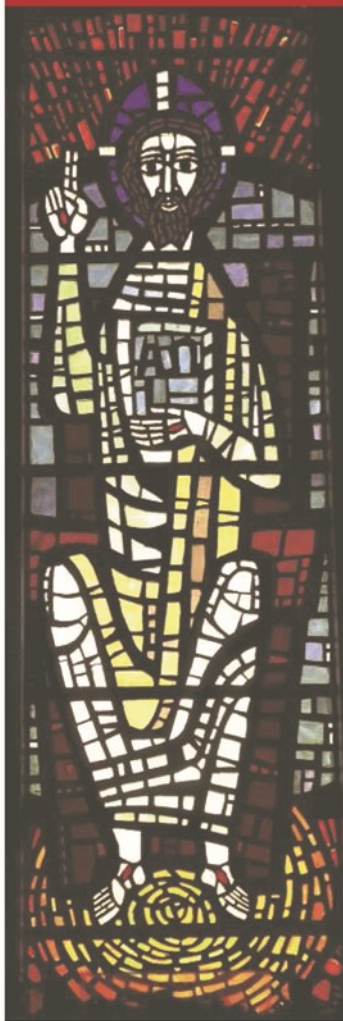


St. Paul
Catholic
Newman
Center



1572 East Barstow Avenue
Fresno, Ca 93710
Office 559.436.3434
csufnewman.com

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

September 5, 2021

Readings: Is 35: 4-7a; Jas 2:1-5; Mk 7:31-37

THE DEACON'S SPEAKIN'

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Have you ever witnessed the opening of a blind man's eyes or a deaf woman's hearing? Have you ever seen the dance of a person who has been disabled for a long time or heard the song of someone who has not spoken in many years? Of course you have, at least figuratively!

Blind people come to "new" sight when they recognize the face of Jesus in the least of their sisters and brothers. The deaf hear when the word of God suddenly opens their hearts and allows love to soften their bitterness and anger. The lame dance when the events of their lives that have left them paralyzed through fear and doubt no longer have power over them. The mute sing when they no longer believe the lie that they are nobody and that nothing they say or do really matters.

Jesus chose to heal these people who suffered from physical and mental illnesses. Why did He choose them? Why are they the central figures of the Gospel message? They were chosen because they represent the destitute of the world. They represent the less privileged whom we are called to serve as His disciples.

In the second reading St. James urges the Christian community to examine their habit of treating the rich and poor differently. James accuses them of making "distinctions" based on social class becoming "judges with evil designs". St. James points to God's habit of choosing "those who are poor in the world", the vulnerable and powerless, to be His greatest collaborators – from David, a lowly shepherd boy to Mary, a young peasant woman who bears the son of God to the world.

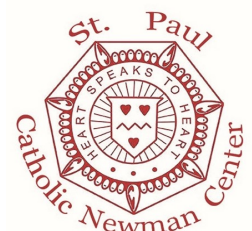
Let us pray that the healing word Jesus uses – Ephphatha, meaning, "Be opened" – might open our senses to find Him and serve Him in all those we meet.

Peace and love,

Deacon John

Mission Statement

Gifted by God, called by Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, St. Paul Catholic Newman Center is a parish committed to serving the academic community and all those who choose to be part of our parish family. We dedicate ourselves to bringing the transformative power of Christ to the world through word and action.



Campus Ministry News!

Donations Needed

Wednesday Student Nights

We need food for our students gathering for our Wednesdays Student Nights. Please help us feed them! 

Here is how you can help:

- 1) Sign up for a designated week by contacting Edgar Guzmán
- 2) You can purchase a meal (5 people) from a restaurant or fast food chain and bring it to the Newman Hall on Wednesday after 5pm.

You can donate a gift card to any restaurant or fast food chain and drop it off at the front office throughout the week (Monday - Thursday from 9:00am to 3:00pm).

Because of COVID restrictions, we cannot accept hot meals made at home; we can either cook it here or purchase it from a restaurant.

