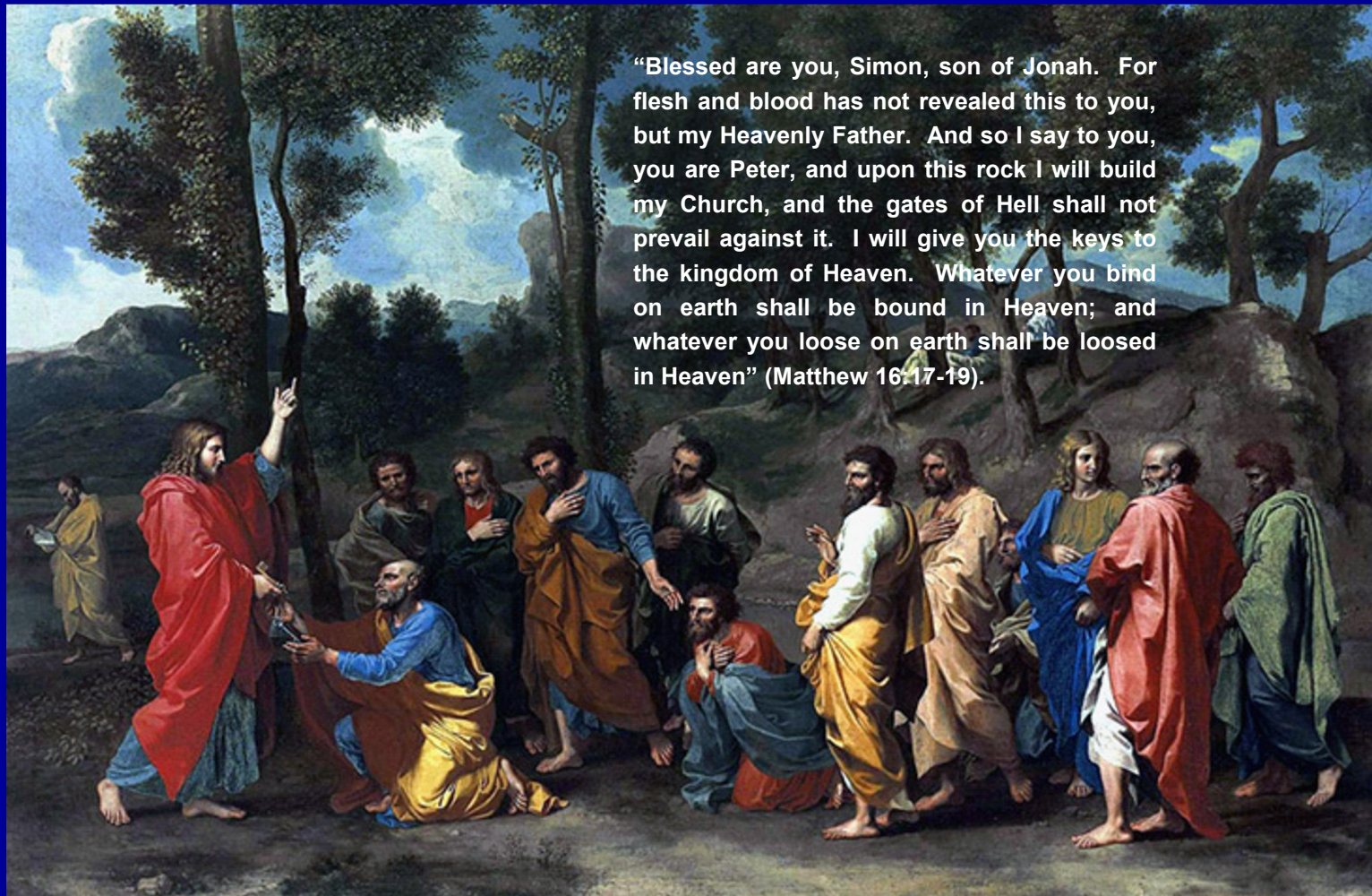




The Little Flower Weekly

An Addition to the St. Theresia Parish Bulletin



“Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven” (Matthew 16:17-19).



