



**Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 11, 2022**

A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.

— Psalm 51:12

RELYING ON GOD'S LOVE

Imagine being among those who heard Jesus address the Pharisees and scribes in the encounter we hear in today's Gospel: "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it?" Would you leave ninety-nine in the desert in order to find one lost sheep? In the parable, Jesus is showing us the depths of God's love, the illogical, incredible love God has for each of us. Moses counted on this loving mercy as he spoke for the wandering people; Saint Paul acknowledges his reliance on it in his letter to Timothy. God desires to draw you close, seeking you when you are lost. Are you ready to be drawn into God's loving embrace?

— © J. S. Paluch Co.

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Look upon us, O God,
Creator and ruler of all things,
and, that we may feel the working of your mercy,
grant that we may serve you with all our heart.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Reflection question:

In what ways do I serve God?

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READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 1 Cor 11:17-26, 33; Ps 40:7-10, 17; Lk 7:1-10
 Tuesday: 1 Cor 12:12-14, 27-31a; Ps 100:1-5; Lk 7:11-17
 Wednesday: Nm 21:4b-9; Ps 78:1bc-2, 34-38; Phil 2:6-11; Jn 3:13-17
 Thursday: 1 Cor 15:1-11; Ps 118:1b-2, 16ab-17, 28; Jn 19:25-27
 Friday: 1 Cor 15:12-20; Ps 17:1bcd, 6-8b, 15; Lk 8:1-3
 Saturday: 1 Cor 15:35-37, 42-49; Ps 56:10c-14; Lk 8:4-15
 Sunday: Am 8:4-7; Ps 113:1-2, 4-8; 1 Tm 2:1-8; Lk 16:1-13 [10-13]

DANGEROUS APATHY

The tyranny of a prince in an oligarchy is not so dangerous to the public welfare as the apathy of a citizen in a democracy.

—Baron Montesquieu



Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated!

For the month of **September** offerings: PLEASE put in Mass collection basket 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].

9/4: summary provided soon. 9/11: Operating Expenses.

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: Every 3rd Friday. Details 874-3812

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule 2022

9/10 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Brendan Smith
 9/11 Sun. 8am Mass
 9/11 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Elizabeth Thurlow
 9/11 Sun. 11:15am Mass for the People
 9/16 Fri. 9am Mass for Sayra Hodges McHargue
 9/17 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Brendan Smith
 9/18 Sun. 8am Mass for the Windler family
 9/18 Sun. 9:30am Mass for the People
 9/18 Sun. 11:15am Mass

Prayer Requests: Please leave a message at 707-408-2650.

Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N., Diane K., River M.; Nikkie; Mr. C., Michelle, Christian A., Peter B., Samantha S., Gary E., Frederick K., John Geving, James Geving, Lawrence Steiner, Marla Perry, Sayra H.M.

RURAL FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE for August 2022

On Tuesday, August 9, a large group of 71 families, were welcomed to our distribution and selected fresh produce, milk, eggs, poultry, beef, fish or vegetarian items, commodities, snacks and bread. All who are in need are welcome to receive nutritional support from our Program.

We have opened the hall to in-person shopping for our clients. Many clients prefer to choose specific foods from our program for their families. It also allows volunteers and clients to re connect post pandemic. Many of our clients are also helping to reduce our costs by bringing their own reusable shopping bags. Each month we typically use over 300 paper bags to package the food our clients receive. Your continued donation of handled paper bags and egg cartons is much appreciated.

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 and to answer your questions. 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, September 10, 9:00-10:00 am repackaging;
 Monday, September 12, 9:00 – 11:00am set up; and
 Tuesday, September 13, 7:30 – 11:00am food distribution



Deacon-structing COVID-19: 5 things that shouldn't go back to normal

By [Deacon Pedro](#)

I write this from inside an airplane – my first flight in over two years – as things begin reopening, restrictions are lifted, and things begin to return to what they used to be. The last two years seem a blur; it's hard to remember where we were in March 2020, when we first heard of some new coronavirus and a place called Wuhan. I remember news of [cruise ships quarantining their passengers](#) and our [prime minister urging all Canadians to return home](#). I also remember news of the [first COVID-19 death in Canada](#) and how we thought a two-week lockdown would do the trick.

