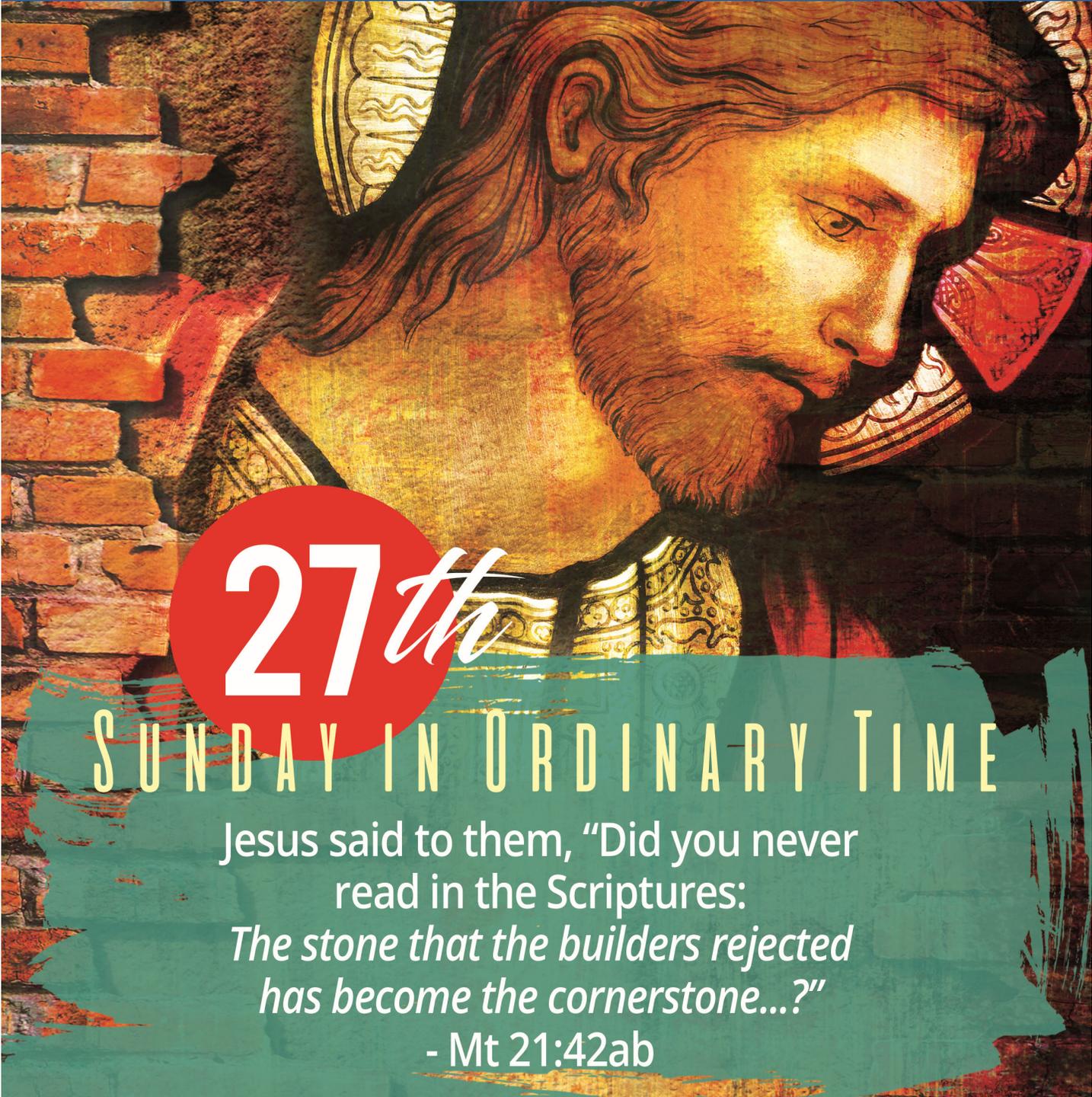




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27th

SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Jesus said to them, "Did you never
read in the Scriptures:

*The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone...?"*

- Mt 21:42ab

OCTOBER 4, 2020

FROM BISHOP BARBER

WE SIMPLY CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT THE EUCHARIST

We have just passed six months of coronavirus lockdown. It is taking its toll. I mourn those who have died from the virus — and those who have fallen ill — including three priests and one deacon from our diocese. But the lockdown itself has caused damage: ruined the economy, taken away jobs, destroyed businesses, closed schools, halted travel, and for us Catholics, interrupted our life of worship and community.

