



# Bringing Home the Word

The Epiphany of the Lord (C)  
January 2, 2022

## Herod Was Correct

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

King Herod, the most powerful man in the region, was greatly troubled to hear about the birth of a king. Why would a reigning king fear a little child? Perhaps because he believed if word spread that a future messiah had been born, the Jews would be harder to control. They were easier to dominate when they were without hope, without a leader.

Herod was correct. Wise men from the East looking for the King of the Jews fulfilled prophecies that foretold all nations would come to Israel looking for a messianic leader.

### Sunday Readings

#### Isaiah 60:1–6

Arise! Shine, for your light has come, the glory of the LORD has dawned upon you.

#### Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6

The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus.

#### Matthew 2:1–12

When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Herod was also troubled because, if indeed this newborn was a king, he had a pretender and a competitor right under his royal nose. King Herod was correct again.

Although Jesus did not pretend to overthrow the Romans, he did come with authority and would upend the existing order. Jesus would preach to the heart and demand that no one sit on that throne except God his Father.

The painter, Pseudo Domenico di Michelino, in *Adoration of the Kings*, presents the arrival of the Magi as a procession of vassals showing homage to their king. Kneeling, bowing, and standing erect with gifts in hand, authorities from far away are reverencing the newborn royalty who sits on Mother Mary's lap. His royal hall is the hillside, his scepter a baby finger, his royal family is Joseph and Mary.

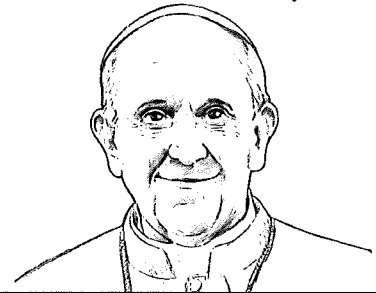
These Gentile kings were the first to do what all of creation and all of history have been doing since then—bending their knee to the King of the Universe. Herod was right to worry. +

***Jesus would preach to the heart and demand that no one sit on that throne except God his Father.***

### A Word from Pope Francis

[The Lord] is our light: a light that does not dazzle but accompanies and bestows a unique joy. This light is for everyone, and it calls each one of us... At the beginning of each day we can welcome this invitation: arise, shine, and follow today—among the many shooting stars in the world—the bright star of Jesus!

—Angelus on Epiphany Sunday,  
January 6, 2017



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- Does Jesus' authority and care give me security?
- Do I seek earthly securities aside from what treasures he offers me: his will, protection, and grace?

# The Richness of God's Vision

By Kathleen M. Basi

As a child, my sisters and I used to pray this prayer every night: "I love you, Jesus, Infant Jesus, meek and mild; make me a good, obedient child."

The word *obedience* rubs most modern audiences the wrong way. We tend to associate it with a lack of critical thinking—with the creation of blind, unquestioning automatons. If we don't understand why we believe what we believe, our faith has no foundation. We risk being derailed by the slightest challenge.

It's true that an unquestioned faith is an immature faith. On the other hand, not everything can be understood. What are the words "thy will be done" if not an acknowledgment that forces are at work beyond our comprehension? "Thy will be done" is our assent—our prayer of obedience. By living through the things we don't understand, we often gain wisdom and insight illuminating what once seemed incomprehensible.

I think about myself during the first few years of my marriage. We had followed the rules and never questioned the Church's teachings on sexuality. We were doing everything "right," and yet we could not conceive. Yes, there were medical issues, but they weren't severe enough to explain why God "allowed" the frustration of the desire he had placed within us to continue. Obedience left a bad taste in our mouths.

We spent several thousand dollars to adopt, only to be further delayed by



international politics. We prayed, we grieved, we wrestled with the words "thy will be done." Only when we reached the top of the waiting list did we conceive at last.

It didn't make sense. Why would God put us through so much if he intended all along to give us biological children?

