



**Twenty-ninth Sunday
in Ordinary Time
October 17, 2021**

**Through his suffering,
my servant shall
justify many.**

— *Isaiah 53:11b*

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

All three readings today support—each in its own way, of course—a reflection on the humanity of Jesus Christ and how that humanity played a key role in the drama of our salvation. Although not chosen specifically to coordinate with the other two readings, today's second reading does in fact carry forward the theme of Christ's humanity in a remarkable way. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews highlights the solidarity that exists between Jesus and us, precisely because in his human nature Jesus has known the same sufferings and testing that are our own experience. Because he can "sympathize with our weaknesses," we can "approach the throne of grace to receive mercy." For the author of Hebrews, the humanity of Jesus was an essential requirement for his redemptive death, as well as an invitation to us to find in Jesus someone with whom we can identify in our daily struggles.

—*J. S. Paluch Co.*

FEAST OF FAITH

Only Say the Word

The bread is broken, the banquet is prepared, and now we are invited to the feast. Once more the priest holds the host, now broken, for us to see, and invites us to behold the one "who takes away the sins of the world." Truly blessed and happy are those invited to this meal, which is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, the supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:19). We respond to this invitation with a prayer to the Lord: we acknowledge that we are not worthy, but at the same time we are confident that the One who comes to us can heal us, body and soul. This prayer echoes the story of the centurion in Luke's Gospel. The centurion, a Gentile, asks healing for his servant, but does not consider himself worthy to have Jesus come under his roof—he believes that Jesus can heal his servant with a word, without even seeing him. Jesus is amazed at his faith. It is the same for us. We believe that Jesus speaks to us, comes to us, dwells with us, even though we neither hear his voice nor see his face.

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 2 Tm 4:10-17b; Ps 145:10-13, 17-18; Lk 10:1-9
 Tuesday: Rom 5:12, 15b, 17-19, 20b-21; Ps 40:7-10, 17; Lk 12:35-38
 Wednesday: Rom 6:12-18; Ps 124:1b-8; Lk 12:39-48
 Thursday: Rom 6:19-23; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Lk 12:49-53
 Friday: Rom 7:18-25a; Ps 119:66, 68, 76-77, 93-94; Lk 12:54-59
 Saturday: Rom 8:1-11; Ps 24:1b-4ab, 5-6; Lk 13:1-9
 Sunday: Jer 31:7-9; Ps 126:1-6; Heb 5:1-6; Mk 10:46-52

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Monday: St. Luke
 Tuesday: Ss. John de Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues & Companions
 Wednesday: St. Paul of the Cross
 Friday: St. John Paul II
 Saturday: St. John of Capistrano; Blessed Virgin Mary

ACHIEVING SANCTITY

Let us throw ourselves into the ocean of God's goodness, where every failing will be cancelled and anxiety turned into love.

—*St. Paul of the Cross*



Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated! For the month of **October** 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!



10/10: summary provided soon.

10/17: No 2nd collection. 10/24: World Mission Sunday.

Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: TBA
Finance Council [FC]: Thurs., 11/11/21, at 3pm on Zoom
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

10/16 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Brendan Smith
 10/17 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Susan K. Miller
 10/17 Sun. 9:30am Mass for the People
 10/17 Sun. 11:15 am Mass
NO weekday Masses 10/18-10/22 due to diocesan clergy retreat
 10/23 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Richard McMahon
 10/24 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Emily & Joe Palmer
 10/24 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ John Moore
 10/24 Sun. 11:15 am 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., River M.; Nikkie; Mr. C., Michelle, Christian A., Samantha S., Gary E., and for repose of the soul of Claudia Munoz's mother.

[San Luis Obispo 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 October 2021

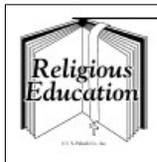
Perhaps the Sonoma County Gazette's recent article featuring our Rural Food Program provided information to new families about our program. On Tuesday, October 12, 65 families (140 individuals) received nutritional support during our distribution at the St Philips Parking lot and parish hall. This is a significant increase in attendance.

