THE CHURCH OF SAINT BONIFACE
Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
September 29, 2019

"Woe to the complacent in Zion...They drink wine from bowls and anoint themselves with the best oils; yet they are not made ill by the collapse of Joseph!"

(Amos 6, 1: 6)
A Blessed week in the Lord!

This is difficult stuff! We must be ready to carry the cross. (faith, patience, gentleness). Compete well for the faith. Lift others up. Do all that gives God’s name honor.

From the Desk of the Pastor

Make room for God and the service of others.

An indolent man is like an unoccupied dwelling; scoundrels sometimes burrow in it; thieves and evil characters make it their haunt, or, if they do not, it is full of vermin.

Henry Ward Beecher, “Proverbs from Plymouth pulpits” (1887)

Last weekend Fr. Stephen (Mission Appeal) told us ‘his story’ and I thanked him for this. When one is brave enough to tell us his or her story and we are open to listen with our hearts, it will put our lives into perspective (how grateful we must be!). Do any of us even know what a pit latrine is? He asked, are there people who still live this way in the 21st century?

Such stories of complete poverty (which can sometimes hit home hard…) provoke questions in my mind. Why is it that in this very rich world, some people are reduced to ‘beggers,’ in fact ‘perpetual beggars,’ constantly malnourished and diseased? Their children have no dreams and no future. Are they just lazy or inept, waiting comfortably on their couches…

The maladies of poverty are deep. They are often rooted in social and economic injustice and the Prophet Amos even in his time, powerfully and providentially addresses this.

In Amos’ time there was great economic prosperity but only a few profited from this. These few ‘bathed’ in good life and luxurious living: “lying in beds of ivory, stretching comfortably on their couches…they drink wine from bowls and anoint themselves with the best oils” (Amos 6, 6) and this is their sin (fatal wound); they are not made ill by the collapse of Joseph. They have become so indolent, blindly indifferent and insensitive to the falling apart of ‘the other.’ Amos is furious and he will speak his mind. This is totally unacceptable and against every Old Testament covenant promise. Steeped in Mosaic tradition, Amos reminds the rich that the Covenant with Yahweh allowed no class distinction (only a concept of brotherhood). Amos finally notes that the root cause of all this is a ‘Religious decay.’ The people, therefore, must ‘return to God’ and obey his Word and Will in order to avoid the Day of Judgment and doom.

What is the rich man’s sin in the Gospel? It is not so much that he is well off, but that he was blinded by his catering to self, to Lazarus. Lazarus was more or less like his dogs and this did not bother him at all. This attitude even carries into the judgment moment: “ask (that) Lazarus to come down here.” Unknown to the rich man is that when God’s time appears there will be a total reversal of things. Lazarus is now up!

What then is our challenge or the point of the readings? Put God back at the center of our lives. Make room for God and the service of others. Listen and live by the Word of God (Matthew 7, 24-27).

The Celebration of the Eucharist

Sunday: 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM
Saturday Vigil: 4:00 PM
Summer Sunday Mass schedule: 9:00 AM (Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend)

Weekday Masses: 8:00 AM, Wednesday/Thursday/Friday

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Discover St. Boniface – Visit our website: www.StBoniface-lunenburg.org

Sunday, October 13, 10:30 a.m.
We will celebrate a Multi-cultural Mass.
The Eucharistic celebration will be led by “The Karolines,” a Ugandan Youth and Young Adult Group from Saint Mary’s Parish in Waltham, MA
Mujje tumusinze (Come Let us Celebrate)!
THANKS to all who planned, volunteered, donated and attended our 3rd Annual Saint Boniface Oktoberfest Celebration.

Have You Heard the One About...
...the skunk who went to church every Sunday? He even had his own pew!
...the novice cook who bought a cured ham? She spent all afternoon trying to find out what it had.
...the tomatow who lost his tail? That’s what brought him to the反射 store.
...the man who fell into an upholstery machine? But don’t worry — he’s fully recovered.

