



AUGUST 2020

WICHITA, KANSAS

Understanding God's role in times of evil

It is an understatement to say we are experiencing a tumultuous time in our world today. The coronavirus pandemic and all the disruptions it has caused, coupled with worldwide protests over racial injustices, it is only natural to feel like our world is falling apart. But while this tumultuous time may be unique for many of us, as scripture says, "Nothing is new under the sun." (Eccl 1:9)

From a historical perspective, there have been plagues and social upheaval in every age, most of which were much worse than what we are currently experiencing.

In fact, I am writing these words on July 11, the feast of St. Benedict of Nursia, whose monastic way of life and rules of living a humble and holy life in the sixth century were a direct result of the collapse of the Roman Empire and western civilization.

Just as certain as the fact that "such things are bound to happen" (Mk 13:7), is the inevitability of questions that arise in peoples' mind about God's role in all of it: Is God the cause? If not, why does He allow bad things to happen? Why doesn't He intervene? And for those who don't believe in God or whose faith is weak, the fact that these things are

happening only reinforces their lack of belief in God.

These are all legitimate questions and concerns that philosophers and theologians typically categorize under the general topic, "the problem of evil," and volumes have been written about it. I would not presume to provide a comprehensive answer in the limit space allotted to me. I will simply limit my comments to the three questions about God's role in these evils and set aside the argument of God's existence or non-existence; it would take up too much space. Suffice it to say, the fact

that evil exists is not enough reason to conclude that God does not.

Is God the cause of evil?

The short answer to this first question is both no and yes. God is not the direct cause of any evil, either natural (like coronavirus) or man-made (like racism). As we know from Scripture, "God is Love." (1 Jn 4:8) Love is not something God does, it is what He is. In other words, Love is not simply an attribute of God, it is His very nature.

If God's nature is Love, that means

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Amelia Vopat, salutatorian, speaks to her fellow BCCHS graduates in the online portion of their graduation. See pages 6, 7 and 11 for a story and more photos.

SFA's newest priest introduces himself

Hello! God is so good. It has been a joy and privilege to be newly ordained to the priesthood and to be assigned to St. Francis of Assisi. These past few months have unquestionably been quite strange for everyone, and that certainly has been the case for me. My friends joked that we got “kicked out” of the seminary back in March when the country began to shut down.

After the lockdown ended, we were ordained at the Church of the Magdalen on May 23, the same anniversary day as my ordination to the diaconate the year before, as well as the anniversary of Fr. Kapaun's death.

I was actually baptized back in

the day by Fr. Ned Blick here at St. Francis. Shortly after, we moved to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish where my father, David, became the director of music, a position he still holds.

My two brothers and I attended St. Elizabeth School. My mother, Linda, is an accountant with Koch Industries. Dustin, my older brother, lives in Wichita and has four little girls. My younger brother, Landon, graduated from Benedictine College a few years ago, is married, and teaches religion at Kapaun Mt. Carmel. This has been a playful source of contention within the family, since the three of us boys proudly attended Bishop Carroll.

In high school, I wrestled and played tennis and football.

After graduating, I entered Conception Seminary College, primarily influenced by the close friendship and example of several wonderful priests whom my family had gotten to know, especially through working with my Dad. It was their joy, enthusiasm, gentleness and faith that first spoke to my heart of the call to the

priesthood.

Three years into my wonderful time at Conception, I decided to spend some time discerning the religious life. I returned home, attended Wichita State University, and played a ton of golf. That spring, I entered the Abbey at Conception as a Benedictine monk, where I had been attending as a Diocesan seminarian. After the Lord's revelation of the plans of his heart in my life, I left the monastery, worked at Auburn Hills golf course (to play as much free golf as I could), and eventually returned to seminary.

I attended Mundelein Seminary, located in a northern suburb of Chicago. The past four years of my life have been so full of God's goodness, his tender care, and full of so many blessings, many of which I had no idea were on the horizon.

Some of my deep passions are playing golf, watching Notre Dame football, spending time with friends and enjoying meals together, and watching movies. I also enjoy general aviation. I got my private pilot license about six years ago and have been flying ever since; I love it.

Even in this initial time at St. Francis, I have been so overwhelmed by the kindness and hospitality of all you wonderful parishioners. This parish is so blessed by many warm and faithful hearts and families. I very much look forward to getting to know all of you in the years ahead. Don't hesitate to come say hello after Mass! Please pray for me, and know of my continual thoughts, prayers and love for you.

