

Living the Gospel



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THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

“Unless souls are saved, nothing is saved.”

I am always amazed about the many seemingly disconnected parts of our Catholic faith and how they actually come together so beautifully as a whole. This proves again and again how the Church is God's own handiwork and was established by divine mandate two millennia ago to be and remain His voice, His teaching, His visible sign and presence to the world.

Teaching on the soul

Last weekend we were privileged to have Mr. Allan Smith with us as he spoke at each Mass' end of the *Holy Face of Jesus* relic and also of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. Mr. Smith is the Director of the Fulton Sheen Mission Society in Canada and is also a strong proponent of the cause for beatification of now Venerable Fulton Sheen. One of the quotes that Mr. Smith made in his presentation was from Fulton Sheen at the beginning of his 1949 book *Peace of Soul*, “Unless souls are saved, nothing is saved.” I, too, had focused on this very truth in my homily last weekend with words that came from each of the readings which expounded on this same common theme of the soul. Each of the lectionary readings spoke of the importance of the soul of each individual human being created in the image and likeness of God. In the Acts of the Apostles it stated: “And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47b) In the second reading from the First letter of St. Peter; “...for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” (1 Pet. 1:9) and in the Gospel: “... and that through believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31) All of these readings speak to not only the reality of the soul – that which gives life to the body and lives for ever – but also that God desires that all souls need to be saved. Jesus did that ‘saving’ on the Cross, taking our place. Yet we must participate in what He has won for us with the ‘yes’ of our lives. It's not automatic or the default of our existence. The promises of Christ to us are just that, but hinge on our own acceptance of what He offers to us. So, Sheen was and is absolutely right. “Unless souls are saved, nothing is saved. And that's where we come in. We participate in the saving of souls when we share the truth, goodness and beauty of God with others. Our prayer for others, particularly those who don't know God, is essential for the good of their souls. When we talk to others, starting with those in our own families (not easy to do) about their need for a personal, living relationship with God, the Mass and the sacramental life we are reaching out to them with the knowledge of the gift of being saved, that is, to live with God forever in the promise of heaven. As we may have often heard, the role of every husband and wife is to get each other to heaven. Same for parents with their children – to get them to heaven. Nothing else is more important and thus the distractions to this are so, so dangerous.

What distractions?

Like, the most important thing everyone needs to do is to save the planet. Since when? I've been dragging around this earth for some 64-years and suddenly now it's all going to end unless everyone radically changes their life, job, car and the way we eat and what we eat.... to save the planet. It has become a religion and it's priests are mightily godless in that they even reveal talk of the fact that there is no God but that we can be gods. And in this 'planet-saving' who is the enemy? Us. The ones created by God

and in His image, you know, the ones He came to SAVE. So many world leaders, though unelected on the topic of 'climate change', formerly known as 'global warming', are only the latest gurus who have come along to tell us suddenly that the world is going to end unless we save it. Yet it's amazing how these same people never mention nor profess any faith in God at all. Their plans for the future are just that: their own, yet are not only for themselves but for everyone, by force of course. It just makes it that much easier if we can be frightened into compliance and, as with the religion idea, convert people into the craziest man-made, man-made-up plans for your life and mine. We weren't asked about this but through the fog and confusion of the past three years it has emerged, on the coattails of the pandemic comes yet another crisis to save the world. Well, actually, Jesus did that already.



The world was made for man.

Sitting in the dark just a few weeks ago at the Easter Vigil, in the same darkness that represented the dark void of nothingness that God filled with His loving creation, we recalled through the reading from Genesis that all things He created, in His magnificent and intricate plan, was made for man. Yet man, put in charge of all these things, was to use them for his good and to take care of them. We are stewards of all creation. And while man has a propensity to destroy that which he is entrusted with – most especially other human beings – its called sin, man is still not the enemy of the planet. The enemy is, as Christ told us, the devil, that real entity and being who fell by his own prideful stance that before God, he said, “I will not serve.” Jesus said, “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matt. 10:28)

In a world where many are willing to save the whale but not a human baby in the womb, the Church must all the more proclaim and defend the souls created by and for God – all of them. Man, more and more in our age, has become arrogant and narcissistic, thinking that each of us are the centre of the universe and with the mindset that everyone gets a trophy. The real trophies are granted and given by Christ in a crown that signifies a life well lived under God whether it be fully seen or perceived by others or not. As the Book of Samuel says, “God looks on the heart”. (1 Sam. 16:7) I want God to judge my life by my heart, my loves, my intentions because He made it,

knows it and loves it. It represents that which is at the center of my being and longings. And my heart in this sense will live forever.



