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August 30, 2020 **MINISTERED BY THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FRIARS** Estab. 1924



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Traditional Latin High Mass: 1:00 p.m.
and Sunday Evening at 5:00 p.m.;

Monday-Saturday—9:00 a.m.: Outside
for the Public (live streamed on Facebook)



Confessions in the Parking Lot on Saturdays from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

Jesus said to his disciples,
 “Whoever wishes to come after me
 must deny himself,
 take up his cross, and follow me.”

Matthew 16:24

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 30, 2020

SUFFERING

Suffering. We all know it. It is an inescapable part of the human experience. Our readings today help us understand what to do with suffering, how to redeem it for eternal glory. In a tenderly poetic passage, the prophet Jeremiah clings to the Lord, despite the suffering and hatred he endures in God’s service. Since speaking on behalf of the Lord is the cause of his anguish, Jeremiah flirts with the idea of giving it all up, of abandoning his ministry. But God is “too strong,” and Jeremiah remains faithful even in violent times. He knows, as the psalmist sings, that there is no life without God, for whom our souls thirst. Saint Paul acknowledges the universality of suffering and urges us to offer our suffering to God. God alone can transform our pain, our “crosses,” into good for others, just as God redeemed the ultimate suffering of Jesus.

OFFER IT UP!

As Saint Paul says, we can offer our personal experiences as a “living sacrifice.” Let’s offer up our daily prayers, thoughts, words, actions, joys, and sufferings. Let’s unite our sacrifices to the perfect sacrifice of Jesus we celebrate in the Eucharist. Our sacrifices—little or big, happy or sad—become the stuff of miracles. Consider the example of the loaves and fishes we read about a few weeks ago. Jesus’ tender heart pities the hungry crowds. Jesus asks the disciples to offer anything they can spare. Using the ridiculously inadequate offering of five loaves and two fish, Jesus goes to work. He blesses their offering, breaks it, and uses it to satisfy thousands. Baskets overflow. Jesus uses a tiny offering and transforms it into real help for people in need.

We too can offer sacrifices for Jesus to transform. When we are confronted with problems we know we can’t solve, Jesus remains calm. He asks us to give what we can. Often, we have no confidence. We scoff at our own pathetic attempts. We cannot imagine how God could possibly use our boring little sacrifices of dishwashing, caregiving, or e-mail-managing to bless the world. But Jesus takes whatever we offer. He blesses it. He breaks it. He transforms it into grace for ourselves and for all people in need.

PRAISE GOD!

The mystery of redemptive suffering transforms our lives, but it is not an easy mystery to accept. Suffering is not attractive. Especially when suffering afflicts innocent people, we cry out to God for justice and relief. Jesus’ words today penetrate our hearts: “You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.” We beg the Lord to accept our suffering, then, and to transform it in ways we cannot imagine. Embracing the details and crosses of daily life, we look forward to the day when Jesus comes in glory, revealing to us how he used our sacrifices to bless the world.

