



## CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

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## MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH

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Dear Parish Family,

July 24, 2011

I spent this past week in a hermitage up near Whitefish Bay. As I said last week, time spent in silence magnifies many things. The one thing that we seek in prayerful silence is the voice of the Lord. In the Old Testament in the First Book of Kings, Chapter 19 we see this in the life of the prophet Elijah:

*Then the LORD said [to Elijah], "Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will be passing by." A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD – but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake – but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire – but the LORD was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.*

Tuesday is the memorial of Ss. Joachim and Anne – the parents of Mary, and the grandparents of Jesus. This week, let us take time to remember in a special way our own grandparents. If the Church would have us remember Jesus' grandparents by name with a special memorial – then we, too should honor and pray for our own grandparents, both living and dead.

Next week is already August. The month of August is dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of our Blessed Mother Mary.

*O Most Blessed Mother, heart of love, heart of mercy, ever listening, caring, consoling, hear our prayer. As your children, we implore your intercession with Jesus your Son. Receive with understanding and compassion our humble petitions.*

*We are comforted in knowing your heart is ever open to those who ask for your prayer. We trust to your gentle care and intercession, those whom we love and who are sick or lonely or hurting. Help all of us, Holy Mother, to bear our burdens in this life until we may share eternal life and peace with God forever. Amen.*

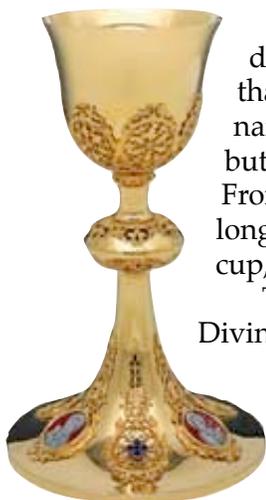
I hope you are using your time during the summer to grow in your relationship with God and Jesus Christ. Travelers can go to [www.masstimes.org](http://www.masstimes.org) to find a Catholic church while on the road. Pray for each other, and for me! God bless you!

*Fr. David*

## *Sacred Signs and Symbols*

## **Sacred Vessels - Chalice**

Years ago, and only once, I came upon a chalice. *The* chalice. I had of course seen many chalices, but this one was not only seeing; it was a meeting, an encounter. It was at Beuron when a kindly monk in charge of the sacred vessels was showing me the treasures of the sacristy.



The broad base it stood on adhered firmly to the ground. The stem, sharp, spare and delicately thin, seemed to lift itself with compressed force and carrying power. A little more than half way up it expanded in a knob, and then at the top, first confining its strength in a narrow ring or band in orderly compression, it broke out into a wealth of foliage, finely cut but strong, in which lay the cup, the heart of the chalice.

From this chalice I caught a glimpse of the meaning of the sacrament. The sure-footed base, the long shaft molded to carry weight, the disciplined, ingathered strength blossoming out into a cup, open but enclosed, could signify but one thing: to receive and retain.

The pure and holy vessel of the mystery receives and guards in its dimly shining depths the Divine drops of the gracious, fruitful Blood, which is sheer fire, sheer love.

I had a further thought, an insight or rather, an intuition. The chalice represents the created universe. That universe has but one purpose and one final meaning: man, the living creature, with his soul and body and his restless heart ... Saint Augustine has a great saying: "That which makes a man to be what he is – is his capacity to receive God and hold Him fast."

*-Romano Guardini*

# THE DISCIPLINE OF LOVING YOUR ENEMIES

The world of forgiveness is the world of new and expanding possibilities. Very often people are afraid to forgive because they assume that if they forgive, injustice will triumph. Yet the counter-intuitive wisdom of Jesus Christ reveals that the very opposite is true. It is forgiveness alone that has the capacity to break the chains of injustice and give us the possibility of a new future – a future unchained from the past and free of bitterness. And this is why Jesus calls his followers to the demanding discipline of enemy-love. Again we hear challenging words of Jesus from the sermon on the Mount.