Student Lounge

As the school semester begins we will continue offering our study lounge to students and others. As an added bonus we like to offer a few snacks and drinks. If you'd like to donate an item(s) see our list below.

- microwavable ready meals
- water bottles
- snack size chips
- granola bars
- pastry snacks

School Supply Drive

Our annual school supply drive is underway. Many stores still have their school supplies on sale. This drive not only benefits our students but also the Renaissance Scholar Program at Fresno State. We continue to partner with them to help the many students who have aged out of the foster care system and plan to continue their education. You may drop off items at the front office.

Thank you so much for being part of this mission; may God reward you for your generosity.

Young Adult Mass

Every Sunday, we host a young adult Mass at 7:00pm. This is an opportunity for students, young adults, and young professionals to come together and be among others our age giving thanks to God.

Join us before Mass at 6:00pm for a prayer activity followed by Mass at 7:00pm.

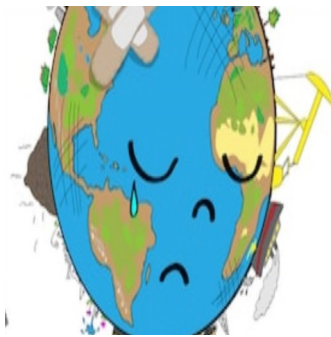
YOUNG ADULT MASS CALENDAR

September 5	6:30pm—Adoration	7pm—Young Adult Mass
September 12	6:30pm—Confessions	7pm—Young Adult Mass

Campus Ministry Contacts

Edgar Guzman, Director: edgar@csufnewman.com

Fr. Byron Macias, Chaplain: frbyron@csufnewman.com



September: Month to Celebrate the Season of Creation

Please help us honor and care for God's beautiful creation and the most beautiful house God has given us: our planet. Join us this Wednesday, September 8 at 7:15pm via Zoom to pray,

learn and take action as to how to protect our generous, kind and yet silent mother earth. Here is the link to the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85712412875>

Give Creation a chance; give yourself a chance!

Contact Fr. Byron or Jim Grant for more information.

Celebration of Life Mass

A Celebration of Life Mass for Mrs. Zelinda (Zee) McCammond will be held at St Paul Newman Center on Thursday, September 9 at 10:00am.

Adult Sacrament Prep

Our Adult Sacramental Preparation program prepares baptized Catholics for the sacraments of Confirmation, and/or Eucharist and Reconciliation. Classes begin October 4, 2021, and run through January 2022. For more information contact Deacon Bill Lucido at bill@csufnewman.com, Edgar Guzman at edgar@csufnewman.com, or call the office at 436-3434. Registration forms will be available in the office and on our website.

Knights Football Parking Crew



Thanks to our football parking crew, John Henry Newman Council #9445, for helping with parking for the first home Fresno State football game.

Newman Center is Hiring

Parish Life Coordinator

St. Paul Catholic Newman Center, a Vatican II oriented parish, seeks a replacement for Deacon John Supino after 12 years of successful leadership in his position as Parish Life Coordinator. He will be retiring once the position is filled. The Parish Life Coordinator role will administer to the business and managerial needs of the parish, lead the various parish functions and support the vision of outreach and ministering to college students, young adults and anyone choosing to be part of this parish family. Please access the Newman Center website by clicking this link www.csufnewman.com/parish-life-coordinator. There you will find the job description and application process. For questions, please e-mail Dave Meyer at dmeyer@centralmedsolutions.com.

Baptism Prep Class

Our next Baptism Prep Class is on Sunday, September 12 at 2:00pm. The cost is \$10 per person and meets the requirements for both parents and Godparents to baptize their children. To register click here: [Baptism Prep Class Link](#).

Bilingual Mass

On Sunday, September 19, 2021 at 5:00pm we will start offering a Bilingual Mass (English and Spanish). We will celebrate the Bilingual Mass every first and third Sunday of the month.

This initiative is a response to a pastoral need from many of our college students and parishioners who would like to pray either in the primary or second language – or just want to experience the beautiful Catholicity of the Church!

For more information, please contact Karl Gurney, Liturgy Director, at karl@csufnewman.com.

