

Gospel Reflection

Most people will go to any lengths to avoid talking or thinking about death. We fear and dread it, and when it comes for us or for those close to us, we are angry and even more fearful. People spend billions avoiding it, delaying its effects, or trying to remain perpetually young. But as the old adage says, the mortality rate in life is 100%.

Often the demise of a pet is a child's first introduction to mortality. Many adults can remember burying a pet turtle or goldfish in an old Q-tips box in the backyard. Sometimes the introduction is more wrenching—a beloved dog or cat. But tragically, it sometimes involves the death not of pets but of grandparents, parents, or siblings. It is usually the occasion for the first questions concerning death, and the fumbling attempts of parents to explain that all living things die someday. It is also at this point that the first inklings of "heaven" begin to form—the blessed place where we are united with those we have loved, and all tears are wiped away. But why—the child asks—why does everything die? Adults usually don't have a terrific answer for that one, and their feeble explanations often cause even greater harm.

"God did not make death"—a puzzling statement, given that all living things die. But as the statement is fleshed out, it becomes clear that the author is making a ringing declaration that all creation is good, God takes no delight whatsoever in death and destruction, and these are never God's intentions. But if God made everything good and takes no delight in death and destruction, why doesn't God just "fix" everything?

Death really refers to the sort of unnatural and avoidable situation that results from human action: war, violence, starvation, disease, and injustice. These are human actions rather than the hand of God, and they give us no cause to be angry with God or despise God's creation. Natural biological death is not a punishment but an essential element of creation. And death, when it is understood as separation from God, is met with God's response: the gift of eternal life.

It is amazing how much our own attitude determines the amount of power that God can exert on our behalf. In almost all of the gospel healings Jesus declares that it is the faith of the individual that has made the healing possible. It seems that God can exert a positive, active healing power on our behalf, but it must be met by an open and receptive power that only we possess. And the healings of Jesus always involve the crossing of boundaries and prejudices of human origin. The woman with the flow of blood would have been considered unclean, and yet Jesus does not object to her approach and touch. She is healed not through any magical properties of His robe, but her determination and persistence in seeking healing and her burning surety that it would be granted. His arrival at the home of Jairus is greeted by resignation and grief as well as ridicule when He suggests that the little girl is merely sleeping and will return to life. In both cases, God has the last say. God is the giver of life, and death need not be permanent.

God intends for us to have life and have it abundantly and does not afflict us with death and disease as some sort of punishment or test. Life will deal out many painful situations, but only we can decide how we will respond to them. Our negativity and doubt are the greatest hindrance to God's power to work miracles in our midst. We claim to believe, and yet there is one of the deadliest phrases in our spiritual vocabulary: "Yes, but..." In that expectation of failure, so many hopes and wonders are dashed and smothered before they can bear fruit. "Do not be afraid, just have faith"—Jesus gives us these simple but very powerful words, not to put on T-shirts and coffee mugs, but to live by. They are nothing less than the essential ingredients for miracles.



Stewardship Report: Revenue



June 21 st :	5,277.00
Faith Direct:	1,602.75
Total Offortory:	6,879.75
Last Year:	9,998.02
Poor Box:	81.96
Every Penny Counts Box:	153.50

Some of our Recent Expenditures: McGraw Hill (Terra Nova Tests) \$3,390.00; Property Insurance, \$1,840.00 per mo; Catholic Standard Assessment, \$521.00 per mo; Bills: BG&E \$4,012.34; WSSC \$1,761.00; American Capital \$2,000 School Cleaning (2 wks) and McLean \$1,300.00 A/C Repair.

Number of Adult Envelopes: 169
Number of Children's Envelopes: 4
Number of Faith Direct donors: 45
Number of Registered Households: 668



- **Peter's Pence Collection:** Today we recall the apostolic journey of Pope Benedict XVI to the United States and his call to us to cast the light of Christ upon the world. We can show our solidarity with the Holy Father and our suffering brothers and sisters abroad through our support of this week's Collection. These funds allow him to provide emergency assistance to victims of war, disaster, oppression, and disease. Please be generous in today's Peter's Pence Collection.
- **Building Maintenance:** Our second collection next weekend is for our regular **Building and Maintenance Fund**. This monthly collection enables us to make ongoing repairs, upkeep, improvements to our parish and school buildings as well as our parish grounds. May we suggest a minimum contribution of \$20 per household? As always we thank you for your continuing generosity.
- **Summer Stewardship:** Please remember that your parish counts on your weekly sacrifice of treasure, joyfully given to the Lord in gratitude, and that treasure is needed even when you're away from us on vacation. Please remember to mail your offertory envelope to the rectory before you go away on a well-deserved holiday or drop it in the collection basket the week before you leave. Thank you for being a faithful steward!



- **Recycling Bin:** If you haven't finished your "spring cleaning" why don't you get rid of all of your old newspapers, magazines, catalogs, office paper and mail piling up in your home. Bring them to our Green and Yellow paper recycling container located in the area to the left of the parking lot behind the school. It is an easy way to help earn cash for our school, and model environmentally responsible behavior for your children.
- **A Stewardship Moment:** In today's second reading, St. Paul offers the community at Corinth a spirituality of giving. He urges them to give and helps them understand that through their generosity, they will in turn be recipients of a spiritual abundance. They will receive from those who are the beneficiaries of their own giving, a reciprocal gift that amounts to an equality of giving through the generosity of Christ. A good reflection this week would be on how Christian stewards, through their generosity, enjoy a spiritual abundance through Christ Jesus.