– Fr. Luke Downing



God and His love are superabundant

Superabundant. When I consider this word, superabundant, the image of a cornucopia comes to mind. I remember as a child seeing that container shaped like a goat's horn, filled to overflowing, and spilling to the ground with an overabundance of fruits, vegetables and flowers. For me, I always saw pictures of an overflowing cornucopia around Thanksgiving time. The sign of abundance was connected to an attitude of gratitude for all the good things shared with one another and bestowed upon us by God.

Our readings today speak of God's superabundance: "All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk!"

Our Psalm says: "The eyes of all look hopefully to you, and you give them their food in due season; you open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing."

And again, our Gospel shows God's superabundant love when twelve wicker baskets were filled following the multiplication of the five loaves and two fish.

Our God is superabundant.

But we are living in a time of restriction: Social distancing, masks, limited activity, and the daily mental concern. This time of restriction is a stark contrast to the overabundance displayed in our Gospel. Perhaps it could cause us to ask: Is God really superabundant?

I think of those people who are more strictly locked into their homes because of preexisting conditions. Or those children who would like to be more interactive but are limited because of the virus. I especially think of those



men and women who, even now, are in the hospitals with severe illnesses and cannot receive a visitor.

I also consider those workers who are on furlough, or those who have lost their jobs, and business owners whose business has been severely hampered because of the situation. I think further of the limitations placed on our college students trying to go back to college, or the necessary health precautions placed on our grade school teachers, employees and students, not to mention the difficulties parents experience in providing school for their kids. I think of people who have financially suffered loss because of a stressed economy.

And, to be quite honest, I was afraid to even articulate such a list of restrictions and woes, precisely because they are the focal point of so much conversation, debate, interest and intrigue. It is right that we should talk about these things. And it is right that we should find the best ways to maximize the health and safety of the greatest number of people that we can.

But there are some sectors of our society that are using our current situation as an opportunity for fearmongering, political posturing, media sensationalism, or empty disputes. This has added a whole other level of psycho-emotional burden to an already difficult crisis. There are many strident voices, and they are compromising peace

and tugging on hearts and minds to the point of weariness. This disrupted society that we are living in, this is our deserted place.

And in the midst of this we have readings that reveal God's love as superabundant. How? How, in our current situation, is God's love superabundant? And my response is this: It depends on whose voice you are listening to. To whom are you listening? To whom do you give your first attention?

There is an interesting amalgamation in today's readings between the physical and the spiritual, the temporal and the eternal. Our first reading promises physical blessings: grain and water, wine and milk to those who have no money. And even our Gospel shows Jesus Christ providing food for thousands from the miraculous multiplication of five loaves and two fish. The promise of Isaiah says, "You shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare."

The felt experience of our current crisis seems different. Stress, anxiety, burden, and restrictions may cause us to ask: Is God going to lift our current burden? Will He who promises relief and gives food and water hear our prayer? How is it that we will find rest in our God?

The answer is found in the three words of Isaiah: "Come to me." Isaiah says, "Come to me."

So again, I ask, to whom are you listening? To whom do you give your first attention? It must be the Lord!

Notice this: The promise of Isaiah was not first the promise of food and drink. Rather it was, first, the promise of a relationship: "Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life." And again, in

Forming youth in relationship with God, Church

“Then Jesus approached and said to them, ‘All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.’”
(Matt 28:18-20)

I remember when my 11 siblings, my parents, and I all gathered and prayed the rosary as a family. I’m sure you can imagine the struggle that it was for my parents to commit to a weekly discipline with so many children. I remember some of our rowdier moments and can say that we all fortunately survived. Through that experience I learned to love the rosary and to pray it regularly, because the habit was formed in my youth. That is just one memory I have of my faith journey growing up. My parents gave me, and nurtured, a faith that carried me through college and my adult life.

Why is the formation of youth important and what are some ways we can nurture the faith life of our family and community?

We all are called to make disciples; teaching and forming the young people in our families and communities. We will find that in forming our youth, we also will increase our own faith.

The youth are embarking on a life-long journey. It began at their baptism when we promised to give them the faith and will continue for the remainder of their lives. What we teach them now, they will learn to value as a priority. We are establishing habits that the youth

will carry on in their lives.

