

[Readings: Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41; Psalm 30; Rev. 5:11-14; John 21:1-19]

The way of the Kingdom bears little resemblance to the way of the law. Its means, its motives, and its goals often move like a crosscurrent against the accepted moral code. The Pharisees and Jesus once had a telling exchange that underscored the difference between these ways. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the people cried hosannas to the King, which alarmed the religious leaders who feared a riot and ensuing crackdown. So the Pharisees ordered Him bluntly, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" Being people of the law, they assume that a quick command from the leadership will get the crowds in line. This is the assumption of lawgivers: that obedience is the answer to every conflict, and obedience can be enforced.

But in the way of the Kingdom, the coercive power of law is replaced by the persuasive power of love. The human will may choose to lay itself down, but it cannot be throttled into submission. Love is the only command to which the citizen of the Kingdom cheerfully complies. So Jesus replies: "I tell you, if they keep silent, the stones will cry out!" Chances are, as people of the law, the Pharisees found this answer inscrutable.

A few months and one significant crucifixion later, the religious leaders of the Sanhedrin have called the apostles before them. This is not their first post-Easter run-in, which is evident by the remarks of the high priest: "We gave you strict orders, did we not, to stop teaching in that name?" Once again, the law people are at a total loss to comprehend the Kingdom people. The religious leaders actually seem to expect that the apostles would do as they're told!

Peter patiently explains, "We must obey God rather than men." He presents what is by now his "Soundbite Gospel," affirms the call to testify to this, and draws upon the further witness of the Holy Spirit. This is the only testimony Peter offers. It is the same in the court of the Sanhedrin as on the streets of Jerusalem.

But of course, this liberating message given so freely has no impact on the people of the law. They repeat the injunction not to teach in "that name" and let

the apostles go. Do they really think reissuing the same order will have a different effect this time? Do they really believe they can command a person's soul by simply insisting?

The differences between the way of the Kingdom and the way of the law show up in the post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus. If Jesus were a proponent of lawful living, he would have had a few well-chosen words of correction to administer to His followers, who had failed in their allegiances all across the board. But instead, Jesus does what love longs to do: He comforts Mary in the garden, offers peace to his friends huddled in the upper room, He goes out of his way to include Thomas, who had excluded himself, and makes breakfast for his friends when they haven't been able to catch a bite all night.

And when Jesus speaks privately to Peter, who is haunted by mortification since His denial, the words are only about love. He doesn't ask Peter for an apology, a pledge of allegiance, or a testimony of faith. Jesus simply asks, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Jesus trusts that if He has Peter's love, all the rest will be added besides.

Peter offers his love three times, vigorously and with no small amount of distress for being asked more than once. In response, Jesus commissions him to serve. No special skills are required beyond love, evidently.

Peter's not much of a fisherman, and there's no guarantee he'll make a better shepherd. But his love will cover a multitude of faults, all the way to a glorious death only a lover could embrace.

What if WE loved, instead of insisting on our rights, on what's due us in matters of fairness, on the submission of others to the letter of law and principle? What if WE focused our attention on the mandate to love and didn't fixate on the response of others around us?

What if WE expressed our love in service to others, and our own fidelity to that call became the only moral code that concerned us?

For too long, religious people have been tempted to cling to rules as a source of justification, as well as a whip and chair to get our neighbors into line or to condemn them in our hearts. Our forgiveness is contingent on apology, and

our love is timidly and conditionally given. If love became our starting point, we might end up in quite a surprising place.

This weekend, we honor two groups whose loving service have shown their fidelity and love for St. Martin de Porres Parish. The Pope Pius X Knights of Columbus Council 3848 celebrate this month their 65th anniversary of Unity, Fraternity and Charity. As Chaplain of this local council, I congratulate and thank you brother Knights for your presence in our parish community. There are representatives from our District and from the State. As well as our current Grand Knight, Kevin Labudde and Past Grand Knight Jerome Kunert. I would like to acknowledge and any other Past Grand Knights now. Would you please stand and accept our welcome and thanks?