Over the last two years much has changed. The [WHO reports](#) that over six million people have died of the virus worldwide and some 463 million have been infected (confirmed cases only!). In Canada there have been more than 37,000 deaths and over three million confirmed COVID-19 cases. All of us know people who've had the virus and people who have died. Even today, as mask mandates are lifted in Ontario, there are still some 4,000 people in hospitals in Canada, and today, when I am writing this post, there were [52 COVID-19 deaths](#) in our country.

I remember two years ago, we began a series of programs speaking to people around the world about what they were going through: [Hope From Home](#) and [Faith in a Time of Crisis](#) are still available to stream on our website. It's good to watch them and remember.

On one episode of *Faith in a Time of Crisis*, I spoke with [Cardinal Gérald Cyprien Lacroix](#), who, when asked if he thought the Church would ever go back to normal, said that he hoped that we would never go back to what it was like before.

Those wise words have stuck with me since.

And so today, as we rejoice in many things going back to the way they used to be at church and things returning to "normal" (I particularly look forward to seeing people's faces at Mass), I offer five pandemic adjustments that I hope we keep:

1. Greet people at the door

Many parishes have a robust team of ushers and welcomers, but quite often their role is limited to showing people where they can find a seat in a crowded church. Pandemic measures forced us to make our welcoming teams larger and forced

them to talk to parishioners as they arrived at the door. Contact tracing required us to ask for their names. This meant that community was being built as we got to know each other. Ushers began welcoming people by name, and often conversations began to happen. In many cases, as clergy had to assist, for the first time, clergy spoke with parishioners they didn't know before, leading to other, deeper conversations. I pray that all parishes continue to invest in developing their welcoming strategies, thus continuing to build up and strengthen the parish community.

2. Change it up every once in a while

Two examples: The first happened unintentionally in my parish when churches first closed and we began livestreaming Mass. We were only celebrating one Mass on Sunday, so we began rotating our musicians so that the responsibility didn't fall on just a few of them. As a result, not only did we discover new musicians and singers that volunteered to help, but it meant that our parishioners got to experience a variety of music and styles. When we reopened and our regular weekend five-Mass schedule resumed, in order to continue rotating musicians for the 10am livestreamed Mass, we had to more or less also rotate them for all the other Masses. Now we've settled into a pattern where each Mass has its set music group or singer but at least once a month it is someone else. This has made our parish less "cliquey" with people feeling like they are in a parish and not just belonging to one Mass.

The second example had to do with people not being able to sit in "their own pew" all the time. Having to sit in a different spot each week was very good and meant that people were more considerate of others and exposed to other people. I pray that parishes that are able continue to offer all parishioners (no matter what Mass they choose to attend) the fullness of what the parish can offer at liturgy and that people try to sit in a different spot, or go to a different Mass, every once in a while.

3. Parish outreach

I think we can all agree that this is likely the most significant benefit of the last two years as we were forced [out of the church and into the streets](#). I heard that in Victoria, BC, during that first lockdown, Bishop Gary Gordon asked his priests to spend time each day phoning parishioners. A week later, many reported back to him how amazing that experience had been. Many long-time parishioners had never spoken to their priest. This is all too common with our "go-to-Mass-once-a-week-and-get-out-as-quickly-as-possible" church attendance mentality. But it is also because many pastors and clergy are [too busy with the self-preservation of their parishes](#) and not able to invest in the mission of the parish.

In some parishes, priests and deacons doubled their home visits or simply went out for walks (as many of us at home did), making sure they waved at and greeted people as they walked. With fewer Masses, baptisms, marriages, and confessions, and with no first Communions and confirmations, and no meetings and fewer appointments, priests had time to do this kind of outreach.

When churches were closed, our parish was able to offer drive-by Communion. Each week we saw some 200 people who came. Many of them were not able to come to Mass even when we were open and now, with no restrictions, still have not been able to return. Their reasons are varied, and I wonder how many feel abandoned by the Church.

