

The Bell Ringer

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, HYANNIS + SEPTEMBER 2020



Matthew's Conversion

We celebrate the feast of St. Matthew on September 15. Apostle, author of the first Gospel, his conversion and life were the subject of Pope Francis' homily on his visit to Cuba in 2015.

“Jesus’ love goes before us, His look anticipates our needs.”

We are celebrating the feast of the apostle and evangelist Saint Matthew. We are celebrating the story of a conversion. Matthew himself, in his Gospel, tell us what it was like, this encounter which changed his life. He shows us an “exchange of glances” capable of changing history.

On a day like any other, as Matthew, the tax collector, was seated at his table, Jesus passed by, saw him, came up to him and said: “Follow me”. Matthew got up and followed him.

Jesus looked at him. How strong was the love in that look of Jesus, which moved Matthew to do what he did! What power must have been in His eyes to make Matthew get up from his table! We know that Matthew was a publican: he collected taxes from the Jews to give to the Romans. Publicans were looked down upon and considered sinners; as such, they lived apart and were despised by others. One could hardly eat, speak or pray with the likes of these. For the people, they were traitors: they extorted from their own to give to others. Publicans belonged to this social class.

Jesus, on the other hand, stopped; he did not quickly take His distance. He looked at Matthew calmly, peacefully. He looked at him with eyes of mercy; He looked at him as no one had ever looked at him before. And this look unlocked Matthew's heart; it set him free, it healed him, it gave him hope, a new life, as it did to Zacchaeus, to Bartimaeus, to Mary Magdalene, to Peter, *(Continued on page 2)*



Confession: It puts you straight with everyone. See page 3.

Two saints — Alphonsus and Josemaria — offer ideas on the virtue of mortification, on page 4.



September 15 is the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, see page 5 for details.

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Respecting the Resources of our planet, quotes on love and a life of finding wisdom, begin on page 7.

Words: WISDOM

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and to each of us. Even if we do not dare raise our eyes to the Lord, He looks at us first. This is our story, and it is like that of so many others. Each of us can say: "I, too, am a sinner, whom Jesus has looked upon". I ask you, in your homes or in the Church, to be still for a moment and to recall with gratitude and happiness those situations, that moment, when the merciful gaze of God was felt in our lives.

Jesus' love goes before us, His look anticipates our needs. He can see beyond appearances, beyond sin, beyond failures and unworthiness. He sees beyond our rank in society. He sees beyond this, to our dignity as sons and daughters, a dignity at times sullied by sin, but one which endures in the depth of our soul. He came precisely to seek out all those who feel unworthy of God, unworthy of others. Let us allow Jesus to look at us. Let us allow his gaze to run over our streets. Let us allow that look to become our joy, our hope.

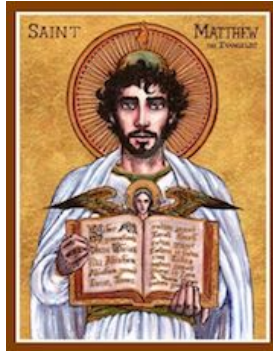
After the Lord looked upon him with mercy, He said to Matthew: "Follow me." Matthew got up and followed Him. After the look, a word. After love, the mission. Matthew is no longer the same; he is changed inside. The encounter with Jesus and His loving mercy has transformed him. He leaves behind his table, his money, his exclusion. Before, he had sat waiting to collect his taxes, to take from others; now, with Jesus he must get up and give, give himself to others. Jesus looks at him and Matthew encounters the joy of service. For Matthew and for all who have felt the gaze of Jesus, other people are no longer to be "lived off", used and abused. The gaze of

Jesus gives rise to missionary activity, service, self-giving. Jesus' love heals our short-sightedness and pushes us to look beyond, not to be satisfied with appearances or with what is politically correct.

Jesus goes before us, He precedes us; He opens the way and invites us to follow Him. He invites us slowly to overcome our preconceptions and our reluctance to think that others, much less ourselves, can change. He challenges us daily with the question: "Do you believe? Do you believe it is possible that a tax collector can become a servant? Do you believe it is possible that a traitor can become a friend? Do you believe it is possible that the son of a carpenter can be the Son of God?" His gaze transforms our way of seeing things, His heart transforms our hearts. God is a Father who seeks the salvation of each of His sons and daughters.