As adults, we should be instilling healthy life-giving habits and helping the youth to see the value in a true relationship with God; to grasp the faith in such a way that they believe Jesus loves them and wants them. As Fr. Jarrod mentioned, God is super abundant in His love, and He brings peace amidst chaos. As teens make their way through the chaos in their lives, they need a foundation of seeking God’s love and truth first. The way to build those truths in our young people is to live them out in our lives. We are the models for the future. We are all responsible to affirm and reinforce the sacramental life and love of Christ with each other.

If you take time with your children to share the wonderful ways that God and the Church is super abundant in your life, that will go a long way. Children remember the emotions associated with events. Making sure that we are a positive example of faith, our children will feel that welcoming atmosphere for years to come.

What are some ways we can help form the youth in our families and Church?

1. Participate in the sacraments.
2. Pray together. Build a habit of daily prayer.
3. Talk about your faith.
4. Read Scripture. This can be done as a family or individually.
5. Attend retreats and faith formation sessions. These are available in the parish and diocese.
6. Send your child(ren) to Catholic schools or Parish School of Religion. This will reinforce their faith through education and an

atmosphere of acceptance to grow one’s faith.

7. Get involved in the many programs available in the parish. Our parish has a lot to offer to help prioritize Christ in our lives, including programs for youth to help instill and grow their faith and find others that are of similar age and life experience, and programs for adults to help grow our relationships with God, His Church, and other adults. Check out SFA’s [Comprehensive List of Ministries](#).

Understanding our faith and the responsibility to form our young people is an essential part of the life of a Catholic Christian. We all have the vocation to holiness, and our young people need our help to learn how to live that holiness in their lives. Being able to build positive life-giving habits will go a long way to increase our faith and the faith of our families. Know that you are not alone. Look to the Church. Look to Christ. Be bold.

“Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” (Mt 19:14)

– April Bailey, *Theologians Guild*

Stewardship Thought

“The mission of the Catholic school is the integral formation of students, so that they may be true to their condition as Christ’s disciples and as such work effectively for the evangelization of culture and for the common good of society.”

– Pope John Paul II

School, PSR, CYM gear up for new year

Although this school year will look a little different, St. Francis is here to serve its youth in a variety of ways. Parish educators Mary Carter, Theresa Herman and Emily Savage filled us in on some of their plans.

Mary Carter, St. Francis School's principal, and her staff have worked tirelessly to ensure this school year will be safe and successful for students, parents and teachers.

"While this school year is sure to be different than most, it still begins like every year in the past: with nervous anticipation and excitement," Carter said. "Granted, the nervous anticipation might be for different things this year, like starting with a re-entry guide, health screenings and state mandates and masks, all of which are not the norm, but the excitement of seeing friends, meeting new teachers, playing on the playground and learning always tops the list from year to year.

"This year, the need for faith over fear is critical. How can we move forward with faith? Catholic education. What a blessing it is to teach in a Catholic school where we have the opportunity to form the whole child! We are blessed to work with parents to form students

not only academically, socially, emotionally and physically, but also spiritually. There is no better gift to give our children!

"Vikings, as it says in the Gospel of John, 'Take courage!' We will move forward with hope knowing that we have dedicated teachers and staff who are willing to protect your children and provide the best education possible."

Theresa Herman, our new Parish School of Religion director, will draw on her wealth of experience as a retired elementary school teacher to serve St. Francis in her new role.

"I am looking forward to helping the families of St. Francis to nurture Catholic virtues in their children," Herman wrote. "Our staff and volunteers will work to bring all our students closer to God, and help them experience the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ through religious instruction and the sacraments. I ask for your support and prayers as we continue this journey of faith."

Emily Savage, director of youth ministry and Confirmation, has already kicked off CYM. Summer activities included mini golf on a course handmade by volunteers; "Dead Theologians Society," which

is a prayerful experience during which high schoolers learn about the lives of the saints; a holy hour with confessions; and more.

"I would like to invite all high school students to participate in the youth ministry opportunities at our parish," Savage wrote. "Youth ministry serves our teens and serves alongside our teens. Pope St. John Paul the Great said, 'In order to find yourself, you must become a sincere gift of self.'

"Youth ministry provides occasions to give and to receive. Ultimately, SFA youth ministry provides opportunities to encounter Our Risen Lord. We have opportunities to encounter Him within prayer, our community, and our activities.

