

# NOTRE DAME PARISH

## 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

*"Master, I want to see!"*



Marvels and astonishing feats begin with a vision. Someone somewhere tilts his or her head in a different way and sees what was not seen before. The mind's eye pictures the impossible as possible. Ingenuity and hard work make the possible real and available.

Miracles also require a vision that makes the impossible possible. Unlike marvels or feats, miracles require a level of faith. Miracles require people to trust in a power greater than they possess. On a dusty road, a blind beggar saw with faith what was possible.

### MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, October 23 @ 4PM  
Joseph Moerschbaecher  
Joan Langley

Sunday, October 24 @ 9:30AM  
Fr. James Meade

Monday, October 25 @ 8AM  
Deceased/Gavin Family

Tuesday, October 26 @ 8AM  
Susan Sheridan Joyce

Wednesday, October 27 @ 8:30AM  
John McClain

Thursday, October 28 @ 8:30AM  
Al Slattery

Friday, October 29 @ 8AM  
Al Slattery

Saturday, October 30 @ 4PM  
Judy Haas

### Let Us Pray

- For the eternal rest of parishioner, Joan Langley; for all who mourn
- For the blind and all who have eye or vision problems
- For those searching for God
- For the Holy Spirit to renew the Church's ability to listen to the signs of the times
- For the world leaders who will gather in Scotland to address climate change
- For reverence for all human life from conception to natural death
- For Christians and other religious groups persecuted for their beliefs
- For those who adopt children and teens

## Can We Talk About Faith Anymore?

At last week's Diocesan Synod meeting, the gathering of priests and laity voted on the importance of a number of topics related to the Church such as religious education, parish renewal programs, and outreach to young people. The voting categories were "extremely important," "important," "not so important," and "not important." On the subject of preaching, the majority vote was "important" as contrasted with "extremely important" (just slightly). Although this was not a scientific poll, the result surprised me because for at least forty years, every Catholic Church survey, papal document, and conference has emphasized the essential importance of good preaching to the Church's

mission.

Until the late 1960s, Catholics heard what was called a "sermon" at Mass. Sermon is from the Latin, "a word." They were topical—i.e., talks on themes such as charity, virtue, sin, heaven, hell and damnation, the sacraments, Mary, and devotions.

As a result of the Second Vatican Council, the priest or deacon was charged with preaching a "homily." A homily is a study and application to life of a scriptural passage(s). Candidates for diaconate and priesthood study "homiletics" in the seminary

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*"A man who first tried to guess what the public wants and then preached that as Christianity because the public wants it would be a pretty mixture of fool and knave."*

C.S. Lewis

## "Be Thou My Vision": A Hymn of Celtic Origin



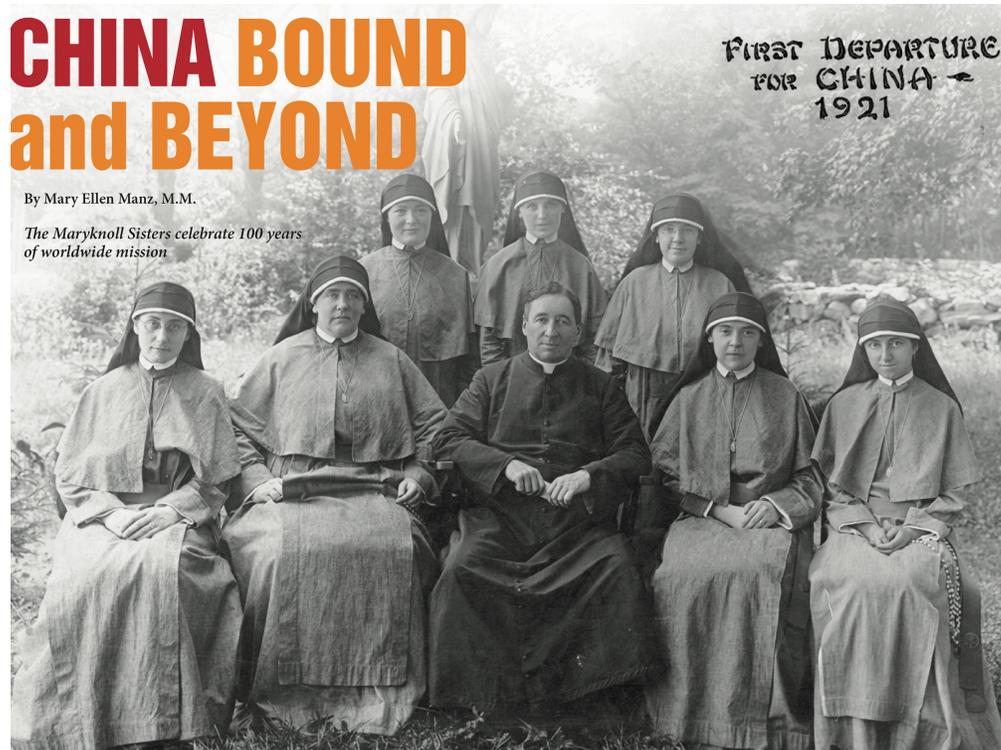
*"Be Thou with me,  
Be I with Thee, Lord"*

