

# NOTRE DAME PARISH

## 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?*



How many of us have felt someone treated us unfairly? Has someone favored another over us? All of us have endured some hurt when our dreams are dashed or ambitions denied. Preferred treatment can lay the foundation for bitter memories.

Yet, does our ill treatment serve a greater good? Do others in need benefit? Sometimes we endure unequal treatment in the name of justice. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus presented the Kingdom as one of justice, not necessarily of fairness.

### MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, September 19 @ 11AM  
Memorial Mass for Joe Meell

Saturday, September 19 @ 4PM  
Agota & Vincentas Gudaitis

Sunday, September 20 @ 9:30AM  
Edward B. Dunigan

Monday, September 21 @ 8AM  
John Benish, Sr.

Tuesday, September 22 @ 8AM  
Patricia Shinn

Wednesday, September 23 8:30AM  
Tom, Florence & young Tom Gately

Thursday, September 24 @ 8:30AM  
Nora Dotson

Thursday, September 24 @ 7PM  
Confirmation Mass

Friday, September 25 @ 8AM  
Yvonne McGill

Saturday, September 26 @ 1AM  
Wedding of Matt Mayer & Charity Garwood

Saturday, September 26 @ 4PM  
Earl & Margaret Courtney Wedding Anniversary

### Oremus – Let Us Pray

- For our graduates who will receive the sacrament of Confirmation this Thursday
- For the unemployed and those being evicted from their homes
- For serious international attention to Climate Change; for the conversion of our bad practices of waste and indifference
- For victims of wildfires, floods, and hurricanes
- For those who do not receive a just or living wage
- For an end to political obfuscation and dishonesty in our government
- For the security of our ballots in the upcoming

## The Church Exists in the Real World

In 1963, my parents and I were shopping in the mall at Park Forest, Illinois. It happened that the Otto Preminger movie, *The Cardinal*, was playing that night at the mall theater. I was already considering a vocation to the priesthood, but that movie had considerable impact on me.

The movie is a panorama of political and pastoral issues that marked the first half of the twentieth century. Those who say the Church should stay out of politics really do not understand the history of the Church, its mission, and the grave challenges it has encountered in every generation. And seldom are they *new* challenges.

*The Cardinal* follows the life of one Boston priest, Stephen

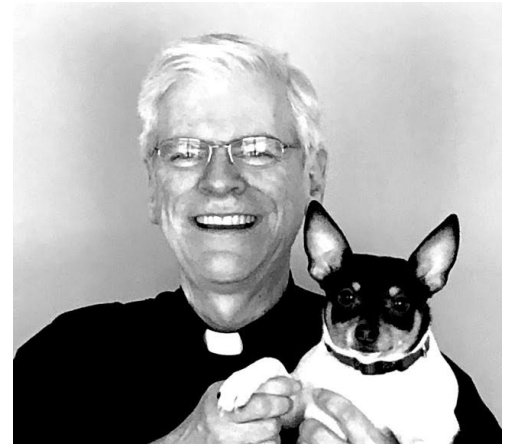
Fermoyle, from his ordination in 1917 through the rise of German fascism to his elevation as a “prince of the Church” as a Cardinal.

In between, Fermoyle encounters just about every moral, religious, and political issue of the day.

Recognized as a potential rising star in the Church, he falls under the patronage of his archbishop, who seeks to teach him humility by making his first assignment far away in a poor, rural parish led by a dying pastor who has multiple sclerosis.

Meanwhile, in his own family, his sister has fallen in love with a Jewish boy whom

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the family won't acknowledge unless he converts to Catholicism. His sister loses her boyfriend, and angrily rebels to a promiscuous life. Pregnant out of wedlock, her baby is too large and the doctor reports that it is too late to perform a C-section. Fermoyle must make a moral

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## Addressing Climate Change Is a Moral Imperative



*“To contaminate the earth’s water, its land, its air, and its life – these are sins”*  
Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*

Many people are familiar with the Book of Genesis referring to humanity’s “dominion” over the earth (1:28). We often misunderstand this to mean we humans have free rein to exploit creation for our own gain, often at others’ expense. Rather, God, in providing for us through a life-giving world, bestowed upon humanity the responsibility of stewardship.

In *Laudato Si’* (On Care for Our Common Home), Pope Francis clarifies that stewardship is an act of respect for creation. The world is more than a collection of resources for utilitarian consumption.

Pope Francis explains that creation is worthy

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## Rethinking the Future with Faith

by Sarah Sanderson

September 10 was supposed to be my first day of teaching online. Almost exactly six months before, I stood in a classroom and asked my students if reports of the coronavirus made them feel afraid. It turned out to be the last conversation we would have face to face. That evening, our governor canceled school, and the remainder of the year was eventually scuttled.

Last week was supposed to be a time to establish connection with a new crop of students and to usher in a new kind of normal with virtual teaching. But late Wednesday afternoon in Clackamas County, Oregon, the color of the air changed. I saw great orange-gray billows piling up over the roof, and the sun looked like a red eye blinking down through the haze.

