

25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

From the Pastor's Desk

We have received correspondence for the Diocese of Columbus with the request for a Special collection for relief in the wake of Hurricane Laura (and looking to the very near future the effects of Hurricane Sally) and the massive wildfires out west. With the unfortunate imposition of our own precautions with the current virus pandemic it has not been easy planning for a second collection at our masses with the unpredictable crowds. However, we will make an attempt for a second collection for the weekend of September 26-27. This gives us a week to be prepared with a second envelope for the special collection or for you to mail into the office. Although we face our own difficulties at this time the good people of St. Nicholas are very generous in assisting those people who find themselves in devastating situations. Catholic Charities USA is hard at work in their efforts in assisting those people who unfortunately find themselves in these devastated areas in our country as well as around the world.

We live in overwhelming times. As we find ourselves living under the current pandemic, we have the news of these natural disasters. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those who must deal with the aftermath of Laura and the expectation of Hurricane Sally: barely recovering from one there comes another with heavy rains to an already saturated gulf coast. As we continue to monitor the news from the south, we are also reminded of the ongoing wildfires out west. This present situation is proving to be the worst episode of forest fires. The loss of lives and property is astronomical. This is overwhelming.

We refer to these natural disasters in the category of "evil". We do so because they negatively impact human beings. Hurricanes, forest fires, volcanic eruptions, tornados, earthquakes etc. are natural occurrences. They are not due to human agency, unless the cause for a forest fire was by someone starting the fire. Nevertheless, we refer to them as evils because they affect us in a negative and life-threatening way. In reality they are neutral since they are the result of the natural effects of the laws of nature. There is no moral decision involved in their occurrence. Some would speculate that they are punishments from God to a sinful humanity: thus, giving them some reason for their occurrence. No, they are the results of the laws of nature. Such thinking only reveals a guilty conscience.

Along with all these natural phenomena we have also been exposed to more devastating activity. We have witnessed much turmoil around many protests and demonstrations. Protests in themselves are not a bad thing. However, behind the current protests we have witnessed the occurrence of rioting, destruction of property, violence toward others as well as the loss of life; intentional and unintentional. This past summer has been a moral nightmare. As opposed to a natural evil the latter is in the area of moral evil due to the fact of human agency; human choice.

There is no need to justify natural "evils" as it were. They are a part of the reality of this world and the laws of nature. However, when it comes to moral evil, there is always an attempt to justify the actions. This is the opposite for moral virtue which does not need justification. Virtue never needs to be justified: it is already good. Just the same, when there is a need to justify something it is a betrayal of the action, there is something questionable here that begs to be declared good. That which was done seeks to be declared "good" for it to be permissible. For something to be authentically good it must be measured by an objective standard of good. Subjective good is always questionable about its authenticity as good and its justification.

In further reflection when looking at the goodness or wrongness of actions we must look at the "fruits". We are reminded of the words from the gospels "*Thus you will know them*

by their fruits." (Mt 7:20). When the fruits are destruction, violence, injury and death we have to say it is evil. The actions are wicked. This has been one of the thoughts I had while reading stories and watching more recent news. I am especially saddened about the two sheriff deputies who we ambushed last weekend. They were in their vehicle as an assailant stealthily approached, drew his handgun and shot each deputy then made his escape. "By their fruits..." To further this sad story, as the deputies were at the hospital and in surgery a group gathered outside and shouted something to the effect (withholding the foul language) we hope you die! This is evil. It is raw wickedness. This is the world we are presently living in. We must call it what it is.

I find it ironic that there is a call for justice. "No justice, no peace." However, there will never be justice when an injustice is committed in the plea for justice. It's contradictory. It cancels itself out. It is irrational. This basic principle applies evil/sin is irrational. Evil and sin are deadly and self-destructive. That's irrational.

There is only one source for justice. Justice is only found when we place ourselves in the presence of God. God alone justifies. We will only find justice when we are *right with God*. God alone is the absolute Good. God is the only measure or standard for what is authentically good. *To be justified is to be right with God*. If we are painfully not right with God, we will look elsewhere to find what we want. We will look to others or self. The worst is self-justification.

