



ST. ROMUALD CATHOLIC CHURCH

394 N HWY 259 · HARDINSBURG KY 40143

July 23, 2017 - Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

dear Padre

Parish Office:

Phone: 756-2356

Fax: 756-2099

Hours: Monday - Friday

8:00am - Noon, 1:00 - 3:00pm

Email: stromuald@bbtel.com

www.stromuald.org

Pastoral Staff:

Pastor, Father Brian Johnson

Email: Brian.Johnson@pastoral.org

Deacon, Tony Anthony

Deacon, Mike Wiedemer

Administrative Asst, Jane Haynes

CRE: Adult, Rosa Hockenberry

CRE: RCIA, Lyvenia Anthony

CRE: 7-12, Gayle Poole

CRE: K-6, Kim Brumfield

Pastoral Council:

Dana Bland, Harry Mattingly,

Janet Bland, David Morton

Christi Brooks, Kevin Oelze

Chris Brumfield, Don Payne,

Jerry Dowell, Gail Pollock

Betty Heavrin, Pam Pollock

St. Romuald

Interparochial School:

Phone: 756-5504

www.stromualdschool.org

Principal, Rob Cox

School Board

Representatives:

Jamie Barr, Amy Flood,

Jennifer Payne

If I'm late for Mass, can I receive the Eucharist?

There is no hard-and-fast rule on how "late" one can be for Mass and still receive Communion. Holy Communion is offered outside of Mass at times, so theoretically you could come during the Communion rite and still receive Communion.

But there is more to be considered with this question. If you are going to go Mass, you should be there from the beginning to the end. You should be there before the entrance procession begins and you should stay until the last verse of the final song is sung. Things happen, like an unexpected train on the way to Mass or a sick child who needs attention and care. However, if you find yourself always coming late to Mass, you may need to make a change in your routine.

I remember cleaning out a closet of a church I was stationed at, and I found a sign with ropes attached to it. It stated, "Mass has begun, the next Mass begins at..." and there was a place where you could list the time of the next Mass. I was told the ropes were tied across the entrance so you couldn't come into Mass late.

Those days are gone, though. It's up to you to follow your conscience. It is important to participate in the entire celebration, but if on the rare occasion you come late to Mass, ask yourself, "Can I prepare myself to worthily receive Communion at this moment?" If you can answer "yes" to that question, then I would say it would be OK to receive Communion.

Fr. Patrick Keyes, CSsR

Masses for the Week

June July 24th—30th

Tues	1:00 pm	No Mass (Extended Care)
Wed	5:00 pm	Bobby Joe Hinton (DH)
Thurs	9:30 am	Edward & Marry Robbins (Medco)
Fri	8:00 am	Special Intention (WB)
Sat	5:00 pm	Loretta Duggins
	7:00 am	Adam Sutton
	10:00 am	Victor Henning

Stewardship of Finance

July 8th & 9th Collection

Sunday Collection	\$5,934.50
Building Fund	\$5.00
Children	\$10.00
Loose change for the Poor	\$43.00
St. Romuald School	\$390.00
Adalee Taul Collection.....	\$ 3,365.10

Parish Financial Summary

July-June, 2017

Total Income	\$537,000
Total Expenses	\$494,600
	\$ 42,400

Thank you for your financial stewardship!

Worship and Sacrament

Anointing of the Sick: Anointing of the Sick is celebrated with the parish community every first Wednesday at 5:00 pm Mass. Yet, anytime, anointing is available for illness, preparation for surgery or for recovery, by calling Fr Brian.

Baptism: Congratulations on the birth of your child! Your Church Family is excited about your family growing and our family growing! We look forward to celebrating your child's baptism! Preparation for new parents or those new to the parish is held by appointment. Call Fr Brian.

Marriage: Congratulations on your engagement! Your Church Family wishes to help you fully prepare spiritually and walk with you into this lifetime commitment to each other. In order to allow sufficient time, couples must contact the parish office at least 6 months before the anticipated wedding date.

Confession/Reconciliation: Every Wednesday 4:00-5:00 pm; every Saturday 4:00-5:00 pm, every first Saturday after 8:00 am Mass, or anytime by simply asking or calling Fr Brian for appointment.

