



HUMAN LIFE MUST ALWAYS BE DEFENDED
FROM ITS BEGINNING IN THE WOMB
AND MUST BE RECOGNISED AS A GIFT OF GOD
THAT GUARANTEES THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY.

- POPE FRANCIS



St. Mary Church Hyde Park Cincinnati, Ohio

2853 Erie Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45208

Church Office 513) 321-1207
School Office 513) 321-0703

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary Church, Hyde Park, is a Catholic community committed to: Gathering for worship of God, Spreading and living the teachings of Jesus Christ, and, Providing quality Christian education for all ages.

EUCCHARISTIC LITURGIES

Saturday: 4:00 pm
Sunday: 8:00 am, 9:30 am, 11:30 am
Weekdays & Holy Days: Mass Schedule inside the bulletin

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday: 3:00 - 3:45 pm and by appointment.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Takes place on the first and third Sunday of the month, 1pm or quarterly during weekend liturgies. Preparation for this Sacrament is on the third Thursday of the month 7pm. Call the rectory to either begin the process or register for class. **Parents should know and understand the qualifications of a Godparent before asking someone to fulfill this important role. If you are unsure about the qualifications, please contact the rectory for clarification **before** you ask someone to be a Godparent.* See website for more information.*

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Parishioners must contact the parish office at least one year in advance. A marriage preparation program is required. See website for more information.

PARISH STAFF

Rev. Ken Schartz Pastor	x5501
Deacon Tim Helmick	x5761
Deacon John Schuler	x5762
John Thamann Deacon Emeritus	
Connie Erdmann Parish Secretary	x5511
Brian Geeding Pastoral Associate	x5533
Beth Mock Communication/ Development Director	
Angie Pfaller Business Manager	x5502
Marianne Rosemond School Principal	
Katie Barton Director of Liturgy and Music	x5525
Margaret Shank Pastoral Associate	x5521
Laura Nickol Volunteer Coordinator	x5510

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9 -12; 1-5
Closed Saturday & Sunday

BULLETIN DEADLINE

Noon Monday
to Connie Erdmann

RESPECT LIFE



www.smchp.com



Reflection
by Brian Geeding

What's it like to...

Last week there were 16 students in the 7th and 8th grades who participated in a week long experiment. The goal was to see how it would be to live under the poverty line and have a very small budget for lunches for the week. The students were broken up into three groups of about 5 people and were given \$2.50 per person for 5 days of lunches. The students went to Kroger together the week before and made their purchases for the following week. Here are a few reflections from the students on their experience.

Grace Boron: "I was surprised how eye opening this experience was. I didn't realize how difficult the lives of others were. It is hard to buy nutritious food on a really tight budget."

Clare Schuermann: "It was very tough living off little food this last week. I realize how, more than I did before, that there are many people in this world who live off little food and need help. This challenge made me realize how important it is to give back."

Anastaisha Westbrook: "I felt God's presence in the lunch room when everyone was eating together in our group. I knew God was proud of what we were doing, so I kept my smile on and kept going."

Group: "We felt God's presence in all the people, other classmates and teachers, who donated food to us when we started to run out. God always provides."

God moment: As one of the groups was checking out at Kroger, they realized they went over budget by \$.30. They were debating what to put back when a St. Mary parent walked in at that moment and said that she would cover the \$.30. It was perfect timing.

Pet Blessing - Saturday, October 1st

In honor of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Fr. Ken will be blessing pets on Saturday morning, October 1st in the Seton Center parking lot after the 9:00 Mass. Bring your furred, feathered or scaled friends to receive this special blessing. (If you don't have a pet, please come because it's always interesting!)



calendar

Please visit www.smchp.com for the most current info.

Tuesday, October 4

No 7:30am Mass

First Reconciliation Parent Mtg-Robisch Hall-6 :00pm
Mass at 6:45pm

Wednesday, October 5

Choir Rehearsal -Church - 5:30-9 :00pm

Thursday, October 6:

No 7:30am Mass

Sunday, October 9

Rosary-Seton Center 8:00pm



masses

Tuesday, October 4

7:30 a.m. **No 7:30 am Mass**

6:45 p.m. For the People of the Parish-Fr. Tom Snodgrass, Celebrant

Wednesday, October 5

9:00 a.m. Mary MacConnell-Family

Thursday, October 6

7:30 a.m. **No 7:30 am Mass**

Friday, October 7—All School Mass

9:00 a.m. John J. Prunte-Babbitt Family

Saturday, October 8

9:00 a.m. **No 9:00 am Mass**

4:00 p.m. Deceased Members of Marian High School Class of 1966

Sunday, October 9

8:00a.m. Sp. Int. Abigail Lowe-Cheryl Fast

9:30a.m. Thomas J. Hardy-Kim & Jeff Geoppinger

11:30a.m. For the People of the Parish

servers

Saturday, October 8

9:00 a.m. No 9:00am Mass

4:00 p.m. Clara Keiser, Declan Lang, Nicola Settle

Sunday, October 9

8:00 a.m. Patrick Mulligan, Marley & Mac Walter

9:30 a.m. Cece Fermann, Anna Koslovsky, Rebecca Smyth

11:30 a.m. Megan Dorr, Tate Wagner, Drew Williams

readings

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time: Oct. 9

2 Kings 5:14-17

2 Timothy 2:8-13

Luke 17:11-19

Collection Sunday, September 25....\$14,342.15

Projected weekly Collection \$19,388.00

Want to write fewer checks? Sign up for *Electronic Fund Transfer*. To enroll go to our website www.smchp.com and click on "Giving" found at the top of the main page. Any questions? **Call Jeff Rinear 321-1207 ext. 5502.**

***to increase your electronic giving:** Log in to smchp.weshareonline.org and click Payments & Schedules/Click Edit next to Sunday Offerings/Enter in your new account/Click Apply

Questions contact Jeff Rinear at 321-1207 ext. 5502.



From the desk of Fr. Ken

A few days ago I saw the movie Sully. It starred Tom Hanks as the pilot who landed the jet airplane into the Hudson River. Miraculously everyone survived. The movie showed the power of the human spirit when faced with adversity. The human spirit can only exist because it flows from the Hand of God. How often do we thank Him?

Fr. Ken Schopf



Jubilee Year of Mercy "The Name of God is Mercy"

"In his book, *The Name of God is Mercy*, ... Pope Francis writes, 'I hope that the Jubilee will serve to reveal the Church's deeply maternal and merciful side, a Church that goes forth toward those who are 'wounded,' who are in need of an attentive ear, understanding, forgiveness, and love.' He encourages leaders to build a Church that is like a 'field hospital,' meeting people where they are and ministering to their wounds."



Reflection

Pursuing the Corporal Works

"In her Christopher Award-winning book, *Mercy in the City*, Kerry Weber tells of how ... she managed to complete all seven works of mercy to fulfill a Lenten observance. Reflecting on what can be gained by setting out to perform the corporal works, Weber points to the mere fact that it can be the beginning of developing habits for a lifetime, writing, 'Maybe in the end, the Works of Mercy aren't things that can be completed the way one can finish playing a board game or painting a picture. Each act is not an isolated incident, but a part of a process. ... You have to do it regularly. ... They must become habits without becoming mindless. Ultimately, the Works of Mercy point us toward ways in which we can build God's reign on earth. There is no guarantee we get to see how it ends, but I know I certainly won't make progress if I don't begin.' -- *Christopher News Notes*

Mercy in Motion

Do you believe that mercy can change the world? How can it change your area of influence? Make one act of mercy today, no matter how small it may be. Make the world less cold and more just!

WELCOME!

Are you new to our parish? Have you been attending Mass here but aren't registered? We invite all individuals to join our parish family, by registering on our parish website:

www.smchp.com or call the Parish Office (321-1207) for a form to be sent in the mail.

SMS school news FROM OUR SCHOOL OFFICE



Please join us at an All School Mass this Friday, October 7 at 9:00am. We will celebrate the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary.

We are accepting applications for our Kindergarten Class Fall 2017. **Special tours and visits in the Kindergarten classrooms are being offered on Friday mornings.** Call us at 321-0703 to arrange your visit. Be sure to check us out at www.smshp.com to learn more and to view photos of SMS Life.



We welcomed our guests from Australia last week!

Reconciliation Parent Meeting

Reminder to all parents of children in St. Mary School and PREP who will be preparing for the sacrament of Reconciliation that our PARENT MEETING is Tuesday, October 4, 7:00pm-8:00pm, in Robisch Hall. One or both parents should plan to attend.

Little Sisters of the Poor

will be present at all the Masses next weekend seeking your assistance in their ministry. For the past 145 years, the Sisters have been offering the needy elderly of the tristate, a home where they are welcomed as Christ, cared for as a family, and accompanied with dignity until God calls them to himself. The Sisters depend on our support to meet the needs of their poor elderly. Your generosity will be appreciated. For more information visit their website at www.littlesistersofthepoorcincinnati.org.