When our second child was born, finally, everything fell into place. She has Down syndrome. And the reality is that no matter what we said in public, neither of us were truly open to parenting a child with a disability. But we had spent seven years learning to accept God's will for us. We had continued to be faithful and, yes, obedient, even when it didn't make sense. All that suffering prepared

us to accept and even embrace a different future than we had envisioned for our family. That vision, it turns out, is richer than ours ever was. We understand God and Christian discipleship in a way we never would have otherwise.

Obedience shouldn't be blind. We can and should wrestle with difficult questions, just as Jacob wrestled with the angel. Still, not everything has to make sense. Our job is to follow, even though we can't always see where we're going... yet. +

*By living through the things  
we don't understand,  
we often gain wisdom  
and insight.*

## PRAYER

*Lord, your light gives us strength  
and shows us the way to God.  
Remove my blindness that I may  
see the light of goodness, peace,  
and love within myself and others.*

—From *Joyful Meditations for Every Day  
of Advent and the 12 Days of Christmas*,  
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

January 3–8

**Monday**, Christmas Weekday:  
1 Jn 3:22–4:6 / Mt 4:12–17, 23–25


**Tuesday**, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton:  
1 Jn 4:7–10 / Mk 6:34–44

**Wednesday**, St. John Neumann:  
1 Jn 4:11–18 / Mk 6:45–52

**Thursday**, Christmas Weekday:  
1 Jn 4:19–5:4 / Lk 4:14–22a

**Friday**, Christmas Weekday:  
1 Jn 5:5–13 / Lk 5:12–16

**Saturday**, Christmas Weekday:  
1 Jn 5:14–21 / Jn 3:22–30

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# Bringing Home the Word

*The Baptism of the Lord (C)*

January 9, 2022

## Renewal by the Holy Spirit

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

**W**e have all received baptism, but why don't the amazing fruits and graces received then always show themselves powerfully in our lives?

Titus tells us what has already happened for us in baptism. We were saved "through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the holy Spirit" (3:5). Yet this renewal accomplished by the Spirit needs to be fully embraced by us for it to reach its potential. We know we have been renewed, but how do we keep renewing? This happens by prayerful contact with the Holy Spirit.

In Titus, Spirit is capitalized because it's the Spirit of God. Renewal by the Holy Spirit is a renewal in which God, not man, is the principal protagonist. "Behold, I" (not you) "make all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

We often think that to be renewed and grow, we have to do something. God tells us it is something he does. "I, the LORD, make you holy" (Leviticus 20:8). We have to give him back the power he already has. Or better yet, we need to recognize God's power and let him use it in us.

A revolution needs to happen in our minds and hearts where we recognize that without the Holy Spirit we can do nothing. So, ask the Holy Spirit to come upon you in a real baptism of fire. Then all those baptismal gifts will spark into a flame and help you set the world ablaze with his love! +

## Sunday Readings

**Isaiah 42:1–4, 6–7 or  
Isaiah 40:1–5, 9–11**

I, the LORD, have called you  
for justice, /  
I have grasped you by the hand.

**Acts 10:34–38 or  
Titus 2:11–14; 3:4–7**

He went about doing good and  
healing all those oppressed by the  
devil, for God was with him.

**Luke 3:15–16, 21–22**

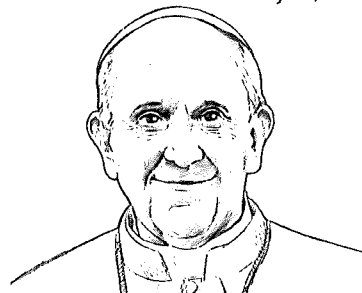
[John said,] "I am baptizing you  
with water, but...he will baptize you  
with the holy Spirit and fire."

*We need to recognize God's  
power and let him use it in us.  
A revolution must happen  
in our minds and hearts.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

After these thirty years of hidden life, Jesus' public life begins. And it begins precisely with his baptism in the River Jordan. But Jesus is God; why does Jesus get baptized?... Because he wants to be with the sinners. For this reason, he gets in line with them and does the same thing they do.