Visitation of the Sick: Please notify Father or the office upon admission of a family member into nursing homes or hospital. Often we rely upon word from the family about illnesses of a member. Please call.

RCIA: Interested in the Catholic Faith? The RCIA process is a "spiritual journey" that fully initiates those who are not baptized or who have baptism from another tradition and wish to join fully the Catholic Church. Classes are offered through the year culminating at Easter! Please call the office for details!

Membership in the Parish: Welcome to all new families or persons moving into our parish. We are glad that you are joining the parish community. We want to visit with you and help you settle into the church. Please register in the parish office as soon as possible.

Ministers of the Liturgy - July 29th & 30th

	Eucharistic Ministers	Lectors	Ushers	Servers	Rosary Leaders	Music Ministers
5:00 pm	Amy Flood Millie Whittler	Christi Tivitt Lynn Tuell	C-Jim Bland* C-Sam Bland S-Will Bland S-Leroy Henning	Claire Flood Aubrey Tabor Lily Tabor	Minnie Nimmo	Pippa
7:00 am	Denise Hardesty Jean Oelze	Cathy Lewis	C-Greg Hardesty* C-Chuck Hardesty S-Bobby Joe Rhodes S-Jeff Rhodes	Amber Woods Tabby Woods	Mike Wiedemer	Pippa
10:00 am	Cindy Payne Mary Jo Rankin Aulton Richards Tabetha Walz	Rosa Hockenberry Carlos Matthews	C-Mack Mattingly* C-Chuck McGary S-Griffin Moore S-Zack Payne	Becca Walz Logan Walz	Susan Arnold	Volunteer
Radio Minister: Ann Tritschler			Children's Liturgy:			



"the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matthew 13:43)

We step into the middle of a battle between light and dark, between good and evil in our gospel today. Jesus tells a parable of the wheat and weeds. God plants wheat, yet an evil influence sows weeds in the mix and suddenly weeds appear in the otherwise good field. Now what, should we go thrash about in the field and pull up the weeds? No! Jesus wisely points out that by traipsing around the

good tender plant shoots in the field, the good plants will be caught up and destroyed accidentally. So let them be, wait through the growing season, and in the harvesting everything will be sorted out. In the end, the bad will burn, and the good will glory! This is where the line I love enters the parable. Jesus says in verse 43 ***"the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."*** What does it mean to shine like the sun? I remember Fr Ron Hoye's conference talk in our parish mission two years ago, when he described the glory of a sunflower being its ability to reflect what it always looks upon-the sun! In splendid detail, he described the sunflower's behavior of looking upon the sun all day. The flower turns toward the sun all through the day, following its direction from sun-up to sun-down. He mentioned that what is most beautiful is that the sunflower grows to mirror what it lovingly looks upon-the golden Sun and its bright light of leaf-petal rays! What does that have to do with this reading today? Well, the selfless action of a sunflower just mirroring and reflecting the sun's goodness, is what we followers of Jesus are supposed to do: be good as gold for its own shiny sake! What I mean is that we follow Jesus simply to live good for goodness' own sake. Not for any selfish gain, not for our own prideful glory, not for any vengeful come-uppance over evil, but just for goodness' own sake. Because that is what goodness does! Goodness shares itself out of the simple abundance of life's own growth! Confronted or faced with evil, goodness does not glory in the triumph over an enemy; no, it actually desires its conversion. With the weeds and wheat, many a weed does come to look like the wheat it grows up among. Perhaps with enough growth cycles of gene-sharing, the wheat's heartiness (?) and usefulness could overcome the weed's selfish expansion and sneaky theft of resources in the field. So, Jesus says to leave the weeds and wheat together through the growing period, and the good and bad will be separated in the end! Some interpreters have seen this parable as a comforting account of how we are to with the reality of evil in our world. Why does God allow the bad to even be around? Perhaps jerking out the bad, will damage the good more. And all the while, good can become better, and maybe(!) the bad will be transformed to good! In another place in the gospel Jesus says, ***"be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust"***(Matthew 5:45).

