

July 31, 2016– Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



DETACHMENT AND THE QUEST FOR GOD

We have been probing the Virtue of **DETACHMENT** and its relationship with Contemplation. How important is the experience of Contemplation in the life of the Disciple. Two weeks ago in the Gospel story of Jesus' visit with Martha and Mary, we got a great insight into the importance that Jesus places on Contemplation.

“The Lord said to her in reply, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.” (Luke 10:41-42)

Thomas Merton is the best known Contemplative of our time and a very prolific writer on the subject. In his book *New Seeds of Contemplation*, (pg. 39) Merton says the following:

“What one of you can enter into himself and find the God Who utters him? ‘Finding God’ means much more than just abandoning all things that are not God, and emptying oneself of images and desires.

If you succeed in emptying your mind of every thought and every desire, you may indeed withdraw into the center of yourself and concentrate everything within you upon the imaginary point where your life springs out of God: yet you will not really find God. No natural exercise can bring you into vital contact with Him. Unless He utters Himself in you, speaks His own name in the center of your soul, you will no more know Him than a stone knows the ground upon which it rests in its inertia.

Our discovery of God is, in a way, God’s discovery of us. We cannot go to heaven to find Him because we have no way of knowing where heaven is or what it is. He comes down from heaven and finds us. He looks at us from the depths of His own infinite actuality, which is everywhere, and His seeing us gives us a new being and a new mind in which we also discover Him. We only know Him so far as we are known by Him, and our contemplation of Him is a participation in his contemplation of Himself.

We become contemplatives when God discovers Himself in us.”

Now, we can begin to appreciate more deeply His instruction in the Martha & Mary experience!

—Fr. Gerry



Mass Intentions

August 1st — August 7th

7:30 am Mon.: People of the Parish

7:30 am Tues.: communion service

6:00 pm Wed.: communion service

7:30 am Thurs: communion service

10:00 am Fri.: Healing Mass & Sr. Adult Brunch

5:30 pm Sat.: Owen Blackwell (RIP)

8:00 am Sunday: Lucia Vinci (RIP)

10:30 am Sunday: Rosa Giurintano (RIP)

Prayer Intentions

Liz Donahue Kevin O'Donnell Jane Hipp
Travis Sievert, grandson of Ron Millington
Maria Ellis, friend of Marge Kovach
Bob Combs, friend of Rodney Hipp

Rest of the Soul

Devin Rawson, friend of Ragan & Cherrie Murphy

Adoration This Week: *Monday-Thursday: 8am-Noon;
Friday: 8am-10am (Healing Mass @ 10) Wed. 6:30 pm-7:30 pm*

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Sat 4:30-5:00pm or by appt.
Lectio Divina Mondays @ 7pm; and Tuesdays @ 10 am

New Announcements

*Safe travels to Fr. Gerry during his trip back home to Ireland during the month of August.



*Parking space raffle winners! Saturday- 5:30 pm mass: Betty Cochran, Sunday- 8:00 am mass: Jim Hemphill, 10:30 mass: Bobby & Christine Gill

*The parish office is excited to announce that online registration for PRE and Youth Group is now ready on our website! Go to our website for registration and to find the 2016-2017 schedule. Classes begin the week of Sept. 11th. Ages 3 years - 6th grade meet on Sunday mornings @ 9:15 am. 7th - 12th grades meet on Wednesday evenings 6:00 - 8:30pm.



This Week

*Altar flowers have been donated by Ro Agosta in memory of Deacon Frank Agosta.

*Weekly offering for July 24th: \$16,553

August 5th — Healing Mass @ 10am followed by our Senior Adult Brunch

August 6th — Armed Forces Support Ministry— Pray the rosary with us for our country and U.S. Armed Forces @ 4:45 pm in the chapel.

Upcoming

September 8th — Following Christ Sessions begin on Thursday evenings. Register on our website or call the office if you need assistance.

September 9th — 3rd Annual Golf Tournament for the Early Learning Center.

