



JUNE 13, 2021 | 11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

312 Tazewell Avenue, Tazewell, VA 24651

(276) 988-4626 | email: theword1875@verizon.net | facebook: search Holy Family SWVA

ST. THERESA'S
312 Tazewell Ave.
Tazewell, VA 24651

ST. ELIZABETH'S
160 Merrick Lane
Pocahontas, VA 24635

ST. MARY'S
1122 Farmer Street
Richlands, VA 24641

ST. JOSEPH'S
1007 Independence Rd.
Grundy, VA 24614

From Small Beginnings Come Great Things (*Sic Parvis Magna*)

On 16th of July 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped at Hiroshima Japan by America and this caused a phenomenal destruction of lives and property. It is, however, important to note that the bomb was 3 meters in length and 0.7 meters in diameter. Most people in life have not been able to rise even to the average level of livelihood because they do not appreciate the fact that great things begin small. Many who have the intention of becoming successful business men and women wish to start with big capital, big shops, a large number of employees, and so on. Often such people experience great setbacks before the first anniversary of their enterprise. If we take a cue from history we will find out that this reality runs in the universe. Let us begin with some biblical examples:

Abraham to whom God made the promise of being the father of a great nation came from the then small insignificant pagan city Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen. 11:28, 15).

Joseph who became a prime minister in the palace of Pharaoh was a prime suspect awaiting a death sentence. (Gen. 39:20; 40:41-45).

Moses who later became the instrument of liberation for the people of Israel from Egypt was salvaged from the riverside by the daughter of Pharaoh (Ex. 2:5) and he was not even the best in speechmaking.

David the youngest of the sons of Jesse was finally chosen and anointed the king of Israel. (1 Kings. 16: 11-13). The smallest became the greatest.

Most of the Judges and Prophets were men and women of little worth, but the little in them became great and helpful for the entire nation.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came from the small and insignificant town of Nazareth to become the savior of the world. Of course we are familiar with the saying: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth" (John 1:46).

A multitude of five thousand men excluding women and children were fed with five loaves of bread and two fish (Matt.14:17).

Let us proceed to cite some extra biblical examples of individuals who made it in life starting small. Brian Tracy did say that "80% of millionaires are self-made." That means they started out almost penniless, with nothing. There are so many examples like Bill Gates, David Murdock, Ralph Lauren, Ken Langone, Oprah Winfrey, Thomas Peterffy, Dan Abraham, Howard Shultz and Abraham Lincoln who became American president after a series of humble failings.

Beyond individuals, most great companies in the world started in garages like Apple, Hewlett-Packard, Walt Disney, Amazon, Google and others. Furthermore, some small groups that are organized have shown power in small things. If you cue into history,

you will find organized minority groups giving tough moments to disorganized majorities. References can be seen in groups like the Nazis, Al queda, ISIS, Boko Haram, etc.

Behind these achievers one could detect ambition and energy. Furthermore, as Dan Abraham would say, they have three things moving them: perseverance, perseverance and perseverance! Evidently one of the little secrets of success in any undertaking is: "never to quit until you finish." Actually, winners never quit but quitters never win! This disposition to remain steadfast and never quitting is the functional aptitude of a seed planted on good soil. Our Lord Jesus Christ exemplified this when he admonished about discipleship that: "No one who puts his hand on the plough and looks back is worthy of the kingdom of God" (Luke 9: 62).

We will at this point get back to the first reading and the Gospel reading to situate our reflection more concretely. In the prophecy of Ezekiel (17: 22-24), God promised that he would take a twig from the cedar tree and plant it on the mountain and it would grow, bear fruits and be a place of comfort for the birds of the air. In the Gospel reading (Mark 4: 26-34), our Lord likened the kingdom of God to a mustard seed which, though small, grows to become a great tree with comfort rooms for the birds of the air. From the two readings we discover that the seed and

the twig (as in the first reading) are at first small, tender and vulnerable. They could at most be neglected. The power is not actually physical; it lies within them and they begin to manifest their innate potential when they are planted on receptive soil.

