



Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time July 11, 2021

Truth shall spring out of the earth,
and justice shall look down from heaven.

— Psalm 85:12

GOD CHOSE US

Who chose first, God or you? That is the question explored in today's three readings. The second reading, from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, reads almost like a hymn. It praises God for choosing us, for calling us to serve, and for blessing us in our service. Paul makes it clear how honored we are and how special is the call to live as children of God. This is through no doing of our own.

The first reading and the Gospel use prose rather than poetry to describe the same truth: God did the choosing, not us. When the prophet Amos was berated for being a prophet, he retorted that the whole thing wasn't his idea in the first place. Neither did the twelve apostles in today's Gospel ask for their calling. Jesus sent them forth, two by two, to do the work of his kingdom.

—J. S. Paluch Co.

FEAST OF FAITH

Invitation to the Eucharistic Prayer

After the presider washes his hands, he turns to the people and says, "Pray that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God the almighty Father." We have brought forward bread and wine, and now we are asked to see in these simple gifts upon the altar a sacrifice offered to God. Our response is rich in theological meaning. "May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands." The words point to the unique role of the priest, whose hands, at his ordination, were anointed for just this purpose: that he might "sanctify the Christian people and offer sacrifice to God" (*Rite of Ordination*). We ask God to accept our sacrifice not because it is worthy of God, but simply "for the praise and glory of his name." God does not need our offering, but allows us to give it so that we might grow in holiness. And God, never to be outdone in generosity, gives all that we have given back to us, "for our good and the good of all his Church." This Mass benefits not just those who have gathered, but, in the mysterious economy of grace, the whole Church. In the words of Saint Paul, when one part rejoices, the whole body "share[s] its joy" (1 Corinthians 12:26).

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Ex 1:8-14, 22; Ps 124:1b-8; Mt 10:34 — 11:1
Tuesday: Ex 2:1-15a; Ps 69:3, 14, 30-31, 33-34; Mt 11:20-24
Wednesday: Ex 3:1-6, 9-12; Ps 103:1b-4, 6-7; Mt 11:25-27
Thursday: Ex 3:13-20; Ps 105:1, 5, 8-9, 24-27; Mt 11:28-30
Friday: Ex 11:10 — 12:14; Ps 116:12-13, 15, 16bc, 17-18; Mt 12:1-8
Saturday: Ex 12:37-42; Ps 136:1, 23-24, 10-15; Mt 12:14-21
Sunday: Jer 23:1-6; Ps 23:1-6; Eph 2:13-18; Mk 6:30-34

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Tuesday: St. Henry
Wednesday: [St. Kateri Tekakwitha](#)
Thursday: St. Bonaventure
Friday: Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Saturday: Blessed Virgin Mary



WEEKLY



Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated! For the month of July 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. Please include your offering envelope # [if you have one] with your donation. Bless you!

June summary: 1st collections: \$6727. 2nd collections: \$3009.

July 3-4: 1st collection: \$1968. 2nd collection: \$210.

7/11: Operating Expenses. 7/18: Capital Expenditures. 7/25: Rural Food.

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: Contact Penny, 559-367-7403

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

7/10 Sat. 5pm Mass for the Papke Family special intention
7/11 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Deborah Marcelius
7/11 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Brendan Smith

7/17 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Chris Olson
7/18 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ John Kennedy
7/18 Sun. 9:30am Mass for the People

Prayer Requests: Please 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., 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., Chuck, 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 G., Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N., Diane K., Janet K., Norma M., Elaine J., River M.

RURAL FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE for June 2021:

On Tuesday, June 8, 34 families received nutritional support during our drive-through distribution at the St Philips Parking lot. This month we began outreach to client families who may be needing school supplies for the return to school in the fall.



We are looking into revising our services as the COVID pandemic restrictions are lessened. We are surveying our clients to determine whether we will continue drive-through distribution or return to our traditional walk-through distribution.

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.

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, July 10, 9-10:00am repackaging; **Monday, July 12, 9:00 - 11:00am** set-up; and **Tuesday, July 13, 7:30a- 11:00am** to distribute food to clients.



Detail of *St. Margaret and the Dragon* by Titian
(Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

Deacon-structing Church Mothers: Part Three

by [Deacon Pedro](#)

[Last week](#), we learned about St. Hermione the Physician and her sisters, traditionally believed to have been the four daughters of St. Philip the Evangelist, one of the first seven deacons, mentioned in the book of Acts. [Two weeks ago](#), we learned about a few other women who were deeply influential in the early Church. I'm sure you had not heard of them before: Thecla, Irene of Macedonia, Macrina the Elder, Macrina the Younger, Nino, and Proba.

