

A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

November 3, 2019



Sinners and Saints

Some people are tall and some are short and based on their physical height a person can either see more or less of the world. Vision and height form two key factors in the spiritual life and are highlighted in this week's Gospel from St. Luke. In the encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus we see a small man who was not living for the Lord, but desired to see Him. As Jesus was passing by on the road to Jericho, Zacchaeus needed to adjust his physical and spiritual vision in order to see Jesus. Because Zacchaeus was short and could not see Jesus, he climbed a tree showing a desire to see the Lord. Jesus notices the spiritual desire of Zacchaeus and calls upon this sinner to come down quickly to prepare his house for Jesus. The passage says that Zacchaeus was filled with joy in receiving the Lord. Sometimes in our relationship with Jesus we cannot see Him through the lens of faith as we should. Simply, we are too small in our vision of God and cannot truly appreciate the great love He has for us. The desire to be close to the Lord must be present in our life. Jesus notices our deepest desires and they should be reserved for union with Him alone. Whether we are close to Jesus today or seemingly far away, each of us should take time to reflect on our heart's desires. If our top desire in life is to welcome the Lord into the home of our hearts and to prepare a dwelling place for Jesus, then our vision is clear and centered in reality. If our heart is not ready for Jesus to dwell in love within, then some work needs to be done in allowing our desires to be reprioritized so that loving God and receiving His love is the top priority in life. As Christians we should be doing whatever it takes to fix our eyes on Jesus and take great effort to make time for prayer while doing so. Take some time today to pray and take notice of what type of priorities are important in your life. Is Jesus one of them? Is going to Mass one of them? Is prayer one of them? Is loving God and others one of them? Turn to Jesus in prayer and He will help you to get back on track.

All Souls Day

All Souls Day is on November 2, 2016 and is a day for remembering the faithful departed. The Church allows for three Masses to be said that day as we pray for the Holy Father Pope Francis, for the Poor Souls in Purgatory and for a specific person in the parish who has died. It is good for us to pray for the dead, especially for those souls who have need of purification as they journey toward eternal rest and peace with God. It is a good day for us in our Catholic Cluster to pray for all the deceased members of all our parishes and families, especially those who have died in the last year.

Bury the Dead

November is the month when we remember the faithful departed through prayer and visiting the graves of those who have died marked with the sign of our faith—the Cross. As Catholics we are to have the highest understanding of the mystery of faith that unfolds at the death of a person. We are to live what we profess in our belief of the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Jesus has made the grave sacred through His three day sleep in the tomb and rising on the third day. He has consecrated the body through Holy Baptism and offers strength with the Sacraments and this gives special meaning to Catholics as we approach death. We need to seek at all means possible to have prayers for the dead, to have a viewing of the deceased, to have a funeral Mass and to have a full body burial in a Catholic Cemetery where possible. Cremation is allowed in the Catholic Church but IS NOT PREFERRED. Recently the Catholic Church clarified the teaching on cremation of deceased Catholics, that cremation is allowed but we should seek to have the remains of a dead person BURIED IMMEDIATELY. Under no circumstances should the ashes of a deceased person be desecrated or treated less than sacred by having them spread over the land, set on the bookshelf, placed in jewelry, fed to the dog, or other bizarre practices that are seen in our current culture that cares more about getting money from the inheritance than giving dignity to a deceased person. If you have questions about the Catholic Church's teaching on cremation please feel free to contact me. Since July, several people have spoken with me about disturbing situations that have taken place in their families and we have been able to come up with a plan so that these situations can be rectified.

Prayer for Our Country

O Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy, at this most critical time, we entrust the United States of America to your loving care. Most Holy Mother, we beg you to reclaim this land for the glory of your Son. Overwhelmed with the burden of the sins of our nation, we cry to you from the depths of our hearts and seek refuge in your motherly protection. Look down with mercy upon us and touch the hearts of our people. Open our minds to the great worth of human life and to the responsibilities that accompany human freedom. Free us from the falsehoods that lead to the evil of abortion and threaten the sanctity of family life. Grant our country the wisdom to proclaim that God's law is the foundation on which this nation was founded, and that He alone is the True Source of our cherished rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. O Merciful Mother, give us the courage to reject the culture of death and the strength to build a new Culture of Life. Amen.

Shared by the Men of the Sacred Hearts at info@menofthesacredhearts.org

In Christ,
Fr. Tom Niehaus