



ST. PETER'S CHURCH

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July 25, 2021

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Year of Saint Joseph

LIVING OUR FAITH

A lecturer on stress management raised a glass of water and asked us, “*How heavy is this glass of water?*” Various answers were called out. Then he replied, “*The weight really doesn't matter. What matters is how long you try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem,*” he said. “*If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes. And that's the way it is with stress*” he said. “*If we carry our burden all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavier, we won't be able to carry on. You have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we are refreshed, we can carry on with the burden. So, before you return home tonight,*” he continued, “*put the burden of work down. Don't carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow. Whatever burdens you are carrying right now, lay them down for a moment if you can. Relax; pick them up later after you've rested. Life is short. Enjoy it!*”

So, Jesus said to Phillip, “Tell the folk to just sit down and relax for minute or two.”

Questions for the week: *What burden can I lay down, so the Lord can nourish me and I can carry on? In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus makes himself known through “signs.” What does the sign of the feeding of the 5,000 reveal to you about who Jesus is?*



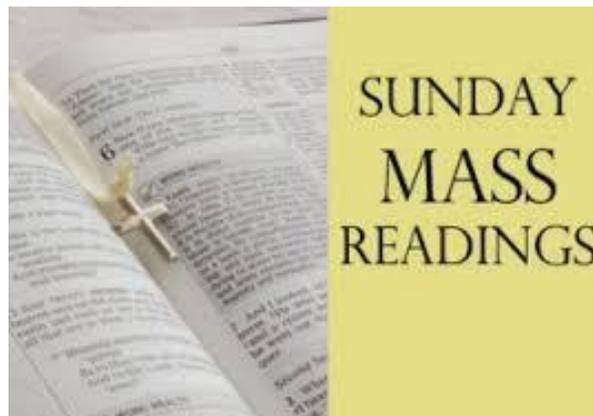
This Sunday's Hymns (10AM Mass)

#229 Jesus, Bread of Life

#231 Gift of Finest Wheat

#242 Draw Near

#282 The Church's One Foundation



Readings for This Sunday – July 25th

2 Kings 4:42-44

Ephesians 4:1-6

John 6:1-15

Readings for Next Sunday – August 1st

Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15

Ephesians 4:17, 20-24

John 6:24-35



The Parish Family of St. Peter's welcomes
Pricilla Matute, John Matute and Emilia Greenspan
to the Christian community!

May they continue to grow in faith and love of the Lord!



PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

If you would like to add a name to our prayer list for the sick, please contact the Parish office. We kindly ask that you do not request a name to be included without the express consent of the person for whom you are requesting prayer. While the request may be very well-intentioned, we want to respect people's right to privacy.

Thank you!

PRAYERS FOR THE DEARLY DEPARTED

We ask our good and gracious God to welcome our dearly departed into his Kingdom, and to bestow his peace and consolation on the family and friends who mourn their passing.



Catholics need to wear their faith on their sleeves

Mister Rogers was defined by his cardigan and sneakers. What's the Christian equivalent?

ALICE CAMILLE, Published July 8, 2021

Some things don't really matter. Others are essential to growth and happiness. The key to life may be in how well we're able to discern which elements belong in which category.

When it comes to Mister Rogers, any child can tell you that he just isn't the same guy without his familiar uniform: a brightly colored cardigan and a pair of tie-on sneakers. This is why it became a state of emergency on the day when Fred Rogers accidentally left these trademark items in an airport lounge on the way to a gig, an incident described in the rewarding biography, *The Good Neighbor: The Life and Work of Fred Rogers* (Abrams Press), by Maxwell King.

After reaching his destination, Rogers registered the loss and quickly placed a call to the airline. A spokesperson agreed to send the items ahead. An assistant to Rogers was dispatched to the airport to retrieve them.

Upon arriving at the proper counter, however, the assistant was informed by an airline rep that it was against company policy to release items to a third party. With no time to quibble, the assistant made the case: "Listen, lady, this is Mister Rogers's sweater and sneakers, and if we don't have these tomorrow, we can't shoot."

That crystalized the situation. The rep immediately revised her response: “Oh my gosh. Hold on a second. I’ll make this happen for you.” Both sweater and sneakers were soon safely on their way back to Mister Rogers.

While we can imagine that Rogers, the private citizen, could make do without either of these items indefinitely, Mister Rogers, the beloved children’s show host, wouldn’t survive the opening song of his broadcast thus unattired. It’s just as vital for each of us to be clear on what makes us who we are. In the realm of our identity as Christians, we might wonder: What’s our sweater?

In many gospel passages, this fundamental component seems to be faith. Even Jesus, Mark tells us, is hamstrung in the presence of unbelief. Just think about that for a moment. The element of human faith is so crucial to the divine-human collaboration that, without it, the will of God is in danger of remaining unaccomplished! Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. . . . We pray this prayer with great expectations. Yet if we don’t add faith to the equation, these are simply words tossed into the wind.

