

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SEPTEMBER 16, 2018

MASS READINGS

MONDAY: 1 COR 11:17-26,33, PS 40, LK 7:1-10

TUESDAY: 1 COR 12:12-14, 27-31A, PS 100, LK 7:11-17

WEDNESDAY: 1 COR 12:31-13:13, PS 33, LK 7:31-35

THURSDAY: 1 COR 15:1-11, PS 118, LK 7:36-50

FRIDAY: EPH 4:1-7, 11-13, PS 19, MT 9:9-13

SATURDAY: 1 COR 15:35-37,42-49, PS 56, LK 8:4-15

NEXT SUNDAY: TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME-RDGS: WIS 2:12,17-20, PS 54, JAS 3:16-4:3, MK 9:30-37

MASS INTENTIONS

MONDAY: FR. METHOD WILSON

TUESDAY: DONALD CLAPP

WEDNESDAY: DEC. OF ANDERSON FAMILY

THURSDAY: JEANNE HANTHORN

FRIDAY: POOR SOULS

VIGIL: DONALD CLAPP

7:30: JANET MOHLMAN

10:00: JEANNE HANTHORN

NOON: FOR THE PARISH

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

Deceased religious & for the Poor Souls. (M/M Homer Curwick, M/M John Kidwell, Mr. Dennis Widner). Norbert & Mark FitzSimons. John Scowden. Butz & Altling families. Nufer & Vogel families. (Tom, Louise, Katherine, Thomas Haviland, Harold & Iudia Kavanagh). (Bud & Mary Jo Anderson families, Deni Farrell). (Alex James, Quentin Bryan, Pete & Connie Rourke, Helen McMullen, Robet E. Smith). (Carl & Scott Waclawik). (Joe & Chet Albregts, Marie Brown). Robert W. Bennett

To say that life comes with a number of questions is putting things mildly to be sure. However, in our present age the types of questions have shifted. Put by one philosopher, we are no longer concerned **that** things are we are concerned about **what** things are. A definite shift has been seen since the 18th century regarding the idea of being or ontology as it is called in philosophy and theology. People have shifted their attention from the great questions of life, e.g. why am I here? , what is my purpose?, what is the meaning of it all? And, largely influenced by the materialism and utilitarianism of our day, are concerned about the utility of things and when the next new thing which promises to make life better (whatever that means) comes out. We are fixated on devices and their usefulness and have moved away from the weightier issues. Who can blame us after all? Those big questions are way too big and besides, either no one knows or, we all know each in his own way and who is anyone else to tell us anything different? Given that we are left with plenty of free time to devote to all the new inventions coming out on the hour to captivate our lives and make them more....what...meaningful? Think again! This age doesn't seem anymore illuminated by either have given the big questions a thought or discarded them for the little questions, shifting from the why to the how in life. And yet there is something awfully wrong with an age which has so dramatically avoided the difficult questions in favor of the passing things and hence dismissed life itself. Jesus asks us a very important question in today's gospel. He wants to know what we think of him or more importantly who he is in our lives. Our response comes not from creeds or carefully worded doctrines which have been passed down through the centuries. Those creeds and doctrines represent the articulated reflections of folks who faced that question in their own lives and times and have done us the favor of passing on what they have come up with. We for our part consider their responses and the fullness of what they mean and then look within ourselves to see if whether or not we have something to add or more importantly can connect with what they have said. In short doctrine, creeds and the like are the media by which we come to realize in our own lives the presence of God. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, who inspired Peter, we can now respond in a similar manner AND MEAN IT! This will mean that we are not afraid to take on the bigger questions since they have found a definitive answer in the person of Jesus Christ who is Lord and Savior. Our own questions about life, meaning and future have all been drawn out for us in the person of Jesus who came among us with the glory of the Father to reveal a plan in which each of us individually and all of us collectively are freed from the slavery of sin and death and given new birth by water and the Spirit and brought into the family of God's holy people. Hence these questions become, not burdensome, but "old friends" who have remained with us to remind us of the way in which God not only cares for us now but for eternity. Jesus, perhaps anticipating a big question from us proclaims that "I have come that you may have life and have it in abundance."