Fr. Ken's Milestone Anniversary Brunch Sunday, October 23rd

Come Celebrate your 50th, 40th or 25th *Wedding Anniversary* with Mass and Special Blessings—Enjoy brunch immediately after 11:30 a.m. mass in Fr. Ken's Rectory Dining Room. RSVP to the Parish Office (513-321-1207).

Interested in the Catholic Faith?

Classes begin soon. Please contact Connie in the Parish Office for more information (321-1207).

Support the Cub Scouts!

The Cub Scouts will be selling their delicious popcorn after each Mass next weekend (Oct. 8, 9). >73% of sales goes to support local Scouting!"

40 Days for Life

This fall from September 28 through November 6, St. Mary Parish is uniting with other parishes in Greater Cincinnati and over 300 cities around the world for the 40 Days for Life campaign. Since 40 Days for Life began we have seen: 11,796 lives saved from abortion; 133 abortion worker conversions and 74 abortion facilities closed.

St. Mary Parish is covering the prayer hours, in front of Planned Parenthood on Auburn Ave, from 3PM-6PM on Fridays during October. If you or your family are able to cover 30 minutes or an hour, please let Dianne or Bob Donlan know by calling 871-8851 or emailing dia2ne@webtv.net or bdonlan14@msn.com. If you have any questions, please contact us. If you would like to meet with us to pray or would like a sign ("Pray to End Abortion") to bring with you, let us know.

In addition, at 7pm on Thursday, October 6, the Cincinnati vigil site is privileged to be one of the "United for Life" statewide rally sites as part of a national bus tour by members of the 40 Days for Life headquarters team. This is a rare opportunity for you to hear speakers from six national pro-life groups. Please consider attending this event and contact us if you would like to carpool.

Young Adults

The young adult group is for anyone in their 20s/30s who are looking to grow in faith and friendship. We meet after the 6:45p.m. Mass on the first Tuesday of the month at Holy Grounds coffee house located in the red house just behind St. Mary church adjacent to the parking lot. Anyone who has questions and/or is interested may contact **Daron Monnin** at 937-361-6640 or email (daron.j.monnin@gmail.com) *Like us on our facebook page [St. Mary Young Adult Ministry](#).*

Theology on Tap

For Young Adults is a speaker series that meet together in a local pub or brewery. Through lively conversation & interesting speakers, 20's & 30's have an opportunity to reflect on their faith. **Beginning Wed.'s in October**, focusing on social issues and will be held at Madtree Brewing starting at 7 p.m. Questions contact: Sr. Leslie Keener at St. Monica-St. George (381-6400) or Sean Reynolds (421-3131).

Prayer Request Hotline

The Prayer Request Hotline is in service. The number is **533-5500 ext. 5770**. For anyone who is in need of prayer, or if you know someone who is in need of prayer, call and leave your prayer request on the message system. If you'd like to be a prayer partner, please call Marlene Berning (321-7911).

Worship 101

"What are appropriate signs of reverence with respect to the Body and Blood of Christ?"

The Body and Blood of Christ present under the appearances of bread and wine are treated with the greatest reverence both during and after the celebration of the Eucharist (cf. *Mysterium Fidei*, nos. 56-61). For example, the tabernacle in which the consecrated bread is reserved is placed "in some part of the church or oratory which is distinguished, conspicuous, beautifully decorated, and suitable for prayer" (Code of Canon Law, Can. 938, §2). According to the tradition of the Latin Church, one should genuflect in the presence of the tabernacle containing the reserved sacrament. In the Eastern Catholic Churches, the traditional practice is to make the sign of the cross and to bow profoundly. The liturgical gestures from both traditions reflect reverence, respect, and adoration. It is appropriate for the members of the assembly to greet each other in the gathering space of the church (that is, the vestibule or narthex), but it is not appropriate to speak in loud or boisterous tones in the body of the church (that is, the nave) because of the presence of Christ in the tabernacle. Also, the Church requires everyone to fast before receiving the Body and Blood of Christ as a sign of reverence and recollection (unless illness prevents one from doing so). In the Latin Church, one must generally fast for at least one hour; members of Eastern Catholic Churches must follow the practice established by their own Church.

