



The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time January 17, 2021

Your body is a temple
of the Holy Spirit
within you.

— 1 Corinthians 6:1

SPEAK, LORD, WE ARE LISTENING

In today's first reading God keeps calling out in the night to a sleeping boy. Neither the boy, Samuel, nor his teacher, Eli, understands who is calling. But God's persistence convinces them. Samuel is then ready—not ready yet to do anything, but ready to listen. "Speak, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10).

In the Gospel Jesus is out teaching. Various people notice him and begin to gather around. They soon become disciples and, like the young Samuel, are ready—not ready yet to do anything, but ready to listen. "Speak," they say, "we are listening."

God's voice is always with us, awake or asleep. It swirls around us like fog on a waterfront, enveloping us, gently urging us to wake up, to listen. Awareness of the voice comes first; then willingness to listen; then, in time, the decision to act, to live according to God's word. Let's ask today for the ability to keep our ears open so we don't miss God's voice. *-J. S. Paluch Co.*

FEAST OF FAITH

The Greeting

At several points during the liturgy, the presider greets us with the words, "The Lord be with you." These simple words are not like the greetings that we exchange all day long—our "good mornings," our "hellos" and "how are yous." This liturgical greeting has roots deep in the Old Testament. In the book of Ruth, the words "the Lord be with you" are spoken by Boaz to the harvesters who are laboring in his fields (2:4); in the book of Judges, an angel speaks similar words to Gideon (6:12), where they are words of promise: for soon Gideon will lead his oppressed people to victory and freedom. For us, the words become a greeting of peace, a prayer that the Lord will indeed be with us, and a reminder of his promise to be with us always, to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20). Our response—"And also with you," soon to be "And with your spirit"—returns to the presider this prayer for the Lord's presence. As we know from the scriptures, a prayer for the Lord's presence is no small thing, for when God comes in our midst, God brings healing, grace, and challenge. God's presence transforms us.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Heb 5:1-10; Ps 110:1-4; Mk 2:18-22
Tuesday: Heb 6:10-20; Ps 111:1-2, 4-5, 9, 10c; Mk 2:23-28
Wednesday: Heb 7:1-3, 15-17; Ps 110:1-4; Mk 3:1-6
Thursday: Heb 7:25 — 8:6; Ps 40:7-10, 17; Mk 3:7-12
Friday: Heb 8:6-13; Ps 85:8, 10-14; Mk 3:13-19
Saturday: Heb 9:2-3, 11-14; Ps 47:2-3, 6-9; Mk 3:20-21
Sunday: Jon 3:1-5, 10; Ps 25:4-9; 1 Cor 7:29-31; Mk 1:14-20

"For he will command
his angels concerning
you to guard you in all
your ways." (Psalm 91:11)

"Are not all angels
ministering spirits sent
to serve those who will
inherit salvation?"
(Hebrews 1:14)



WEEKLY



Finance Corner: Your generosity

is greatly needed and appreciated! For the month of **January** 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.

1/17: No 2nd collection. 1/24: Ch in Latin America. 1/31: Rural Food.

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

Centering Prayer ZOOM: Tues. noon/Fri. 930am - info www.stphilipstteresa.org

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

1/17 Sun. 8am Mass Mary Karp
1/17 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Shirley Strong
1/24 Sun. 8am Mass for the People
1/24 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Bob Tiller

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, Dennis M., Art H., Lynn, Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N.

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Monday: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins
Wednesday: St. Fabian; St. Sebastian
Thursday: St. Agnes
Friday: Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of the Unborn
Saturday: St. Vincent; St. Marianne Cope

The Pastor Speaks.....

1. The **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** begins Monday, 18 January (USA). Specific intentions may be inserted in the general intercessions at Mass and the Hours.

2. As per the direction given by Bishop Robert Vasa to all the Pastors during our recent deanery zoom meetings, I decided to provide two more opportunities to those of our parishioners who like to receive **Holy Communion**. Other than Sundays and some Holy Days of Obligation, those who would like to receive Holy Communion from me or another delegated by me may do so until otherwise notified on **Wednesdays at St Philip's and Thursdays at St Teresa's at 9:15 AM**.

(All are kindly to note down that the Distribution of Holy Communion will be done soon after the celebration of Eucharist privately by me or another priest delegated. This way the bishop wants us to understand that distribution of Holy Communion not as independent Communion Service but as it were an act flowing over from the Eucharistic Celebration.)



