



ST. LUKE'S ORDINARIATE PARISH ✠ WASHINGTON DC

The Epistle

PRAYING FOR THE DEAD: A NEGLECTED WORK OF MERCY

While it is always good to offer prayers for the good of the departed, we are especially conscious of this obligation during the month of November. During November, we celebrate two feasts devoted to remembering the faithful departed. The first is the Solemnity of All Saints, November 1, which is a Holyday of Obligation. Already in heaven, the saints honored this day have no need for our prayers.

On November 2, we celebrate All Souls Day, and it is for these souls—the faithful departed still in Purgatory—that we pray during the month of November. The theological basis for All Souls Day (and indeed for praying for the dead), as the New

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Advent Catholic Encyclopedia explains, is the doctrine of Purgatory—if there were no Purgatory, no intermediate state between heaven and earth, there would be no need to pray for the dead. It is only because of Purgatory that we can assist the dead with our prayers.

Many St. Luke's parishioners, when they were still Episcopalians, may have believed in an intermediate state of purification between death and heaven (though in deference to the Thirty-Nine Articles, we likely would not have called it Purgatory) and thus may have offered prayers for the dead. But most Protestants do not do this (or if they do it is part of private prayer rather than public liturgy). Martin Luther taught that people went to heaven or hell and that was that, thus eliminating any rationale for prayers for the dead. Luther's German translation of the Bible omitted books of the canon that refer to prayers for the dead.



But there is a scriptural basis for praying for the dead. In the Old Testament, 2 Maccabees clearly states, “It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.” The Church's early belief in the efficacy of prayers for the dead is attested to in various ancient liturgies, inscriptions in the catacombs, and in early Christian literature that tells of commemorating the anniversaries of deaths with celebrations of the Mass.

Taken together, All Saints and All Souls remind us that we are members of the Communion of Saints, which is made up of the saints already in bliss (Church Triumphant), the souls still in Purgatory (the Church Suffering), and those of us still on earth (Church Militant). We believe that our prayers can relieve the sufferings of those in Purgatory. It is an important duty to pray for them.

A rather colorful column in the U.K. Catholic Herald offered this perspective on why, all too often, modern Catholics neglect to pray for the dead. “I don't know how many times I have heard priests confidently announce at a funeral Mass that the person who was stiffened in rigor mortis a couple of days beforehand is now relaxing into God's presence in heaven,” wrote Father G. Casey, an Irish Jesuit. “You'd almost think that the priest had clearly identified the deceased's location with the help of Google Maps.”

But they need our prayers. “We can make a huge difference to the souls in purgatory,” wrote Father Casey, “and we should do our best to help them, because

they cannot help themselves. Their earthly lives are over and so they cannot of themselves increase in virtue. But we can offer them the merits of our good words and deeds, of our prayers and acts of love, of our small sacrifices and, especially, of the biggest and best sacrifice of all, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We can offer this infinite sacrifice of Jesus to the Father on their behalf.”

And we might want prayers ourselves someday. “Without wanting to sound selfish about it,” Father Casey concludes, “we can be assured that they will pray for us in return. It is never too soon to pray for the souls in purgatory, because, before we know it, it will be too late.”

If you have not filled out the names of those for whom you request Father Vidal to pray during November, it is not too late.

EVENING PRAYER AT THE ABBEY: NOVEMBER 4TH AT 4 PM

Once a month, on Saturday afternoons during the school year, a group of former Anglicans now Catholic gather at St. Anselm’s Abbey Chapel to say together the resonant words of the service of Evening Prayer. Four laymen from St. Luke’s take it in turn to lead the congregation through the prayers, while a schola guides the service in the canticles and appointed psalms.

We gather on one Saturday a month during the school year in the chapel of St. Anselm’s Abbey [4501 South Dakota Avenue NE] to offer to God our prayers and thanksgiving using the familiar words formed in us by the Book of Common Prayer.

If you haven’t come before, mark your calendar to join us in singing hymns, chanting psalms, and meditating on the Scriptures. And linger afterwards for coffee hour in the Abbey’s Fort Augustus Room.

INSTALLATION OF OUR NEW PASTOR

On November 12 we begin an exciting new chapter in the life of St. Luke's at Immaculate Conception with the installation of Father John Vidal as our pastor. Father John becomes St. Luke's second pastor since the parish's historic entry into the Catholic Church in October 2011 under provisions of then-Pope Benedict XVI's apostolic constitution *Anglican coetibus*. It will be a festive occasion with the Very Reverend Timothy Perkins, Vicar General and Director of Clergy Personnel of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, presiding. The Mass will be followed by a potluck lunch next door at the school. Although most of us already have had a chance to chat with Father John, it will be nice to welcome Father John and Helene

Vidal officially and to meet our Vicar General. Father John is a former Episcopal priest who was ordained to the Catholic priesthood in 2012. He has served at Mount Calvary, an Ordinariate parish, in Baltimore and comes to St. Luke's from Corpus Christi, Texas, where he was priest in charge of St. Anselm of Canterbury Ordinariate Community and a Navy chaplain.

We urge parishioners to make a special effort to be present and, if possible, to bring a dish for the potluck lunch. Please contact La-Verne Williams [voisy@aol.com] to let her know what you will be bringing.

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF MINISTRY



Father Arthur Woolley, a former rector of St. Luke's back when we were an Episcopal parish in Bladensburg MD, celebrates the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the Episcopal priesthood November 25th. The service will take place at 11 am at The Church of the Ascension, a historic stone church, at 13941 Braddock Road in Centreville VA. A reception will be held immediately afterwards. Father Woolley is beloved by many St. Luke's old timers and would love to see them at this special celebration. He is now a priest in the Anglican Catholic Church.