What do you get when you divide the circumference of a pumpkin by its diameter?
Pumpkin Pi

From a Christmas Party Song by Maxine, Tad
Written and compiled by Patricia Mitchell in association with Product Group Mfg., Inc.

A Mini-Retreat for Women
The Commission for Women of the Diocese of Worcester invites you to join us for a Mini-Retreat for Women on Saturday, October 19 at St. Mary’s Parish Hall, Main Street, Shrewsbury, MA. The topic will be “Re-entering the Paradise of the Heart: A Spiritual Path for Healing” and will be facilitated by Sr. Kathryn Hermes, a Daughter of St. Paul. Through quiet prayer, guided inner exploration, and Scripture meditation, this retreat will help you take back your self-ownership; when you learn how to stand at the door of your heart, when you re-enter the paradise of the heart. You will leave the retreat with prayer guides and life tools.

The day will begin with Mass at 8:30 a.m., followed by registration and coffee/pastries. Lunch will be included with the $15 offering, and the program will conclude by 1:30 p.m.
Visit www.worcesterdiocese.org/commission-for-women for more information and the registration form.
For questions or to have a form mailed to you call Jacqueline at 508-841-5221 or email worcestercommissionforwomen@gmail.com.

True Discipleship Requires Sacrifice for the Needs of Others
“Remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented.” Luke often returns to this theme of “great reversal.” One of the signs of the kingdom was the rise of the lowly and the fall of the mighty. Mary’s Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55) includes this insight, as do the blessings and woes in Luke’s version of the beatitudes (Lk 6:20-26).

For Luke, the arrival of God’s kingdom turns the world upside down.

This idea has deep roots in Israel. In this Sunday’s first reading, the prophet Amos foretells a historical reversal. Writing during a time of invasion and famine, he chastises Jerusalem’s wealthy for their personal indulgences during a national emergency. As punishment, they will be among the first conquered Israelites to face exile.

By Jesus’ time, these prophecies had given rise to apocalyptic speculation. These writings claimed that God was acting in unseen ways to undo the evil that humans had introduced into creation. The result would be a world with no hunger, illness, war or poverty. God’s intervention would cause the toppling of kings and the plundering of the conquerors. The coming reversal would transform all humanity.

The parable in today’s Gospel reading makes that cosmic reversal personal. The person who in life enjoyed extravagant pleasure after death experiences torment, while the homeless leper suffers torment because his attention to pleasure not only violated God’s law but led in part to the death of the starving, sick man at the very door of his house. Like the Jerusalemites in Amos’ prophecy who feasted while their nation collapsed, the rich man’s indifference condemned him to exile in the next life.

Such a punishment was not inevitable. If the rich man had attended to God’s instruction, he would have spared himself torment. Likewise, if he had followed the teachings of the covenant, Lazarus would not have had to wait until death for comfort. Luke thus finds in this parable a deeper teaching on discipleship. We disciples need to live out the great reversal in our daily lives. Through repentance and the power of the Spirit, we must sacrifice our luxuries to provide for others’ necessities. We must share our own and even accept times of hunger in order to ensure the hungry are fed. We must leave behind achievements and status and even risk persecution in order to lift up the lowly. In this way, every act of mercy proclaims our faith in Christ and reveals God still at work, making all things new.

— Michael Simone, S.J.

This article also appeared in print, under the headline “The World Upside Down” in the September 16, 2019 issue of America Magazine.

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PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER OF NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS, INC.
515 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420

You are cordially invited to our 17th Annual Fundraising Banquet
To be held on Thursday, October 24, 2019 – 6 p.m.
at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 99 Erdman Way, Leominster

Register at www.friendsofcarenetfitchburg.org - Or call us at 978-342-4244, or email us at gail.carenet@verizon.net.