TODAY’S READINGS

Jeremiah 20:7–9
 Psalm 63:2–6, 8–9
 Romans 12:1–2
 Matthew 16:21–27

Sketch, *Martyrdom of Saint Peter*, 1598/99

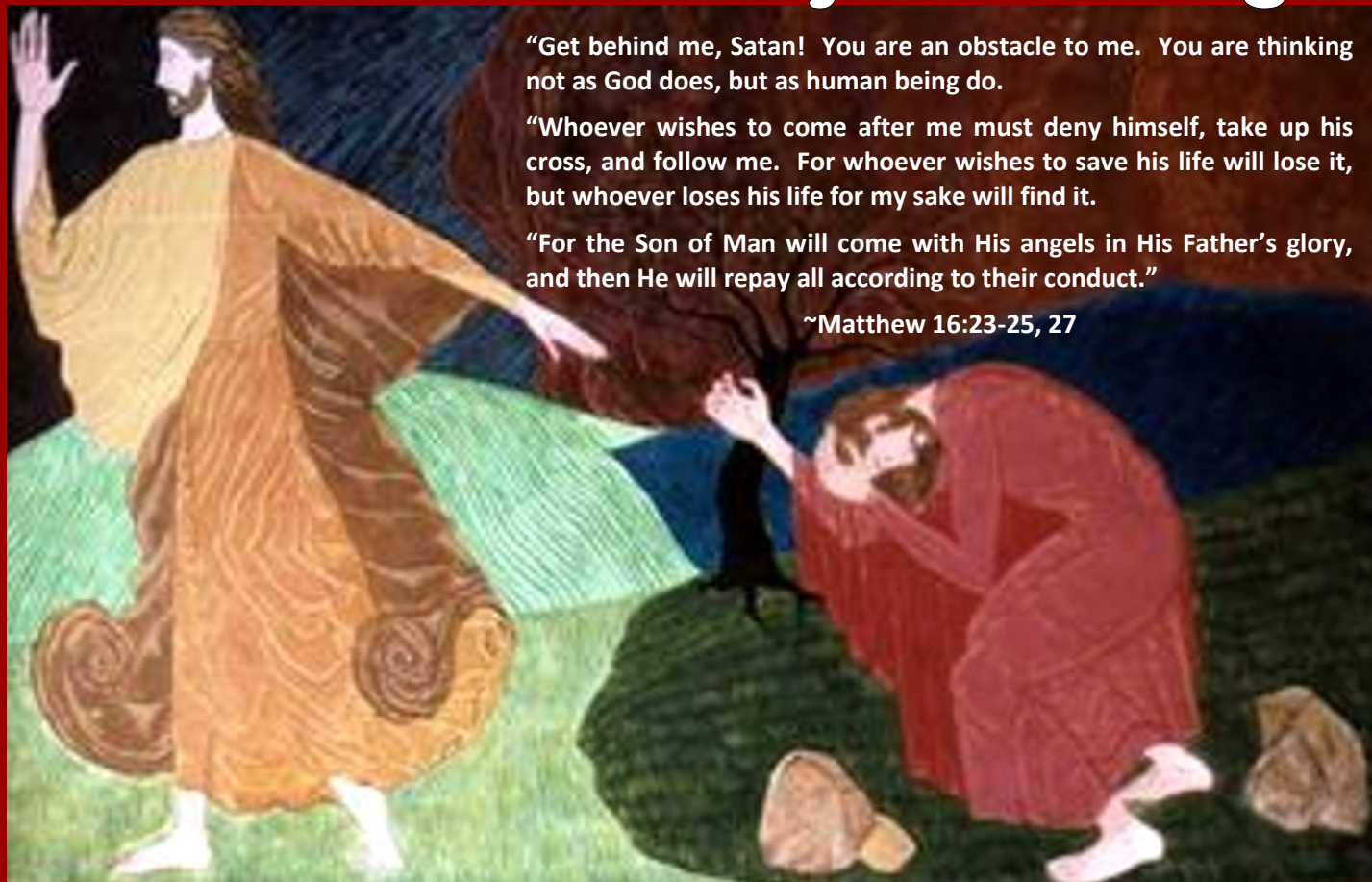
Andrea Boscoli

Italian, c. 1560–1608

Chicago Institute of Art (CIC)

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Reflection on Today's Readings:



“Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human being do.

“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

“For the Son of Man will come with His angels in His Father’s glory, and then He will repay all according to their conduct.”

~Matthew 16:23-25, 27

Today’s readings invite us to reflect on the path of discipleship offered by Jesus. Jesus, now seen by the disciples as Messiah and Christ, begins to describe most fully what this means: He will not march into Jerusalem filled with God’s power like a conquering general. Rather, His path is like that of Jeremiah’s from the first reading—one of being mocked and rejected. His path is also like that described by St. Paul in our second reading, where he urges Jesus’ followers to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1–2). Jesus summons His followers down the same path of death and resurrection, to live the radical paradox that “whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” Loving and trusting God will entail self-surrender, leading us to joy in service to others. We will learn to let go of what we desire and what we think we need, trusting God to provide what we truly need.

Our reading from Jeremiah (20:7–9) contains some of the harshest language you will find in the Bible toward God. In despair and fury, Jeremiah accuses God of deceiving and abusing him. He pours out his rage at God for ruining his life. He wants to “quit God,” but finds it impossible. In later verses, he alternates between giving thanks to God and wishing he had never been born. Remarkably, after all this, Jeremiah resumes his prophetic ministry. As with Abraham (Genesis 18), Moses (Exodus 32), Job, and David (various psalms), Jeremiah pushes back against God. God receives and blesses their prayer, and their relationships are stronger for it. Our God is a God of dialogue, who encourages us to speak our mind and heart in full honesty. Our Trinitarian God is in eternal conversation within Himself and with all of creation. God invites honest dialogue—always grounded in love—within His Church and between the Church and the world.

