OPENING PRAYER
Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.
O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS
Reading 1   Lv 19:1-2, 17-18
The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the whole Israelite community and tell them: Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy. You shall not bear hatred for your brother or sister in your heart. Though you may have to reprove your fellow citizen, do not incur sin because of him. Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against any of your people. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”

Responsorial Psalm   Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13
R. (8a) The Lord is kind and merciful.
Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all my being, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.
R. The Lord is kind and merciful.
He pardons all your iniquities, heals all your ills. He redeems your life from destruction, crowns you with kindness and compassion.
R. The Lord is kind and merciful.
Merciful and gracious is the LORD, slow to anger and abounding in kindness. Not according to our sins does he deal with us, nor does he requite us according to our crimes.
R. The Lord is kind and merciful.
As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.
R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

Reading 2   1 Cor 3:16-23
Brothers and sisters: Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for the temple of God, which you are, is holy. Let no one deceive himself. If any one among you considers himself wise in this age, let him become a fool, so as to become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the eyes of God, for it is written: God catches the wise in their own ruses, and again: The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. So let no one boast about human beings, for everything belongs to you, Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or the present or the future: all belong to you, and you to Christ, and Christ to God.

Gospel   Mt 5:38-48
Jesus said to his disciples: “You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand over your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.

“You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. 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. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

MEDITATION ON READINGS

We must live charity at all times and in all circumstances. You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you...if anyone would go to law with you and take your tunic, let him take your cloak as well; and whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two... These words of Jesus in the Gospel of today’s Mass are an invitation to live charity beyond the criteria of men.

We should not be naïve when dealing with people, but rather exercise prudence and justice (which might include demanding our rights). But neither should we regard any renunciation and sacrifice offered for the good of others as a mere excess of zeal, for it is by such actions that we become like Christ, who by his death on the cross gave us the example of a love that knew no human measure.

There is nothing in man more divine, more Christlike, than his meekness and patience in doing good. Of all the virtues leading to salvation, St. John Chrysostom suggests, let us seek mainly those that benefit our neighbor...In the things of this world no one lives for himself; the craftsman, the soldier, the farmer, the merchant, all without exception contribute to the common good and to the good of their neighbor. This happens even more fully in the spiritual life, which is the true life. He who lives only for himself and despises his neighbor is useless, is not a man, does not belong to our lineage.

Our Lord’s repeated calls for us to be charitable at all times, and especially in his New Commandment, must stimulate us to follow His lead by finding concrete ways of being of help to others, such as by making those at our side happy, realizing that we can never be too extravagant in the practice of this virtue. Most of the time the practice of charity will consist in little details, something as simple as a smile, a word of encouragement, a kind gesture...In the eyes of God all of this is very pleasing and draws us closer to Him. In our prayer today we should also consider areas where we can easily lack charity if we are not careful: rash judgments, negative criticism, neglect of others due to self-centeredness, forgetfulness...The Christian way of conduct is not the way of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but to do good always, even though occasionally such an attitude will not result in any human gain in this world – but at least we will have enriched our hearts.

Charity makes us understanding, ready to forgive, fit to live alongside everyone, so that those who think and act differently from us in social, political and even in religious matters will also have a claim on our respect and charity...

Love and courtesy of this kind should not, of course, make us indifferent to truth and goodness. Love, in fact, impels the followers of Christ to proclaim to all men the truth that saves. However, we must
distinguish between the error – which must always be rejected – and the one who is in error, for he never loses his dignity as a person even though he flounders amid false or inadequate religious ideas. A disciple of Christ will never treat anyone badly. Error he will call error, but he will correct the person in error with kindliness. Otherwise he will not be able to help him, to sanctify him. And that is the greatest manifestation of love.

1. Matt 5:38-48

**Questions for Discussion:**

1. What struck you the most in this passage?

2. What is the difference between exercising prudence and justice (which might include demanding our rights) and regarding any renunciation and sacrifice offered for the good of others as a mere excess of zeal?

3. What are some virtues to practice that would mainly benefit our neighbor as opposed to mainly benefitting ourselves? (share testimonies)

4. What are some examples of situations where we should “distinguish between the error – which must always be rejected – and the one who is in error, for he never loses his dignity as a person even though he flounders amid false or inadequate religious ideas”?

5. How can we do this concretely?

6. Why is helping to sanctify (make holy) someone the greatest manifestation of love? How is “love” sometimes used as an excuse to not help sanctify someone?