In This Issue



	PAGE
“GET USED TO DIFFERENT,” by Fr. Philip Sullivan, OCD (A Homily Adapted into an Article).....	2-5
“THE GREATEST GIFT”	6

"Get Used to Different"

By Fr. Philip Sullivan, OCD
Pastor



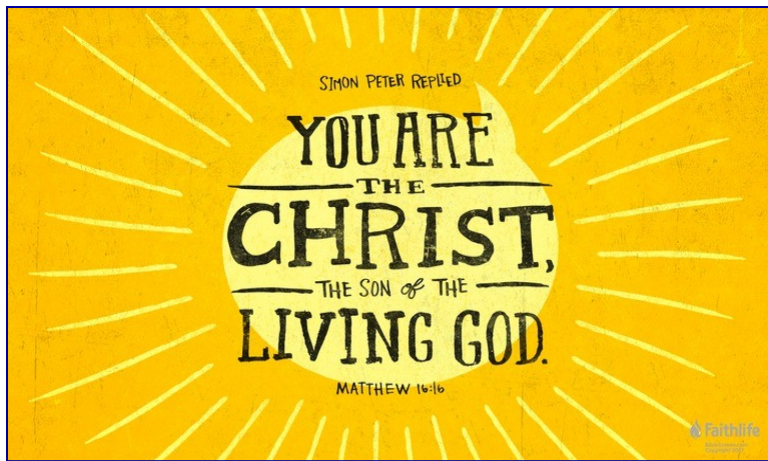
You may recognize the words, “get used to different,” from the popular 2019 TV mini-series called, *The Chosen*, about Jesus Christ and the calling of His apostles during the beginning of His ministry on earth. *The Chosen* shows our Lord fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah: healing the sick, casting out evil spirits, teaching children, and beginning His Church on earth by “choosing” the most unlikely people. **Get used to different!** At first, I was skeptical of this show and its portrayal of Christ—especially as to how the actress playing the Blessed Mother would portray her, since the series was produced by a Protestant organization. Nevertheless, I found it to be a refreshing depiction of our Lord in His humanity, especially shown in His relationship with His apostles and disciples. I particularly love how the character of Jesus teaches the children and sends them out as enlightened little disciples eager to speak the Good News.

Artists of all kinds, including movie directors, have struggled throughout history with the daunting responsibility to convincingly portray Jesus. I know, because I struggle with it every time I am working in the art room with my students here at Saint Therese Carmelite School. “Get used to different” takes on a whole new meaning when you are teaching children how to draw and paint a beautiful image of Christ, Mary, or one of the saints. Remember the story I shared some time ago about a student who was drawing during class time? The teacher asked the student what she

was drawing, and she boldly declared that she was drawing the face of God. The teacher confidently corrected the student, “But *nobody* knows what God looks like”—to which the student replied, “They will when I’m finished!”

Even as a teacher of art, I struggle in my own limited abilities to accurately depict a rendering of Jesus Christ, His Immaculate Mother, or the glory of the Saints. I struggle through my limitations and pray for divine intervention! In other words, it’s not easy imagining and correctly depicting God, salvation history, and the heavenly kingdom of saints. I think what makes it so difficult and challenging is the competing images we already have in our imaginations from various artists throughout history. Let’s not forget our own subjective mental imageries and the frustration of not getting it right, especially when it comes to the person of Jesus Christ. Listen to the words of Rachel Bulman from *Word on Fire*: “Through artwork, literature, or Scripture, the image of Jesus has become vastly subjective, even individualistic. In our fear of misrepresenting Jesus, we run the risk of stripping Him of His humanity and rejecting all depictions of Him in any medium that we deem as insufficiently holy or majestic” (Rachel Bulman for *Word on Fire*, May 27, 2020).

One of my professors at Mount Angel Seminary frequently quoted St. Augustine’s words: “**If you think you’ve understood God, it’s not God you’ve understood!**” Ponder those words in anticipation of next



weekend's readings at Mass (August 23), when St. Paul will say to us: "For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been His counselor? Or who has given the Lord anything that he may be repaid?" (Romans 11:33). In next Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 16:13-20), Jesus asks His apostles: "Who do people say that I am?" They all got it wrong, except St. Peter, who replied, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

But did St. Peter really understand what he was saying? Who knows? But I think that's a humbling reminder for all of us, especially as we struggle through our daily prayers, grapple with the doctrines of the Faith and the liturgical trends—frustrating to some while appealing to others—and try to explain the most famous of these misunderstandings of God: "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Furthermore, do we really understand the resurrection of Jesus Christ—BODY, BLOOD, SOUL, and DIVINITY—in the Most Holy Eucharist? If you think you have understood God, it is not God you have understood!

In *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Pope Benedict XVI writes, "God is beyond all thought and, therefore, all propositions about Him and every kind of image of God are in equal proportions valid and invalid." When we attempt to dive into the depths of who God is and what God looks like, then the reality that every artist understands rings loud and clear: We really *don't* understand God! In fact, we soon find the depths to be too much for us to handle. Maybe that is why our Lord "strictly ordered His disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ" (Matthew 16:20). Listen to the humble words of St. Thomas Aquinas: "Everything I have written seems like straw by comparison with what I have seen and what has been revealed to me." Humility is the key for every artist who attempts to unlock the intellectual and artistic challenge to depict the face of God.