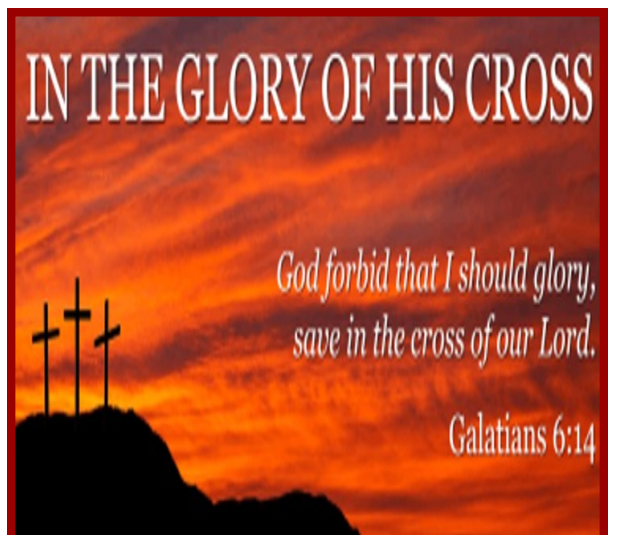
"The Cross is the Path of Discipleship"

It seems that Jesus is pretty hard on Peter in today's Gospel (Matthew 16:21–27), when He calls him "Satan" for questioning His prediction of His Passion. The scene echoes Matthew's story of the temptations of Jesus (4:1–11), when Jesus was in the desert for forty days and encountered Satan, also called the "tempter." Satan had sought to draw Jesus into thinking about His own needs instead of attending to God's purposes. Unlike Satan, Peter was an *unwitting* tempter, anxiously reacting out of his own fears and misunderstanding. This story speaks about Jesus' identity and vocation, and also about our own. As God's beloved people, sent out to witness to the Gospel, we are offered a foundation and a purpose to our lives. There is much in life that tempts us, stirs up false fears, or draws us to the attractive but superficial. Jesus provides us a way forward. He named the temptations that He faced, so they had no power over Him. As He followed His path, He placed His full trust in His Father.

I frequently see signs in front of non-Catholic churches inviting everyone to come. Often they advertise that they are a contemporary, casual church. One thing that concerns me is that they do not add "challenging" to that description. Some people try to teach that since Jesus is risen from the dead, we should also be able to live that way: Rejoicing, but never sorrowing. But if we preach resurrection without the cross, we are acting like Peter in the Gospel. Peter had just proclaimed that Jesus was the Messiah, but he failed to understand that Jesus' mission was not to bring wealth and glory to Israel, but that being Messiah required Him to give His life for all people. Peter was tempting Jesus to avoid the painful death and use His divine power to bring prosperity. Like Satan's temptations in the desert, he wanted Jesus to take the easy way to glory.

Instead, Jesus challenges us to deny ourselves. Today, the phrase, "deny ourselves" is not very popular with those who say we should be free to satisfy all our desires, or with motivational speakers, who say that everyone is able to achieve financial success and live a comfortable life. As long as we center our lives on our own pleasure and comfort, we are rejecting the cross. **To deny oneself means to choose God's will over our own. It means to be willing to suffer for being honest. It means giving God the first place in our lives. It means we get more joy from serving others than serving ourselves.** This is what Paul is talking about in the second reading when he says to offer ourselves as a "living sacrifice." Or, as Jesus says, we lose our life for His sake, only to find it in loving and serving Him. That is one reason we use the image of God as Father. Parents will lose much of their freedom—and much sleep—when they bring a child into the world. But they find a new joy in the eyes of that child. We are all called to lose our selfish lives and find the joy of living for Jesus.

The perception of the Cross changed dramatically after Jesus' crucifixion. Before that event, death on a cross was not only horrible, it was degrading. It was a penalty reserved only for the most wretched of criminals. The word "glory" would not have found its way into the same sentence containing the word "cross." But all that changed with Jesus. Over time, believers began to venerate and honor the Cross. They painted, sculpted, and carved images of it. Many lost their own lives for their association with it. Today our reverence for and relationship with the Cross recalls little of the contempt originally associated with it. As it has been through the ages, it is our perception of the Cross that determines how we follow Jesus.