The following history of the Council was prepared by Past Grand Knight Jerome Kunert on December 12th, 2016.

St. Pius X Council #3848 was brought into existence in the mid 1950's largely through the efforts of two individuals; Brother Knight Joe DeMuch and Father Frank Walsh, then-Pastor of St. Anne Parish.

These two men, along with District Deputy Edwin Theut, a Warren businessman, were the driving force behind the formation of our Council. Joe and Father Walsh were men of vision and ambition. They had the foresight to realize that the City of Warren would be expanding enormously over the next ten to twenty years, and that there would be a need for more than one council in this area. Sheer determination, burning enthusiasm and hours of painstaking thought and legwork on the part of these men finally overcame any and all obstacles.

The property and building, which originally housed the first church of St. Anne in Warren, was procured in 1953. Their charter was received on May 9, 1954 with a charter class numbering 60 men.

As fate would have it, while Joe DeMuch was on Mackinac Island attending the annual K of C State Convention, the building which housed the council was completely demolished by fire, leaving the newly-elected Grand

Knight with the formidable task of rebuilding and holding together its membership.

Through the efforts of many men, they were able to build the K of C Hall which was dedicated in 1958. The Knights of Columbus are justifiably proud of the many civic, social, fraternal and religious activities which their council has sponsored over the past years. The Council declined over the years and was suppressed in 2010.

In January of 2014 a group of men from St. Martin de Porres Parish in Warren met with District Deputy Harry Deneweth about restarting the council as a parish council at St. Martin de Porres. Most board positions were filled that night and the first business meeting was held on March 13, 2014 in the parish hall. I arrived three months later and was asked to become their Chaplain. This Council continues to be of service to me and to St. Martin de Porres Church.

We also welcome and honor the Active Christian Women's Club of St. Martin de Porres Parish, who have been a venerable parish group since the earliest years of our parish. Their three-fold mission is Spiritual, Social and Service. They are here this weekend for their Corporate Communion. I welcome them, and on behalf of a grateful parish, I thank the ACWC for their fidelity, dedication and generosity. They give to the parish and to the larger community.

This weekend, we also observe the start of our annual Catholic Services Appeal. The mission of the Church is to proclaim and establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

Advancing this mission requires our clergy, religious, and lay faithful to unite in our common goal of pursuing the pastoral priorities of the larger Church.

For over 30 years, the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) of the Archdiocese of Detroit has been a successful way to advance our mission.

The Archdiocese of Detroit is our Mother Church, one of three "Mothers" we honor during the month of May: Holy Mother Church, the Mother Church of the Archdiocese of Detroit, and our natural and spiritual mothers.

Together, as Christian stewards, we live out the Gospel mission of our Church through our support of the CSA. The ministries, programs and services

funded by our annual appeal reach every soul in our six-county Archdiocese, strengthening urban and rural faith communities alike. No one individual or parish could possibly accomplish all these good works themselves. Truly, the CSA transforms our diverse family of believers into, in the words of Pope Francis, and Archbishop Allen Vigneron, a “band of joyful missionary disciples.”

We are grateful to our parish and archdiocesan staff and lay volunteers who do the hard work of annually conducting the CSA. We are grateful to our many faithful stewards who so generously give their treasure to the CSA, benefiting all their brothers and sisters in Christ throughout southeast Michigan. Last week, we exceeded our 2018 goal by \$350; this year’s target is \$750 higher.

Fully living as a disciple of Jesus Christ requires following his commission to make disciples — *Opening Doors to Witness Christ* to others. We accomplish this when we allow his Good News to inspire joyful words and deeds each day. As we become conscious witnesses to God’s everlasting mercy, we unleash the Gospel to everyone we meet. Each year when we support the CSA, we renew this opportunity to witness Jesus. The CSA fuels the engine of the Gospel mission of our Archdiocese — more than 100 ministries touching every soul in southeast Michigan. The spirit of joining together to witness Christ in carrying out these works of mercy and to become a “joyful band” of missionary disciples.

ALLELUIA and AMEN!