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WHOEVER WANTS TO BE
MY DISCIPLE MUST DENY
THEMSELVES AND TAKE
UP THEIR CROSS AND
FOLLOW ME.
JESUS (MARK 8:34)



Everyone in their life carries a cross of some kind-everyone has some struggle, no life is perfect. There are the obvious crosses-serious illness, birth defect, learning disability, addiction and poverty. There are some less visible crosses-anxiety, depression, egotism and the struggle for humility, the penchant for doubt and lack of trust, disorganization, confusion.

Ironically, in the world today, we don't hear the phrase "take up the cross," we most often hear "take up the CAUSE", meaning take up a cause, even if that cause goes against the cross and fight for that cause. If a person, for instance, is born into poverty, rather than embrace that cross, and carry it with humility, a person is taught to be angry, and take up the cause of perceived equality, even if it means stealing from a neighbor in order to equal things out. We've lost the concept of taking up the CROSS and following. We've lost the concept of denying our ideas, either as an act of humility, obedience, or in deference to our neighbor. Our society has become all about rights and what we perceive that we are entitled to.

Anything good that we have, "every good gift" (James 1:17) is from Above. Meaning that if we open our eyes to see the light of another day, even if we greet them in a state of poverty or illness, we are to greet the day and our cross in gratitude, that we've lived another day, even another day to carry our cross. Instead of gratitude and humility, we've become greedy.

I'm reminded of a story I once read about a man who was angry about the cross he was carrying in his life. And one night the man had a dream, and in his dream, he was carrying a wooden cross and complaining about it. In the dream he entered a warehouse where there were lots of crosses. And in the warehouse, he met the Lord. The Lord told him to put down his cross and look around at all the other crosses in the warehouse. So the man put down his cross, and took a look around. He saw large crosses, small crosses, he picked up a jeweled cross covered in diamonds but as he put it on his back, the diamonds cut into his shoulders. The solid gold cross was too heavy. Finally, he saw a plain wooden cross, and he picked it up, it felt like it was the right size and fit him well. He told the Lord that he wanted to take that cross out with him. The Lord asked him if he was sure that was the cross he wanted. When he assured the Lord that this cross was indeed the one he wanted to carry, the Lord told him,

*1 Take up your cross, the Savior said,
if you would my disciple be;
take up your cross with willing heart,
and humbly follow after me.*

*2 Take up your cross; let not its weight
fill your weak spirit with alarm;
Christ's strength shall bear your spirit up
and brace your heart and nerve your arm.*

*3 Take up your cross, heed not the shame,
and let your foolish pride be still;
the Lord for you accepted death
upon a cross, on Calvary's hill.*

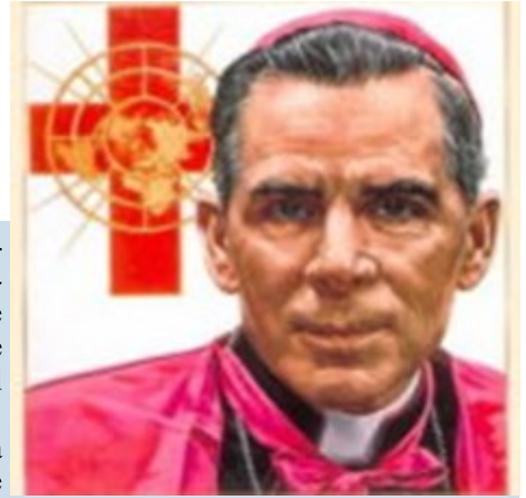
*4 Take up your cross, then, in Christ's
strength,
and calmly every danger brave:
it guides you to abundant life
and leads to victory o'er the grave.*

"That is the cross you walked in here with."

The lesson of this story is that we all carry crosses. And many times, the "grass looks greener" as we look at other people and their crosses. When I look at my life and my crosses, and I consider the lives of other people and who I might like to exchange places with, I always end up coming back to my life and being grateful for what I have, crosses and all. And many times it is a struggle to deny envy and jealousy over what other people have, or to fight the urge to have something or do something that is against what God would have me do. But this is what it means to deny oneself, take up the cross and follow, and as St. Luke puts it, to do it daily. And this is what the Lord calls us to do.

