

the CATHOLIC NAVIGATOR

Charting a Course to Christ

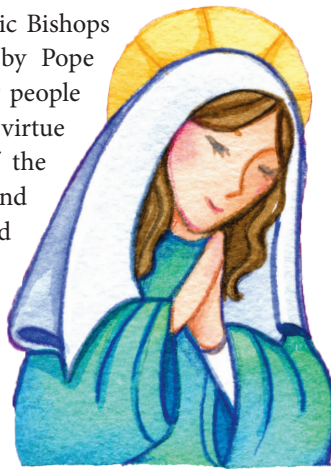
18 June 2023 • Cycle A: 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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"Be Still And Know That I Am God."

Psalms 46:10

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) posted a prayer offered by Pope Francis in July 2013 at a meeting with young people from Argentina. It is a gentle reminder that by virtue of our baptism we are not only hearers of the Word but heeders as well. We are disciples and missionaries, a vocation shared with priests and religious women and men. We join with Pope Francis in his prayer *(Excerpted from, *Prayer to the Lord*, Pope Francis; see website):



*"Lord, you left your Mother in our midst that she might accompany us –
May she take care of us and protect us on our journey, in our hearts, in our faith.
May she make us disciples like herself, missionaries like herself.
May she teach us to go out onto the streets.
May she teach us to step outside ourselves...
May she, by her meekness, by her peace, show us the way."*

Disciples: Hearing & Heeding

'To hear the word of God and to heed it,' such is the commission of every Christian. Hearing and believing commits one to spreading Christ's message. We must evangelize, prophetically and courageously. Bishops and priests do so, most powerfully *in persona Christi*. "Lay people also fulfill their prophetic mission by evangelization, 'that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life.'" (CCC 905)

Thursday, June 22nd, we remember a bishop and a layman who evangelized by martyrdom. Bishop John Fisher and ex-Lord Chancellor Thomas More, close friends and staunch defenders of Catholicism, were executed within days of each other for defying King Henry VIII's claim to become head of the Catholic Church in England, and for refusing to accept Henry's divorce from Queen Catherine. Here we make brief observations about their martyrdoms, but these holy men deserve much more detailed attention. (see website)

In May, 1535 Pope Paul III elevated Bishop John Fisher to Cardinal's rank. So infuriated was King Henry that he stripped Fisher of his episcopal office, reverting him to commoner status. On June 17th, a jury convicted him of treason against the Crown, ordering him hung, drawn, and quartered at

Tyburn. Ruling against the Tyburn execution, the King sped up Fisher's death by a June 22nd beheading on Tower Hill. St. John went to God so calmly and with such dignity that those who came to gawk left edified.

On July 6, Thomas More said good-bye to his wife and four children, leaving prison for his execution by beheading. Like Fisher, his sentence was also commuted by King Henry. Awaiting execution, he stated, "I die the king's good servant, and God's first." He recited the *Miserere* while kneeling, whereupon the executioner begged his pardon. More stood up, kissed him, and gave him forgiveness, leaving a lasting and inspiring image. Both saints are honored on June 22nd.



Scriptural Secrets

Jesus responds to His fellow man in today's Gospel, "moved with pity for them... he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." Jesus, this Master, begins the next leg of our salvation history by sending laborers. He names His Apostles.

This salvation journey began long ago with YHWH intervening in time and place to tap his people on the shoulder and beckon them. He told Abram, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless." (Gen. 17:1) He directed Moses, "tell the Israelites: You have seen for yourselves... how I bore you up on eagle wings and brought you here to myself." The God of All came to us to make us His people: "if you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be... dearer to me than all other people... You shall be to me a kingdom of priests."

God continued His loving intervention in the Person of His Son. Reminded that we are to keep His covenant, we are also taught that, through the death of His Son, "we are now justified by his blood," and "we have now received reconciliation." Guided by His Holy Spirit, we study Jesus Christ, learn Jesus Christ, and become like Jesus Christ.

Next Sunday's Gospel begins what is called Matthew's *Missionary Discourse*. Let us begin today to be open to the Word of God, to wherever He leads and to whatever He asks.



Exodus 19:2-6a
Psalm 100:1-2, 3, 5
Romans 5:6-11
Matthew 9:36-10:8

Catechetical

So important is our call to evangelize that it is treated in the third article of the Catechism:

"Those who with God's help have welcomed Christ's call and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world. This treasure, received from the apostles, has been faithfully guarded by their successors. All Christ's faithful are called to hand it on from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer." (CCC 3)

Common

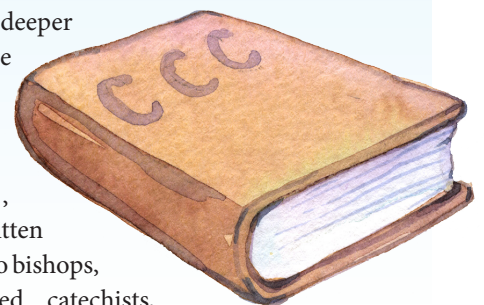


As part of 'Christ's faithful,' we laity are called to hand on the Faith from generation to generation. Mindful of the Faith, we profess it weekly in the Creed, we live its tenets at home and in the workplace, and, we

worship, publicly and privately. In these actions we *echo* what has been passed on to us, for echoing is to *catechize*.

To effectively echo the Faith requires strength and commitment. Strength is found in pursuit of knowledge and in the certainty of the truth we possess. This commitment, though, can be maintained only by a discipline of prayer.

We might use the summer months to acquire deeper knowledge of the Faith. A perfect resource is *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which, though written and recommended to bishops, priests, and trained catechists, "will also be useful reading for all other Christian faithful." (CCC 12) That would be us.



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