Most damaging of all on the spiritual level, the coronavirus has deprived us of the opportunity to enter our churches, kneel down, participate in the Eucharist, and receive Holy Communion in the normal way.

I applaud our priests and parishes who have done their utmost to provide Mass and sacraments under ever-changing conditions: through live stream; holding outdoor Mass “in cars”; opening churches for 100 people or more — then having to close them again, then constructing outdoor garden or parking lot altars. Some of the outdoor settings were so beautiful and tastefully done that people attending our outdoor ordinations at Church of the Good Shepherd in Pittsburg and Santa Maria Church in Orinda remarked, “Bishop, we should celebrate outdoors more often.”

I worry about those parishes that have virtually “shut down” and don’t offer much of anything for the faithful.

The truth is, for us Catholics, the Eucharist is the essence of the parish community. Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theologians have long

taught, “The Eucharist makes the Church, and the Church makes the Eucharist.”

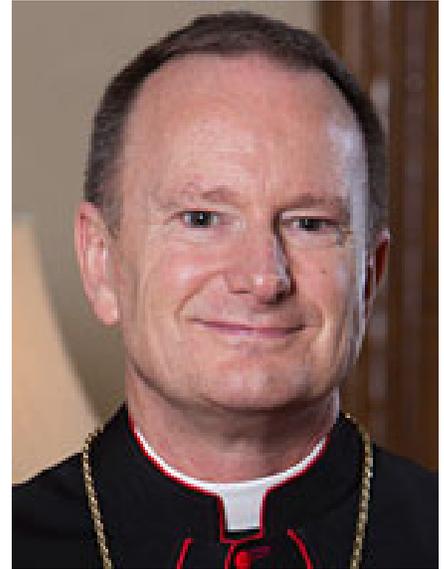
As Catholics, we simply cannot live without it.

We have adapted as best we can under the circumstances in our desire to serve you, while preserving your safety. Even the Pope celebrated daily live-stream Mass without a congregation, and conducted all his Holy Week and Easter services with only a dozen people present. Although understandable in a time of Eucharistic famine, our temporary rites of “drive-through” Communion, live-stream Mass without a congregation, or distributing Communion outside of Mass are not a substitute for real, live, actual participation of the priest and community offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

That is what makes this all so painful.

Cardinal Robert Sarah, head of the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship, issued a letter to all bishops of the Church this week urging a return to normal worship, as soon as it is safe to do so. I agree. The Cardinal stated: “As soon as circumstances permit, however, it is necessary and urgent to return to the normality of Christian life, which has the church building as its home and the celebration of the liturgy, especially the Eucharist, as ‘the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; and at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows’ (Vatican II: Sacrosanctum Concilium, 10).”

The key words here are “as soon as circumstances permit.”



We are lucky in that in Contra Costa and Alameda counties, we have been able to hold Mass and the sacraments outdoors. Except for a week of smoky air, this has served us well. I have witnessed weddings, baptisms, ordinations and confirmations celebrated outdoors with reverence and dignity. Our parish churches are still open for private prayer and adoration.

Catholics living in the City and County of San Francisco have not been so fortunate. The government there has imposed draconian, discriminatory prohibitions against religious worship. Only 12 people are allowed at outdoor Mass in The City. I think Archbishop Cordileone is quite right to invite his parishioners to sign a petition, and participate in a public procession of protest to “Free the Mass” (See <https://sfarchdiocese.org/events/free-the-mass>).

No one disputes the need to wear masks, disinfect hands and observe social distancing. That is why our diocese has issued strict liturgical guidelines to preserve your safety — yet allow access to the sacraments. We are monitoring the situation in our East Bay counties with regard to businesses, restaurants, gym and school reopenings.