—Angelus, Baptism of the Lord,  
January 10, 2021



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- When was the last time I prayed to the Holy Spirit? He is a real divine person; talk to him.
- Do I have courage to ask the Holy Spirit to come down and touch my soul with his fire?

# The Art of Complaining

By Very Reverend Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

At some time or another, I think every pastor has gotten “hate mail.” Letters of complaint, filled with anger, the occasional foul word, or any variety of accusations and disparaging remarks are part of pastoring. Pastors can’t please everyone. Once, just briefly, I thought about printing a viciously negative letter I received in the parish bulletin. I even thought about tacking it to the church notice board. I didn’t do it, realizing it could embarrass the author or—worse for me—earn the writer a few sympathizers.

Complaining is part of being human. We’ve likely all been known to complain about family members, friends, or coworkers. As a pastor, complaints can be helpful. How else will the parish improve? The difficulty is that there are very few persons schooled in fashioning and delivering a well-thought-out complaint. That means, for most of us, our message is lost.

Here are some tips to help parishioners master the art of complaining and get their pastor’s ear:

**Presume goodwill.** Pastors don’t make random decisions just to make their parishioners miserable. Decisions are often given a great deal of thought and discussed thoroughly with parish staffers, pastoral councils, and other clergy and laity. Presume your pastor’s heart is in the right place. Most pastors love their people and want what is best for everyone in the parish.



**Don’t be anonymous.** Anonymous complaints are rarely taken seriously unless they’re of the type that require the intervention of law enforcement. I’m not writing about those here. A complaint should invite conversation, interaction, and hopefully an exchange of ideas, concerns, hopes, and probable solutions. You can’t talk to “anonymous.” Unsigned complaints usually go nowhere.

**Find allies.** True concern for the well-being of the parish should be shared. If one person is struggling with a pastor’s decisions, it is likely that others are, too. I’m not making the strength-in-numbers argument here. Lobbying in church really isn’t a good idea. But if a decision is negatively affecting a number of people, it should be reviewed.

**Meet in person.** Much is left open to interpretation when a complaint is only shared in writing. Text and email complaints, even with the inclusion of emojis, don’t carry emotions. Facial expressions, body language, tone and volume of the speaker, even silence, allow for total communication. Ask for a meeting. Agree together about who should be invited. Sit down and have a dialogue.

**Be open to compromise.** Don’t go to your pastor with a decision. Approach him with a question. Why the change? Why now? Why this new direction? “Why” is a great starting point. It can lead to greater understanding, which may change your opinion. Be part of the solution.

**Be Christian.** Kindness, even when you’re angry about something, will always win you a fair hearing. Be kind. Be kind. Be kind. +

*Complaints can help a parish improve. Check out these tips for some good ways to get your pastor’s ear.*



*Lord, give me a shepherd’s heart so that I can show your love and compassion to someone in need.*

—From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

January 10–15

**Monday, Weekday:**  
1 Sm 1:1–8 / Mk 1:14–20


**Tuesday, Weekday:**  
1 Sm 1:9–20 / Mk 1:21–28

**Wednesday, Weekday:**  
1 Sm 3:1–10, 19–20 / Mk 1:29–39

**Thursday, Weekday:**  
1 Sm 4:1–11 / Mk 1:40–45

**Friday, Weekday:**  
1 Sm 8:4–7, 10–22a / Mk 2:1–12

**Saturday, Weekday:**  
1 Sm 9:1–4, 17–19; 10:1a / Mk 2:13–17

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# Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)  
January 16, 2022

## The Many-Threaded Tapestry That Is Marriage

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

A tapestry weaver works from the back side of the fabric while looking into a mirror to see the reflection of his work. Next to the mirror sits a painting of what he is weaving. The back of the tapestry is full of knots and dull colors. In front it is beautiful and ornate. The way a tapestry is made is a great allegory for marriage. Spouses look at the ideal they are trying to reproduce: God’s love for humanity, Jesus’ love for

his Church. It is a sacrificial, lay-down-your-life kind of love. While viewing the ideal, the spouses have their hands on the threads, weaving the right color at the right time to reproduce that ideal.

