



MISSION PEACE & JUSTICE

MPJ Monthly Newsletter "Hope in Action"

Volume 2, Issue 5

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MEET THE TEAM

Dear SJS Community,

I hope you all have a very blessed beginning of the year of the Lord 2020. A new year means for us new MPJ activities, through which we may support all those in need by our prayers and material help.

I am thrilled to announce that in this issue of our Newsletter, you may find a very thought-provoking



article entitled *The Penitential Act: Declaring our Love for God and Neighbor in the Sacred Liturgy* by Fr. Ryan Ruiz, our retreat master. The second, equally exciting article, was written by Joseph Cruz, the MPJ Representative for both of the Pre-Theology classes. Joseph reflected on the significance of the interreligious dialogue in building peace in the modern world. I encourage you to take a look!

Thank you all who generously donated your time and prayers during the MPJ Rosary for Life. I direct special thanks for promoting the culture of life in our

Community to Marko Rudela (cantor), Anthony Huynh (musician), Abundio Colazo Lopez (master of ceremonies), Dcn. Jonathan Nestico (sacristan) and all the MPJ Reps.



Since most of the dorm storages are now cleaned out, there is a lot of clothes to be donated. The MPJ will organize the additional Clothing Drive on February 3-7. The clothes will be picked up by the



representatives of the Ventura County Rescue Mission on Friday, February 7, at 1:30 PM. The MPJ Blood Drive will take place on March 23 (1:30 PM – 5:00 PM). Please, consider signing up once the

list is published!

The MPJ Reps will lead the voting in their respective classes in regards to the MPJ charitable activity that will take place during the season of Lent.

You are always in my prayers,

Kamil Ziolkowski

The Penitential Act: Declaring our Love for God and Neighbor in the Sacred Liturgy By Fr. Ryan Ruiz

In *Sacramentum Caritatis* Pope Benedict XVI highlighted an essential aspect with regard to the nature of the sacred liturgy. In this Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist, the pope emeritus reminded us that "union with Christ brought about by the Eucharist also brings a newness to our social relations [...]. Indeed, 'union with Christ is also union with all those to whom he gives himself. I cannot possess Christ just for myself; I can belong to him only in union with all those who have become, or who will become, his own'" (n. 89). This is what the Mass effects in our lives: 'union with Christ' and 'union with all those to whom he gives himself.' This is wonderfully captured in a number of elements of the Mass, though for the sake of brevity we will treat only one: the Penitential Act.



As we know, the Ordinary Form of the Mass provides us with three meaningful options for the confession of our sins in preparation for the sacred liturgy. The second option, often referred to as the Versicles, utilizes themes drawn from Psalm 51 – "Have mercy on me, O God" (v. 3), "Against you, you alone have I sinned" (v. 6) – and Psalm 85:8 – "Show us, Lord, your mercy; grant us your salvation." Although these themes naturally direct our minds to our need for repentance, the use of Psalm 85 also points to an anticipated encounter with 'the Other.' Prosper Guéranger notes that since Psalm 85 was King David's prayer for the coming Messiah, whenever this option is used for the Penitential Act we are reminded of the spirit of "the Season of Advent, when we are unceasingly asking for Him who is to come" (Prosper Guéranger, *On the Holy Mass* [Farnborough: St. Michael's Abbey Press, 2006] 14). Similarly the so-called "Tropes," the third option for the Penitential Act, not only direct our minds to God come in the flesh, but also to the salvific ministry by which He healed the contrite of heart, called sinners to repentance, and is now seated at the

right hand of the Father to intercede for us. Both of these options for the Penitential Act situate us before the merciful hand of Christ, who calls all men to reconciliation.

However, the first option – the Confiteor – is somewhat singular in drawing out the individual Christian's personal responsibility to love God and neighbor. The oldest option amongst the three, finding its roots in the ninth and tenth centuries, the Confiteor helps to highlight the human vocation to the virtue of humility and the need to admit our faults committed against both the Almighty and our fellow man. Listen to what we say: I confess. And to whom do I confess? – To almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters. And what am I confessing? – That I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do. And not only do I confess my sins to God and to my brothers and sisters, but I then ask my brothers and sisters, as well as the blessed Mary ever-Virgin and all the Angels and Saints, to pray for me to God. What a marvelously bold request! We make a confession that is both very personal and very public: personal, because every sin is a personal act; public, because every sin damages our relationship with God and neighbor.

We confess our sins at this point in the Mass to remind ourselves that "if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Mt. 5:23-24). May our love of God and neighbor first begin with our recognition of the need for God's love and mercy to transform us to be the saints that we are called to be.





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Dialogue for Peace

By Joseph Cruz



Pope Francis' prayer intentions this month were for the Promotion of World Peace: "We pray that Christians, followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill may promote peace and justice in the world." Thus, in heeding the words of our Holy Father's namesake, it might benefit us "that [we] may not so much seek ... to be understood as to understand". Yet, in a world where there appears more that divides us than unites us, it may be noted that every dominant religion has an imperative similar to our "golden rule" (Matt 7:11, Luke 6:31): "Do to others whatever you

would have them do to you."

- In Hinduism, for example: "Do not unto others that which would cause you pain if done to you" (Mahabharata 5:1517 - 15th century BC)
- In Buddhism: "Hurt not others with that which pains you" (Udanavarga 5:18 - 6th century BC).
- In Confucianism: "Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you" (Analects 15:23 - 5th century BC).
- In Judaism: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man" (Talmud & Tobias 4:15 - 3rd century BC)
- And in Islam: "No one is a believer... until one desires for a brother what one desires for oneself" (Sunnah & Hadith 13 - 7th century AD)

This would suggest that the world's faiths have common ground from which to promote dialogue. Pope Saint John Paul II promoted both ecumenical dialogue (within Christianity) as well as interfaith dialogue (with 20 different religious traditions) during his pontificate. Highlights included his being the first pontiff to visit the Synagogue of Rome, to visit a mosque (the Ummayyad Mosque in Damascus, Syria), to participate in an Anglican religious service (at Canterbury Cathedral), and to pray with Lutheran leaders at St. Peter's Basilica. He would later declare the commitment of the Catholic Church to this dialogue as both "irreversible" and "irrevocable".



Further, per his 1995 encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, Pope Saint John Paul II stated that dialogue "is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way, it is always an exchange of gifts" (UUS, 28). Thus, founded as an implementation of the Second Vatican Council's documents *Nostra Aetate* and *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue was a prime vehicle that this pontiff used to seek the "noble" task of dialogue, contact, prayer in common, and the "investigation of the treasures of human spirituality" (*Redemptor Hominis* 6) with Christian and non-Christian religions. The Second Vatican Council was, of course, also seen as a watershed event in this new openness toward the other faiths of the world.

Today, there is still much hope for this dialogue with other faiths. The Parliament of World Religions convened its most recent gathering in 2018 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, marking its 125th year. Over 8,300 participants joined in the most significant worldwide interfaith event representing over 200 faith traditions. The John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue – a joint-venture between the Russell Berrie Foundation and the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (*Angelicum*) – was also founded after the pontiff's passing to bridge the distance between Christian and other religious traditions by promoting interreligious study, formation for religious leadership, and dialogue in life and action. Priests are often referred to as bridge builders. This function need not be limited to bridging the divide between heaven and earth, but perhaps also between our faith and that of our brethren. "By dialogue, we let God be present in our midst, for as we open ourselves to one another, we open ourselves to God." – Pope Saint John Paul II.



CLEAN OUT YOUR CLOSET