

## Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 19, 2017

### Calendar

Saturday, February 18th

4:00pm Vigil Vincent Boudreaux Sr, Vincent Boudreaux Jr, Anthony Joseph Cartozzo, Joy Nalty Hodges, Jewel & Joseph Simon, Christopher Joseph Vanderbrook, and Ella Marie Workman

Sunday, February 19th

8:00am Mass All parishioners

10:30am Mass Jack Michael Almon, Drago Cvitanovich, Paul Haygood, Lester & Ethel Heidingsfelder, Earl LeCorgne, Joy Nalty Hodges, Ronald & Pauline Marchessault, Barbara Maynard, Deacon Paul A. Nalty, Miriam Ogden, the Cassard Family, the Derbes Family, the Mercante & Youngblood Families, and the Vaughn Family

Monday, February 20th

6:30am Mass Patricia H. Virgadamo

Tuesday, February 21st

*St Peter Damian, bishop and doctor of the Church*

6:30am Mass The Boudreaux & Bergeron Families

10:30am "Lord, Teach Me to Pray" (St Henry's)

4:45pm Eucharistic Adoration

6:00pm Mass Joy Nalty Hodges

Wednesday, February 22nd

The Chair of St Peter the Apostle

[St Baradates, hermit (pictured)]

6:30am Mass Patricia H. Virgadamo

6:00pm Rosary (@ Our Lady of Good Counsel)

Thursday, February 23rd

St Polycarp, bishop and martyr

6:30am Mass Anthony LaRocca, Sr

7:00am Eucharistic Adoration

9:30am "Lord, Teach Me to Pray" (St Stephen Rectory)

Friday, February 24th

6:30am Mass Jude Marino

8:30am School Mass

Saturday, February 25th

10:00am Rosary (@ Church of St Henry)



The Sanctuary Light in the church will burn this week for the repose of the soul of William Allen.

The Sanctuary Light in the chapel will burn this week for the Intentions of the Pope.



### Mass Setting

The Mass setting for Ordinary Time is the Gregorian *Missa jubilate Deo*, found on the Pew Card.



### Banns of Matrimony

Paige Johnson & William Kery



Abby Blanchard & Reagan Simpson

### Lay-Ministers Schedule for February 26th

#### 4:00 pm

Lector: Brian Plauché

Eucharistic Ministers: Artie Baehr, Hilda Heidingsfelder, and Angela Villanueva

#### 8:00 am

Lector: Linda Tufton

Eucharistic Ministers: Liz Rareshide, Rebecca Stahr, and David Wojciechowski

#### 10:30 am

Lector: Mark Surprenant

Eucharistic Ministers: Deacon Richard Eason, Laura Finnegan, Kenneth Moran, Mona Musser, and Sandra Westfall



## Sharing Our Faith, Securing Our Future

Restoration of St Stephen Church

**Our generous parishioners have pledged in excess of \$476,000 to date. Well done!** If you have not yet turned in a pledge card, please consider doing this soon. No contribution is too small; every dollar gets us closer to our estimated project cost of \$6.2 million. Your donations, in combination with new donations from outside of the parish, have brought our total "left to raise" down to \$744,000.

**What next?** Although we are still fundraising, preliminary planning is in full swing. Our architects and general contractor are working on the detailed scope of work and budget. We hope to approach the Archdiocese within the next few weeks to secure permission to begin construction work.

**When do payments start?** As soon as you are able! We now have special pledge payment envelopes on the tables in church; we ask you always to write *pledge payment* on the memo-line in your check. And if you choose cash, don't forget to put your name on the envelope.

Please expect a telephone call or e-mail from parish staff in the near future if you did not indicate a form of payment (check, cash, credit card, etc) or a payment schedule (monthly, annual) on your pledge card, so that we can send reminders that match your expectations.