Those strings can represent the different virtues or acts of love required by the specific situation of the relationship. Sometimes a spouse has to stop, tie off a string, pull it out, and start over. From the back, it can look chaotic, but slowly the ideal takes shape and the beauty of the tapestry of marriage comes into view.

God will marry us, says the prophet. He will take us as his own, giving us the gifts of his Spirit to enrich us. Together, we will bear fruit of new life in ourselves and others. Trying to weave that loving union with God and others may be chaotic and knotty; thus, the need to repent and try again. But with his grace, the final product, which comes into full view only at the end, will be unique and beautiful. +

*It can look chaotic, but slowly the ideal takes shape and the beauty of the marriage tapestry comes into view.*

### A Word from Pope Francis

We go to Mass because we are sinners and we want to receive God’s pardon, to participate in the redemption of Jesus, in his forgiveness. The confession which we make at the beginning is not pro forma. It is a real act of repentance! I am a sinner and I confess it—this is how the Mass begins!

—General Audience, February 12, 2014



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Is God’s love the ideal I try to emulate in my relationships, especially marriage?
- God is the main protagonist in my relationships. Do I try to listen to his inspirations?

## Sunday Readings

### Isaiah 62:1–5

As a bridegroom rejoices in his bride / so shall your God rejoice in you.

### 1 Corinthians 12:4–11

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; / there are different forms of service but the same Lord.

### John 2:1–11

[Jesus said,] “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.”

# Measuring God's Love

By Kathleen M. Basi

Anyone who has suffered loss—death, miscarriage, infertility, unemployment, natural disaster—can list the well-meaning yet deeply hurtful things people say. Most of them invoke God: God doesn't give you anything you can't handle. God's will is perfect. And so on.

You can't argue with statements like these, but they can be damaging. They set up God as the cause of one's suffering, which can isolate a person from the very grace he or she most needs: the certainty of God's love.

Perhaps it's human nature. When we lack easy answers, we blame the divine. When a storm decimates a town, it's punishment for human wickedness. If we escape harm, it's a personal blessing. When we're diagnosed with major illness, it's because God is testing us; when the biopsy comes up negative, it's a sign of his favor.

In short, we sometimes treat God as if he's sitting on his heavenly sofa, hitting the "fire" button on some celestial Xbox controller.

The trouble is, if everything is God's fault, then when someone walks into a nightclub and starts shooting or when civil war spirals into war crimes perpetrated by all sides of the conflict, forcing millions to flee, some people will view it as proof that God doesn't exist at all. What loving God could possibly allow such things to happen?



Of course, God didn't have a thing to do with the horror in Syria or the nightclub shooting in Florida. That's on us—on fallen, broken humanity.

Bad things happen because we live in a fallen world. People who have been formed by prejudice and raised in an atmosphere of violence may do things that average sinners like us can't fathom. Yet it's still sin, not God, that bears the responsibility.

Nor should we blame God's wrath when extreme weather events cause great suffering and destruction. Instead, we should examine our own behaviors, looking for ways in which consumption and pollution are damaging the balance of nature.

God's love is not measured by physical bounty or beneficence. Neither should we view misfortune or loss as a sign of his displeasure. God's love is evident in the beauty of this world; in the incredible goodness of humanity—the goodness we are capable of when we remember that we are made in his image. Most of all, it's measured by the cross and the resurrection.

