

February 16, 2020
Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time
60th Anniversary Mass for St. Louise

On February 12, 1960, Archbishop Connolly established St. Louise de Marillac Parish and on Valentine's Day of that same year, Fr. Howie Lavelle celebrated the first Sunday Masses for the new parish at Sammamish High School. Thirty years later, on February 18, 1990 the newly ordained Fr. Joe Tyson, now Bishop Tyson, celebrated the first Mass in Spanish. These anniversaries for our parish give us every reason to come together this weekend with great joy.

We build on the past because that is exactly what Jesus did in three years of public ministry. We just heard in Matthew's Gospel: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill." What does it mean that Jesus came not to abolish but to fulfill the law?

The law had the promise of holding the people of God in right relationships with each other and with God. The law in and of itself was not the fullness of God's revelation. Jesus himself, in his teaching and even more his very person as both God and man, is the fullness of God's revelation. We hear repeated in the Gospel today, "You have heard it said . . . but I say to you . . ." He took the external observance of the law and raised it to a new level, the level of the heart, the level of his heart that he gave to us, to invite us to give our hearts to him completely and then to give our hearts of love to each other.

Jesus taught the importance of the law because he himself studied the law and followed it. He also knew the teaching of the prophets and understood that fulfillment of the law means that the law is lived in a balance with the prophetic message. He observed the law of the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship but he also healed the sick who came to him on the Sabbath and reminded those who criticized him that even they led their animals to drink on the Sabbath. Those were prophetic words and actions.

Those who founded this parish exercised a prophetic witness, believing the future, believing that future generations would come to follow. They faithfully followed the law of God in their time and now, we do the same.

The Book of Sirach says quite clearly, "If you choose you can keep the commandments, they will save you; if you trust in God, you too shall live." Jesus is our life. He teaches us to let your "Yes" mean "Yes" and your "No" mean "No". We keep the law of God, through our love of God and the love of neighbor. We love God and neighbor in three ways:

Frist, the worship of God: Sunday is the most important day of the week for the mature Christian. Let your "Yes" mean "yes" to the worship of God on the Lord's Day, the day that Jesus rose from the dead. In every Mass the Church prays that "it is our duty and our salvation,

always and everywhere to give you thanks.” There is no better way to give thanks to God than to do what Jesus did on the night before he died when he commanded us to do this in memory of him. We say “yes” to what Jesus gave us! One of the Eucharistic prayers says that the offering of the Eucharist is how “we show forth the paschal Sacrifice of Christ that has been handed on to us”. Those who gathered at Sammamish High School for the first St. Louise Masses, “handed on” to us what they received, and we “show forth” what has been handed on to us by the way we live. Let’s make our “yes” to worship strong!

Second, we evangelize: We say “Yes” to what Archbishop Etienne says is, our number one mission, which is to bring Christ to others. We need to start by making sure that our faith is strong. *Christ Renews His Parish* retreat weekends is one that we have sought to do exactly that. We live our parish mission statement, *Ignite Faith and Witness God’s Love* in every way that we make a commitment to grow personally in our faith to share the faith that we have received from Christ. Let’s make our “yes” to evangelize strong!

We serve the poor: We say “Yes” to love Christ in the least of our brothers and sisters. St. Louise gave her life to the service of the poor. Our parish lives this mandate of Christ in many ways. At the same time, we live in a time when many people find it difficult to give their time to service. Like with everything in stewardship, giving time to service and to the poor means planning and giving from the top, that is our first commitment. We can feel like we don’t have time, yet how often do we find ourselves spending significant time on social without meaning to do so? Let’s make our service to the poor strong!

This anniversary Mass for St. Louise is a time to renew our “yes” to Jesus, and may our choice be strong. That choice is most important so that we can make the next sixty years of St. Louise vibrant and full of faith.