



Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 19, 2021

The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace.

— James 3:18

THE MEANING OF DISCIPLESHIP

The geography of today's Gospel is significant. Jesus is completing his ministry in Galilee and beginning his journey to Jerusalem, where he will meet both death and resurrection. The prediction of his death placed here is the second of three in Mark's Gospel, and as usual it is the occasion for an important teaching on the part of Jesus. Today that lesson is tied to the need for his disciples to embrace a ministry of service. A play on words in Aramaic would have linked the words "child" and "servant," thus turning Jesus' gesture of placing a child in their midst into an illustration of his understanding of himself as the Servant of the Lord. It is that same awareness of the meaning of their ministry that Jesus (and Mark) wishes to instill in the disciples. Theirs must be a ministry of service if they are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. And that service might even require of them that they be "handed over" to death. What would have been—in the culture of Jesus' day—an ordinary discussion of social status ("who is the greatest") becomes in Mark's context a key insight into the meaning of discipleship for the disciples and for us. -J. S. Paluch Co.

FEAST OF FAITH
Doxology and Amen

"Doxology" comes from a Greek word meaning "words of praise." The Eucharistic Prayer ends with a doxology addressed to the triune God: "Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever." It is an exclamation of praise, honor, and glory to God, reminding us that we receive everything from God through the Son, in the power of the Spirit. At the consecration, the priest held up the host and then the chalice for us to see and adore. During the doxology, the host and chalice are held up again, but this time they are held up and offered to God the Father. With the doxology, the Eucharistic Prayer ends, as it began, with words of praise addressed to the Father: truly, it is right and just to give God praise, and we assent to this in our whole-hearted acclamation, "Amen." Never was more meaning packed into so short a word. This "Amen," sometimes and fittingly called "the great Amen," is our response to the entire Eucharistic Prayer.

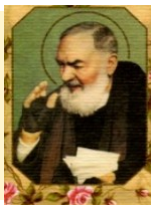
-Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Ezr 1:1-6; Ps 126:1b-6; Lk 8:16-18
 Tuesday: Eph 4:1-7, 11-13; Ps 19:2-5; Mt 9:9-13
 Wednesday: Ezr 9:5-9; Tb:13:2, 3-4abefghn, 7-8; Lk 9:1-6
 Thursday: Hg 1:1-8; Ps 149:1b-6a, 9b; Lk 9:7-9
 Friday: Hg 2:1-9; Ps 43:1-4; Lk 9:18-22
 Saturday: Zec 2:5-9, 14-15a; Jer 31:10-12ab, 13; Lk 9:43b-45
 Sunday: Nm 11:25-29; Ps 19:8,10-14; Jas 5:1-6; Mk 9:38-48

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Monday: Ss. Andrew Kim Tae-gõn, Paul Chõng Ha-sang, and Companions
 Tuesday: St. Matthew
 Wednesday: Autumn begins
 Thursday: St. Pius of Pietrelcina (**Padre Pio**)



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!



9/12: 1st collection: \$1030. Operating Expenses: \$385.

9/19: Capital Expenditures. 9/26: Rural Food.

Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: Tues., 9/21/21, at 4pm on Zoom: to RSVP email Joe at bodegajoe@icloud.com

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

9/18 Sat. 5pm Mass for the People
 9/19 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Tina Bartolo
 9/19 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Elaine Joyce
 9/19 Sun. 11:15am Mass

 9/25 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ John Jackson
 9/26 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Emily & Joe Palmer
 9/26 Sun. 9:30am Mass for the People
 9/26 Sun. 11:15 am Mass ✠ Philip, Steven, Anthony Luongo

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.

Mission San Buenaventura (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.
 (NOTE: on 9/12/21, the St. Philip Sunday 11:15am Mass resumed)

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.

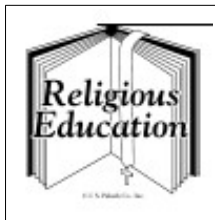
This program is funded through monthly Rural Food Collection, private donations and the dedicated, awesome volunteers. **Thank you for your generous donations as we strive to meet the nutritional needs of all attendees at our food distributions.**

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. There is still time to enroll the children. 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!