So how do we act like wheat in a world where weeds are mixed into the field? We look to the light. We keep focused on the sun. Growing stronger and better by continually asking whether we are truly reflecting its good light or not. We are not dragged into the downwardly negative and life-draining fruitlessness of selfish assertion. We say to the weeds, "We wish you would change, being less weedy and becoming life-giving wheat yourselves. Our only means to help that come about is to trust the 'planter and harvester' and we ourselves remain faithful to doing good. May our fruit and effect be to your good, too!"

And being humble, we pray to God that we are not the weeds in someone else's wheat field! Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:16 "Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father." We are called to follow Jesus, repeating his words and imitating his conduct in our relations to others, serving His Glory and the spread of His Kingdom. And the Book of Revelation describes what this will all look like in the end, "as the city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb Himself" (Revelation 21:23). This reading makes me flash back to the Mount of Transfiguration when Jesus revealed his divinity to some of the apostles as a boost to their faith before persecutions and trials with evil. Matthew 17:2 says that ***Jesus' face "shone like the sun"*** and his clothes became white as light."

I recently reviewed some study I had done a long time ago on Thomas Merton, looking at pivotal moments he experienced affecting changes in his monastic vocation. It blessed me to read all over again his writing about the mystical experience he had on the corner of 4th of Walnut in our own Louisville, Kentucky. Next time you are in Louisville, go downtown to 4th & Muhammad Ali Blvd and pray/read the historical marker sign that registers the exact spot on the sidewalk! Merton wrote the next day (March 19, 1958) in his journal *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* about this God-Experience. He wrote:

"in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world..... I have the immense joy of being human, a member of a race in which God Himself became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now I realize what we all are. And if only everybody could realize this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun."

The same image of people as shining suns sticks with me! We are called to be 'lights'! God's identification with us in Christ Jesus, revealing God's goodness itself, and His compassion for us, is what motivates us to desire the conversion of evil and strengthens us to remain faithful to good even when attacked by evil to not be drawn away from the light of God, our life!

Here are some daily questions to consider in our prayer time!

Sunday: What did God say to me at Mass today? Did I receive a spiritual 'work-order' to focus upon this week to help grow my faith?

Monday: What do I have to give this week in my workplace, that God gave me Sunday morning?

Tuesday: Wheat and weeds are part of living. Pray for the grace to remain wheat. Can it happen that we become someone else's weeds? How do I remain fruitfully good?

Wednesday: How do I act in the face of evil? Am I pulled into the downward negativity or do I lift it upward by focusing upon light and good?

Thursday: Have I ever overreacted and raged into a weed-pulling? How can I better respond to evil and pray/work for its recovery or redemption?

Friday: Make a loving sacrifice willingly for someone today without any recognition.

Saturday: For what am I especially grateful for this weekend? Dedicate your prayer at mass to simply thanking God and appreciating His goodness to you.

Peace and Prayers, Fr Brian Johnson

PARISH NEWS & EVENTS

Save the Date: Our Parish Mission:

Nationally recognized and dynamic Evangelist Mike Cumbee of the Micah Project, will be our Mission Speaker each night October 15-17th. Plan to attend and be rejuvenated in your faith! Mark your calendars!

Thanks to Past Parish Council Members: We want to recognize and thank our outgoing council members completing their three year terms on Parish Council: **David Morton, Jerry Dowell, Christi Brooks, Betty Heavrin. I am so grateful for their service and sacrifice of time to lead and work in the parish. Thank-You!**

I want to thank all of the nominees who were willing to serve in leadership on the Parish Council for the elections last weekend: Tom Aull, Gera Jarboe, Tobias Curran, Janie Maysey, Duane Flood, Joellen McGary, Danny O'Reilly, Cindy Rhodes, and Mark Rhodes. The new members will be announced this weekend!

Senior Day: Sheroll Carby who is the Community Outreach Coordinator with Alzheimer's Association will be our guest speaker for the day. The topic she will be discussing is "Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body. So bring a friend or two, and come listen and join in on this most important topic. We will provide the fried chicken and ask that you try to bring a dish to pass. We will be meeting Tuesday, July 25th, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, again that is Tuesday. Hope to see you all there, to celebrate our independence!

