

*Twenty-fourth Sunday
in Ordinary Time
September 13, 2026*



***Extra-Ordinary Jubilee Year
800th Anniversary
of the death of St. Francis***

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From the Gusset

The word **on the path** says that **grief** leads to **compassion**.

That may sound **strange** to your ears – it does to mine – but don't forget It is a **strange** God, who has fallen in **love** with us! **Grief** asks us to see the **sins** of the world (ours included). **Grief** allows us to let **sin** **pierce** our **heart**, so that we can cry! If you cannot cry then you cannot have

compassion; and so, **grief** asks us to look at the **sins** of the world through God's eyes and to weep; because God is so **good** and so **beautiful**, and we just ought not to **sin** against Someone that is that **drop dead gorgeous beautiful**! When we **pray** to God, **St. Jerome** says, we are actually **grieving**! To my Confirmation namesake: **praying** is almost the same thing as **grieving**. We look at the world – it is not as it should be – **sin** has entered it, and so we talk to God about how messed up things are – we **grieve** – we tell God how things are versus how we perceive they should be (**hopefully** we think they should be more like God wants them to be). One of the problems that **creeps up** at this point is that: there are fewer and fewer '**Prayers**' (**people who pray**) every day. See, instead of **mourning** how things are not as they should be – the world starts to just accept things as they are – all gone astray – and then not to bother to tell God about things – **pray** – **grieve**! There are fewer and fewer '**Prayers**,' fewer and fewer people who **grieve** – because we become **cynical** and just accept not only a **broken world**, but a world that is broken into more and more pieces every day! But a person, who truly **grieves** – truly **prays** – not only sees **sin** in the world, but they see **the boundless love of God**, and so they realize God can do something about that **sinful** world, that **broken world** – if only we would ask Him!!

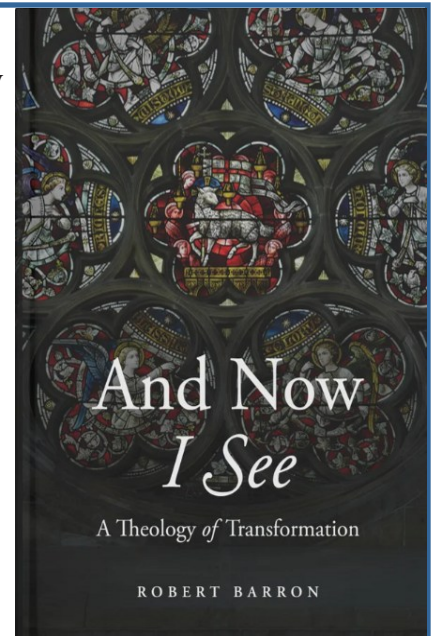
Remember when **the Widow of Nain** had lost her son? The Lord saw her **grief** – Jesus saw all the **sins** that the son never asked **forgiveness** for from his Mom before he died – Jesus saw all the **sins** that Mom committed against her boy, but never asked to be **forgiven** of; and so, our Lord **restores** the son to **life**. **Imagine** the conversation between Mother and **son come back to life**! **Imagine** if God miraculously **restored** to **life** the person you **loved** that had died – what would your conversation be like with them? Your tongue would trip over itself as you tried to say, "**I am sorry**" – you would be so busy saying, "**I love you**" to them, to even hear them asking you for **forgiveness** of their **sins** against you! **Generosity** would burst forth from both your **hearts**. You see, **St. Jerome** told us: **grief** leads to **forgiveness**, **forgiveness** leads to **generosity**, **generosity** leads to **compassion**! What is **compassion**? **Compassion** is to draw close to God and allow God to wipe away the tears and **restore** us to **beauty** – **restore** us to **life** – **restore** us to **communion** with God and neighbor!

Yours on the Path Fr. Randy

Rockford Diocese had a tradition of ordaining men to the priesthood in late May, and so I was called back to the States to be ordained with my three classmates on May 21st. Trouble was, because of the hot weather in Rome, the school year did not start until October – Roman Seminarians took their final exams in June, so when I came back to Rockford for ordination – I technically had not completed all of my Theological studies. This turned out to be a Godsend as now, when I went back to Rome in late May and took my exams and finished my studies – now I could do so as a priest. This meant I could celebrate Mass in the Eternal City at different beautiful Basilicas that had influenced my studies for the past four years. One day, I was approached by an underclassman, who wondered if I might celebrate the Mass for his sister, who had just gotten married and the young couple was having trouble conceiving, and so I was asked to pray the Mass for this intention. We started out into the city on a Saturday morning and went to my absolute favorite Church in Rome – St. Ignatius (the founder of the Jesuit Order). I went into the Sacristy and as best as I could explained (in Italian) how I wanted to celebrate the Mass. The Italians can smell a ‘new priest’ a mile or should I say a kilometer away, and the Sacristan smiled, gave me a Mass kit (which consisted of a chalice, hosts, and cruets of water and wine along with a purificator and corporal – I had brought an English Missal), and then tapping his chin with his forefinger – he sized me up muttering in Italian – ‘which altar? Which altar would be good for you? Ah, il Cardinale!’ I was hoping that I would be able to celebrate the Mass at one of the transept altars – gigantic altars dedicated to young Jesuit boys, who died before they could be ordained priests – St. Aloysius Gonzaga and St. John Berchmans, but the next thing I knew, I was taken to the altar of St. Robert Bellarmine – the intellectual giant – Pope Clement VIII called Bellarmine the greatest mind of the Church – he was named a Doctor of the Church. Bellarmine’s body is buried in a glass coffin (you can see this diminutive, little man decked out in his red Cardinal robes with a lead mask over his face) under a small altar right next door to the colossal altar dedicated to St. Aloysius Gonzaga – Bellarmine’s student! I celebrated the Mass and immediately fell in love with this great Saint! I look forward to his Feast Day every year (September 17th – his death date). I have a 3rd-class relic of St. Robert Bellarmine and ask for his intercession every day when I pray two decades of the Rosary for my Mom and my Dad’s happy repose. I couldn’t hold a candle to Bellarmine’s intellect, and our dispositions are radically different, but I look forward to waiting on tables for all eternity in the Heavenly Banquet Hall – feeding you, my parishioners, and my family members and friends the Eucharist – and passing St. Robert Bellarmine as we both take the Flesh of the Eucharist from Christ’s wounded side and feed the hungry multitude of God’s Saints in Heaven.