Lord, thank You for the gift of this day. Whatever happens to me today, help me to consider today a blessing, for the mere fact that You've given me another day of life. Help me to carry my cross (name your crosses) with strength, with humility and with confidence. Help me to deny my own desires and to seek after Your commandments. Help me to be a good follower. Help me to do these things today, and then tomorrow, and then the next day, for as many days as You will give me in my life to carry my cross and follow. As Your cross lead you not only to crucifixion but to Resurrection, help me to carry my cross not only in this life, but into Eternal Life. Amen.

FINDING HAPPINESS WHERE YOU LEAST EXPECT IT



Ask someone where happiness may be found, and you'll get a variety of answers. Many of them, however, are centered on attaining something currently out-of-reach. The thinking goes like this: "If only I could make more money, then I would be happy." Or "If only I had a nice car, then I would be happy." Or "If only I could win that tennis tournament trophy, then I would be happy."

The problem is, there are people all around who have plenty of money, a nice car and maybe even an entire collection of tennis trophies, yet they are not happy. Material goods don't bring happiness, and in fact, the more earnestly such goods are sought as if they would bring happiness, the more bitter the disappointment that follows.

Many years ago, Venerable Fulton Sheen wrote: "Every earthly ideal is lost by being possessed." After someone attains the object he was searching for, he no longer places happiness in it. He realizes that his unhappiness was not due to his lack of that material item. He got what he had wanted, and, despite a possible temporary kick, the general unhappiness remained.

Instead of deriving satisfaction from what we've achieved, we use our achievements as baselines from which to achieve more. Those making \$30,000 per year want to make \$40,000; those making \$40,000 want to make \$50,000, and those making \$50,000 want to make \$60,000. As the material rewards increase, the search for happiness does not abate, and it can in fact intensify.

If happiness cannot be found in material possessions, where can it be found? The answer is: we find happiness where we least expect it—in self-denial. This is not a piece of wisdom that is easily learned and lived, because it is so paradoxical. Who, without being told, would ever imagine that denying oneself would bring happiness?

Yet, we are told by Jesus Himself in Matthew 16:24 that "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For he that will save his life, shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it." Self-seeking ends in destruction of self, while self-denial (and seeking of God) culminates in happiness.

Self-denial being the route to happiness is possible, because, as Sheen points out, denial of self prepares us for disappointments from others: "Contradictions from others will hurt us less when we have first contradicted ourselves. The hand that is calloused will not pain as much as a soft hand, on catching a hard ball. Contradictions can even be assimilated and used for further taming of our own errant impulses."

Yes, even the disappointments of life can be used for our greater good, if we take them in the right way. What happens outside of us is not nearly as important as what happens inside of us, and the latter is oftentimes the only thing we have control over. Good can come even from the worst situations, by a mere act of the will.

Sheen reminded us of the great importance of the will. He said, "There is one thing in the world that is definitely and absolutely your own, and that is your will. Health, power, life, and honor can all be snatched from you, but your will is irrevocably your own, even in Hell. Hence, nothing really matters in life, except what you do with your will."

Happiness, then, is found by making decisions (acts of the will) to contradict our own errant impulses. When our own wills have been negated, we can live out the will of God here on earth and for eternity in Heaven. Complete happiness can only be attained after this life, but true happiness does start here by saying no to oneself.

Because I wanted to share this great paradox with others, I chose passages from Venerable Sheen found in the new book [Finding True Happiness](#). Sheen's prescription for happiness is just as relevant to us today as it was decades ago when he first wrote it. In fact, it is even more imperative to get his message out now, because even fewer people know of its value. Finding happiness in self-denial and God-acceptance is a reality we all need to be taught or reminded of.

Why the Christian Must Deny Himself

by *Austin G. Murphy*

We can be grateful that the customs of giving up something for Lent and abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent have survived in our secular society. But, unfortunately, it is doubtful that many practice them with understanding. Many perform them in good faith and with a vague sense of their value, and this is commendable. But if these acts of self-denial were better understood, they could be practiced with greater profit. Otherwise, they run the risk of falling out of use.