Collection Report	February 5th	July 1st-Feb 4th
Total Collections	\$6,827.00	\$230,436.48
Budget	<u>\$6,684.69</u>	<u>\$213,910.08</u>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$142.31</b>	<b>\$16,526.40</b>
<b>Second Collections/Miscellaneous Donations</b>		
Restoration Fund		\$9,860.33
Clarion Herald		\$99.00
Catholic Schools		\$28.00

## The Monthly Prayer-Request for Priests

### February

1 <sup>st</sup>	The Rev. Christian DeLerno, Jr*
2 <sup>nd</sup>	The Rev. John Planea*
3 <sup>rd</sup>	The Rev. Dennis Hayes III*
4 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Msgr. Henry Engelbrecht*
5 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Francis Uzochukwu Offia
6 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. John-Nhan Tran*
7 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Francis Berner
8 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Tuan Anh Pham*
9 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Robert T. Cooper
10 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. H. Brian Highfill*
11 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Patrick J.R. Kennedy*
12 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Ælred Kavanagh, OSB*
13 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. David Seid, OP*
14 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Neal McDermott, OP*
15 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Paul Van Tung Nguyen
16 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Alberto Bermudez*
17 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Terence Hayden
18 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Marlon Mangubat*
19 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Jason Brauning, SJ*
20 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Christopher Amadi, SSJ*
21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>His Holiness Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI</b>
22 <sup>nd</sup>	The Very Rev. Philip G. Landry*
23 <sup>rd</sup>	The Rev. G. Amaldoss*
24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>His Holiness Pope Francis</b>
25 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Leo A. Meyer*
26 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Ambrose Udeze, MSP
27 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Teodoro Agudo, OFM Cap
28 <sup>th</sup>	The Rev. Paul Thien Duy Vu, SDD

\* birthday

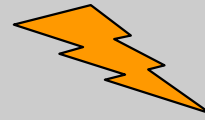
† deceased

Courtesy of The APRP Apostolate



# Lightning Apologetics

by Phillip Bellini, DRE



## Unforgivable Sin?

I have had numerous questions the last few weeks on a particular verse in Sacred Scripture. It is in the Gospel of St Matthew, 12:31-32. Jesus says, “Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever says a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or the age to come.”

So, some are wondering. They have read these verses. So is there really a sin that God will not forgive? On His part, no, there is no such thing. But on the side of the sinner, there definitely is, and many today are getting into it. The Father has accepted the infinite price of redemption. In doing that, He has literally bound Himself to offer forgiveness and grace without limit. Further, it is not just our race as a whole that has such a claim going for it—each individual human has it. St Paul, in Galatians 2:20, wrote that the Son of God “loved me, and gave himself for me.” But is that perhaps a special favor shown to Paul, a great saint? No, Vatican II, in its *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, assures us: “Each one of us can say with the Apostle: ‘The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me.’” Suffering and death in so hideous a form—He was and is willing to take it on for me, for just one soul!

Even though the Father is never unwilling to forgive, yet when we look at human being themselves, yes, there can be and are they who are unforgivable. They have become hard and blinded. But what does this mean? Those words are metaphorical. But they contain a terrible reality. However, if we put on our glasses we can read into it. Let us picture a man who has never been drunk before, but tonight he goes out and gets smashed. The next morning, along with other things, he will have guilt feelings—there is a clash in him, of his moral beliefs with his actions. Our human nature hates to have these clashes, and so something has to give, and it will. If he continues getting drunk, he gradually moves out on a spiral in which he no longer can see drunkenness is wrong: “A guy has to have some fun!” (We are not speaking of alcoholism which many believe to be a disease.) We called it a spiral: as it goes out it gets larger and larger and larger and feeds on itself. All moral truths are interconnected, and so in time he will lose his ability to see other moral truths. He may ever go so far as to no longer see great doctrinal truths. In 1993 when Pope St John Paul II visited Denver, Dignity, the group who say black is white and white is black, published a statement: “The Pope is only the titular head of the Church—we ARE the Church.” Sad to say, I dare say many say that today.

Now, when God sends a grace to us to lead us and to enable us to do something good, the first job for the grace is to cause the person to see in their mind that the thing is good. But if the person is far out on the bad spiral, he will have lost the ability to see that—the grace will indeed come, but it will not get in at all. It is like water on the duck’s back. He is blind, he is hardened.

Is there any hope at all for such a one? The Reverend William Most, a former professor at Christendom College, says, “Not in the ordinary course of things. A grace comparable to a miracle is really needed. It is only if some other person in immense or heroic generosity will sacrifice and pray for him, putting it as it were, a heroic weight into the pan of the two pan scales of the order of holiness, will such heroism call for and make right a miraculous grace, one that goes beyond the normal order, then God will happily find that there is something calling for even miraculous graces, graces that can cut through resistance without destroying freedom, or can even forestall resistance. So Our Lady of Fátima begged: “Pray and make sacrifices for sinners; there are many who are lost because there is no one to sacrifice greatly for them.” For example, St Augustine was a veteran sinner, long sunk in the filth of habitual continued sin. But his mother, Monica, was willing to go heroic lengths in prayer and penance. And so Augustine today is a saint—without her he would now probably be in hell.

