

## 23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

From the Pastor's Desk

Labor Day is already upon us. This is the unofficial ending of summer. However, it has all been a very strange time for us. We were hoping that things would be back to normal by now. Time has slipped by and things are better, yet some say they are not. It is all confusing. Yet we are once again celebrating Labor Day. With this national holiday we acknowledge the importance of work in our lives. It is obvious that as Catholic Christians we see labor in a different light: it is so much more than a job; it is a way of life. We see our work and daily duties as a participation in the ongoing creative activity of God in the world. Labor is God's invitation to share in His creative work. In work we share in God's creative goodness. We help in building the Kingdom of God.

To be fully human, to be fully alive, we need to participate in some kind of creative activity. It is planted in our very being we are created in the *Image and Likeness of God*. We do not hear these words in reference to any other creature. We believe that God is the creator of all things. Since the human being alone is created in His *image and likeness*, we have the creativity of God planted in our human nature. Unlike the animals we desire to be creative like our heavenly Father: we necessarily need to work. It is in and through our work that we express our place in creation: children of God, stewards of creation and builders of the Kingdom of God.

However, work is difficult. This difficulty is the effect of Original Sin. Since creative work is of God, sin is the anti-creative work. Sin is destructive. Sin is the reason why labor is difficult and exhausting. We read in Genesis, God said to the man and woman after the Original Sin... "*Cursed is the ground because of you: in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; (...) by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread*". This is the result of Original Sin.

The lasting effect of Original Sin is selfishness. It is easy to be selfish. One form of selfishness is laziness. In the face of labor there is the temptation and disposition for laziness. This prevents the human person from participating in God's creative activity. Idle minds and hands are the devil's playground! This goes beyond the work-a-day world of the job. It has everything to do with all the activities of our daily lives.

Consider all the various activities we participate in during the day. Many do not notice these various activities as a form of labor. Living a life of faith and virtue takes effort: in a word it takes work. Growing in Virtue is a good and holy thing. Virtue is sharing in the goodness of God. It takes effort to live a virtuous life as opposed to vice. Vice is selfish and easy.

Take the important covenant relationship of marriage and family life; this requires work for it to blossom in goodness and virtue. Laziness and sinful vices destroy all loving relationships most especially a marriage relationship. Family life takes effort; it is hard work. Being a parent is hard work. Laziness is devastating for marriage and family life.

Marriage and family life are a vocation: a calling from God. This calling is in reality an invitation to share in the creative life-giving activity of God in the most explicit way. This vocation is labor intensive since it is a holy vocation in a sinful world. Selfishness along with the laziness that goes with it destroys all relationships that are holy, rendering them impossible for manifesting the goodness of God. Before the Original Sin the relationship between Adam and Eve revealed the glory of God. At the creation of the man and woman, they received an invitation to share in the creative activity of God: "*Be fruitful and multiply*". This was an explicit invitation to share in the life-giving creative activity of God. After the "Fall", this invitation became very

difficult. Thus "*God said to the woman, 'I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children'...*" This is not the job of the work-a-day world. It is the labor that goes beyond the job. This is a vocation; a way of life. And since it is a sharing in God's continuing creative activity it is elevated to the realm of holiness.

In a manner of speaking, our whole life is a participation in the creative activity of God. We hear in the Acts of the Apostles where St. Paul speaks to the men of Athens about the one true God... "*For in him we live and move and have our being...*" Our whole life is lived in God. Yet because our world and our lives are touched by sin, we do not always appreciate this reality. We are blinded by sin as we recalled in the hymn "Amazing Grace". We are blinded to the reality of God's loving presence in our daily work; that our labors are an invitation in the continuing creative activity of God in the world.

The creative activity of God is present in all creation. But it is only the human being who is capable of noticing and rejoicing in it. All the elements of creation are unaware of the presence of God. All the plants and animals are unaware of the creative activity of God even when they are the "beneficiaries" of God's creative goodness. It is only the human person who is capable of perceiving and celebrating God's creative goodness. It is only the human person who when perceiving it is capable of consciously participating in this creative activity. The human person desires goodness and is capable, with the grace of God to create goodness: better yet *co-create* goodness since all good comes from God.

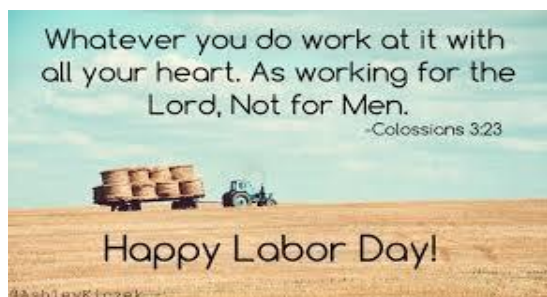
This gives us an insight into the Ten Commandments. The commandments are God's gift to his people to assist them in living as His people in this world. They are for rational creatures (humans) who are to orient their lives to greater goodness by directing them away from evil actions that destroy goodness. Jesus Christ points us to the Spirit of the Law of God as the Spirit of Love. Love in practice brings forth the goodness of God. Love is the most difficult work we will ever do because love is of God. God is Love. The Evil One resists this presence of God. The Evil One seeks to destroy all love. All the saints of the Church would testify that growth in holiness is always a labor of Love. It's an invitation to live in God.