In our parish we also offered a New Year's house blessing – [a beautiful tradition](#) on the Feast of the Epiphany where the home is blessed (from outside) and the initials 20+C+M+B+22 were inscribed in blest chalk on their doors (the year – 2022 – with the initials for each of the wise men – Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar, but which also stand for *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, or Christ Bless Our Home). We must've blessed 100 homes! It meant that we were out in the community, spending time with people. I hope we will do it again when it's warmer and maybe make a point of going to the homes of those who still have health-related concerns. I pray that all parishes invest in a team of home visitors and that clergy spend a little less time in the office and in the sacristy and more time out in the streets.

4. Media ministry

Having one Sunday Mass and maybe one daily Mass livestreamed has also been good for outreach. Perhaps not all parishes need to continue doing so (and certainly not at all Masses), as TV Mass is available through networks like Salt + Light TV and platforms like [Salt + Light Plus](#), but recognizing the importance of media ministry is crucial. In our parish, we created a whole new media ministry, and many students from our local high school – who never came to Mass before – have joined. It's a great way for them to get their community hours and to connect with the Church. Many priests took to social media, recording and posting messages and sometimes even creating little videos or even series. This won't be for every priest or deacon, but I pray many continue doing all they can to reach as many people, in whichever way possible, wherever they can be found.

5. Solidarity with the sick and dying

We always pray at Mass for those who are sick and those who have died; in our parish, once a month, we have a requiem Mass (at the cemetery when weather permits) for those who have died that month, and as we heard of more and more parishioners who were sick or who had died, the list grew. It was not always possible, however, because of confidentiality, to know (and mention) whether the cause was COVID-19 related. But I think reading all those names out loud at Mass brought us closer to those who were deeply and directly affected by the pandemic. It's always important to be in solidarity with those who are suffering. It's easy to ignore it when their suffering is distant. Still, most of us were aware when parishioners were sick or had died (we celebrated many funerals!) and made a point to tell each other and ask for prayers. This meant that the suffering was never too far away from us.

We also knew and prayed for parishioners who were having a hard time, suffering from depression or other mental health

issues or had lost their jobs or were facing financial struggles. A direct result was that our St. Vincent de Paul ministry grew, as did our collaboration with other Christian churches in our community. I pray that, as we long for all of this to go away and hope for no more sickness and death, we don't forget that there are still people getting sick, still people in hospitals, and still people dying from COVID-19.

Lastly, I'd like to sneak in one more suggestion that I pray is heeded by all employers, not just parish and diocesan managers and administrators. The last two years taught us that it is possible to spend less time in the office and more time doing the things that matter: Drive less, work from home, make time for baking, gardening, bird-watching, and board games, and especially for more prayer and more time reading Scripture. If you can, without affecting how you serve your parishioners, let your staff work from home or have a flexible schedule. Not only will this be good for the environment, but it will be good for our mental health and our general well-being and will improve our productivity. I pray that all of us, especially those who work for the Church and for Church organizations, will continue to put our employees' well-being and their families first. It will definitely help us all to improve our relationships with each other, with God's creation, and with God.

In his book, [Let Us Dream](#), written during the pandemic, Pope Francis spoke of "canon-ball moments". In the book he calls them "personal 'Covid's'". These are crisis situations that God allows in our lives. He wrote that they make "you suffer a lot, but if you allow it to change you, you come out better. But if you dig in, you come out worse." It's true. If they make us bitter, they are meaningless. But they always have the capacity to make us better. Let's let these past two years of COVID-19 make us better.

Let's not go back to the way we were before.

For more reflections and memories of COVID-19 lessons, read the [Deacon-structing the COVID Spring](#) blog series from 2021.

Women of St. Philip & St. Teresa:

SAVE THIS DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2022

The joint women's guilds will have a morning of reflection with Fr. Christopher LaRocca.

9am Mass at St. Philip Church will be followed by discussion and reflection in St. Philip Hall.

Morning tea/coffee and snacks will be provided. (Bring your own lunch if you wish to continue the discussions over lunch.)

