

NOTRE DAME PARISH

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

"To what shall we compare the kingdom of God?"



A mustard seed, among the smallest of the earth, slowly rises and erupts. It unfolds to reign as the largest of shrubs, ample enough for birds to nest and hatch in.

The reign of God, this matter of faith, hope, and love, this kingdom for the ages, need not measure well in isolated moments.

It is a living and growing thing.

So also our lives. Life is slow and subtle. Love takes time to show and grow. In life, little acts count. In fact, that is what a life is all about, a long parade of moments deceptively inconsequential.

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, June 12 @ 4PM

George Boeckling
Alan Kalk

Sunday, June 13 @ 9:30AM

Ruth Smith

Monday, June 14 @ 8AM

Kazwara, Martonisi, Szostak
Families

Tuesday, June 15 @ 8AM

Cheri Hruscoci

Wednesday, June 16 @ 8AM

John Benish, Sr.

Thursday, June 17 @ 8AM

Tom Fitzgerald

Friday, June 18 @ 8AM

Tom, Florence, & young Tom Gately

Saturday, June 19 @ 4PM

Genevieve Kowalski

Let Us Pray

- For protection from variants of COVID-19
- For a stronger commitment to studying and praying with the word of God
- For tender shoots, especially the young and those new to the faith
- For the sick and those who struggle with the disabilities of age
- For graduates and others pursuing new beginnings
- For an end to dysfunctional and partisan

Playing Mass

In my youth “playing Mass” was as common as “cowboys and Indians” or “playing doctor.” My older brother, an altar boy, first introduced me to it.

My play masses, however, were pre-Vatican II masses. My brother had copied all the Latin mass prayers on the blank side of a Spike Jones record album. It was used as one of the three altar cards that formerly stood at the ends and center of the altar. From plywood my Dad built a tabernacle and a bookstand. He fashioned a fiddleback chasuble from an old window shade, and painted a shrimp cocktail jar with gold paint as a chalice.

My mother provided the thick Latin missal she had used at her Catholic academy. My uncle, a

priest, had recorded his parish choir singing the Latin Mass, so I played that record when I celebrated “High Mass.”

Necco candies were the preferred substitute for communion wafers, but they weren’t always on hand. So instead I would drop pennies to the floor along an imaginary congregation and communion rail.

When I look back upon those days, I think how rich and real imagination is when you are a child. Recently watching the Netflix series, “Anne with an ‘e’”, I observed how the main character, Anne, is able to see things adults cannot see because of her imagination.

This is why, I believe, people fall away from the Church or



simply go through the motions. They have lost imagination. Jesus said, “Unless you become as little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”

Imagination does not mean “making things up.” Rather, it is a way of seeing things beyond their materiality or surface.

Continued, page four

Embracing the Kingdom of God



They that are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Psalm 92

Kingdoms of all kinds dominate the headlines – countries, political parties, social media and financial institutions are the newsmakers. However, the news of a kingdom that raises up the poor, rewards those who are forgiving, liberates captives and feeds the hungry hardly gets a mention, even in the footnotes of a nightly telecast or as a crumb on daily news sites. This kind of kingdom that reverses all the usual assumptions relies on its adherents to spread the message in word and deed, the news of what Jesus called the kingdom of God.

Early in the Gospel accounts, it is John the

Continued on page five



Alive With Love: The Sacred Heart of Jesus

By James Harvey, SJ

Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is a real person. He has a heart. This is the most challenging and consoling thing about him. In *him* we find the infinite and eternal God who chooses us and offers us a share in the Triune life. In all its material, historical and physical density, the '*him*' is the reality we cannot escape, erase or deny. *Jesus* is not a myth like one of the Greek gods taking on human or animal shape, nor is he some cipher for a philosophical idea of the transcendent that every human may recognise though it makes no further demand upon us. Jesus's reality and the claim that it entails shocks and resists all attempts to construct the category into which he will fit. The person of Jesus haunts and pushes us beyond our limits into new realms of thinking and existing. With him we always have to begin anew. With Jesus it is always personal; we always have to begin in either response to or refusal of the encounter. We cannot slip or evade the personal relationship that his person requires of us. This is the meaning of the

image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is always a personal, affective, devotional relation with the whole of Jesus, contained in the image of his heart alive with love.

We cannot look upon the wounded heart of Jesus without encountering a love that is so completely human. The humanity of Christ is before us in all its vulnerability and strength. The image of the Sacred Heart offers a deep intimacy and like all such relationships we may long for it but it can frighten us. To be so exposed and so committed and, of course, so vulnerable. Yet, the Sacred Heart of Jesus is also a waiting heart. In it we can experience something of the patient, generous love of God which will not coerce or threaten us. The love in the heart of Christ seeks only our love, and what good is a love that is not freely given? The heart of Jesus creates the sacred, personal space for that deeply hidden and intensely personal exchange

Continued next page

Continued, SACRED HEART

of 'heart to heart' –*cor ad cor loquitur*.