OUTDOOR SUNDAY MASSES:
Times & Zoom information can be found at
our parish website ---- www.stphilipstteresa.org

RURAL FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE for JANUARY 2021

We prepared for stormy skies for the January 12 Rural Food distribution but were happy to get only a short sprinkle.

We were greeted with warm and sunny smiles as we distributed food to 61 families totaling 54 adults, 32 seniors, and 23 children.

As we plan for and adjust to distribution outside in inclement weather we have decided to adjust our set up and distribution times slightly. ***Please note the changes below.***

We are so thankful for the support provided to make this program flourish.

This program is funded through the Rural Food Collection each month, private donations and 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 Hall:

Saturday, February 6, 9-10:00am repackaging;
*Monday, February 8, 9:00 - 11:00am set up; and
*Tuesday, February 9, 8:00 - 11:00am distribution of food to clients.



Pope Francis asks Immaculate Virgin Mary to intercede for US after Capitol violence



by [Courtney Mares](#)



Vatican City, Jan 10, 2021 / 05:30 am MT ([CNA](#)).- Pope Francis prayed Sunday for the United States, asking the Immaculate Virgin Mary to help foster a “culture of encounter” after the recent violence at the U.S. Capitol Building.

“I extend an affectionate greeting to the people of the United States of America, shaken by the recent siege of Congress. I pray for those who lost their lives, five lost in those dramatic

moments,” Pope Francis said after his Angelus address Jan. 10.

“I reaffirm that violence is always self-destructive. Nothing is gained with violence and so much is lost. I urge the authority of the state and the entire population to maintain a high sense of responsibility in order to calm the spirits, promote national reconciliation and protect the democratic values rooted in American society,” the pope said.

In the midday Marian prayer broadcast live from the library of the Vatican’s Apostolic Palace, Pope Francis invoked the intercession of the Immaculate Conception, who was proclaimed patroness of the United States in 1846.

“May the Immaculate Virgin, Patroness of the United States of America, help to keep alive the culture of encounter, the culture of care, as the main way to build the common good together,” the pope said.

I am praying for the United States of America, shaken by the recent attack on Congress. I pray for those who lost their life. Violence is always self-destructive. I urge everyone to promote a culture of encounter and of care to construct the common good.

— Pope Francis (@Pontifex) [January 10, 2021](#)

Pope Francis’ comments came four days after pro-Donald Trump protesters stormed the U.S. Capitol Building Jan. 6 as Congress was in the process of certifying the presidential election results, leading to the evacuation of lawmakers and the deadly shooting of one protester by law enforcement. A U.S. Capitol police officer also died from injuries sustained during the attack, and three other protesters died due to medical emergencies.

In a video clip published Jan. 9, Pope Francis said that he was “astonished” by this incident that occurred in the U.S. Capitol Building.

“I was astonished, because they are a people so disciplined in democracy, right? But it’s a reality,” the pope said in the clip published to the website of the Italian news program TgCom24.

“Something isn’t working,” Francis continued. With “people taking a path against the community, against democracy, against the common good. Thanks be to God that this has broken out and there was a chance to see it well so that now you can try and heal it. Yes, this must be condemned, this movement...”

The clip was published as a preview of a longer interview with Pope Francis by Vatican journalist Fabio Marchese Ragona, who works for the Italian television network Mediaset.

The interview will air on the evening of Jan. 10, and will be followed by a Mediaset-produced film on the life of Jorge Mario Bergoglio, from his youth in Argentina until his election as Pope Francis in 2013. In his Angelus address, Pope Francis reflected on the manifestation of the Holy Trinity at Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River.

"After this gesture of compassion from Jesus, an extraordinary thing happens: the heavens open and the Trinity is finally revealed. The Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove and the Father says to Jesus: 'You are my beloved Son.' God manifests himself when mercy appears," Pope Francis said.

"Do not forget this: God manifests himself when mercy appears, because that is his face. Jesus becomes the servant of sinners and is proclaimed Son; He lowers himself upon us and the Spirit descends upon him. Love calls love. It is also true for us: in every gesture of service, in every work of mercy that we perform, God manifests himself, God sets his gaze on the world."

The pope said that "God overcomes the evil of the world by humbling himself."

He added: "It is also the way in which we can lift others up: not judging, not in commanding what to do, but by becoming neighbors, by empathizing, by sharing God's love."

What is it about grace that infuriates people?

Today's first reading from the *Book of Isaiah* was composed sometime around 550 BC during the exile of Jewish captives to reservations within the Babylonian Empire (generally modern Iraq). Since the glory days of Kings David and Solomon the Kingdom of Israel had declined until it became simply the Kingdom of Judah (the only tribe left standing). And then even this remnant was crushed by Babylon leading to the above mentioned exile.