A greater understanding of the practice of self-denial would naturally benefit those who customarily exercise it during Lent. Better comprehension of self-denial would also positively affect the way Christians live *throughout* the year. The importance of self-denial can be seen if we look specifically at fasting and use it as an example of self-denial in general. Indeed, fasting, for those who can practice it, is a crucial part of voluntary self-denial.

But since we live in a consumerist society, where self-indulgence rather than self-denial is the rule, any suggestion to fast will sound strange to many ears. It is bound to arouse the questions: Why is fasting important? Why must a Christian practice it? Using these questions as a framework, we can construct one explanation, among many possible ones, of the importance of self-denial.

To answer the question "Why must the Christian fast?" we should first note that fasting, in itself, is neither good nor bad, but is morally neutral. But fasting is good insofar as it achieves a good end. Its value lies in it being an effective means for attaining greater virtue. And because it is a means for gaining virtue—and every Christian ought to be striving to grow in virtue—there is good reason to fast.

Some people point out that fasting is not the most important thing and, therefore, they do not need to worry about it. Such reasoning displays a misunderstanding of our situation. But, since the excuse is common enough, some comments to refute it are worthwhile.

Doing Small Things Well

First, while it is true that fasting is not the most important thing in the world, this does not make fasting irrelevant or unimportant. There are, certainly, more urgent things to abstain from than food or drink, such as maliciousness, backbiting, grumbling, etc. But a person is mistaken to conclude that he therefore does not need to fast. He should not believe that he can ignore fasting and instead abstain in more important matters. Rather, fasting and avoiding those other vices go hand in hand. Fasting must accompany efforts to abstain in greater matters. For one thing, fasting teaches a person how to abstain in the first place.

Moreover, it is presumptuous for a person to try to practice the greater virtues without first paying attention to the smaller ones. As Our Lord says, "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much"¹ and so can be trusted with greater things. Therefore, if a person wants to be able to abstain in greater matters he must not neglect to abstain in smaller matters, such as through fasting.

Finally, there is a subtle form of pride present in the person who says that because something is not very important, he does not need to do it. Whoever makes such a claim implies that he does only important things. But the average person is rarely called to do very important things. Accordingly, each person is more likely to be judged on how he did the little, everyday things. Even when, rarely, a person is called to do a great work, how often does he fall short? All the more reason, then, for a person to make sure that he at least does the small things well. Furthermore, if he truly loves the Lord, he will gladly do anything—big or small—for him. So, in the end, saying that fasting is not the most important thing is not a good excuse for avoiding it.

What, then, is the reason for fasting? To answer this let us first clarify what fasting entails. It involves more than the occasional fast, such as on Good Friday. To be effective, fasting requires disciplined eating habits all the time. There are certainly days when a person should make a greater effort at abstaining from food and drink. These are what we usually consider days of fasting and they must be practiced regularly. But, still, there are never days when a person is allowed to abandon all restraint. A person must always practice some restraint over his appetites or those periodic days of fasting are valueless. Always keeping a check on his desires, a person develops good habits, which foster constancy in his interior life. So, in addition to practicing days of fasting on a regular basis, a person should continuously restrain his desires, such as those that incline him to eat too much, to be too concerned with what he eats, or to eat too often.²

We might, then speak of the discipline of fasting in order to avoid the impression that fasting is sporadic. The operative principle behind the discipline of fasting is simple: to limit yourself to only what is necessary for your physical and psychological health—no more, no less. St. Augustine puts it concisely when he teaches: "As far as your health allows, keep your bodily appetites in check by fasting and abstinence from food and drink."³ So, fasting is meant only to keep a person's unnecessary wants in check. A person is not—nor is he permitted—to deny himself what is necessary for his health. The discipline of fasting instead asks a person to check his desires for what is superfluous and not necessary.