Millions have found in the humble prayer text and lyric tune, "Be Thou My Vision" a vehicle for praise and worship. It offers a singular voice of fierce devotion rooted in medieval Celtic Christianity that is still relevant today.

The eighth-century prayer was composed in Old Irish:

*Rob tum o bhoile  
a Comdi cride  
Ni ni nech aile,  
ach tri secht nime...*

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## Maryknoll Missionary Sisters – 100 Years

September 12, 1921: the first Maryknoll sisters set out for mission in China. Their departure was both joyful and sobering, as they bid farewell to families and homeland for life. Travel by air was unheard of, so the six women underwent a rough sea journey of 40 days to Kowloon, Hong Kong. They were relieved to see Maryknoll priests and brothers on shore shouting and waving in welcome. Sisters Paul McKenna, Lawrence Foley, Barbara Froehlich, Rose Leifels, Monica Moffatt and Imelda Sheridan had landed. A century of sisters in foreign mission would unfold.

At the beginning of the 20th century, brave young Catholic men and women aspired to travel to China, willing to give their lives to spread the Gospel of Jesus and “to save souls.” The first Maryknoll men who arrived in 1918 had become aware that women missionaries were needed to minister to Chinese women. However, many, especially in the Vatican, doubted that American women could withstand the rigors of life in the

Orient.

Full of zeal and romantic ideas of being missionaries, the sisters were inexperienced and unprepared for life in China. But, fortified by their deep faith – and the saving grace of a sense of humor – they rolled up their sleeves and went to work.

The women scrubbed the walls and floors of the old house where they set up residence. Very soon they had a small chapel for the Blessed Sacrament.

In 1922, six more sisters arrived. At the invitation of Maryknoll Father Francis X. Ford, a group of sisters went to Yeungkong, in the south. There Father Ford put them in charge of a school, a house for the elderly and blind girls, an orphanage and a dispensary.

Sister Gertrude Moore, a nurse, ran the dispensary. Within 10 months she treated some 6,000 cases of worms, skin ailments, blood

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poisoning and eye infections. When a typhoid epidemic broke out, Sister Gertrude attended 50 to 100 patients a day, until contracting the disease herself and dying a few weeks later. This was a terrible blow for the fledgling group. Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, the Maryknoll Sisters' mother superior, visited the sisters in China for seven months. She shared their grief over the death of Sister Gertrude and experienced the difficult living conditions endured by her young sisters. For example, the only means of local travel was on filthy "junks," boats overcrowded with crated livestock and a bucket for sanitary facilities. During Mother Mary Joseph's visit, Father Ford observed how easily the Chinese women and children related to her and the sisters. He asked if she would allow pairs of sisters to visit rural women on their homesteads. It was unacceptable for men to do so. The sisters could stay with families, making friends with and learning from them. Mother Mary Joseph heartily approved: wasn't this the way Jesus sent his disciples out to evangelize, two by two? Maryknoll Sister Paulita Hoffmann, assigned to the area of Hakkaland in 1938, recalled, "Father Ford told us very emphatically, 'Schools and orphanages, the Christians will build later; you are here to bring them the gift of faith and teach the Christian doctrine.'" "The rub was, we had to learn the local dialect of the women,