St. Romuald Altar Society will be getting under way with our first meeting set for Thursday, August 3, 2017, at 5:00 pm in the parish hall. Come and join us as we make plans for another year, discussing old and new business. Ruby Davis, our president, welcomes all old and new members to sit in on our meetings to help plan for the upcoming year.

SRIS REGISTRATION

Saint Romuald Interparochial School will be having registration on Friday July 28th, 2017 for the 2017-2018 school year, Pre-School through 8th grade. Registration will take place in the parish hall from 12:00-6:00.

Celebration

BIRTHDAY:

Jim Whitworth, July 22nd

ANNIVERSARY: Buck & Dorothy Jarboe will be celebrating 49 years on July 20th.

"The Catholic's Divorce Survival Guide was created to bring hope and healing to divorced and separated Catholics." With the help of trained counselors Deacon Mike (270-756-0120) and Rosa Hockenberry (270-614-1669), "you can go from pain and loneliness to hope and healing." For men and women seeking healing from divorce, join us beginning August 7, 2017 every Monday thru October 30, 2017. Cost is \$20.00 for 12 weeks of sessions. Tell your loved ones who might be going through the same struggles, there is help out there, remember everything is kept private. Contact Deacon Mike, or Rosa, or call the office at 270-756-2356, you can sign up now!

Catholic Faith Information: Please check out and pick up any of the free pamphlets and booklets in the back of church about Catholic teaching and practices. They are excellent resources from the Knights of Columbus about our faith beliefs!

This Week at St. Romuald

Mon	1:00 pm	Blue Army Rosary
	7:00 pm	Al-Anon Meeting
Tues	10:00 am	Scripture Study
	10:00 am	Senior Day
	1:00 pm	Mass (Extended Care)
	4:00 pm	Rosary
Wed	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Mass
Thur	9:30 am	Mass (Medco)
	6:00 pm	Family Holy Hour
Fri	8:00 am	Mass
	12 - 6 pm	SRIS Registration
Sat	5:00 pm	Second Collection for St. Vincent de Paul
Sun	7/10 am	Second Collection for St. Vincent de Paul

UPCOMING:

Aug. 3 5:00 pm Altar Society Meeting

PRAYER AND SPIRITUALITY

A Word from Pope Francis:

"In the minds and hearts of government leaders, and at every phase of the enactment of political measures, there is a need to give absolute priority to the poor, refugees, the suffering, evacuees and the excluded, without distinction of nation, race, religion or culture, and to reject armed conflicts. Always foremost in our minds is the need to work for unity that prevails over conflict, as war is never a lasting solution. We know that the whole is greater than the part. Problems do need to be resolved concretely and with due attention to their specificity, but such solutions, to be lasting, cannot neglect a broader, more inclusive vision. While it is reasonable that G20 Summits should be limited to the small number of countries that represent 90% of the production of wealth and services worldwide, this very situation must prompt the participants to a profound reflection. Those states and individuals whose voice is weakest on the world political scene are precisely the ones who suffer most from the harmful effects of economic crises for which they bear little or no responsibility. "This great majority, which in economic terms counts for only 10% of the whole, is the portion of humanity that has the greatest potential to contribute to the progress of everyone." (Papal Address 7-7-2017)

Children's Liturgy: We had 3 teachers to step away from their positions as teachers for Children's Liturgy this last cycle. We are now in the process of trying to replace them before September when the classes start up again. Children's Liturgy of course is held March, April, May and then September, October and November. Safe Environment and a background check are required to work with the children. All questions and information can be gotten from the church office, stop by or call 270-756-2356, or you may contact Rosa Hockenberry at 270-314-1669 (cell) any hour of the day or week. Please take some time to prayerfully think over coming to join this very special ministry. Our children need you!

Come shop at the St. Romuald Gift Shop. We have all kinds of treasures for you to purchase, rosaries, devotional candles, children's prayer books to mention a few. We just received some new items, Guardian Angel visor clips (for those new drivers), devotional auto emblems, Our Lady of Guadalupe rosary beads, and St. Benedictine key chains. Almost all items are under \$4.00, so come on in and shop around for your next communion gift or whatever the occasion might be. We have a great selection to choose from!