Wednesday, November 1st: SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS [holyday of obligation]; Mass at 8:30am

Saturday, November 4th: Evening Prayer at the Abbey

Sunday, November 12th: Installation Mass of Fr. John Vidal as Pastor of St. Luke's; Very Rev. Timothy Perkins presiding; 8:30am

THE DEACON-CANDIDATE'S DESK

by Mark F. Arbeen

My brothers and sisters,

Last month, I asked each of you to look at yourselves, and at your life with St. Luke's. I asked that you prayerfully consider a ministry that you would like to see started, and to come up with ideas and plans to help spread the Good News of God in Christ. This month I continue that thought, but through the lens of Church teaching.

The Second Vatican Council taught that a Deacon is one "upon whom hands are imposed not unto the priesthood, but unto a ministry of service."



For, strengthened by sacramental grace they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service of the liturgy, of the Gospel and of works of charity. It pertains to the office of a deacon, in so far as it may be assigned to him by the competent authority, to administer Baptism solemnly, to be custodian and distributor of the Eucharist, in the name of the Church, to assist at and to bless marriages, to bring Viaticum to the dying, to read the sacred scripture to the faithful, to instruct and exhort the people, to preside over the worship and the prayer of the faithful, to administer sacramentals, and to officiate at funeral and burial services. Dedicated to works of charity and functions of administration, deacons should recall the admonition of St Polycarp: "Let them be merciful, and zealous, and let them walk according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all."

(Dogmatic Constitution of the Church *Lumen Gentium* 29)

In other words, with the grace of Holy Orders, the Deacon is to lift up, in prayer and in service, the people of God, and guide them into service of their fellow man.

As the Priest is ordained to stand in *persona Christi capitis* (as Christ the Head) and offer the Sacrifice, the Deacon is the stand in *persona Christi servus* (as Christ the Servant) and offer himself as the servant of the people.

As I enter the last four months of formation, and prepare to make myself your servant, I want to start a dialogue with you. This dialogue is to find out exactly what you feel called to do. How will you help St. Luke's spread the Gospel? How will you fulfill your duty to "make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself "according to the measure of Christ's bestowal"? (*Lumen Gentium* 33) And, how can I help you achieve your goals and aspirations?

As the Council taught, "the laity have the right, as do all Christians, to receive in abundance from their spiritual shepherds the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the assistance of the word of God and of the sacraments. They should openly reveal to them their needs and desires with that freedom and confidence which is fitting for children of God and brothers in Christ. They are, by reason of the knowledge, competence or outstanding ability which they may enjoy, permitted and sometimes even obliged to express their opinion on those things which concern the good of the Church." (*Lumen Gentium* 37)

Now is the time for us to start this dialogue. Not for any personal gain or glory, but so we can grow in faith, hope, and charity to each other and to our fellow man.

Oremus Pro Invicem

Saint Luke's at IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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St. Luke's at Immaculate Conception is a parish of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter, which was established on January 1, 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI in response to repeated requests by Anglicans seeking to become Catholic. Ordinariate parishes are fully Catholic while retaining elements of their Anglican heritage and traditions, including liturgical traditions.

**THE PERSONAL ORDINARIATE
OF THE CHAIR OF SAINT PETER**

That we all may be one

As we come into November, our society is largely focused on Halloween, and the Church is looking to the Solemnity of All Saints on November 1 and the commemoration of the faithful departed on November 2. Later in the month we will start to look toward Advent and Christmas. It is therefore easy to forget to reflect on the Solemnity of Christ the King on the last Sunday of the liturgical year. This year it falls on November 26, the latest possible date.

Historically, the Solemnity of Christ the King was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925. He connected the increasing denial of Christ as king to the rise of secularism throughout much of Europe. At the time many Christians (including Catholics) began to doubt Christ's authority and existence, as well as the Church's power to continue Christ's authority. Just as the feast of Corpus Christi was instituted at a point when devotion to the Eucharist was at a low point, the Feast of Christ the King was instituted during a time when respect for Christ and the Church was waning, when the feast was needed most.

Pius XI hoped the institution of the feast would have various effects, namely,

1. That nations would see that the Church has the right to freedom, and immunity from the state
2. That leaders and nations would see that they are bound to give respect to Christ.
3. That the faithful would gain strength and courage from the celebration of the feast, as we are reminded that Christ must reign in our hearts, minds, wills, and bodies.

This same distrust of authority has resurfaced today, and I would argue that the problem has gotten worse. Not only has our society developed a strong distrust for authority, but instead has embraced an ever-increasing extreme attitude of Individualism, namely that it is only an individual's authority that

has any validity. As a result, the teachings of the Church are rejected as obsolete, naïve, and— in many instances—even bigoted and hateful. Because of this, any moral leadership that the Church may have on society and our government is rejected as a breach of the so-called separation of Church and State.

In light of this, it is important for us to remember that our role as Catholic Christians is not to be a people driven by the political arguments and activities of the day, but rather to be a Eucharistic people—praying, reading Scripture, doing acts of penance, and aiding our brethren while attempting to live in peace and harmony with others. Only when we live out this role can the Kingship of Christ be manifest in the world and only then will the angelic powers be released to effect the necessary changes in our society and government.

As we look forward into our future, I invite all of us at St. Luke's to take this feast seriously and indeed allow Christ to reign in our hearts, minds, wills, and bodies so that we effectively proclaim his Kingship not only in our lives but in the world around us.

Our Lady of Walsingham, Pray for us.

Father John