In a sense we are connected with this parabolic seed. Left alone we are nothing; we are small, fragile, vulnerable and even powerless. But through baptism we are united with Christ and it is through this union, as in being planted on a good soil, that we grow, mature and become big, solid trees. It is not surprising then for St. Paul to say that he can do all things through Christ who gives him strength (Philippians 4:13).

There is yet another important issue here: the tree that eventually comes out of the small seeds bears fruits and also accommodates all kinds of creatures. As Christians we are expected to bear fruits; we are also expected to be charitable and accommodating. If God has given us increase we are expected to give others increase. We have seen that business men and women could start small with little or nothing and become renowned millionaires in the secular world. Why won't you and I, who are supported by divine power and grace, not be able to grow in all ramifications? Often we lose sight of the fact that God is with us.

Some of us are more sure of failure than they trust in the power of God to lead them to the next level. This is entirely offensive to God. No wonder the letter to the Hebrews would say that it is impossible to please God without faith (Heb. 11:6). What God requires is your faith, no matter how

small it may seem. (Mark. 11:22). You may find yourself small in the midst of those you consider great. You may be feeling that one good thing or another, one success story or another, cannot come to a small person like you. Your background has no right to keep your back on the ground.

Remember that those great men and women out there were like you and you can make a difference as well. Remember David. Though Goliath was great in human eyes and in human eyes he (David) was small. However, because he knows who planted him and with which power, he uses the smallest of stones to pull down the greatest of warriors in his own time. Today you have become the David of your situation. You only need a small stone—your faith—and with it great victory will be recorded.

The kingdom of God on earth is represented in a larger sense by the Church. Like a small seed sown in the Palestinian land, it has grown beyond that location and we all, like birds, are congregating on it. To maintain the growth of this kingdom until the final unification with the celestial kingdom is our baptismal obligation. In many places and at various times the Church has faced serious attacks and polemics, yet we are sure that the gates of hell cannot prevail against her (Matt. 16:18). We may also face some challenges in the process of our growth and expansion, like the mustard seed. We should nevertheless remain steadfast and persevere in season and out of season, bearing in mind that out of difficulties heroes emerge.

Happy Sunday.

PASTOR

Fr. Eric Anokye
eanokye@richmonddiocese.org
(276) 385-7312

OFFICE MANAGER/ BOOKKEEPER

Lydia St. Peter

OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Fri 9:30AM – 2:30PM

Please call the parish office to make arrangements for the **Sacraments of Baptism, Anointing of the Sick or Holy Matrimony** as well as funerals. **Reconciliation** is available from 30 minutes before a scheduled Mass.

MASS TIMES

SATURDAY

4PM – St. Joseph's
6PM – St. Mary's

SUNDAY

9AM – St. Elizabeth's
11:30AM – St. Theresa's

MON | WED | FRI

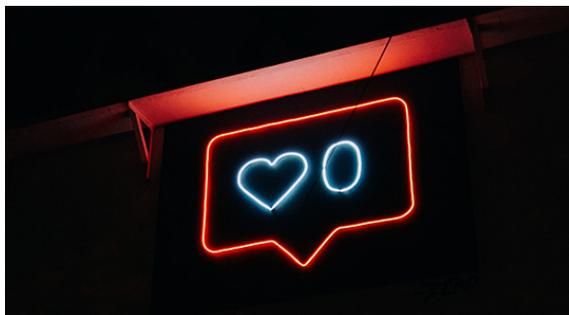
10AM – St. Theresa's

Cover image:

James Tissot, *Jesus Teaches the People by the Sea*, 1886–94

Tweet, Text, Post: Welcome to the Exterior Life

BY TOD WORNER, *Word on Fire*



“The silent forces are the strong forces.”

—Fr. Romano Guardini

“Interiority breeds interiority.”

—Gary Shteyngart

Tweet, text, post. Likes, follows, FOMO. Optimize, expedite, multitask.

This is the life we now lead.