"Throughout high school we are pulled in many directions. We are presented with choices and decisions that can sometimes affect the rest of our lives. It is my hope that you will prayerfully consider joining the SFA youth ministry. It truly is a place to connect with others, to grow in understanding of yourself and your faith, as well as a place to learn what it means to serve one's neighbor."



Photos by Emily Savage

After the COVID-19 quarantine, CYM members were finally able to come together in July for some fun. They played miniature golf on a homemade course built by Gary Savage. CYM will host a repeat miniature golf event on Sept. 9. See more golf photos on SFA Facebook page.

BCCHS Class of 2020 includes 62 from SFA

Congratulations to the 257 Bishop Carroll Catholic High School students who graduated on July 26, including the 62 from St. Francis of Assisi Parish listed below. Due to COVID-19, the graduation was postponed from its original May date and moved from Hartman Arena to the BCCHS Family Stadium.

Graduation looked a little different this year. The administration created six time slots for the graduates, with approximately 40 students signing up for each half-hour time slot from 7 to 10 p.m. With small groups of immediate families watching from the track, the graduates walked across an outdoor stage to receive their diplomas.

The principal, community president, valedictorian, and salutatorian gave speeches in the Graduation Awards video available here on the [Bishop Carroll TV YouTube page](#).

Caralyn Bailey, Lorenzo Barles*, Haley Beugelsdyk*, Brett Bongartz, Caly Bourbonnais, Michael Burns**, Alexandria Carter, Abigail Conrad, Amber DeSmit, Drake Dugan.

Farrah Evans, Chase Fisher, Ashton Forbes, Emma Fox, Savannah Frost, Rochelle Gallant, Noah Gorges, Benjamin Gregg, Tyler Griffin.

Ava Hanna, Thomas Harter, Augustine Hauge**†, Seger Holman, Johnathan Honas, Colby Hudspeth, Rebekah Iseman**, Noelle Jerman, Emily Jones,

Megan Keahey, Nathan Koehler, Kennedee Lara, Dominik Lehmann, Tanner Mans, Lauryn Mauler**, Grace Mernagh, Nicholas Mileham, Hailey Moravec, Audriana Navarro, Helen Nguyen**†, Jason Nguyen, Dalton Nichols, Dylan Nichols.

William Paronto, Layne Petersen, Vanessa Rosales, Brady Saville, Lexie Shelton, Brian Simon**†, Reagan Smith, Levi Streit**, Ainsley Stump, Logan Tajchman, Ethan Taylor†, Clare Timmermeyer.

Ashley von Mosch**†, Amelia



Vopat**†, Shelby Vu, George Walden, Zachary Wankum, Levi Ward, Jenna Welsby, Emily Werth.

Names marked with * received the Honors Diploma; those marked with ** received the Cum Honors Diploma. Names marked with † were Kansas State Scholars. Some of the other awards and recognition received by SFA parishioners follow.

• **Salutatorian:** Amelia Vopat
• **Community President:** Levi Streit

• **Bishop David Maloney**

Award: Augustine Hauge

• **Monsignor Barth Award:** Augustine Hauge, Helen Nguyen

• **National Merit Finalist:**

Augustine Hauge

• **Kansas Governor's Scholars:** Helen Nguyen, Amelia Vopat

• **National Honor Society:** Lorenzo Barles, Michael Burns, Drake Dugan, Augustine Hauge, John Honas, Rebekah Iseman, Lauryn Mauler, Grace Mernagh, Helen Nguyen, Brian Simon, Levi Streit, Ashley von Mosch, Amelia Vopat

• **Advancement Ambassadors:** Alexandria Carter, Grace Mernagh, Ashley von Mosch

• **BC/KSHSAA Citizenship Award:** Michael Burns

• **Kansas Scholars Curriculum Completers:** Nathan Koehler, Brady Saville, Levi Ward

• **Community Leadership Team:** Levi Streit, George Walden

• **Topeka Capital-Journal Award:** Augustine Hauge

• **Red Cross Scholarship:** Amelia Vopat

• **Golden Eagle Band Award:** Haley Beugelsdyk

• **Choral Director's Award of Excellence:** Caralyn Bailey

• **Theatre St. Genesius Meal:** Dominik Lehmann

• **BCCHS Spirit of the Theatre Award:** Drake Dugan

• **Broadcasting Saint Gabriel the Archangel Award:** William Paronto, George Walden

