



Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 10, 2021

The word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword.

— *Hebrews 4:12a*

GIFTS

In today's readings, we discover that material wealth alone does not keep us from discipleship. We will see that there are other gifts more important than material wealth, but even so, it is how we use our gifts that matters most.

Today's scriptures point to the value of the gifts of wisdom, trusting in God, and letting our actions reflect the love of God from within. It is not gold that causes us to fall, but rather the desire for gold above all other things. From the readings in Wisdom and Hebrews, we find the source of God's gifts in our lives. Wisdom is more valuable than worldly possessions. In Hebrews, we are challenged to look at our own values and admit honestly what controls our lives. -J. S. Paluch Co.

FEAST OF FAITH
Agnus Dei

After the sign of peace, the priest breaks the host into pieces, and prepares the patens or plates of hosts for the assembly. In the early church, "the breaking of the bread" was the name given to the entire Eucharistic liturgy, so central was this action to the meaning of the Christian life. For just as the one bread is broken and given to many people, the many are made one in receiving it.

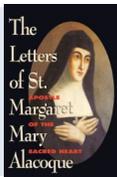
During this ritual action, we sing an ancient litany, calling on Jesus as the "Lamb of God"—the words used by John the Baptist when he pointed to Jesus walking beside the Jordan River (John 1:29, 36). In calling Jesus "the Lamb of God," John was already pointing to the death that Jesus would die: in giving his life, Jesus would become the Paschal Lamb of the new covenant. During the Mass, when we call on the Lamb of God, we call to mind his self-sacrificing love, his blood poured out for us, and we ask this compassionate Lord for mercy and peace. -Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Rom 1:1-7; Ps 98:1-4; Lk 11:29-32
 Tuesday: Rom 1:16-25; Ps 19:2-5; Lk 11:37-41
 Wednesday: Rom 2:1-11; Ps 62:2-3, 6-7, 9; Lk 11:42-46
 Thursday: Rom 3:21-30; Ps 130:1b-6ab; Lk 11:47-54
 Friday: Rom 4:1-8; Ps 32:1b-2, 5, 11; Lk 12:1-7
 Saturday: Rom 4:13, 16-18; Ps 105:6-9, 42-43; Lk 12:8-12
 Sunday: Is 53:10-11; Ps 33:4-5, 18-20, 22; Heb 4:14-16; Mk 10:35-45

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Mon: St. John XXIII; Columbus Day
 Thurs: St. Callistus I
 Fri: St. Teresa of Jesus
 Sat: [St. Margaret Mary Alacoque](#);
 St. Hedwig;
 Blessed Virgin Mary; Sweetest Day



Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated! For the month of **September** offerings: PLEASE put in Mass collection box 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] with your donation. Bless you!



10/3: 1st collection: \$1850. 2nd collection: \$725.
 10/10: *Capital Expenditures. 10/17: No 2nd collection.*

Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: TBA
Finance Council [FC]: TBA
Liturgy Committee [LC]: Fri., 11/5/21, at 9:45am in Hall
St. Teresa Ladies Guild: Contact Diane, 823-6044
St. Philip Ladies Guild: Contact Penny, 559-367-7403

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

10/09 Sat. 5pm Mass
 10/10 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Tina Bartolo
 10/10 Sun. 9:30am Mass for the People
 10/10 Sun. 11:15 am Mass

10/16 Sat. 5pm Mass
 10/17 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Susan K. Miller
 10/17 Sun. 9:30am Mass for the People
 10/17 Sun. 11:15 am Mass

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., River M.; Nikkie; Mr. C., Michelle, Christian A., Samantha S., Gary E., and for repose of the soul of Claudia Munoz's mother.

[La Purisima Concepcion Mission \(link\)](#)



(the California missions are featured in our current bulletins)

Our Current Parish Mass Schedule:

St. Philip, *Occidental*: 8am & 11:15am Sun.; 9am Wed. & Fri.
 St. Teresa, *Bodega*: 5pm Sat.; 9:30am Sun.; 9am Tues. & Thurs.

RURAL FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE for September 2021

On Tuesday, September 14, 42 families, 105 individuals received nutritional support during our distribution at the St Philips Parking lot and parish hall. The bounty of beautiful produce, from community gardens as well as from Redwood Empire Food Bank, was a highlight of our distribution this month.

Volunteers enjoyed a selection of pastries and cake and received gift certificates to celebrate their dedication to the Rural Food Program during the past 18 months.

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.