When we encounter the pain of others, it may be hard to know what to say. Sometimes it's better to say nothing at all—to offer a hug, a listening ear, and service. Then, perhaps, those who suffer will know the love of God because they have felt it—through us. +

***God's love is not measured  
by physical bounty  
or beneficence.***

**PRAYER**

***Lord, send your Spirit and  
empower me to use my gifts and  
talents for the common good  
of all people.***

—From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day  
in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

January 17–22

**Monday, St. Anthony:**

1 Sm 15:16–23/ Mk 2:18–22

**Tuesday, Weekday:** 1 Sm 16:1–13 /

Mk 2:23–28 / Lk 4:31–37

**Wednesday, Weekday:**

1 Sm 17:32–33, 37, 40–51/ Mk 3:1–6

**Thursday, Weekday:**


1 Sm 18:6–9; 19:1–7 / Mk 3:7–12

**Friday, St. Agnes:**

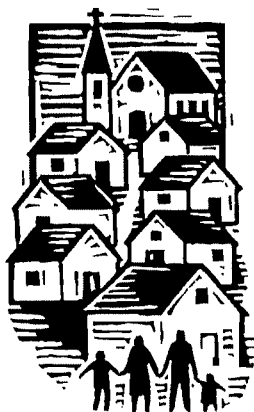
1 Sm 24:3–21 / Mk 3:13–19

**Saturday, Day of Prayer for the Legal  
Protection of Unborn Children:**

2 Sm 1:1–4, 11–12, 19, 23–27 / Mk 3:20–21

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# Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

January 23, 2022

## Rediscovering God's Love

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

**H**ave you ever lost something and then, after some time passes, finally found it? Perhaps your keys, a cell phone, or worse still, a credit card? When we find utilitarian items that we've lost or misplaced, we're so relieved and happy because we need these things for daily living. But what if we lose our whole purpose for living? Then we're really in trouble.

The people to whom Nehemiah was speaking lost more than something material; they lost the key to who they were as a people. They lost the law

of God that had been given to them through Moses hundreds of years before. They were now listening to it for the first time. Upon hearing all its wisdom and prescriptions, they were cut to the heart and wept. There was so much they had forgotten and were no longer practicing. As exiles in Babylon, they had lost so much.

Yet the response toward this rediscovery could have been joy, because now they knew once again what made for happiness and living in the Lord. They had discovered the love that called them into existence.

We have been given the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth and reminds us of everything Jesus taught us in Scriptures and Tradition. Knowing God's truth is the deepest source of joy. Finding him is like finding what was lost. Like the found key, God unlocks our happiness. Like a cell phone, he gives us a constant connection with him. And like a credit card—but infinitely better—God is the love that fulfills our desires. And we never have to pay him back. +

*Knowing God's truth  
is the deepest source of joy.  
Finding him is like finding  
what was lost.*

## Sunday Readings

**Nehemiah 8:2–4a, 5–6, 8–10**

Ezra read clearly from the book of the law of God, interpreting it so that all could understand what was read.

**1 Corinthians 12:12–30 or  
12:12–14, 27**

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.

**Luke 1:1–4, 4:14–21**

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.

## A Word from Pope Francis

Without Christ we are condemned to be dominated by everyday weariness, with its worries, and by fear of the future. The Sunday encounter with the Lord gives us the strength to experience the present with confidence and courage, and to go forth with hope. For this reason, we Christians go to encounter the Lord... in the Eucharistic celebration.

—General Audience, December 13, 2017



REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS

ONE? TWO? REFLECTION

- Is there any aspect of God's word or truth that I have ignored or forgotten?
- How can I rediscover and accept that truth again?

# Finding the Best Mass

By Very Reverend Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

I think everyone has his or her list of “bests:” the best ice cream, the best fried chicken, the best seat in the ballpark, the best route to work, the best hospital, or the best movie ever made. You get the idea. We gravitate toward things and experiences that meet a particular set of standards that we hold for others and ourselves. We instinctively rate our experiences, categorizing them as good, better, and best or—on the flip side—not so bad, bad, and awful.