A more pleasant thought is that there is a spiral in a good direction too. If someone really lives what the faith calls for, gives up the things of this world more and more, then his ability to see supernatural truth grows more and more. There are cases known, like St Joseph of Cupertino, in which a not very bright and uneducated person may understand more of the ways of God, of theology, than highly trained theologians. Going back to that verse of Our Lord “they see and see not, hear and hear not,”...Did Our Lord really want to blind them? Of course not. He even wept over the hardness of Jerusalem.

There is another way to help understand it. St John, in his First Letter, wrote “God is love.” He did not say God has love, but that God IS love. That was the only correct way to write it. If he had said God has love, there would be a duality—God and His love. But God is supreme unity—there are no real distinctions in God. So mercy and justice are identified with His Being, and so, with each other. But how? Let’s look at the bad spiral again. The person is becoming more blind. He has earned that by his sinning. It is justice. But it is also mercy, for the more a person knows and understands of God, the greater his sin, if he does sin. At the beginning of the process, if he foresees what may happen, he can and will take on the guilt of all that he does later in blindness. For example, a man has a few drinks; he comes to the point where he sees that if he takes two more drinks, he will go out of his head and run wild. At a later time when he is under the influence of alcohol, he may be incapable of sinning much at the moment. But when he embarked on that course, he foresaw, at least to some extent, what would happen. He then took on the frightening responsibility of running wild and killing or destroying. Therefore in one and the same action, God’s dealing with him is both justice and mercy at the same time.

But in the good spiral, the man who moves far on gains more and more light. In one sense, he has earned it, but only secondarily—for no creature by its own power can establish a claim on God. So it is mercy that he gains light. Therefore his great light is both a gift of God and something, secondarily, earned in justice. Again, one and the same act of God is both justice and mercy. So the unforgivable sin is the blind person, who no longer sees his sinfulness and denies sin. For if we deny that we are sinners, how can we ever be saved?

## Pray for the Sick

Ron Behler, William Brown, Ray & Zetta Burkart, Gary Callahan, Jeanne García, Mary Gremillion, Joseph Liberto, Leddie Lopez, Louise Martin, Dilia Miller, Marie Schmitt, and William Youngblood.

## Pray for the Dead

Shelley Baptiste  
Hunter Harris, Jr  
Joy Nalty Hodges  
Gertrude Petit

The Right Reverend Patrick Regan, OSB

## Pray for Our Armed-services

Lt Junior Grade, USN, Neil P. Chatelain;  
LT John Tortorich; and LT Kate Tortorich.



## News

The Extraordinary Form of the Mass of the Roman Rite, the “Tridentine” (Latin) Mass, will be offered again at St Stephen Church on Sunday, March 26th (**Fourth Sunday in Lent, *Laetare***), at 12:30 pm.

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We will have a Second Collection this week -end, for the Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa.

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Our Office Manager of eleven years, Dixie Williams, has announced her retirement, which will commence on March 1<sup>st</sup> (Ash Wednesday). She has been a most devoted employee, and has so often gone well beyond the call of duty. She will be greatly missed! As a result, the parish is in need of a part-time Office Manager. The Office Manager is, indeed, the “face” of our parish to the community. Therefore, excellent communication skills are essential. Responsibilities include maintaining Mass and church schedules as well as sacramental records; handling regular business transactions for the parish; and assisting the pastor as needed. (A detailed list of duties is available.) The ability to organize a varied workload and knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel are required. Experience with QuickBooks book-keeping program is a plus. Interested parties should contact the Rectory Office.

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Next Sunday, February 26th, the 10:30 am Mass will be offered at 10:00 am, because of the schedule of parades. Additionally, Lizbeth Turner will lead an instrumental combo at that Mass. The Schedule of Masses for Ash Wednesday, March 1st, will be 6:30 am (at the Church of St Henry), 12:00 pm, and 6:00 pm (both at St Stephen Church). Additionally, a Charismatic Mass will occur at the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, at 11:00 am.



The Chair of St Peter the Apostle.