Today, let's look at a few others from the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

St. Eudokia is also known as Eudocia, or Eudokia of Heliopolis. Tradition holds that Eudokia was a Samaritan woman who lived in the late 1st and early 2nd century. She led a questionable life, acquiring wealth from having wealthy lovers. One night she heard the monk Germanus preaching in the house next door to hers. Eudokia's heart was moved, and the next day she found Germanus to ask if someone like her could also be saved. Germanus recommended a week of seclusion, fasting, and prayer, after which Eudokia gave up all her wealth and her previous life and was baptized. She entered the monastery at Heliopolis (in present-day Egypt) where she received many special gifts from God. When she became abbess of the monastery, one of her former lovers came to see her again. Eudokia rebuked him, and he was struck dead. Immediately Eudokia prayed for him, and her former lover came back to life and in turn was converted and baptized. There are also stories of other people being brought back to life. After some 50 years of ascetic living at the monastery, Eudokia was executed by the governor Vicentius on March 1, 107.

St. Blandina died as a martyr in AD 177, in Lyon, when she was probably not quite 20 years old. Blandina was a slave who, along with her mistress, was rounded up during a violent persecution. St. Irenaeus was a priest in Lyon at the time. According to Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, Blandina endured torment for a whole day until her executioners *"were wearied and tired, confessing that they had been baffled, for they had no other torture they could apply to her."* The tortures were relentless, and many apostatized, while others died in prison. Those who didn't continued to endure torture. Blandina was tied to a stake, like one crucified, and left as food for the wild beasts that were let loose on her. Still she continued to inspire the other martyrs. When none of the beasts attacked her, she was sent back to prison. On the last day of the gladiatorial shows, Blandina was once again brought back to the amphitheatre,

where she was exposed to every torture possible, all during which she continued to exhort her companions *"not as one thrown to the wild beasts, but as one invited to a marriage supper"*. Finally, she was sacrificed, with, according to Eusebius, *"the heathens themselves acknowledging that never among them did woman endure so many and such fearful tortures."* While she is not remembered for her writings or sage advice, she is nonetheless remembered for her witness – no doubt an inspiration for many to continue steadfast in their Faith. Her feast day is June 2.

The Eastern Tradition that brought us most of our Desert Fathers, also has a tradition of Desert Mothers or Ammas, who also lived as hermits in the deserts of Egypt. Most of their stories are documented in a work titled the *Lausiac History*, written by Palladius, a student of St. John Chrysostom. Among them are **Theodora of Alexandria**, **Sarah of the Desert**, and **Olympias the Younger**. They all lived in 4th and 5th centuries.

The best known Amma is **Syncretica of Alexandria**, who lived in the late 3rd and early 4th century. Having distributed her parents' riches to the poor after they died, Syncretica is said to have moved to the desert with her younger sister, who was blind, where they lived in a crypt among the tombs outside of Alexandria for the rest of their lives. Very soon, news of her spread, and many young women came to learn from her and live the ascetic life with her. After a long illness, she gave final instructions to her sisters and died at age 80, around the year 350. Her sayings are preserved along with the sayings of the Desert Fathers. One of them is:

"There are many who live in the mountains and behave as if they were in the town; they are wasting their time. It is possible to be a solitary in one's mind while living in a crowd; and it is possible for those who are solitaries to live in the crowd of their own thoughts."

She is venerated on January 5th.

St. Demiana lived in northern Egypt in the late 3rd century. Her mother died when she was quite young, and she was brought up by her father, who was a Christian. At the age of 15, she requested him to build her a house where she could live a life of celibacy, in isolation, and devote herself to Christ as his bride. Her father built her a palace in the outskirts of the city where she lived with 40 friends, who also embraced the monastic life. During the Diocletian persecution, Demiana's father was persuaded to renounce his Christian Faith. When Demiana heard the news, she left her convent to go see him. She convinced him to return to the Faith. When Diocletian found out, he had Demiana's father beheaded. He then turned his attention towards Demiana and her 40 virgin companions. Demiana was tortured over a period of three years, but each time she persevered and survived. Thus, it was ordered that she, along with her 40 friends, be beheaded. Tradition holds that when St. Helena travelled to the Holy Land, she visited the tomb of St. Demiana and the 40 Virgins and had a church built over it. Nearby, the original site of St. Demiana's monastery has also been restored and is the location of a Coptic Orthodox Monastery for a congregation of sisters who dedicate their lives to Christ, inspired by the life of the one who is considered to be the founder of monasticism or Coptic Orthodox nuns. St. Demiana and the 40 Virgins are commemorated in the Coptic Orthodox Church on January 21.

Margaret of Antioch is also known as Margaret the Virgin or St. Marina the Great Martyr. She lived in the 3rd century in Antioch and was martyred at age 15. According to the Golden Legend, Margaret's mother died in childbirth and she was brought up by her nurse, who was a Christian. When Margaret herself embraced Christianity, her father disowned her, and she was adopted by her nurse. In a story that is very common with early Church women martyrs, Margaret, who was very beautiful, was proposed marriage by a Roman governor, who demanded she renounce her Faith. Margaret refused and was tortured. Many miracles reportedly occurred during these tortures. Legend says that they tried to execute her by drowning and by burning, but each time she was miraculously saved, which led to the conversion of thousands. In the end she was beheaded. Along with St. Barbara and St. Catherine of Alexandria, she is one of the three original women martyrs who became known as the Fourteen Holy Helpers for their powerful help to those who ask for their intercession. St. Margaret of Antioch is the patron of safe childbirth, and her feast day is July 20.