Let us gaze upon the Lord in prayer, in the Eucharist, in Confession, in our brothers and sisters, especially those who feel excluded or abandoned. May we learn to see them as Jesus sees us. Let us share His tenderness and mercy with the sick, prisoners, the elderly and families in difficulty. Again and again we are called to learn from Jesus, who always sees what is most authentic in every person, which is the image of His Father.

. . . I now turn my eyes to the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre, whom Cuba embraced and to whom it opened its doors forever. I ask Our Lady to look with maternal love on all her children. . . . May her "eyes of mercy" ever keep watch over each of you, your homes, your families, and all those who feel that they have no place. In her love, may she protect us all as she once cared for Jesus. +



The Pope's September Prayer Intention

Respect for the Planet's Resources

We pray that the planet's resources will not be plundered,
but shared in a just and respectful manner.

Prayer for the Holy Father

Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Pope Francis, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of Thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be to the Father.

Confession: It puts you straight with everyone

By Sister Mary Ann Walsh, posted on USCCB Blog, July 11, 2011

Penance, aka confession, is the sacrament of the forgiveness of sin. You can't beat it for convenience. It's available practically whenever. Tell a priest you want to go to confession and you'll get his attention.

One bishop I know was cornered on an airplane. Another passenger figured out what was going on and asked if he could confess too. It must have been an interesting game of musical seats.

An interesting question for priests might be: Where was the strangest place you ever administered the sacrament of penance? The answers I've gathered include "in a sports bar, at a graduation party" and "on the golf course, walking up the fairway."

Confession has benefits.

Here are ten:

1. Confidentiality guaranteed. There's nothing like confessing your sins to someone guaranteed not to tell anyone else. Sometimes you need to talk in absolute confidence. Even under subpoena, a priest can't tell anyone what's said to him in confession. He can't even hint at it. Now that's confidentiality.

2. Housekeeping for the soul. It feels good to be able to start a clean life all over again. Like going into a sparkling living room in your home, it's nice when clutter is removed – even if it's your own.

3. A balm for the desire for revenge. When you have been forgiven you can forgive others. If the perfect Jesus forgives me, who am I to want to avenge the slights in my life. Think: "Why did they promote him over me?" or "Mom played favorites!"

4. Low cost therapy. It's free, which makes it cheaper than a psychiatrist for dealing with guilt.

5. Forced time to think. Socrates said that the unexamined life is not worth living. To

examine our lives and acknowledge failings marks the first step of making things right with God, others and ourselves. Life can be more worth living when you ponder the meaning of your own life.

6. Contribution toward world peace.

Gaudium et Spes, the Second Vatican Council's

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, said that the imbalances in the world that lead to war and tensions "are linked with that more basic imbalance which is rooted in the heart of man." Peace of soul leads to peace of heart leads to peace beyond oneself.

7. A better neighborhood.

Confession leaves you feeling good about yourself, thereby cutting back the inclination to

road rage and aggressive shopping cart driving. With the grace of the sacrament you're energized to, as Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, "go and sin no more."

8. Realistic self-perception. Confession helps overcome arrogance when you have to admit you're as much of a sinner as anyone else. It helps build tolerance for others' perceived shortcomings.

9. One more benefit of being Catholic. There are lots of benefits, including a sense of community, liturgical rites to help us encounter God in prayer, and the wonderful sense of humanity exemplified in the saints, from Mary, the loving Mother of God, to Augustine, the exasperating son of Monica. The sacrament that leads us to inner peace is among the greatest boons.

10. Closeness to God. Confession helps you realize that you have a close connection to God and receive His grace through the sacraments. What can be better than knowing God's on your team, or, to be less arrogant about it, that you are on God's. +



If the grain of wheat does not die, it remains unfruitful. Don't you want to be a grain of wheat, to die through mortification, and to yield a rich harvest? May Jesus bless your wheat-field! — St. Josemaria Escriva

The Monthly Virtue for September, according to the Redemptorist London Province website, is Mortification. Mortification refers to the Christian ideal of dying to self through deliberate restraint of our unruly passions and appetites. It refers to our struggle against evil inclinations.

“St. Alphonsus Ligouri distinguishes between external mortification for example, fasting, controlling one's tongue, and internal mortification, ”the discipline of the heart,” overcoming aversions, resentments, and dangerous attachments.