Readings for the Week

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

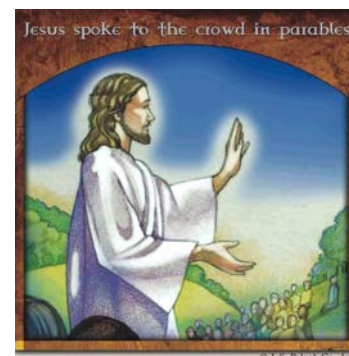
Monday: Ex 14:5-18; Ex 15:1bc-6; Mt 12:38-42
Tuesday: 2 Cor 4:7-15; Ps 126:1bc-6; Mt 20:20-28
Wednesday: Ex 16:1-5, 9-15; Ps 78:18-19, 23-28; Jn 20:1-2, 11-18
Thursday: Ex 19:1-2, 9-11, 16-20b; Dn 3:52-56; Mt 13:10-17
Friday: Ex 20:1-17; Ps 19:8-11; Mt 13:18-23
Saturday: Ex 24:3-8; Ps 34:2-11; Jn 11:19-27 or Lk 10:38-42
Sunday: 1 Kgs 3:5, 7-12; Ps 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-130; Rom 8:28-30; Mt 13:44-52 [44-46]

July 23rd Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

"I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world"

When we respond to our vocation, what has lain hidden becomes visible. Others come to know Jesus through us when we live our lives for Him. If you've ever thought you might have a vocation to priesthood, contact the vocations office for resources to assist you with your discernment: www.owensborovocations.com 270-683-1545, www.owensborovocations.com, jason.mcclure@pastoral.org

A Lifeline for Marriage – Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vi with a long i) helps couples through difficult times in their marriages. It is designed to provide the tools to help get your marriage back on track. It will give you the opportunity to rediscover each other and examine your lives together in a new and positive way. This program has helped thousands of couples experiencing marital difficulty at all levels. For confidential information or to register for the August program beginning with a weekend on Aug 18, 2017, call 270-852-8346 or email: felliott3232@yahoo.com or visit the web site at www.retrouvaille.org . Registration deadline Aug 4, 2017.



PRAYER REQUESTS

We Pray For:

Gene Aldridge, Paula Anthony, Gene Bennett, Joe Bennett, Juanita Burch, Brian Butler, Billy Carwile, Jerry Carwile, Mallorie Collins, Debbie Critchelow, Jim Curtis, Rick Dale, Amanda Douthitt, Marolyn Dowell, Roger Dowell, Kenneth Dowell, Treyten Drake, Debbie Dubree, Davye Duggins, Sammy Duggins, Tijuana Duncan, Lottie Eauer, Tessa Farris, Carroll Ferguson, Ginny Flood, Pat Flood, Cindy Getz, Jenny Ginn, Rita Greenwell, Bill Greenwood, Linda Greenwood, Susan Griffin, Clyde Hall, JoAnn Henning, Lisa Henning, Karen Herbert, Kitty Himmelhaver, Bill Hinton, Doug Hinton, Rick Hurley, Merri Hurt, Braddock Inman, Barbara Jarboe, Virginia Jeffries, Mary Ann Johnson, Tracy King, Patricia Lane, Angie Lawrence, Annette Lucas, Margaret Lyons, Red McClellan, Oleta McDaniel, Bevan Michael Miller, Richard Miller, Blaise Mills, Sharon Morgan, Dorothy Morris, Don O'Donoghue, Eddie O'Donoghue, Joe Oelze, Earl O'Reilly, Janet O'Reilly, Libby Osborne, Martha Payne, Brian Phillips, Peggy Phillips, Bobby Potts, Joe Priest, Robert Priest, Sandy Priest, Stoy Priest, Bob Rankin, Rita Roach, Shirley Robbins, Lincoln Roberts, Suzanne Rose, Carri Roth, Eric Severs, Rex Lee Sheets, Steve Smith, Jerry Sosh, Virginia Stanford, Lucy Stupak, Pam Sturgeon, Loretta Swink, Adalee Taul, Becky Taul, John N. Taul, Gina Thornsberry, Paul Tucker, Gil Urban, Tessa Wadsworth, Greg Wethington, Raymond Wethington, Jimmy Whitworth, Mary Rita Whitworth, Carolyn Wilcheck, Kevin Wilcheck, Rebecca Wilson, Robert D. Wilson, Anne Wolfe, Sandra Zanone. **Serving in the Armed Forces:** Mandie Adams, Kevin Arnold, Fred Barham, Austin Brown, Timothy Cashen, Ryan Critchelow, Cody Garst, Parker Findlay, James Hanor, Jack Hayes, Stevie Higgs, James Howard, Charles Kuhlman, SSgt Bradford O'Reilly, Jordan Pate, Liana Tindle, Chase Upchurch, Garrett Wadsworth