**Charity towards all – including those who do not like us. Our prayer for them.**

The commandment of charity not only applies to those who show us love and kindness, but to everyone without exception. *You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you.*

Should we ever need to, we must also practice charity with those who ill-treat us, those who actively seek to cause us harm. Our Lord gave us the example on the Cross, and the route of the Master was travelled by his disciples. Jesus taught us to regard sin as the only true evil and to avoid considering anyone as our personal enemy, and the saints of all times have given heroic witness to these teachings. The various manifestations of charity do not conflict with the exercise of prudence in the just defense of one’s legitimate interests or those of others, or of the rights of the Church, or in the proclamation of the truth in the face of lies, or with a firm defense of the good. But a Christian should always have a big heart and show respect for all, even for those who act as enemies, *not because they are brothers*, as St. Augustine points out, *but because brothers they must become; one must show fraternal love towards him who is already a brother, and towards the one who acts as an enemy, so that he may become a brother.*

This way of acting presupposes a deep life of prayer and sets us clearly apart from pagans and from those who in fact do not want to live as Christ’s disciples. *For if you love those that love you, what reward shall...*
you have? Do not even the Publicans do that? And if you salute your brethren only, what are you doing more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do that? Our Christian Faith does not call for a merely correct human behavior, but for heroic virtues manifested in ordinary living.

Assisted by grace, we will also show charity towards those who do not behave as children of God but rather offend Him, because, in the words of Saint Augustine, no sinner, as a sinner, is worthy of love; but every man, as a man, is lovable by God. They all continue to be children of God, capable of conversion and of reaching eternal life. Trusting in everyone’s capacity to rectify his errors, charity will impel us to devote ourselves to prayer, to give good example and to do apostolate and practice fraternal correction. If at some time we suffer through particularly painful offenses, injustices or calumnies, we should ask for Our Lady’s help. Very often we have contemplated her at the foot of the Cross, enduring the infamous things done to her Son; and many of those offenses – let us not forget – came from us. We should be sorry, rather, because injustices offend Our Lord and may harm other people; our reaction shall be to offer atonement to Our Lord and to make reparation if possible.

Questions for Discussion:
1. What struck you most in this passage?

2. Have you ever received this type of unconditional love? Have you ever been able to practice this yourself? (share testimonies)

3. How does a deep prayer life help you to love this way? What are some examples of methods to grow in deep prayer? (see Appendix 2 for “The Five C’s of Christian Meditation”)

4. There are two extremes to be avoided – excusing or accusing (see article in Appendix 1). Which one do you find yourself leaning more towards? How can you live a more balanced approach in difficult situations?

Charity gives friendship a deep Christian sense.
A Christian must have a great heart. But since charity must be ordered, the Christian should practice this virtue primarily with those that God has placed close to him, nevertheless our respect and affection for others should be in no way exclusive or focused on only a small circle of friends. Our Lord does not want an apostolate with limited horizons.

That union with God which we try to make fruitful in our daily life, with the help of his grace, must bring us to recognize the attractively human dimension of our apostolate. A Christian’s dealings with his fellow men should mean a generous outpouring of supernatural affection and human politesse, overcoming his tendency to egotism and absorption in his own projects.

In our personal prayer we ask Our Lord that He enlarge our hearts; that He help us to offer our sincere friendship to a wider circle of people; that He may move us to do apostolate with each one of them, regardless of their response, even if we have often to submerge our own ego, or put aside our personal ideas or preferences. It is part and parcel of a loyal friendship to make a positive effort, which we will maintain by
means of our constant dealing with Jesus Christ, to understand the convictions of our friends, even though we may never come to share them or accept them\textsuperscript{11} if they are irreconcilable with our Christian convictions.

Our Lord never fails to forgive our offenses as long as we return to Him led by his grace. He has infinite patience with our miseries and errors. That is why He asks us to be patient in turn when circumstances render it difficult for our acquaintances or friends to get closer to God. Jesus himself taught us this doctrine in the Our Father. When others lack formation, are ignorant in doctrinal matters, display character defects, or even seem indifferent to such things, we should not let ourselves be put off. On the contrary, we should regard these failings as urgent calls, signal lights that reveal a greater need of spiritual help, which should be for us an invitation to intensify our concern for those others, rather than leave them alone.

Let us resolve to get close to those relatives, friends and acquaintances that are most in need, and let us ask Our Lady for the necessary graces to make this approach.

\textsuperscript{11}St. Escriva, Farrow, 746

Questions for Discussion:
1. What struck you most in this passage?
2. How can we practice an apostolate without limited horizons?
3. What are some examples of situations where we might have to submerge our own ego or put aside our personal ideas or preferences?
4. How can we make a positive effort to understand the convictions of our others even though we may never come to share them or accept them? Why should we?
5. Can you think of an example of a situation where you interacted with someone with or without this understanding? What were the fruits of this understanding or the lack thereof?
6. When you are faced with a person who lacks formation, is ignorant in doctrinal matters, displays character defects or even seems indifferent to such things, how can we not be put off but instead intensify our concern for them?

FAITH IN ACTION – PART 1 – SAINT FOCUS

St. Isaac Jogues – North American Martyr
Feast Day – October 19

Called the "Apostle of the Mohawks," and known to the Mohawks themselves as Ondessonk, "the indomitable one," Isaac Jogues was born on January 10, 1607, at Orleans, France, into a good bourgeois family; at the age of seventeen he entered the Jesuit novitiate school at Rouen. Later he studied at the royal college of La Fleche. From one of the
teachers there, Louis Lalemant, who had two brothers and a nephew serving as missionaries in Canada, the young man heard stories that may well have turned his thoughts towards the New World. Isaac Jogues continued his education at the College of Clermont, University of Paris, and in due time was ordained and accepted for missionary service. He was already recognized as an able scholar, with talents for writing and teaching. In the summer of 1636, at the age of twenty-nine, he embarked for Canada with several companions.