Welcome to the Exterior Life.

In an age of marvelous technology affording instant access to endless pleasures and efficiencies, one would think that we had “arrived.” We have the promise of forever feeling good. But paradoxically, our limitless connectivity and perpetual satisfaction of desire has left us not deliciously sated, but curiously empty. Why, when we have everything we need to be happy, aren’t we fulfilled?

The Exterior Life is the life lived outside of oneself. Now, to be clear, this does not mean you are an outdoorsman, gregarious, or endlessly charitable. The Exterior Life, instead, is the frenetic, unfocused life of distraction and activity hunting for good feelings and affirmation. It longs to be happy and desires peace but is riddled with quiet angst and ill-defined restlessness. It is the antithesis of the Interior Life.

But why would anyone want to live the Exterior Life?

Because they don’t know any other way. It is quite simply what the world has to offer.

The troubled, though insightful comedian Louis C.K. once shared an anecdote embodying the insidious nature of the Exterior Life. Once, while driving and listening to Bruce Springsteen’s song “Jungleland,” he found himself pricked by what he described as a profound sadness. Something from the deep interior was bubbling up, and he immediately felt the urgent impulse to run away from it. “Oh man,” he declared, “I’m getting sad!”

I’ve got to get my phone and write “hi” to fifty people. . . . But as I was reaching for the phone, I said, “Don’t. Just be sad. Stand in the way [of the sadness] and let it hit you like a truck.” . . . And I pulled over and I cried

. . . and it was beautiful. Sadness is poetic. You’re lucky to live sad moments. . . . I was grateful to feel sad, and then I met it with true, profound happiness.

The Exterior Life doesn’t want you to feel sad. Ever. It recoils at the prospect. It wants there to be nothing but pleasure. But this is unnatural. To be fully human is to endure the full range of emotions in response to the broad continuum of life’s experiences. That means that we are destined to experience sadness as well as joy, anger as well as love, restlessness as well as contentment. To live the Exterior Life’s lopsided emotional existence is to bury honest and necessary emotions, to heap tension upon tension while covering them with a yellow smiley face. Such a life involves the willful stunting of our growth until we ultimately become, as Georges Bernanos would describe, horrible undeveloped monsters, stumps of men.

Great minds have warned us about the Exterior Life for centuries. “Put simply,” Pope Benedict XVI observed, “we are no longer able to hear God—there are too many frequencies filling our ears.” Blaise Pascal confessed, “All the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact: that they cannot stay quietly

in their own chamber.” And Aldous Huxley, in his novel *Brave New World*, acutely diagnosed what we miss in a pleasure-drenched dystopia, saying, “Being contented has none of the glamour of a good fight against misfortune, none of the picturesqueness of a struggle with temptation, or a fatal overthrow by passion or doubt.”

That’s why we need the Interior Life.

Cultivating the Interior Life requires silence and humility, slowing down and simply being. It means grappling with difficult truths and onerous duty. It insists that we make an inventory of who we are, as well as who we are to become, what we are doing well, and what we are doing wrong. Most importantly, it asks us to do all of this with God. But the sheer attention (the “present-mind-

Though cultivating the Interior Life is difficult, it is worth it. It opens us to headwaters of wisdom and grace, purpose and peace. It is the life we are seeking without fully understanding that we are seeking it.

Fr. Romano Guardini once observed, “The greatest things are accomplished in silence—not in the clamor and display of superficial eventfulness, but in the deep clarity of inner vision; in the almost imperceptible start of decision, in quiet overcoming and hidden sacrifice.”

For many of us, the Exterior Life is the life we now lead. But it doesn’t have to be.

Let’s put the phone down. Let’s blacken our computer screens. Let’s turn off the television and turn to God.

