

26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

From the Pastor's Desk

Last week I wrote a reflection on Justice. Only God is the source of authentic objective justice. We may have ideas of what justice is and what it should look like. However, our own ideas left to themselves will always fall short if they are not rooted in the Word of God. Last Sunday's Gospel was a wonderful insight into this. It is worth rereading. As was noted, the workers hired earlier in the day had a reasonable sense of fairness about their pay. However, at the end of the day they had other ideas; they should be paid more than the ones who were hired with only an hour's worth of work. They may have had a legitimate point, and I am sure they were good workers and all. But they were basing their sense of justice only from their personal perspective. There was no injustice here. Yet no matter what, personal perspectives will always be limited because we have egos and we are imperfect limited persons with minds that match.

Nevertheless, my reflections emphasized the need for an objective standard for Justice. Therefore, we have the Constitution and Bill of Rights with a Judicial Branch of government to help discern justice according to that higher, objective standard. When people want to eliminate the Constitution and Bill of Rights, they want to eliminate the objective standard for discernment. Without that standard, things become subjective and relative. In the pursuit of wanting to do whatever I want to do; I do not want some standard telling me what I cannot do or that it is illegal or immoral! I would rather banish the standard so that I can do what I want.

The same holds true for the Judeo-Christian tradition. People would rather eliminate the Ten Commandments so that they are free to do as they please without some old commandments telling them what they cannot, or it is illegal or sinful. In fact, the only ones who want to eliminate the commandments are the ones who want to break them: i.e. the most popular one is "Thou shall not commit adultery". That pesky commandment is often involved directly or indirectly in the immoral formula for the downfall and corrosive activities for so many wicked and sinful activities. It is the most disregarded commandment in the list of ten.

Back to my point, people are crying out for justice. We hear it all the time. We hear the cry for "economic justice", "social justice," and even "reproductive justice". (There is the sixth commandment again!) What do these cries for various justices mean? Asking individuals about these justices there are no clear answers. There are all kinds of thoughts and opinions. These ideas may sound good and thoughtful; but they are usually empty. They should mean something ultimately important; but it is not clear. So...

I must return to a point I made last Sunday in this column. We will only find justice in God. Repeating from last Sunday...

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.

Continuing; *In a godless society, which is part of the present socialist agenda, the measure of justice becomes subjective, relative, 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 no 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.

A response to the question about "social justice" is that we must place the social issues before God. God needs to be involved in this important issue since all are created in the image and likeness of God. It cannot be based on personal preferences or opinions or even some manifesto. The issues must be put in the presence of God who created all humanity. God is the creator of all humanity and therefore God must have had a plan for humanity. Justice is found in knowing God and His will for us. But unfortunately, God is denied and not welcomed. So, the results will always be limited, imperfect and destructive.

When it comes to "economic justice" we must put this before God. Placing the worth of a person based on economics is unjust. This is the lens of a materialistic society. The idea of equal pay with equal outcomes is not realistic. Not all work is the same and not all efforts are the same as well. Talents vary from person to person. The motivation to work is completely different from person to person. There are too many variables involved. We are not defined by our work or economic status for that matter. I would suggest that last Sunday's Gospel from St. Matthew is a particularly good source for further reflection. As painful as it may seem, we must humbly accept the fact that our sense of justice is limited and tainted with our own self-interests and worldly standards. Counting our blessings and not making comparisons with others is a good start. This only gives us a false sense of superiority or inferiority.

The cry for "reproductive justice" is a complex mix of many issues. We definitely need to be in God's presence about this one. The whole reproductive issue is all about God who is the source of all life and reproduction is about human life. We live in a world that does not want God in on this discussion, yet God, the source of all life, has a definite plan for humanity when it comes to these life issues. Furthermore, this issue embraces so many more issues beyond mere reproduction. It is about abortion, cloning, genetic engineering, and so forth. It also embraces the end of life issues such as euthanasia, physician assisted suicide, and mercy killing because these deal with human life. Thrown into this category, since it deals with reproduction, are all the issues about human sexuality. God has a specific plan for human sexuality and the pro-creation of new life. That plan is an invitation to share in God's love and creative activity. The "reproductive justice" cry is packed with so many extras that deal with human sexuality or the cry for "sexual justice". All of these are neatly packed into the vague grouping of "reproductive justice". Calling for justice in this area seeks justification from any source other than God, the creator of all life. In seeking true justice, one must prayerfully turn to God who is Creator and has a plan for His creation. That plan is expressed as the meaning of life... To know, love and serve God in this world that we may be happy with God in heaven. That is the plan. In this plan we will find truth and justice.

In our desire for justice, which is genuine and true, we must turn to God. It is only when we are right with God that we will be justified and live justice. All genuine justice comes from God. All other means for seeking justice for this world alone are imperfect and flawed. True and lasting justice will not be served. As Christians we hear the words of St. Peter who says: "*What we await are a new heaven and a new earth where, according to his promise, the justice of God will reside. So, beloved, while waiting for this, make every effort to be found without stain or defilement, and at peace in his sight. Consider that our Lord's patience is directed toward salvation.*" (2 Peter 3: 13-15) And so in our search for justice we are really searching for God. When we pray

for justice, we pray that people who seek justice will in fact find God. When we want to see the world set right, we must be right with God.