After a stormy voyage, they sailed up the St. Lawrence to the lofty citadel of Quebec. Father Jogues' companions were at once sent on westward to join Father Brebeuf, who in 1626 had established an outpost on the peninsula of Lake Huron, to minister to the Huron Indians, one of the less warlike tribes. Jogues went with them as far as the settlement of Trois Rivières, and there, some weeks later, he saw a flotilla of canoes descending the St. Lawrence. In the first, wielding a paddle, was Father Anthony Daniel, one of Brebeuf's coworkers, exhausted and emaciated, his cassock in tatters. He was bound for Quebec for a period of recuperation, and Jogues was to replace him. The young missionary lost no time in organizing the expedition. The post was nine hundred miles away, up the river, through forests, across portages.

Arriving at last at the Lake Huron post, Father Jogues collapsed in Brebeuf's arms. Almost at once he fell ill of a fever, which in turn struck down others. When the missionaries had recovered, a similar epidemic broke out among the Indians, who, blaming it on the Black Robes, as they called the Jesuits, threatened to kill them all. Brebeuf conciliated them and by the following year relations had so improved that he was able to write in one of his reports: "We are gladly heard, and there is scarcely a village that has not invited us to go to it.... And at last it is understood from our whole conduct that we have not come to buy skins or to carry on any traffic, but solely to teach them, and to procure for them their souls' health." Indian good will, however, was fickle, and before long the medicine men had fomented so much hostility that in a tribal council the Indians decided that the Jesuit priests must die. Once more the Indians were pacified.

For six years Father Jogues labored here. He learned the language and ways of the Hurons, developed into a skilled woodsman with great stamina, and often went on missions.

Back on the Huron peninsula, near the mouth of the Wye River, the Jesuits established their main settlement, calling it Ste. Marie. A church, living quarters, a cemetery, a hospital, and a fort were eventually built, and a way of life that was half monastic, half patriarchal grew up in this remote spot. The surrounding lands were cleared and cultivated, food was stored against famine, and here the Indians came in times of sickness and trouble, as well as on Sundays and feast days. Here in the lonely north woods the missionaries tried to create order and organization and to demonstrate in their manner of life the teachings of their religion.

The year 1642 brought a very poor harvest and much sickness among the Indians. Also Father Raymbault was ill and needed medical treatment. Father Jogues was appointed to lead an expedition to Quebec for supplies and reinforcements. The journey was safely made, but unfortunately they had been sighted on the way down by a Mohawk scouting party. The Mohawks were members of the confederation of Five Nations into which the great Iroquois people had banded themselves, and were the sworn enemies of the Hurons. More Mohawk warriors were recruited by the scouting party and they lay in wait for the Black Robes and their detested Huron converts as the flotilla traveled back upstream.

Father Jogues was in command of the twelve canoes, carrying in all some forty persons; there were but three white men-William Couture, Rene Goupil, and himself. Goupil was a young Frenchman who had failed of admission to the Society of Jesus because of poor health, but he had nevertheless taken up the study of medicine and had come to Canada to offer his services to the missionaries. Couture was another layman of great courage and integrity. About a day's journey beyond Trois Rivières, the main body of warriors fell upon them, killing or maiming some and taking many prisoners. The more agile of the Hurons escaped to the woods. Father Jogues could also have escaped, but gave himself up when he saw that Goupil had been taken. Couture was singled out for severe torture later because in the fray he had slain a Mohawk leader.
The white men and the Huron prisoners were led south to the home ground of the Mohawks in east central New York. At the southern end of Lake Champlain is a small island, now called Jogues Island, which is believed to have been the scene of barbarous cruelties inflicted on the prisoners. Jogues wrote: "We were made to go up from the shore between two lines of Indians who were armed with clubs, sticks, and knives. I was the last and blows were showered on me. I fell on the ground and thought my end had come, but they lifted me up all streaming with blood and carried me more dead than alive to the platform." Worse tortures followed. The Iroquois were especially cruel to the Huron converts. At this time and during subsequent torturings Father Jogues suffered the loss of two fingers.

The news of their capture soon reached the Protestant Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam at the mouth of the Hudson, and Commandant Van Corlear came up in person to ransom them. His overtures were rejected, but the Indians decided not to kill such valuable captives—perhaps in the hope of getting an even higher ransom from the French.

Before long, however, Goupil was tomahawked from behind by an Indian who had observed him making the sign of the cross on the head of an Indian girl, a gesture which, according to the Indian medicine men, brought bad luck. Jogues, who happened to be nearby, took the dying man in his arms, and gave him the last absolution before he died. The Indians snatched the body away from the grieving priest and concealed it in a stream. Guided by a friendly Indian, Jogues went in search of the corpse, and on finding it, hid it deeper in the stream, hoping to return and give it proper burial before he too was killed. The Indians thwarted him by destroying the body.