The next day, smoke poured in, obscuring first the distant hills, then the nearer hills, then the trees at the end of our street. Finally, at 2 o'clock that afternoon, when local officials moved the boundary of the evacuation zone from five miles away to five

blocks away and as ash began to drift down onto our laurel hedges, I decided to pack up my kids and go. I filled my car with birth certificates, photo albums, and computers and then drove away, trying to stay ahead of the encroaching flames.

The West Coast fires aren't the first disaster of this year. As the calamities pile up, my friends and I keep saying to one another, "2020!" As if this year is a one-off. As if, when the calendar turns to January 1, 2021, our troubles will be over. But as the year drags on, I'm finding it harder to hope for the possibility of better times anytime soon. What if 2020 is not an anomaly but a bellwether? What if the problems accumulating now – climate change and racial reckoning, political division and disease control – get worse before they get better?

As I drove up the freeway surrounded by smoke and bumper-to-bumper traffic, unable to see the mountains and trees, unable to see the water under

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the bridge as we crossed from Oregon into Washington, I thought of the Israelites in the desert, wandering along after the pillar of fire and the cloud of smoke. They'd had a doozy of a year themselves. Some of the plagues had been reserved for the Egyptians, but other hardships had fallen on the Israelites: the late-night escape, the pursuing army, and the walk through the middle of a sea.

When they began to follow God into the desert, they had no idea that 40 years would pass before they emerged. Would it have been better if they had known? Probably not. They didn't need to see the end from the beginning. All they needed to see was where God led. All they needed to watch was the movement of the cloud. "At the Lord's command they encamped, and at the Lord's command they set out" (Num. 9:23).

In these days of 2020, we are all a bit like the ancient Israelites: evacuees from the world as we knew it, headed out into the unknown. We still write things on our calendars, of course. We cast our visions and make our plans. In past years, some of us have gotten away with imagining that the pages of those planners depict the future with accuracy. But 2020 has laid bare the truth that our times have always been in God's hands. What will happen next year or next week? Will school be canceled by a pandemic or a wildfire? What disaster will

strike next? We cannot know.

I used to wonder why God chose to appear to the Israelites by day in a cloud of smoke. A pillar of fire, at least, gives light and heat. Smoke, on the other hand, reduces visibility. It disorients and obfuscates. But on that long freeway drive, I saw the symbolic purpose of smoke: It forces us to admit that we can't see where we're going, and it forces us to rely on God.

*Sarah Sanderson has an MFA in creative nonfiction from Seattle Pacific University and teaches creative writing and public speaking to K-12 students near Portland, Oregon. This article was taken from Christianity Today, September 14, 2020.*

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Fr. Keith

decision between saving the baby's life or his sister's.

This provokes a crisis of faith in the priest (now a Monsignor), and he takes a two-year sabbatical as a lecturer in Vienna. He falls in love but does not violate his vows.

Returning to his ministry, he is sent to the United States on a mission to assist a black priest in Alabama, stalked and tortured by the Ku Klux Klan. There he encounters racist Catholics on a picket line with posters reading, "Segregation is God's law." When he asks a parishioner where she learned that, she replies, "Father, it's in the Bible."

After this assignment, Fermoyle is made a bishop, and he is sent by the Holy See to Austria to persuade a cardinal there not to cooperate with the Nazis (Historically, this was Cardinal Innitzer of Vienna, who had church bells rung to welcome Hitler's Anschluss in 1938.)

Fleeing for his life, Fermoyle escapes to return to Rome, where he is named a cardinal at the dawn of World War II.

This story, based on a book by Henry Morton Robinson in 1950, was made into a movie in 1963, at the very beginning of Vatican II. All the pressing issues that Fermoyle encountered were addressed during the Council: pre-marital sex, contraception, abortion, racism, fascism, interfaith marriage, and social justice. It shows that the Church can never separate itself from the issues of the day.



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of care because God created it: “Even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of [God’s] love.”

Whenever a forest is cut down for development or agriculture (for products such as beef, coffee, or gasoline), how many “least of beings” are destroyed for our own consumptive lifestyles? “We take [ecosystems] into account . . . because they have an intrinsic value independent of their usefulness. . . . Although we are often not aware of it, we depend on these larger systems for our own existence.”

This interrelatedness between human and nonhuman creation has been evident during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Salvific love for one another and the environment depends on selfless actions: “These attitudes also attune us to the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us. . . . Social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a ‘culture of care’ which permeates all of society.”

By extension, we can work as a global community to solve climate change – something the church recognizes as a problem that must be addressed.

Stewardship of creation dictates that, rather than consuming whatever we want, we take only what we need: “Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little.” This is especially true in our daily overconsumption of resources and energy that, as Pope Francis states, “leads to the planet being squeezed dry beyond every limit.”

This challenging time has revealed not only our human frailty but also how much we depend on a healthy environment for both spiritual renewal and for life itself.

The pandemic crisis has also afforded a greater awareness of our interconnectedness with all creation.

In the end, we will be judged on how well we have loved God and each other. Both demand that we “till and keep” God’s creation and care for our common home.”

Pope Francis says that not fulfilling our charge as caretakers of creation is tantamount to sin, so caring for creation is critical to our salvation. +

## DON'T FORGET THE CATHOLIC SERVICES APPEAL



Diocese of Gary

COLORING PAGE: The parable of the vineyard workers.