This is a good opportunity for all Catholic women (from our parish and elsewhere) to grow deeper in their faith and find friendship with one another. Contact Antoinette at 707-874-1501 for details and to RSVP.



“Sunday School”

CCD Religious Education starts early this Fall.

**Sign-ups will be on Sept. 11 and Sept. 25
at St. Philip Church from 9am to 11:15am.**

For details on our program and how to register, please visit <http://www.stphilipsteresa.org/religious-education-ccd.html>

Our parish offers a vibrant religious education program for students from Kindergarten through Confirmation. Regular classes are held 2-3 times each month in the St. Philip's parish hall on Sunday mornings from 9:45 - 11:00 a.m., followed by 11:15 Mass throughout our CCD school year.

Besides First Communion preparation, we have started a 2-year Confirmation program for children as young as 10, so they can be prepared for their Confirmation by age 12 or 13.

The religious education program is run by volunteers, and parent involvement is greatly appreciated. Anyone wishing to aid in the classroom, provide snacks for the children, or help organize larger events (such as the Christmas play), please contact the office, or contact your child's teacher. **Note: Children from other parishes are welcome to join our program.**



Lost and Found

In his poem called “Michael”, William Wordsworth tells of a shepherd in England’s mountain country who had a son in his old age. Over the years the shepherd taught him all there was to know about pasturing. And then along came bad news. A relative had defaulted on a loan. The shepherd had been a co-signer. The only solution: the son’s going off to London to work off the debt.

On the day before his departure the father took the son to a meadow where he intended to build a sheepfold. He asked his son to lay the first stone as a way of recalling his son to mind while he was away. *When thou return’st thou in this place will*

see / A work which is not here, a covenant / ‘Twill be between us - but whatever fate / Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last. Off went the young man, wrote cheerful letters - and then silence! He had fallen in with bad company and sailed off to some distant continent, never to be seen again. The poem then tells of the father’s visiting the unfinished sheepfold every day until he died.

I had a similar experience with my younger son who – in the lingering mix of the Haight – at age 14 – became lost amid the drug culture of the 1980’s. Unlike the father of Wordsworth’s poem, I went looking for him – indeed got to know the nooks and crannies of San Francisco very well. Eventually enrolled him in a program that made a difference, but too late. He died at age 23. My lost sheep, my prodigal son.

The Gospels have some very wise things to say about human existence – things linked to what we call nature, organic metaphors. As human beings we arrive scattered all over this world like seed thrown. Some take root, finding good soil, becoming productive, a humanity that is true, chastened by experience, caring, roots sunk deep into wherever we came from – the Being that characterizes all things. Others fall upon worn paths, swept up upon the thruways, avenues, crowded venues, super-this and super-that: lost and faceless, a statistic. Others succumb to the appetites of the birds of the air: robocalls, digital communication (press 1 etc.) designed to *prevent* communication, twitter, celebrating transient celebrities. Others of us fall upon rocky ground, no moisture, we tend to shrivel up; the world is too much for us. Others fall among thorns: everyday conflict, clashes of personality, us versus them, the strife of politics – and we choke on it.

We have somehow lost any deeper sense of why we are here, what is our essential reason for being. Even institutions like churches get worn down over time in a routine that’s forgetful of why a church exists – for instance to reveal we have souls, some kind of grounding in a Source more intimate to you and me almost beyond belief! – akin to that intimacy we experience with someone we love that can make such love profound. In other words: we are rooted somewhat like that bush Moses saw in the desert that burst into flame. So too each of us has grown out of an abyss of light emerging from the veils of a mystery of which Jesus said: *So let your light shine [become unveiled] before men, that they may see your good works*, experience your own creative, mysterious being.

PS: Re my “lost” son, in searching for him I also found my “lost” self – we discovered each other at a level more inexpressible than biological.
--Geoff Wood, 9/11/2022

The Diocese of Santa Rosa invites everyone to attend the annual Santa Rosa Religious Education Congress on Saturday, September 24, 2022. This event is free. This year's theme is "The Church and the Most Holy Eucharist". Workshops are in English and Spanish. Come hear great speakers. For more information check out the diocesan website at www.srdiocese.org