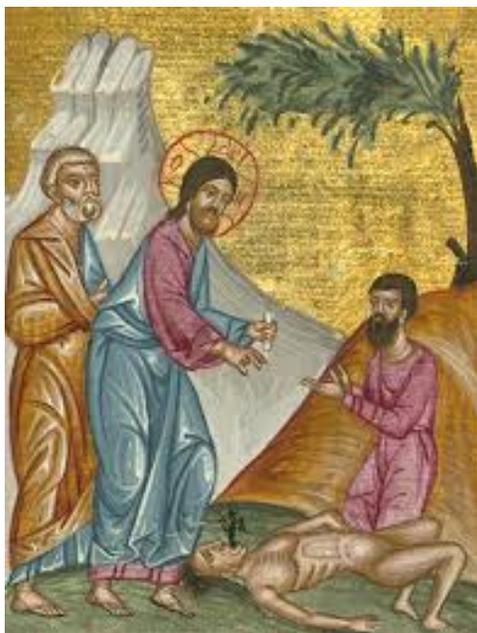


NOTRE DAME PARISH

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

"Quiet! Come out of him!"



When the demon-possessed man arrived in the scene, he addressed Jesus by name and in the plural. In other words, the demon tried to take control of the situation through Jesus' name and his status ("the holy One of God"). The demon claimed knowledge of Jesus.

And he spoke for his fellow demons ("Why do you interfere with us...? Did you come to destroy us?"). So, the lines of the battlefield were drawn. Jesus faced the host of demons in the land controlled by Satan himself. God's holy One was the invading force. [1:24]

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, January 30 @ 4PM
Tom & Margaret Maloney

Sunday, January 31 @ 9:30AM
Deacon Victor Janowski

Monday, February 1 @ 8AM
Jon McClain

Tuesday, February 2 @ 8AM
Robert Reed

Wednesday, February 3 @ 8:30AM
Roman Macudzinski

Thursday, February 4 @ 8:30AM
Jean Donnelly

Friday, February 5 @ 8AM
Glen McGeady

Saturday, February 6
8AM, Joan & Mike King
4PM, Tom, Florence, & young Tom
Gately

Oremus – Let Us Pray

- For the students, faculty, staff, and parents of Notre Dame School
- For celebration, support, and endurance as we observe Catholic Schools Week
- For wisdom and bipartisanship in legislating to exit from the effects of COVID-19 on health, livelihoods, the economy, and education
- For deliverance from the schemes and deceits of Satan in our world today
- For those held bound by addictions, greed, anger, and the desire for vengeance
- For the chronically ill of our parish and families
- For commitment to addressing climate change

Inauguration Day Mass

Unfortunately, media were prevented from covering the Mass that began the day of President Biden's inauguration. Attendants included about 150 invited guests from the two Elects' families, friends, and congressional colleagues.

I was interested in learning what music was used in the service, so I did a little research and found the information in *The National Catholic Reporter*.

The repertoire included hymns based on Irish melodies, African-American songs, and a few contemporary hymns we would recognize from our missalettes.

Arriving guests heard an organ prelude, "Priere," written in 1910 by the Belgian composer Joseph Jongen.

The second prelude was a mournful fiddle tune, "Ag Criost

an Sol," written by Irish composer Sean O Riada "that speaks of Christ as both the source and destination of our life's journey."

The cantor accompanied by violin and organ sang the hymn, "Be Thou My Vision".

Those familiar with Ken Burns' PBS masterpiece, *The Civil War*, would recognize the next prelude, "Ashokan Farewell" from that film.

Members of the St. Augustine Gospel Choir sang the soulful spiritual, "Jesus Is Here Right Now." This was followed by the processional hymn, also African-American, "We've come this far by faith."

Familiar to most of us would be "On Eagles' Wings," the Celtic Alleluia, "The Prayer of Saint Francis," Schubert's "Ave



Maria," and "America the Beautiful."

The organ postlude was J.S. Bach's "Fugue in C Major."

