

NOTRE DAME PARISH

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

"Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the tables of their masters."



A foreign woman approached Jesus in faith. And because of her faith, Jesus ministered to someone outside his culture, to the shock of his audience.

Are you at ease in today's multi-cultural climate? Do you have any contact with people from another culture?

Do you find your dealings with people of other cultures difficult?

A wise person once said: "We all have prejudices. What we do with them is the important issue."

Consider your own prejudices. What plan do you have to battle them?

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, August 15 @ 8AM
The people of Notre Dame Parish

Saturday, August 15 @ 4PM
Tom & Nancy Henry

Sunday, August 16 @ 9:30AM
Frank & Pat Flanagan

Monday, August 17 @ 8AM
Anton Kasuba

Tuesday, August 18 @ 8AM
John Benish, Sr.

Wednesday, August 19 @ 8AM
Anthony Benish

Thursday, August 20 @ 8AM
John Benish, Sr.

Friday, August 21 @ 8AM
Fran Lysaught

Saturday, August 22 @ 4PM
Norine Binder

Oremus – Let Us Pray

- For immigrants and families being detained or prevented from seeking refuge and safety
- For Nola Reed Wall and John Edward Collins, to be baptized this Sunday
- For a greater role and appreciation for women in the Church
- For a safe and reliable vaccine for COVID-19
- For administrators, teachers, parents, and students coping with the challenges of COVID-19
- For the sick and chronically ill of our parish and families; for their caregivers
- For honesty, integrity, and conscience in all that pertains to the upcoming elections

Why Was Jesus So Rude?

This Sunday's gospel is one of those that can be quite troubling to our image of Jesus. A Canaanite woman approaches Jesus for an exorcism on behalf of her possessed daughter. Jesus first ignores her, then he says, "It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs."

Like many scriptural passages, we will never know the original context. Cultural differences always play a part: the millenia chasm between today and the time of Jesus, as well as the gap between first-century Judaism and its foreign neighbors.

Biblical and rabbinic sources do include numerous references that associate dogs with violence and

uncleanliness, and frown on the practice of keeping them in one's home. Perhaps this was because the most commonly encountered dogs were scavengers who lived outside the city walls.

It appears that Greeks and Gentiles, such as the Canaanite woman, had a more familiar relationship with household pets than did the average Jewish person. As suggested by this woman, "yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Her culture differed from that of Jesus. It allowed their pets to be fed *while* the children eat. One could feed the children *and* feed the pets too!



"Not in insult, then, were Jesus' words spoken, but calling her forth, he revealed the treasure of faith laid up in her."

Saint John Chrysostom,
Homily 52 on Matthew

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PRAYER TO SAINT ROCCO

O great Saint Rocco,
deliver us, we beseech you,
from contagious diseases and
the contagion of sin.

Obtain for us a purity of heart
which will assist us to make
good use of health and to
bear sufferings with patience.

Teach us to follow your
example in the practice of
penance and charity so that
we may one day enjoy the
happiness of being with
Christ, our Savior, in heaven.
Amen.

July 16: Saint Rocco

Saint Rocco (c. 1348 – 1379) was born in southern France of noble parentage. Orphaned by the death of his parents, he distributed his wealth to the poor and became a pilgrim to Rome. On his journey, he passed through many regions stricken by plague, and became renowned for his care of victims and his power to heal.

Eventually he too contracted the disease and quarantined himself in a cave outside a town. The infection became evident by an open sore on his leg. There, in the woods, he befriended a dog who miraculously and faithfully brought him bread for sustenance. Soon the dog led its owner, a nobleman, to Rocco's cave, from where he was carried to the castle to recover.

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Part 5: My God Is Free to All

My God is free to all.
 My God doesn't have a price.
 Nobody and nothing can buy my God,
 neither money nor sanctity.
 My God is received free,
 just as the flowers receive the sun.
 Nobody merits God.
 I can call out to God; I can shout to God about
 my thirst and hunger for God.
 I can knock at God's door; I can cry out to God
 about my pain and my solitude.
 But I have no rights over my God.
 My God is a pure gift.
 God is the gift of my life.
 God is the One who must love me first.
 Only God can open the door to me.
 But my God is not avaricious,
 nor is my God stingy.
 My God gives abundantly,
 like the sun and the air.
 My God blooms beside all the ditches of life.
 My God flowers every moment for all people.
 But my God wants to be received as a gift.
 My God denies giving only to those
 who would put a price on God.
 My God, my free God, is difficult
 for modern men and women to accept.
 My God is difficult for those

who think they can buy everything,
 who want to own things,
 who despise anything
 that doesn't have a price
 who measure persons and things
 by the handful of gold they cost them,
 who love most
 what costs the most money.
 But my God does not change, because God is
 love, and love alone can give itself.
 Love is not sold.
 God is a love which demands only the answer
 of love, which in turn is also given free.
 Those who open their hearts to this free gift of
 love which is showered upon us continually
 will feel a new life within them.
 They will feel springing up in them, as the best
 of fruit, that unique, substantial love that is
 capable not of buying, but rather of enamoring
 God: a love that is love and nothing but love,
 a love which can no longer die and which
 always grows and is new every instant
 because it carries within it the unique
 joyful secret of the inexhaustible. +

The above excerpt is taken from the book, The God I Don't Believe In, by Juan Arias. This is the last excerpt in the series. The book is out of print and the author is long deceased.

Be Pro-Life. Wear a Mask.