The exiled Jews were of the more cultured variety including priests and merchants, urban types. No longer a political state, Judah was now on its way to becoming Judaism, a "church", i.e. a community united not by borders but movable, migratory, and by a creed built upon its old traditions as reinterpreted by its exiled priests in the light of its recent disaster. Indeed, having been uprooted from old borders, the exiles began to envision a wider, cosmic sense of itself – the dispersal of its tradition to the whole world. Far from being confined to alien reservations, this newly found sense of destiny had them gathering the whole world into their universe, as they understood it.

Especially interesting is Isaiah's mention of a *Servant* of God who would play a role in this expansion of Judah's mission to the world. But who was this Servant, mentioned in four different places in Isaiah's later chapters? Scholars think it refers to some individual within the exiled community of the

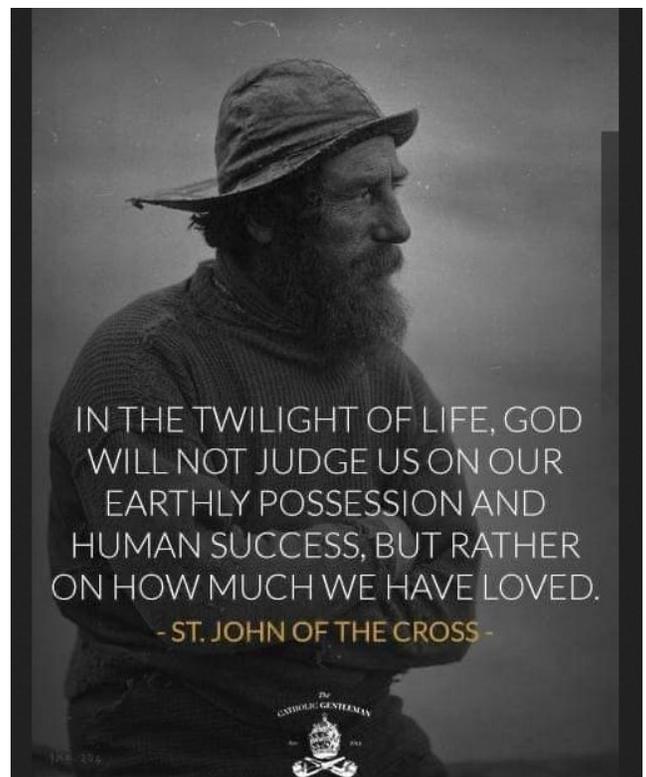
500's BC. He is addressed by God as *my chosen one* upon whom God has put his spirit to bring forth justice to the world.

He wouldn't do this in the way justice is usually enforced (in the manner of John Wayne) but by way of extreme gentleness. He will not shout, break a bruised reed, quench a smoldering wick. He will open peoples' eyes, making of them visionaries; he will release people imprisoned in one way or another; put an end to dungeons – draw people enclosed in their biases out into the open air – to expand their breathing. He shall speak a new language by way of his well-trained tongue. His word will relieve the weary, wake up the whole world. Indeed his very way of gentle, gracious, eloquent being will in itself draw the attention of others.

But will he succeed? The prophecy suggests the world's response will be otherwise. He will meet insult, physical violence, spit, disfigurement, made appalling rather than attractive, knowing pain. Yet somehow his very wounds, his suffering will awaken the conscience of a belligerent world. Of course, the New Testament saw in this *Servant* of Isaiah a forecast of the mission and outcome of Jesus' role in history . . . even to weaving Isaiah's language into its description of his crucifixion.

Yet the question can still be argued: do such Servants of God have any success in changing the human race? The point may be argued but the question remains: what is it about being merciful, forgiving, gentle, speaking with care and concern that - rather than captivate - triggers off hostility, even violence from century to century? Why is it that when one turns the other cheek, he nevertheless ends up with a broken jaw? What is wrong with us?

--Geoff Wood, 1/10/21



Our Pilgrimage and Epiphanies through a Christian Life

Those of our parish who attended the Advent Retreat with Father Christopher LaRocca had the opportunity to learn how the Epiphany pilgrimage of the Wise Men was representative of our spiritual pilgrimage through life. Father Christopher described this pilgrimage in stages, beginning with the study of ancient writings to recognizing a new star in the heavens to setting to follow the star to meeting with Herod to presenting their finest gifts to an infant lying in a manger to obeying the angel to return home by a different road.