I do not know if the Mass was recorded (probably!). Until it's available, all of these songs can be found on YouTube performed by various artists.

Father Keith & Rocco

A Guide to Loving Your Conspiracy Theorist

By Brian J, Mockingbird Magazine



"And so, in conclusion, FDR knew about Pearl Harbor, and he allowed the attack to happen so that America would get involved in World War II. He has the blood of American patriots on his hands."

I still remember the silent cringe in that classroom 16 years ago as we witnessed a classmate self-destruct in front of us all. Our friend, who was no dummy by any stretch, had gone down the wrong Internet rabbit hole and made the Advanced-Knowledge-Pearl-Harbor conspiracy theory the cornerstone of his senior capstone project. To be fair, this was 2005. All the students of that era were still learning to parse fact from fiction online. But those of us in the classroom knew enough to know that, a mere month or so from graduation, our friend's grades and, by proxy, his college admission, were all suddenly in jeopardy.

That story came to my mind as I watched the images of the capitol riots last week. As conspiracy theories and the political divide

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William Blake: Lucifer the Archangel in his original glory

Pope Francis: the Devil is Real

from his Apostolic Exhortation, "Rejoice and Be Glad"

158. The Christian life is a constant battle. We need strength and courage to withstand the temptations of the devil and to proclaim the Gospel. This battle is sweet, for it allows us to rejoice each time the Lord triumphs in our lives.

159. We are not dealing merely with a battle against the world and a worldly mentality that would deceive us and leave us dull and mediocre, lacking in enthusiasm and joy. Nor can this battle be reduced to the struggle against our human weaknesses and proclivities (be they laziness, lust, envy, jealousy or any others). It is also a constant struggle against the devil, the prince of evil. Jesus himself celebrates our victories. He rejoiced when his disciples made progress in preaching the Gospel and overcoming the opposition of the evil one: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Lk 10:18).

More than a myth

160. We will not admit the existence of the devil if

we insist on regarding life by empirical standards alone, without a supernatural understanding. It is precisely the conviction that this malign power is present in our midst that enables us to understand how evil can at times have so much destructive force. True enough, the biblical authors had limited conceptual resources for expressing certain realities, and in Jesus' time epilepsy, for example, could easily be confused with demonic possession. Yet this should not lead us to an oversimplification that would conclude that all the cases related in the Gospel had to do with psychological disorders and hence that the devil does not exist or is not at work. He is present in the very first pages of the Scriptures, which end with God's victory over the devil. Indeed, in leaving us the Our Father, Jesus wanted us to conclude by asking the Father to "deliver us from evil". That final word does not refer to evil in the abstract; a more exact translation would be "the evil one". It indicates a personal being who assails us. Jesus

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taught us to ask daily for deliverance from him, lest his power prevail over us.

161. Hence, we should not think of the devil as a myth, a representation, a symbol, a figure of speech or an idea. This mistake would lead us to let down our guard, to grow careless and end up more vulnerable. The devil does not need to possess us. He poisons us with the venom of hatred, desolation, envy and vice. When we let down our guard, he takes advantage of it to destroy our lives, our families and our communities. "Like a roaring lion, he prowls around, looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet 5:8).

Alert and trustful

162. God's word invites us clearly to "stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph 6:11) and to "quench all the flaming darts of the evil one" (Eph 6:16). These expressions are not melodramatic, precisely because our path towards holiness is a constant battle. Those who do not realize this will be prey to failure or mediocrity. For this spiritual combat, we can count on the powerful weapons that the Lord has given us: faith-filled prayer, meditation on the word of God, the celebration of Mass, Eucharistic adoration, sacramental Reconciliation, works of charity, community life, missionary outreach. If we become careless, the false promises of evil will easily seduce us. As the sainted Cura Brochero observed: "What good is it when Lucifer promises you freedom and showers you with all his

benefits, if those benefits are false, deceptive and poisonous?"