In a secular society, the celebration of labor as on May 1<sup>st</sup> (May Day) in Communist countries is a celebration of *the State*. The State is celebrated with all their tokens of power. The place for human beings in the State is in labor. All human beings are laborers and are considered to be cogs in the machinery of the state. Human beings find purpose and meaning in living their lives in service to the State. Human beings have value because they contribute to the State. Everybody performs their labor in creating the perfect State: Utopia. The Laborer only has value when contributing to the State. No contribution equals no value. By strictly worldly standards this may sound like common sense. However, this is very derogatory and insulting to humanity. This system is one dimensional: human beings have no value without work. This does not respect that the human person as created by God in His *Image and Likeness*. It does not respect the true dignity of the human person who has a higher calling: to ultimately share in the Life of God: The Kingdom of Heaven. This higher calling goes beyond the worldly ideal of Utopia. It points beyond this worldly existence. Long story short, Utopia is impossible to achieve just as a socialist agenda will always fail.

However, with the presence of the Judeo-Christian tradition, the world is a better place because we manifest the presence of God in the world. We call it the Kingdom of God here and now. Not perfect yet but moving in the right direction.

We do this by living and moving in the grace of God today. We are invited to make the present the goodness of God in the world today. We do so by the grace of God. It is all God's doing and we share in his ongoing creative activity. This is the most important labor. It is a labor of love. It builds the Kingdom of God.

Have a great week  
Father Ralko



**This week we pray Week III of the Liturgy of the hours.**

*We pray for those who have died recently:  
Laverne Pickrell*

## Church Support

August 30, 2020	
OFFERTORY	\$6,092.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$2,203.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly deficit	\$(4,657.00)

**May God bless you for supporting your parish!**



**The Parish Office  
will be closed  
Monday, September 7th  
for the  
Labor Day Holiday.**

### Sunday School News!

Sunday School classes will **begin Sunday, September 20 at 9:15 a.m.** Please note that due to Covid-19 restrictions Sunday School classes will **now be held in the Parish Office Building.** We are asking for advance registration to assist in planning and for classroom assignments as some rooms are bigger than others and we want to make the best use of the space we have available. **Please register as soon as possible.** Registration forms can be found online at [stnickparish.org](http://stnickparish.org) and in the parish office. For more information please contact Suzanne and Kevin Dooley (740) 319-2170.

“You, son of man, I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel...” - EZEKIEL 33:7



The virtue of Justice is defined by the Catechism as the moral virtue where one gives God and neighbor their due. For our purposes here we will concentrate on our neighbor. To exercise the virtue of Justice with our neighbor we must honor

and respect a man's good name, i.e. no gossip, protect his reputation, be fair in business dealings and always pay a fair wage, this includes giving a decent tip to the pizza delivery person and restaurant servers. Justice (impartiality, fairness, reasonableness, etc.) is **not** “revenge” (retaliation, payback, vengeance). Unfortunately, today we often hear “justice” used in a way that sounds like “revenge”. This week lets pay attention to the true meaning of justice and walk and talk in a way that truly reflects true virtue of justice.

Remember virtuous living takes work. Do not give up. If you fall, run to the confessional to obtain forgiveness and the gift of God's grace so you can begin again.

### **4th Annual Rick “Paps” Lee Memorial Golf Outing “Gives Back”**

**Proceeds this year will benefit the  
Landon Jade Thomas Memorial Scholarship Fund  
for Bishop Rosecrans High School**

Saturday, Sept. 19 at Jaycees Golf Club- 8:00 a.m. shotgun start (4 person scramble). \$60/person: includes lunch and 2 drink tickets. Contact Chad Lee at (614) 397-4105 or [cdlee12@icloud.com](mailto:cdlee12@icloud.com) for more information or to register.