If you think you have understood God, it is NOT God you have understood! This is a bold and true statement that can apply to the TV series, *The Chosen*. There are several scenes in it that come to mind: The wedding feast at Cana, the sharing of Shabbat (the Sabbath meal), and the healing of the man with leprosy. These are examples that have challenged me to meditate differently upon these real moments in the historical life of Christ. Get used to different! *The Chosen* even provides a fresh and sympathetic depiction of the Sanhedrin (especially Nicodemus), and the scenes presenting the Shabbat were all well-staged and framed. I think I can speak for all of my Carmelite Brothers with whom I live that we have enjoyed this series very much and have found that it is was a refreshing study of Jewish life in the first century.

There is one scene in *The Chosen* that stands out among them all: When Jesus called Matthew from his tax collector's booth. Peter protested this decision of our Lord, to which Jesus responded to Peter: "**Get used to different!**" We can easily apply these words to the scene in today's Gospel of Jesus' interaction with the Canaanite Woman. The apostles seem not to understand why our Lord is not dismissing the Canaanite woman who is trying to speak to Him. They are protesting the fact that she is a Gentile woman. Can they not see she is approaching our Lord in humility and supplication? Can they not hear that she is in desperate need and is petitioning Jesus to heal her possessed daughter? They even tell Jesus to send her away. Jesus then proceeds to have what could be perceived as a rude and indifferent conversation with this Canaanite woman.



It's important for us to see this particular scene for what it really is. Jesus is instructing His apostles to better understand that He has come to reconcile the world to God—once and for ALL! Get used to different? Wow! This is a game changer altogether! I assure you our Lord is not being rude or indifferent to the needs of this humble woman; rather, He is showing His apostles—and all of *US* today—that God so loves the WORLD that He sent His Son to reconcile the Jews and the Gentiles, and even our worst enemies, like the Canaanites were to the Jews. Get used to different!

Here is another example of getting used to different: Many times in my homilies I have voiced my frustrations with the ever-growing Protestant factions that exist in this country today. While I was in the seminary, I found a statistic that showed there were over 45,000 different denominations or sects of Christianity, all waving the banner of Discipleship to our Lord and all claiming that they belong to “His Church”. Of course, as a Catholic priest, I believe these churches pose a huge problem because many of their members are fallen-away Catholics! Maybe my frustration should be redirected to us priests who have failed to properly catechize these self-exiled, protesting, wandering, “roamin’” Catholics who are looking for Jesus in other churches! Nevertheless, to leave the Catholic Church and its Sacraments and to join another Christian church to be taught about Jesus Christ is troubling on so many levels. So, I’d like to take this moment to apologize to anyone who may have taken offense to my words of frustration and my criticisms about the non-Catholic Christian churches that exist in this country. Okay. Like the apostles in today’s Gospel, I am beginning to appreciate the love for Jesus Christ by other Christian religions. So, get used to different!

You see, I am finding myself more sympathetic to the non-Catholic Christians these days because many of them are so vocal and courageous in pushing back against an over-reaching government that has wrongfully labeled religion as “non-essential” in this country. One of these Christian leaders, John MacArthur, the pastor of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, has made several public statements making it clear that being able to attend worship services in a church is ESSENTIAL and that, because Christ—not Caesar!—is head of the church, that Grace Community Church will not acquiesce to a government-imposed moratorium on their worship services.

Perhaps our elected politicians should go back to school and look at the First Amendment of our Country’s Constitution. I would also like to encourage the successors to the Apostles, the Catholic bishops, many of whom remain so silent, to push back against the government’s orders! The non-Catholic Christian churches are rebuffing the directives given by these politicians, who seem to blatantly ignore the rights established by the First Amendment. I’m encouraged and

impressed by our brothers and sisters of other Christian faiths. I look forward to the day when the Catholic bishops will let their influence be felt and their voices be heard in the decisions made by the government concerning the closing of churches and schools. Let us continue to pray for our bishops who carry such a heavy responsibility.

Here is the event that triggered my new empathy with our fellow Christians: While I was on a recent vacation with my mother in Scottsdale, Arizona, we were watching the news. Amidst all of the advertisements selling drugs, pillows, and lawsuits, was an advertisement by Franklin Graham, the son of the famous Reverend Billy Graham. He was advertising Christianity on a cable network, repeating over and over the name of Jesus Christ. Rev. Graham told the viewers that God loves us, and he invited us to welcome and except Jesus Christ into our hearts as our Lord and Savior. It was a sincere invitation to become a Christian and to know Jesus! It was beautiful! My mother and I were both stunned by the contrast of this advertisement amongst all the others. However, my mother’s emotional joy over this commercial soon dissipated and she asked me a question which, at the time, I could not answer: “Why doesn’t the Catholic Church invest their money (“MY donations”) into advertising on primetime television in order to promote the Roman Catholic Faith and to welcome home those who have left the Church?”