Realizing True Well-being

Consequently, fasting should not threaten a person's health. And there is no foundation for believing that fasting is somehow motivated by anti-body sentiments. Fasting actually does good for the body by helping it realize its well-being. The body needs to be in conformity with the spirit and this requires such disciplines as fasting. In this way, the body is like a child. Children would never realize their true well-being if their parents never told them "no," but gave in to every one of their desires. In the same way, if a person never says "no" to his bodily desires, his body will never realize its true well-being. That is, the body needs such discipline to be brought into conformity with the spirit. For otherwise, it cannot share in the spiritual blessings of Christ.

This makes perfect sense when we consider that the human person is not just a soul, but is matter as well. A person's body, too, is to be renewed in Christ. Fasting is one way that a person brings about a harmony between body and soul, so that being made whole he can be one with Christ.

The Christian belief that the body is intimately united to the soul should also make a person suspicious of the opinion that fasting is merely external. External acts stem from the desires of the heart within, as Our Lord says in the Gospel.⁴ So, a person's external acts are linked to his interior desires. The external act of abstaining from food and drink, therefore, clearly affects a person internally. It does not permit his desires within to reach fulfillment. Thus fasting has the ability to keep interior desires in check, which is important for improving a person's interior life.

It is true, of course, that a person should be more vigilant over his interior life than over his external actions. He must be attentive to interior motives, desires, intentions, to make sure that his fasting is affecting his interior life as it ought—and not giving rise to pride, anger, or impatience.

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In fact, only by considering the interior self, and how fasting can affect it, does one see the high value of fasting. If someone looks only at the external act of eating, and does not consider the underlying internal desires of the heart, then the value of fasting cannot be seen. For, clearly, there is nothing wrong with the very act of eating. Nor do the enjoyments of food and the pleasures of eating, as such, harm a person. The joys and comforts of eating are good. Like all created goods, they testify to the goodness of God, who made them. Therefore, the enjoyment of eating and drinking manifests the goodness of God. A person ought to see God's goodness in the joys of these things, and give God thanks for them.⁵ The enjoyment of food can then actually help lift the mind and heart to God.⁶

But by lifting a person's gaze to God, created goods point beyond themselves, to greater joys. Consequently, he who truly enjoys God's goodness in created things, such as food and drink, will not remain attached to them. Rather, he will go beyond them, readily giving them up, in order to enjoy the higher things, which St. Paul says we must seek.⁷

Seek What Is Better

This might lead some to ask: If the enjoyment of eating does me no harm, and can in fact manifest God's goodness, why sacrifice this joy by fasting? That is, why check my unnecessary desires for what is enjoyable? After all, there is nothing wrong with enjoying food. Why, then, if I enjoy having a snack, or eating fine foods, sacrifice these things? Again, they are not bad or sinful.

The answer is: Because it is better. Having a tasty meal prepared just to my liking is good, but it is better to sacrifice such things. Showing why it is better to fast than to neglect fasting will provide the reason why a Christian is expected to fast.

A Christian must be seeking what is better, and not merely trying to avoid what is bad. This is the only way to live a life of continual conversion, to which we are committed by baptism. The Christian must face decisions with the question: "What is the better thing for me to do?" He must not, when he has a decision to make, approach what he is inclined to do with the justification: "Well, there is nothing wrong with doing it." If that is his approach, then he is not genuinely seeking improvement in his life. Spiritual progress becomes impossible.

Ongoing conversion, to which, again, the Christian must be dedicated, involves going from good to better. This conversion is unreachable for him who in his life refuses to give up the lesser goods in order to attain greater goods. Due to fallen human nature, every person is prone to be complacent. Each of us is reluctant to change his ways. But clearly, if a person has not yet reached perfection, there are certainly greater goods for him to realize. Fasting, in many ways, is simply the choice to give up lesser goods for greater ones, to abstain from the joys of food and drink in order to attain greater joys from God. It seeks for more. If a person ever stops seeking for more, then he has stopped seeking God.

Why is it better to fast than not to fast? Again, we said that the enjoyment of food and drink is good. Enjoying food is not the problem. Fasting does not tell a person not to enjoy eating—I think this is impossible—as much as it says not to seek the enjoyment of eating. A person may take the joys of food as they come, and be grateful for them: but he should not pursue such joys.