In Sympathy

Please pray for the repose of the soul of David Stinnett, (grandfather of Kim Brumfield) and Bernard Mattingly (father of Jeff Mattingly and grandfather of Jennifer Payne) whose funerals were last week. Pray for their families to be comforted.

FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN INQUIRING ABOUT THE CATHOLIC FAITH OR IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE 270-756-2356 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

From the Diocese: DRF Update to be Published in Parish Bulletin

June 8, 2017 St. Romuald, Hardinsburg Parish Target Amount: \$12,005.35
Pledged: \$7,472 Paid: \$7,107 Remaining Balance: \$365 (Our Parish receives a rebate of 50% for all dollars paid over Parish Target Amount.)

Thank you to our advertisers for making the bulletin possible! Please let them know that you are thankful for support of our parish bulletin.

Advertiser of the week

Hardees

\$1 off any combo after Church!

AROUND AND ABOUT

St Theresa Custom Car Show/Picnic and Auction: August 12, begins at 2:00 pm: Car show entry fee \$10, with prizes. For more info call Marvin Stull 270-496-4123, or St Theresa, 9245 Rhodelia Road, Payneville, KY 40157 at 270-496-4362.

Pray to end abortion: Join other Catholics and those from other faiths that gather each Saturday at 2nd and Market in Louisville from 7:00-8:00 am (EST) to pray for families entering the abortion clinic. Many children have been saved and mothers spared future grief by this prayer action and support. With God, all things are possible! Archbishop Kurtz is known to show up and pray with everyone too!

Abortion Update: Last week 56 women went into EMW Clinic for abortions at 2nd and Market Street in Louisville. **Please pray to end abortion.**

St Vincent DePaul June Report: St Vincent DePaul conducts works of mercy for our community. The Society is thankful for the generosity of parishioners who contribute monthly to their outreach ministry. Their monthly report for June included the following services and help given: Assistance was provided to a total of 21 families amounting to 66 persons (of which were 34 children). The aid totaled just over \$1,108.32 given to help struggling families and individuals. May God continue blessing the generous donors and all of the recipients of their caring gifts.

Al-Anon Meeting: Mondays 7:00 pm St Romuald Parish Hall. Come find support and understanding to recover a sense of serenity in your life.

Brescia Sunday Weekend: August 12-13th
Across the Diocese, a special collection is taken up in every parish to help the work of Brescia University providing Catholic Higher Education. For a Diocese our size, we are so blessed to have a Catholic University. We are blessed with many Brescia graduates in our parish!

15th Annual Rural Life Celebration
Sunday, August 13, 2017, 5:00 pm
Owensboro Convention Center

You are invited to a celebration of rural life in the air conditioned comfort of the Owensboro Convention Center on West Second St and Locust St. A free meal will be served start at 5:00 pm with a short program. This year, special recognition will be given to the lives of service of Bishop John McRaith and Rick Kamuf both of which we lost earlier this year. Come help us honor their contributions to our community.



SUNDAY, JULY 23, 2017
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Get on board with God

“We believe in God . . . the Almighty,” we pray at Mass every Sunday: We believe God to be all-powerful—to think anything less would mean God isn’t God. If we look at the world around us, though, we see bad things happening to just about everyone. Where is the Almighty in all that? The church’s answer has always been that “God grants his creatures . . . the dignity of acting on their own,” as the Catechism of the Catholic Church says. That dignity can go two ways: either working with God to help bring about the reign of God, or not. How can you show your cooperation?