163. Along this journey, the cultivation of all that is good, progress in the spiritual life and growth in love are the best counterbalance to evil. Those who choose to remain neutral, who are satisfied with little, who renounce the ideal of giving themselves generously to the Lord, will never hold out. Even less if they fall into defeatism, for "if we start without confidence, we have already lost half the battle and we bury our talents... Christian triumph is always a cross, yet a cross which is at the same time a victorious banner, borne with aggressive tenderness against the assaults of evil".

Spiritual corruption

164. The path of holiness is a source of peace and joy, given to us by the Spirit. At the same time, it demands that we keep "our lamps lit" (Lk 12:35) and be attentive. "Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess 5:22). "Keep awake" (Mt 24:42; Mk 13:35). "Let us not fall asleep" (1 Thess 5:6). Those who think they commit no grievous sins against God's law can fall into a state of dull lethargy. Since they see nothing serious to reproach themselves with, they fail to realize that their spiritual life has gradually turned lukewarm. They end up weakened and corrupted.

165. Spiritual corruption is worse than the fall of a sinner, for it is a

form of blindness. Everything then appears acceptable: deception, slander, egotism and other subtle forms of self-centredness, for "even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Cor 11:14). So Solomon ended his days, whereas David, who sinned greatly, was able to make up for disgrace. Jesus warned us against this self-deception that easily leads to corruption. He spoke of a person freed from the devil who, convinced that his life was now in order, ended up being possessed by seven other evil spirits (cf. Lk 11:24-26). Another biblical text puts it bluntly: "The dog turns back to his own vomit" (2 Pet 2:22; cf. Pr 26:11).

166. How can we know if something comes from the Holy Spirit or if it stems from the spirit of the world or the spirit of the devil? The only way is through discernment, which calls for something more than intelligence or common sense. It is a gift which we must implore. If we ask with confidence that the Holy Spirit grant us this gift, and then seek to develop it through prayer, reflection, reading and good counsel, then surely we will grow in this spiritual endowment. +

Continued from page 2, **LOVING**

continue to dominate the headlines, a national dialogue is coalescing around a fundamental question: how do you convince someone that their conspiracy theory is wrong? More broadly than the immediacy of current events, how do you get someone to change what they believe? These are, of course, extensions of another, more theological question: how can people change to be better? It's a question for the ages, not just in our own divided and divisive time.

Jesus had a remarkable insight on that question of changing people's hearts and minds. He doesn't offer a checklist of actions to perform, nor does he advocate the creation of a carrot-and-stick method of incentives. Instead, he advocates for humility and repentance ... in the person who wants others to change!

It's a quirky pattern evident throughout his ministry. A man comes to Jesus demanding that the rabbi intervene in an argument about his family's estate, and Jesus refuses to get involved (Luke 12). Instead, he takes the occasion to rail against the dangers of greed, presumably the greed of the man who asked for Jesus to intervene! Others ask Jesus if the massacre of some Galilean rebels was God judging those rebels for their sins (Luke 13). Jesus' response turns the tables: unless they repent, they will end up just like those who were massacred! Which is to say, whenever the question is about *other* people – “How do we get *them* to stop believing in conspiracy theories” – Jesus says in response, “Forget about them, what about *you*?”

If Jesus's strategy is right – redirecting outrage through a slice of humble pie – then perhaps there are some practical ways we can become useful in bringing God's love to the conspiracy theorists in our lives. If there's someone we love, whether they believe the tabloids or think jet fuel can't melt steel beams, here are a few questions to ask ourselves before we turn to our loved ones with our questions:

Have we become fully convinced that human beings are not, fundamentally, rational

creatures? Even though the biology community has dubbed our species *homo sapiens*, literally “the wise men,” the proliferation of social science research available suggests we may have been hasty in that designation. The matters of the mind are enslaved to the desires of our hearts, and so the expectation that human beings should be rational at all times and in all things is outdated at best – and naïve at worst. An adjusted anthropology will align our expectations as we work to love those captivated by a conspiracy theory.

