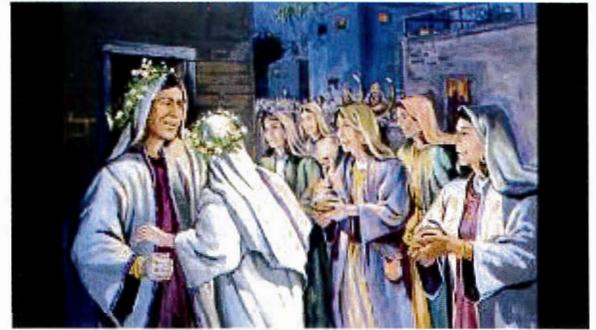


LIVING FAITH

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY



ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. JOHN'S



THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY

Matthew 25:1-13

'Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, "Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise replied, "No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves." And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, "Lord, lord, open to us." But he replied, "Truly I tell you, I do not know you." Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.'

REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL

Jesus teaches in parables in order to give us glimpses of what God is like. People often think that the Kingdom of Heaven is a place or a state of being that will exist after our earthly life is finished; but this is not the Kingdom that Jesus speaks of so often in His stories. The Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus speaks of, the Kingdom that He worked so hard to bring about, is possible here on earth, if we love one another. In the Kingdom of Heaven, people are like the five wise bridesmaids. What does that mean? They were ready, ready to go out to meet the groom, even though they could not be certain at what hour he would come. We People of the Kingdom have to be ready as well, ready to meet Jesus at whatever hour He comes. This does not mean death, as so many people think; it means that we must be ready to love others when they most need it, to tend the sick when they most need care, to feed the hungry when the need arises, to welcome the stranger when they are in need. People of the Kingdom are ready and watchful, seeking to meet Jesus in our neighbour. Whatever we do for one of the least of our sisters or brothers, we do to Him.

MERCY IS LOVE IN ACTION THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

IDEAS FOR FAMILIES...

The Corporal Works of Mercy are found in the teachings of Jesus (Matthew 25), and give us a model for how we should treat all others, as if they were Christ in disguise. They are charitable actions by which we help our neighbors in their bodily needs. They respond to the basic needs of humanity as we journey together through this life.

SHELTER THE HOMELESS



There are many circumstances that could lead to someone becoming a person without a home. Christ encourages us to go out and meet those without homes, affirming their worth and helping them seek a resolution to the challenges they face.

- See if your parish or diocese is involved with a local homeless shelter and volunteer some time.
- Visit www.choicesforyouth.ca
- Donate time or money to organizations that build homes for those who need shelter.
- Many homeless shelters need warm blankets for their beds. If you can knit or sew that would be an extra loving gift.
- There are millions of children and families who are on the move, fleeing from war, illness, hunger and impossible living conditions, and searching for peace and safety. Engage parish groups of children, youth, young adults, and families in doing some research on the causes and challenges that these families face to survive.

You asked!

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick: The Why and the How

The earliest evidence of the Sacrament of Anointing comes from scripture (the Bible), namely the Gospel of Mark (6:13) and the Letter of James (5:13-15). In addition, there are many scriptural stories of Jesus' care for sick persons. Flowing from this, there is evidence in the early church of care for the sick especially through forms of anointing. Theologically, the Church deepened its understanding of the Sacrament of Anointing through significant gatherings of the Church, (called councils) such as the Council of Florence (15th century), the Council of Trent (16th century) and the Second Vatican Council (20th century). The Council of Trent said that the Sacrament of Anointing gives the sick person the grace of the Holy Spirit which removes any remnant of sin and both raises up and strengthens the soul of the one who is sick. This sustains the sick and helps them believe in God's mercy, helps them endure the sufferings of illness, and "sometimes regain bodily health ...". The Sacrament of Anointing brings spiritual help to the sick in the face of the fears and anxieties that sickness and death can bring. With Vatican II, the Church came to understand that the Sacrament of Anointing was not only for those about to die, but for anyone who is sick. The Church sees the Anointing of the Sick as being available to people under numerous conditions: those who get well and then become sick again, or those whose condition worsens; those preparing for surgery, the elderly who are weakened due to the effects of their age; sick children; those who have become unconscious; and those who are actively dying. It is important to understand that the theological thrust of the Sacrament of Anointing - the heart of it - is this: discovering the presence – the revelation – of God in the midst of sickness. In other words, it opens our minds, hearts and spirits to seeing God present to us and with us in our sufferings; God does remain aloof or indifferent; God is not feckless. God promises His presence and we believe that presence supports, strengthens and blesses us.

