

NOTRE DAME PARISH

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

"Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of heaven before you."



If a celebrity professes repentance, the disbelieving whisper, "It's only for the publicity." If a politician works for the good of his or her district, the talking heads declare, "It's pork-barrel politics." The human condition limits real change. Human nature favors the dark side. The sinner will always sin. But are the cynical realistic or merely self-righteous?

Are they so absorbed dissecting the morass of humanity they fail to see the power of divinity? Does the pride of their judgment cloud their faith?

Where you think you hear the call of the Lord in your life? How is God leading you to change? Pray for the wisdom to clearly discern the Lord's voice and the power to change.

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, September 26 @ 1PM
Mayer-Garwood Wedding

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

Sunday, September 27 @ 9:30 AM
Patricia N. Flanagan

Monday, September 28 @ 8AM
Nora Dotson

Tuesday, September 29 @ 8AM
Genevieve Kowalski

Wednesday, September 30 @ 8:30AM
John Benish, Sr.

Thursday, October 1 @ 8:30AM
Patricia Shinn

Friday, October 2 @ 8AM
John Benish, Sr.
Glen McGeady

Saturday, October 3 @ 8AM
Joan & Mike King

Saturday, October 4 @ 4PM
Margaret Courtney Birthday

Oremus – Let Us Pray

- Theodore James Wooten, to be baptized this Sunday
- For a proper examination of conscience as we prepare to choose our candidates for election
- For confidence in the integrity of the upcoming local and national elections
- For rejection of the growing movement to legalize euthanasia in Europe and the US
- For an end to the federal executions taking place regularly in Terre Haute, Indiana
- For the victims of crime and those who mourn them
- For the pursuit of racial justice and concord
- For those suffering from climate events

What's Your Attention Span?

Last December, the Pew Research Center on Religion and Public Life published the results of a survey that measured various aspects of sermons. The survey was admittedly partial; it studied only sermons that were posted or live-streamed on the Internet, around 50,000. The survey was conducted between April 7 and June 21, 2019, a period which included Easter.

Among the interesting take-aways is the difference between the vocabulary of Christian traditions. For example, Evangelical white Protestant preachers use words like "eternal hell," "lose...salvation," "trespass...sin." Historically black churches use expressions like "powerful hand,"

"hallelujah... come," "neighbor...tell," and "hand...praise." Catholic preachers use words such as "homily," "diocese," "Eucharist," and "parishioner."

Across all denominations, preachers are more likely to refer to books from the New Testament (90%) than the Old Testament (61%).

Most interesting, however, is the length of sermons/homilies. The average length across all Christian denominations is 37 minutes! Historically black churches have an average 54 minute sermon. Evangelicals preach for 39 minutes, Mainline Protestants for 25 minutes. And guess how long Catholic priests or deacons preach: 14 minutes!



Studies show that the average person has a 7-minute attention span. Beyond that, the preacher has to use creative means to maintain attention and interest.

My seminary homiletics professor taught us to make our point and be done! Anything beyond that can be self-indulgence.
Father Keith & Rocco

October 2: The Holy Guardian Angels



The Holy Guardian Angels are the patron saints of the Diocese of Gary.

Angels are real – and they're actively involved in the world, in the church, even in our own lives.

We humans are an interesting breed. Blessed as we are with a natural curiosity, we have plumbed the depths of the earth and sent satellites millions of miles into space. We have explored the tiniest of atoms and the most majestic of mountains. But for all our delving into the physical world, we are still strangely uninterested in the spiritual world.

So now, let's do a bit of exploration into the realm of angels. While there is much about the angels that we probably will never understand on this side of eternity, God has given us many glimpses into their character and ministry. He has shown us just enough to prove how much he loves us. He has shown us enough to encourage us as well, for the angels prove that we are never alone in

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October is traditionally dedicated to the Holy Rosary.

As much as we may love Christ, the Virgin Mary can always lead us to a deeper love and a more uplifting perspective of faith in him.

The beauty of the Rosary is that it can be prayed on so many levels, in so many places, individually or communally. [Moreover, the Rosary is a] prayer that spans a wide variety of human interactions. Because the prayers of the Rosary are memorized, we can pray it while doing other tasks, as if we were washing the dishes but at the same time enjoying the company of our family. We can pray it with others, analogous to a family get-together. Or we can spend intimate moments with Jesus as we contemplate the mysteries of his life and death.