[Readings: Acts 13:14, 43-52; Psalm 100; Rev. 7:9, 14b-17; John 10:27-30]

Today is what we call in the preaching business a "3-Ring Celebration." First of all, it's Mother's Day, so Happy Mother's Day to all the moms out there! Believe it or not, some folks come up to me after Mass and wish me a Happy Mother's Day! Today is also the World Day of Prayer for Vocations to the priesthood and religious life. It is also Good Shepherd Sunday. So, if you spot a good shepherd around anywhere, thank him for being a good shepherd!

Someone asked me before Mass, does this mean that we are getting three homilies today? I replied, "Oh, no, I wouldn't preach THAT long. Just two homilies today!"

A friend was talking about a time she was sorely tempted toward revenge. A person at work had hurt her and now it was in her power to turn the tables. She found out something about this co-worker that would have deeply embarrassed the woman, and my friend savored the possibility of spreading the news.

Wouldn't YOU do the same thing? I would if I had dirt on someone who had just humiliated me in front of others!

Then she heard her grandmother's voice. Her grandmother had been her spiritual hero, and even though the elderly woman had died years ago, my friend often heard her words echoing in her heart. Today she heard, "Revenge spills on everyone -- including the one who dishes it out." It made her pause, and she reconsidered. Reluctantly she came to the conclusion that the right thing to do was to just keep quiet and let this chance for sweet revenge pass by.

We all hear voices in our heads. Some people call it the "committee." Psychiatrists call it schizophrenia! Catholics call it your conscience or your memory. And we're influenced by those voices we hear. Parents hope their children will hear parental voices in their consciences loud and clear when they're tempted to take crazy chances or stray from the right path. I hear my Mom's voice say, "Don't go there. Don't do that! You'll be sorry!"

Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice; I know them and they follow me." With all the noise going on in the world, it can take consistent effort to hear the voice of Jesus. Why not begin your morning with this prayer: "Jesus, help me to hear Your voice." And then just sit and listen.

We are the sheep who recognize our Shepherd's voice and willingly follow Him to better pastures. We want Him to be our Good Shepherd. We want His protection, His guidance, and His love. However, sometimes we forget to listen for His voice. This usually happens when life doesn't go as planned, the way we want it to. In frustration and fear, we assume that Jesus has left the sheepfold.

However, no matter how busy Jesus gets, and no matter how far He has to go to rescue lost sheep, He never leaves our side. He is always with us, even if at first we don't like what He's saying.

In what areas of your life do you feel lost and alone or abandoned? What activities can you do that will restore your vision and your hearing so you can recognize the presence of your Good Shepherd as our spiritual underdog?

There seems to be a primordial instinct in most human beings to support the underdog. We read about it in fairy tales like "Jack and the Beanstalk." We see it in sports with the lithe receiver avoiding the onrushing linebacker twice his size. It happens in politics when the candidate without the clout takes on the political powerhouse and wins. It continues in movies like *The Lord of the Rings* when Frodo beats unbelievable odds.

Two thousand years ago, the Church began its history as an incredible underdog. There is no good reason -- other than their message -- for Paul and Barnabas to be listened to, much less heard, and ultimately responded to. But they are, to the point of being persecuted. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, aflame with the message of Jesus, the disciples speak boldly and unafraid. They don't hesitate in moving on if not listened to.

We need to ask ourselves how boldly our lives preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ -- at home, in the workplace, at school, and with our neighbors. The louder our voices proclaim the Word of God, the more confident we grow, the closer we come in attaining that life of perfection. And ultimately we will someday join the

great multitude that stands before the Lamb of God in heaven forever. Not bad for the underdog!

On this Good Shepherd Sunday, as we observe the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, it's appropriate for us to consider the nature of authentic vocation. The word itself means "calling." *Vocare*, vocal. We hear that we're all called by God -- all of us, not just priests and religious. But what does it mean to be called? How should we listen for it, and what are we to do about it?

