

Resources for Family Mass

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1 October, 2017 • Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32

Theme: The parable of the two sons reminds us that good actions speak louder than words

Sacred Space: 'To do' lists created by pupils in the local Confirmation class

Homily: In today's gospel Jesus reminds us that we ought to listen attentively to the invitation to love from God, with every fibre of our being. Jesus is telling us that we are invited to become fully and wholly aware of the presence of God in our lives. Through his life, ministry, death and resurrection, Jesus has shown us the way. Often we say 'Yes, I will give to that charity', 'Yes, I will do that good deed', 'Yes, I will do that job without pay the next time'. Often, the next time does not arrive, it does not materialise. We get caught up in b... u... s... y, we become trapped in our daily grind and forget the real meaning, the truth, of all we do. Today, Jesus is reminding us that although our intentions may be great, we actually have to match our thoughts and words with deeds in order to have any impact on our future in the kingdom of God. Act today, there is no need to wait for the next opportunity!

Prayer of the Faithful

1. Lord, help us to recognise your invitation to become all that we can be.
2. God, embrace my efforts to do your will, thank you for loving me unconditionally as I navigate my path in life. Help me to choose the right path.
3. Jesus, bless Pope Francis as he sets new standards and seeks new ways of being in the world, outward looking with love.



8 October, 2017 • Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43

Theme: God is master of the vineyard and expects a true and just return from the tenants

Sacred Space: Fruits of the harvest/wheat/baskets of bread

Homily: In today's gospel, Jesus shares the parable of the vineyard and how the tenants decided to deal with the fruits of the harvest. They wanted the harvest all for themselves and did everything they could to keep it. This meant beating, killing and destroying all who came in their paths. When we read this gospel we should try to imagine that the vineyard represents the talents and gifts that God has given each of us. As with the tenants and the crops in the vineyard, we are given these talents to develop them and to support them as they grow for God's greater glory, not just for ourselves, but to share with each person. When we refuse to share our talents, our time and our energy with others, we are not doing such a great job of looking after what God gave us! God created each one of us as magnificent and wonderful. We can be holy and blessed in our daily life. Of course we want to excel in our exams, studies and careers, but we are here for more than that. We are here to be in community, to show and share love with each other, to help

each other and to enable and empower each other to be the best we can be. The harvest of the fruits we are blessed with as human beings are for the good of all.

Prayer of the Faithful

1. Gracious God, help us to recognise the capacity of our hearts, minds and bodies in being able to bring love and life to the other.
2. Giving God, inspire us to see the necessity that lives around and about us. Empower us to embrace each opportunity to do good with a full and generous heart.
3. Glorious God, we pray for all those who have gone before us with courage and unconditional love for the other. We pray for each person who has inspired us to be more than we are.



15 October, 2017 • Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

Theme: Be the Best you can Be!

Sacred Space: Invitations to love, created by the First Holy Communion local class.

Homily: This Sunday's gospel is about trying to be the best we can be! Each day we set out to consciously 'be' a good living person, all the days start adding up and soon we are achieving goals we didn't even dream about! Sometimes it is not easy to do the right thing but by making a decent and hearty effort, we are on the right path.

In today's gospel the wedding invitation was opened up to all in the end. It seems harsh that the man was thrown out for not dressing up. However, it seems that this is a symbolic story for not caring enough, for not making the effort, for taking our lives for granted. Also, the gospel is telling us that not taking the teachings of Jesus as a narrative for our lives is another example of us not paying adequate attention. Jesus has blessed us with the 'garments' of life through the sacraments of baptism, reconciliation, communion and confirmation. We are called to wear our 'garments' of life with love and with a full heart, working hard to be the best version of ourselves that we can at all times.

Prayer of the Faithful

1. Loving Jesus, I ask you to bless us as we prepare for the wedding banquet. Help us to give our all as we make every effort to listen to and act with your words at the centre of our goals.
2. Teacher Jesus, thank you for showing me the way, the truth and the life.
3. Saving Jesus, we pray for all of those who show your love by living lives of generous care and compassion for all.