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father. – Matthew 5:43-45*

Nikolai Velimirović was a Serbian Orthodox bishop who, during World War II and the German occupation of Yugoslavia, taught against the evils of Nazism to the priests under his charge. He was betrayed by one of his priests, arrested, and sent to the concentration camp at Dachau. It was in Dachau that Nikolai Velimirović learned to pray for his enemy persecutors and, most of all, for the man who had betrayed him. As a prisoner in Dachau, Velimirović composed a prayer known as “Prayer Regarding Critics and Enemies.”

***Bless my enemies, O Lord.***

***Even I bless them and do not curse them.***

*Enemies have driven me into Thy embrace more than friends have. Friends have bound me to earth, enemies have loosed me from earth and have demolished all my aspirations in the world. Enemies have made me a stranger in worldly realms and an extraneous inhabitant of the world. Just as a hunted animal finds safer shelter than an un-hunted animal does, so have I, persecuted by enemies, found the safest sanctuary, having ensconced myself beneath Thy tabernacle, where neither friends nor enemies can slay my soul.*

***Bless my enemies, O Lord.***

***Even I bless them and do not curse them.***

*They, rather than I, have confessed my sins before the world. They have punished me, whenever I have hesitated to punish myself. They have tormented me, whenever I have tried to flee torments. They have scolded me, whenever I have flattered myself. They have spat upon me, whenever I have filled myself with arrogance.*

***Bless my enemies, O Lord.***

***Even I bless them and do not curse them.***

*Whenever I have made myself wise, they have called me foolish. Whenever I have made myself mighty, they have mocked me as though I were a gnat. Whenever I have wanted to lead people, they have shoved me into the background.*

*Whenever I have rushed to enrich myself, they have prevented me with an iron hand. Whenever I thought that I would sleep peacefully, they have wakened me from sleep. Whenever I have tried to build a home for a long and tranquil life, they have demolished it and driven me out. Truly, enemies have cut me loose from the world and have stretched out my hands to the hem of Thy garment.*

***Bless my enemies, O Lord.***

***Even I bless them and do not curse them.***

*Bless them and multiply them; multiply them and make them even more bitterly against me: So that my fleeing to Thee may have no return; so that all hope in men may be scattered like cobwebs; so that absolute serenity may begin to reign in my soul; so that my heart may become the grave of my two evil twins: arrogance and anger; so that I might amass all my treasure in heaven; ah, so that I may for once be freed from self deception, which has entangled me in the dreadful web of illusory life.*

*Enemies have taught me to know what hardly anyone knows, that a person has no enemies in the world except himself. One hates his enemies only when he fails to realize that they are not enemies, but cruel friends. It is truly difficult for me to say who has done me more good and who has done me more evil in the world: friends or enemies. Therefore bless, O Lord, both my friends and my enemies.*

*A slave curses enemies, for he does not understand. But a son blesses them, for he understands. For a son knows that his enemies cannot touch his life. Therefore he freely steps among them and prays to God for them.*

***Bless my enemies, O Lord.***

***Even I bless them and do not curse them. Amen.***

I'm not sure I can pray all of that prayer. I'm not sure I want my enemies to increase. I'm not sure I want my enemies to be even more bitterly against me. But I fully recognize that this remarkable prayer by a Serbian Orthodox bishop is full of deep wisdom and overflows with the kind of Christianity firmly rooted in the Sermon on the Mount. Nearly every line contains some of the counterintuitive wisdom that characterized the teaching of Jesus. I recognize the scent of the Holy Spirit in this prayer. It is a prayer that reminds me of the endless possibilities of forgiveness. It is a prayer that reminds me that the Sermon on the Mount transcends the comfortable confines of conventional wisdom. This prayer reminds me that the command of Christ concerning forgiveness is not the generous offer of seven times, but the radical and absurd commitment to forgive seventy times seven.

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*Excerpted from:*

*“Unconditional? The Call of Jesus to Radical Forgiveness,”  
by Brian Zahnd, (Charisma House: 2011)*