

# TWENTY SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## AUGUST 30, 2009

Mark 7:14--15

- This was revolutionary stuff. The Maccabees had suffered torture and death rather than eat the flesh of pigs. St. Peter struggled to associate with gentiles. Jesus was wiping out with one stroke the laws for which Jews had suffered and died.
- He pushes us to look inside. What can defile a person? The heart's evil intentions: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, and so on. Remember Belloc? "I said to Heart, How goes it? Heart replied: Right as a Ribstone Pippin! But it lied".



### MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF AUGUST 31<sup>ST</sup>

Wednesday 9:00 a.m.

First Friday 9:00 a.m. Mass in Thanksgiving "Agnes Dolan's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday" followed by Adoration and Benediction.

Saturday 7:00 p.m. Harold Blackman by Gloria Henderson & Family  
Yuriy & Slone Families by Teenie

Sunday 9:00 a.m. Deceased Members of Runyon & Charron Families  
by Don & Lana

11:00 a.m. Ian McIntyre by Richard & Cheryl McCarthy

**WEEKEND COLLECTIONS: \$ 2178.14 Thank You!**

### Slowly back to normal... for a Parish too!

**This coming Monday, August 31: Parish Pastoral Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.**

Apart from the regular Sunday Masses, the occasional funeral – to which the funerals from St. Paul's must be added -- the Strawberry Social, a faith formation meeting and some St. Vincent de Paul activities, not much has been happening in the parish the last little while. It is about time that we pick up the pace again. This Monday evening, our Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) meets again with that in mind.

The primary focus of the meeting is to see how we want to handle the launching of our pastoral year. What do we have to do to give some coherence and new energy to the four poles of parish life: **Liturgy, Faith Formation, Fellowship, and Service/Outreach?** The idea is to let the parish community take ownership of these four modes of being a parish. The suggestion that "*somebody will look after that!*" is not good enough. Of course, some parishioners will be more involved in it than others, but we all have a stake in it.

In the meantime, some new parishioners have joined us. Others have come to sort of "*check us out*". The challenge is for us to welcome them, to provide a faith-home for them so that they may have a place among us and see themselves as St. Mark's parishioners too. And they are also new blood for us. Our doors are open.



### Next Baptisms: Sunday, September 27

**But they need to be prepared...**

It is unheard of today to celebrate Baptism without any preparation. The times that you could simply phone the rectory and inquire about "*when can we get it done?*" are behind us. We can no longer proceed that way for a variety of reasons. Our society and our church as well have changed so drastically, and that also affects the way we believe and the way we practice our faith. Moreover, we also try to respect the immense richness of the **Sacrament of Baptism**. After all, Baptism is much bigger than "*taking away original sin*".

Every parish struggles with finding a way to take this into account. It affects the way Baptism is celebrated, but also the way we prepare for it. In our case, the preparation consists in a home visit after the initial contact is made. Then, we have three evenings of reflection on the significance of what the parents are asking for their children, and the children are presented to the parish community at one of our Sunday Masses. After that, we take the plunge! Yes, it could be done differently, but this is what we feel comfortable with. Here too, it is a matter of welcoming not only the children to be baptized, but also their parents; many of whom – let us be honest – have had only sporadic contact with the church. It is challenging, but also exciting to do the best we can to encourage the young parents to intensify their contact with the church in the hope that they may also experience it as a “faith-home” for themselves. If you are interested in being part of the preparation or of the celebration of Baptism itself, please let us know. Let us make it a parish activity.

We begin the more formal preparation for the next Baptisms on Wednesday, September 9. So if you know of anyone who would be interested in being part of it, please pass on this information. Thank you.

### **Sunday, September 20: Quebec-wide Catechetical Sunday**

Last year, the Bishops of Quebec launched a new initiative for the Church in Quebec. They designated the third Sunday of September as ***Catechetical Sunday***. It is the sort of initiative that tries to address the new situation we as Church find ourselves in. That the situation of the Church in Quebec society – and for that matter in the entire Western world – has changed drastically is a given. We experience it daily in many different ways.

The question is: how do we handle it? We can lament and complain about it. Little is achieved with that. Do we have to passively accept it and resign ourselves to it? That would be a defeatist attitude that can in no way be reconciled with the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we believe in and that as individual Christians and as a parish community we are bearers of. Yes, we are being challenged today. No question!

The Quebec Bishops hope that with designating September 20 as ***Catechetical Sunday*** they will entice the parishes to develop strategies that will in some way meet the challenges. Naturally, we don't need to start from scratch. We can build on what we have, but in some instances we can be a little more deliberate about it. That applies especially to the involvement of the larger parish community so that it may become a catechized and catechizing community. A few years ago our Bishop wrote a fine little document about it: ***Becoming Communities that are Schools of Catechesis***.

