

What Is Your Image of God?

Rebecca Ruiz – Staff at Loyola Press, Chicago

Recently, I had an enlightening conversation with friends about how we envision God. It's a really interesting question, because how we imagine God determines how we relate to God. For instance, if I see God as an old, bearded man on a cloud, I will find it pretty difficult to relate to him. I'm not really well-versed in talking with old men who live on clouds and, in fact, I don't know anyone who lives on a cloud. If I see God as a harsh judge who keeps a tally of everything I do wrong, I will be afraid all the time and will not want to approach God at all.

When St. Ignatius first started pondering God, he knew God loved him, but he still considered himself a terrible and unworthy sinner. As he progressed in the spiritual life, though, he understood God's love and individual concern for him as being so deep that it was nearly unfathomable. In his book, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, Fr. David Fleming, SJ, writes:

Ignatius experienced God as an intensely personal, active, generous God, a God as Love loving. God creates, and by so doing God is actively showering us with gifts. God acts, and all his actions show his wisdom and love. God's love is unconditional. It is not something we earn, or buy, or bargain for. (8)

Ignatius realized that although he was a sinner, he was a profoundly loved sinner. And he realized that God had created everything for him, so that he could know God. After that, Ignatius felt impelled to share about God's personal love for each individual person. He thought long about how to express his experience of God's love to others.

One of St. Ignatius's solutions was to invite individuals to imagine Jesus sitting next to them. He advised that one ought to talk with Jesus as one would talk with a dear friend. This is a remarkably effective method, because it makes God more relatable. If I imagine Jesus as a trusted friend instead of an old man in the sky or a harsh judge, I find that I am able to converse freely with him. I am not afraid to speak truthfully with him; my words are unguarded. I know that there is no need to come up with rosy images or words that impress. Through this prayer experience, I am also more able to understand at least a fraction of how much God loves me, because I have experienced the generous love of a friend before. And I experience a newfound gratitude for the gift of this life-sustaining friendship.

What is your image of God? Pray for the grace to relate to God personally and understand God's immense love for you.

God, help me to know you as you are,
To experience that fathomless love that St. Ignatius experienced.
Allow me to see myself as you see me,
To feel the warmth of your loving gaze upon me—
Loved, treasured, worth dying for—
And give me the grace to respond to you
In generosity of heart.
Tell me,
How can I respond to your love?
What can I do for you?



ST. MONICA PARISH

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PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday

9:30 am – 1 pm / 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

MASS SCHEDULES

WEEKDAYS: **9:00 am**

SATURDAYS: **9:30 am & 5:00 pm**

SUNDAYS: **9:00 am & 11:00 am**

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

SATURDAYS: **4:30 pm – 4:55 pm**

CONFESSIONS: 10 MINUTES BEFORE DAILY

MASS OR BY REQUEST AT OTHER TIMES

NOVENA TO

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

WEDNESDAYS: **7:00 pm**

MASS FOLLOWED BY NOVENA

& BENECTION

BAPTISM COURSE

EVERY 2ND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT **6 pm**

BAPTISMS

4th SATURDAY AFTER 9:30 am MASS

HOUSE BLESSINGS

PLEASE CALL THE PARISH OFFICE

March 10, 2019

1st Sunday of Lent

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Each Lent presents a new opportunity to repent and grow in our relationship with Jesus who gave his all so we could be his. We need only to call on Jesus, and he will deliver us from our sins.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses instructs the people to offer gifts to the Lord for their freedom from slavery in Egypt, and for God's never-ending care. In the second reading, St Paul reminds his readers that without any distinction of nationality, all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Luke's Gospel tells how Jesus withstood the temptations of the devil.

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Today's Readings:

1st: Deuteronomy 26.4-10

Psalm: 91

2nd: Romans 10.8-13

Gospel: Luke 4.1-13

PARISH UPDATES

Spring Break – There will be no PREP classes on Tuesday, March 19 and 26.