CONTINUED...

I am concerned churches not be the last on the list — but treated fairly with regard to indoor gatherings permitted to other groups of our size. So far, I believe we have been treated fairly in the East Bay. When I complained to a Catholic physician and public health officer that cannabis clinics were open, and Catholic churches were closed for group Mass, he replied that people entered the clinic controlled one-by-one, and not in a group. We immediately opened our churches for individual, private prayer.

If you think the church reopening process is moving too fast and is unsafe, let your pastor and me know. If you think the reopening process permitted by the government is moving too slowly — then you should call the county. If I contact them, it is one phone call. We have on the books 500,000 Catholics in our diocese. If you call, the people who make the rules will get the message.

Alameda County Health
Officer: ncov@acgov.org; 510-268-2101.

Contra Costa County Health
Officer: info@cchealth.org; 844-729-8410.

I am hoping we can reopen soon for indoor worship at 25% of a church building's capacity, with all the necessary health and safety precautions. This will be important as the weather gets colder and wetter.

Your safety is my first consideration. But also your right, and absolute necessity, to participate in the Eucharist.

From <https://www.catholicvoiceoakland.org/2020/09-21/bishop.htm>



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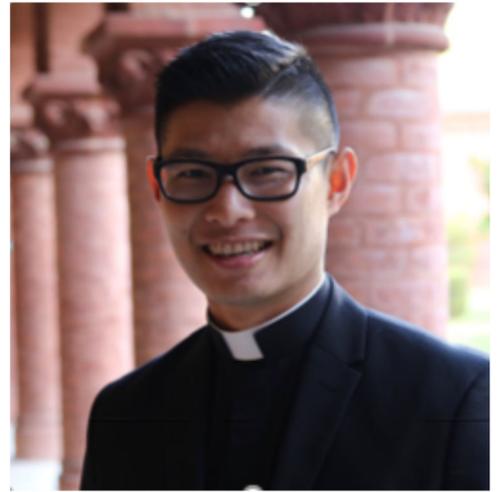
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FR PETER LAWONGKERD



Dear St. Michael family,

Many of you might already know me and some might not. So just to share with you a little bit about myself and my personal vocation story. My name is Fr. Peter Lawongkerd. I am a newly ordained priest of the diocese of Oakland. I was born and raised in Thailand in a small town of about 200 catholic families. Since when I was little, I helped my mom at the sacristy and prepared things for daily Mass. I was so proud to assist my pastor as an altar server. God called me in this particular vocation at a very young age. I entered the minor seminary when I was 13 years old.

During my high school years, my dream about the priesthood began to falter. I started to feel unsure, fearful, doubtful of my path and eventually dropped out of the seminary. After 8 years in the seminary, I decided to leave, to work and experience life outside its boundaries. I

worked at a coffee shop and in a restaurant. I also experienced working in a hospital setting where I became aware that the desire of being a priest was still in my heart.

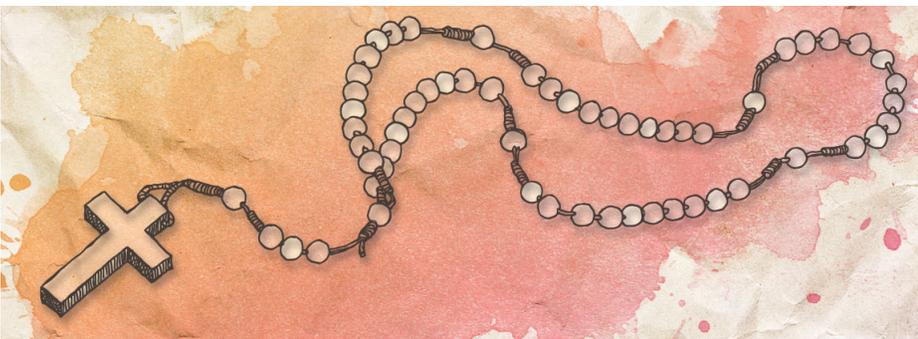
Brother Don Bosco, a retired religious brother who volunteered at my seminary in Thailand for so many years, had hope in me and encouraged me to become a missionary priest in the U.S. I came to the US in December 2009. I took ESL classes in Los Angeles for a couple of months, and eventually applied to the Oakland diocese.