The brisk and windy weather reminds us that winter will soon be here. We are planning to provide warm socks to all of our families as well as an additional selection of protein in November. In December, we will continue our tradition of providing each family with enough blankets, scarves or hats for each member of the family. We will also participate in the Star Child program.

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 are: Saturday, November 6, 9-10:00 am repackaging; Monday, November 8, 9:00 – 11:00am set up; and Tuesday, November 9, 7:30a – 11:00am to distribute food to clients.

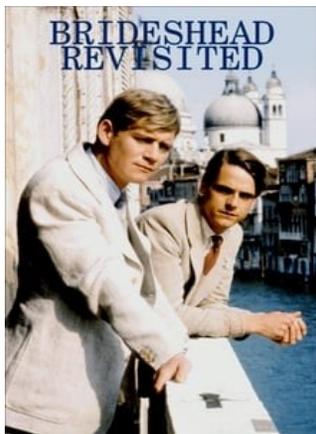


Parish Religious Education Program

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!



Wisdom

[info link](#)

Recently I presented a talk on our parish Facebook on the meaning of our familiar terms sacrament and sacramental. It was intended to be both educational and inspirational – and went into the task at some length. Of course, I was assuming that many church laity – far removed from catechism days – needed help understanding

what a sacrament was.

Later my grandmother came to mind, relative to such well-worn terms, and I was amused as to whether she or anyone

coming out of her peasant Catholic culture would have needed any such education as to what a sacrament was or in what way our world is itself a sacrament. Illiterate immigrant that she was, any explanation on my part would have beclouded the wisdom she already possessed. My aunt referred to her as “dumb-smart” – suggesting that though my grandmother seemed “out of it” at times – she was quietly wise to everything that was going on.

Many years ago I acquired a sense of her “cultural” smarts when viewing an episode in Evelyn Waugh's novel [Brideshead Revisited](#). Late in the novel Lord Marchmain, a Catholic peer, has returned to his estate to die. Cara, his mistress,, has accompanied him. Cara and Marchmain's heirs Brideshead, Julia and Cordelia have gathered to discuss when it would be prudent to call a priest to anoint the father. They're concerned that Lord Marchmain, a strong willed apostate, might cause a scene. To Charles Ryder, Julia's agnostic fiancé, their almost agonizing discussion seems pointless. He proposes they leave the poor man alone. But no, on they go, arguing just *when* would be the best opportunity, until Charles asks impatiently, *I wish someone would explain to me quite what the significance of these sacraments is.*

The family had never before been challenged to explain things like the Anointing of the Sick. They slip into conflicting opinions: *I think my nurse told me . . . You've got it all wrong, Cara . . . Well, I remember when Alphonse de Grenet died . . . Madame Grenet thought . . . Well, she was wrong. . . I never heard that before.*

Charles is not impressed. *There was a pause in which Julia sighed and Brideshead drew breath as though to start further subdividing the propositions.* Then in the silence Cara said, *"All I know is that I shall take very good care to have a priest."* *"Bless you,"* said Cordelia. *"I believe that's the best answer."* (It was their way of saying that death is somehow a sacramental event – not just a final breath.) Cara's gut, Cara's heart has spoken and wins delightful Cordelia's confirmation. Wisdom has spoken out of a logic Charles Ryder could not presently fathom but would eventually understand even as he would better understand himself.

St. Augustine says there were two trees in Paradise, the tree of knowledge (or science) and the tree of life (or wisdom). Some people in our day and age would eat only of the tree of knowledge. People of faith – and poets - feed also off the tree of life, whose roots draw nourishment from realms far more profound, primeval and true. **--Geoff Wood, 10/10/2021**

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



Utopia, dystopia, and Christian hope

by [Benjamin Boivin](#)

Last week, I discussed the utopia-dystopia nexus by [reviewing Lord of the World](#), a dystopian fantasy novel by Catholic priest Robert Hugh Benson. This week I would like to take a broader look at this issue and its ramifications in our culture.

From utopia...

To do so, it will be helpful for us to take a quick look at the concept of utopia and its meaning. The term "utopia" was coined by [St. Thomas More](#), a prominent English jurist and politician who was martyred for refusing to acquiesce to the schismatic enterprise of King Henry VIII.