Fridays in Lent – This is a day of abstinence from meat, but Catholics may substitute with acts of charity or piety.

Update on the Khumpis' Family – Although our refugee family has been approved for resettlement two months ago by our Government, they need our prayers for their delay in getting their medical examinations and travel visas.

Development and Peace -- Caritas Canada encourages us to reach out to forcibly displaced persons and to share their journey by supporting their Share Lent appeal and becoming aware of its ministry. For more info visit, www.devp.org

Parish Mission – Fr Pierre LeBlond, OP will introduce the Lenten mission at next weekend Masses. The Mission itself is on March 18, 19 & 20 at 7:00pm. Please make this renewal of faith a priority in your schedule.

Parish Website – We have put our art glass windows on our parish website www.stmonicaparish.ca You can enjoy them in the tag, "About/St Monica". Check it out!

ARCHDIOCESAN EVENTS

Marriage Anniversary Mass 2019

Celebrate your Milestone Anniversary with us! This Mother's Day, Archbishop Miller will be honouring couples celebrating their 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th, 55th & 60th+ years of marriage. Register your anniversary with us today at rcav.org/marriage-anniversary. Mass will be on Sunday, May 12, at 3:30 p.m. at St. Paul Parish, Richmond. Reception to follow in St. Paul Parish Centre. All are welcome to witness and celebrate the milestone anniversaries of others! Register today: <https://rcav.org/marriage-anniversary>

Monthly Eucharistic Adoration - Intensive Prayer

The Matthew 7.7 Prayer Brigade, a prayer warriors group of the Office of the Filipino Ministry (<https://rcav.org/Filipino-Ministry>) gathers month-to-month in different parishes for Intensive Prayer with Scriptural Rosaries during a 3-hour Eucharistic Adoration. This month's will be March 24, 2-5 p.m., at St. Helen's Church, Burnaby. Prayers are in English and all are invited to unite themselves in prayer and sacrifice for the sanctification of the ordained ministry and consecrated persons, for the renewal and strengthening of the Catholic Church in all levels, for our families, for healing of illnesses of victims of sexual abuses, for broken relationships, for justice and peace in the world, for intentions of families in our Archdiocese. Petitions and Thanksgiving boxes are provided and will be brought to the Blessed Sacrament before start of the Adoration.

2019 Lenten Retreat with

Fr. Pierre LeBlond, OP

March 18, 19, 20 at 7:00pm

Getting the Heart and Mind of Christ in You

Does your prayer time feel like talking to a wall? Are you looking for God's answers only in external events? This retreat is meant to draw your attention to God's active presence in you. Discerning the transforming actions of God abiding in you and choosing to cooperate with it is what Saint Paul called the practice of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Love.

Faith is the ability given by the Spirit of God to see yourself, others and the world with the eyes of Christ, with His mindset.

Hope is the renewal by God of your expectations and desires according to the Heart of Christ.

Love is the transformation of our being into the being of God's Incarnate Son. He is Love Itself that is loving us into a new being.

Holy Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do you, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Stewardship Reflection

Today's first reading describes the offering of first fruits the people of Israel were to present to the Lord in thanksgiving for their deliverance from Egypt and the gift of the promised land. Is my offering at today's Mass an appropriate response to the many blessings the Lord has given me?

Mass Intentions

Mar 10 - 16, 2019

Mon, Mar 11 - Cristina McManus (RIP)
Tue, Mar 12 - Remedios Arevalo (RIP)
Wed, Mar 13 - 9am, Aurita Victoria (RIP)
7pm, Jonathan Joseph (TG)
Thu, Mar 14 - Marcelino Revita (RIP)
Fri, Mar 15 - Elisa & Rey Siga (TG)
Sat, Mar 16 - 9:30am, Kay Sullivan (RIP)
5pm, Lam Thanh Dave (RIP)



WAY OF THE CROSS - During Lent, we will make the Way of the Cross on FRIDAYS after the morning Mass.