September 11th—PRE and Adult Ed classes begin @ 9:15am

September 13th — Following Christ Sessions begin on Tuesday evenings. Register on our website or call the office if you need assistance.

September 14th— Youth Group classes will begin @ 6pm. A meal will be served every Wednesday night.

Other Events

August 6th — Therapeutic Foster Care Training 9:00 am at Catholic Charities on North Congress St. Contact Ashanti @ 601-326-3762

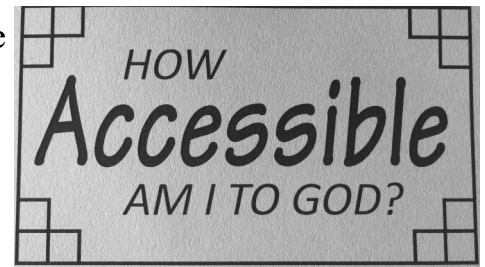
August 20th — Hunger Banquet 7-10 pm sponsored by St. Richard Catholic Church to benefit several local food charities. Tickets are \$25. Contact Susan @ 225-931-3979 or by email seleming@gmail.com

September 9-11th — Lectio Divina Retreat at the Dwelling Place in Brooksville. Presented by Mary Louise Jones & Claudia Addison. \$180 donation to attend. Contact Clare @ 662-738-5348 or visit dwellingplace.com for more information.

September 25th — 30th annual St. Joseph Catholic Church GermanFest from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Advance meal tickets are \$6. Meals the day of the festival will be \$7. Contact St. Joseph parish office at 601-856-2054

Job opening: The Diocese of Jackson is hiring a new Family Life Minister. This is a full-time position requiring a BS or BA; Master of Theology desired. Minimum 3 years experience in related ministry. Contact fran.lavelle@jacksondiocese.org

Our reflection on **Detachment** this month leads perfectly into our new word for August — **ACCESSIBLE**. We chose the word last year because of our Mission with Fr. Henry Shelton “**How Accessible Am I to God?**” **Detachment** allows greater *accessibility* to Him. Our Lord is always ready and waiting for us. We need only cooperate and make ourselves **ACCESSIBLE** to Him. Contemplative prayer is a powerful tool to do just that!



Merton invites us to not be anxious about contemplation. He said, “*Leave God to take care of your degree of sanctity and of contemplation. If you yourself try to measure your own progress, you will waste your time in futile introspection. Seek one thing alone: to unify your love of God more and more, to abandon yourself more and more perfectly to His will, and to love Him more exclusively and more completely, but also more simply and more peacefully and with more total and uncompromising trust.*” (from Merton’s book, *What is Contemplation?*)

But, how? What is the process of contemplation? How might I, a faithful member of St. Paul Parish in Mississippi, practice contemplation? The 14th Century book, *The Cloud of the Unknowing*, is revered as one of the greatest sources to assist in one’s quest for contemplation and relationship with God. This work has inspired countless religious thinkers, mystics and laypersons who practice contemplative prayer such as St. John of the Cross, Thomas Keating, Basil Pennington, Fr. William Menninger and many more. Chapter 3 of *The Cloud* answers the blatant question of, “How to do the work of contemplation?” The answer in the book is, “This is what you are to do: *lift your heart up to the Lord, with a gentle stirring of love desiring Him for His own sake and not for His gifts. Center all your attention and desire on Him and let this be the sole concern of your mind and heart. Do all in your power to forget everything else, keeping your thoughts and desires free from involvement with any of God’s creatures or their affairs whether in general or in particular.*”

It is freeing. We need not do anything. This is truly the experience of Psalm 46, “Be still and know that I am God.” As simple as it sounds, **being and being still** are actually quite difficult for us in our busy world. That is where **detachment** leads to *accessibility*! No pressures. No requirements. No standards of success. Sitting in united love with the Divine.

He loves us unconditionally, and he asks us to do the same. He wants our human, imperfect love! We must be careful not to put conditions on His loving relationship with us. When we lament, “I am not worthy,” we are actually restricting His love. Let us not put limits on God loving us!

Open up. Be accessible.

—Fr. Gerry

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