Jogues' slavery lasted for more than a year. The Indians were not without respect for their strange captive, naming him "the indomitable one." He had at least one good friend among the Mohawks, an old woman whom he called "aunt." She tried to heal his wounds and to warn and protect him when danger threatened. His days were passed in menial work, learning the language, and comforting Huron prisoners who were sometimes brought in. He was taken on fishing and hunting expeditions, when he suffered much from hunger and exposure. As opportunity offered, he baptized children he found dying. During the year he baptized some seventy persons, New York State's first Catholic baptismal record.

The Dutch were eventually able to rescue Jogues. The enraged Mohawks were soon on his trail, threatening reprisals against the Dutch for their part in the affair. Learning of this, Jogues insisted on going back on shore. "If this trouble has been caused by me," he said, "I am ready to appease it at the loss of my life. I have never wished to escape if it meant injury to the least man in the colony." But the Indians were now persuaded to relinquish all claim to his person for the sum of 300 livres, which the Dutch paid.

Jogues set sail for France and on Christmas Day was put ashore in Brittany. Kindly people helped him reach the town of Rennes. At the rector's house, he sent word by a servant that he was the bearer of news from New France. Unknown to Jogues, his own fate was a matter of widespread concern in France, for news of his capture had spread throughout the land. When the rector came to the door, after an exchange of courtesies, he asked the shabbily-dressed man if he had known Father Jogues. "Very well indeed," was the answer. "Have they murdered him?" "No, Father, he is alive and free—and I am he!"

The astonishing news spread quickly. Jogues reported to his superiors, and such was his fame that ladies, courtiers, and even the Queen Regent desired to meet him and do him honor. Jogues was received by Anne of Austria, and told his story. At its conclusion, the Queen arose and stooped to kiss the mutilated hands, which the priest habitually kept covered by the folds of his cassock. He feared that their condition would debar him from saying Mass, but Pope Urban VIII abrogated in his case the canonical ruling.

Father Jogues' only desire was to get back to Canada to minister to his beloved Native Americans, and in June, 1644, he was again in Quebec. From there he was sent to Montreal, to spend his time helping to build up that new outpost, until the cessation of warfare would permit him to return to the Hurons. Two years later an embassy of Iroquois came to Trois Rivieres to discuss terms of truce and the ransom of prisoners. Many fine speeches were made and gifts were
exchanged. The Jesuit priest participated in these conclaves. After the deliberations were concluded, the French thought it prudent to send a conciliatory deputation to meet with other Iroquois chieftains at Ossernenon. This embassy was led by Father Jogues and Sieur Jean Bourdon, an engineer, who represented the government of New France. "Oh, how I should regret to lose so glorious an occasion," wrote the priest to his superior before starting, "when it may depend only on me that some souls be saved! I hope that His goodness, which has not abandoned me in the hour of trial, will aid me still."

The party traveled south, stopping first at Fort Orange, where the priest saw again his Dutch friends and reimbursed them for his ransom of the year before. The Dutch were astonished to learn that he was going back to the scene of his painful captivity. Ondessonk indeed deserved his name! The Mohawks, too, when he appeared among them, were impressed by his courage and disarmed by his gentleness, for he showed no trace of ill-will. The old "aunt" greeted with friendly words the man who had been the tribe's despised captive and who now returned as an envoy of peace. "With us you will always have a mat to lie on and a fire to warm yourself," she told him. Gifts were exchanged between Frenchmen and Indians, and belts of wampum offered for the release of the Hurons held captive. Thus the purpose of the visit was achieved, the pact confirmed, and Jogues went back to Quebec. He was to return to spend the winter among the Mohawks, now that friendly relations were established.

In the meanwhile, after Jogues and Bourdon had left Ossernenon, an epidemic broke out, caterpillars ate the crops, and famine threatened. As usual, the Mohawks blamed all their troubles on Black Robe, even though, on his latest trip, he had not worn priestly garb. But had he not left with them a mysterious box? True, he had showed them its contents, which consisted of personal necessaries, but he had locked it up and asked them to keep it. No doubt a devil was concealed in the box, to bring upon them all manner of evils. They threw the box into the river. Totally unaware of the mounting tension and antagonism, Jogues, with John Lalande, a lay missionary, once more started south for Ossernenon. On the trail they were met by a party of Mohawks on the warpath. The three or four Hurons serving Jogues as guides turned back to escape capture, while the two Frenchmen were led on as prisoners. At Ossernenon Jogues' arguments seemed to affect his hearers. "I am a man like yourselves," he replied to their charges. "I do not fear death or torture. I do not know why you wish to kill me. I come here to confirm the peace and show you the way to Heaven, and you treat me like a dog." In the councils the majority were ready to give the brave Ondessonk his freedom, but the minority faction, members of the Bear clan, took matters into their own hands. They invited Jogues to pay them a visit, and as he unsuspectingly entered the cabin of the Bear chief, he was brutally tomahawked. The next day Lalande met the same fate, and both bodies were thrown into a nearby ravine. Their heads were cut off and placed on poles facing the trail by which they had come, as if in warning to other Black Robes. When the news of the martyrdom was carried to Fort Orange, the Dutch pastor hastened to Ossernenon to denounce the Mohawks for their crime. Later on some of the Indians went to the fort with Father Jogues' breviary, missal, and cassock, hoping to make a profitable trade, and the pastor again censured them.