From our own experience with others we know that this intimacy can be fleeting even when we desire it. Often it can take many years of sharing and coming to know each other in the course of all life's twists and turns. True intimacy only really happens when we trust someone; it is a resting in them, an 'at-homeness.' So it is with Jesus. The Sacred Heart – his heart – is the unchanging guarantee of a love that waits for us, that makes a home for us, for all that we are and all that we carry. His heart is a sanctuary for us. The heart of Christ is an open heart. All can find their place in it for all have a place in it. There are no limits to the love of God that we discover in the heart of God's Son. When we allow ourselves to be drawn to that love, we find that we are also drawn beyond ourselves to a greater, deeper love, especially those whose own heart is wounded. Then we begin to understand the beauty and mystery of the Sacred Heart that is itself wounded. The wound is infinite because Jesus's love is infinite. It is also the mark of truth. This heart is no symbol of a false love. That it carries the wound of love – a love that knows the depths of betrayal and rejection – means that it also carries our truth as well as God's truth. We see here the consequences of our sin and that calls us into a greater truth. It also creates in us a greater

freedom. Unless we recognise this truth we cannot change; we always remain in our illusions and self-justifications, minimising the consequences and protecting our interests. That is how systems as well as individuals perpetuate and inflict suffering, whether it is on other persons or nature and natural life itself. In the wound of the Sacred Heart we see our own hardness of heart; we have to confront our solipsistic indifference. Yet Christ, too, does expose his heart not to crush us with just guilt but to heal our own woundedness and show us that sacrifice is not only the cost but also the gift of love. Devotion to the Sacred Heart is the school of such a free, courageous and responsive love; we learn again how to love, how to give without seeking return, how to grow beyond ourselves.+

**Continued from page 2**

The Greek philosopher, Plato, illustrated this in his Allegory of the Cave. He describes a group of people who have lived chained to the wall of a cave all their lives. The people watch shadows projected on the wall from objects passing in front of a fire behind them and give names to these shadows. The shadows are the prisoners' reality, but are not accurate representations of the real world.

Saint Paul took up this theme also, in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face."

Prayer, contemplation, and becoming close to nature are among the pathways to recognizing the realities beyond the shadows. It is also called mysticism. And anyone can become mystic if one cultivates it.

The late Jesuit theologian, Karl Rahner, made this observation in his spiritual writings. He wrote, "In the days ahead, you will either be a mystic (one who has experienced God for real) or nothing at all."

There is more than meets the eye out there!

Father Keith and Rocco

Continued from page 2, THE KINGDOM

Baptist who raises the profile of a godly kingdom that is bursting forth right under the nose of the Roman Empire. From the banks of the Jordan River, John proclaims that the “kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2).

While we may think that most at the time expected the restoration of the Davidic monarchy in Israel, there is ample evidence that expectations of a messiah were much broader and multi-faceted. These included anticipating someone who would revive the law of Moses and teach with authority, or become a new high priest, or even upend the domination of Rome.

The kingdom of God that John announces in preparation for Jesus, and that Jesus proclaims and embodies in his own public ministry, reveals that God is indeed active in history, but in ways that both fulfill and upend the usual expectations. Jesus does act and speak with authority (e.g., Matthew 7:24-29; 21:23-27; Mark 1:21-27; Luke 5:17-26); he is a perfect high priest (e.g., Hebrews 5:1-10; 9:11-28); and he does establish a kingdom. It is this kingdom of God that will be the subject of this series as we tease out its meaning through Jesus’ words and deeds.

While many of us may have the impression that the kingdom of God is something beyond our grasp and awaiting us in heaven, the Gospels are clear that in Jesus the kingdom is brought near and is, in fact, in our midst. Just consider these passages: Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7-8; 12:28; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:8-11; 11:20; 17:20-21.

Most biblical scholars agree that the proclamation of the kingdom of God is the core of the Gospel. It is the news that in all ways and in all places God is sovereign. Those who enter into a relationship with Jesus accept this absolute primacy of God, even in the midst of the realities of the world in which we live. When we live in right relationship with God

and with neighbor we are embracing this kingdom that Jesus initiates in his coming.

What shall we say, then? Is God’s kingdom among us? Yes. Is God’s kingdom still to come? Yes. The kingdom of God is now and it is not yet. Christians hold within us the reality that both are true. We struggle with the holy tension between what God is doing among us now and what God will complete for us in eternity.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells an ancient audience, and he tells us, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). We seek the kingdom in prayerful silence with God, in conversation with others of faith, and in doing the work that Jesus gives us to bring the kingdom to fullness – loving our enemies, caring for the poor, teaching the truth, calling out injustice and surrendering our sometimes faulty agendas.

Catherine Upchurch is the general editor of the Little Rock Catholic Study Bible and contributes to several biblical publications. She writes from Fort Smith.

2021 CATHOLIC SERVICES APPEAL
Notre Dame Parish Goal: \$37,796
YTD: \$14,620



HELP US MEET OUR GOAL!

SUPPORT THE NATIVITY PROJECT



Please support this project with your contribution, either using a contribution envelope available at the entrance of the church or by mailing your contribution to the parish office. Checks should be made out to the Notre Dame Nativity Project.