22 October, 2017 • Gospel: Matthew 22:15-21

Theme: We look to Jesus when we are at a crossroads

Sacred Space: Crossroads/signposts

Homily: This week's gospel is about staying true to God in our lives. Jesus asks us to keep God at the centre of our hearts. We

Resources

Sunday, 1 October 2017

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Matthew 21:28-32

1. It is possible to be a dutiful and observant Christian, and yet feel there is something missing. It makes such a difference when your heart is in what you are doing – so much better than just going through the motions. Where do you experience that most in your life?
2. The desire of Jesus for us is that we grow in that kind of committed, enthusiastic involvement in life. What encourages you to grow in this way?
3. The elders probably thought well of themselves in contrast to the tax collectors and sinners. Perhaps you know some unconventional people, ones who appear to ignore the 'right' way of doing things, and yet they have taught you something about true goodness.

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MUSINGS

St Paul says that we received the spirit of being children, and the spirit 'makes us cry out *Abba: Father*' (Rm 8:16). This is where our dignity lies and even in the depths of distress teaching that we are beloved of God ... It is hard to speak of the Spirit of love. Hans Urs Von Balthasar says: 'This Spirit is breath, not a full outline, and therefore he wishes to breathe through us, not to present himself to us as an object; he does not wish to be seen but to be the seeing eye of grace in us and he is little concerned about whether we pray to him, provided we pray with him, *Abba, Father*, provided we consent to his unutterable groaning in the depths of our soul.'

For Von Balthasar Christ is the proper object of our vision. The Holy Spirit remains hidden in revealing the love of God revealed in Jesus.

John O'Brien OFM, *Waiting for God: From Trauma to Healing*

learn that to be a good citizen and to serve God are not in contradiction with each other. There are times in life when we do not know what to do or what choice to make. Sometimes we are put under pressure by colleagues, classmates or companions. It can often be very difficult to remain true to our beliefs in the face of friends. How to do the right thing is often the question, because going against Facebook, Twitter or Instagram communities requires a lot of courage. This takes bravery! But by keeping a connection with Jesus through prayer and a sense of God's Spirit in our hearts, we will always have the help and support we need during difficult times or decisions.

Prayer of the Faithful

1. Loving Jesus, you hungered and thirsted for justice. Help us to walk in your light as we work to follow you.
2. God our Father, help us to always hear the cry of the downtrodden, the poor and those who feel lost.
3. Guiding Spirit, we pray for each other with a full heart and one voice. Let us be aware of the love we create as companions on the journey.



29 October, 2017 • Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40
Theme: Jesus' summation of morality as the twofold commandment of love

Sacred Space: Symbols of love in every possible format

Homily: Today's gospel tells us how Jesus interpreted the greatest commandment. Love on two counts is present in each of us. Love of God and love of neighbour – this is the commandment of Jesus. Sometimes the first love is one that we can embrace with the most ease. Sometimes it is the love of neighbor that causes greatest difficulty. However, Jesus specifically tells us that without this 'double' love, all we say we do for God is really done for ourselves. Nothing is above this law of love. Jesus said this, and lived by this commandment in his life. Many times Jesus showed us through his words and actions that the laws of religion cannot overtake the need for love. The message in today's gospel is all-embracing. It penetrates and is at the heart of our relationships. We are invited to see this for what it is. We are invited to see the 'neighbour' in the sister we argue with, the brother who irritates us, the aunt who forgets us ... Love is the foundation whereupon all our relationships are built. We are called to love those who are near (our family and community) and those who are far away (global citizens) in need of our love that can be given with a full heart in so many different ways.

Prayer of the Faithful

1. God of love, empower us with your divine invitation to have love at the centre of our being.
2. Jesus our loving Saviour, thank you for giving all so willingly and so graciously for our greater good.
3. Spirit of life, walk with us on this journey of life. Guide our acts of love and embrace our potential to love to Christ our Lord, Amen.