The Iroquois now once more began to attack and plunder the Huron villages, sparing neither Christians nor non-Christians. Garnier, Daniel, Gabriel, Lalemant, and Brebeuf were killed. But in the Mohawk Valley the example of Jogues' heroism was not forgotten, for the gentle priest had possessed in high degree the virtue the Indians most admired, bravery. And when, some years later, there was peace, the three Jesuit priests sent from Canada to establish the Mission of the Martyrs were well received. Before long Mohawk converts were traveling to the seminary in Quebec to be trained as Christian leaders. Today, near the town of Auriesville, New York, which on the best archeological authority is accepted as the site of Ossernenon, there is a famous Catholic shrine and pilgrimage place. It was dedicated in 1885 to the Martyrs of North America and to their Indian converts. Here pilgrims come to honor the memory of the Jesuits of the seventeenth century who faced death in the wilderness. The eight martyrs—Jogues, Lalande, Brebeuf, Lalemant, Garnier, Daniel, Goupil, and Chabanel—were solemnly beatified in 1925 and canonized in 1930.

Questions for Discussion:
1. What struck you the most in this account of St. Isaac Jogues life?
2. How was he able to love like this?
3. How can we love like this?
Catherine Doherty and the Madonna House

God is a Lover who hungers to be loved in return. Burning with this vision of faith, Catherine Doherty challenged Christians of her day to live a radical Gospel life and to recognize God’s image in every human being.

She was a pioneer among North American Catholic laity in implementing the Church’s social doctrine in the face of Communism, economic and racial injustice, secularism and apathy. At the same time she insisted that those engaged in social action be rooted in prayer and that they incarnate their faith into every aspect of ordinary life. Catherine was a bridge between the Christian East and West. Baptized Orthodox and later becoming Roman Catholic, her spiritual heritage drew upon both of these traditions.

Catherine Kolyschkine was born in Nizhny-Novgorod, Russia, on August 15, 1896 to wealthy and deeply Christian parents. Raised in a devout aristocratic family, she grew up knowing that Christ lives in the poor, and that ordinary life is meant to be holy. Her father’s work enabled the family to travel extensively in Catherine’s youth. At the age of 15, she married her cousin, Boris de Hueck. Soon, the turmoil of World War I sent them both to the Russian front: Boris as an engineer, Catherine as a nurse.

The Russian Revolution destroyed the world they knew. Many of their family members were killed, and they themselves narrowly escaped death at the hands of the Bolsheviks. The Revolution marked Catherine for life. She saw it as the tragic consequence of a Christian society’s failure to incarnate its faith. All her life she cried out against the hypocrisy of those who professed to follow Christ, while failing to serve him in others.

Catherine and Boris became refugees, fleeing first to England, and then in 1921, to Canada, where their son George was born. In the following years she experienced grinding poverty as she labored to support her ailing husband and child. After years of painful struggle, her marriage to Boris fell apart; later her marriage was annulled by the Church.

Catherine’s talent as a speaker was discovered by an agent from a lecture bureau. She began travelling across North America, and became a successful lecturer. Once again she became wealthy—but she was not at peace. The words of Christ pursued her relentlessly: “Sell all you possess, and come, follow Me.” On October 15, 1930 Catherine renewed a promise she had made to God during her ordeal in the revolution, and gave her life to Him. She marked this as the day of the beginning of her Apostolate. With the blessing of Archbishop Neil McNeil of Toronto, Catherine sold all her possessions and provided for her son, George. In the early 1930’s she went to live a hidden life in the slums of Toronto, desiring to console her beloved Lord as a lay apostle by being one with his poor.

The lay apostolate was still in its infancy in the 1930’s. Dorothy Day, another pioneer in this field, was among the few who understood and supported what Catherine was trying to do. Catherine searched for direction, prompted by an inner conviction that she must preach the Gospel with her life. As she implemented this radical Gospel way of life, young men and women came to join her. They called themselves Friendship House, and lived the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi. In the midst of the Great Depression of the 1930’s, the members of Friendship House responded to the needs of the time. They begged for food and clothing to share with those in need and offered hospitality of the heart to all. They also tried to fight the rising tide of Communism, through lectures, classes, and the distribution of a newspaper called “The Social Forum”, based on the great social encyclicals of the Church.
Misunderstanding and calumny plagued Catherine all of her life. False but persistent rumours about her and the working of Friendship House forced its closing in 1936. Catherine left Toronto, feeling her work had failed. Through the seeming failure and great disappointments, she heard the voice of Christ beckoning her to share His suffering.

Soon after she left Toronto, Father John LaFarge, S.J., a well-known Civil Rights Movement leader in the U.S., invited Catherine to open a Friendship House in Harlem. In February, 1938, she accepted his request, and soon the Harlem Friendship House was bursting with activity. Catherine saw the beauty of the Black people and was horrified by the injustices being done to them. She travelled the country decrying racial discrimination against Blacks.