That is not entirely new, but the emphasis is certainly on working on the sort of ***catechesis*** that is borne by the parish community. In other words, it cannot be left to a few generous volunteers who will be asked to do things a little differently. Part of that too is that the sort of ***catechesis*** that is called for today is not simply teaching catechism to the children. It is more comprehensive than that. It is an ongoing formation in the faith we cherish, a formation that stretches over our entire life-span.

### **Our particular take on “Catechetical Sunday”**

Each parish will most likely give its own shape to ***Catechetical Sunday***. After all, it is not a question of having something new to invent. Instead, let us build on what is already in place, but let us try to be more deliberate and coherent about it.

What may help is taking a look at the front page of our Sunday bulletin, where the diagram displays the four poles of parish life: **liturgy, faith formation, fellowship, service/outreach**. The same is expressed in a different way on the inside back page of the bulletin, where the parish activities are listed. It is in those four areas that, as a parish, we live from and bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When those four areas are well looked after and when as a parish we really show our face in those four areas, then we are really doing ***catechesis***. We are really doing the mission that Jesus Christ now still works at and continues through us who are his Body, his Church.

We would like ***Catechetical Sunday*** to serve as the launching of our pastoral year and to take the shape of giving a prominent place to the four poles of our parish life. These four poles or four areas of parish life are not neatly separated compartments where each can do its own thing. They are dependent on each other, they feed each other, they interact with each other, they need each other.

The plan of the PPC is not to limit **Catechetical Sunday** to the one Sunday, September 20. We build up towards it. As a result, the first signs of it will be on display next Sunday, September 6. Similarly, we do not see it finish on September 20 either. Yes, that Sunday will be the focus, but we hope that it will serve as giving new energy and interest to what makes us tick as a parish.

**Ready to take on the challenge? Let us make Sunday September 20 work!**



### **Registration for Confirmation and First Communion: September 20**

That is a little earlier than we are used to, but it is a sort of spin-off from what we are trying to accomplish with **Catechetical Sunday** on September 20. In his pastoral orientations as outlined in **Discovering Jesus Christ: the Path to Freedom** of a few years ago, our Bishop urged us to move from a narrow preoccupation with preparation for sacraments towards formation for the Christian life. If we think that through a bit, then it also becomes clear that such a thing as registration for and preparation for Confirmation and First Communion cannot take place as an aside in our parish life. In fact, precisely because they are sacraments of Christian Initiation, they need to be given their proper setting which is our parish life. In that light, it makes a lot of sense to place the journey towards Confirmation and First Communion as Sacraments of Initiation in the midst of the parish's four poles that will be more prominently on display at our **Catechetical Sunday**. That will also show in what such a journey or preparation consists of. Some changes are subtle, but others are not so subtle.

If you know of candidates for these two sacraments, please let them know of this changed date. And let us not forget the preparation for, and celebration of, these Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) are not tied to a fixed age. In other words, we can get baptized as adults, we can make our First Communion beyond the age of 8-9, and we can be confirmed beyond the age of 15. The particular age with which we tend to associate any of these three sacraments is really rather arbitrary. Enough about that for now. Registration for Confirmation and for First Communion after the three Masses of Sunday, September 20.

### **About Father John's Departure...**

Some newer parishioners may not know Father John. He used to "help out" here on Sunday's and other occasions for many years. But especially the last year he has not been around very much because of other commitments. As mentioned earlier he is now on his way to Rome, since he has been elected as a member of the General Council of the religious community (Priests of the Sacred Heart, S.C.J.) that he and I belong to. Actually, his work at St. Mark's goes back many years. In the seventies he, Mrs. Collins and others worked with the youth in Aylmer (**Tillage**). Nano McConnell knows more about that.

Anyway, Father John plans to leave for Rome mid-September to begin his six-year term there. Plans are underway to have a bit of a send-off for him on Sunday, September 13. He will preside at our Masses then, and we are working on what we can do after the Masses.

**CWG MEETING / POT LUCK – TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>**: Membership Registration: from 5:45 to 6:15 p.m. followed by a "POT LUCK SUPPER" in the church hall. All ladies in the parish are most welcome to attend. For more info, call **819 684-6926**.



**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:** Kindly remember Magdalena Mueller, Hilda Preslawski, and their families in your prayers.

**PRAYERS & SYMPATHY:** Prayers & sympathies to the family of Evelyn McCormick & Ruth Mondoux on the death of their aunt Rosella.

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