

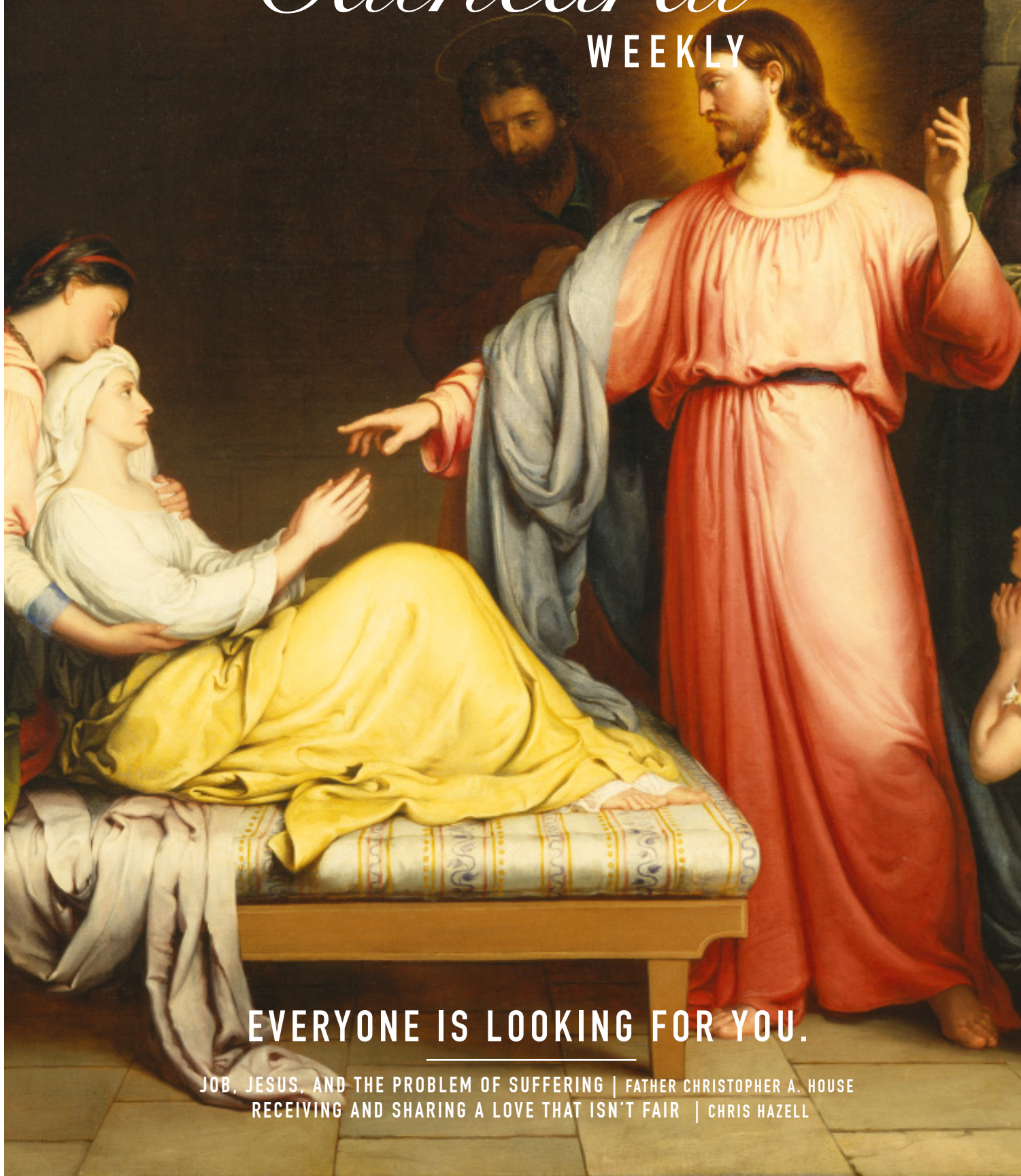
ISSUE No. XXIII

5th SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

4 FEBRUARY 2018

Cathedral

WEEKLY



EVERYONE IS LOOKING FOR YOU.

JOB, JESUS, AND THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING | FATHER CHRISTOPHER A. HOUSE
RECEIVING AND SHARING A LOVE THAT ISN'T FAIR | CHRIS HAZELL

Cathedral WEEKLY

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CATHOLIC ART SHOWCASE:

Rembrandt – *Healing of Peter's Mother in law* (1660)

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Job, Jesus, and the Problem of Suffering

The books of the Bible each have their own innate beauty because each is the inspired word of God, but that is not to say that the individual reader may not have different preferences for one book over the other. This is usually the case with the four Gospels. For me,

my favorite is the Gospel of Luke because it gives us one of the two infancy narratives (Matthew does also), it is full of parables and stories (as in Matthew also), and the Passion narrative is one where Jesus continues to minister throughout his own suffering as he makes his way to Calvary (rather different from Matthew). The Book of Job is another standout for me among the Scriptures.

