



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church Newsletter
January 30, 2022

My Dear Parishioners,

This week we continue our journey through St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. As I wrote previously, this was a very personal letter from St. Paul, for he had helped to establish the Church in Corinth and had personally catechized and baptized many of its members.

We know that he was writing to address sharp divisions that had developed in the Church. There were divisions between Jewish and Gentile converts. There also seems to have been divisions between different classes and personal vocations with the Church. Most sadly, the divisions had spilled over into what is central to our Christian Faith: the Sunday Celebration of Mass. The divisions, of course, had their root cause in sin: in the sins of pride, envy, jealousy, greed.

Thus, St. Paul wrote to remind the Church that there is no room for division, or cliques, or selfishness, or anything of the sort in the Church of Jesus Christ. He reminded them that their many gifts and talents had a source, a source in the One True God. He reminded them that God gave these gifts and talents and personal vocations for the building up of the Body of Christ, the Church, and not its tearing down.

This week, St. Paul reminds the Church in Corinth, and through them, reminds us, that it is not enough to simply do the right thing, but that in our relationship with Jesus Christ, we must do the right thing for the right reason, and that right reason is Love. Thus, St. Paul was making the case to them, as to us, that the many gifts which flow down from Heaven are actually God-given tools: tools to build up the Kingdom—a Kingdom of Love.

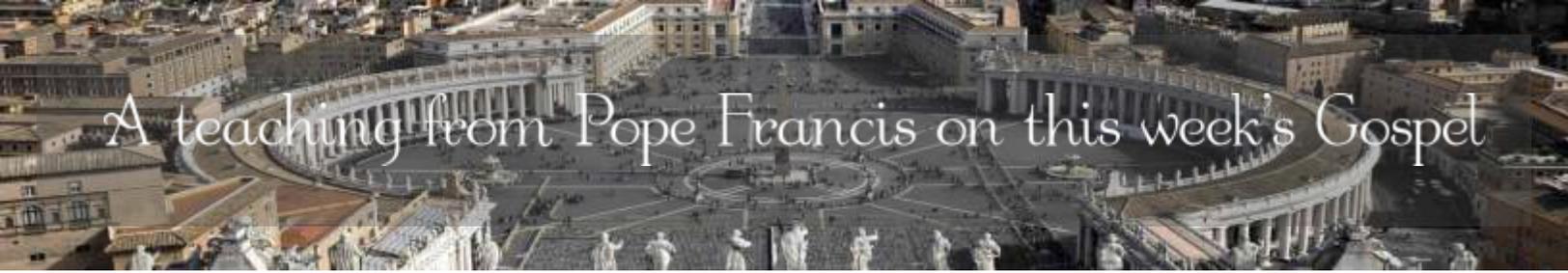
Which brings us to the nature of Christian Love. Christian Love is more than an attraction or a feeling. Christian Love is a wholehearted commitment to live the Great Commandment, day in and day out. Christian Love is moreover a gift, a gift received at our Baptism and a gift that needs God's Grace to continue to grow. What is most important about Christian Love, is that it is a Sacrificial Love, thus for us faithful Catholics that ultimate sign of Christian Love is nothing less than the Crucifix.

The effect of Christian Love is to force us to move outside of ourselves and to overcome any pride, envy, or selfishness in our lives. It then gives us a hunger to grow closer to God and to please Him above all else, and then gives us a thirst, a thirst to help our neighbor, and to especially help our neighbor to know God.

This week, we as a parish give thanks to our Caring and Merciful and Loving God for all of the tools that He has given us: our gifts, our talents, our personal vocations. We give thanks because these tools allow us to Love, to Love God with our whole body, mind, and soul, to our Love of neighbors as ourselves. We give thanks because they make us instruments of His Love.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us!

Fr. Michael J. Pawelko, Pastor



A teaching from Pope Francis on this week's Gospel

*Angelus Address, Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 31 January 2016*

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today's Gospel account once again, like last Sunday, brings us to the synagogue of Nazareth, the village in Galilee where Jesus was brought up in a family and was known by everyone. He, who left not long before to begin his public life, now returns and for the first time presents himself to the community, gathered in the synagogue on the Sabbath. He reads the passage of the Prophet Isaiah, who speaks of the future Messiah, and he declares at the end: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4:21). Jesus' compatriots, who were at first astonished and admired him, now begin to look sideways, to murmur among themselves and ask: why does he, who claims to be the Lord's Consecrated, not repeat here in his homeland the wonders they say he worked in Capernaum and in nearby villages? Thus Jesus affirms: "no prophet is acceptable in his own country", and he refers to the great prophets of the past, Elijah and Elisha, who had worked miracles in favor of the pagans in order to denounce the incredulity of their people. At this point those present are offended, rise up, indignant, and cast Jesus out and want to throw him down from the precipice. But he, with the strength of his peace, "passed through the midst of them and went away" (cf. v. 30). His time has not yet come.

This passage of Luke the Evangelist is not simply the account of an argument between compatriots, as sometimes happens even in our neighbourhoods, arising from envy and jealousy, but it highlights a temptation to which a religious man is always exposed — all of us are exposed — and from which it is important to keep his distance. What is this temptation? It is the temptation to consider religion as a human investment and, consequently, "negotiate" with God, seeking one's own interest.

Instead, true religion entails accepting the revelation of a God who is Father and who cares for each of his creatures, even the smallest and most insignificant in the eyes of man. Jesus' prophetic ministry consists precisely in this: in declaring that no human condition can constitute a reason for exclusion — no human condition can constitute a reason for exclusion! — from the Father's heart, and that the only privilege in the eyes of God is that of not having privileges, of not having godparents, of being abandoned in his hands.

"Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4:21). The 'today', proclaimed by Christ that day, applies to every age; it echoes for us too in this Square, reminding us of the relevance and necessity of the salvation Jesus brought to humanity. God comes to meet the men and women of all times and places, in their real life situations. He also comes to meet us. It is always he who takes the first step: he comes to visit us with his mercy, to lift us up from the dust of our sins; he comes to extend a hand to us in order to enable us to return from the abyss into which our pride made us fall, and he invites us to receive the comforting truth of the Gospel and to walk on the paths of good. He always comes to find us, to look for us.

Let us return to the synagogue. Surely that day, in the synagogue of Nazareth, Mary, his Mother, was also there. We can imagine her heart beating, a small foreboding of what she will suffer under the Cross, seeing Jesus, there in the synagogue, first admired, then challenged, then insulted, threatened with death. In her heart, filled with faith, she kept everything. May she help us to convert from a god of miracles to the miracle of God, who is Jesus Christ.