All are welcome! Bienvenidos!

34 Week Retreat in Everyday Life

If you would like to deepen your personal relationship with God; if you desire to be drawn closer to Jesus and to deepen your friendship with him; if you feel a nudge inside to act on that desire, once again, starting this coming September 11th, St. Anthony Retreat Center in Three Rivers, in collaboration with the On-Line Ministries of Creighton University, is offering an on-line Retreat in Everyday Life based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Participants will receive a guidebook, weekly orientations for prayer, and an opportunity to gather each week with a team of spiritual directors and fellow retreatants to process our journeys and share the treasures we are discovering. For more information or to register, call the retreat center (559) 561-4595 or visit www.stanthonyretreat.org and click on retreats and events.

News from Fr. Byron

Hi St. Paul Family!

I am happy to announce that we will start having Confessions effective this coming Thursday, September 9 at 4:00pm. Therefore, the new schedule is Thursdays from 4:00pm - 5:45pm.

Our children will start serving actively at the 8:00am Mass on the first Friday of the month. This is a wonderful initiative from our youth and also a wonderful way to highlight a lovely tradition in our spiritual life especially since we remember Our Blessed Virgin Mary.

Claretian Youth Core Team: We will meet on Monday, September 13 at 7:00pm via ZOOM. Here is the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86564712840>

We will also have our Busy People Retreat for our Core Team on Wednesday, September 21 from 7:00pm to 8:30pm in person at the parish. Please plan accordingly.

Father Paul will return on the evening of September 12. He was representing the USA/Canada Claretians at our General Chapter in Rome. The Government has been elected and has set a work plan for the worldwide congregation to be implemented in the next six years. Welcome back, Fr. Paul!

I would also like to thank you for your wonderful generosity in feeding this poor old hungry priest! Thanks for making sure I had a meal while Fr. Paul was gone. May God reward you for your generosity.

Finally, let us remember the First Reading this Sunday: "Be strong, fear not! Here is your God!" - Isaiah 34:4

Peace,
Fr. Byron Macias, CMF

Children's Mass

Our next Children's Mass will be Tuesday, September 7 at 6:00pm in the Chapel. There will be a Children's Choir practice at 5:00pm immediately before the Mass. If your child(ren) would like to serve as a lector or if they are trained to be an altar server, please contact Jakki at joyoflovmoms@gmail.com to sign up.

Weekly Justice Challenge

Justice Challenge: On September 15th, we celebrate Grandparents' Day. This is an opportunity to look at how we treat all of the elders in our communities, including but not limited to those in our own families. Your challenge this week is two-fold: do something special for the grandparents in your own family, but also identify an older person or couple in your community who suffer injustice in some way. It might be the injustice of loneliness, in which case a visit and a conversation would be great. It might be poverty; bringing a food basket or household supplies would be appropriate. Once your family identifies the elder in need, brainstorm the best way to help which also gives dignity and honor. No matter what you choose to do, find a way to let the elder share a life story or some wisdom with you from the perspective of many, many years of living. Finally, don't forget to thank them for the gift of their wisdom.

Faith, Family & Friends 2021-22

Faith, Family & Friends is the Newman Center's innovative approach to religious education for EVERYONE of all ages. It is adult oriented, family centered religious education and faith formation for our whole parish community. It offers faith formation for children, individual adults, couples, and families. Members of our parish become better acquainted and become better educated Catholics and lifelong learners of the faith. Adults have their choice of educational offerings in the topic areas of Scripture, Catholic Faith, and Family Life (Relationships/Parenting).

Because it is family centered, it is mandatory for at least one parent or guardian to attend with their child(ren).

Children are never allowed to be dropped off and picked up. Sacramental preparation programs for First Communion and Reconciliation are a part of FF&F. Please join us!

To register online, please go to our website by clicking this link: www.csufnewman.com. You will find registration forms for Families (Adults with children) and one for Adults (without children).

The first mandatory meeting for parents with children will be held on Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 6:30pm.

FF&F sessions for EVERYONE (Families and Individual Adults) will be held from 6:00pm to 7:15pm beginning October 5th!