USCCB.org

2017 Parish Pictorial Directory

We are in the final stages of completion and design for our 2017 Parish Pictorial Directory - For those of you who were unable to schedule a photo at the parish, you still have the opportunity to submit an individual or family picture - If a professional portrait please note we will need a 'release form from photograph to publish picture - Otherwise please drop off a hard copy in my rectory mailbox including Names of individuals in photo as well as phone number. I can be contacted at 513-533-1100 or nickol@smshp.com.

PLEASE SUBMIT BY OCTOBER 31ST! - *Laura*

Parishioners called to Military Service

If you know of a parishioner who is called into, or presently serving in, our country's military forces **please notify the parish secretary at (321-1207)**. We want to keep these men and women in our prayers. In serving honorably, they contribute to the good of the nation and the preservation of peace (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2310). Please keep the following in your prayers: **Craig Blessing, Josue Vazquez, Tony DeFilippo, Louis Hamilton, Jr., Karl Kadon, III, Kurt Kadon, Jake Keefe, Dom Lanzillotta, Ewan MacDougall, Michael O'Connor, Andrew Quatkemeyer, Amy Rohs, Todd Seurkamp, Todd Smyth.**



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time October 2, 2016

From Fear to Strength

By Janel Esker

I'm not the world's bravest person. When I got to college, I was delighted that I no longer had to go on roller coasters or into haunted houses to avoid my friends' mocking for being afraid. My college buddies didn't base our friendship on whether I went along with the crowd. I could say, "No, I really dislike roller coasters and haunted houses. See you when you get done!" It was liberating.

Life is full of much scarier things than amusement-park rides and fake goblins.

We hear the prophet Habakkuk speak of some of it in today's first reading. Evil, violence, strife, destruction—add to that cancer, natural disasters, Alzheimer's, domestic abuse, and unemployment, and sometimes it can take a lot of courage just to get up in the morning.

As a person who's more fearful than most, I take hope in St. Paul's reminder to Timothy today: "God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control." Feeling afraid is a normal human emotion, but it's not what God wants for us, and it isn't part of the spirit God gives us.

As St. Paul reminds us, the Holy Spirit "dwells within us." The Spirit is the source of our daily strength; the Spirit can get us out of bed when all feels lost; the Spirit helps us persist in the face of incredible challenges.

Do we have faith in this Holy Spirit—faith at least the size of the minuscule mustard seed that Jesus speaks of in Luke? If so, it's enough. With such faith, we will experience the courage to face our fears and to trust that God is with us through them all. †

"God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control."

A Word From Pope Francis

Fear and sadness cause illness in people and in the Church, too; they cause paralysis and selfishness, and in the end spoil the air of a community... However, a Christian sustained by the fear of God and by the Holy Spirit has the courageous attitude of joy, which in pain becomes peace.

—Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, May 15, 2015



Sunday Readings

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

"How long, O LORD, must I cry for help and you do not listen?"

2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

"For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control."

Luke 17:5-10

"If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to [this] mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How does your faith offer you power when you're afraid?
- What is one fear you would like God to help you overcome with strength and joy?

Joyful Noise

By Miriam Van Scott

The sound billowed through the aisles and lingered in the muted sunlight, then it was gone. Those of us waiting in line glanced at one another and smiled nervously before retreating back into our hushed deliberations. How odd, I thought. Laughter is the last thing I would expect to hear coming from the confessional. But then some distant, melodic voice whispered back, “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.” Was a rush of honest, spontaneous laughter from the darkened room where secrets of the human soul are laid bare really such a contradiction? In God’s plan, laughter is inextricably tied to redemption. It’s the instinctive music of a soul finding its way back home.

The Old Testament gives us the story of Sarah, a woman well past her days of fertility, who has given up hope of ever bearing a son to her husband, Abraham. Angels, disguised as travelers, visit Abraham and tell him they will return at the same time next year and Sarah will be cradling a baby boy in her arms. Overhearing this, Sarah couldn’t help but snicker. But her disbelief would soon turn to jubilation as she and Abraham welcomed Isaac—whose name means “laughter”—a few months later. Rather than reproach her for her doubt, God responded to Sarah’s laughing by filling her with joy that would echo through the ages.

Job is likewise rewarded with merriment after enduring tragedies that would crush most spirits beyond repair.



