

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 27, 2008

1 Corinthians 1:10-13,17

"I appeal that there be no dissensions among you." We live with the scandal of a divided Christendom; but we can make it better or worse. We make it worse if we focus on the differences between Christians, better if we keep our eyes on what unites us.

We are all baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In worship, belief, morality, and in the love of Jesus, we share great areas of agreement; and we are traveling in hope towards one flock and one shepherd.

Let me ponder this during this Octave of prayer for unity among Christians.



MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 28TH

Wednesday	9:00 a.m.	Blessed Virgin
First Friday	8:30 a.m.	Joseph Krizmanic 10 th Anniv. by Olga & Family Followed by Exposition and Benediction
Saturday	7:00 p.m.	Harry O’Heare by Mickie & Family Fay Parrington by Gilles & Agnes
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Delina Farkas by St. Vincent de Paul
	11:00a.m.	Roy Gatenby by Pete, Ellen Gravelle & family

LAST WEEKEND’S COLLECTIONS: \$2,379.30 Thank you!

“Why for (Baptism), Confirmation and Eucharist, and not for Reconciliation?”

That question refers to what we have done at this Sunday’s 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Masses with those who have begun to prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation and for their first participation in the Sunday Eucharist (First Communion). Yes, by way of exception, we have taken the liberty to change the first part of the Mass. This was not simply to accommodate and to put the focus on the candidates for Confirmation and for First Communion and their families. Rather, it was to put into focus something that applies to all of us as we come together as a parish community to celebrate the Eucharist. We are all called by God to enter into the mystery of God’s love for us. Our coming together is in response to God’s call.

That call of God to us applies especially when members of our parish prepare for the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. In the midst of all of us who are called, we want to make the call of our candidates very explicit so that they may know themselves supported and embraced by us all. That sort of support is the “enfleshment” of God’s call to them.

Why would we not do something similar for those who are preparing, for example, for the sacrament of Reconciliation? Of course, the celebration of that sacrament is in response to God’s call as well. Still, there is a difference. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are sacraments of initiation. That is to say, they graft us onto Jesus Christ and make us into the Spirit-filled Body of Christ, the Church. The other sacraments and the rest of the Church’s liturgical activity renew and sustain us in the Christian life that we have been initiated into by means of the sacraments of initiation, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist. Does all this make it sound rather

complicated? Perhaps the overview of the Church's liturgical-sacramental activity, which you find in this Sunday's bulletin as an insert, may shed some light on it all.



This is the Year of Matthew...

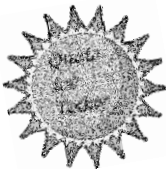
That is what the banners in the center of the church display. In case you wonder what this refers to, it has to do with the Scripture readings at Sunday Mass, more specifically the Gospel reading. This year, you will notice that the Gospel reading is taken from Matthew's Gospel. Of all the Scripture readings at Mass, the Gospel reading is the dominant one. It has its bearing on the first reading from the Old Testament which is chosen in light of the Gospel passage, either by comparison, or as fulfillment, or as contrast. Following the first reading, we have the responsorial psalm which in turn is chosen in light of the Old Testament reading.

This linking of Scripture readings does not apply to the second reading (at least not during Ordinary Time). There we usually walk through parts of the letters of the Apostle Paul.

The Jesus of Matthew's Gospel: A different Portrait

Each Gospel writer had his own agenda for writing; and each Gospel has its own unique portrait of Jesus. Matthew's Gospel is very Jewish in character, as Father John mentioned last Sunday. Matthew makes Jesus into a teacher and interpreter of the Jewish law. Matthew's Jesus brings the Jewish law to its most eloquent and definitive expression. In this case, law is not a burden, but a trusted friend. Jesus himself, as faithful Son of God, is obedient to it.

Another characteristic of Matthew's Gospel is that it is made up of five major speeches by Jesus and six major narratives about Jesus. That gives Matthew the opportunity to present Jesus as teacher, the one who preaches the coming of God's Kingdom. The narratives, on the other hand, give us the image of Jesus as healer for the crowds of people seeking health and liberation from pain and death and experiencing in Jesus the healing power of God.



A Quote from Kathleen Norris...