Our lives as Christians are defined by our pilgrimage based on our personal epiphany of Jesus Christ. We are not unlike so many persons in Scripture and the many saints whose lives stand as models for our own personal pilgrimage, though no two humans have identical pilgrimages or epiphanies. Even the non-believer's life is a pilgrimage, albeit without a true Epiphany with a capital "E." Life is filled with revelations; but the Christian's true pilgrimage both begins and ends with the Epiphany, the revelation of Jesus Christ. This is even true of Jesus, the man, who had to walk the road set by his Father in Heaven. If we review the lives of these persons, we see all the elements of a good and productive pilgrimage, filled with triumphs and trials, lessons and epiphanies. All true Epiphanies begin with a sign from Heaven which can come in virtually any form. We then search to understand and are given the choice (free will) to follow the sign that begins our true Epiphany. As we begin our walk we are energized, committed to see it through. But along the way we encounter the "Herods" of the world and all the normal obstacles of life. Occasionally, we are challenged with the option of continuing or turning back. We may stop to help someone and find our expectations changed, like Artaban, the fourth Wiseman. But, if we follow the path God has laid before us, we will eventually find our divine reward, our own divine epiphany.

As far back as I can remember, due to my mother, I lived in a religious world, being named after Monsignor John Patrick Manley, attending Catholic school through the third grade, and being influenced by Mother's nun and priest friends to become a priest. It was not to be, being turned down by our bishop. I had many great spiritual experiences, including the opportunity to accompany my dad to his First Communion when I was eight and being his Confirmation sponsor at fifteen. I loved my faith and especially loved serving Mass, hundreds of times, but I would be thirty years old before my true epiphany would come.

As a young Catholic, I had never read the Bible, but I listened to the incredible witness of Bob Cavnar, a layman who turned to Jesus, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and founded what would become one of the largest Catholic prayer groups in America. Though already confirmed, I was prayed with for a filling of the Spirit. I had the opportunity to hear the testimonies of great Catholic and Protestant spiritual leaders. My life changed! Truly hungry for God, I decided to do a 14-day, in-home retreat and Bob Cavnar agreed to be available by phone. I started a journey that changed everything for me. I read the Gospel of John in one sitting and had my first, true epiphany of Jesus, Messiah and Christ. I prayed, listened to hymns, read scripture ... and prayed more. Bob told me to pray holding my Bible. I had questions, and Bob was confident God would answer me. First, I asked God if I should be in business with two men, and that quiet, still voice said to open the Bible to the Old Testament and read the right hand page. I did! I opened to Ecclesiastes 4 and found verse 12 – *"One man standing alone will be defeated. Two back-to-back will conquer; but three is better, for three is like a triple-braided cord and cannot be broken."* I tried to understand what was happening. God gave me three more scriptures, and I was amazed when I read them together: Galatians 4:15-16, Ephesians 2:22 and Romans 5:5. (GAL) *"What has happened to your open-hearted spirit? I can testify on your behalf that if it were possible you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. Have I become your enemy just because I tell you the truth?"* (EPH) *In him you are being built into this temple to become a dwelling placed for God in the Spirit.* (ROM) *And this hope will not leave [you] disappointed, because the love of God has been poured out in [your heart] through the Holy Spirit who has been given to [you].* I asked God to give me something that would always remind me of His presence. The voice said to read Leviticus 11 on clean and unclean foods. I thought it was a mistake, being a Southern and loving pork roast, salt cured ham, chops, bacon, and especially barbecue. Two days later that voice said to read Deuteronomy 14. The same message! I gave up pork forever; and I can't see pork or read it on a menu without thinking of God. Nothing would ever be the same. Like the Wise Men and so many others, I found far more than I expected, and a road to faith not expected. I began a lifelong pilgrimage through the Scriptures and a different route through life, filled with victories, failures, disappointments, and surprising encounters with God through others. I also found long periods when it did not seem God was there. But I was wrong.

For all of us, our spiritual pilgrimage is a choice of will and is deeply personal. A great epiphany awaits all believers. It's a matter of faith and seeking God with an overwhelming desire that will not let us be deterred. James 1:2-4 tells us: *"Consider it all joy, brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of faith will produce endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you might be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."* This scripture has become one of my spiritual mantras. As all who have gone before us have learned, it is not just one divine revelation or one trial, but many. It is not just one road, but a series of roads and changes, as Paul learned. But we have the blessed assurance that we will each find our epiphany and the route home to God.

I thank Father Christopher for his wisdom and illumination. We all need to be refreshed and redirected along our road to God.

Pat Griffith