Even Mass is subject to our inner critic and our personal rating system. So, where’s the best Mass? Before I go any further, I feel the need to divulge the fact that I attended Catholic school my entire life, and the idea that, regardless of the details, the Mass is the Mass and no one celebration is better than another was instilled in me repeatedly. Every Mass offers us the opportunity to have an awesome exchange with God, and each one deserves our reverence and respect, even if human weakness and error sometimes take center stage.

But aren’t some celebrations of the Mass really just better than others? I don’t mean your first holy Communion, wedding, or fiftieth anniversary. Certainly, those are special celebrations.

I’m referring to that Sunday Mass in your diocese that everyone talks about, saying, “They have the best Mass.” Maybe the priest gives memorable homilies, or they have an exemplary



music ministry, or they excel at making everyone feel welcome. Everyone flocks to that church and wishes their parish had that kind of Mass.

What if we rated Sunday Masses? What if you could look online or leaf through a diocesan directory to find out how others rate the various components of a Mass? Everything from architecture and parking to the style and character of worship could be described and rated. Many dioceses have relaxed regulations regarding territorial parishes. There are many options for Mass.

The challenge is to make worship relevant. If Masses were rated, competition might result. Competition is good when the goal is to attract more

people to Jesus through the celebration of the Mass. The Mass well-prepared and executed is the best tool we have for evangelization. The Mass has the power to draw us together into the very life of God. So why not market the Mass where it’s done well? We shop for the best in so many areas of life. We search for the best jobs, schools, and other things. Isn’t the Mass worth all that, and so much more? +

*We’re taught that  
all Masses are good,  
but what if we rated them?*

**PRAYER**

*Lord, you created all people equal.  
Open my eyes to recognize  
the dignity of all people and  
my heart to love unconditionally.*

—From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day  
in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

January 24–29

**Monday**, St. Francis de Sales:  
2 Sm 5:1–7, 10 / Mk 3:22–30


**Tuesday**, The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle:  
Acts 22:3–16 or Acts 9:1–22 / Mk 16:15–18

**Wednesday**, Sts. Timothy and Titus:  
2 Tm 1:1–8 or Ti 1:1–5 / Mk 4:1–20

**Thursday**, Weekday:  
2 Sm 7:18–19, 24–29 / Mk 4:21–25

**Friday**, St. Thomas Aquinas: 2 Sm 11:  
1–4a, 5–10a, 13–17 / Mk 4:26–34

**Saturday**, Weekday:  
2 Sm 12:1–7a, 10–17 / Mk 4:35–41

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# Bringing Home the Word

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

January 30, 2022

## Developing the Strength of a Prophet

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The consoling words from the prophet Jeremiah give comfort to all of us. God told him that he, like each of us, was known even in his mother's womb. It was the knowledge of being known and loved that gave Jeremiah the strength to stand before his people and prophesy some very strong and harsh words. He was set as a strong pillar, a wall of brass, a fortified city. He was rooted in love, because he needed to be so as not to be crushed by the anger and

resentment stirred up by his prophetic words.

Jesus faces the same ire when visiting his hometown. At first the Nazarenes praise him, but soon, as if they had some entitlement, they presumptuously demand that he perform miracles to satisfy their vanity—not to change their hearts. When Jesus challenges them, their response is to want to throw him off a cliff!

As Christians, we all have a prophetic mission. We're called to preach the truths of the gospel, and at times this isn't popular. In the public square, the Church and Christians are often praised for their charitable work but asked to silence their religious voice when morality is discussed. We need the strength and conviction of prophets as well as the love that drives them. +

*As Christians we're called  
to preach the truths  
of the gospel, and at times  
this isn't popular.*

## Sunday Readings

**Jeremiah 1:4–5, 17–19**

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you.

