



Nineteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time
August 12, 2018

St. Olaf Catholic Church ■ Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402 ■ 612-332-7471 ■ www.SaintOlaf.org

A Serious Conversation By Fr. Patrick Kennedy

My friends,

The other day, I presided at the funeral of a friend's mother. It was in a small town in southern Minnesota. The parish I was at boasted 600 households. Attached to the parish was a smaller church, 15 miles out of town. This parish has about 150 households. Together, these two parishes have formed a community and minister and worship together.

A month ago, their pastor of many years retired. The diocese these two parishes are in is still looking for pastor to replace him. No one is forthcoming. It isn't that nobody wants to come to these two parishes. It is simply that right now, the Bishop doesn't have anyone available to appoint as pastor to serve this community. As I listened to the parishioners lament about the vacancy they were experiencing, I realized a deeper meaning to Jesus' words, "They were like sheep without a shepherd." I was saddened by their experience.

After the funeral, when we sat in the parish hall for lunch, my table talked about the shortage of priests, creating a void in parish life. In fairness to what was going on, the staff and volunteers were doing a wonderful job not just keeping things going. They were trying to provide

a semblance of normalcy for the parishioners while things are sorted out at the Chancery. However, struggling to find a priest for each funeral, each Mass, each wedding, each anointing, each Confession was not easy. And while the staff and volunteers try to do their best, the burden is not an easy one to bear.

Our discussion at lunch was interesting. There were many solutions posited. The laity are bright. They are astute when it comes to the deep need and desire to have a pastor at the helm guiding and leading the parish. But they are also realistic. They suggested that if we don't have celibate males being ordained to the priesthood, then it is time to broaden the pool of available and worthy married men and some even said women, and ordain them. Those around my table, enjoying turkey and ham sandwiches, loads of various homemade salads, and washing it all down with lemonade, were incredulous that the Bishops of the Church don't do something. The people don't understand, and when they are leaderless, they deduce that the lack of understanding falls in the laps of the leadership of our Church when it comes to solving the problem. These people and others like them sum it up by saying, "They, the Bishops, just don't get it."

While the last statement may sound disrespectful, it was quite the contrary. They actually like their bishop. They realize he is trying to do his best. But they are frustrated and angry there are other solutions available but the intransience of our leadership to act is deeply affecting parish communities like this one. They demand some courage to think outside the box for a change and then act. The fact that the leadership of the Church fails to do this, makes good people like the ones I met at the funeral bereft of a priest and a pastor to lead them. They are suffering because of it.

As I left and drove home, I thought of our own Archdiocese. I have said before in other columns, over half of our present clergy, serving as pastors in our parishes, will retire in the next five to ten years. I wondered how the impact of those retirements and the void of their leadership will have on our parishes, the people in them, and the vibrancy of the Church as a whole. The answer will probably be to continue to pray for vocations a certain kind. It will be to consolidate parishes, maybe even close some long-standing parish communities because we have no priests available. We will plead with the retired priests to stay in the game, fill the

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holes, and keep things the way we have always done them. In the process, many people suffer.

The Eucharist is the sum and source of our life as Christians. It is essential. Only an ordained priest can celebrate and preside at the Eucharist. When there is no priest available because of scarcity, it is time to do something different. Jesus himself told us, "The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few." From my vantage point, the time seems to be now for Bishops, priests, and laity to assume a collaborative role that brings about a new understanding of the need and creates a way forward to meet it together.



Reminder for August

There is no hospitality after Masses in August. The Forliti Gathering Room will be closed all of August for cleaning, repairs, and improvements.

Discussions That Encounter, August 9 at 6:30 p.m.

Featuring Maria Nhambu, a native of Tanzania who, as an infant, was placed in a German Catholic orphanage for biracial children.

Masses for the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary

(Holy Day of Obligation)

Tuesday, August 14, 2018: 5:15 p.m. Vigil (with music)

Wednesday, August 15, 2018:

6:00 a.m., 7:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. (no music)

11:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, 4:00, 5:15 p.m. (with music)

First Communion & First Reconciliation Registration

If you have a child 8-12 years, St. Olaf's Sacramental Program for First Communion and First Reconciliation registration begins now! Deadline for registration is September 2, 2018. Please call the office as soon as possible to register. This is a home-based program where parents are the primary support. We have mandatory student classes September-April, approximately two times a month on Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. There will also be three mandatory parent meetings on Saturdays, 9:30-11:30 throughout the year. Thank you!

RCIA Invitation

St. Olaf will begin the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) classes on Saturday, September 15 at 10:00 a.m. Classes will run through May 11. Anyone who is interested in becoming Catholic, either from another faith tradition or who has never been baptized, is welcome to attend. We ask that you contact Fr Michael Krenik (612-767-6209 or frmkrenik@SaintOlaf.org) to register. We are also in need of sponsors, parishioners willing to walk with the candidates through the RCIA process.



THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Additional info at: SaintOlaf.org/events

Saturday, August 11

9:00 a.m. Centering Prayer
12:00 p.m. **Mass/Confessions**
2:00 p.m. African Choir Rehearsal
4:00 p.m. **Mass**

Sunday, August 12 — 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

6:00 a.m. **Mass**
8:00 a.m. **Mass**
9:00 a.m. Nursery Opens
10:00 a.m. **Mass**
12:00 p.m. **Mass**
4:00 p.m. **Mass**

Monday, August 13

7:00 a.m. **Mass/Confessions**
7:30 a.m. Samaritan Ministry Hospitality
12:00 p.m. **Mass**
12:00 p.m. AA

Tuesday, August 14

7:00 a.m. **Mass/Confessions**
12:00 p.m. **Mass/Confessions**
5:15 p.m. **Mass for the Assumption**

Wednesday, August 15 — Assumption of Mary

(Holy Day of Obligation)

6:00 a.m. **Mass**
7:00 a.m. **Mass**
7:00 a.m. AA
10:00 a.m. **Mass**
11:00 a.m. **Mass**
12:00 p.m. **Mass**
12:00 p.m. AA
4:00 p.m. **Mass**
5:15 p.m. **Mass**
7:30 p.m. Alanon

Thursday, August 16

7:00 a.m. **Mass/Confessions**
12:00 p.m. **Mass/Confessions**

Friday, August 17 *(Office closed on Fridays)*

7:00 a.m. **Mass/Confessions**
12:00 p.m. **Mass**
12:30 p.m. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Saturday, August 18

9:00 a.m. Centering Prayer
12:00 p.m. **Mass/Confessions**
2:00 p.m. African Choir Rehearsal
4:00 p.m. **Mass**