Cultivating the Interior Life requires silence and humility, slowing down and simply being.

edness”) of the Interior Life can overwhelm and scare us away. Like the shine of a brilliant light, interiority can blind before it illuminates. And sometimes when we turn inward—I mean really inward—we don’t like what we see, so we scramble to turn outward. Anything is better, we shudder, than facing ourselves and our God. While we hunger for the blessings of an Interior Life (peace, joy, and connection to the transcendent), we shrink from the responsibilities. Wanting the best return with the least investment, we settle for the knock-off version. The Exterior Life promises cheap, sparkling ego fixes that vanish too soon and leave nothing but emptiness demanding to be filled once again. The surrogates for God—we are shocked to find—are simply not God.

Instead of tweeting, texting, and posting, let us pray and think and be.

As St. Augustine reminds,

Let us leave a little room for reflection in our lives, room too for silence. Let us look within ourselves and see whether there is some delightful hidden place inside where we can be free of noise and argument. Let us hear the Word of God in stillness and perhaps we will then come to understand it.

Shall we begin?

mass intentions

Date Intention

6/12 SATURDAY

4PM Dr. Bob Baxter, MD, PhD †

6PM Doyle Whited †

6/13 SUNDAY

9AM Appalachian Twinning Ministries

11:30AM Kyle Williams

council members

PARISH COUNCIL:

Tonya Hylton, Frannie Minton, Ralph Shawver, Cindy Deskins, Barbara Jones, Donna Lambert

FINANCE COUNCIL:

Kathy & Bob Buchanan, Randy Bolling, Doug Vance, Anne Danko, Jim Talbert, Jackie Shawver, Janet McDonagh

please pray for

Louise Serreno*
 Margie Stutso *
 Margaret Shawver
 Scotty McBride
 Gerry Hankins
 Clarence Moore
 Lexi Cox
 Sarah Wall
 Paris Whisher
 Tammy Bennett
 Margaret Wasilewski
 Nic Ulate
 Elizabeth Gregory
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 Archbishop John Kwofie
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 Anne St. Peter
 Rayburn Minton
 Jeanne Hash
 Philip & Pat Imel
 Lara Marshall
 Virginia Shumate
 Jim Shumate
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 Frank Mauceri
 Lori Hale
 Dee Gentile
 Glenn Harrison
 Chris Lester
 Donna Petro
 Cathy Bolling
 Harold & Wanda French
 Christian Marshall
 Leslie Stanley

stewardship of treasure

Donations Received as of June 6 (Week 49)

CHURCH	ATTENDANCE	RECEIVED
St. Joseph's	9	\$192
St. Elizabeth's	20	\$1,310
St. Mary's	12	\$360
St. Theresa's	42	\$1,060
Total Offertory	83	\$2,922
Outside Donations		
Year to Date Received		\$117,533
Goal		\$108,365
Ahead/Behind Goal		+\$9,168

OUTSIDE DONATIONS—THANK YOU!

St. Michael's, Glen Allen, VA: \$1,778
 Hampton Donor: \$150

PETER'S PENCE COLLECTION:

\$91

BUILDING FUND:

St. Elizabeth's: \$600
 St. Mary's: \$200

HOLY FAMILY NEWS

Fr. Eric's Bible study sessions will resume July 14 with a study of Revelation. Please join us!

Prayer Shawl Ministry began again on June 9 at St. Theresa's and will start on June 16 at St. Mary's at 11AM. Join the "ladies of the yarn" in crafting shawls for comfort, peace, healing and love. Questions about the ministry? Contact Jackie Shawver at jshawver1965@gmail.com.

The updated guidelines for liturgical celebrations are posted on Facebook and a hard copy is available at each church. Fully vaccinated individuals are no longer required to wear masks (masks are still required for anyone over the age of 5 who has not been vaccinated). Song books can again be used and we will have holy water at each church entrance!

birthdays & anniversaries: **JUNE**

BIRTHDAYS—16: Aleah Belcher | 18: Brenda Cataline | 19: Daisy Claustro

ANNIVERSARIES—14: Pete & Nenita Belcher | 17: Norman & Angie Howell, Fred & Grace Barker

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Nationwide

3144 E Cumberland Rd.
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Mike Romeo, Agent

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