Last week, at the 11:00 am Sunday Mass, I mentioned in my homily parishioner Jim Groves who was experiencing sudden yet serious health problems. He had been sick at home and then was taken to hospital, waiting to go to Barrie's RVH for a biopsy. The reason I spoke of Jim was that his condition seemed to be worsening from my giving him the Sacrament of

the Sick on a Wednesday to administering the Last Rites by Saturday night. His family had gathered around his ICU bed and we prayed for him as he was prepared for the imminent possibility that he soon might be standing before the Lord but not on earth. Again, "unless souls are saved, nothing is saved". I spoke of Jim because he was yet another soul, created and gifted by God, for the future Kingdom of God. And his absence in the pew that morning reminded me of his danger of death which, when united in faithfulness to Christ, isn't danger at all. At the end of the Mass I felt moved to ask the parishioners to join me in a single Hail Mary for Jim which in so many ways expresses the summation of our lives, particularly the last eight words when asking Mary to intercede for us or for someone in particular we end with "now and at the hour of our death". It turns out that Jim went home to his hour of death before the Lord early the next morning. A life, a soul that knew and loved God, not perfectly, for none of us does, but with a striving to draw closer to the One who is life itself, Jesus.

On Tuesday at 10:30 in the morning in the season of Easter we will not only 'say goodbye' to Jim but more importantly through the Catholic Funeral Mass will commend his soul to God in a great 'return to sender' of the Church's prayer. Jim, like so many souls who have gone before us and will in the time ahead continue to leave this world (or be taken from it) lived his life before God and had faith in the promises of Jesus. He made his own personal "yes" to God with his life and we will pray for his soul to see the beautiful, merciful face of Jesus. He died near the feast of The Divine Mercy.

Pray for souls

We need to bring people before the Lord in prayer whether they have died and may be in purgatory or most especially here on earth while they still live their lives with or without God. As Catholics and as a Catholic parish our most important asset is our people at Mass, at prayer. If we are not about the care of souls, our own and others, we have become unmoored from the divine, from our call and purpose and our mission to make Jesus known. Why? Because "unless souls are saved, nothing is saved".

When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. (2 Chronicles 7:13-14)

MASS **SCHEDULE & INTENTIONS**

Tuesday April 25	
8:30am	+Aaron Michael O'Brien Requested by Ken Wright
Wednesday April 26	
7:00pm	+Ken Caruthers Requested by he Lassak Family
Thursday April 27	
8:30am	Intentions of Rika & Nick Huver 60 TH Anniversary Requested by the Family
Friday April 28	
7:30pm	Holy Hour
8:30am	+Jane Tylec Requested by Ken Wright
Saturday April 29	
3:30pm	Confessions
4:30pm	+Katherine Cudney Requested by the Cudney Family
Sunday April 30	
9:00am	+Anne Van Boxmeer Requested by Elinore Van Der Vechte
11:00am	For the People

Please Pray for the Sick

Chelsea Cando, Dorothy Dynes, Margot Brandreth, Ken Buchan, Jean Ferguson, Rose Flanagan, Fred Coulson, Andrew Vella, Gwen Collard. Janine Wright, Emilie Gosselin, Mark Zalter, Francesco Hoedl & Family.

Pray for those who have died recently

Jim Groves, Margaret Allen

Our Sanctuary Lamp Burns
For the CWL Members of St. Mary's
From April 23 to April 29, 23



Regular Collection \$3365.00 (inc PAG)

**3rd Sunday of Easter
April 23, 2023**



A ShareLife Campaign Update

Next week, we will be holding the second collection in our parish's ShareLife campaign. We ask for your kind generosity and support once again.

Thus far we have raised \$9992.50 toward our goal of \$43,000.00. Please give at the parish using a ShareLife envelope, online through our parish website, or at sharelife.org/donate. Thank you for "living the Gospel" through our parish ShareLife campaign.

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