I must say that learning about these women has inspired me to learn more about saints in general, but especially those who lived in the first centuries of the Church. If you dig deep enough, you'd be amazed and inspired by what you will find.

Come back next week, and let's look at some more influential women in the early Church who lived in the 4th century, including St. Helena and St. Monica.



Every week, Deacon Pedro takes a particular topic apart, not so much to explore or explain the subject to its fullness, but rather to provide insights that will deepen our understanding of the subject. Contact: pedro@saltandlighttv.org.

But "Professor Harold Hill", the salesman, wins their approval, distracting them by a worse intrusion, a pool hall! As he sings: . . . *Or you are not aware of the caliber of disaster indicated / By the presence of a pool table in your community. / Ya got trouble, my friend right here in River City. . . . I say that any boob kin take / And shove a ball in a pocket. / And they call that sloth . . . / I say, first, medicinal wine from a teaspoon, / Then beer from a bottle. / An' the next thing ya know, . . . / Your son is playin' for money / And list'nin to some big out-a-town Jasper / Hearin' him tell about horse-race gamblin'.*



In normal use, to be provincial is to be insular, parochial, inflexible, bordering on bigoted, set in one's ways, wary of novelty . . . dogmatic. Back in the days of H. L. Mencken (1880-1956) provincialism, home-town-ness, was greatly admired in the United States, though not by Mencken who wrote a rambling piece about sections of the U.S. thus: . . . *there a poet is now almost as rare as an oboe-player, a dry-point etcher or a metaphysician. It is, indeed, amazing to contemplate so vast a vacuity. One thinks of the interstellar spaces, of the colossal reaches of the now mythical ether.*

Which brings us to Nazareth, the hometown of Jesus. It had a small population, much inbred as is evident in Jesus' having so many relatives there. John's Gospel has someone asking: *Can anything good come out of Nazareth?* And in today's Gospel the town actually resents the fact that Jesus has made a name for himself. "Where does he get off sounding so superior? We know all there is to know about that carpenter's son." Yet what is it that turns them off during his discourse at their synagogue? We have only a fragment of his message (in Luke's version of the visit) but it's loaded with challenges – in a way similar to those set before the citizens of River City: to get musical, become harmonious, acquire rhythm, snap out of your static everydayness, loosen your minds.

We are all citizens of Nazareth (or River City) in some way, once a routine is set, not wanting to change, to widen and deepen our interests, pay some curiosity to why we exist, what brought us here, why must tomorrow differ from today. The concrete has dried, the paving set – so let's continue to tread our familiar way. All this Jesus stuff about bringing good news to the poor, freedom to shackled lives, insight to obsessed minds, hope to the oppressed, a God of grace to people burdened by guilt – is asking too much, thank you – so will you please leave town?

Indeed I myself am a citizen of Nazareth; I am inclined to wish the challenges of Jesus to leave me alone, like caring interminably for a demented spouse – and live my tomorrows as I have all my yesterdays – comfortably dormant – skeptical as ever of anything like a miracle – unless maybe it is I whom Christ expects to behave like a miracle.

–Geoff Wood, 7/04/2021



Do you knit, crochet, or use a loom? We need hats and scarves for the people who come to the food program. Interested? Call Dolores at (707) 874 6072. Thanks.

Provincialism

Meredith Wilson's 1957 show **The Music Man** is a prime example of a provincial town resisting the outside influence of a traveling salesman, conning its residents into buying band instruments for their children – to form a town band. The adults will have nothing to do with it . . . the idea is alarming, a threat to Midwestern everydayness – it's a new idea and therefore dangerous.

Volunteer Search 2021

Memo from Parish Council: St Philip and St. Teresa are looking for volunteers. As a result of our churches opening up we have a need to get the word out to let our parishioners know what volunteer opportunities are available. Below is a list opportunity areas and a brief description of what skills and experience would likely be needed. If you have a background, working experience or just a general interest in any one of those opportunities please contact Father Bala. He can be reached via email; govindu77@gmail.com. He will pass your show of interest to the appropriate person. Please include any contact information you have.

Mass:

Lector, usher, Mass setup, church cleaning, liturgical events, weddings, funerals & CCD

Building maintenance:

Electrical, plumbing, general contractor, refrigeration, heating & sound system support

Landscape maintenance:

Enjoys all facets of gardening, plumbing (PVC), electrical (watering timer systems)

3rd party hall events & kitchen management

Event coordinator, kitchen manager, customer contact and scheduling

Fundraising:

Experience, organization, ideas, planning, promotion

Parish social events:

Ideas, planning, promotion, setup, cooking, serving, raffles

Parish/Office support:

Accounting experience, video & sound support, Wi-Fi communications