluctant to give up being seen, the second reluctant to give up a hiding place.

Merry, out of love for the King, and a “good” shame, let go of the littleness he clung to. In that moment, he also found his strength and his ability to resist evil. He turned and stood up against the Nazgul, still vulnerable but now visible. Augustine, on the other hand, reports that he was enabled to let go of the control he clung to when he heard a child’s voice singing. Somehow that little one led him back to the Scriptures where he found his peace.

God may seem demanding — “put me first” — but really, God is thorough. There is no part of us He doesn’t care about, and doesn’t want to transform. Unfortunately, or fortunately, for us, we can’t wait until we are certain of Him to take the final step towards Him. We have to take the step and find out.

St. Augustine, and Merry, had already walked a long way to come up against the one thing they hung on to most fiercely — and then to let it go. This definitive moment was not the end of the story; “the road goes ever on and on,” as Tolkien puts it. If we are feeling stripped and tested, up against our own thorniest inner knot — perhaps through COVID, perhaps by other things in our lives — this is not evidence that all is lost, that God has abandoned us or God never existed. The path is like that. Let us pray for one another.

(Columnist Marrocco can be reached at marrocco7@sympatico.ca)



You duped me . . . and I let myself be duped . . . everyone mocks me . . . I say to myself . . . I will speak in his name no more. But then it becomes like fire burning in my heart . . . (First reading for today)

I can imagine St. Peter saying this in reference to the tragic end of Jesus on the cross. The Gospels indicate that Peter had his own ideas of where Jesus would lead his followers. The procession on Palm Sunday awoke Peter's imagination to the possible installation of a new regime to be presided over by Jesus as a "new David" - his closest followers being handed keys of office. And then came that supper, overcast with omens of failure. Then the arrest without a fight! Peter's expectations shattered, the organization dispersed, he himself in danger. Addressing the now defunct Jesus, he might echo the prophet Jeremiah: *You duped me . . . and I let myself be duped. How gullible could I be?*

Peter's misperception of where Jesus was leading is evident in his disbelief in Jesus's warning in today's reading of imminent violent opposition. *God forbid, Lord*, he says, *No such thing shall ever happen to you.* And he might have added: *That's not the way I see it. What I see is a world reformed by your healing touch (new programs?) - and my happy self, having a role in it.* We know how Jesus reacted to that. *Get behind me . . . You are an obstacle to me. You . . . are thinking as human beings do.*

And that's when Peter begins to feel confused, duped. But what was Jesus predicting? Isn't it what happens all the time down through human history? As insecure beings we immediately construct geodesic domes (one civilization after another) to stop time or to control the future in one way or the other, lacking trust toward a mute environment - even toward neighbors next door. Trust your suspicions, everybody pays cash, build walls of various kinds - like, for example, an ideology that dupes millions into thinking they are a master race.

And what are we doing - what does history say? We seem always to be setting ourselves up for a fall - empires gone, economies in ruins, competence questioned, our best engineering so easily and unintentionally evolving into a menace? We are witnessing one of these collapses today - our expensive efforts to unify the world since my childhood no longer seeming to pay off. Always insecure! So why should Peter be surprised that this enterprise of Jesus, as Peter understands it, should fall apart - leaving him embarrassed before a mere serving girl who associates him with Jesus?

But then it becomes like fire burning in my heart . . . The "program" initiated by Jesus - as *Peter* understood it - might succumb violently to opposition, but not his Gospel. Why? Because in our heart of hearts his Gospel embodies what we all really long for - not just security confined within our geodesic domes - but a resurrection, our release from the winding sheets that mummify us - the release of that core (*one's soul?*) placed within us by the very Source of our being: of faith, hope and love - mutual trust of each other and of nature as kindred as well. From the very core of our being we long to come outdoors into an Easter Sun-Day of cosmic grace and kinship. The Church's mission is to cultivate that ember from age to age - even though clumsily at times.

--Geoff Wood, 8/30/20