Jesus says His sheep recognize His voice, and because they do, they follow where He leads. Evidently, "call" involves more than a word spoken or message received. It also implies a word *heeded*. The way we respond is not merely to hear the call but to reply with our behavior. We *follow*, as we heard in last Sunday's Gospel. This response requires our consent. And our action.

In our Second Reading, we see that every true vocation has Heaven as its ultimate goal, and is also ordered toward bringing other people to Heaven. Ask yourselves: when you stand before the throne of God, whom will YOU have helped attain Heaven?" Who is in Heaven now because of YOUR example and YOUR witness? Can you imagine standing before Jesus and Him saying to, "Well, look who's here because of YOU!"

Finally, on this Mother's Day, I share with you a reflection from Michelle Martin, a Catholic writer for the National Catholic Register. All the following words are hers:

Being a mother is wonderful. It comes with sweet-smelling newborns and sticky-fingered hugs from toddlers and teenagers that can blow you away with their surprising insights on life. But it's hard, and getting harder, especially for Catholic moms who are trying to raise their children in the Faith.

According to many women who write and talk about family life and motherhood, mothers are so immersed in the busyness of daily life -- which, for most, includes professional, paid work as well as caring for their children and their homes -- that they often feel alone.

Mothers also are suffering from a lack of respect. We are so belittled in our maternity. There never has been a time when mothers were less sacred to society than they are now. It's harder than ever before.

I think the world has become a scary, scary place for children, and I think the world has become a scary, scary place to raise children. Even if public schools in years past did not teach religion, they did teach right and wrong.

There's parent peer pressure too. My parents were never afraid to say no. Today I think there's pressure to not be strict, to be your kids' best friend and buddy. And I think it's very hard to stand up to parent peer pressure. Our kids are watching 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' and so many of us want to be the cool mom, the mom that doesn't say no.

That's not good for children, or for their parents. You have to be a loving, caring authority figure. Technology has amplified the challenges, both for parents and their children. Teenagers come home from school and can see what all the cool kids are doing in real time.

It's harder for parents to be the primary influence on their children. I think parents start out saying they're going to be vigilant and do everything right, but it's exhausting, and you will slip up. You're not going to be perfect. But you have to keep being vigilant. Kids can just be led down rabbit holes of danger.

One way mothers can combat their own isolation and keep tabs on their children is to form their own relationships with other parents, especially the parents of their children's friends. That way, they can assure their 9-year-olds that no, they are not the only child in their class without a smartphone, because they know for a fact that at least three other kids don't have one.

It makes parents feel less alone to know that other parents are going through the same thing.

Finding that community is important for both parents and for their children, who benefit from the positive example.

Parents also have to make sure they spend time with their children even when they think their children don't want to. Teenagers tell me all the time that they want their parents to be with them and to talk to them.

Parents looking for practical ideas can turn to online sources such as CatholicMom.com, which was founded in 2000 by Lisa Hendey. She started the site, which was acquired by Holy Cross Family Ministries in 2017.

Finding the right online and in-person communities is so important, because mothers who are having rough days can fall into the trap of looking at Facebook or Instagram or Pinterest images posted by mothers who appear to have their lives and homes and families all pulled together and accessorized perfectly. Or they can go to the sites where people say that if your kids are still breathing, you're doing fine, and that's not good either.

That means telling other mothers that they're doing great when they need to hear that, and calling them to step up when they need that. Sometimes what we need to hear is, "You can do this." We need to affirm each other and build each other up." That's a good note to end upon! Happy Mother's Day! ALLELUIA and AMEN!

[Readings: Acts 14:21-27; Psalm 145; Rev. 21:1-5a; John 13:31-33a, 34-35]

We have many funerals here at St. Martin de Porres. And as part of our celebration of the life of the deceased and the renewal of our own faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we invite the family of the deceased to select the readings and funeral music for the day of the Mass of the Resurrection.

Ironically, many of the readings that we hear during these Easter Sundays are readings that appear in the Funeral Mass book of readings. Today, two of the three readings are such readings. But they apply not to a dead person but to a community on the decline. They apply not to a loved one who is about to be buried, but to a church community that is about to be risen from the dead. Listen.