When the majority of people hear the term *pro-life*, they immediately equate it with the issue of abortion – full stop. The reality, though, is that the pro-life issue is much broader than that. Saints, popes, and the US bishops have all addressed the issue and said so.

These days, as we face down the challenges of COVID-19, we have to adjust our way of thinking and living. What being pro-life looks like right now is taking precautions to protect those who are most vulnerable. And one of the easiest ways to do that is by wearing a mask.

Yet doing something so simple and selfless has somehow turned into a hot-button political issue with people crying out that being



asked to wear a mask is infringing on their civil rights. But what about human rights, such as a person's right to life? Isn't that the tagline of the pro-life movement? It's time for us to move from a me-centric view to a more we-centric one.

Many people who choose not to wear masks cite reports from early on in the crisis when the World Health Organization, the US surgeon general, and others questioned the effectiveness of masks. Those organizations have since reversed their stances, based on new information.

According to an editorial in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) "reviewed the latest science and affirms that cloth face coverings are a critical tool in the fight against COVID-19 that could reduce the spread of the disease, particularly when used universally within communities. There is increasing evidence that cloth face coverings help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others."

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Fr. Keith

Perhaps that's why the woman appears to take no offence at Jesus' insult, but persists in her faith that Jesus' powers and mission extend to all, not just Jews.

At first we are startled by Jesus' and his disciples' lack of sensitivity. But if we reflect more deeply, perhaps the text confronts us with our *own* insensitivity – to the strength of a desperate mother's persevering faith, to the demands of discipleship, and to the depths of mercy that make Jesus ready to bless anyone who comes to him in true faith.

If we think gospel incidents don't have relevance today, recall the brief encounter Pope Francis had with a pilgrim on New Year's Day. As he made his way down a line of people shaking hands and smiling, one woman would not release his hand and yanked the pope toward her. He was startled into anger, grimaced with pain, and slapped the woman's hand to get free. Media and others used the occasion to accuse the pope of hypocrisy, since he has been outspoken about violence against women.

Pope Francis apologized publicly and even later met with the woman.

Jesus and the Canaanite, Pope Francis and the pilgrim: both encounters point to authentic human nature. To be human is to encounter the unexpected. What matters is how we deal with it.

Father Keith & Rocco

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Director of the CDC, Dr. Robert R. Redfield, explained: “We are not defenseless against COVID-19. Cloth face coverings are one of the most powerful weapons we have to slow and stop the spread of the virus—particularly when used universally within a community setting. All Americans have a responsibility to protect themselves, their families, and their communities.”

We are in unprecedented times and uncharted territory, so we all must allow for some flexibility to learn about the virus and, if necessary, change course. And we must similarly adapt our roles for the health and safety of all. Right now, that means wearing masks to protect ourselves and others.

In 1971, Roman Catholic pacifist Eileen Egan introduced the “seamless garment” concept as a way to describe a holistic reverence for life in all its stages, incorporating issues such as unjust war, capital punishment, social injustice, and other issues that affect people’s lives. “The protection of life,” she said, “is a seamless garment. You can’t protect some life and not others.” In that same vein, the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin often spoke of the “consistent ethic of life.” The issues were individual, he noted, but at the heart of them all was valuing and defending human life. “When human life is considered ‘cheap’ or easily expendable in one area,” he once told a group, “eventually nothing is held as sacred and all lives are in jeopardy.”

Even St. John Paul II alluded to this idea in his 1995 encyclical “*Evangelium Vitae*” (“The Culture of Life”) when he wrote: “Therefore every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church’s very heart. Today this proclamation is especially pressing because of the extraordinary increase and gravity of threats to the life of individuals and peoples, especially where life is weak and defenseless. In addition to the ancient scourges of poverty, hunger, endemic diseases, violence, and war, new threats are emerging on an alarmingly vast scale.”

Certainly protection of vulnerable people during a pandemic would fit into those philosophies.

Do you remember the old acronym WWJD—What Would Jesus Do?—that was so popular in the ’90s? Well, if we asked ourselves that question right now given our current situation, I’m pretty sure the answer would be that Jesus would wear a mask and tell his followers to do so, too, because it’s the loving thing to do. And it’s the right thing to do. +

The above article is by Susan Hines-Brigger and appeared in the Saint Anthony Messenger, July 31, 2020.

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Saint Rocco

Saint Rocco traveled through northern Italy for two or three more years before he returned to his birthplace. Rocco is venerated in the Catholic Church as the protector against plagues, epidemics, and all contagious diseases. He is also revered, among other things, as the patron saint of dogs.

The iconography of Saint Rocco is considered unique because it depicts him with his left hand pointing to an open sore on his leg. Few images of saints expose any afflictions or handicaps.

Other notable images that accompany Rocco are the dog at his feet with bread, and the clothes, hat, and staff of a pilgrim.

Saint Rocco is particularly venerated in southern Italy and Sicily. Numerous cholera epidemics ravaged southern Italy after Rocco’s death, and the people turned to Rocco for protection against this plague, other illnesses, and for his help in daily life.

At the turn of the last century, millions of Italian immigrants brought their Saint Rocco devotion to the United States. Movie buffs will recall the *festa* scene in *Godfather II*, where the white-suited Don Fanucci attends the San Rocco festival in Little Italy, and is applauded for pinning a dollar bill on the saint’s garment as the statue is paraded through the street.

In the world of modern science, the patronage and intercession of saints like Rocco had come to seem irrelevant until recently. COVID-19 should disabuse us of such notions. +

Saint Rocco