In the midst of widespread rejection and persecution, she found support from Cardinal Patrick Hayes and Cardinal Francis Spellman of New York. In Harlem, a small community formed around her, but again, her work ended in failure. Divisions developed among the staff of Friendship House and in January, 1947, they out-voted Catherine on points she considered essential to the apostolate. Seeing this as a rejection of her vision of Friendship House, she stepped down as Director General.

On May 17, 1947, Catherine came to Combermere, Ontario, Canada, with her second husband, American journalist Eddie Doherty, whom she had married in 1943. Catherine was shattered by the rejection of Friendship House and thought she had come to Ontario to retire. Instead, the most fruitful and lasting phase of her apostolic life was about to begin. As she was recovering from the trauma, Catherine began to serve those in need in the Combermere area, first as a nurse and then through neighborly services. She and Eddie also established a newspaper, Restoration, and eventually began a training centre for the Catholic lay apostolate.

At a summer school of Catholic Action that Catherine organized in 1950, Fr. John Callahan came to teach. He was to become Catherine and Eddie’s spiritual director and the first priest member of Madonna House. Under his guidance, in February 1951, they made an act of consecration to Jesus through Mary, according to St. Louis de Montfort. Mary, Mother of the Church, became guide to their lives and to their apostolate.

Catherine’s lifelong passion to console Christ in others propelled her forward. Again young men and women asked to join her. Graces abounded. In October 1951, Catherine attended the first Lay Congress in Rome. The Papal Secretary, Msgr. Montini (later to become Pope Paul VI) encouraged Catherine and her followers to consider making a permanent commitment.

On April 7, 1954, those living in Combermere voted to embrace a permanent vocation with promises of poverty, chastity and obedience, and the community of Madonna House was established. The following year, Catherine and Eddie took a promise of chastity and lived celibate lives thereafter. From these offerings, an explosion of life took place and Madonna House grew. On June 8, 1960, Bishop William Smith of Pembroke offered the Church’s approval to the fledgling community at the blessing of the statue of Our Lady of Combermere.

Catherine had a faith vision for the restoration of the Church and our modern culture at a time when the de-Christianization of the Western world was already well advanced. She brought the spiritual intuitions of the Christian East to North America. Lay men and women as well as priests came to Madonna House to live the life of a Christian family: the life of Nazareth. They begged for what they needed and gave the rest away. At the invitation of bishops, they opened houses in rural areas and cities in North and South America, Europe, Russia, Africa, and the West Indies.

Catherine’s vision was immense, encompassing farming, carpentry, cooking and laundry, theology and philosophy, science, the fine arts, and drama. “Nothing is foreign to the Apostolate, except sin... The primary work of the Apostolate is to love one another... If we implement this law of love, if we clothe it with our flesh, we shall become a light to the world,” she said, “for the essence of our Apostolate is love—love for God poured out abundantly for others.”

In response to the deepening dilemmas of the Western world, Catherine offered the spirituality of her Russian past. She introduced the concept of poustinia, which was totally unknown in the West in the 1960’s, but has since become recognized in much of the world. Poustinia is the Russian word for “desert,” which in its spiritual context is a place...
where a person meets God through solitude, prayer and fasting. Catherine’s vision and practical way of living the Gospel in ordinary life became recognized as a remedy to the depersonalizing effects of modern technology. In response to the rampant individualism of our century, she called Madonna House to sobornost, a Russian word meaning deep unity of heart and mind in the Holy Trinity—a unity beyond purely human capacity.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty died on December 14, 1985, after a long illness. She left behind a spiritual family of more than 200 members, and foundations around the world. She left to the Church, which she loved passionately, a spiritual heritage that is a beacon for this new century. The following is taken from a Letter to Madonna House Family:

“We need to be poor! Let us live an ordinary life, but, beloved, let us live it with a passionate love for God. Become a mystery. Stretch one hand out to God, the other to your neighbor. Be cruciform. ... Christ’s cross will be our revolution and it will be a revolution of love!”

Questions for Discussion:
1. What struck you the most in this account of Catherine Doherty’s life?
2. How is her life similar to St. Isaac Jogues?
3. Where did she get the strength to love so unselfishly?
4. What does that mean for us?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION
What is one way I can apply what I have learned and meditated on today this coming week?

Reminder: When you come to Mass on Sunday and receive Jesus, our Savior, in Holy Communion ask him to help you with this resolution. Ask St. Isaac Jogues to intercede for you.

APPENDIX 1

ARE YOU AN EXCUSER OR ACCUSER?

BALANCE IMPORTANT BETWEEN ENABLING WHAT’S EVIL AND EXPOSING IT

Are you an excuser or an accuser? There are extremes on both ends. An excuser often goes too far in trying to make light of every negative and letting everyone "off the hook." Mercy is critically important in the Christian walk (as we judge, so will we be judged; Matthew 7:2), and it is always best to give a person the benefit of the doubt, to be a defense lawyer. The problem is if we become an "enabler": when our unwillingness to stand against wrong behavior is interpreted as a green light by whoever is doing or saying or thinking the wrong things. That turns us into "accomplices."