TODAY’S READINGS: Wisdom 12:13, 16-19; Romans 8:26-27; Matthew 13:24-43 (106). “He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the Kingdom.”

MONDAY, JULY 24

MEMORIAL OF SHARBEL MAKHLŪF, PRIEST

Don’t be a closet Christian

Saint Sharbel Makhlūf, the Hermit of Lebanon, dedicated himself to imitating Christ at an early age. He entered the Maronite monastery of St. Maro and was eventually granted permission to live as a hermit. Many sought his counsel over the years, but it wasn’t until his body was discovered incorrupt long after his death in 1898 that hundreds of miracles were attributed to him. He became a sign to 20th-century Christians of the liberating power of simple living. We 21st-century Christians may not be prepared to reduce our possessions to a tunic and leaf-filled mattress, but we could begin to loosen the bonds of materialism by giving away the contents of a closet or two.

TODAY’S READINGS: Exodus 14:5-18; Matthew 12:38-42 (395). “The scribes and Pharisees said to him, ‘Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.’”

TUESDAY, JULY 25

FEAST OF JAMES, APOSTLE

Name your faith

James has lots of nicknames. Besides “apostle,” he is “the Greater” to distinguish him from the other, younger apostle named James. He was “son of Zebedee,” which identified his fishing roots. He and his brother were the “sons of thunder,” reflecting a familial temper trait. He is also “the Martyr,” being the first apostle to suffer such a fate. The shrine in his name in Santiago de Compostela refers to his supposed missionary work in Spain. These names indicate that he was larger than life and multifaceted. What nickname would you want to be remembered by?

TODAY’S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 4:7-15; Matthew 20:20-28 (605). “She said, ‘Declare that these two sons of mine will sit at your right hand and your left in your Kingdom.’”

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26

MEMORIAL OF JOACHIM AND ANNE, PARENTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Be a model

Remember when you first realized that you were becoming your mother? Or turning out to be just like your father? Kids do tend to grow up to be like their parents. Just like Mary’s parents, Joachim and Anne, were the good ground from which the seed of goodness grew, we can be the good soil from which our children spring and produce much fruit. So it might

be better for us to invest our energy in self-control, rather than kid-control. The goal, remember, is not well-behaved kids but well-behaved adults.

TODAY’S READINGS: Exodus 16:1-5; 9-15; Matthew 13:1-9 (397). “Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

THURSDAY, JULY 27

Be different

The routine nature of daily life can cause our hearts to grow dull. And when we’re feeling dull, it’s hard to hear what God has to tell us. Yet it doesn’t take much to shake things up and get a new perspective. Just break out of a routine and do something different—take a new route to work, rearrange your furniture, clean out a junk drawer, or call an old friend you’ve been thinking about. God often talks to us in moments of surprise. So get out of your rut and you might even get a fresh message from God.

TODAY’S READINGS: Exodus 19:1-2, 9-11, 16-20b; Matthew 13:10-17 (398). “For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing.”

FRIDAY, JULY 28

Jesus is close at hand

Where does God “live”? Where do you go to find God? Jesus declared he was the new temple, the new dwelling place of God in creation. So wherever Jesus is, God is present, too. In his Body, which is the church, in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, in love of and service to others, and in countless other ways—in these places, God lives. Think of all the places you can encounter Jesus in your life, all the temples great and small where you feel the presence of God.

TODAY’S READINGS: Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 13:18-23 (399). “But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.”

SATURDAY, JULY 29

MEMORIAL OF MARTHA

Friendliness is Godliness

Even the savior of the world needed a place where he could put his feet up and let his hair down. The home of Martha, her sister Mary, and their brother Lazarus was just such a place for Jesus. They were his good friends, people with whom he likely shared laughs and good times and perhaps on occasion a good cup of wine. When Lazarus died, Jesus without hesitation put his own life at risk by raising him. Friendship is fundamental to the spiritual life and to our well-being, yet too often we let friendships wither from neglect. Who counts you among their closest friends? If the list is short or nonexistent, it’s time to reassess your priorities.

TODAY’S READINGS: Exodus 24:3-8; Matthew 13:24-30 (400). “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and anyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”

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