We do this with respect for all people. All people have an inviolable dignity given to them by God. Since they have their dignity from God, we pray that they will also find their justification in God who gave them their dignity. God is very much a part of all this. Then again if God is not welcomed true justice and justification does not exist. We will set ourselves up for disaster. It follows; where there is no true justice ultimately the respect due toward all human beings will disappear. It is all interrelated.

We are to respect all human lives. As I said last Sunday tolerance is about human beings. We do not have to tolerate human behaviors that are immoral, sinful, and wicked. In fact, we are to be intolerant of immoral sinful behaviors. In the light of this I came across a wonderful statement from a Dominican Theologian. *“The Church is intolerant in principle because She believes; She is tolerant in practice because She loves. The enemies of the Church are tolerant in principle, because they do not believe, and intolerant in practice, because they do not love.”* Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP.

We live in difficult times. These times demand our thoughtful reflections: most especially in prayer before the presence of God. As Christians we pray the Lord’s Prayer often. In this commonly shared prayer, we say the words *“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* To seek the will of God must always be the guiding focus of our lives. It is in knowing and doing the will of God that makes us right with God: it justifies. This is the meaning of life. We come to know the will of God in His Word. We find the will of God in the heart Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the perfect revelation of God and he is truly the Just One. We strive to be close to Jesus. We must come to know him, love him, and serve him as his followers. This is the path where we will find true justice and the Kingdom of God.

Have a great week
Father Ralko

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

Church Support

September 20, 2020, 2020	
OFFERTORY	\$13,408.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$9,519.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly surplus	\$2,659.00

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.

Men of the East

St. Mary’s Mattingly Settlement will host the Men of the East for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on Thursday, October 8 starting at 7:00 p.m. in the church. All men of the twelve-parish consortium are invited to attend. 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.

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.

ROSARY RALLY 2020

Come and join us for the celebration of “Our Lady of Fatima’s apparitions” to be held **Sunday Oct. 11** from 1:30p.m.-3:30 p.m. in front of the Muskingum County Courthouse esplanade. Please be there between 1:00-1:30. Bring your rosaries and a chair. For further information, please contact: Patty Schmutz at 452-3369, Carol Fluharty at 704-6477 or Margaret Kronenbitter at 221-0813.



“The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name” (Luke 1:49) Mary is expressing her **Gratitude** for God’s goodness. The virtue of “Gratitude” is defined as having a thankful disposition of mind and heart. Thanking God for the

goodness of life and your many blessings is essential to strengthening this virtue and key to living a happier life. One year for Lent I wrote a thank you note to each person who expressed some kindness toward me. I thought it might be one note per day, what I discovered was that there was so much kindness in my life (that I had never noticed before) that I couldn’t keep up. The next time someone holds a door for you, prepares your dinner or helps you in any way remember to say, “thank you”. Don’t forget to thank God for your many blessings, too. The “attitude of gratitude” is guaranteed to change your life for the better!

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. 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 something prevents 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.

“Do nothing out of selfishness; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves...” Philippians 2:3

26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



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.

Jubilee of Anniversaries Celebrates Marriages with Mass on October 25, 2020 -- Couples celebrating their 25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th, 55th, 60th (and every year thereafter) anniversaries in 2020 are invited to the annual Jubilee of Anniversaries in honor of their marriages! Bishop Robert Brennan will celebrate Mass at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 25, at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Westerville. The Jubilee Mass will also be livestreamed for couples who prefer to attend virtually. All registered couples, whether attending or not, will receive a personalized certificate. Couples who R.S.V.P. by Wednesday, October 14, will be included in the Mass worship aid and The Catholic Times. Visit columbuscatholic.org/marriage-enrichment.



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?

What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, September 28, St. Wenceslaus
8:00 a.m., Mass: Tony Maniaci, birthday, Church

TUESDAY, September 29, SS. Michael and Gabriel
9:00 a.m., Mass: Ned Englehart, Church

WEDNESDAY, September 30, St. Jerome
9:00 a.m., School Mass: Mike Andrews, Church

THURSDAY, October 1, Thérèse of the Child Jesus
8:00 a.m., Mass: Judith Batross Goodrich, Church

FRIDAY, October 2, The Holy Guardian Angels
8:00 a.m., Mass: Robert Wahl, Church

27th Sunday of Ordinary Time

SATURDAY, October 3
4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church
5:15 p.m., Mass: Bertha Haren, Church

SUNDAY, October 4
8:15 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church
10:45 a.m., Mass: Shirley Knox, birthday, Irene Dillon, Church

Readings for Week of September 28

Mon.	Jb 1:6-22	Lk 9:46-50
Tues.	Dn 7:9-10, 13-14	Jn 1:47-51
Wed	Jb 9:1-12, 14-16	Lk 9:57-62
Thurs.	Jb 19:21-27	Lk 10:1-12
Fri.	Jb 38:1, 12-21; 40:3-5	Ex 23:20-23
Sat.	Jb 42:1-3, 5-6, 12-17	Lk 10:17-24
Sun	Is 5:1-7	Mt 21:33-43

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.