Faith Formation

Registration for 2009-2010: Forms have been mailed home via regular mail. Please make sure to fill out and return them to the Office of Faith Formation before July 31st. If you do not receive a letter from us, please check with the office to make sure we have the correct address for you.

Other Items of Note

New Pamphlets: We currently offer three new pamphlets in the pamphlet racks with information on the **Anointing of the Sick:** the purpose of this pamphlet is to introduce the history, celebration and theology of the sacrament of the anointing of the sick and give practical examples of when, where, by whom and for whom it may be celebrated; **Roman Catholic Funeral Rites:** gives information concerning the funeral Mass, burial, and related optional rites; and **The Church and Cremation:** contains information on the rules concerning cremation, the proper container for cremated remains and whether they must be buried.

Ladies of Charity: Due to increased need, our pantry shelves have once again been depleted. The Ladies would appreciate, if your means allow, another drive to collect non-perishable food donations to restore our pantry. Items in short supply are: canned fruit (we have none at all), cereal, pasta sauce, peanut butter, jelly, canned meats and tuna fish. Please place your bag in the back of the church. We thank you for helping to feed the poor in our neighborhood.



Security: Every person and group granted the privilege of using Friendship Hall or the school library and classroom space for meetings or functions is responsible for thorough clean-up and restoration of the premises to a clean and orderly condition. Every person and group member is also responsible for ensuring the security of the premises by closing and checking the locks on all exterior doors and windows prior to leaving the building. Please be mindful of the safety and comfort of your fellow parishioners as well as Father Jeff and his staff when using the facilities of the parish. Thank you.

School Office Hours: The school offices will be closed June 26th through July 31st, 2009. The school offices will re-open from Aug 3rd through Aug 27th (Mon-Thurs 9am to 3pm, and Fridays from 9am to 1pm). The school offices will be closed Fri, Aug 28th through Mon Aug 31st. Normal business hours (8am—3pm) will resume on Tue, Sept 1st. If you have questions concerning enrollment, please e-mail vmason@stmatthias.org and you will receive a response in 24 hours.

Sunday TV Mass: TV Mass is moving! Starting July 5th you will find the TV Mass on WDCW Channel 50 at 10:30am. Confirm the channels with your cable provider—P.G.Co. usually channel 3.

SOME 40th Anniversary Inaugural Concert: Please join SOME (So Others Might Eat) as it commemorates 40 years of service to the homeless and poor in Washington, DC, with a special benefit concert at the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine on Wednesday, July 1 at 7:30 pm. The renowned Georgetown Chorale will lead a choir of 100 voices in a performance of Henry Mollicone's moving *Beatitude Mass (for the homeless)* and selections from *Les Misérables*. Mr. Mollicone apprenticed under Leonard Bernstein and has been lauded by the *Washington Post* as "one of the most distinctive American opera composers." Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children and students and are available at www.georgetownchorale.org. Concert proceeds will help SOME to continue to feed, clothe and serve the most vulnerable members of our community in these most difficult economic times. Learn more at www.some.org.

Mass Intentions for the Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time:



Monday, June 29: Peter & Paul, apostles

8:30 am Intentions of Juliet Manlapaz

Tuesday, June 30: First Holy Martyrs of Holy Roman Church

8:30 am Arinze Michael Ezeifeke

Wednesday, July 1: Blessed Junipero Serra, priest

8:30 am Stafford Lowry

Thursday, July 2:

8:30 am Edwin and Rita Walters

Friday, July 3: Thomas, apostle

8:30 am Adolph Koloski

Saturday, July 4: Vigil – Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

3:30 pm to 4:30pm—Confessions

5:00 pm Helen Maria Jones

Sunday, July 5: Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00 am Pampilio Buan

9:30 am Intentions of Ugo Onukwubiri, Uzo Onukwubiri, Okezie Onukwubiri and Emeka Ekgocha, in Thanksgiving

11:30 am This Mass has been canceled for the summer.

Please Pray for: ♦The Sick and Homebound In Our Parish:

Anne Benson; Mary Bittner; Margaret Brooks; Audrey Brown; Lisa Farland; Dennis George; Helen Guditis; Charles Henry; Lena Jacobs; Ray Krok; Joe Makowski; Willie (Bill) Moore; Rosemarie Nardozi; Peter O'Neill; Joe & Irene Pezzuti; Bill Pinchback; Rohland Reich; Joe Sico; Anita Topnick; Margaret Zanin ♦**For Our Military Serving in Iraq:** Gerard Johnson♦

For the Deceased: Joseph Clayton; Margaret Tolzman. Names will be placed on our prayer list for three weeks. To add a name or to request continuing prayers, please contact Carmen Kosko by email at ckosko@stmatthias.org or by phone at 301-459-4814 ext 201.

Outdoor Parish Shrines; Memorials and Tributes:

The votive lights burning from June 28th through July 4th

Shrine of the Sacred Heart

For the Special Intentions of: The Ferrara Family; Dennis George and for Father James Downs, on the occasion of his retirement.

Shrine of the Madonna & Child

For the Special Intentions of: Dennis George; and for Sister Ann; Alicia Camacho and Leslie O'Leary on the occasion of their birthdays.

SCHOOL RAFFLE WINNER

Congratulations to **Donna Reed** of South Carolina (winner of \$300) AND **Debbie Self** of Lanham, MD (\$50.00 as seller) of this week's ticket!



Holy Humor



A preacher completing a temperance sermon said with great expression: "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river; and if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river; and if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." He sat down and the song leader then announced with a smile, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn #365: "Shall We Gather at the River."