Even Jesus, Mark tells us, is hamstrung in the presence of unbelief.

This begs the question: What is faith? Any Catholic with a half-decent religious education might recall that faith is one of three theological virtues, along with hope and love. St. Paul lists these three supreme qualities as the only things that last (see 1 Cor. 13:13). The church calls this triad the theological virtues since they govern our relationship with God. Admittedly, St. Paul identifies love as the greatest of the three, but the list necessarily begins with faith. You can’t have a loving relationship with a phantom.

Still, the observant reader recognizes that categorizing faith isn’t the same as defining it. This puts the finger on a historical problem that keeps many believers at arm’s length from the loving relationship with God we say must be at the center of our lives. For many of us who’ve studied the Catechism of the Catholic Church diligently, faith has become equivalent with believing things about God—or worse, a fundamental nod to the idea that God simply exists.

So when we say that we’re believers, what we may mean is that we assent to the eternal reality of a Creator Being who is Three-in-One. We may further believe—which is to say we don’t actively doubt—that Jesus of Nazareth is both divine and human and that the Holy Spirit is around . . . somewhere, doing God knows what. We may hold a long list of line items to which

we have no trouble professing: virgin birth, one-holy-catholic-apostolic church, real presence in the Eucharist, the Bible as divinely inspired text. Not that any of this makes a lick of difference to the next decision we're going to make.

In other words, the most common form of religious faith is belief that certain things are true. Theologian Monika Hellwig contrasts "belief *that*" with "belief *in*": the sort of faith a child has in the adult to which she instinctively offers her hand while walking. Faith that is belief *in* describes a trusting relationship that's going places.

Faith that is belief *in* describes a trusting relationship that's going places.

All indications are that this is the kind of faith Jesus is looking for in the gospel stories. His invitation is always the same: Come follow me. To take the journey with Jesus requires putting more trust in him than in fishing boats and family, income streams, and reliable institutions. You have to trust Jesus more than the rules designed to keep you ritually safe, more than the religious leaders whose job it is to keep you in the bullpen of orthodoxy. To put your faith in Jesus means reaching out to touch his cloak, knowing you're breaking a bunch of laws doing it. Faith in Jesus means asking him to make you whole even after all the experts confirm that you're too far gone to make a comeback, and, besides, it must be God's will that you're suffering anyway.

The letter to the Hebrews poetically describes faith as the "assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). That contrasts sharply with the faith that grounds itself in what we can reason out, put our hands on, or simply take for granted as true. If a thing is obvious and readily available, not something to be grasped at and sought after, we don't need faith to access it. We can achieve it ourselves. Yet theologians have long viewed faith as a divine gift. We can't claim it by getting an A on the religion test. Faith involves a surrender, a falling into another's arms, as any loving relationship does. We have to let go.

The more common understanding of faith—believing correct principles about God—fixates us on the content of faith, not on the relationship of trust. To be sure, we like faith-as-content better. It guarantees that we're in control of the process. Check the right boxes, don't think too hard about the details, and you're done.

If we can't or won't put our hand in the hand of that guy who stills the waters, our faint stabs at religious practice are a sincere waste of time.

I don't know about your relationships, but total control of outcomes rarely seems to be true of mine. I keep trying to yank friends and family in the direction I'm going, but they predictably yank back each time. I've also never been a fan of the blindfolded trust walk: allowing someone else to determine the path and the destination while being meekly led along by the hand. I'm not sure I trust anyone enough to be convinced their judgment is better than mine.

Yet this is what faith in God really means. This is what discipleship depends on. If we can't or won't put our hand in the hand of that guy who stills the waters, our faint stabs at religious practice are a sincere waste of time. If we want to experience the "deeds of power" Mark's gospel tells us about, we have to bring trusting faith to the table and not rely on faith-as-content to be sufficient. Hellwig describes trusting faith as a visionary way of living. It drove Abraham from his homeland in the direction of an intangible promise. It made prophets hang their fate on mere words. And for disciples, it's the sweater that distinguishes us from the rest. Don't leave home without it.

This article also appears in the July 2021 issue of U.S. Catholic (Vol. 86, No. 7, page 47-49).