**1 Corinthians 12:31–13:13 or  
1 Corinthians 13:4–13**

Love is patient, love is kind....It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

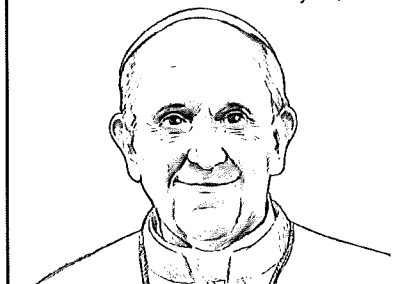
**Luke 4:21–30**

And [Jesus] said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place."

## A Word from Pope Francis

The great biblical tradition enjoins on all peoples the duty to hear the voice of the poor. It bids us break the bonds of injustice and oppression which give rise to glaring, and indeed scandalous, social inequalities. Reforming the social structures which perpetuate poverty and the exclusion of the poor first requires a conversion of mind and heart.

—Journey to the Philippines,  
January 16, 2015



REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS

ONE QUESTION  
REFLECTION

- Do I have the courage to share the gospel truth?
- Do I show my faith in charitable thoughts, actions, and words?

# We Need a Real Open-Door Policy

By Kathleen M. Basi

Several years ago, my hometown of Columbia, MO, was rocked by racial protests. We even made the national news. It was hard for me to judge who was “right” and who was “wrong.” The issues seemed too complex and nuanced.

So, I found it very disturbing when some people dismissed the protesters out of hand. I had never really thought through what “white privilege” meant. Nor had I, until then, ever examined my conscience for unintended bias in my worldview.

Guess what? I found it—a lot of it.

We tend to view the world through the lens of our own experiences. We assume that the realities that define our worldview are the same ones that define everyone else’s, even though a look at the news every night tells us that isn’t the reality. Most of us surround ourselves with people who look and think like us, and gradually we forget to empathize with those whose experiences are much different.

Christians have historically been separated not only by denomination but by skin color and, later, by style of worship. This isn’t as big a problem among Catholics because in smaller towns there’s often only one parish. We have no option but to worship together.

Still, the issues that get the most attention in Catholic liturgical circles focus on white European concerns: How much Latin is enough? How much



is too much? Is the organ really more conducive to communal song than piano and guitar? Are hymns better than styles influenced by popular music?

The American Church is beautifully diverse: Latino, African American, African immigrant, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean. Frequently, though, our worship doesn’t reflect that richness. How often do we include the languages, voices, and music of nonwhite cultures in our liturgies?

In the civic sphere, it’s common to hear people argue that those who come to America should assimilate, but that view has no place in the Church. We are called to be a neighbor. To do so means to honor and accept, to welcome and

support. Isn’t it possible that if races and cultures were more open to each other inside the church doors, it might spill out onto the streets as well?

I often ponder this: Despite a largely Eurocentric worship, the power of what we celebrate attracts people from many races and cultures. If we open our hearts and our worship to the beauty that they have to offer us, how many more might enter into the faith? +

*Worshiping together  
means more than just  
being with each other  
in the same church  
at the same time.*

**PRAYER**

*Lord, your love never fails. Help  
me to embrace life with gratitude  
and love and joyfully welcome all  
people into my heart.*

—From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day  
in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

January 31–February 5

**Monday**, St. John Bosco:  
2 Sm 15:13–14, 30; 16:5–13 / Mk 5:1–20


**Tuesday**, Weekday: 2 Sm 18:9–10, 14b,  
24–25a, 30—19:3 / Mk 5:21–43

**Wednesday**, The Presentation of the Lord:  
Mal 3:1–4 / Heb 2:14–18/ Lk 2:22–40 or 2:22–32

**Thursday**, Weekday:  
1 Kgs 2:1–4, 10–12 / Mk 6:7–13

**Friday**, Weekday:  
Sir 47:2–11 / Mk 6:14–29

**Saturday**, St. Agatha:  
1 Kgs 3:4–13 / Mk 6:30–34

Bringing Home  
the **Word**   
January 30, 2022

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