Family Life Ministry

Ignatian Spirituality: Spiritual Discernment for Everyday Living.

This course will introduce you to St. Ignatius of Loyola and to a deeper understanding of his rules for spiritual discernment as a guide in your everyday life. Meetings will be held Thursday evenings, September 2 – December 16, 2021 from 5:30pm to 7:00pm in Cardinal Newman Hall – Room 103. No Fee. Facilitated by John Prandini, Director of Ministries.

Participants need to purchase the book, *The Discernment of Spirits: An Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living*, by Timothy M. Gallagher on their own prior to the first session from wherever books are sold. To register contact John Prandini at prandinij@csufnewman.com.

Men's Scripture Reflection Discussion Group will begin meeting Monday mornings beginning September 13 after the 8:00am Mass from 8:30am to 9:30am in the Library. Facilitated by John Prandini.

Live Streaming Volunteers Needed

As many of you know, the livestream Masses have enabled us to connect with so many people otherwise unable to join us in person. To meet this ministry need, we are still looking for volunteers to serve on our live-streaming team. Experience with smartphones and the Facebook app helps, but is not required. We will train you and you will be a blessing for our online audiences! Email our Liturgy Director Karl Gurney at karl@csufnewman.com to let us know you are interested!

Weekly Calendar

Sunday, September 5 Is 35: 4-7a; Jas 2:1-5; Mk 7:31-37
 7:30am Mass Int. of Ron & Elaine Zucca Chapel
 9:30am Mass for Lai Pham Chapel
 11:30am Mass for Alfred Mendoza Chapel
 7:00pm Young Adult Mass Chapel

Monday, September 6 Col 1:24-2:3; Lk 6:6-11
LABOR DAY—OFFICE CLOSED

Tuesday, September 7 Col 2:6-15; Lk 6:12-19
 6:00pm Mass for Deceased Members of FOSS / All Souls in Purgatory Chapel

Wednesday, September 8 Mi 5:1-4a; Mt 1:1-16, 18-23
 8:00am Mass for Agnes Formation Chapel
 6:00pm Scriptural Rosary Community Room
 6:00pm College Night CNH 101
 6:30pm PAIN Cafeteria

Thursday, September 9 Col 3:12-17; Lk 6:27-38
 10:00am Zee McCammond Funeral Chapel
 4:00pm Confessions Chapel
 5:30pm Ignation Spirituality CNH 103
 6:00pm Mass for Glen Bartolome Chapel

Friday, September 10 1 Tm 1: 2, 12-14; Lk 6:39-42
 8:00am Liturgy of the Word Chapel

Saturday, September 11 1 Tm 1:15-17; Lk 6:43-49
FOUNDERS DAY WEEKEND
 5:00pm Mass for Ferdinand Erese Chapel
 7:00pm CSUF vs. Cal Poly CSUF Stadium

Sunday, September 12 Is 50:5-9a; Jas 2:14-18; Mk 8:27-35
FOUNDERS DAY WEEKEND
 7:30am Mass for Rev. Angel Sotelo Chapel
 9:30am Mass for Rudy Facio Chapel
 11:30am Mass for Katherine Dillon Chapel
 2:00pm Baptism Prep Class ZOOM
 7:00pm Young Adult Mass Chapel

Prayers:

- ◆ **For those who died this week:** Deacon Mike Avila
- ◆ **Please pray for those who have requested special intentions and prayers:**
 Deacon Ed Valdez & Family, Willie Jacques, Ted & Marcia Falk, Linda Alvarez, Marianne Coons, Tom Kane, AJ Pasma, Julissa Mojarras, Mayra Cervantes, Chris Gonzales, Estefania Medina, Laura Willers, Fr. David Enriquez, Mary Garr, Kathy Papagni, Michael Vienna, John and Kathy Brechmann, JoAnn Myers, Issac Orozco, Diana Mock, Fr. Kevin Bray, Msgr. Anthony Janelli, Fr. John Schmoll, Sandra Barrie, Deacon Joe Parugrug, Tom Lucas, Kristal Lowe Limon, Nettie Shute, Sandy Keith, Meghan Vasquez, Jacob Blake, Dan Dungy, Isabel Wiggins, Rose Derby, Monica Becerra, Alice Schultz, Nancy Martin, Sr. Rosa Maria Branco FHIC