In a godless society, which is part of the present socialist agenda, the measure of justice becomes relative, subjective and thus unstable and ever changing. If there is no objective, universal measure for justice, true justice will never become a reality. Therefore, the words of the Great Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky ring true: "*If there is not God, everything is permissible.*" Without God there is no true good. Without God evil is permissible. Without God there is only death. Without God there is no justification.

The question arises: Who is the just one? We read in the Book of Psalms, in particular chapter one, the just man is the one who loves and lives the law of God. We expand this in our Christian faith to say the Just One is the one who loves and lives the Word of God: Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Word of God in the flesh. He is our perfect example of the Just One. As his disciples we see this as our Love and desire to follow Jesus Christ. As his disciples we also pray for justice. Justice is found when people find Christ. In our pursuit for justice we are willing to endure injustice not to commit injustices. We imitate Jesus who suffered and died to bring justice as he endured the greatest injustice. Jesus did not demand justice for himself.

We can get lost in all the turmoil that surrounds us. It is overwhelming. Just the same we need to be attentive to the "Fruits" of moral behaviors. We are not to be tolerant of evil and wicked things. We are to be tolerant of people out of respect for the human dignity endowed by God for all people, but we are never to be tolerant of wicked behavior. God was tolerant of Adam and Eve and desired their salvation, but God was not tolerant of their sin: they were kicked out of the Garden! We pray for justice and that is to say we pray that all people will find God the source of justice. As we do this, we also need to endure injustices patiently and prayerfully. We can only do this when we love the Word of God and Live the Word of God. We find our strength in union with Christ. As Catholics we do this by living the Sacramental Life of the Church. Through the Sacramental Life we come to know, love and serve the Lord who justifies.

Have a blessed week.
Father Ralko

Note Well: We will be making a slight change in our weekday mass schedule. Because of the situation at St. Thomas Church they are unable to have the weekday celebration of the Eucharist in their activity center because it is being used for the Bishop Fenwick Preschool. Thus, it has been decided that weekday masses will now be offered here at St. Nicholas. Fr. Sullivan and I will alternate as celebrant and at times possibly concelebrate. The celebrants will use the mass intentions for their respective parishes. There is however one additional change to the weekday schedule. That change will be for Tuesday. **Tuesday morning mass will be at 9:00 a.m.** Masses on Monday, Thursday and Friday will be at 8:00 a.m. Masses on Tuesday and Wednesday will be at 9:00 a.m.

Along with these changes and as you may already be aware all funeral masses for the Catholic Community of Zanesville will be celebrated here at St. Nicholas. This will take some patience and cooperation. A good example of this coordination happened a week ago on a Thursday when we had two funeral masses at St. Nicholas: one for St. Thomas in the morning and one for St. Nicholas in the afternoon. Thanks for understanding.

Lastly, I plan on leaving this afternoon (Sunday) for a few days to spend with some of my siblings who I have not seen since my Godmother's funeral last January. If all goes well, I will be back Friday evening. Fr. Sullivan will have the morning masses this week. Thanks.

This week we pray Week I of the Liturgy of the hours.

Church Support

September 13, 2020, 2020	
OFFERTORY	\$5,348
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$1,459.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	<u>\$1,855.00</u>
Weekly surplus	\$(5,401.00)

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Mt. Olive Cemetery has a part time position available. Duties would include mowing, weed eating, helping to open and close graves, help pouring footers for headstones and snow removal. If interested, please call the Parish Office at 453-0597.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

The Parish Office needs someone to organize books in our library. If you are good at organization and have some time to spare call the office at 453-0597.



How many of us have said “God give me Patience”? What exactly are we asking for? There is a temptation to lose our tempers when we are asked to wait... wait in line, wait in traffic, wait for news, wait for someone to stop talking. In these situations, we need the virtue of Patience. The definition of “patience” is the ability to tolerate delays, suffering, etc. without getting upset or angry. This virtue is very important in this volatile world. The next time you are stuck in traffic, waiting in line or dealing with difficult individuals, try using that time as an opportunity for prayer. Ask God to give you the virtue of patience, then thank Him for the gift. Remember, virtues are spiritual muscles and it takes hard work to develop and strengthen those muscles. Do not give up! God is waiting for you with open arms. Run to Him, He will forgive you and give you the strength you need.... and the Patience!