Can we draw from our past personal examples of faulty thinking? In Romans, St. Paul articulates that one of the impacts of sin is how it corrupts the mind. Thinking becomes futile, wisdom and folly are confused, and our thought processes are corrupted (1:21-28). Theologians call this the noetic effect of sin: we don't just miss the mark when it comes to behavior, but our thought life also misses the mark.

Some might have thought, as noted above, that human beings are free and rational creatures. I once thought Hawaii was a state during World War II (it wasn't). An adult colleague once admitted he didn't know the moon had phases until someone pointed it out to him in college. Maybe we've worked the twelve steps and discovered ways in which our addiction co-opted our rationality to justify our self-destructive behaviors. If the Christian acknowledges that his or her own mind is prone to faulty thinking, it creates the space to view our peers with faulty thinking in a sympathetic light.

Are we prepared to make an imperfect attempt at unconditional love?

One of St. Paul's arguments in Romans is that God's unconditional love in Jesus's death and resurrection transforms our minds (Rom 12). It's worth asking what in us needs to die, mirroring Jesus's own willingness to die, so that someone else may be loved. Do we debate because we want to be viewed as intelligent? Do our deeply held political convictions need to die? When we are

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impatient or grow frustrated at another's opinions or ideas, the roots of that impatience usually reveal the beliefs or values that prevent us from loving someone with something akin to God's grace.

When my classmate made the bold pronouncement that FDR allowed Pearl Harbor to happen, our teacher stood up from his seat with a gentle smile. "Woah, woah woah. It seems as if you've found some unhelpful sites on the Internet that influenced your research. Let's talk after class and see if we can't sort this out." My classmate did not flunk his capstone, by my teacher's grace and goodwill. In fact, my friend went on to graduate from the Air Force Academy and join a special forces unit, the kind that went on missions so secret that, if he *actually* told me what he did, he might *actually* have to kill me. It's really a gracious ending to a story that might have derailed this student's life.

As the national conversation continues about how to respond to violent conspiracy theories, Jesus may just be on to something. A dose of humility might be the medicine we all really need. It was my teacher's kindness that changed the heart and mind of my classmate. Don't we all wish we had that kind of gentle patience in our life? Who knows? It might even create in us the kind of graciousness that could lead our loved ones to be captivated by another far more scandalous story. I mean, you know the story of what *actually* happened two thousand years ago at that empty Jerusalem tomb, don't you? +



LENT 2021



you are invited to join an

ONLINE

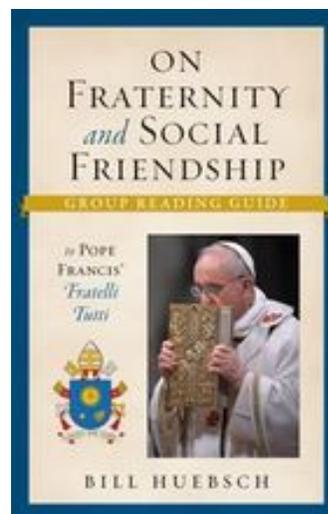
DISCUSSION GROUP

—reading together a guide to Pope Francis’ recent encyclical—

Fratelli Tutti

“On Fraternity and Social Friendship”

- When:** 10:00 to 11:00-ish in the morning
Fridays during Lent, starting Feb. 19
(not including Good Friday)
- Where:** in your own home, using Zoom *
on your computer or smart phone
- How:** email Marie Campbell to sign up,
to get more information, or to ask
about forming a group that meets at
another time:
matkcampbell@comcast.net
- Booklet:** Bill Huebsch’s new group reading guide,
provided to participants by the parish



*New to Zoom? No problem! Go to www.zoom.us and click on the orange tab that says “SIGN UP, IT’S FREE.” You can call Marie Campbell for help (878-1516).

We will have an optional and brief introductory meeting for anyone who wants to test their connection on Friday, Feb. 12, 10:00 am.