which was different from Cantonese," Sister Hoffmann explained. Much laughter ensued, she said, as the sisters attempted to repeat words using inflections the village women taught them. "After carefully copying what we heard in our notebooks, when we would go home, we would give the new words and phrases to two of the sisters who were rewriting them in a book," Sister Hoffmann continued. "After four or five years, they had a complete course of 18 books!" This new type of ministry (called "direct evangelization") was met with criticism by some other religious congregations, who objected to sisters leaving the protection of convent walls. Encouragement arrived in 1939 in a letter to Mother Mary Joseph from Cardinal Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi. He praised their efforts, writing, "Such work and sacrifice ... showed courage and devotion." By 1941 there were more than 450 Maryknollers in Asia (priests, sisters and brothers). At one time approximately 100 sisters staffed four primary and two secondary schools in Hong Kong. A painful turning point came with World War II. Missioners in China were seen as American spies. Many were interned and others deported. Even worse, the subsequent Communist takeover destroyed most

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alongside of scripture. It is no longer about style or presentation (although this is included) but primarily about studying the text, drawing meaning from it, and inspiring, exhorting, challenging, and motivating the congregation.

This is no small task in any era. It is especially daunting today because we have lost a common cultural language. Illustrations are an important part of a homily.

Back in the day, workers might gather around the coffee machine to discuss, "Who shot J. R." or the latest episode of "All In the Family." A homilist could use popular TV shows or movies as illustrations in his homilies.

Today, however, each family member often has multiple devices that give him/her access to information and entertainment that is tailored to individual interests. It is hard to find common ground.

What's more, the culture wars and political partisanship have divided even Catholic congregations. If one doesn't like what one hears at Mass, one simply leaves that parish and goes elsewhere. In the past, a parishioner was bound and loyal to a territorial parish.

Although the motive of Jesus' teaching (and of his

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The original text is often attributed to Saint Dallan Forgaill in the sixth century. The poem reflects aspects of life in early Christian Ireland (c. 400-800 AD). The prayer belongs to a type known as a *lorica*, a prayer for protection. The symbolic use of a battle-shield and a sword to invoke the power and protection of God draws on Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (Eph 6:16-17) which refers to the "shield of faith" and "sword of the Spirit." Such military symbolism was common in the poetry and hymnology of Christian monasteries of the period due to the prevalence of clan warfare across Ireland.

The poem makes reference to God as "King of the Seven Heavens" and "the High King of Heaven." This depiction of God as a chieftain or High King is a traditional representation in Irish literature; medieval Irish poetry typically used heroic imagery to cast God as a clan protector.

In 1905, "Rop tum o Baile" was translated from Old Irish into English by Mary Elizabeth Byrne (see right column). The English text was first versified in 1912 by Eleanor Hull, and this is not the most common text used for the hymn.

Be Thou my vision  
O Lord of my heart,  
None other is aught  
but the King of the seven  
heavens.

Be Thou my meditation  
by day and by night  
May it be Thou I behold  
even in my sleep.

Be Thou my speech,  
Be Thou my understanding  
Be Thou with me  
Be I with Thee.

Be Thou my father,  
Be I Thy son,  
Mayst Thou be mine  
May I be Thine.

Be Thou my battle-shield,  
Be Thou my sword,  
Be Thou my dignity,  
Be Thou my delight.

Be Thou my shelter  
Be Thou my stronghold  
Mayst Thou raise me up  
to the company of the angels.

Be Thou every good  
to my body and soul  
Be Thou my kingdom  
in heaven and on earth.