Well, this “hard question to answer” got me thinking. My own cynical response as to why the Catholic Church is not investing in advertising is because the leaders of the Church are afraid. The bishops have been investing money in a Catholic educational system that seems to be on life-support in most dioceses. Because there are so many non-Catholics who make up a large part of the student body at most Catholic schools in this country, it is not likely that these schools will be producing future Catholics. So, what can we do differently to help ensure a Catholic future? Although there are Catholic radio stations like Relevant Radio and Catholic networks like EWTN, maybe we should be promoting the Catholic Church on primetime stations and networks similar to those placed by Rev. Graham. Imagine these commercials proudly advertising Christ’s Kingdom on earth—the Catholic Church!—and inviting people to consider—and reconsider!—a life with Jesus Christ. It would be a great opportunity to welcome home

Catholics who feel “unaffiliated” with the Church they grew up in. How upsetting that would be for the Enemy! And how invigorating this would be to so many Catholic parents who pray for their children to return to the Catholic Church.

To be fair, there are probably some networks that would not allow Christian advertisements to air on their prime time networks—no matter how much money was offered!—but there are, no doubt, others that would be happy to do so. Like the non-Catholic producers of *The Chosen* and like the Rev. Franklin Graham, let us pray that our Catholic voice will be added to this Christian effort to push back against an overreaching government and to proclaim our right to worship comfortably in our churches! The First Amendment of our Constitution of the United States of America demands it!

Getting used to different could be applied to the popular slogan we hear so often these days: **The “new normal”**. The new normal means that Catholic schools are closed while Home Depot is thriving and abortion mills are “milling.” It means that people can enjoy dining in air conditioned restaurants and gambling in fancy casinos, while we are celebrating our Masses outdoors during a heat wave. The new normal means getting used to different rules for different people and purposes. For example, we are not allowed to let you to pray before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament inside our Perpetual Adoration Chapel—until now, opened continuously since 1988—but you can go to Starbucks and enjoy a nice latte.

Apparently, you can also take part in “peaceful” protests, but you cannot go inside a public library to quietly read a book and you cannot allow your children to enjoy themselves at a playground or park—because the libraries are closed and the parks are off limits. These “peaceful” protests, accompanied by rioting and looting, continue to take place in many of our cities, including Portland, Seattle, and Chicago. Watch this video to see what some “peaceful” protesters did to a man and his wife (warning...contains graphic violence and language). (Note: the driver stopped to help the person and only crashed his truck when trying to escape after the initial attack. He did not endanger any protesters. The accident occurred due to his truck’s power steering failing.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60cqUPxYThY>

Is this the new normal?

What does the new normal look like in light of today’s Gospel? It is challenging us to live our lives in a more determined way—to follow Jesus Christ courageously and to not act cowardly in the face of the Enemy. Living as a faithful Christian **MUST** be the new normal! We need to wake up to the atrocities that surround us! The Canaanite woman’s daughter is possessed! How many of us can see this possession among the youth of today? What they call “woke,” I call “possessed by an evil spirit”! What they call “women’s health care,” I call “sacrificing innocent life”. What they call “places of higher education,” I call “Socialist Day Care Centers”. Get used to different! Get “woke” Catholics, and smell the latte; we have work to do! This is the “new normal”.

In conclusion, I came across a quote recently: “Live your life as if every day is your birthday”. My brothers and sisters, **my challenge to you is to live your life as if every day is your LAST DAY!** This is how the saints live—in total and complete expectation of Life Everlasting! Think about these words: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for them that love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). Eternity is for real. Heaven is for real. Hell, too, is for real. Let us live our lives as if every day was our last. Be not afraid! Saints are made in times like these.

We need to find ways to be united with our brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations in our common fight for religious freedom in this country. They are doing good work, evidenced by *The Chosen*, Rev. MacArthur of Grace Community Church, Rev. Franklin Graham, and many others. Get used to different! Live your life unapologetically—with and for Christ! Let this be the new normal!

GOOD NEWS!

The Chosen has just announced that there will be a Season Two! To get ready for its debut, first watch Season One by one of the methods shown below:

To watch Season One of *The Chosen* **FREE (and also order GET USED TO DIFFERENT t-shirts!)**: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBXOFnNTULFaAnj24PAeblg>



To purchase the DVD of *The Chosen* for \$29.99: <https://studios.vidangel.com/the-chosen/multi/season-1-disc>

"The Greatest Gift"



This is my Body, broken for you.
Come share in this offering,
Let me live within you.

This is my Body, broken for you,
Think of me always,
In all that you do.

This is my Body, broken for you,
Cleansing your soul,
Your life to renew.

This is my Body, broken for you,
Love one another,
As I have loved you.