I have studied at Mt. Angel seminary in Oregon for four years to get my bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Literature. Then, I was sent to St. Patrick seminary in Menlo Park to get my Master's degree in Theology and graduated last year in May, 2019. I have had the opportunity to experience pastoral ministry at different parishes including St. Michael in Livermore.

I was recently ordained by Bishop Michael C. Barber S.J. on September 5, 2020 at Santa Maria church in Orinda, California. I also have been appointed as a parochial vicar of Holy Spirit in Fremont, effective immediately. I am very excited and looking forward to come back and celebrate mass with you all.

God bless.

Fr. Peter



4TH FRIDAY ROSARY FOR VOCATIONS

Meet our seminarians and pray the rosary with them on Zoom! Show your support and pray for their vocations.

Every 4th Friday at 7:00 pm. The next date is October 23.

Meeting ID: 701 467 8859
Passcode: 369640

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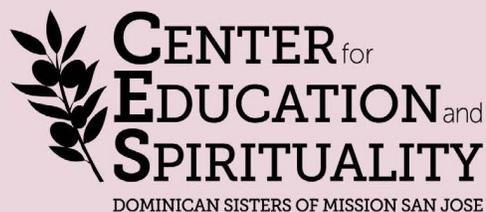
Presented by Pamela Bjorklund, Ph.D.



As the pandemic and the rest of the upheavals in our world stretch on, how can we continue to cope? Is it possible for us as individuals to grow and even thrive through all of this? Join us to receive usable tools that will enable you to find some answers to these questions, deep where God dwells within your own self.

Dr. Pamela Bjorklund, is a licensed clinical psychologist and spiritual director in private practice in San Jose. She taught spirituality courses in the Pastoral Ministries Program of Santa Clara University for 15 years, serves the Diocese of San Jose in a variety of capacities and teaches, leads retreats and consults throughout the area.

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GOSPEL MEDITATION

“Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit.” (Mt 21:43)

Do you ever wonder why things never seem to come together? We see glimpses of consistency, equity, justice, peace, harmony, and well-being, but it always falls short. Human life is still expendable and manipulated, people are used for personal advancement, countries are at war, the economy continues to face turbulence, anger and frustration are widespread, and happiness is the possession of just a few and not the many. Could it be that we are serving the wrong kingdom? We keep trying to make our kingdom work and find ourselves still scratching our heads after repeatedly failed attempts to do so. It is almost as if people are saying, “we’ll get it right this time if we do ...,” as if some new and secret innovation has yet to be tried.

We serve God’s kingdom. We may not like hearing that, but it is true. God did not make only a few of us. God made all of humanity and all

of humanity is called into service. How often do we defer any of our decision making to God? Secular leaders enjoy winking at the Sacred Scriptures and using them when they advance a cause, but are they really listened to? Even those who consider themselves believers tend to sift through God’s Word, taking what seems to fit and apply and discarding the rest. After all, if we were really serving God’s kingdom, we would see an abundance of fruit testifying to this fact. But what’s growing on the vine is anything other than good Gospel-centered fruit.

Nothing in this world or the next belongs to us. We have such a hard time believing this and live our lives as if everything belongs to us. And, the fruit does not lie. Trees that are neglected and not properly fertilized reveal that fact. They cannot keep these deep secrets from being discovered. If God’s

kingdom was really being served, then life would have looked much differently after the crucifixion. By now, there would be plenty of fantastic fruit to harvest in abundance: faith, hope, love, prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude. Do we see these in abundance around us? Why not?

Still we grapple with ownership, privilege, status, and the protection of our rights. It’s all about us and what we want, think we need, and expect to acquire. When did this change of focus occur? We may be struggling with this since humanity’s day in the garden and have never understood that the focus cannot be on us and the apple but on God and God’s justice. Maybe the only answer is that the Kingdom be taken from us and given to someone who is willing to do a better job. Is that the fate we really want?