August Contributions

2020		2021	
Aug. 2	\$9,121.50	Aug. 1	\$17,923.00
Aug. 9 ACH	\$18,604.00	Aug. 8 ACH	\$20,215.11
Aug. 16 ACH	\$15,740.00	Aug. 15	\$10,196.11
Aug. 23	\$10,128.00	Aug. 22 ACH	\$16,574.61
Aug. 30	\$4,017.00	Aug. 29	\$10,557.30
August Total	\$57,610.50	August Total	\$75,466.23


Homebound Eucharistic Ministry


We are happy to announce the Diocese has reopened our Ministry to the Homebound. We are looking for Eucharistic Ministers to visit and take communion to the sick and homebound. This is a rewarding and grace-filled ministry. We will train you and you can visit the sick and homebound during the week or on the weekend. If this sounds like a ministry for you please contact Deacon Bill at bill@csufnewman.com or 436-3434.

Labor Day Holiday


Our office will be closed on Monday, September 6 in observance of the Labor Day Holiday. We will also not have Mass that morning. Our office will reopen on Tuesday, September 7.


Follow us!

 St. Paul Catholic Newman Center

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College Pages

 Newman Catholic Student Association (Fresno)

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Scholarships Sustain Our Commitment to Students

This Founders Day weekend, September 12, we will celebrate our founding pastor, Fr. Sergio P. Negro and the people who turned his vision of academic achievement and service to others into an enduring legacy we call the St. Paul Catholic Newman Center.

A few years ago, the Sergio P. Negro Scholarship Endowment was established with seed money from our 50th anniversary.

In 2019, the parish scholarship committee announced our inaugural two scholarship winners, but Covid-19 interrupted our 2020 scholarship plans.

Your generosity has helped grow the endowment so that this academic year we are awarding \$2,500 scholarships to four upper-division or graduate students who have been active in our parish community and plan to turn their academic preparation into careers serving others:

Guadalupe “Lupita” Franco, from Santa Maria, majors in deaf education at Fresno State and is working on a minor in Spanish. She’s active in the Newman Catholic Student Association, attends daily Mass, and recently started working at our front desk on weekends.

Marianne Gleason “grew up” at Newman, where she was an altar server, assisted in Vacation Bible School, was a Confirmation leader and helped plan retreats for high schoolers. At Loras College in Iowa, she majors in politics, creative writing and literature and plans to practice family law, representing children’s needs.

Nathan Madrigal became involved with the Newman Center while attending Fresno State. Since graduating, he’s joined the RCIA team and became a lector. His work at an elementary school inspired him to study for a Master of Education degree and become a credentialed teacher.

Hector Rodriguez of Wasco found a home, friends and deeper faith through the Newman Catholic Student Association, which he will serve this year as president. He assists with our celebrations of Ash Wednesday and the Virgin of Guadalupe. His Fresno State industrial technology degree will help him develop environmentally friendly agricultural practices and equipment.

The scholarships will be presented at the 9:30am Mass. Please meet and congratulate our Newman Scholars, living the legacy of our founding pastor, at a reception in the Cafeteria following Mass.

We also invite your continuing support of the Sergio P. Negro Scholarship Endowment Fund to recognize outstanding students who will use their knowledge and skills to serve humankind.

Your generosity endows our parish commitment envisioned nearly 60 years ago by Fr. Negro and all others who have served us so faithfully.

Good News—Women’s Guild is Back!