- Rev. Tony, Bidgood, CSsR

Note: the above information was drawn from the essay "Anointing of the Sick", by Charles W. Gusmer; as found in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Joseph Komonchak, Mary Collins & Dermot. A Lane (Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1988, 2nd printing); and *Pastoral Care of The Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum* (Ottawa: Concacan Inc., 1983).

View more here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsCJkGdHOuk

(Continued next week... stay tuned!)



Thanks to Fr. Tony Bidgood C.Ss.R for his submission to our weekly resource.

SAINTS AND BLESSED OF CANADA

Blessed Vasil Velychkovsky, CSsR



The twentieth century is known as a century of martyrs. Millions of people gave up their lives for Christ. In the Soviet Union under the atheistic regime many Christians, especially Ukrainian Catholics laid down their lives rather than deny Jesus Christ and His Church.

Honoring this sacrifice, Pope John Paul II beatified a number of martyrs for the Ukrainian Catholic Church on June 27, 2001. Among the martyrs was Bishop Vasil Velychkovsky, C.Ss.R.

Blessed Vasil was born into a priestly family in Stanislaviv, on June 1, 1903. His father was an assistant at the Cathedral where Vasil was baptized. His family soon moved to the village of Shuparka, where Vasil was raised and educated, mainly by home schooling. The First World War interrupted his studies. After the War Blessed Vasil completed his high school and entered the Major Seminary in Lviv. He entered the Redemptorist novitiate in Holosko in 1924. On October 9, 1925 he was ordained to the priesthood. The following two years he taught at the minor seminary, but his heart was in preaching missions. Recognizing his gift of preaching, he was soon assigned to the missions. He was a tireless, brave and devoted preacher and had a special love for the poor and the suffering.

On August 7, 1945, the Soviets arrested him. He was given a chance to deny his faith, leave the Catholic Church and serve as a Russian Orthodox priest. He quickly responded with "No, Never."

After one year of interrogations and tortures, he was finally sentenced on June 26, 1946 to die by firing squad. He was on death row for three months. While in the cell with others on death row, he catechized them and prepared them through the sacraments for their coming death. When his name was called, he left the cell ready to die for Christ, but at that moment, his death sentence was commuted to ten years in Soviet labour camps.

He spent most of his years working in coal mines above the Arctic Circle. Accused of inciting a strike among the prisoners in the fall of 1953, he was transferred to a most severe prison in near Moscow.

When his prison sentence was completed, he became instrumental in organizing the underground church. His apartment became the centre of church activity: Divine Liturgies, administering the sacraments, catechesis, preparing seminarians, counseling and the like. He also began to organize religious sisters, even though the monasteries were official closed, and taught them a new way of living out their monastic and religious life. Many a vocation was fostered by Father Vasil's guidance and care. In 1959 Rome appointed Fr. Vasil to be bishop of this underground church. He was secretly ordained a bishop in a hotel room in Moscow.

On January 27 of 1969, Bishop Vasil was again arrested. He was accused of anti-Soviet agitation in a book he wrote on The Icon of the Mother of perpetual Help, for listening to Vatican radio and for baptizing people. He was sentenced to a three year prison term in Komunarsk in Eastern Ukraine. There he underwent chemical, physical and mental torture. The Soviets attempted to extract information from him about the underground church but were unsuccessful. Near death in 1972, he was released from prison and was exiled from Ukraine. Metropolitan Maxim Hermaniuk invited Bishop Vasil to come to Winnipeg, Canada in June, 1972. Overcome by the tortures and death causing drugs he received while in prison, he died a martyr's death on June 30, 1973.

Blessed Bishop and Martyr Vasil Velychkovsky, C.Ss.R. was beatified in 2001 by St. Pope John Paul II. His body is enshrined in a shrine chapel at St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. This is Canada's Second Martyr's Shrine. A museum is also attached depicting his holy life.

A short video about Blessed Vasil can ve found here:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZFgj6xxr94