“While both kinds of mortification are important, Alphonsus views the internal as more demanding and more fruitful for spiritual growth. During September you might reflect on the resentments or dangerous attachments in your life and pray for the grace to overcome them.”

In *The Way*, Josemaria Escriva, the founder of Opus Dei, devotes Chapter 6 to Mortification. The



format of this book deals with thoughts from the saint that are numbered and are designed to provoke meditation on the part of the reader.

Here are a few, numbered as in his book:

“173 That joke, that witty remark held on the tip of your tongue; the cheerful smile for those who annoy you; that silence when you're unjustly accused; your friendly conversation with people

whom you find boring and tactless; the daily effort to overlook one irritating detail or another in the persons who live with you. . .this, with perseverance, is indeed solid interior mortification.

“174 Don't say: 'That person gets on my nerves.' Think: 'That person sanctifies me.'”

“178 When you see a poor wooden Cross, alone, uncared-for, and of no value. . .and without its Crucified, don't forget that that Cross is your Cross: the Cross of each day, the hidden Cross, without splendor or consolation . . . ,the Cross which is awaiting the Crucified it lacks: and that Crucified must be you.

“183 The eyes! Through them many iniquities enter the soul. — What experiences like David's! — If you guard your sight you have assured the guard of your heart.

“187 Paradox: to live we must die.” +



Padre Pio's Words Of Faith

On Wednesday, September 23, we celebrate the feast day of St. Pius of Pietrelcina, Padre Pio, the Franciscan stigmatist. Here are some of his quotes from the website: padrepiodevotions.org

In all the events of life, you must recognize the Divine will. Adore and bless it, especially in the things which are the hardest for you.

In my greatest sufferings, it seems to me that I no longer have a mother on this earth, but a very compassionate one in Heaven.

Let us always keep before our eyes the fact that here on earth we are on a battlefield and that in paradise we shall receive the crown of victory; that this is a testing-ground and the prize

will be awarded up above; that we are now in a land of exile while our true homeland is Heaven to which we must continually aspire.

Some people are so foolish that they think they can go through life without the help of the Blessed Mother.

Our Lord sometimes makes you feel the weight of the cross. This weight seems unbearable but you carry it because in His love and mercy, the Lord helps you and gives you strength.

You must not be discouraged or let yourself become dejected if your actions have not succeeded as perfectly as you intended. What do you expect? We are made of clay and not every soil yields the fruits expected by the one who tills it. But let us always humble ourselves and acknowledge that we are nothing if we lack the Divine assistance. +

The feast of Our Lady of Sorrows commemorates the seven great sorrows which Mary lived in relation to Her Son, as they are recorded in the Gospels or through Tradition. On September 15, we are invited to reflect on Mary's deep suffering during these seven events in her life. They are also commemorated in the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows on Fridays and during Lent.

Devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows became a standard devotion in the Church around the 14th century. It was revealed to St. Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373) that devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary's Seven Sorrows would bring great signal graces. The devotion consists in praying seven Hail Mary's while meditating on the Seven Sorrows of Mary.

Mary, in a unique way, willingly suffered alongside her Divine Son as He gave His life to save the world, and she felt the bitterness of His passion as only a mother can. Here are the Seven Sorrows and some meditations on them.

1. At the prophecy of Simeon: "You yourself shall be pierced with a sword - so that the thoughts of many hearts may be laid bare." (Luke 2:35). The Blessed Mother revealed to St. Bridget, the 14th century Swedish mystic to whom she gave many private revelations, that this grief pierced her soul for the rest of her life. As she put it "as often as I looked at my Son, as often as I wrapped Him in His swaddling-clothes, as often as I saw His hands and feet, so often was my soul absorbed, so to say in fresh grief; for I thought how He would be crucified."

2. At the flight into Egypt: As St. Alphonsus Liguori put it: "Herod, having heard that the expected Messiah was born, foolishly feared that he would deprive him of his kingdom." The upshot was that, soon after the Magi left Bethlehem, an angel told Joseph in a dream to flee for Egypt immediately with Mary and Jesus. He warned Joseph that Herod would soon order the massacre of all boys under the

age of two in Bethlehem, the place of Jesus' birth, to make sure the child was killed!