G.K. Chesterton (the man to whom we owe all the success of our recent **Retreat** on *the Spirituality of St. Francis*) once said: “the only problem more puzzling than the question of evil is the question of the good.” **Bishop Robert Barron** picks up on this notion in his wonderful book: **And Now I See: the theology of Transformation**. This is a book, I am considering as a title for our **RCIA classes** this year. I am hesitate to do so, because this is really a book for those who are wanting ‘*Spiritual Direction;*’ that is, those wanting to grow in **holiness**. It would be good for **RCIA**, because **RCIA** is all about learning more about God – as **St. Augustine** said, the more one learns about God, the more one falls in love with God. **Bishop Barron** will take us on a journey from a “**little soul**” (*pusilla anima*) to a “**magnanimous soul**” (*magna anima*), but this book will require a great deal of introspection on the part of the **RCIA student** and **their teacher**! **Barron** is very blunt throughout the whole book; for instance, this is a typical line: *if there is something irreducibly wrong with us, there is also, something inescapably and stubbornly right about us*. Here he is referring to **original sin** (that which is wrong with us), and **God’s boundless love for us** (that which is right about us). If you have ever **wondered** about why our **families** or your **marriage** can be so riven by **sin**; **Bishop Barron** has a sharp answer: the “typical mark of sinners is to punish precisely those who most resemble the sinners themselves.” Do you see how blunt this is? Our own **sins** are projected outward onto the persons closest to us – **loved ones**! See, **sin** not only hurts us and our **relationship** with God, but it hurts those around us – our **family**, our **Church**, our **Country**.... Let me know, if **And Now I See**, sounds **interesting** to you. We will for sure be using **The Strangest Way** – also a **Bishop Barron** work – both of these books are divided into three sections (because it is always 3): **Self**, **God**, and the amazing lynch pin to the Universe – **Jesus Christ**! **RCIA classes** start on **Tuesday night, September 22nd**. Why should **CCD kids** have all the fun learning about God. Come to **RCIA**, and you will fall more and more in **love** with your **Intimate Lover**, God!



Mass Intentions

Saturday, September 12th

(+) Michael Leurck & (+) Matthew Leurck/ Steve Leurck

11:00 am, **Theiss Cemetery** (+) Rose Theiss/ Fr. Randy

4:00 pm, **OLPH** (+) Michael Widolff/ Fr. Randy

Sunday, September 13th Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00 am, **St. Patrick** (+) Eileen Leffelman/ Mr. & Mrs. Mark Streit & (+) Ron Leffelman/ Velma Quest

10:30 am, **SMA** Pro Populo/ Fr. Randy

Monday, September 14th Exaltation of the Holy Cross

(+) Robert Bulfer/ Mr. & Mrs. Jeff O'Sadnick

Tuesday, September 15th Our Lady of Sorrows

(+) Howard McInnis/ Fr. Randy

Wednesday, September 16th

8:00 am, **OLPH** (+) Janet Wagner/ Family &

(+) Floyd Wilson/ Judy Marschang & Dave Setchell

Thursday, September 17th Feast of St. Robert Bellarmine

7:30 am, **SMA** (+) Marilyn Henkel & (+) Robert Bulfer/ Fr. Randy

8:30 am, **OLPH** (+) Fr. Richard Kramer/ Mark Lauer &

(+) Chad Folkers/ Pam Milano

Friday, September 18th

8:00 am, **St. Patrick** (+) Sharon Funfsinn/ Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Blaine

Saturday, September 19th Feast of St. Januarius

(+) Fr. Robert Camacho & (+) Barbara McCoy/ Fr. Randy

4:00 pm, **OLPH** (+) Ed McLaughlin/ Shawn Leffelman

Sunday, September 20th Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00 am, **St. Patrick** Pro Populo/ Fr. Randy

10:30 am, **SMA** (+) Quin & (+) Josephine Torri/ Torri Family



Capital Campaign

St. Paul has an **interesting** take on **the virtue of gratitude**.

Paul would say that **gratitude** is a posture of our heart. Just as our **body** might stand, sit, and kneel during **the Mass** – **St. Paul** would say that **gratitude** is an ongoing posture of our heart that shapes how **Catholics** live our lives, **worship our God**, and even relate to one another. We are **grateful** to God for all **the gifts** He gives us and **Paul** was even **thankful** for **the hardships** he received from God: being shipwrecked, thrown in prison, or even beaten with rods! **St. Paul** was **thankful** to God for all the **Faith** in God that others showed when he **preached** to them!

Your **priest** gives **thanksgiving** to God for your **generosity** to **the Bishop's Capital Campaign**. Even when all three of our **Parishes** are strapped for cash and all have looming bills and **priceless Stainedglass windows** to refurbish – we still **generously** gave to **the Diocese of Rockford** from our limited treasure. I give **thanks** to God every time I pray **evening Prayer** from **the Breviary** for your **generosity**, and I would like to give **thanksgiving** to God and **the Angels of Heaven** for your **generosity** by **celebrating the Holy Mass** (in the near future) for you in **gratitude** to God for your **generous** hearts.