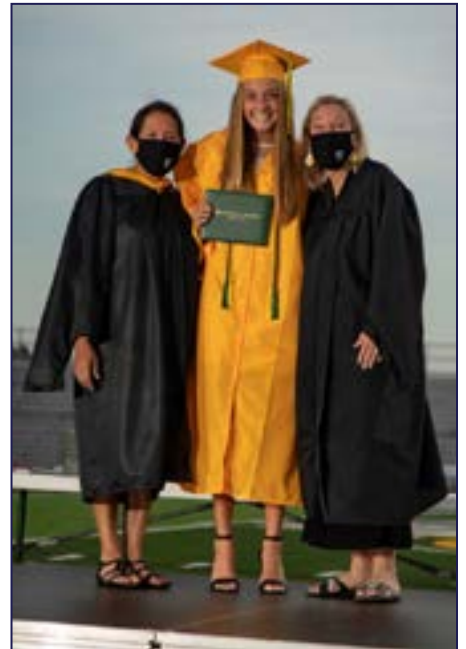
• **International Thespian Society:** Caralyn Bailey, Emma Fox, Dominik Lehmann

• **Newspaper:** Caly Bourbonnais, Rochelle Gallant, Grace Mernagh, Reagan Smith, Shelby Vu, Emily Werth

• **Yearbook:** Abigail Conrad, Ashton Forbes, John Honas, Emily Jones

• **Liturgy Club Leadership:** Brian Simon, Clare Timmermeyer

2020 BCCHS SFA Graduates



Photos by Pete Iseman

See more graduation photos on p. 11.

Stewardship Focus: Pillars of Life

This is a regular series created by our Stewardship Council shedding light on the Pillars of Life: service, prayer, formation and hospitality.

Hospitality

“Come you blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you invited me in; I needed clothes and you clothed me; I was sick and you looked after me; I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

– (Matthew 25:34-36)



Service

Because children are naturally focused on their own needs, we must patiently call out their response of love. Here are three suggestions:

1. Give them models of people who serve others for the love of Christ.
2. Explain that we show our love and thanks to God by taking good care of the gifts he has given.
3. Assure your children that they have talents for loving and serving.

FINANCIAL REPORT - JUNE 2020

Current Status of Operating Budget Compared to Actual Contributions

	2020 June	Fiscal YTD*		
Contributions Needed				
(4 weeks @ \$ 110,000 per week)	\$ 440,000			
(52 weeks @ \$ 110,000 per week)		\$ 5,720,000		
Contributions Received	\$ 389,430	\$ 4,905,820		
Contributions Long/(Short)	\$ (50,570)	\$ (814,180)		
Other Ordinary Receipts (Other Gifts& Misc.)	\$ 20,868	\$ 243,280		
Building Fund	\$ 8,770	\$ 199,119		
Extraordinary Receipts **	30,352	\$ 82,427		
Bequests		\$ 30,000		
Total Received	\$ 449,420	\$ 5,460,646		
Long/(Short)	\$ 9,420	\$ (259,354)		
	June Actual	Fiscal YTD* Actual	Fiscal YTD* Budget	Fiscal YTD* Cost Variance
Expenses				
United Catholic Stewardship	\$ 45,391	\$ 536,566	\$ 568,000	\$ 31,434
St. Francis of Assisi School	229,549	2,620,265	2,675,000	54,735
Bishop Carroll Catholic High School	79,612	868,345	870,000	1,655
Other Educational Programs - PSR/RCIA/Etc.	3,022	13,181	27,000	13,819
Parish Salaries and Benefits	63,015	509,812	504,000	(5,812)
Utilities, Maintenance, and Property Insurance	24,011	177,210	179,500	2,290
Charity	-	14,200	26,000	11,800
Supplies	10,939	132,420	133,600	1,180
Other	32,201	469,938	479,900	9,962
Capital Outlay	5,776	281,337	257,000	(24,337)
Call to Share, Missions	-	42,000	-	(42,000)
Investment with Chancery	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses	\$ 493,516	\$ 5,665,274	\$ 5,720,000	\$ 54,726
Contributions less Expenses - Long/(Short)	\$ (44,096)	\$ (204,628)		
	Prior Year Surplus/(Deficit)			

* July thru Current Month

** Includes Endowment Investment Gains

BAPTISMS

Atlas Grey, son of Isaiah & Renae Carter, July 5

Olive Agnes, daughter of Cody and Jessica VenJohn, July 5

Hazen Lucille, daughter of Brandon and Kristin Dooley, July 11

Arabella Dorothy, daughter of Joe and Amy Gallagher, July 12

Sailor Bel, daughter of Steven and Sicily Orth, July 12

Anastasia Celeste, daughter of Augustine and Bianca Iacopelli, July 25

John Michael, son of Mark and Tara McCreary, July 26

NEW PARISHIONERS

James "Nick" & Carolyn Sojka, 3 children

Alan Albarracin Jr.

