

## **BULLETIN – JUNE 26**

**Our honor roll students** for the fourth quarter include the following: from Catholic Central, Luz de Maria Anleu (12). From West Catholic, Joshua Augdahl (10), Wyatt Davis (9), Michael Edozie (10), Holly Holtzclaw (10), Samantha Knight (11), Bridget Kohane (9), Joshua Kohane (10), Maria Kohane (12), Maria Marzolf (9), Olivia Marzolf (9), Ciera Rodney (9), John Worm (12), and Joseph Worm (9). Congratulations to all! Best wishes and prayers for a blessed summer and for the coming school year!

**Our parish feast day**, the Solemnity of SS. Peter & Paul, is this Wednesday, June 29. We have Mass in the morning at 8 a.m., then Vespers or evening prayer at 6 p.m., followed by a parish cookout and ice cream social. Come and pray and have supper and dessert with us. And of course, church will be open all day for you to come and offer prayers for all of our families, fellow parishioners, and special intentions.

**Human solidarity.** Those who attend to the Apostleship of Prayer leaflets which are available in church will recognize that this has been the special intention of prayer designated by our Holy Father for the month of June. We had no idea how appropriate the intention would be, nor how many people might benefit from the prayers of millions of apostles of prayer around the world.

The death of Muhammad Ali focused the nation's attention on a champion athlete who decades ago had converted to Islam from Christianity. (By the way, no Muslims were killed nor mosques burned by Christians when that took place.) Without regard to his religious beliefs, but with regard to the virtues which he both exhibited and promoted in his unique fashion, his native city of Louisville, the whole nation, and many around the world joined in the acclaim. Here was a man who was generous with his time, shared his earthly treasures with many causes, and handled his long illness with a grace and nobility that will, as with St. John Paul II, remain a model of coping and thriving in the midst of adversity. In contrast to some other voices within his own religion, Ali preached and practiced "human solidarity" in ways that many who will never know anything of popes and prophets can appreciate and identify with. He left an indelible mark not only in the almanacs of sports achievements, but in the annals of heroic lives lived in exemplary service.

Within a week, another Muslim, this one radicalized by who-knows-how-many overt or covert influences, took the lives of over four dozen people in an Orlando night club. Once again, a city, a nation, and a world were left reeling with the news that the lives of so many could be ended or irreparably changed by the hate-filled actions of a zealot who proved incapable of living peaceably in a "pluralistic" society. But as in so many places where such violence has burst upon our consciousness, people came together from every nook and cranny of human society to offer condolence, empathy, and support. The ever-ready protesters from the infamous Westboro Baptist Church were blocked out and basically ignored by people who were determined to exhibit "human solidarity" on behalf of those with whom they might under other circumstances have some disagreement or reservation.

It seems to me that our Catholic faith provides us with ideal ways and means to practice a common social virtue like human solidarity -- and with good reason! The

Polish word *solidarność* (“solidarity”) captured our attention back in the days of Lech Wałęsa leading the workers’ revolt in the Gdańsk shipyards back in 1980. That spirit continues and must continue if we humans are not only to survive but *thrive* on this planet of ours. Our common human origin in Adam and Eve has found expression for eons of human history in the wild diversity of sights and sounds and sensibilities that make up the races, languages, customs, and religious beliefs of the creatures whom God has made in his image. Some look at that diversity and call it fractious. Others will look at it and call it interesting. Psalm 149:4 tells us, “The Lord takes delight in his people”: not in our sins, not in the harm we do to one another, not in the neglect of the talents he has given us, but in *us*, made in his image and likeness and called to share forever in his divine life.

Our Catholic faith teaches us that we can approach the diversity in the human family with both caution and enthusiasm. No one language or set of customs can perfectly convey everything that is capable of going on in the human mind and heart. Some are more adept at it than others. Lithuanian has (at least) 27 different words to express what we can say in English only as *mother, ma, mama, mammy, mom, mommy, mum, or mummy* (that’s 8, by my count). On the other hand, certain aboriginal languages in Australia have no words for numbers higher than two. They live in a world of “one, two, and many.” Customs and laws vary from tribe to tribe and people to people. Among one people in southern Africa, when a person is guilty of a capital crime, the senior members of the tribe surround the offender, place their hands on him, and pray fervently over him for an extended period of time. Then he is accepted back into the group forgiven, but is expected to spend his life making whatever restitution is appropriate for his crime. There is very little recidivism (repeat offending). In a much larger and far more heterogeneous society like our own, our practices of capital punishment and rates of incarceration are perhaps expressions of our common frustration with people who cannot or will not control their impulses to violence and criminal behavior. So languages and customs all have their strengths and inadequacies.

Religion is another matter. Many people, both inside and outside the Church, become incensed (figuratively, anyway) at the Catholic admission to be the “one, true Church,” the singularly complete expression of what God intends and wishes for all people in our relationship with him and with one another. Many Catholics are embarrassed at what appears to be *chutzpah* on the part of their Church! Who, after all, do we think we are to make such claims? The fact is, we *know* who we are, and we know that Christ has called us to be instruments of his Truth in the midst of a world that clearly cannot find its own way. It’s not a claim we make for ourselves. Matthew 16:18 has Jesus himself saying to Peter, “On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

The fact is that we can live at peace with Orthodox, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, agnostics, and atheists. We do it all the time. This is not because the Church is not devoted to the Truth revealed to us by Christ. We do have and have had sinners among us (since we are ALL sinners) who seem to have fighting with any and all of the above in their DNA. But being faithful to the promises of baptism does not mean that we must be engaging in open warfare with everyone else. First and foremost, that was not the pattern set for us by Christ.

Similarly, we have an obligation to strive to live and grow in moral virtue. That doesn't give us any God-sanctioned permission to obsess about what other people do with their minds, their health, or their various body parts. Rather than simply condemning those who live in ways contrary to our beliefs, we are to live and behave in such a way as to attract them to and explain to them the fullness of truth in Christ. After all, we're the ones with the confessionals to make use of when WE so often fail to live up to the demands of the gospel! God bless you.

Fr. Den

**Thought for the week:** “You can be a great deal too solemn about Christianity to be a good Christian. . . You must have mirth. If you do not have mirth you will surely have madness” (Gilbert Keith Chesterton, 1879-1935, English Catholic convert and author).