A Message From the Pastor

Breaking and Entering

No one ever wants to be victimized by crime, and many people take precautions to prevent thieves from stealing their valuables. Security cameras, alarm systems, motion sensors or even dogs are common forms of protection that people use to keep their homes or workplaces safe. This has always been the case, which is why we hear Jesus in the Gospel tell us, "if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into." But the Gospel is not so much about the prudence of having home security systems. The prevailing themes are really about spiritual preparedness and recognition of the Father's will. For those who are faithful in discerning and following God's plan of life and love, what emerges is the discovery of great spiritual wealth – an inexhaustible treasure. Holding onto that truth can provide the consolation, security of faith, and courage to stay close to Christ as we walk through our week.

This week in the Church calendar there are some wonderful saints that demonstrate not only an understanding and awareness of the treasures of heaven, but also spiritual fortitude that can inspire us to do what is just and right in a oft confusing world.

On Monday, August 11th, the Church honors St. Clare of Assisi. She was a contemporary of St. Francis, and likewise inspired by his faith and love to the Holy Eucharist, which she passed down into the community of nuns in her convent on the outskirts of Assisi. In 1240, an army of Saracen mercenaries marched toward the convent, imagining there were gold vessels or valuable artifacts inside for them to loot and steal, not to mention what other evil things they could have done. As the soldiers were climbing over the outer walls of the property and advancing towards the convent, Clare ran to the chapel and lay prostrate on the floor, praying for the Lord's protection. She heard a voice from the tabernacle, "I will always protect you." She got up and from the tabernacle took the small monstrance, in which was held the Eucharistic Host, and ran to the doors of convent, kicked them open and held the monstrance aloft. When they saw her holding up the Eucharist, the Saracens were thrown into confusion and fled in fear. St. Clare's faith in the treasure of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament saved her community from an army of thieves and marauders.



On Thursday August 14th, we honor St. Maximillian Kolbe. The treasure of his faith, despite being in one of the darkest moments in World War II, shed the light of joy on nine prisoners, like himself, who were imprisoned and forced to starve to death in a tiny cell in the Auschwitz concentration camp. Ten men, chosen at random, were thrown in the cell because another prisoner had tried to escape. But Father Kolbe, a Franciscan Priest, offered to take the place of one of the randomly chosen prisoners, sacrificing his own life. It was a radical imitation of Christ, and through that act, Fr. Kolbe actually brought faith and hope to the other prisoners, as he led them in singing hymns of joy.

Long before Fr. Kolbe's martyrdom in Auschwitz, he was well known as a preacher and theologian, especially for his love of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And I'm sure he is very honored that his memorial falls the day before the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary. It's as if even the Church calendar uses his death and martyrdom to point to Mary. At the natural end of her life, she was assumed — "taken up body and soul into heavenly glory... so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the conquerer of sin and death" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, §966). Christ's death and resurrection breaks the prison bars of death, and thus opens for us the gates of heaven. Thus we can now enter into the heavenly kingdom and receive an inexhaustible treasure of love and joy beyond comprehension. Our faith teaches us that. The saints and feasts of this week highlight the path for us to walk, so that where the Virgin Mary and the saints have gone, we may hope to follow.

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