Ivan & Jenna Guerrero, 2 children

Allan & Joyce Reinert

Ignacio Ayala, 1 child

God's role ... cont. from p. 1

He is all good, and if He is all good, he cannot be evil or cause evil, because it would be contrary to his nature, and God cannot contradict himself.

Expressed another way, evil is not the opposite of good, but a lack of, or privation of the good. St. Augustine put it like this, "For evil has no positive nature, but the loss of good has received the name 'evil.'" So, no, God is not the direct cause of these evils.

On the other hand, an argument could be made that God is the cause of these evils, albeit indirectly. Why? Because he created us with free will, and given the choice between good and evil, from the beginning of human existence, we chose evil. By "we," of course, I mean our original ancestors, Adam and Eve, who by their own free will chose to disobey God, known also as Original Sin, thereby, allowing evil to enter our world.

You may be saying, "We" didn't disobey God. Why should we suffer evil because of our original ancestors? With the doctrine of original sin, the Church teaches that we, with our human nature, suffer the consequences of that original disobedience.

"... original sin is a mystery that we cannot fully understand. But we do know by Revelation that Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all human nature. By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a personal sin, but this sin affected the human nature that they would then transmit in a fallen state. It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human

nature deprived of original holiness and justice." (CCC 404)

Why does God allow evil to exist? Why doesn't He intervene?

The short answer to these two questions is because He loves us, and He wants us to freely love Him.

Remembering that we are created with free will, it follows that God must allow evil to exist so that true love can also exist. God could easily take away evil and force us to love Him, but then that would not be true love. He loves us so much that He gives us the choice to accept His love or reject it.

He also knows, like any good parent, that by permitting evil and suffering to exist, a greater good may be achieved.

St. Augustine wrote: "For the Almighty God ... has supreme power over all things, being Himself supremely good, would never permit the existence of anything evil among His works, if He were not so omnipotent and good that He can bring good even out of evil."

Salvation history and scripture bear this out over and over again, from The Fall to the Great Flood, from slavery in Egypt to the years of wandering in the desert during the Exodus, and later on, the fall and exile of the Hebrew people to various foreign powers. In every case, God allowed sin and suffering in order to bring about a greater good, usually a return to Him.

My favorite example of this in the Old Testament is the story of Joseph, or in contemporary terms, Joseph and his Amazing Techno-color Dreamcoat. Although Joseph's brothers, of their own free will, committed the evil of selling their brother into slavery, God was able

to bring good from that evil act after Joseph rose up to be a high ranking official and saved Egypt and the surrounding countries from starvation, during a seven-year famine. He even saved his own family, including the brothers who had intended to kill him.

Joseph's story is only a foreshadowing of the ultimate example of God allowing evil, so that He could bring about good. By this, of course, I mean God allowing the evil of His only Begotten Son being crucified and buried, so that He could bring about the good of raising Him up, in order to redeem us and forgive us of our sins, including the original sin committed by our ancestors.

If God loves us so much that he would allow the evil of His only begotten Son's crucifixion for our sake, you can be certain He can bring some good from the evils of illness and racism we are currently experiencing. I would say He already has; we must have the eyes of faith to recognize it.

Of course, evil still exists, and it will until Jesus returns to lead us on our final Exodus out of this valley of tears and into the Promised Land of life eternal. But His delay, too, is an act of love. For He wants to give us every opportunity to choose good over evil; to choose Him over the forbidden fruit.