We do not know who wrote the Book of Job, but it was likely written between the 7th and 5th centuries BC.

The book centers on numerous tragic events that happen to Job, who himself is a good and holy man, and these events are the source of great suffering for him.

The book contains varying discourses from Job, his neighbors, and finally from God. In the first reading for this Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, we hear of Job's frustration,

sorrow, and even anger at the events that have happened to him and the

direction that his life has taken. Towards the end of the book, God speaks to Job in a wonderful, vivid discourse, reminding Job, and us, that God's ways are far beyond us. At the end of the book, God makes all things right for Job, yet there is one thing in reading the Book of Job that you will find lacking: an answer to the question of why do bad things happen to good people.



This question is as old as time and if I had an answer for you I would be selling books and appearing on talk shows. We can delve into philosophy and theology to address this question and we can come up with some answers but they will not be definitive and many will not find them satisfactory. Fully grasping the problem of evil, especially concerning the innocent, is something that none of us will be able to fully this side of heaven. While we may not be able to answer the question, that does not mean that there is nothing to do in the face of suffering and evil.

This Sunday finds us continuing in the first chapter of Mark's Gospel. Jesus is preaching and healing, the crowds are coming to him, and in the midst of it all he attempts to briefly get away. Our translation says that his disciples "pursued him" but the actual Greek is closer to "hunted him down." The crowds were eager, desperate to get to Jesus because they recognized in him the ability to make things better: to cure, to forgive, to heal, and to console. Jesus leaves his solitude and goes back into the fray of the crowds who have been searching for him. The crowds knew that Jesus could make a difference. Do we believe the same when faced with suffering in our own lives?

The crowds knew that Jesus could make a difference. Do we believe the same when faced with suffering in our own lives?

When faced with suffering, we want it gone, we want nothing to do with it; that is a natural reaction. In dealing with suffering, when deciding where we turn to or where we go, is God one of those options, or, rather, shouldn't God be our automatic "go to?" Jesus tells his disciples in this Sunday's Gospel that preaching the Kingdom is why he has come and so he sets off. The coming of the Kingdom is about our liberation from the power of sin and the cares of the world. With this proclamation, the Lord also God's desire for our good through his healing actions and his generous compassion.

The good news for us is that whenever we turn to God in the face of suffering, he is already turning towards us. God does not will our suffering and while God will not always address our suffering in the way we might want him to, he will always be present in it as he was to Job and as Jesus was to the crowds. The Psalmist this weekend reminds us that God "heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." You may not have an answer for why bad things happen in life, but in the midst of sorrow, pain, and loss, God will draw near to you, to love you and to console you. In the end, on the other side of heaven, he will make everything right as he did for Job. In the meantime, make sure that you are always seeking to draw near to him, whether in joy or in sorrow.

Father Christopher House is the Rector-Pastor of the Cathedral and serves in various leadership roles within the diocesan curia, specifically Chancellor and Vicar Judicial.

DISCIPLESHIP



MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE UPCOMING WEEK

Monday 5 February

7AM - John Piccinino (John Busciacco)

5:15PM - Fred Kohorst (Judy & Tim Nicoud)

Tuesday 6 February

7AM - Special Intentions for Poor Souls (Holy Angels Parish)

5:15PM - Special Intention for Lost Souls (CCCW)

Wednesday 7 February

7AM - Russell Steil, Sr. (Steil family)

5:15PM - Special Intention for Lost Souls (Holy Angels Parish)

Thursday 8 February

7AM - Special Intentions for Poor Souls (Holy Angels Parish)

5:15PM - Lawrence Bussard (Fr. Tolton, KC Council 12126)

Friday 9 February

7AM - Special Intentions for Poor Souls (Holy Angels Parish)

5:15PM - Special Intention for Poor Souls (Holy Angles Parish)

Saturday 10 February

8AM - Betty Sowarsh (Anonymous)

4PM - James Sullivan (Sullivan Family)

Sunday 11 February

7AM - For The People

10AM - Charles Rossiter (Jane Fornoff)

5PM - John Montgomery (John Busciacco)

Finding Alone Time Stewardship of Time

I can't imagine being a nurse or doctor. Medicine is tough, from the hours, to the demanding situations, to the needy patients at all times of the day. I would imagine time alone for a few quick minutes could be a luxury! But all too quickly, the silence breaks and it is back to saving lives and tending to the sick.

This week we saw Jesus' ministry in this same fashion. He is in high demand. As we follow His ministry in Mark's Gospels, he continues to preach and heal. To this end, as he takes care of one person, he need simply turn around and see another in need. Again, and again. *"Everyone is looking for you."* (MK 1: 37)

It might be more obvious to reflect on his healing ministry, but I wanted to focus today on prayer. Of course, Jesus was fully

aware of the needy around Him. However, we witness the importance of prayer life to Jesus through today's Gospel.

"Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed." (MK 1:35)

Prayer was a priority Jesus made at the start of the day before anything else. Taking away distraction, Jesus sought to find a private place of prayer. He sought alone time, which is something too often many of us are without.

In this Gospel, Jesus models for us Stewardship of Time. Stewardship of Time is our opportunity to make time with God a priority. He also shares a model for a personal prayer life, drawing us closer to our relationship with God. It takes an intentional decision to place your relationship with God above all else, as Jesus has shown us.

*Katie Price is the Stewardship Coordinator for the Cathedral.
She can be reached at kprice@cathedral.dio.org.*



STEWARDSHIP of Time

Identify a personal prayer space. Somewhere you can go regularly for private prayer, away from distractions.



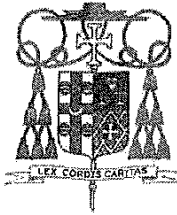
STEWARDSHIP of Talents

Have you considered serving during Mass? Reach out to the Parish Offices if you are interested in Liturgical Ministry!



WEEKLY COLLECTION INFORMATION JANUARY 13th and 14th

Envelopes - \$ 5,646.00	Loose - \$ 3,315.25
Maintenance - \$ 46.10	TOTAL: \$ 9,007.35
December EFT: \$ 16,718.00	

*Diocese of Springfield in Illinois*

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January 23, 2018

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Dear Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Religious, Seminarians and Parishioners,

I am pleased to inform you that almost \$30,000.00 was donated toward my "Running for Priestly Vocations" at the Indianapolis Marathon on November 4, 2017. In addition, I have received a check for \$12,000.00 from a generous donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, as the first installment on a pledged gift totaling \$72,000.00 towards the endowment in the Seminarian Education Fund of the Foundation for the People of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

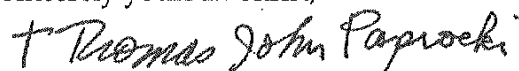
The donor has asked that I express gratitude for this gift by sending this letter to all of our parishes, informing them that the gift has been made by an anonymous donor in honor, recognition and gratitude of the services provided to the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois and parishioners by its past and present priests. I gladly do so with my own expression of sincere appreciation for the services provided by our past and present priests. I am also deeply grateful to this devoted and thoughtful donor for helping to provide the resources needed to fund the formation and education of our future priests for years to come.

In this regard, I have asked our Diocesan Office for Development to begin working on a Capital Campaign for Seminarian Education. I am designating the \$72,000 received from the anonymous donor and the \$30,000 from my marathon "Running for Priestly Vocations" to be deposited in our Seminarian Education Fund, which means that we already have over \$100,000 before formally beginning the campaign.

We have been very blessed with a substantial increase in the number of seminarians studying to become priests for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois. The proceeds from this Capital Campaign for Seminarian Education will relieve the demands on our diocesan annual operating budget so that we may continue to offer the wide range of pastoral services provided by the staff of our Catholic Pastoral Center.

May God bless our donors for their generous sacrificial giving!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois



Receiving and Sharing a Love that Isn't Fair

We've probably all received an unexpected gift or act of love. Perhaps this past Christmas someone we didn't know very well—and from whom we didn't expect anything—brought us a gift or wrote us a nice card. Since we didn't expect it, we may feel uniquely loved and valued. We're touched by the act, possibly more so than gifts

by our loved ones, which we expect on some level. The urge breaches to do something nice for that person, to offer them something tangible as well—to remit payment for the free, unexpected act of kindness. Since they did something nice for me, surely I must do something similar in return.

There is obviously nothing wrong with showing affection or love to another who has first shown it to us, and in fact, that's what we are called to do with God who first loved us. However, there can be the subtle temptation to believe that if we don't respond in kind, if we remain only the receiver of love, then we'll lose out on this person's love—and potential gifting—in the future; if I don't gift them in return, then they'll love me a little less, or perhaps not at all. It's a natural and reasonable feeling because we live in a world ordered by justice. And with other people, that is usually true. If we don't respond to their love with love, we can lose it.

It's a great challenge not to let this paradigm of justice sour our relationship with God. We can fall prey to judging the measure of God's love for us based on our actions or behavior. Now, to be clear, our relationship with God is dependent in some sense on our behavior—clearly a life of grace looks different than a life of sin. We must respond to his love with love, otherwise it's a one-way relationship, which isn't a relationship at all. We choose to receive God's love—and receive it to an infinite number of degrees—or reject it altogether. In this case, any lack of union with God is our fault, as God doesn't love us any more or less depending on the state of our souls:

"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust." - Mt. 5:44-45

With our intellect we may believe God loves us unconditionally, but it's hard to believe it with our hearts. It's easier instead to believe that if we do good, God will reward us with good, and if bad, then God will punish us with bad. This can bleed into our relationships with others. If others do good to us, then we can rightfully love them, but if not, then they don't deserve our love. In short order, this can snatch the joy and freedom of living in God's friendship. If we're perpetually nervous that God's favor with us might slip, then we become overly critical of ourselves, doubtful of God's mercy, and unable to image God's love to our neighbor. For if we worship a God—even unintentionally or implicitly—who

loves us based on our actions or good deeds only, then we have no hope of loving others without condition.