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RESPONDING *Call* to the

EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP

Gifts Given to Share

My oldest two children took piano lessons when they were younger. In fact, it was because my oldest wanted to learn to play so badly that we purchased a piano. He would use it for practice during his few years of lessons, and then my daughter took up the instrument. After a few years of lessons for each, restlessness set in and a type of indifference took over. The lessons and the practicing came to an end.

My youngest had not expressed

much interest in piano when he was younger. Then when he was a teenager, he asked for lessons. He began to play and now he plays even for fun and to relax. When his siblings try to play, they are stuck with the truth that those days are gone and since they gave it up years ago, they can no longer really play. In many ways, they were given a gift, but since they did not use and cultivate it, they lost it.

God gives us gifts every day and we too often act like those gifts will

simply always be there. The truth is, unlike God Himself, many of those gifts are not eternal. If we fail to acknowledge them and put them to use, we risk losing them in the end. What a shame. What gifts might be slowly slipping away from each of us due to our lack of interest and indifference? They might not be there if and when we change our minds.

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS



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(Rosary begins at 8:00 am)

Wednesday
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Sunday
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am, 12:30 pm (Spanish), 5:00 pm

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StMichaelParishLivermore
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StMichaelLivermore**

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6:45 am in English

Wednesday
8:30 am in English
5:00 pm in Spanish

Saturday Vigil
5:00 pm in English
7:00 pm in Spanish

Sunday
9:30 am

WALK IN COMMUNION

In the Courtyard
Face covering is required
30-40 minutes after Mass begins

Monday - Friday
7:15 - 7:45 am

Saturday
5:45 pm - 6:15 pm
7:45 pm - 8:15 pm

Sunday
Immediately after all outdoor
Masses

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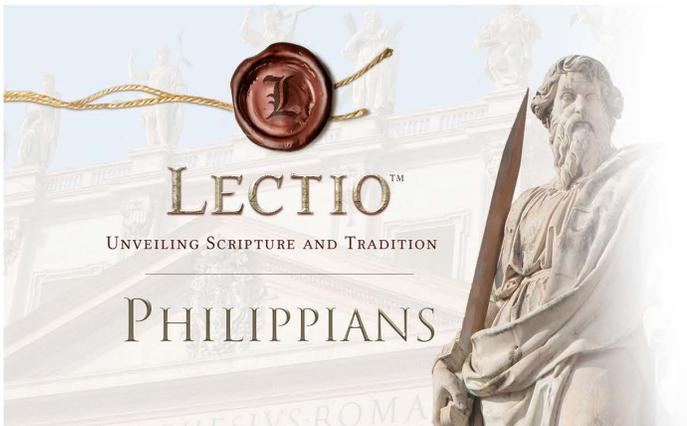
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At the dawn of the twentieth century, three voices rose up from Poland—St. Faustina Kowalska, St. Maximilian Kolbe, and Pope St. John Paul II—to proclaim an urgent message, a message powerful enough to alter the course of an age plunging into spiritual darkness.



LECTIO: PHILIPPIANS WITH DR. TIM GRAY

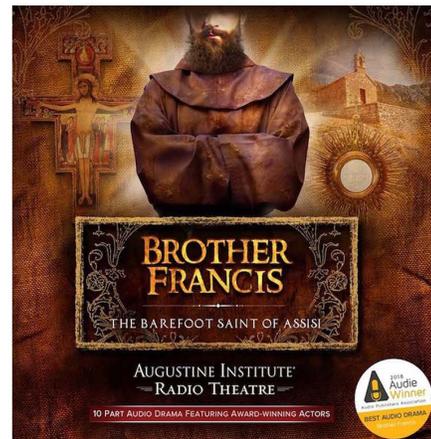
Towards the end of his life, under arrest and awaiting trial in Rome, Saint Paul writes a short but powerful letter to the Philippians. In six sessions, Dr. Tim Gray combines insight and practical guidance using the lectio divina disciplines to make the Scriptures come alive in Philippians: Life in Christ.

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