Most Catholics are very familiar with the Rosary, but many are surprised when they discover the level of depth that is possible while “telling the beads.” An essential component of the Rosary is the association of one of the mysteries of Christ’s life with each decade. The importance of these mysteries was well expressed by Pope Paul VI, who

called them the “soul” of the Rosary (*Marialis cultus*, 47) because it is precisely in these meditations that we come to know the various aspects of Jesus Christ’s work to save the world from sin and separation from God. The first set of five mysteries are called “Joyful” and meditate on Jesus’ birth, infancy, and childhood, especially as recorded in St. Luke’s Gospel. The Luminous Mysteries consider key events from Christ’s public ministry. The Sorrowful Mysteries consider his suffering and death, and the Glorious Mysteries consider his resurrection and its aftermath.

There are a number of reasons to meditate on these mysteries while praying the ten Hail Marys of each decade. First, we learn to approach each mystery from the perspective of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Recall that Our Lady was present at many of these events, not only in the events surrounding Jesus’ birth, but also at the wedding feast of Cana

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and while Jesus carried his cross and was crucified. She was with the apostles in the upper room at Pentecost, so we can also safely assume that she saw the risen Lord Jesus and perhaps his ascension. Of course, she experienced her own assumption and crowning in heaven. By repeating the Hail Mary, we address her with those greetings of St. Gabriel and St. Elizabeth, and then we ask for her prayers as we consider the mysteries. In this process, it is as if we were trying to look at each mystery of salvation from her maternal perspective, seeking to love Jesus Christ, the center of each mystery, as she does. I assume that the Virgin Mary had a more personal and a more highly motivated love of Jesus than we sinners do. As much as we may love Christ, the Virgin Mary can always lead us to a deeper love and a more uplifting perspective of faith in him.

Another reason to keep returning to these mysteries is to integrate the cycle of all twenty mysteries into the rhythm of our lives. At times the temptation may be to focus on the mysteries we like – perhaps the warmth of the nativity or the glory of the resurrection or the power of Pentecost. While it is permissible to feel drawn to emphasize a certain aspect of the mystery of salvation, as do many of the religious orders – the Passionists or the Resurrectionists, for example – the Christian faith encompasses all aspects of salvation. Praying through the

cycle of the twenty mysteries will remind us to balance our meditation on all the key mysteries of salvation.

Some people pray the Rosary while driving or walking; because the prayers are memorized, this is easy to do. And given the temptation we all face to express anger at other drivers, we may find that praying a Rosary while we drive is a constructive thing to do! It's also a good way to keep a prayerful attitude while performing a task that might lend itself to distraction. Two friends can take a walk and pray the Rosary aloud, or a whole parish can pray the Rosary together, as we do at St. Elias Maronite Parish every Sunday before the 10:30 a.m. *Qurbono* (Aramaic for "Mass").

Many people pray the Rosary in church or in a private room of the house that is free of distractions. The quiet and the greater attention that are possible in such an environment can enable us to take more time to concentrate on the individual mysteries of the Rosary. A variety of aids to meditating on the mysteries are available, including books or pamphlets called "Scriptural Rosaries," which provide one verse of Scripture for each Hail Mary in every decade, or those with short reflections on each mystery. A person might do well to look

up the mysteries in the Bible and read a small part of that passage, either at the beginning of each decade or in small sections between each Hail Mary. Other people simply focus on their own imaginative sense of each mystery, while still others concentrate on the words of the Hail Mary, the Our Father, or the Glory Be. Everyone is free to approach the Rosary according to one's own preference. However, the more open in heart and mind we are to the prayers and the mysteries, the greater will be the depth of prayer we experience.

From Mitch Pacwa, SJ, How To Listen When God Is Speaking, The Word Among Us Press, 2011.

DON'T FORGET THE CATHOLIC SERVICES APPEAL



**NOTRE DAME'S GOAL:
\$36,700**

**Y-T-D PLEDGED
\$3,770**

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this world. These mighty, compassionate, and wise beings are yet another piece of evidence that God truly has blessed us with “every spiritual blessing in the heavens (Ephesians 1:3)!