May we all see these difficult times as an opportunity to deepen our faith in God and trust that He "will not let us be tested beyond our strength, but ... will give us a way out, so that we may be able to endure it." (1 Cor 10:13)

– Randy Phelps,
Theologians Guild

God and His love ... cont. from p. 3

the Gospel, notice that the people in the Gospel did not follow Jesus so that he would give them bread and fish. In fact, they specifically went into, what the Gospel calls, “a deserted place.” They followed Jesus because he possessed the words of life. The gift of fish and bread was a consequence of their act of literally coming to Jesus in a deserted place. They desired God’s Word, and he gave them food. They prioritized the spiritual, and Jesus gave them the physical.

This message, to trust in the superabundant love of God before all other things, is the constant message of the Gospel. Peter learned this lesson when he saw Jesus walking on the water. Water can be a sign of chaos. When Peter focused on the water, he began to sink in the chaos. When he focused on Jesus, he was able to walk on the chaos.

Remember Martha also. Martha was busy working, preparing food for Jesus. Martha’s sister, Mary, was sitting listening to Jesus. When Martha complained, Jesus said, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. Mary has chosen the better part, and it will not be taken from her.” Even in the midst of our labors, worries and anxieties, we must prioritize the Lord.

And so it must be with us. We must first listen to the Lord before we turn our attention to the strident voices of the world. “Come to me, HEEDFULLY, listen, that you may have life.”

In place of fearmongering, we must trust. Even in a time of chaos we trust in the God who, not only walked on the waters, but himself brought order out of chaos. To this end we have the beautiful words of St. Paul: “What

will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Our God is greater than the chaos of the world!

In place of political posturing, we should posture ourselves on our knees. As St. Paul says, “For this reason I kneel before the Father ... I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.”

Throughout this entire crisis our Church building has been open as a spiritual shelter during a social storm. Now, even more, how blessed we are to have perpetual adoration open once again! Here in the adoration chapel we can listen, on our knees, to God first so as to respond rightly to the chaos of the world.

In place of media sensationalism, we situate ourselves in the peace of Christ. The voices of the world stir us to a frenzy. In contrast the Psalms say, “Listen carefully to what God the LORD is saying, for he speaks peace to his faithful people.” As St. Paul elsewhere says, “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, will He not also give us everything else?”

Finally, in place of empty disputes, we speak the truth in charity. St. Paul warns us against

empty disputes because, as he says, they promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God’s work – which is by faith. To be sure, times like these do call for conversation, dialogue and legitimate debate. But such dialogue must have the goal of the true common good of every person in society.

My point is this: Even in the deserted place of this current pandemic, God is superabundant. Like an overflowing cornucopia, God’s Sacred Heart is overflowing with every good blessing. Even if we, now, find ourselves like the Israelites in the desert, we never despair as if God is not in charge. We must listen, heedfully, to the voice of God that speaks of peace. Yes, we enter into legitimate debate about what is truly good, but that debate begins on our knees, listening to God and looking to him to provide good things for all who come to him.

When we prioritize God over the world, God will provide for us. When we seek God first, He will provide for all our needs. When we approach God as children of a heavenly Father then we will know, from the depth of our being, what our Psalm said today: “The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.” Let us trust in the superabundant love of God.

FUNERALS

Jackson Zarchan, son of Adam and Meghann Zarchan; brother of Jacob, Jace, Leah, Lucy and Lily; July 21

Catherine Lahar, mother of Katherine “Abby” Reif and daughter of Arthur Bordin, July 27

2020 BCCHS SFA Graduates (cont.)



Photos by Guy Gallant



Photos by Kristin Hudspeth



Photo by Guy Gallant



The president and principal wear masks while presenting graduates with their diplomas at the July 26 outdoor graduation ceremony at BCCHS. Shown are some of the 62 graduates from SFA. See article and more photos on pages 1, 6 and 7.

Layout editors needed for Vernacular

We are in need of additional layout editors for the Vernacular, with volunteers taking turns throughout the year being responsible for two or more issues each, depending on availability. Experience with Adobe InDesign is required; cloud-based software is provided for those who don't have it. Contact Lanette at sfavernacular@gmail.com if you are interested in helping. Thank you!



“Let no one despise your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.”

1 Timothy 4:12

God's Superabundant Love
- page 3 -

Youth Formation & Education
- pages 4 & 5 -

e-Vernacular Only

Due to the current pandemic and a need to reduce expenses where we can, we will use email and social media only to distribute the Vernacular for the foreseeable future. There will be no hard copy of the parish newsletter mailed to parishioners for the next few months, after which we will decide what to do about future issues. Thank you for your understanding.