"What is Good and Pleasing and Perfect"



How should we respond to God's great mercy to us? Paul's exhortation to the Romans in today's reading (12:1-2) answers that question. He tells us we must become living, breathing sacrifices, living our lives in service to God as an ongoing act of worship. To do this, we will need to break free from the "me-first" pattern of the world and have our minds transformed for the purpose of knowing and understanding what God wants and then to live according to His will.

Paul's list of commands describes a lifestyle of setting ourselves aside and living as true disciples. He urges us to respond to God's mercy, His forgiveness of our sins, and His inclusion of us in His family. We must refuse to sink to evil's level, giving good to those who harm us instead of revenge. We must focus our expectation on eternity and wait with patience and prayer for our Father to provide.

Paul writes that we must no longer be conformed to the world. The word "world" is often used in the

New Testament to refer to the "world system," or the way that human beings live by default. John described this worldly way of living as "the lust of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). By instinct, people chase those things that they think will bring them happiness and meaning. Paul tells us to abandon the chase for pleasure, possessions, and status—to stop living like everyone else! Instead, he entreats us to be divinely transformed from the inside out. Specifically, he writes that we must be changed in how we think, in order that we can begin to know God's plans for our lives.

God may continue to provide us with pleasure, possessions, and status in various forms, but He advises us to learn how to look at life with a new question: **What does God want for me?** What is truly a good, acceptable, and perfect use of my life for His purposes and not just for my own?

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The Life of Pope St. Gregory the Great

From Pope Benedict XVI's
General Audience of 5/28/12

Pope St. Gregory was Bishop of Rome from 590 to 604 and earned the traditional title of “the Great” (**his feast is this Thursday, September 3**). He was born in Rome about 540 into a rich patrician family, distinguished not only for their noble blood but also for their adherence to the Christian faith and their service to the Holy See. Two Popes came from this family: Felix III (483-492), the great-great grandfather of Gregory, and Agapetus (535-536). The examples of his parents, Gordian and Sylvia, both venerated as Saints, and those of his father's sisters, Aetnaiana and Tharsilla, who lived in their own home as consecrated virgins. In the footsteps of his father, Gregory entered early into an administrative career, which reached its climax in 572 when he became Prefect of the city. This office allowed him to apply himself to every type of administrative problem; however, he found it unsatisfying and, shortly after, he decided to leave order to begin monastic life. In the midst of the pressure of pastoral worries, he often recalled this period of his life as “a happy time of recollection in God, dedication to prayer, and peaceful immersion in study.” There he acquired a deep understanding of Scripture that later served him in his work.



But the cloistered withdrawal of Gregory did not last long. Because of his administration experience and his prior relationships with the Byzantines, Pope Pelagius sent him to Constantinople as his “apocrisarius,” what today would be called “Apostolic Nuncio,” in order to obtain the Emperor's support in the effort to check the Lombard invaders. The stay at Constantinople, where he resumed monastic life with a group of monks, was very important for Gregory, since it permitted him to acquire direct experience of the Byzantine world, as well as to approach the problem of the Lombards, who would later put his ability and energy to the test during the years of his Pontificate. After some years he was recalled to Rome by the Pope, who appointed him his secretary. They were difficult years: the continual rain, flooding due to overflowing rivers, and the famine that afflicted many regions of Italy as well as Rome. Even the plague broke out, which claimed numerous victims, among whom was Pope Pelagius II. The clergy, people, and senate were unanimous in choosing Gregory as his successor to the See of Peter. He tried to resist, even attempting to flee, but to no avail. He finally yielded in the year 590.