Candied Apples

We celebrated the Jewish New Year last week – known as Rosh Hashanah – and in reading up on its customs I

learned that one pleasant practice is to bite into a honey coated apple – possibly to anticipate a sweeter new year. At once I was reminded of the block parties of my childhood.

Before the sprawling suburbs of later years many of us lived in row house neighborhoods. Each block of row houses was like a village. You knew almost everybody on the block, would converse from porch to porch. The narrow streets not crowded by parked cars became the children's playground. And a few times a year there would be a block party – streets closed to drivers, tables set up for adult games of chance, food displays, a dance space cordoned off and a quartet of instruments supplying the music. And then there were treats for the kids – the whole event financed by the block residents. And among the treats were candied apples, all red and glistening and tempting to bite.

I never gave much thought to the symbolism of apples – or bitten apples – but they figure in a lot of stories as in the case of Snow White. Her adventures begin with her wicked stepmother offering her a poisoned – and beautiful – apple to bite; and off falls Snow White into a deep sleep. And of course there is the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden. Later generations and most paintings of the Eden event interpret the fruit to be an apple of mixed potential – good and bad. As such it becomes even more tempting to bite – which Adam and Eve do – and wind up wise but also of poisoned inclinations; drawn to things while also suspicious of things – at odds with their very selves. And the Garden disappears.

At Rosh Hashanah Jewish tradition ponders that Eden episode – our tendency to fall – which may be why next week the tradition schedules its Yom Kippur – its Day of Atonement – for sins committed to date. But again there's that introduction to sweetened apples to lighten the bitterness of past sin and conjure up a sweeter future.

And while thinking these thoughts what do I behold? Here I am sitting in front of a computer whose logo is a gigantic apple minus a bite – the logo of Apple Inc.! I doubt whether the designer of that logo was aware of the centuries of lore in which an apple plays a crucial role – but the logo plays right into the role of Eden's *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. For what is a computer? It's an electronic device that can be the source of an infinite amount of useful information and profound knowledge at your fingertips like apples hanging from a tree. But it can also be a source of insidious stuff, lies, cybernetic violence, theft, disinformation that can disturb the minds and even lives of millions of people worldwide.

Technologically, if we persist in thinking that the computer and computation in general can tell us the whole truth about this world we live in, we may one day have to face up to the same words that conclude the Eden story: Cursed be the ground because of you.

--Geoff Wood, 9/12/2021

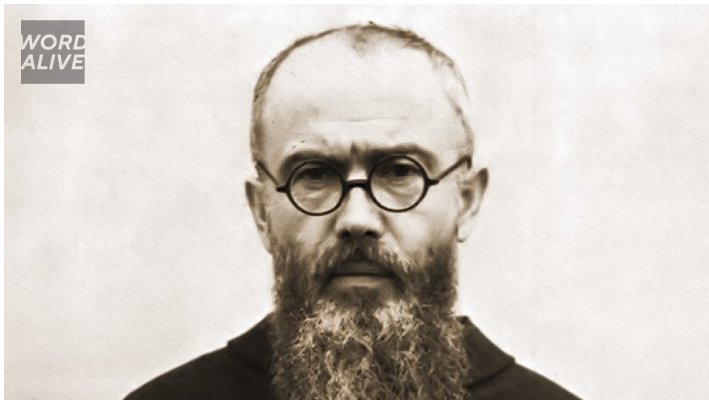
The Pastor Speaks...

Pope Francis recently spoke on Hope, saying: "Although the life is full of thorns and weeds, there is always a space in which the good seed can grow. You have to trust God." "Let us pray for peace, peace in the world and in each of our hearts." "God's love calls us to move beyond fear."

The Religious Education Program will commence soon in our parish. An excellent Team of coordinators and catechists are making preparations to run this program, and are waiting for more children and their families to join this and richly benefit in this faith education. I want all of us to spread a word about it and encourage more children to attend the program and also join the Sunday 11:15am Mass in order to make it very special and vibrant liturgical celebration.

We are indeed happy to announce that Janis Wilson has been appointed a few days ago as our Parish Music Director and Wedding Coordinator. But, as per her request, I permitted her to start her work from next month. We wish her all the best and pray for an abundance of blessings on her life and service.