Satan, jealous of Job’s fidelity to God, declares that Job is only faithful because he is healthy and prosperous. God then allows the devil to destroy Job’s property, slay his children, and even afflict his body with painful sores, yet Job accepts all without complaint. It is the memory of joy and the hope of its return that sustains Job as he takes comfort in the promise, “Once more will your mouth be filled with laughter and your lips with rejoicing” (Job 8:21).

Jesus himself offers a tale that resonates with the sound of unbridled exhilaration in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The aged father, heartsick over thoughts of his impetuous son lost to a world of debauchery and callousness, catches sight of the young man making his way back home through the fragrant fields. As we read the words of Luke we can picture the elderly man, his feet tripping over themselves, running like a child to embrace his beloved boy, tears of

laughter streaming forth like the grace of God flowing from heaven.

Then we come to the tomb of Christ. It is here, in the glory of the empty tomb, that we meet God with laughter in the confessional. We share with Mary Magdalene the bliss of discovering that what was gone has now been restored, and our closeness to the person of Jesus is once again part of us. The door God opened with the rolling back of the stone remains open, beckoning to us in the sacrament of reconciliation, promising that same electrifying joy. Through this redeeming grace, God not only invites us to return—he ardently yearns for that reunion. And our souls, purged of sin and its foul residue, can’t help but sparkle with glee as they draw close, once again, to their Father.

Thus, what better spot for laughter than the confessional: the ultimate expression of joy beyond words, emanating from a place of hope without limits. †

Source: *Liguorian*, October 2009

PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful for your gentle voice of love. Help me to speak with love and peace everywhere I go.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

October 3–8

Mon. Weekday:
Galatians 1:6–12 / Luke 10:25–37
Tue. St. Francis of Assisi:
Galatians 1:13–24 / Luke 10:38–42
Wed. Weekday:
Galatians 2:1–2, 7–14 / Luke 11:1–4

Thu. Weekday:
Galatians 3:1–5 / Luke 11:5–13
Fri. Our Lady of the Rosary:
Galatians 3:7–14 / Luke 11:15–26
Sat. Weekday:
Galatians 3:22–29 / Luke 11:27–28

Bringing Home
the Word 
October 2, 2016

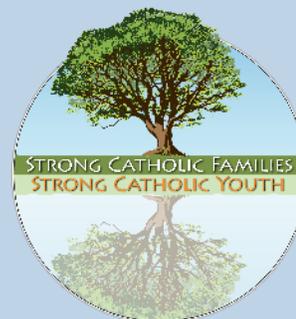
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Amoris Laetitia Webinar Series

The Pastoral Response in Accompanying Families in Faith

The Strong Catholic Families National Partnership Invites ministry leaders, teachers, school leaders, parents and clergy to join together with others around the globe in a webinar series focusing on the pastoral implementation of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on the family, Amoris Laetitia.

Four Master Teachers will present video reflections on the following themes, followed by two sets of live panels reacting to the content and discussing practical applications to various ministries.



Listening to the Joys and Hungers of Families

September 18-October 12



Featuring Dr. Tim Hogan, Director of Grace Counseling Center, Detroit

Live Panel Reactions on September 28 and October 12 at 2pm and 7pm EST

Accompanying Families

October 16-November 2



Featuring Bishop Richard Malone, Diocese of Buffalo

Live Panel Reactions on October 19 and November 2 at 2pm and 7pm EST

Assisting Families in Discerning God's Movement

November 6-December 7



Featuring Julianne Stanz, Director of New Evangelization, Green Bay

Live Panel Reactions on November 16 and December 7 at 2pm and 7pm EST

Engaging for Mission

January 8-January 25



Featuring Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archdiocese of Washington

Live Panel Reactions on January 18 and January 25 at 2pm and 7pm EST

Register at www.strongcatholicfamilies.org/amoriswebinar/ or e-mail akopp@ncea.org

Thanks to our Series Sponsor **PARADISUS DEI**

The Strong Catholic Families Webinar Series is presented in partnership by these national Catholic organizations working together to help parents bring home the faith.



OCTOBER

23

BLESSINGS
on your
Wedding
ANNIVERSARY



You're a wonderful couple
Joined by God above
May your marriage continue
In God's love

Happy
Anniversary

FR. KEN'S MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY BRUNCH

COME CELEBRATE YOUR 50th, 40th, OR 25th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY WITH MASS AND SPECIAL BLESSINGS AT 11:30 SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23rd - RESERVED SEATS FOR ALL COUPLES.. ENJOY BRUNCH IMMEDIATELY AFTER MASS IN FR. KEN'S RECTORY DINING ROOM

JOIN IN THE FUN ON -
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23RD

RSVP TO BECKY LAUDEMAN 321-0703 OR EMAIL blaudeman@smshp.com



Have you experienced

- Stress & Anxiety
- Pain & Loss
- Depression
- Drug & Alcohol Abuse
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- Parenting Difficulties
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“Lord, I Am Not Worthy . . .”