One of the most beloved parables in the Gospel is that of the Prodigal Son. When I initially came back to the faith, I empathized strongly with the younger son (something to be expected by those of us who have strayed from God before being embraced again by his mercy). I was also quick to dismiss the elder son as pharisaical—a blind, arrogant, jealous, and judgmental man without a heart of flesh. And while the elder son doesn't respond to the celebratory feast with love and joy, there is something understandable about his response. As I matured in my faith I was able to see the elder son in a more empathetic gaze. He is simply living within the confines of the natural world—one built on the pillars of justice and fairness. Day after day, he weathered the sun and rain to work for his father out in the field. He has been patient, obedient, dutiful, and virtuous. And so when he finds out that his prodigal brother is back, and his father has killed the fattened calf, he is understandably upset.

"He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.'" - Lk. 15:29-30

While his response is reasonable, it only is through the eyes of the world—one bereft of radical mercy. I see his bitterness stemming not so much from a blatant maliciousness—a stony hatred that opposes his brother's salvation—but rather from being hurt. Perhaps he is deeply hurt because he assumes that if his father never slayed even a goat for him, despite his good and obedient behavior, then his father must love him less. And if we too believe God loves us less than others because of what befalls us in this life or the blessings that others receive, then we can become angry and bitter—a deep wound can fester unchecked.

Henri Nouwen echoes this same thought in his insightful and touching *The Return of the Prodigal Son*:

"When I listen carefully to the words with which the elder son attacks his father—self-righteous, self-pitying, jealous words—I hear a deeper complaint. It is a complaint that comes from the heart that feels it never received what it was due."

If we live in this space, we aren't able to understand the reality of a God who is merciful, a Father who bestows love on us—and others—without our deserving it. The elder brother sees through the eyes of the world, and in his account, he is right: the younger son deserves punishment, justice. However, God responds with a radical mercy that can only be understood in the light of grace. It's the kind of mercy that the world itself doesn't understand.

On May 13, 1981, Mehmet Ali Agca, a man who had escaped from a Turkish prison, shot Pope John Paul II four times in St. Peter's Square. Two years later, in 1983, the Pope would image the Vicar of Christ in a profound, concrete way. He visited his would-be assassin—the man who willed his death and caused

continued from page 6

him much physical pain and suffering—and befriended him. And in 2000, the Pope requested that the man be pardoned. Here was a man who knew that the Father loves all men unconditionally—even the “unjust.” This was a man who understood what it meant to look into the heart of every single person and love them freely, not expecting anything in return, no matter the cost.

If we don’t see God’s love as truly unconditional—that God does really love us more than we love ourselves, no matter what evil we’ve done—then we are empty vessels without the capacity to share his love with others. In this state, the good we do is coerced in some way, done to appease a peevish father or to ensure a life of continued blessedness.

“Yet there can never be happiness in compulsion. It is not enough for love to be shared: it must be shared freely.” - Thomas Merton, “No Man Is An Island”

Love can only be shared freely if we believe it has been given to us freely in the first place. We never do find out what the elder son does, and I think for good reason. As we stand outside, the sun burrowing beneath the hills, and God pleads with us to join the celebration inside, what will our response be? Will we refuse to share our love with those who seemingly don’t deserve it? Or will we walk back with God into a room filled with laughter, mirth, and music, with hearts ready to share God’s mercy with all?

Chris Hazell is the founder of The Call Collective, a blog exploring the intersection between faith, culture and creativity. This article was written for the Word on Fire Blog, printed with permission.



Read the Gospel and Color



Kids Cathedral Weekly

The Gospel is Mark 1: 29-39

Mission for the Week

When you get home, choose a special quiet place where you can talk to God every morning. Tell your family about your special place. They may want to join you in spending quiet time to pray.

Sharing the Gospel

Simon Peter's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever. Jesus went to her. He took hold of her hand and helped her up. The fever left her. She felt so good, she cooked them a nice meal to celebrate. Neighbors brought all of their sick loved ones to be cured. When we pray today, Jesus still comes to those who are sick and heals them. He cures through doctors, nurses, medicines, and machines.

Pray Together

Lord, heal my family and friends who are sick today.
Help me comfort my friends and family who may be hurting.
Help me to stay healthy in mind and spirit.
Amen.