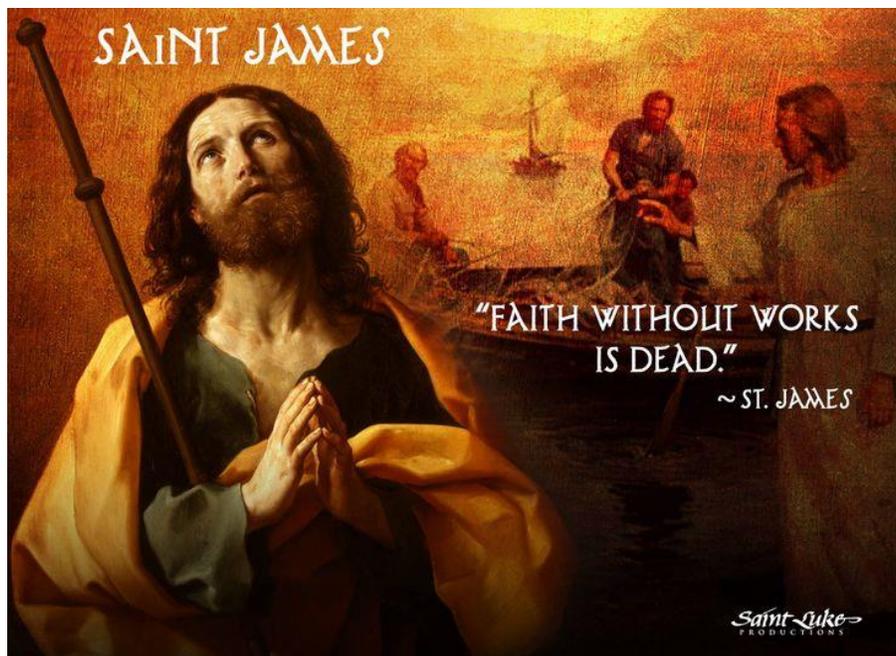
Image: Pixabay/Marisa Sias

BLESSED FEASTS!

St. James

Feast Day: July 25th

St. James is the Patron Saint of pilgrims and Spain



Saints Anne and Joachim

Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Grandparents of our Lord, Jesus

Feast Day: July 26th

Saint Anne is the patroness of unmarried women, housewives, women in labor or who want to be pregnant, grandmothers, mothers and educators.
St. Joachim is the patron of fathers, grandfathers and grandparents in general.



St. Martha

Feast Day: July 29th

St. Martha is the Patroness of homemakers and cooks



BOOKS AVAILABLE

There will be a book rack in the back of the Church. Please help yourself to any titles that interest you. Books *do not* need to be returned.

SUNDAY EVENING MASS REMINDER

Our Sunday evening Mass is celebrated at 5:30PM.

This Mass tends to be less crowded and therefore may be a good choice for those wanting to attend Mass with fewer people.

WEEKDAY MASS

Weekday Mass has resumed.

Mass will be celebrated on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8:30am.

PARISH CLOTHES CLOSET AND FOOD PANTRY MINISTRIES

Just a reminder that we are now *OPEN* every Wednesday and Saturday morning from 9:00am - 12:00pm.



COVID PROTOCOLS: UPDATED JUNE 17, 2021
FOR 10:00 AM SUNDAY MASS

New York State has lifted Covid-19 restrictions. What a welcome sign that we are returning to some sense of normalcy, while recognizing it will take more time for all of us to feel comfortable to go back to pre-Covid conditions.

Masks are no longer required to be worn during services (for those who are vaccinated). Unvaccinated parishioners are asked to continue to wear masks.

There are no longer capacity restrictions. As you enter, the left side of the seating in Church is without restriction. You may sit anywhere you like.

We will continue to maintain, for the time being, a “physical distance” section. For those who wish to continue to do so, our ushers will continue to escort you to your seat out of safety.

We have been asked to continue to keep holy water fonts empty.

Communion from the chalice will not resume at this time. All are encouraged to receive communion in the hand.

For the unrestricted seating section, communion will be distributed in pre-pandemic procession style. For those in restricted seating, the minister will bring communion to you.

We will continue to clean and disinfect the Church after services, and we will continue to livestream Mass.

I want to thank you for your cooperation and understanding during this difficult time!



Saturday evenings at 7 PM:

Mass in Spanish

Sunday mornings at 10 AM:

*Mass in English ***

Sunday evenings at 5:30 PM:

Mass in English

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8:30 AM

Mass in English

****We will continue to livestream our Sunday morning Mass on Facebook Live.**

You can join us for Mass in person, or by logging on to www.facebook.com and visiting our page - St. Peter's Church, Liberty, NY. A recorded video of the Mass will also be published to our page at the conclusion of Mass.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

For those who continue to join us for Mass on Facebook Live who would like to receive the Eucharist, you may come to the church following the conclusion of Mass to receive. Father Ed will be available until 11:30am to distribute Communion.

MASS RESOURCE

Do you have travel plans this summer and want to be able to find a Catholic church at your vacation destination? Visit www.masstimes.org to find the name of the Catholic church nearest you, along with its website address, contact information and worship times.

(Due to the Covid pandemic, Mass times at some Parishes may have changed, so we recommend checking the website of the Parish before heading out to Mass!)