Abundant documentation has been preserved from his governance, thanks to the register of his letters (approximately 800), reflecting the complex questions that arrived on a daily basis from Bishops, Abbots, clergy, and civil authorities. Among the problems that afflicted Italy and Rome at that time was “the Lombard question.” The Pope dedicated every possible energy to bring about a peaceful solution. St. Gregory saw this people with the eyes of a good pastor and was concerned with proclaiming the word of salvation to them. The Pope—who was a true peacemaker—deeply committed himself to establishing an effective peace in Rome and in Italy by undertaking intense negotiations with the Lombard King. This negotiation led to a truce that lasted for about three years (598-601); after which, in 603, it was possible to stipulate a more stable armistice. This positive result was obtained thanks to the parallel contacts that the Pope undertook with Queen Theodolinda, a deeply-Catholic Bavarian princess. Little by little, she was able to guide the King to Catholicism, thus preparing the way to peace. Gregory focused on three basic objectives: to limit the Lombard expansion, to strengthen the Catholic Faith, and to mediate between the Lombards and the Byzantines. With the revenues from the Roman See, the Pope also assisted the needy, including priests, monks and nuns who lived in poverty, paid the ransom for citizens held captive by the Lombards, obtained armistices and truces, and demanded that the tenants on Church territory be protected from dishonest agents. Gregory carried out this intense activity, notwithstanding his poor health, which often forced him to remain in bed for days on end (the fasts he practiced during his years of monastic life had caused him serious digestive problems). Furthermore, his voice was so feeble that he was often obliged to entrust the reading of his homilies to the deacon.

On feast days he celebrated Mass and met with the people of God, who were very fond of him. Notwithstanding the very difficult conditions in which he had to work, he gained the trust of the Faithful, thanks to his holiness and rich humanity. His desire for God was always alive in the depths of his soul. This man of God shows us from where the true source of peace comes and is a guide for leading a life immersed in God. (See more about him on Page Seven.)

Mass Intentions

Saint of the Week

For the Week of August 29 through September 5, 2020

Saturday:

5:00 p.m.: Karolyn Dudro, Birthday INT

Sunday

*7:30 a.m.: George Watson, RIP

7:30 a.m.: Parishioners

9:00 a.m.: Clara Grace Maringka, RIP

11:00 a.m.: David Lin, INT

1:00 p.m.: (Latin): Ursulina Aquino, RIP

5:00 p.m.: Roland de la Rosa, RIP

Monday:

*7:30 a.m.: Jamie Chiu, INT

9:00 a.m.: Anita Lin, INT

9:00 a.m.: Clara Grace Maringka, RIP

Tuesday:

*7:30 a.m.: Abby Cox, INT

9:00 a.m.: Mrs. Billie Gaynor, RIP

Peter Kretschmer, B-day INT

Wednesday

*7:30 a.m.: Cindy Chiu, INT

9:00 a.m.: Ellena, Alex, and Lauren Cheah, INT

Clara Grace Maringka, RIP

Thursday:

*7:30 a.m.: Sr. Mary, OCD, INT

9:00 a.m.: Ernest & Denise Holguin, INT

Angelle Francisse & Karina Therese, INT

Friday:

*7:30 a.m.: Leo Jaula Lacangan, RIP

9:00 a.m.: Zarina Dorothy Deresma, INT

Nicole Tittmann, B-day INT

Chris Holman, B-Day INT

Saturday:

*7:30 a.m.: Carmelite Community

9:00 a.m.: Teresita Lopez, INT

Leo Jaula Lacangan, RIP

*Held at the *Carmelite Chapel,
215 East Alhambra Road.

9:00 a.m. Daily Mass
(Monday–Saturday) is held
outside for the **public**;
it is live streamed on
Facebook for those not
attending. The Sunday
11:00 a.m. Mass
is also live streamed
on Facebook.

POPE ST. GREGORY THE GREAT

Imagine, fourteen hundred years after death, boasting a best-selling CD! Yes, outside the Church and within, Gregorian chant is



enjoying a renaissance. Still, the timeless sacred music that bears his name is but part of Gregory’s legacy.

Renouncing civic service for monastic life, Gregory’s administrative and diplomatic skills prompted continual summons from the cloister. Papal ambassador and advisor, he was eventually elected pope himself, renowned as a wise steward of the church’s material possessions, generous benefactor of the poor, sponsor of missionaries, and promoter of monasticism.

His liturgical enrichment of the Church endures not only in Gregorian chant, but in eloquent homilies still gracing the Liturgy of the Hours, the “Gregorian Canon” (Eucharistic Prayer I), and his spiritual classic, Pastoral Care, once presented to new bishops at ordination.

Of countless impressive papal titles—Supreme Pontiff, Vicar of Christ, Bishop of Rome, Successor of Saint Peter, Prince of the Apostles—the title still so cherished that it heads official documents is the one Gregory coined to describe his papal ideal: “Servant of the Servants of God”. Together with being designated “the Great,” a fitting epitaph for a true man of God. (See Page Three for Pope Benedict XVI’s comments about St. Gregory.)



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