



CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

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MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH

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Dear Parish Family,

October 31, 2010

This last week, a Funeral Mass was offered for Flavio (Floyd) A. Guerrero. Please pray for the repose of his soul and the consolation of his family.

Thank you to all the young people who took part in the liturgies at both parishes last weekend. I am very proud of all of you for your willingness to help out at Mass. Thank you, too, to the parents whose generosity is shown to us in your children.

Monday is All Saints Day. Mass will be offered at 9:00am at St. Mary. Tuesday is All Souls Day. Masses will be offered at 9:00am, 12:00pm, and 3:00pm at St. Mary for the souls of the dead. On Wednesday at 7:00pm, we will hold a Memorial Mass at St. Mary for the parishioners from both parishes who died in the past year.

From November 1 - 8, a plenary indulgence for the faithful departed may be obtained by visiting a cemetery and praying for the deceased. On All Souls Day, November 2, a plenary indulgence may be applied to the deceased by visiting any church to pray for the dead. Both require confession, Holy Communion, and prayers for the Pope.

If you haven't already done so, stop by the parish offices at St. Mary. We received a generous donation of desks and tables. While not brand-new, they are new to us and give our spaces an updated look. Please pray for our generous benefactors.

During November please pray for those who died, especially in the past year; as well as for their families and loved ones. God bless you and keep you always!

Fr. David

The Faith Explained **TITHES AND ALMSGIVING**

In the Old Testament tithes were an essential part of life. There were three tithes to make, which exceeded the ten percent that we usually think about. The first ten percent was contributed to the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem. In addition to that tithe, every third year, ten percent would be given to the Levites, widows and the poor. Finally, every seventh year all debts would be forgiven and people would help one another in their needs.

Attachment to material goods can distract from one's identity as a child of God. Money can be a great blessing but it can also cause a person to lose their soul. It doesn't matter whether someone has very little money, the temptation to use it selfishly is a danger for many. To avoid this, all Christians must be intentional about giving; which should to be done through prayer and deliberation.

Thomas Zordani, author of *Faith Finances*, says that when he is counseling a family on how to get out of debt he tells them that they need to begin tithing before setting aside money for anything else. Although it may seem like a great burden, he says that once a budget has been established it becomes apparent that the family was tithing already - but to the wrong "god." It is easy to come up with 10% when someone has been spending money on Starbucks, or eating out for lunch every day.

Zordani goes on to say that tithing and giving alms forces someone to take control of their finances. It keeps the universal destination of goods at the forefront, serving as a reminder that God is the Provider and Source of all that anyone has. It also means that a person will have to trust that God will continue to provide for their needs as they provide for the needs of others.

Every \$1.00 given amounts to 0.15% for an annual income of \$35,000. No one should plan their charitable donations on the amount they have in their wallet when it's time for the Sunday collection. Pray to discern what God is asking and then build a budget around God's plan.

Giving with a happy heart forms the virtue of generosity. It means learning to develop faith and trust in God's providence. It also means learning humility and accepting that someone else may be making choices about how one's money is spent. St. Paul tells us: *God loves a cheerful giver* (2 Cor 9:7b).

the
Psalm
Psalm 145

**"I will praise your name
forever, my king and my God."**



The Four Last Things

Traditional Catholic theology has distinguished the “Four Last Things” as: Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell. We are admonished to meditate upon these things frequently. We **will** die, be judged, and spend eternity either in Hell, or in Heaven (likely after some time in purgatory). *All people are appointed to die once, and after that face the judgment* (Hebrews 9:27) A song by Johnny Cash on the topic of judgment gives us pause to reflect on this. Here are some of the words:

*You can run on for a long time
Run on for a long time, run on for a long time
Sooner or later God'll cut you down
Go tell that long tongue liar,
go and tell that midnight rider
Tell the rambler, the gambler, the back biter
Tell 'em that God's gonna cut 'em down.*

We will all one day die, or as the song puts it, be cut down. *We will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ* (cf: 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 4:13; 1 Peter 4:5).

The reality of judgment and the possibility of Hell bothers a lot of modern Christians who have had God's love emphasized to the exclusion of just about everything else about God. For example that He is Truth, and utterly Holy, that nothing unholy can tolerate His presence and so forth.

How to explain the possibility of Hell to a generation with a rather simplified notion of God? Perhaps the word

“*respect*” can help. God want to save us all and have us live with Him forever. This is clear in Scripture. But God has made us free and wants us to freely love Him and accept His invitation. This is His respect for our freedom. Now everyone want to go to heaven as they describe it. But **not everyone** wants to go to real heaven which is God's Kingdom in perfection. You see, in heaven, God's Kingdom, there is love for the truth, love for chastity, love for the poor, love for justice, love for one another, mercy and forgiveness are esteemed and God is at the center. But **not everyone** wants these things. Not everyone wants the truth, wants to be chaste, not everyone wants to forgive and love everyone. Not everyone wants God to be at the center, they prefer that spot for themselves or some other idol. Many people can't stand to go to Church at all, or if they do they want it to be as short as possible. If we don't want to spend time with God here in this life, what makes us think we will want to do so after death? If the liturgy is boring or loathsome to someone now what makes them think they will enjoy the liturgy of heaven? And the Scriptures clearly describe heaven as primarily a liturgy of praise (cf esp. Rev 4-8) centered on God. So God invites, but not all accept or are interested in the real heaven to which God invites them. In the end, God respects our choice and this is why there is Hell, it is for those who do not want what the Kingdom of God is. God still sustains the souls in Hell but he ultimately respects their choice to reject the Kingdom and its values.

So we ought to pray for a deepening desire for heaven. Death is on the way, sooner or later we will all be cut down. And the Lord Jesus will judge us among other things with this question: “What is it that you want?” Do not think that we will magically change at that moment. By that time our choice for the Lord and his Kingdom or for something else will be firmly fixed. Behaviors become habits, habits become character, character becomes destiny.

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him. For the LORD is your life, and He will give you many years. (Deut 30:19-20)

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From the Archdiocese of Washington online blog.

Written by Monsignor John Pope.