D. Todd Williamson

Few Gospel accounts are as powerful as the story of the Roman Centurion who has heard of Jesus and his great deeds. The Centurion seeks out Jesus to help him, for his servant is paralyzed and suffering. Of course, Jesus agrees and offers to come to the Centurion’s home to cure the servant. In faith, the Centurion utters these powerful words: “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed” (Matthew 8:8, NRSV; see also Luke 7:6).

This is, truly, a story of faith. Recall, that the Centurion is a Roman—a Gentile—one who would be considered ineligible for the promises that the Lord had made to his Chosen People, Israel. Yet he had faith that Jesus could heal his servant. He even called Jesus “Lord.” Because of this, Jesus was willing to go to his house—an act that would have been forbidden and would, according to Jewish standards, made Jesus unclean. Yet Jesus was willing to do this. In the end, this story is as much about the faith of the Centurion as it is a story of the ends to which Jesus will go to bring health, wholeness, and salvation.

Is it any wonder, then, that the Church puts the words of the Centurion on the mouth of every member of the liturgical assembly as we too prepare to receive health, wholeness, and salvation through the gift of the Eucharist? With the implementation of the English translation of the third edition of *The Roman Missal*, this full statement of the Centurion will be our response to the invitation to Holy Communion: “Behold the Lamb of God, / behold him who takes away the sins of the world. / Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.”

It is no accident that *these* words, in *this* exchange, should take place at *this* point of the Mass. Look at what is happening: we are being invited to “behold” the Lord, as he is present in the Eucharist. Not simply to “look,” not simply to “notice.” We are to “behold” him—to see him, with the eyes of faith, and to see what he is doing for us in this liturgy. He is preparing to feed us with his very body and blood!

This makes the most sense if we look closer at the Gospel accounts and the story of the Centurion, particularly from the Gospel according to Matthew (it is also recounted in Luke),



for it is only in the Matthean account that Jesus replies to the Centurion “many will come from the east and the west, *and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven* [emphasis added] Go; let it be done for you according to your faith” (Matthew 8:11, 13, NRSV).

Now look again at the liturgical exchange at this point in the Eucharist. We are invited to “Behold the Lamb of God.” The invitation references the vision of the book of Revelation (19:9, NRSV), where the angel says to Saint John, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” The wedding feast of the Lamb, and the “banquet in the kingdom of heaven,” that Jesus references in Matthew (see

above) *are the same great banquet!* And we are being *invited* to that banquet, at this moment in the liturgy!

Surely, there are no better words with which to respond to this invitation—“Lord, I am not worthy / that you should enter under my roof, / but only say the word / and my soul shall be healed.” The liturgy invites us, at this moment, to the same faith, to the same conviction, as that of the Centurion belief in what Jesus can do. Then, as the Centurion was assured presence at the great banquet of heaven, so too might we be admitted to that same banquet, *here*, in this Eucharist! If there was hope for him, then surely there is hope for us, too!

Notice that in the revised translation of this exchange, the emphasis is *not* on our unworthiness. Truly, in fact, *none* of us is worthy of so great a gift as the Eucharist. And that’s the point! It is not our merit that admits us to this great banquet. Rather, it is our faith in Jesus Christ—the same faith as that of the Centurion! God’s grace given in the sacrament of the Eucharist is free gift. We need only respond and accept this gift.

The full response of the Centurion helps us to recognize that Christ’s promise of health, wholeness, and salvation is ours if we accept the invitation. That promise is fulfilled in the Eucharist, in Holy Communion which we are about to receive!

“Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb!”

Weekly Marriage Tip

The story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well is about secrets and conundrums (John 4:5-42). How to get water? How many husbands? Secret food? Spouses should keep no secrets from each other. Is there something you don't understand about your beloved? Listen lovingly and intently. - www.susanvogt.net

Weekly Parenting Pointer

Does your child know the basics of courtesy beyond "please" and "thank you"? Teach how to answer the phone appropriately, introduce an elder to a friend, shake hands with an adult. Role play it. These practices need to get into muscle memory so it comes naturally. --www.susanvogt.net

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