Be Thou solely  
chief love of my heart  
Let there be none other  
O High King of heaven.

Til I am able  
to pass into Thy hands  
My Treasure, my Beloved  
through the greatness of Thy  
love.

Be Thou alone  
my noble and wondrous  
estate  
I seek not men  
nor lifeless wealth.

Be Thou the constant  
guardian  
of every possession  
and every life.  
For our corrupt desires are  
dead  
at the mere sight of Thee.

Thy love in my soul and in my  
heart—  
Grant this to me  
O King of the Seven  
Heavens.

O King of the Seven  
Heavens,  
Grant me this—  
Thy love to be in my heart  
and in my soul.

With the King of all,  
with him  
after victory won by piety  
May I be in the kingdom of  
heaven  
O brightness of the son.

Beloved Father, hear,  
hear my lamentations.  
Timely is the cry of woe  
Of this miserable wretch.

O heart of my heart,  
What e'er befall me  
O Ruler of all,  
Be Thou my vision.

*translated by Mary Byrne*

missions. Some sisters were interned in prison; others were kept under house arrest and would have starved if kind neighbors had not quietly left them food. In 1951, the Maryknoll Sisters reluctantly left China. With the door closed to them in mainland China, the sisters crossed back into Hong Kong to reach out to the millions of Chinese fleeing their homeland in search of a new home and freedom. Today, there are only nine Maryknoll sisters in the China Region. But the schools and a hospital continue on, efficiently run by Chinese. Though they were disbanded and persecuted, and their churches destroyed, Chinese Christians hold the seed of faith deeply rooted in their hearts. In 1962, the Second Vatican Council sought to pastorally adapt the Church and the apostolate to a world undergoing great transformation. It was a new epoch, and a time for revising ideas about mission. Maryknoll sisters' "direct evangelization" was right in step with this. That understanding of mission evolved into an apostolate of making God's mercy and love known and experienced through encounters among people and with Jesus Christ on five continents. When asked how all of this had affected her understanding of her missionary vocation, one sister said, "I understand in a deeper way that we are sent to people of other religious beliefs, not to bring God to them, but to help them find a loving God within them." Today, Maryknoll Sisters President Antoinette Gutzler says, "As we approach the 100th anniversary of the first six Maryknoll sisters leaving for mission in China, our hearts are filled with gratitude." She adds that the sisters have chosen September 12th as the beginning date of their next General Assembly. "We will discern the 'signs of our times,' embark on new paths in mission, and choose our next Congregational Leadership Team," Sister Gutzler says. Understanding of mission has changed; but the call to go forth remains. "We embrace the spirit of our first sisters who left home, family, friends and all they knew to preach the Gospel," affirms Sister Gutzler. "They gave their lives to 'make God's love visible.' We pledge to do the same." +

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ordained servants) was "to comfort the afflicted, and to afflict the comfortable," many of us resist the second half of this idea, or apply it to others, not to ourselves.

One of my seminary professors advised future priests that they should have the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other hand when one prepares a homily.

Today that professor might add that whether one uses a newspaper or social media, one must confirm the facts before distributing them. And make sure application of "the facts" is authentically Christian.

*Father Keith & Rocco*

## NOTRE DAME NEWS

Next Sunday, October 31, the 9:30AM services will be our annual **Mass of Remembrance**. Those who died during the Covid pandemic, as well as Covid victims and caregivers, will be remembered.

We will restore the use of **misalettes** at Mass on the First Sunday of Advent, November 28. Please remember to sanitize your hands. Masks will be used for the foreseeable future.

To improve the health environment of the church, I am looking into the installation of **ceiling fans** to improve ventilation. Also, **non-touch holy water dispensers** are now available, and I will study them as well. If anyone would like to donate toward these two improvements, please contact me or the Parish Office.

We are still \$3,286 short of meeting our **CSA goal**. If we don't come up with it, we will have to pay out of our very tight parish savings.

Congratulations to **The Nativity Project** for more than doubling its projected fundraising goal. More information will be forthcoming.