From today's First Reading from the Acts of the Apostles: "It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God." In order for us to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ and with the Church He founded, we need to change -- we need to encounter Jesus Christ, we need to grow in His Holy Spirit, and we need to witness our faith to others.

For decades, I always thought that the hardest thing for me to do in life is change. To change my way of thinking. To change my way of living. To change my way of relating to others. But do you know what we hate more than change? You and I hate the time and energy needed during the transition!

We have to move into a new house. I don't mind that we are going to be living in a new house. It's the sorting, the packing, the recycling, and the travel back and forth several times that I hate. You, too? I have been transferred to a new job, or I am recently retired. I don't mind the new job, or I am grateful to be able to afford to retire. But I hate the transition of having to learn a new routine, having to learn and remember a whole slew of new names, and, if I am retired now, having to see and to be with my spouse 24/7! You too?

Yet if, with the grace of God, we are successful in the transition, then the spirit of today's Second Reading from the Book of Revelation takes root. We will see "a new heaven and a new earth." The old life is gone and a new life is embraced. Tears are wiped away. God is with us forever, making all things new!

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus says to His followers, “Come and see, come follow me.” As He leaves this earth for eternity, He says, “Go and make disciples.” Today, He says, “Love one another.” That is the essential job description of the authentic Christian disciple. Follow. Love. Go and make.

This was the spirit of the Synod that took place in the Archdiocese of Detroit back in 1969, four years after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council in Rome. I know most of you here were not born yet in 1969...

The Holy Spirit inspired Church leadership and their advisors to write some of the most thoughtful, compassionate and inspiring teachings in our history as a Church. The Second Vatican Council breathed new life into the Church; Synod '69 in Detroit put flesh and bones on it.

Following Synod 2016, Archbishop Vigneron is calling every Catholic in every parish to move from a mindset of maintenance to a spirit of mission. To breathe new life into the tired old bones of our parishes. To “Unleash the Gospel” in the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Archbishop Vigneron is asking every pastor and every parish in the Archdiocese of Detroit to create a Missionary Strategic Plan. This is the next phase in our movement to “Unleash the Gospel” in southeast Michigan, so as to become a missionary diocese by being faithful to the vision of Synod '16. The MSP process is an effort to respond to the pastoral letter’s call that every activity and resource of the parish be in alignment with the fundamental commitment to evangelization.

The process of creation and implementation of MSPs is being developed. The process in each parish will be rooted in prayer; allow time for reflection and formation in Unleash the Gospel; and reflect parishioner input. The goal is the development of a practical and concrete strategy to focus all parish activity and efforts towards mission and respond to the Synod Propositions for families and parishes. 10 parishes were selected to start the process this spring; another 10 or 20 parishes will be in the second wave this summer. The rest will enter the process over the next year and a half. That will include our parish.

This weekend, Paul and Barnabas are still together, which means we are en route on Paul's first or three missionary journeys. They will break up over a difference of opinion concerning fellow missionary John Mark before long, but at the moment they are full of wonder at the great things God is doing everywhere they go. It is sad and a little unnerving to think of Paul and Barnabas separating.

Barnabas sponsored Paul into the Christian community when no one else was willing to touch his conversion with a 10-foot pole. As missionaries, they have proclaimed the Gospel, suffered hardships, prayed, and celebrated Mass together. Why they finally split up over a personnel issue is hard to fathom. But it does remind us that the Church has roots, both human and divine, from its inception. Disciples on their mission don't always get along with each other!

At the end of the first journey, the missionaries have nothing but good news to report. They acknowledge the necessity of enduring hardships but find the work God has done with them more compelling to talk about. When you read the circumstances of their journey, you are surprised that their report is made with such unqualified enthusiasm. Clearly, the response of the Gentiles to the story of salvation is so exciting to them that the rest pales in comparison.