I am pleased to announce that the St. Paul’s Catholic Newman Center Women’s Guild will resume monthly meetings in October. It has been a very long hiatus due to Covid-19 and look forward to being together with past members and reach out to attract new members. Throughout the month of September I encourage members to renew their membership; dues continue to be \$20.00 for the year. For those interested in becoming members I direct you to the Newman Center website to learn more about the Guild, its purpose, mission and accomplishments. You may send in your dues directly to the office via mail or drop off in person. Please write in the memo section of the check “Women’s Guild” to ensure proper allocation. The office will have membership forms that we request to be completed for contact information. Forms can also be emailed to you for your convenience by contacting the office at 436-3434. We are very excited to resume the Guild and extend a very warm invitation to all the women of the parish to consider joining.

JoAnn LoForti

Foundations Course for RNs

The Diocese of Fresno is once again offering the Foundations course for RN’s wishing to become certified as a Faith Community Nurse (FCN). This course is being offered March 3-6, 2022. Completing the FCN Foundations course will enable an RN to begin and manage a Health Ministry program within their respective parish as well as provide 34 CEU’s. If interested and would like additional information please contact: Roxanna Stevens RN, FCN at Roxanna@dioceseoffresno.org or 488-7474, ext.108. JoAnn LoForti, RN, FCN at jloforti@dioceseoffresno.org; or 488-7474, ext. 108.

OLPH Job Position

Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) is looking for a part-time Maintenance Worker with experience. Please contact: Jacqui Ramirez at 299-4270 or email at: jacqui@olphclovis.org.

To download an application please go to our website at: www.olphclovis.org it is on the home page. We look forward to hearing from you!

Blood Donations Needed

The Central Valley blood supply is critically low. Consider donating if you can. The Central California Blood Center needs donors of all blood types. Donations will immediately help community members in need from all walks of life and ease the stressful burden of our front-line health care workers. Online scheduling is simple through their website where you can select an appointment location, date and time that fits your schedule. <https://www.donateblood.org/> or call 389-5433.



Care for Creation in Action

In 2017 the Diocese of Burlington, Vermont celebrated a Year of Creation. The Year included creation-themed liturgies, a Catholic schools' ecological awareness and action project, an ecological justice conference and an initiative to "Laudato Si-ify your Advent." To learn more, please visit bit.ly/YOC-VT.

"The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion."

-Pope Francis
Laudato Si', no. 219

The Season of Creation: *September 1 – October 4*

The Season of Creation spans five weeks between the **World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation** (September 1) and the **Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi** (October 4). This "time for creation" offers, in the words of Pope Francis, "individual believers and communities a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live."¹ Below are some ways to live out these three dimensions of Pope Francis' call, both as individuals and as a community.

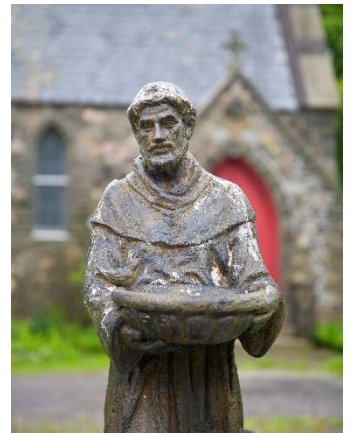
1. Reaffirm Our Vocation as Stewards of Creation

As individuals and families: *Counteract the "Throwaway Culture"*

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis brings attention to our "throwaway culture," which "quickly reduces things to rubbish" (no. 22). In your daily life, try to identify the ways in which you can choose reusables, rather than disposables, such as coffee mugs, reusable bags, or cloth napkins, and commit to making one change during this month.

As a community: *Educational Program*

Use the educational program "Befriend the Wolf" from the Catholic Climate Covenant to reflect on our vocation as stewards of creation. The program is designed to help your community contemplate the connections between all creatures under God our Creator. Visit bit.ly/CCC-BTF to access this resource.



2. Thank God for His Wonderful Handiwork



As individuals and families: *Meal Prayer*

Before and after meals, say a short prayer of thanksgiving for the lifegiving food that sustains and nourishes us. Briefly consider how all nourishment ultimately comes from the earth, and give thanks for all the human hands that helped bring this food to your table. May we recognize, as *Laudato Si'* has

taught us, that this "moment of blessing, however brief, reminds us of our dependence on God for life" (no. 227).