What Is an Angel? First and foremost, we know that they were created “through him and for him” – Jesus, that is (Colossians 1:16). We know that they are “purely spiritual creatures” who have “intelligence and will” (*Catechism*, 330). We know that they are “ministering spirits sent to serve, for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation” – that is, us (Hebrews 1:14). And we know that angels have been active in this grand story of salvation from the beginning.

But what do angels do? The word “angel” comes from the Greek word *angelos*, which means messenger. In his commentary on Psalm 103, St. Augustine tells us: “ ‘Angel’ is the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their nature, it is ‘spirit’ ” (On *Psalm* 103, 1, 15). In other words, angels are pure, immortal spirits; and what they do is act as messengers, or ambassadors, for God. And as ambassadors, they do more than just deliver messages. Many stories in the Scriptures depict them acting on God’s behalf, even wielding divine power to bring about his plans and purposes.

Heavenly Guardians. Jesus taught us: “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father” (Matthew 18:10). The church has always understood this to mean that all of God’s children are protected by guardian angels: “Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life” (*Catechism*, 336).

Reading this passage, we may think: “What a nice, comforting thought! God has given each one of us a guardian angel.” But St. Jerome saw in this verse something more profound than a simple sense of comfort and encouragement. “How great the dignity of the soul must be,” he wrote, “since each one has from his birth an angel commissioned to guard it” (*Commentary on Matthew*, 18, 2).

Where many feel comfort, Jerome felt awe. The mere fact that each of us has an angel – a powerful, immortal, spiritual being – protecting us and guiding us showed Jerome how important we are. It

showed him how great our stature is, and how deeply our heavenly Father honors and loves us.

The words of the psalmist not only confirm this truth, they provide us with a vivid image that reinforces how valuable we are in our Father’s eyes: “God commands his angels to guard you wherever you go. With their hands they shall support you, lest you strike your foot against a stone” (Psalm 91:11-12). The image reminds us of how a father will lift his child high above a crowd so that she can see a parade. Or it makes us think of the way a mother will hold her son’s hand so that he won’t get lost in a crowd. It’s an image of tenderness and concern, an image of protection and delight, an image of promise and inspiration.

Guardian angels lift us above the ways of the world so that we can see the ways of God. They hold our hands so that we won’t lose our way in this world. As Pope Pius XII once said, angels have the task of “keeping careful watch over us so that we do not become separated from Jesus. . . . They are by our side, helping us to go even higher in our union with God” (October 3, 1958).

An Encounter with an Angel. Guardian angels are always working behind the scenes to protect us from temptation, to guard our hearts and minds, and to help us deal with any danger or difficulty we may face. Take, for example, the following story from a reader.

“Having a son on the autism spectrum often leads to many challenges and new opportunities for us to see God’s hand at work in our lives. I can remember a time a few years ago when Sam told us that he saw his guardian angel. At this time, he was unable to speak in complete sentences, and we were having thirty tantrums a day because communication was so difficult for him. My husband was traveling on business, and it was bedtime. I had come back into Sam’s room to try to settle him down again because his sleeping habits were not very good.

“As I stood in the dark next to him, I heard him say, as clear as a bell: ‘It’s okay, Mom. The angel said: ‘Don’t be sad, Sam. I know you’re sad because your daddy is away. He’ll be back soon, so don’t worry.’ Then he lay down and went right to sleep,

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leaving me staring in amazement. He had just used perfect language and then put himself to sleep with no meltdowns! When I couldn't understand my son and he couldn't express himself to me, God solved that problem through his guardian angel."

Led by an Angel. Angels are real. They are actively involved in the world, in the church, even in our own lives. God wants to sharpen our spiritual senses so that we can begin to detect how much they are helping us – preparing us to meet Jesus and equipping us to serve him and his church. He wants us to believe that he has sent angels to protect us, to

guide us, and to inspire us. So be open to the way your guardian angel is trying to lift your heart to heaven. Let him lead you and draw you closer to Jesus every day. +

This article is excerpted from "Hidden Messengers, Heavenly Guardians, Spiritual Companions, The Word Among Us, September 2018