Are we stuck in a rut in our individual lives, or within this generation, or marooned at this point of human history? It can feel that way at times, but only because time and the danger and the fear of the adventure of change is blocking our perspective. The command to love is the call to be made new, and it is the one force divinely imbued with the power to move even mountains when necessary. If we love one another, and do not settle for less, then we will discover what the first apostles knew along their journey: the endless delight of what God can do and how all the old barriers to love dissolve as we become open to the possibility. ALLELUIA and AMEN!

[Readings: Acts 15:1-1, 22-29; Psalm 67; Rev. 21:10-14; 22-23; John 14:23-29]

"Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid," Jesus says in the familiar translation of today's Gospel. This is not the easiest of His teachings to follow, not by a long shot. Our hearts are routinely troubled for lots of very good reasons. Our elders are sick, our children are wayward, money is tight, employment is insecure, the world is a violent place, and the future is by no means certain.

Each of us could make a list of our current troubles, and the paperwork would lengthily roll down the aisle and out the door of the church. We might not even have room for the existential troubles: human limitation, loneliness, the search for meaning, and death. One could argue that anyone who is not troubled is just not thinking hard enough!

Theologically, we could say that trouble is just another word for the effect of Original Sin on our world. As the story goes, God created a world free of trouble, sorrow, and death, but human beings freely chose the mess of evil over the perfection of divine love. Add thousands of years to the mix, and what you get is what we experience in the 21st Century: a chaotic and increasingly wasted environment full of unhappy people making distressing choices.

How can Jesus ask us not to be troubled by this?

Christianity had its start in dissent and argument. As we say in pious imagery, the Church emerged from the wounded side of Christ, and Jesus was clearly no stranger to trouble. His ministry, words and signs together, comprised a confrontation with authority both secular and religious. Jesus is Lord and Savior, but He was also a troublemaker of the highest order. He went to the cross for it, and His Church began as a faction within Judaism destined to rupture quite inelegantly.

A generation later, Paul and Barnabas run into resistance everywhere they traveled, as the clash between Jewish practice and Gentile exceptions intensified. Jerusalem became the epicenter of the debate, as the contest

between Jewish and Gentile Christians reached critical dimensions. What can we learn from the First Church Council at Jerusalem?

First of all, that there are two sides to every story. We get Luke's version of the council in Acts of the Apostles, but it's quite a different meeting than what Paul describes in his letter to the Galatians. Were Paul and Barnabas summoned by church elders, or did they go up to the city of their own volition? Was this a private consultation or a public debate? What was the result of the council: four rulings about dietary restrictions and marriage, or one mild recommendation to remember the poor?

However the matter was resolved, the decision not to press circumcision on Gentile converts was pivotal. It sealed the fate of the Church in regard to its precarious position as a subset of Judaism.

When I was an Associate Pastor at a parish with a grade school, I had Mass with the primary grades (1 through 3) one morning. The third grade lector came up to me before Mass and said, "Father, I don't know what this word is. Circumcision." I said, "I will explain that when I get to that point in my homily." When I got to that point in my homily, I asked the students, "Do you know what circumcision means?" They all shouted, "No, Father." And I replied, "You know that would be a great question to ask your mom and dad when you get home!"

No doubt, not requiring circumcision of the Gentiles caused great anguish for Jewish Christians who felt loyalty to both identities. Though the lifting of compulsory circumcision was a great relief to Gentile converts at the least, many Jewish hearts were greatly troubled by the imminent expulsion from their first spiritual home, the Temple in Jerusalem. This was their home all their lives, from infancy to adulthood, where God lived 24/7, and now they were forbidden entrance to that part of their spiritual home.

But there would be an even more majestic and eternal temple for them and for all believers and righteous people, as we see in today's Second Reading.

John's vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem is one of calm and radiant perfection. Here, we might imagine, the human heart at last might not know trouble. The splendor of precious stones and the regal order of angels, gates,

and directions reveal a complete absence of the chaos and confusion that attends most earthly dealings. Even those primordial divisions of day and night are healed, as this city needs no sun or moon. The Lamb is its lamp, and darkness is permanently banished.