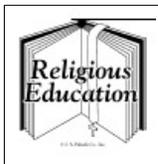
This program is funded through monthly Rural Food Collection, private donations and the dedicated, awesome volunteers. **Thank you for your generous donations as we strive to meet the nutritional needs of all attendees at our food distributions.**

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

Saturday, October 9, 9:00-- 10:00am repackaging;

Monday, October 11, 9:00 – 11:00am set up; and

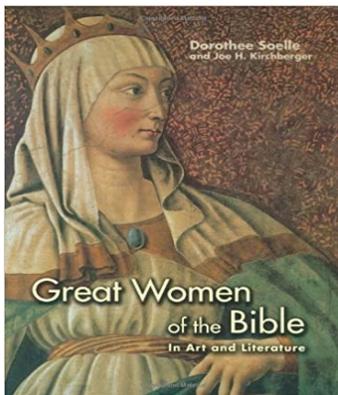
Tuesday, October 12, 7:30– 11:00am to distribute food to clients.



Parish Religious Education Program

We are happy to announce the return of our Religious Education [CCD] K-12 program this September at the 11:15am Sunday Mass.

You can get more information for your family and friends, as well as register, by going online to www.stphilipsteresa.org or by contacting Religious Education Director Jolene Corcoran at jolene@lunardielectric.com. See you soon!



A Trend Emerging

<[book link](#)>

The New Testament comes across as a very male production. It proclaims the advance of a Jesus and his male disciples – with women in occasionally mentioned support roles. And the conflicts throughout are between men – pro or con. Even the mother of Jesus only emerges

as a prominent female in the opening chapters of Luke's Gospel late in the first century. In the New Testament's earliest writings Saint Paul mentions Mary only once in connection with the birth of Jesus: "When the time was right, God sent forth his son, *born of a woman*." Mark mentions her as "standing outside a meeting

pleading with Jesus to come home." And Matthew's birth narrative is all about Joseph and Herod and the Magi – Mary cast in a bit part at best. Only late in the first century does Luke bring her to the fore as prominent in Christ's origin as well as Elizabeth, her cousin, and the elderly prophetess Anna.

The Old Testament also comes across as a drama about men operating within a man's world: about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons and then about Moses, Joshua, the twelve Judges of Israel, Saul, David, Solomon . . . carrying the destiny of a people meant to redeem the world. But a closer look reveals that at almost every critical moment in biblical history where the male characters would prefer a detour from their destiny, a daring woman saves the day. There's Rebecca diverting Isaac's blessing from Esau to Jacob; there's Pharaoh's daughter saving Moses from infanticide; there's Naomi and Ruth compelling Boaz to marry Ruth, without whom there would have been no David (and without Bathsheba, no Solomon). Then there's Tamar seducing Judah; then come Rahab, Deborah, Judith, Esther, each equivalent to an early Joan of Arc.

In every case the men folk are fatalistic; it's the women who have the imagination to perpetuate destiny (as did Eve?). And in every case the women save the situation by not "adhering to the book," but by using their imaginations to the point where their interventions become morally questionable - as in that case of Rebecca's disguising her son Jacob as his elder brother Esau and diverting their father's irreversible blessing to fall upon the younger son from whom would arise the Israel of subsequent history. It's like Rebecca saying: "If I have to lie to save the world, I'll lie, I'll take on the responsibility!" Today we might call that: thinking outside the box.

Which brings us back to the New Testament and Luke's birth narrative. An angel announces to the over aged priest Zachary his equally aged wife's conception of John the Baptist. He can't believe it; he brings up all the reasons it's impossible – and he ends up mute. The same angel announces to Mary her immediate pregnancy of dimensions beyond belief – she wonders *how* but nevertheless says: So be it! Men seem to insist on knowing the facts (in conventional terms) before deciding anything; biblical women seem willing to take a chance; to believe in miracles.

As I view television news nowadays, how different from the old days when it was mostly men who spoke with authority, pundits, broadcasters, peopling politics, arguing, complacent in their role of leadership. Today? Men seem to be fading from such venues – it's women who speak up with authority. An emerging trend but biblically an old one.

--Geoff Wood, 10/03/2021

Parish Notes:

1. **There is still need of Volunteers** for various ministries, like Ushers for weekend Masses, Lectors for 11:15am Sunday Mass, and weekend Altar Servers (especially from past groups of children who received First Communion and Confirmation).

2. Our parish is immensely grateful to Valerie, the bookkeeper, for her committed and free services. As she expressed her desire to retire completely from her service to our community by the end of December 2021, we are looking for a new bookkeeper to take her position from January 2022. Those who like to volunteer or those who want to be hired for this work may email Fr. Bala: govindu77@gmail.com

3. Masks are still mandated for use indoors at churches, halls, and other public buildings. Thank you for your cooperation. At Mass, we will continue singing with masks on. Before we start singing the Recessional Hymn, there will be time given for those (perhaps two or three people) to leave the church silently if they have health or other good reason for safety.