3. The Loss of the Child at Jerusalem: In her great humility, St. Alphonsus Liguori wondered, Mary might have thought that He'd left her because of some negligence on her part! As the Blessed Mother said to Mary of Agreda, a 17th century Spanish nun: "In my great love the uncertainty as to the cause of His withdrawal gave me no rest until I found Him."

4. Meeting Jesus on his way to Calvary: Mary revealed to St. Bridget: "By the footsteps of My Son I traced His course, for along the way by which He had passed, the ground was sprinkled with blood."

5. Standing at the foot of the Cross: "Near the cross of Jesus there stood His mother." (John 19:25). Our Blessed Mother told St. Bridget that she knew from the time of Christ's birth, "by divine inspiration," that her Son would die for our salvation. But the fact that we would be redeemed served only to alleviate, not eliminate her anguish.

6. Jesus being taken from the Cross: Mary told St. Bridget: "I was indeed consoled that I could touch His body and take Him onto my lap, examine His wounds and dry up the blood. They laid Him out on some clean linen, and with my cloth, I washed His wounds and His limbs. And with my fingers I closed His eyes and His mouth, which were open when he died."

7. At the burial of Christ: To St. Bridget, Our Lady said: "It would be impossible for anyone to describe how sad I was then....Oh, how gladly would I have allowed them to entomb me alive with my Son, if it had been His will! I can truly say that when my Son was entombed, there were two Hearts in one sepulcher. Is there not the saying: where your treasure is, there is also your heart? [Matthew 6: 21; Luke 12:34] Therefore my thoughts and my heart were always in the Tomb of my Son." +





St. Vincent de Paul's 'Housing with Love Walk' Most Successful Thanks to You

Last year, the Walk raised almost \$5,000 from our parish but with all the problems associated with the pandemic and the resulting economic fallout, the expectations were lowered. But dear parishioners, the proceeds exceeded last year's fundraising by more than 10 percent. God bless you all for your compassion and generosity! +

Pro-Life and Pro-Country Novena Planned from Sept. 10 through Nov. 2

The Respect Life Team at our parish requests parishioners to take part in a 54-Day Rosary Novena for Life and the Life of Our Nation beginning September 10 and ending November 2.

"Specifically, we are praying for Our Blessed Mother's intercession that three-life threatening bills will be defeated in the State House," noted Deacon and Mrs. Steven Minninger in a recent email to team members and friends.

"The Judiciary and the Public Health Committees have delayed voting until November 12th. The bills are: 1. Roe Infanticide Act, Bill #H3320, 2. University Abortions Bill #H3841, and 3. Physician Assisted Suicide, Bill H4782."

The Roe Infanticide Act allows for abortion on demand at all stages of pregnancy, up and until birth, allows for late-term abortions to be performed outside hospitals, no parental consent is needed for underage girls, requires abortions to be paid by taxpayers, and eliminates all criminal penalties for those who perform abortions and are not doctors.

The University Abortions Bill provides up to \$400,000 to every public college and university to provide on-campus abortions.

The Physician Assisted Suicide, Bill allows doctors to prescribe deadly doses of drugs to patients who may be under duress who want to end their lives. This bill has already received a favorable review from the Joint Committee on Public Health.

With our nation in such disruption and civil unrest, the idea is to implore heaven for the defeat of these bills. The Rosary can be downloaded from the Internet at this website: www.54Novena.com. The 54-Day Novena is divided in two parts: the first 27 days for Life and for the Life of Our Nation and the second 27 days in thanksgiving for Mary's intervention. It takes less than 30 minutes a day to pray the Rosary and is a small sacrifice for Life and our Nation. +

Our Brazilian Community Adds Sunday 8 a.m. Outdoor Mass for the Summer



Father Marcos has added an early Sunday Mass to the summer's weekend schedule at 8 a.m. outdoors on the green behind the Father Duffy Pastoral Center. With so much space available, the community's attendance keeps growing. The mass has proved to be a great success for those having to work on the weekends who wish to attend Mass with their families. Keep praying for good weather on Sunday mornings so the members of our Brazilian community may continue to enjoy the outdoor Mass.+



**Words of
WISDOM**

Respect for the Planet's Resources

"Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude. Safeguard Creation. Because if we destroy Creation, Creation will destroy us! Never forget this!" — **Pope Francis**

"Faced with the widespread destruction of the environment, people everywhere are coming to understand that we cannot continue to use the goods of the earth as we have in the past. . . . [A] new ecological awareness is beginning to emerge. . . . The ecological crisis is a moral issue.