John is offered this vision as an assurance of what will be, but also as a reminder of what already is. In God's reign, which is not consigned to the future but is a reality in every moment, the Holy City waits alongside of and in a real sense slumbers *within* the earthly city. Do we wish to know this kind of absolute peace, which the world obviously cannot give? All we need to do is to invite the Holy City, also known as Thy Kingdom Come, to arrive in full into our lives. This idea might cause a tremor. People of faith often confuse Thy Kingdom Come with the end of the world or the hour of death.

Thy Kingdom Come is when God's will is done, mirrored on earth as it is in Heaven! That is not a future event or a final one, but the consequences of an act of will. When we align our will with the Divine Will, John's vision becomes staggeringly real in us.

As the hour of his death draws near, Jesus bequeaths His peace to His friends. This peace is not like the fragile mortal truces that come between wars, or the cold silence of people who are not fighting, though they also are not talking to each other. The peace of Jesus is not a line drawn in the sand to keep the punches from landing on their intended targets. His peace is supernatural; it is real, it is final. The enmity that sin created and that has fractured human history is healed and bridged, once and for all, in this holy peace.

If we believe this, can our hearts be troubled? Not really, certainly not ultimately. We hold in faith the vision of the perfect city and its serene glow and know it exists in the present hour as truly as in a time yet to be. We can choose citizenship in this city now, and warm ourselves in its radiance through every holy decision. If we make God's will our own, trouble will have one less foothold in our midst. That is the Holy Spirit that is here, right now, in this church on this holy ground, in this people.

How do we encounter Christ? Usually, through other people. Often,

through the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Mass. How do we grow in our faith? Intelligent and inspiring homilies. Music that moves our soul. Stepping outside of our comfort zones in ministry and service. How do we witness? Simply by being the best version of ourselves that God created us to be.

When we take our faith seriously, it is a big and awesome job. But we do not live it out alone. The Holy Spirit, the Advocate, the Comforter, is there to help us. Call on that spirit and pray for the peace which only He can give. Learn, read, pray. Then you and I can understand and teach and guide others to Christ. To be that role model to advise and counsel and bring comfort, support and safety to others. You are not alone. Be at peace. AMEN! ALLELUIA!

[Readings: Mass for Various Needs, #30 for Peace and Justice
Isaiah 57:15-19; Psalm 85; Colossians 3: 12-15; John 14:23-29]

I would like to share with you this reflection from the Editorial Board of the Our Sunday Newsweekly internet site:

Memorial Day also is an invitation for Americans of all faith backgrounds to step with compassion and gratitude into the suffering of other's people's lives

For Catholics, the observance of Memorial Day echoes and combines elements of secular and religious observances half a year away, in November — Veterans Day on Nov. 11, All Saints' Day on Nov. 1 and All Souls' Day on Nov. 2. As in the former, we honor members of our armed forces. As in the Catholic feasts of early November, our focus is on those who have died — in this case, while serving their country.

In a time when medical technology has driven down the number of war casualties, and such casualties no longer reach indiscriminately into every city block as they would have during conflicts of centuries past, Memorial Day also is an invitation for Americans of all faith backgrounds to step with compassion and gratitude into the suffering of other's people's lives.

Families who directly are touched on Memorial Day have made a sacrifice that cuts to their core and is almost unimaginable in the abstract — the sacrifice of a young person, someone they loved and nurtured at every stage of his or her existence, the sacrifice of the joy and the bright future that life embodied in that family. All of it violently snuffed out.

Then there are the deeper values and truths undergirding this sacrifice — the deep love of country that calls a young person to choose service in the armed forces; the belief that decency, freedom and human rights are worth promoting and defending; the belief that evil really exists in the world and requires us to respond with goodness. These all hold a place in the memories of the people we honor on Memorial Day, and they should inform the hearts of all of us who have

the responsibility of living our lives in the peace and freedom for which they sacrificed.

And here the Church has provided a witness on how we can honor these sacrifices, a witness attuned to “signs of the times” that include the destructive capacity of modern weaponry. Pope St. John XXIII wrote in his 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris* that “it no longer makes sense to maintain that war is a fit instrument with which to repair the violation of justice.” His successor, Pope St. Paul VI, put a finer point on it in the famous entreaty in his 1965 address to the United Nations: “War, never again war!”