Pastor Speaks: Appreciation & Gratitude

On my behalf and on behalf of the Finance Council, I would like to say a 'Big Thank You' to all those who generously contributed to our Parish Summer Appeal this time to reach even beyond the goal. An active parishioner who wanted to be anonymous gave us a Matching Grant of \$35,000.00. As per Monday, October 4, 2021, the total amount of donations from many of our parishioners and friends amounted to \$38,323.00. Some of our people gave \$9,800.00 as part of this Appeal but to be used for the Music Program. Thus we made a total of \$83,123.00.

I am short of words to express my genuine appreciation and gratitude to all of you. I can only say, 'Thank You'! I am indeed happy and proud to be part of our Faith Family of St. Philip the Apostle and St. Teresa of Avila Communities who always stand out as generous, kind and sacrificing. God bless you abundantly!

The funds will be utilized carefully for the purposes like the Rectory Repairs, the Music Program, the capital expenses as mentioned in the Appeal Letter.

-Fr. Bala



From the original book cover of Robert Hugh Benson's *Lord of the World*
(Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

Book Review: *Lord of the World*
by [Benjamin Boivin](#)

The utopia-dystopia nexus is a central theme of twentieth-century literature. Some of the most-read novels of our time are directly related to this tradition. We might think in particular of George Orwell's *1984*, a profoundly political dystopia which brilliantly illustrates the worst excesses of totalitarianism, or Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, which parodies the utopian nature of futuristic science fiction novels (like the works of H.G. Wells) and tells of a world where material comfort and

pleasure reign, leading to the enfeeblement of the human soul in an ocean of narcotic banality.

These works have become so well known, so deeply rooted in popular culture that they seem to have lost some of their vibrancy, or rather their ability to surprise. While this does not detract from their merit, other lesser known but equally fascinating works approach the question from sometimes very surprising perspectives.

Such is the case with *Lord of the World*, a dystopian novel written by the English Catholic priest Robert Hugh Benson, whose personal history resonates with that of the Oxford Movement and its most illustrious representative, [St. John Henry Newman](#).

Benson came from a highly sophisticated background, heir to a family of prominent Anglican clergymen. His father was Archbishop of Canterbury, the highest ecclesiastical office in the Anglican Church, and it was by him that he was ordained to the priesthood in that Church in the late nineteenth century. After a lively intellectual journey, he converted and became a priest in the Catholic Church at the beginning of the following century.

In 1908, he published *Lord of the World*, by far his best known and most widely read work. It has been praised and described as prophetic by a number of thinkers in recent years, including [Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI](#) and [Pope Francis](#), each of whom has highlighted its merits.

But what is this mysterious work about? Set at the beginning of the 21st century, it tells the story of Father Percy Franklin, a Catholic priest who lives in London, in a transformed Europe dominated by a form of secular humanism, freed from all metaphysical considerations and similar, in many respects, to the positivism characteristic of the thought of French philosopher Auguste Comte, where man has, so to speak, set himself up as his own god. The modern reader will also certainly recognize the universe in which we currently exist.

The world, politically divided into a European Confederation, an American Republic, and an Eastern Empire, is spiritually divided between the secular humanism mentioned above, the Eastern religions, and a wavering Catholicism – the only form of Christianity to have survived until now. Humanity lives under the threat of a confrontation between the European Confederation and the Eastern Empire, with the latter making notable advances.

On the one hand, we follow Father Percy, increasingly vulnerable as the position of Catholicism weakens. On the other hand, we learn about a set of figures involved in the administration of the socialist regime in place in England, all while a mysterious Senator Felsenburgh with peculiar gifts emerges from this tense human and geopolitical situation, claiming to bring peace while being given extraordinary powers over a troubled Europe.

Under the cover of futuristic literature and science fiction, *Lord of the World* approaches the deep questions of Christian eschatology and puts forward contradictory principles. Secular humanism, focused on worldly concerns and characterized by peculiar ritual practices – in a manner similar to the worst excesses of the French Revolution, is the adversary of a Catholicism which, isolated and weakened at the end of History, is called upon to resist it with limited means.

Benson's unique dystopian perspective here – far from technological or ecological angst – is essentially articulated around spiritual considerations. He will surprise some readers with his lucid yet pungent depiction of a certain humanism untethered from the principles that justify it, the principles of Christian anthropology.

Living as we do today at a time of great ecological, sanitary, and economic crises, the dystopian perspective is in the air of our time, a time very far removed from the decades of the second half of the 20th century, which were often marked in the West by an optimistic, even at certain times futuristic, state of mind. One of the merits of contemporary dystopian literature and its expressions in popular culture is its ability to highlight what worries some and what delights others.

In Benson, a thinker defined by a Christian understanding of cosmology and of the future of the world – our transient home – man's spiritual peril seems to lie in the particular form of man's worship of man, a self-idolizing humanity. In a by-and-large secularized world, that is food for thought.