— **Pope John Paul II**

"The environmental crisis of our own day constitutes an exceptional call to conversion. As individuals, as institutions, as a people, we need a change of heart to save the planet for our children and generations yet unborn. So vast are the problems, so intertwined with our economy and way of life, that nothing but a wholehearted and ever more profound turning to God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, will allow us to carry out our responsibilities as faithful stewards of

God's creation. . . Only when believers look to values of the Scriptures, honestly admit their limitations and failings, and commit their selves to common action on behalf of the land and the wretched of the earth will we be ready to participate fully in resolving this crisis." — **"Renewing the Earth" from the USCCB, November 2011**

Mary, Mother of Sorrows

"Let us say boldly with St. Bernard that we have need of a mediator with the Mediator Himself, and that it is . . . Mary who is the most capable of filling that charitable office. It was through her that Jesus Christ came to us, and it is through her that we must go to Him. If we fear to go directly to Jesus Christ, our God, whether because of His infinite greatness or because of our vileness or because of our sins, let us boldly implore the aid and intercession of Mary, our Mother. She is good, she is tender, she has nothing in her austere and forbidding, nothing too sublime and too brilliant. In seeing her, we see our pure nature."

— **St. Louis de Montfort**

"While other martyrs suffered by sacrificing their own lives, the Blessed Virgin suffered by sacrificing her Son's life, a Life that she loved far more than her own; so that she not only suffered in her soul all that her Son endured in His Body but moreover, the sight of her Son's torments, brought more grief to her heart, than if she had endured them all in her own person". — **St Anselm**

"If you want to assist at Mass, with devotion and with fruit, think of the sorrowful mother at the feet of Calvary."

— **Padre Pio**



Words^o_F
WISDOM

"If we really want to love, we must learn how to forgive." — **Mother Teresa of Calcutta**

"Natural love is sufficient for earthly parents, but the love which [Joseph] bore to Jesus, as His appointed father, was not a mere human love, it was also a supereminently divine love; for, in loving his Son he was exercising the most perfect love of God; since He whom he called his Son was at the same time his God. As in creatures all is finite, so all is capable of increase. What, then, may we imagine, must have been the growth of this ardent love in the heart of our saint during the long period which he spent with Jesus! Those things which tend naturally to add to human love, in him ministered fresh fuel to the divine flame within him. The constant association with the Son of God made Man and given to him as his own Son, the serving Him and being served by Him for thirty years, and, we must add, their marvelous resemblance created a bond between them which was unequalled of its kind."

— **Edward Healy Thompson**

"Our Lord's love shines out just as much through a little soul who yields completely to His Grace as it does through the greatest . . . Just as the sun shines equally on the cedar and the little flower, so the Divine Sun shines equally on everyone, great and small. Every-

thing is ordered for their good, just as in nature the seasons are so ordered that the smallest daisy comes to bloom at its appointed time."

— **St. Therese of Lisieux**

Finding Wisdom

"We trust ourselves to a doctor because we suppose he knows his business. He orders an operation which involves cutting away part of our body and we accept it. We are grateful to him and pay him a large fee because we judge he would not act as he does unless the remedy were necessary, and we must rely on his skill. Yet we are unwilling to treat God in the same way! It looks as if we do not trust His wisdom and are afraid He cannot do His job properly. We allow ourselves to be operated on by a man who may easily make a mistake — a mistake which may cost us our life — and protest when God sets to work on us. If we could see all He sees we would unhesitatingly wish all He wishes."

— **Fr. Jean Baptiste Saint-Jure**

"What is a vocation? It is a gift from God, so it comes from God. If it is a gift from God, our concern must be to know God's will. We must enter that path: if God wants, when God wants, how God wants. Never force the door."— **St. Gianna Molla**

"When we go to confession, we ought to persuade ourselves to find Jesus Christ in the person of our confessor."

— **St. Philip Neri**

"Whenever anything disagreeable or displeasing happens to you, remember Christ crucified and be silent."

— **St. John of the Cross**