Our mission is a rescue mission. By educating those facing an unplanned pregnancy to the sanctity of life, and by offering life-affirming alternatives to abortion we rescue babies from death. Please pray for our mission and for our banquet. Pray for sponsors to support our fundraiser and mission. Pray for guests to come and hear our stories.
Discussion Questions
26th Sunday of Ordinary Time
September 29, 2019
Anne Osieluck

Reading I: Amos 6:1a, 4-7
Responsorial Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 10
Reading II: 1 Timothy 6:11-16

First Reading
Amos 6:1a, 4-7
1. Do self-indulgence and wealth necessarily go together? Are indulgences and related complacency related to your ability to hear the cry of the poor?
2. Would you choose the people in this reading to be your best friends? Why? What’s missing in a person’s life if all possible time and effort is consumed with caring for his or her needs and desires? Put the people in this reading at one end of a self-indulgence spectrum and Mother Teresa at the other. Where do you fall?

Second Reading
1 Timothy 6:11-16
1. Jesus said to Pilate, “the reason I have come into the world is to bear witness to the truth.” What do you do that bears witness to the truth? Do you think, “Lay hold of eternal life” means that you should try to grab eternal life or that you should let God grab you?
2. How do patience, gentleness, and love relate to your bearing witness to the truth? How is your gentleness? Your patience? Your love?

Gospel
Luke 16:19-31
1. Where would you find the poor person today? What would he or she look like? Do you recognize and care for him or her as God’s beloved child, or do you want to roll up your window or shut your door when you see him/her coming? Are you somewhere in between these alternatives?
2. Pope Francis says that “vast wealth and resources are in the hands of few.” If it’s not in your capability to change this unjust situation, what smaller things can you do to answer the “cry of the poor”? This scene reminds us of the harsh words of the Son of man during the final last judgment: “I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was [...] naked and you did not clothe me” (Mt 25: 42). Lazarus represents the silent cry of the poor of all times and the contradictions of a world where vast wealth and resources are in the hands of few. ... (Pope Francis concluded saying that) the Word of God can revive a withered heart and heal it of blindness, and that God’s saving message overturns the situations of this world by the triumph of His justice and mercy.

SAINTS OF THE DAY

Saint Jerome
September 30. Known mostly for his translation of the Scriptures into Latin, Saint Jerome was also an inspiring writer of letters and commentaries. He was known to have had a bad temper, yet he was a man of prayer and penance. A combination of conflicting qualities, Saint Jerome stands out as one of the four great Doctors of the Latin Church.

One side of a double-sided panel: Three saints in full figure – Saint Sylvester, Saint Jerome, and Saint Martin | anonymous

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux
October 1. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux is perhaps one of the most known and best loved saints in the Catholic calendar. A young Carmelite nun who wanted to go to the missions, she remained within the cloister yet became the patron of the missions. Thérèse entered the convent at 15 and died at 24 having lived a full life, including serving her community as novice director. Her parents were canonized in 2015.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux as a novice at age 16 | Carmelite Archives of Lisieux

Feast of the Guardian Angels
October 2. Angels play an important role in Sacred Scripture as messengers of God. The belief that each person has a guardian angel watching over him or her is an extension of that role, and a reminder of God’s never-failing providence.

Detail | The Guardian Angel | Marcantonio Franceschini

Saint Theodora Guérin
October 3. Saint Theodora was born in France but came to Vincennes, Indiana, at the invitation of the bishop. Eventually she established a new foundation of her community in the States, but not after suffering many hardships. Saint Theodora is buried at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, the headquarters of the Sisters of Providence.

Saint Theodora Guérin | Image courtesy and © Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods

Saint Francis of Assisi
October 4. Saint Francis of Assisi: founder of the Franciscan family, Patron Saint of ecology, inspiration to thousands, claimed by people of all faiths as well as by those with no particular faith, a truly “catholic and apostolic man.” Though born in the 13th century, he belongs to all ages.

Scenes from the Life of Saint Francis (Scene 7) | Benozzo Gozzoli

Poverty and Mercy
Saint Boniface Environmental Stewardship: In 2015, Pope Francis said “As stewards of God’s creation, we are called to make the earth a beautiful garden for the human family. When we destroy our forests, ravage our soil and pollute our seas, we betray that noble calling.”

As a start Saint Boniface has added recycling bins for use during church events — one bin is for deposit items and the other is for curbside recycling items. Please use them!