Working to end conflicts rather than stir them up and to promote true and lasting peace among nations is a daunting task. And while Christians can do much to promote nonviolence in our thoughts and actions toward others, as well as advocate for peace and diplomacy in our world, ultimately it all rises to prayer.

So together this Memorial Day, as we remember with gratitude those who sacrificed their lives, we join in this prayer for Memorial Day (“Catholic Household Blessings and Prayer,” USCCB Publishing): “God of power and mercy, you destroy war and put down earthly pride. Banish violence from our midst and wipe away our tears. ... Keep in your mercy those men and women who have died in the cause of freedom and bring them safely into your kingdom of justice and peace.”

At Military Funeral Honors, the song Taps is played while the American flag is held over the casket of the deceased. The distinctive bugle melody played originated during the Civil War and started out as “Extinguish Lights” – the official call to bed time on military bases until 1891. During taps, veterans should stand at attention, and civilians should place their right hand over their hearts. Did you know there were words for Taps? “Taps” is a bugle call - a signal, not a song. As such, there is no associated lyric. Many bugle calls had words associated with them as a mnemonic device but these are not lyrics. A man named Horace Lorenzo Trim wrote a set of words intended to accompany the music.

Here they are:

TAPS

Melody and lyrics[[edit](#)]

The melody of "Taps" is composed entirely from the written notes of the [C major triad](#) (i.e., C, E, and G, with the G used in the lower and higher octaves). This is because the bugle, for which it is written, can play only the notes in the [harmonic series](#) of the instrument's [fundamental tone](#); a B-flat bugle thus plays the notes B-flat, D, and F. "Taps" uses the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth partials.



Day is done, gone the sun,
From the lake, from the hills, from the sky;
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.

Fading light, dims the sight,
And a star gems the sky, gleaming bright.
From afar, drawing nigh, falls the night.

Thanks and praise, for our days,
'Neath the sun, 'neath the stars, 'neath the sky;
As we go, this we know, God is nigh.

Sun has set, shadows come,
Time has fled, Scouts must go to their beds
Always true to the promise that they made.

While the light fades from sight,
And the stars gleaming rays softly send,
To thy hands we our souls, Lord, commend.

Universal Prayer of the Faithful

Priest: Let us pray for our brothers and sisters as they go forth with courage and determination to face the forces of violence, weapons of destruction and hearts filled with hate.

RESPONSE: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Deacon or Reader:

For our President, Congress, Supreme Court and our political and military leaders that they may tirelessly seek peaceful settlements to international disputes; we pray to the Lord:

That the Lord may preserve the members of our Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and Air Force from all harm; we pray to the Lord:

That even in war, we may keep clearly before us the defense of all human rights, especially the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; we pray to the Lord:

That the families, relatives and friends of our military members may be strengthened in this time of concern and anxiety; we pray to the Lord:

That the Lord may help families with men and women in the armed forces to cope with daily challenges in the absence of their loved ones; we pray to the Lord:

That our homeland will be preserved from violence and terrorism and that the nations of the world will seek to work together in harmony and peace; we pray to the Lord:

That the hearts of all men and women will be moved to pursue true peace and justice; we pray to the Lord:

That violence may be overcome by peace; that weapons of destruction may be transformed into tools of justice, and that hate may give way to true charity; we pray to the Lord:

That grateful for and inspired by those veterans who have given their lives for our country we may bravely face the challenges ahead, and for all who have died, including those we are remembering at this liturgy; we pray to the Lord:

For the special needs we mention in the silence of our hearts (pause), we pray to the Lord.

Priest: Lord God, Almighty Father,
creator of mankind and author of peace,
as we are ever mindful of the cost paid for the liberty we possess.
we ask you to bless the members of our armed forces.
Give them courage, hope and strength.
May they ever experience your firm support, gentle love and compassionate healing.
Be their power and protector, leading them from darkness to light.
To you be all glory, honor and praise, now and forever.
Amen.