Sometimes, the most merciful -- and Godly -- thing we can do is stand our ground in the face of someone who is a transgressor. There is strength (and faith) in doing that, and often it serves to "pop" the bubble of pride or other waywardness around a person, who would otherwise simply carry on -- often at our expense.
It is wrong to excuse someone who does not deserve to be excused and will not benefit from it. This is especially true, of course, with children (the Bible is clear on the fact that they should be fairly but firmly -- sometimes very firmly -- disciplined (see Sirach or Proverbs ). If a person is constantly saying something that is wrong, this needs to be made accurate ("the truth will set you free," said Jesus, John 8:32; it will also set the other person free).

When we cower before evil, we enhance -- augment -- its ability to attack and sometimes even open our spirits to demons. We allow it to grow, empowering darkness. We allow it to fester. That's not mercy. It's a lack of strength (see Christ in that temple with the moneychangers). When a person is allowed to carry on with wrong behavior, that person can be like a loose fireman's hose -- spewing darkness in all directions.

We are not called to let others step on us. As one viewer, Colleen Gulish in Aliqippa, Pennsylvania, recently wrote, "Regarding lost things reappearing, my daughter bought me a hand made natural pearl bracelet with a magnetic clasp. I wore it once this past summer and lost it. I looked everywhere for it and called the local stores where I had been shopping that day, but no luck. I gave up and resigned myself to the loss. "On January 1st of this year, I went to our Blue Army prayer group and was in line for Confession. Two prayer group members went in before me and when it was my turn I went in and started my confession. I noticed something on the small ledge on which you rest your hands. I looked closer and noticed it was a bracelet. On closer examination, I realized it was my missing bracelet! I also need to tell you, that I had made it one of my new year's resolutions to not 'cast my pearls before swine' anymore. I am always trying to be nice to people where I work and it is often a hostile environment. I decided to stop letting myself be hurt, to be Christian, but not to 'give my heart' to people who crush it underfoot. I had just been speaking to our Lord about this on my way to Mass and then in the confessional there was my pearl bracelet! After Mass I asked the two Blue Army prayer group members if they had put the bracelet in the confessional. Neither one had ever seen it before and they would have definitely noticed it where it was in the confessional."

We don't let others trample what is precious to us (especially our sense of who we are). At the other extreme, however, is accusation -- the wrong tendency to be prosecutor. When this happens, we are always looking for the wrong in people. Prosecution can become persecution. Our society is currently full of this: those who want to see nothing but bad in relatives, friends, workmates, or those in the public eye. Sometimes there is very good reason to recognize the evil so pervasive in our time as long as we don't overdo it and remember to look for good -- for light -- in them and see with the other person's eyes. This too will set you free.

The greatest danger (in this regard) is gossip: When we talk about the failings of others, it means we have pride and want to indicate how good we are in comparison. Leave this sort of stuff to Satan (the "great accuser").

As a mystical woman from Ireland named Eileen O'Driscoll writes, "It is funny but you always hear from gossips the bad news, about the bad things that people have done; you rarely hear about the good. When I see people gossiping, I think of a rosebush with the flowers dying (if it's not pruned, the energy will still be going into the dead flowers instead of producing new stems). The bad news is run by the power of Satan. He is able to manipulate people's minds. Jesus is the good news. We should start today and talk about the
good, and stop criticizing. It only takes one person to change the habit of gossiping and speak well of people. After a while, when people see that putting others down is not tolerated, they too will change because they will have no one to listen to them."

In many experiences with mystics such as Maria Esperanza, we have always noted how rare it is to hear them criticize. We all need to meditate on the many times that God has had mercy on us and we need to extend the same mercy to others. At the same time, that doesn't mean cowering before evil, nor allowing evil to flourish with its lies; it doesn't mean to keep letting someone do the wrong thing, or get off without justice. Often this happens in our own families. There are times when – guided by prayer (and tossing out anger) -- we need to hold firm. We need to let someone know that he or she has crossed a line. The fewer words, the better. Actions -- and silence -- often speak louder than words. The Holy Spirit will guide you. If you exercise patience, He will act in a powerful way at just the right time to correct a person without further tension and quarrels and division. When you hear bad news -- and sometimes we must -- just remember to pray and fast and respect God; this will take you above even scandal.

http://www.spiritdaily.net/excuserrrprosecutor.htm#

APPENDIX 2

Christian Meditation

The saints have gone before us and have reached the summit of prayer. They have a lot to teach us. They all say in different ways that prayer includes both thinking and loving but it is mostly about loving. In meditation we think about God with our minds in order to love God and others with our hearts.

In contrast to meditation techniques aimed at emptying the mind, Christian meditation makes full use of the intellect in an effort to understand God’s Word and to hear God’s voice.

The CCC tells us in paragraph #2705: “Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking.”