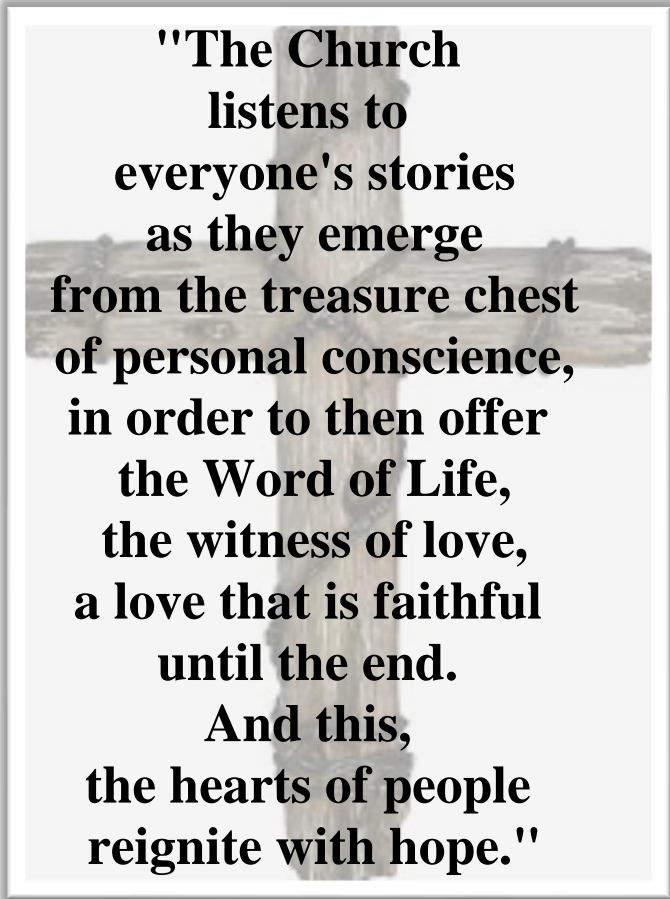


### Men of the East

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 303 E High St., Mt. Vernon, will host the Men of the East for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on Thursday, September 10th starting at 7:00 p.m. in the church. All men of the twelve-parish consortium are invited to attend. Fr. Olvera will offer an extended homily. All current state and diocese COVID-19 protections will be observed. Men of The East is a new Catholic Men's Laity Ministry comprised of all Catholic men 18 years and older who are registered at one of the twelve parishes in Knox, Licking and Muskingum Counties. Men of The East exist to support, strengthen, and help maximize the spiritual growth of men of the Catholic Church. Men of The East is a part of the larger Catholic Men's Laity Ministry for the Columbus Ohio Diocese.

### Reflect

- How does my ability or inability to listen well affect my relationships (with God, family, friends, etc.)?
- In what ways am I good at listening and in what ways can I improve?
- How can truly listening to God and others bring hope?



**"The Church  
listens to  
everyone's stories  
as they emerge  
from the treasure chest  
of personal conscience,  
in order to then offer  
the Word of Life,  
the witness of love,  
a love that is faithful  
until the end.  
And this,  
the hearts of people  
reignite with hope."**

Pope Francis,  
General Audience,  
May 24, 2017

**ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS**

St. Nicholas Church has a convenient way to make your regular offerings. With our electronic giving program, you can easily set up a recurring giving schedule. It provides a much-needed consistency for our church. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. Even when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, our church will continue to receive your contributions on an uninterrupted basis. To become an electronic giver, call or visit the church office or our website: [stnickparish.org](http://stnickparish.org).

**BISHOP ROSECRANS HIGH SCHOOL/  
BISHOP FENWICK SCHOOL SCRIP PROGRAM**

Gift cards in our SCRIP program at Bishop Rosecrans High School and Bishop Fenwick Schools can still be purchased. As of now, any special SCRIP orders will be ordered on Monday's. SCRIP is still being sold from inventory. If you would like to purchase SCRIP at any time or need information about our program, please email Julie Wagner or call the school office at (740) 452-7504. A time will be arranged for the gift cards to be picked up.

***What's Happening in Our Parish***

**MONDAY, September 7, Labor Day**

8:00 a.m., Mass: Daniel J. Paul, Church

**TUESDAY, September 8, The Nativity of The Blessed Virgin Mary**

8:00 a.m., Mass: Joe & Sandi Nader, 47<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary, Church

**WEDNESDAY, September 9, St. Peter Claver**

9:00 a.m., Mass: Robert Fargus, Church

**THURSDAY, September 10**

8:00 a.m., Mass: Pastor's intention, Church

**FRIDAY, September 11, Patriot Day**

8:00 a.m., Mass: Dick Dooley, Wedding Anniversary, Church

***24th Sunday of Ordinary Time***

**SATURDAY, September 12, The Most Holy Name of Mary**

4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church

5:15 p.m., Mass: Anna Mary Glaub, birthday, Church

**SUNDAY, September 13**

8:15 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church

10:45 a.m., Mass: Mary Lou Roessler, Ellen Roessler, Church

***Readings for Week of September 7***

Mon. . . . .	1 Cor 5:1-8	Lk 6:6-11
Tues. . . . .	Mi 5:4a	Mt 1:1:1-16, 18-23
Wed . . . . .	1 Cor 7:25-31	Lk 6:20-26
Thurs. . . . .	1 Cor 8:1b-7, 11-13	Lk 6:27-38
Fri. . . . .	1 Cor 9:16-19, 22b-27	Lk 6:39-42
Sat. . . . .	1 Cor 10:14- 22	Lk 6:43-49
Sun . . . . .	Sir 27:30-28:7	Mt 18:21-35

***Our thoughts and prayers remain with those serving our country currently and with their loved ones at home. We pray for a safe homecoming and that the world may one day be at peace.***

**PLEASE REMEMBER ST. NICHOLAS PARISH IN YOUR WILL. CALL THE PARISH OFFICE AT 453-0597 FOR MORE DETAILS.**

***St. Nicholas Parish Office Chapel is open to pray the Rosary on Monday at 2:00 p.m. for anyone who would like to participate.***