In her book *Amazing Grace*, Kathleen Norris mentions a unique feature of monastic biblical interpretation. There is a strong emphasis on not judging another person's sins. The reality of human sin is admitted, often in stark terms, but the sin of casting judgment is seen as the worst of all:

There was...a meeting at Scetis about a brother who had sinned. The Fathers spoke, but Abba Pior kept silence. Later, he got up and went out; he took a sack, filled it with sand and carried it on his shoulder. He put a little sand also into a small bag which he carried in front of him. When the Fathers asked him what this meant, he said, "In this sack which contains much sand, are my sins, which are many; I have put them behind me so as not to be troubled about them and so as not to weep; and see here are the little sins of my brother which are right in front of me and I spend my time judging them. This is not right. I ought rather to carry my sins in front of me and concern myself with them, begging God to forgive me for them." The Fathers stood up and said, "Truly, this is the way to salvation."

Preparing Before Lent Begins

Taking some time to get ready for Lent will ensure that we aren't going to miss the first week or two of Lent, because we are just getting started. Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday**, but we want to be ready to really take off on that day rather than just beginning to think about Lent on that day. Part of what makes a vacation or a special anniversary so special is the build-up to it.

Before we get to Ash Wednesday, we should start asking ourselves some questions and we should start with some preparations. "What does God want to give me this year?" This question may require that I slow down a bit and listen to my inner spirit. For example, even if I'm very busy, I realize I'm hungry when I hear my

stomach start 'growing'. "What am I going to be doing on Ash Wednesday?" Too often, Ash Wednesday is like every other day, except that I manage to get to church and get ashes on my forehead. Is there anything else I can do on Ash Wednesday? How will fasting and abstaining happen for me, for my family, on that special day? It doesn't take a lot of time to prepare for the beginning of Lent. It just takes desire and focus. God can do so much with that. We can give God more of a space to touch our hearts if we begin to establish some simple patterns. We could wake up each morning, and for something like a half a minute to a minute, stand by the edge of our beds, and just ask the Lord for the grace to let this day be one in which I long for the beginning of Lent. Perhaps we need to ask for specific helps or graces to get ready to begin Lent. Whatever we try to say, our Lord can understand the Spirit trying to speak through our simple words. And all it takes is the time to find and put on our slippers. And each night, in the days ahead, we can practice giving thanks to God before I go to bed. This simple pattern, in the morning and evening can stir our spirits to look forward to and prepare for Lent, as a season of grace.

May our Lord bless us all on this journey ahead.
Ministry/Lent

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(At the same time, we want to keep in mind that Lent is not an end in itself; it is in preparation for the enormous event we celebrate during the Church's **Three Great Days** followed by the 50 days of Easter.)

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION NIGHT:

All volunteers are invited to the parish hall, after the 7:00 p.m. Mass **Tuesday evening, February 5th** where food and drinks will be served. This is a small gesture of appreciation from the Parish for all those who donate their time and energy and whose dedication makes this Parish so vibrant. The **CWG monthly meeting which should be held that evening has been postponed until March.** Hope to see all of you!



DAY RETREAT: with Sister Rosemary O'Toole for the viewing of her Holy Land Pilgrimage DVD. **Marvee Room: from 10:00 a.m. until approx. 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 9th.**



DEAR FRIENDS... I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the many cards, flowers and telephone calls during my illness. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated. I would like to thank Fr. Bill for his visits. Wishing you all a Happy New Year, with good health and happiness! Sincerely, Pearl Proulx

THANK YOU: A special thank you to Francis Danis and Des McGuire for the use of their trucks to move the Manger from the backyard to the front of the Church on a cold Saturday morning before Christmas... this would have otherwise required a great deal of physical effort on the part of many parishioners.

Thank you also to Gilles Laroche for promptly getting the material required to repair damages to the nativity manger, which may have been caused by vandalism.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK: Kindly remember Wandaw Bobrowski, Hilda Preslawski, and their families in your prayers.



Visit our Website: www.stmarkparish.ca

Bulletin design & Web content/design by: Catherine LeGuerrier

Need a website or flyer? Visit www.catleg.ca or e-mail: catleg@catleg.ca