-Father Bala.



St. Maximilian Kolbe (Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

Stepping stone or stumbling block? | Word Alive

by [Steve Lawrence](#)

Maximilian Kolbe, Auschwitz prisoner number 11670, did the unthinkable.

In August 1941, ten prisoners stood on an insufferably hot parade ground. They had been randomly chosen by the brutal Nazi Commandant Fritsch to go to their deaths in the starvation bunker, as punishment and a warning for the many others against trying to escape. One of the ten chosen pleaded for mercy, being a married man with children. Kolbe stood out of line and risked violent retaliation. "I'll go in his place," he stated quietly and yet firmly. He had seen and heard the desperation of his fellow Pole, whose weeping and pleading moved his heart. Despite not knowing the man personally, Kolbe proposed to replace him in the starvation bunker.

Such selflessness, centred on the good of another, even to the point of one's own significant detriment or death, is not something which comes easily. Nor does it simply emerge in a heroic moment. It is rather the effect of the culmination of a lifetime of such acts, beginning with small sacrifices and developing into virtuous habits of giving, habits that develop embedded character. Kolbe was known for that throughout his life, which was why he attracted so many already in the years before the war. He built up a thriving community of Franciscans, widely disseminated a highly effective publication, and provided refuge for 3000 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi-occupied Poland. His ultimate offering in Auschwitz became possible because of the numerous selfless offerings made daily, earning him the title from Pope John Paul II of "martyr for charity".

Kolbe's determination mirrors that of Jesus, who knows that His mission from the Father will be hard but will be followed by glory: "The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days" (Mark 8:31). It is a mission that will be entered into with an attitude of radical trust in the ultimate victory of God: "The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame" (Isaiah 50:7). It is this path on which the believer is called to walk, "to deny himself, take up his cross and follow" Jesus. (Mark 8:36).

Many of the messages in our contemporary culture speak the opposite idea, to put ourselves first, to avoid hardships under all circumstances, to be comfortable. The promotion of this kind of self-preserving attitude was what Peter pushed onto Jesus, and for which he received a stern rebuke: "Get behind me Satan!"

That kind of thinking, Jesus points out, is an obstacle to God, and those who think like that are the enemy (the word *satanas*, from the Greek, means "opponent" or "enemy"). Selfishness is the opposite of love. Those who promote acts of love are stepping stones (the name Peter means "rock"), but those who oppose love are stumbling blocks.

It is amazing how quickly one can transfer between being a stepping stone and a stumbling block in a day. I believe the key to walking the path of self-giving is made by those who spend time contemplating the presence of Jesus, who ponder His faithful love and who choose – ahead of time – to follow that path in the moment of testing. Prayer is the key! This is certainly true in my experience. A long time of personal prayer, usually first thing in the morning, fills the day that follows with grace, with light, with an awareness of my eternal purpose, and helps me to grow in my awareness of the needs of those around me, and my capacity to cherish and serve them. Spending time with Love Himself transforms me to receive His love, to love Him back, and to love others! Prayer is a doorway to allow God's holiness entry into our being. It heals, unifies, strengthens, and illuminates us for the Divine purpose for which we were created – to be saints!

And we know it is the saints who change the world. They make time, exert effort, and use their talents to empower and enable others to realize their purpose and mission in life, which inevitably continues the upward and outward spiral of positive culture building. Saints create families, of one sort or another, as Maximilian Kolbe did, to bring love into the world. When there is not love in the world, these people don't complain, they respond by putting love in the world, and then it is found that there *is* love in the world. At the very moment he was arrested, prior to being taken to Auschwitz, Kolbe's final words to his Franciscan brothers were "Forget not love!"
What will you be today – a stepping stone or a stumbling block?



Steve Lawrence, of Altum Leadership Group, a consultancy for Catholic leaders, is married with six children. He played professional Australian Football for twelve years in Melbourne, was Director of Evangelisation and Catechesis for the Sydney World Youth Day 2008, and Director of the Emmanuel School of Mission in Rome. His latest published works are [Make Your Mark Five Hidden Keys to Great Leadership](#) (Wilkinson, 2019) and [Raising Fathers Fathering from the Frontline: 12 Men's Stories ...](#)