

# Grace Notes

Friday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear friends:

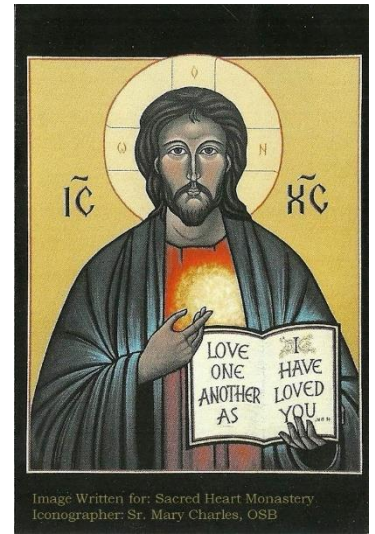
So much distressing news continues to pour in about hate-based and prejudicial attacks against groups of people, even in Halton, and I continue to be deeply distressed at how all too often these disturbing actions are committed by people who are at least nominally Christian. I am feeling like a broken record as I reiterate the same theme of love.

As our Board theological theme unfolds for its last year, I hope we can engage intensively with Jesus' question, "Do you love me?" and understand with every depth of our being that Jesus asks us to reflect his love for us to

every person and every part of God's creation. And we aren't getting into any legalistic arguments or semantics here about who is considered a person. Only those who want to put conditions on their love will enter into those arguments; Jesus tried to teach us through his interaction with Samaritans, tax collectors, lepers, the outcasts of the time, that no one is excluded from the love of God. And if we accept the two great commandments of Jesus, we accept the call to love God without reserve and to in turn love all whom/that God has created. Covid-19 is being blamed for bringing out the worst in some people; however, I'm of a mind that, just as I am told that one will not do under hypnosis anything which is against their moral code, we cannot blame the pandemic for eruptions of violence.

The utilitarian philosopher John Stuart Mill delivered an 1867 inaugural address at the University of St. Andrews in which he stated: "Let not any one pacify his conscience by the delusion that he can do no harm if he takes no part, and forms no opinion. Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing." You may also have heard this sentiment in the statement, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." (mis-attributed to Edmund Burke). The use of male language notwithstanding, I hope we all understand that we are called, indeed challenged, to stand for what is good

and compassionate and true, and that actions or words which meet that description can never be representative of violence against anyone or anything. This picture from the Oakville News (<https://oakvillenews.org/oakville-community-news/Oakville-mom-anti-hate-poster-resonates-internationally/>) is a vibrant witness to the desire of many members of the community to live in harmony. The sign reads: Hate has no home here! If you would like to print it I can forward the file.



GOD'S LOVE AND  
MERCY ARE FOR  
ALL PEOPLE

INCLUDE  
PICTURE QUOTES

PICTURE QUOTES

"...and He has placed  
between you, love and  
mercy..."

Quran 30:21

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Some of you will know that I am part of the executive of the Interfaith Council of Halton and that we have made it our mission to promote inclusion and to defend everyone in our community against any sort of hateful attack whether it is physical, verbal, or vandalism. If you live or work in Halton, I invite you to consider joining this group to add to the strength of our voice in Halton. (<https://www.interfaithcouncilhalton.com/> )



Friday's message from Bishop Robert Barron<sup>1</sup> likens those of us who have been separated from going to Mass because of Covid-19 to the lepers who could not go to the Temple because of the fear of the transmission of disease. He talks about our need to return to worship because of the stability that brings to our lives. He says, "To worship is to order the whole of your life toward the living God, and, in doing so, to become interiorly and exteriorly rightly ordered. To worship is to signal to yourself what your life is finally about. It's nothing that God needs, but it is very much something that we need." In this Matthew version, there is only one leper; however, in Luke's gospel parallel (Luke 17:11-19), the story describes ten lepers, only one of whom returns to Jesus to thank him – and this man is a



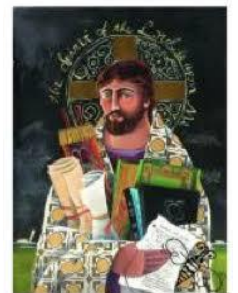
Samaritan! We may be so used to the blessings we receive in our lives that we, also, may take for granted the love and healing we receive from the Lord and forget to be thankful. Once again, it is Bishop Barron who reminds us of

<sup>2</sup> Sunday Mass as the source and summit of our spiritual life.<sup>3</sup> As someone who has been able to continue attending Mass because of the music ministry of which I am a part, I could not believe how much I felt at odds a couple of weeks ago, before our churches reopened (even at reduced numbers), when I was given a break for one Sunday and joined the congregation to watch the live-stream that day. Joni Mitchell reminds us in "Big Yellow Taxi" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94bdMSCdw20>) "don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone". (There are some thoughts worthy of reflection about the ecology in this song also.) During the isolation of the pandemic, we have often remarked on missing our contact with other people; being able to reconnect with our parish family is part of the healing process of getting beyond the dis-ease of the past year and a half. Maybe we need to listen again to John Bell's beautiful song which shares Jesus' invitation:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKkpNbuVDfw&list=RDLKkpNbuVDfw&start\\_radio=1&rv=V0aAkOe87mo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKkpNbuVDfw&list=RDLKkpNbuVDfw&start_radio=1&rv=V0aAkOe87mo)

Peace be with you!

Gillian



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<sup>1</sup> <https://dailycatholicgospel.com/sign-up-daily-gospel>

<sup>2</sup> <https://altusfineart.com/products/simon-dewey-the-grateful-leper-parable-ten-lepers>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/video/go-back-to-mass/31436/>

<sup>4</sup> "Christ, the Teacher" by Brother Mickey O'Neill McGrath, OSFS. All Rights Reserved