The Secret of the Saints is that they learned to hear God speak directly to them through Scripture. That secret is meant for us too! I am absolutely certain that God has so much to say to us about our daily lives. He wants to help, direct, guide, correct and empower us.

In reading Scripture this way there are two things we must keep in mind:

1. We cannot read Scripture in such a way as to violate the Church's faith and morals. (So for instance, an allegorical reading of Scripture is invalid if it is construed as a justification to commit murder, theft, adultery, etc. or if it is taken to deny some teaching of the Church such as the divinity of Christ or the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist)
2. In cases where Scripture or the Church does not attest a particular reading, we cannot demand that fellow Christian agree with our personal interpretation of Scripture.

St. Augustine gives another helpful rule:  
*Any interpretation that leads to charity is good, any reading that works against charity is not.*

Augustine’s rule was an application of Jesus’ words about judging whether or not a tree is good, that is by its fruits:

"A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thorn bushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles" (Luke 6:43-44)

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**The Five C’s of Christian Mediation**

**Step 1. Concentration/Preparation** – The remote preparation for prayer is the life we lead all day. The proximate preparation is the time immediately before prayer, the time to take our minds off other things and put it on God. During prayer time we seek to put our focus completely on the Lord. It’s best to have a specific time and place to pray rather than just when we feel like it or after we get everything else done. To pray it is good to find a quiet place and close the door.

The preparation could consist of three acts: one of faith in the presence of God; of humility, with a short act of contrition; and a prayer to be enlightened. For example: My, God I believe that you are present with me and I desire to love you with all my soul. (2nd) I am sorry for the ways that I have offended you. (3rd) Come to my aid in this time of prayer. Grant me light that I may profit from it. Conclude this brief time of preparation by asking for Our Blessed Mother’s intercession by saying a Hail Mary.

**Step 2. Consideration** – Choose 3 or 4 lines (especially from Scripture), something that speaks to your heart to meditate upon it (as in ponder and dwell upon it). Take these few verses and read them over and over and meditate on them (or take one verse and just dwell on it and let it sink into the depths of your being). Reflect on what it means, what it tells you about God and his ways and his plans, and what it means for you personally, in your particular situation and state in life. In this stage you ponder in your mind and heart some truth or aspect of God’s revelation, you apply it to your life and make it your own. Sometimes asking questions can help: What is the meaning of this passage? What are its key words? What is going on here? How would I express it in my own words? Who? What? When? Where?

The goal of meditation is to go where the Spirit leads us. In our desire to be diligent we might be tempted to strive to get through the entire passage or accumulate the highest number of reflections. As a result, we ignore or pass over the Holy Spirit’s stirring of our heart.

If at any time during your reading your heart is stirred by one particular observation. **Stop there!** Don’t just move onto the next sentence. Take time to go deeper and let the Holy Spirit bring to your mind the reason your heart was stirred. Why did this passage catch your attention? How does it relate to your life? How does it make you feel? What lessons could you draw from it?
**Step 3. Conversation** – Here is the core of the meditation: a heart to heart conversation with Christ about the passage you have been considering and the insights the Holy Spirit has been giving you. This intimate, personal exchange is what separates Christian meditation from other merely psychological exercises that do not move beyond concentration. Here is the mark of true prayer, where you respond to the Word of God with words of your own. You might feel moved to express your admiration, your gratitude, your love, your confusion, your need – whatever the consideration stirred up in your soul. You also give him time and room to speak to you. He often chooses to do this not with words or even ideas, but by moving your will, by directly touching your heart. (Try not to get hung up on hearing him explicitly every day, but you should be able to look back over several days or weeks and recognize his action in your prayer life). As you converse, in the silent depths of your heart you open yourself to God, offering your life and inviting him once again to come and show you the way to living in communion with him. All the other steps of meditation are directed to this step

Talk to Jesus as we would talk to a friend. While speaking to the Lord God, you can say many things. Traditionally we say they are four types of prayer: praise, thanksgiving, intercession (where we pray for others) and petition (where we ask God to supply for our particular needs).

**Step 4. Commit** – In order to let your meditation affect your life commit yourself to doing something concrete today (if possible) as a result of the time you spent with the Lord. Think about what the Lord may be asking of you or what you think would please him and form a particular resolution; Something concrete, measurable, real. Something about which you can say at the end of the day: yes, I did that, or no, I didn’t. For example: to avoid some occasion of sin, to bear with an annoyance from some person; to do something nice for someone, to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament to show your appreciation for the gift of the Eucharist, ask someone to forgive you for an offense you committed, etc… This insures that our prayer life doesn’t become a mere psychological sedative or an exercise of vanity.

**Step 5. Conclusion** - Conclude with three acts: 1. *Act of Thanksgiving* for the grace or inspirations you received. 2. *Act of Determination* to follow through with the resolution made. 3. *Act of Petition* for help in keeping the resolution.

End with an Our Father, Hail Mary and a Glory Be.

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**For further reading check out:**

**CCC 1961-1974 on the Old Law and the New Law; 1812-1833 on the Theological Virtues; 2302-2306 on safeguarding peace in the world**