St. Thomas More used it to title a book in which he presents a supposedly ideal society, the best possible form of political community.

Etymologically, it means something like "from nowhere", or "in no place". More's approach, sometimes compared to Plato's in the *Republic*, is complex, and his motivations for writing this work have been the subject of many interpretations.

Generally speaking, utopia as a literary genre is the intellectual approach aiming for the description of an ideal society, freed from the weight of

human vicissitudes. Utopias are often articulated around ideals like equality, justice, and fraternity. At the same time, this word takes on the meaning of a vision impossible to realize in reality, of an imaginary proposal.

As the modern project advanced, in a society marked by growing confidence in the human capacities to order the world, utopias mixed in with political ideologies, of which some, as utopian socialism, aimed for the construction *here on Earth* of the ideal society.

Dramatic historical experiences like the French Revolution and the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia were motivated by these types of ambition. One could even say that the great ideologies of the 20th century – fascism, communism, and liberalism – are each characterized by a particular utopian inclination. The experience of this century of violence and the evidence of the failure of the utopian enterprises of far-right and far-left alike broke the mould of the political utopia, leading, for some, to the end of the ideologies.

...to dystopia

We cannot speak of utopia as a literary genre without speaking of dystopia, its counterpart, its opposite term, whose etymology essentially means "bad place". The dystopian genre has had an extraordinary fortune in the 20th century.

We have [previously discussed](#) some of the great titles of the genre: *1984* (Orwell) and *Brave New World* (Huxley), or *Fahrenheit 451* (Bradbury). The contemporary proliferation of dystopian books, films, and television series is certainly a sign of a society marked by anxiety. Just like the proper object of each utopia points in some way to the idol to which it refers, the particular object of each dystopia is indicative of the anxieties of the spirit of the age.

In this way, we have witnessed a transition. Before the tragedy of the great world conflicts, we lived in a time marked by a certain optimism with regard to the potentialities of man alone, exemplified in particular by a glorification of experimental science and positive knowledge. It is precisely this excess of optimism that leads us to the worst experiences of human history, and in this respect Benson's perspective on the threat of a secular humanism appears quite prophetic.

While the utopian disposition does not have the credibility that it enjoyed more spontaneously in another era, it must be noted that it has manifested itself in waves at certain moments in our recent history. Even though the great ecological, economic, and sanitary crises that we are currently experiencing can lead us to an excess of pessimism, the characteristic futurism of the 1960s and the singular military triumphalism of the 1990s (as they were experienced in the West) are not far behind us.

Christian hope: neither optimism nor pessimism

Behind the utopia-dystopia nexus – in most of its representations focused on human achievements – lie precisely the excesses of optimism and/or pessimism which the Christian, moved by theological hope, must know how to avoid. The Christian tradition distinguishes itself, in fact, by a certain number of characteristics that should prevent us from falling into such excesses.

On the one hand, Catholic anthropology is characterized by a certain pessimism: men are sinners, and it is grace that saves us. On the other hand, Christian eschatology, which is related to the theological virtue of hope, contains the promise of a renewed Creation, of a new City, of a heavenly Jerusalem where men will live in full communion with God, the culmination of a decisive victory already won by His Christ.

In a sense, Catholic anthropology forbids us to entertain utopian goals: Paradise is not of this world; men are generally weak; political life, even if it is a necessity and pursues a certain good, cannot respond alone to all the crises (ecological, migratory, health, economic) that shock the conscience of believers. The Church's social doctrine is certainly not fatalistic, but it is at its best inhabited by a realism that we must not forget.

It is not uncommon in our time, however, for various reasons that have to do with the profound spiritual changes affecting our Western societies, to hear in some Christian circles an excessively catastrophic tone or the use of a radically dystopian language. While some things are not going as well as we might wish, in many ways, these sometimes shocking imperfections should not let us turn away from eschatological hope.

The history of Christendom is full of twists and turns, but we must never forget that it is a story with a happy ending. [Further resources](#)