True, there are legitimate occasions, such as when entertaining guests, where especially enjoyable foods are procured. But this is done for the sake of hospitality and for lifting up the heart and mind to God in thanksgiving. The joys of food and drink are not sought, consequently, for their own sake but for God's glory. Thus, the person is not really seeking the joys of eating and drinking, as such: he uses them only to pass beyond them to God. Hence, he who uses the joys of eating and drinking rightly will readily give them up.

Because fasting is better than not fasting, he will deny himself these joys regularly. "Looking to the reward,"⁸ moreover, he will not often make the excuse that hospitality, or the "need" to celebrate, requires that he allow himself enjoyable foods. In truth, it is more often the case that self-denial and restraint are called for.⁹

Obstacles To Grace

So, it is not wrong, in itself, to seek tasty, enjoyable food: but still a person should not do so. For when a person seeks the enjoyment of eating, his action is tainted with inclinations to sloth, complacency, and self-love.¹⁰ That is, his motives are mixed. For when he seeks the joys of food, selfish inclinations are at work in his heart along with whatever good motives there might be. Now, if a person only looks at the external act of eating or the objective value of enjoying food, he will not see this. But, if he honestly looks into the heart, he will see that sloth, complacency, and self-love are present in the desire for the joys of eating. Having such mixed motives is simply part of our imperfect condition in this world.

These selfish inclinations in a person's heart, which are present when he seeks the enjoyment of eating, are the sort of things that hinder a person's growth in holiness and virtue. To grow in holiness and virtue every person needs God's help—we know that a person cannot do it on his own. As Christ says, "Apart from me you can do nothing."¹¹ Hence, the help of God's grace is needed to grow in virtue and to live a life of continual conversion. Yet the presence of these inclinations to sloth, complacency, and self-love get in the way of a person's reception of God's grace. They are obstacles to receiving more grace.

Therefore, the Christian, who is dedicated to conversion, must remove these obstacles from his heart, so that he may receive more grace and become a better follower of Christ. A person should not expect God to force his grace on him without his consent. As we know, God chooses to work with a person's cooperation. And, so, he is obliged to work with God to remove these inclinations from his heart as much as possible.

This is done by fasting. For fasting, by checking a person's desires for what is not necessary, teaches him to seek what is sufficient when he eats. When he fasts, he does not seek the enjoyment of food, but is simply seeking what he needs to eat and drink. And since he is no longer pursuing the joys of food, the self-centered inclinations that accompany this pursuit are not allowed a chance to spring up in his heart. A person gives up things he enjoys because in so doing he denies inclinations such as sloth, complacency, and self-love a chance to be active in his heart.

Purifying The Heart

This is why it is better to fast. Fasting removes these obstacles so that being more receptive to God's grace, a person will grow in holiness and virtue. The self-centered inclinations that accompany pleasure-seeking are not directed towards God—therefore, they do not lead the heart to God but away from him. Their presence in the heart creates a divided heart—a heart, which does not completely look to God for its needs. As St. Augustine teaches, a divided heart is an impure heart.¹²

Purifying the heart, then, will involve denying oneself the pursuits of pleasures in things like food and drink. For thus a person protects his heart from the self-centered inclinations that are bound to coexist with these pursuits.

This provides one answer to the question, "Why must we fast?" (and, by extension, to the question, "Why should one practice self-denial?").

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Since, by fasting, a person no longer seeks after the joys of food and drink, the heart is set free to focus more completely on God. By turning away from his concerns for the pleasures of eating, he can turn more wholeheartedly to God. And this, we know is what continual conversion is all about. By fasting, then, a person turns to God more intently. This is reflected in God's words spoken through the Prophet Joel: "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."¹³ Naturally, a person is reluctant to give up through fasting things he enjoys—but by doing so he turns his attention to God and waits for him. He places his trust in him that he will give him the joy he needs—joys "greater than when grain and wine abound."¹⁴ But he has to trust and be willing to persevere through the dry times that will accompany fasting. If he puts his hope in God, however, the Scriptures assure him that he will not be disappointed.¹⁵

For the sake of his ongoing conversion, then, the Christian must fast. But we might add another, better reason for fasting. Not only does fasting benefit a person's own individual spiritual progress, it also benefits his neighbor.