Many people think they know what the Church teaches, but often what they have heard is rumor or restatement from someone who, though well intentioned, did not really know themselves. We are all on a journey but where are we headed? The RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) is a great opportunity to discern God's call and mission for our lives, and an opportunity to learn more about the Catholic faith. Persons who attend RCIA include current Catholics who desire to go deeper into their faith, spouses of Catholics who want to learn more about what the church teaches, and inquirers who are just curious; as well as those who have made that decision to join the church. Not everyone who participates in the RCIA program joins the church. Everyone makes their own decision. All are welcome! **CLASSES WILL START SOON!** If you would like to join us, please call the office (740) 453-0597, ext. 14.

Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition program for men and women who experienced the trauma of being raised in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional home. It is a safe place to learn how alcoholism and other family dysfunction affected the past, how it influences the present, and how to heal the wounds for a better future. Meetings will be held in the Saint Nicholas Church Social Hall (Church Basement) Wednesdays, beginning October 14th, at 7:00 p.m. Please use the Silliman Street door. Meetings are expected to last no more than one hour, and masks are required. Contact James Sullivan for more Information at (740) 670 –2959.

October, The month of Our Blessed Mother, Mary

In honor of Our Lady of The Rosary, we will pray the Rosary before the weekend Masses. Those interested in leading the Rosary before the 5:15 p.m. Saturday Mass or the Sunday 8:15 a.m. or 10:45 a.m. Mass should contact the parish office.

25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Heavenly father,
 I am your humble servant,
 I come before you today
 in need of hope. I need hope for a calm
 and joyful future. I need hope for love
 and kindness.
 I pray for peace and
 safety.
 Some say that the sky is
 at its darkest just
 before the light.
 I pray that this is true,
 for today seems
 stormy and dim.
 I need your light, Lord,
 in every way.
 I pray to be filled
 with your light.
 Help me to walk in your
 light and live my life in
 faith and service.
 In your name I pray,
 Amen. –
 LOYOLA PRESS, 2020

SEVEN SORROWS OF MARY – MONTHLY DEVOTION FOR SEPTEMBER

A depiction of the Seven Sorrows of Mary can be found in the back of the Church with 6 to the left of the cry room and one above the candles to the right of the cry room. The



Seven Sorrows are: The Prophecy of Simeon, The Flight into Egypt, The Loss of Jesus for three days, The Meeting of our Sorrowful Mother and Jesus on the road to Calvary, Jesus' Death on the Cross and Mary Receiving the Body of Jesus as He is removed from the cross (also known as the Pieta). The Seven Sorrows of Mary may be prayed individually or in a group. Booklets and devotionals are available in the back of the Church for those interested in this Devotion. Those interested in the praying the devotional as a group should contact the parish office. To talk to kids about the Seven Sorrows go to: <https://teachingcatholickids.com/the-seven-sorrows-of-mary-monthly-devotion-for-september/>

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.

What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, September 21, St. Matthew, apostle
 8:00 a.m., Mass: Albert Crock, Church

TUESDAY, September 22
 9:00 a.m., Mass: Mr. & Mrs. Bill Snyder, Church

WEDNESDAY, September 23, St. Pius of Pietreicina
 9:00 a.m., School Mass: Nancy Davis, birthday, Church

THURSDAY, September 24
 8:00 a.m., Mass: Esperanza Tan, birthday, Church

FRIDAY, September 25
 8:00 a.m., Mass: Audrey Ralko, Church

26th Sunday of Ordinary Time

SATURDAY, September 26, SS. Cosmas and Damian
 4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church
 5:15 p.m., Mass: Charles E. Rock, birthday, Church

SUNDAY, September 27
 8:15 a.m., Mass: Ann Arnold, Church
 10:45 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church

Readings for Week of September 21

Mon.	Eph 4:1-7, 11-13	Mt 9:9-13
Tues.	Prv 21:1-6, 10-13	Lk 8:19-21
Wed	Prv 30:5-9	Lk 9:1-6
Thurs.	Eccl 1:2-11	Lk 9:7-9
Fri.	Eccl 3:1-11	Lk 9:18-22
Sat.	Eccl 11:9-12:8	Lk 9:43b-45
Sun	Ez 18:25-28	Mt 21:28-32

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.