¹ Pope Francis, "Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis For the Establishment of the 'World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation,'" September 1, 2015.



Here are a few suggestions from the Diocese of Stockton, California on how to care for creation:

- Buy Fair Trade products to support local artisans and farmers and protect the environment.
- Store food in reusable containers, not plastic wrap or foil, to reduce waste.
- Avoid using Styrofoam at your parish functions. Styrofoam can rarely be recycled, and it takes 500 years to decompose in landfills!

(Excerpted from "10 Practical Ways You Can Care for Creation" on togoforth.org. To see more, please visit bit.ly/TGF-CC)

"There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions."

-Pope Francis *Laudato Si'*, no. 211

As a community: *Eucharistic Adoration*

One of the most meaningful ways we give thanks as Christians is through the sacrament of the Eucharist, a word which means "thanksgiving." As *Laudato Si'* proclaims, through the Eucharist, "the whole cosmos gives thanks to God" (no. 236). To celebrate this sacred reality during the Season of Creation, we recommend hosting a one-hour, care for creation-themed eucharistic adoration in your parish. Please visit bit.ly/PCJP-EA to access a resource created by the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace for this purpose.

3. Implore God's Help and Ask His Pardon

As individuals and families: *Confession*

In calling for a deep "ecological conversion," Pope Francis has emphasized the importance of examining one's own conscience, of recognizing one's sins against creation, however great or small. Seeing the interconnectedness of our world leads to an understanding that "[e]very violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment" (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 51). We invite you to bring these sins to confession and to perform a spiritual work of mercy for our common home, such as an act of "grateful contemplation of God's world" (*Laudato Si'*, no. 214).



As a community: *Prayer Service*

One final suggestion for this time is to organize a prayer service in your parish. The Catholic Climate Covenant has developed a four-part prayer service to be said after Mass each week. As we approach the beautiful autumn season, holding this service outside may allow for a rich experience. Please visit bit.ly/CCC-PS to access this resource.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
who are so precious in your eyes...
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
God of mercy, may we receive your forgiveness
and convey your mercy throughout our common home.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Source: Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the Celebration of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on September 1, 2016

For more resources related to care of creation, please visit the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops webpage on the Environment at usccb.org/environment.

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Be Healed - Keep Quiet

This Week's Readings at Mass

- ▶ Isaiah 35:4-7a - Israel's deliverance
- ▶ James 2:1-5 - Against favoritism
- ▶ Mark 7:31-37 - Healing of a deaf-mute

Jesus' ancestors awaited a savior who would work miracles with great power, opening the eyes of the blind, opening the ears of the deaf, and healing the lame. What they probably didn't imagine was a person like Jesus who healed people even in areas like the Decapolis, where most people did not worship the Jewish God. Even less would they have imagined a Messiah who would heal by sticking his fingers in ears and sharing his saliva by touching other people's tongues! Another surprise and mystery for Jesus' followers was his insistence that the people he healed keep quiet about the miracles.

No one knows for sure what Jesus' desire for secrecy was all about, but there are several theories. Perhaps he understood that the more "PR" he got, the less he would be able to move about freely to continue his ministry. Maybe Jesus realized that as soon as he became a public figure, his teaching and preaching would make him enemies and shorten the time before they killed him for his outspoken views. Maybe Jesus didn't want to be known as a sensationalist, a magician, or a miracle worker (there were others in his time and culture), because his message went far beyond physical healing.

The irony of the story is that after Jesus healed a deaf and mute man, the man *couldn't* keep quiet, so Jesus' fame spread in a

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“Say to those whose hearts are frightened:
Be strong, fear not! Here is your God...
he comes to save you.”

Sheepish Question:
What is my part in the work of God's grace?

foreign territory which had previously been “deaf” to his teachings.



Questions of the Week

- 1 When have you had an experience when you were surprised by healing words or actions from an unexpected person or situation?
- 2 Jesus worked this particular miracle outside of a synagogue and outside of his own Jewish community. In what “Decapolis” have you seen God at work (i.e. outside of your religious tradition)?

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