It is commonly pointed out that fasting can help others by allowing those who fast to increase their almsgiving with the money saved from eating less. But the benefit referred to here is of a different sort. It is due to our being connected with each other through prayer, so that a person's offering of prayer can help others. Now, prayers for others are more effective the more united the person praying is to Christ, since Christ is the source of the benefits gained through prayer. So the more converted a person becomes to the Lord, the more effective his prayers for others: "The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects."¹⁶ And since fasting aids a person's continual conversion, it strengthens his prayers so that they benefit others more. In this way, he can help his neighbor through fasting.

Moreover, this service to his neighbor through fasting is an imitation of Christ. He offered himself on the Cross for others. A person too, in union with Christ, offers himself through the sacrifice of fasting. In fasting, he has the opportunity to join Christ in offering himself for the sake of others. Thus, even if a person's heart were pure and always free from selfish inclinations—as was Christ's—he should still fast—as did Christ. Through Christ he has the chance of helping others through voluntary acts of self-denial. Christian love is, indeed, eager for such chances to serve others.

So, in a very real way that is clearly visible to the eyes of faith, the Christian must fast out of love of neighbor. He is commanded by Jesus to live in his love.¹⁷ This love is the love that compels a person "to lay down his life for his friends."¹⁸ That is, it is the love that compels him to sacrifice his own preferences and desires on behalf of others. And this is what each person is invited to do through fasting—to give up things he enjoys for the benefit of others. And, as we are told, "there is no greater love than this."¹⁹

There are good reasons then, why a person must practice fasting and develop disciplined eating habits. Fasting and, by extension, self-denial are important for a person's continual conversion as well as for others who need our prayers. So, the Christian should regularly ask himself, "What do I really need? What can I do without?" and consider the advantages of denying himself even things that are not necessarily bad.

A better understanding of the virtue of denying oneself would undoubtedly benefit our society, where one is taught only how to say, "yes" to what one wants and desires. The practice of self-denial provides a humble yet profound way of giving oneself to God and others out of love, thus breaking the tendency to self-absorption. For, as we have said, self-denial is necessary for helping bring about ongoing conversion, which is sought out of love of God: and one restrains oneself and sacrifices one's desires out of love of neighbor. Love, then—real liberating, sacrificial love—is behind voluntary self-denial.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

Bishop Robert Barron's THE MASS

SEPT 23 – VIEW A PRIVILEGED ENCOUNTER

SEPT 30-DISCUSS A PRIVILEGED ENCOUNTER & VIEW CALLED OUT OF THE WORLD

OCT 7-DISCUSS CALLED OUT OF THE WORD & VIEW GOD SPEAKS OUR STORY

OCT 14-DISCUSS GOD SPEAKS OUR STORY & VIEW RESPONDING TO GOD

OCT 21- PARISH BREAKFAST – NO MEETING

OCT 28- DISCUSS RESPONDING TO GOD & VIEW PREPARING FOR SACRIFICE

NOV 4-DISCUSS PREPARING FOR SACRIFICE & VIEW THE REAL PRESENCE CREATES COMMUNION

NOV 11-DISCUSS THE REAL PRESENCE CREATES COMMUNION

GATHER AND REGISTER SEPT 23 IN THE ADULT CONFERENCE ROOM-BENNETT HALL @ 8:45 A.M.



SUNDAY, SEPT. 30TH AT 2:00 P.M. IN REAR PARKING LOT OF CHURCH

Blessing of the Pets

The graphic features a collage of various animals including dogs, cats, a rabbit, a hamster, and a bird, all with halos, set against a background of paw prints and pet-related icons.

SUNDAY OFFERING:

\$8484

“FIND OUT HOW MUCH GOD HAS GIVEN YOU, AND FROM IT TAKE WHAT YOU NEED; THE REMAINDER IS NEEDED BY OTHERS”