



WE ARE CHURCH International

Saturday, 8 August 2026

Facilitator: Lyle M.

READER 1 LYLE M: Putting Yourself Before the Other: A look at Christian Love

This month celebrates the life of saints like John Vianney – patron saint of parish priests, Monica – who prayed for the conversion of her son, Augustine – whose transformation is profound, leading to sainthood, among others. Today, the youngest individual to be considered Blessed in the Catholic Church is the very first from Pakistan, who lay his life down for the sake of his church community. Akash Bashir was a 10-year-old boy who stopped a suicide bomber at St. John's in Youhanabad from entering the church with a bomb attached to him, by wrapping his arms around the criminal. His last words to the man were: "I will die but I will not let you go in." If Pope Leo officially signs a decree recognizing Akash as a martyr, he will bypass the miracle requirement for the next step. He will immediately be declared "Blessed". Once he is declared Blessed, only one verified miracle attributed to his intercession will be required for him to be officially canonized as a saint.

What does it mean to be Christian, to simply be a good person, morally upright, ethically sound, compassionate and true? We are not called to perform miracles but to live a life of service, in gratitude and giving. In simple terms, Jesus's Commandment says: Love One Another as Yourself. But think about it, when it comes to laying our life down for someone else, prioritizing the other person before ourselves, being selfless or practicing kindness without a strategic approach, is way easier said than done. When we think of unconditional or selfless love, we think of a mother's. Which we take for granted very often. And, the love of Jesus, who died for our sins and who hurts every time we sin. Yet, who forgives us through the mercy of God and calls us back, through repentance. In love. In faith. In hope. In Happiness.

[Hymn: Power of Your Love](#)

READER 2 MAEVE W: From Seven Story Mountain by Thomas Merton: An Autobiography (1948) A Trappist Monk and Theologian

The thing that depressed me most of all was the shame and despair that invaded my whole nature when the sun came up, and all the labourers were going to work: men healthy and awake and quiet, with their eyes clear, and some rational purpose before them. This humiliation and sense of my own misery and of the fruitlessness of what I had done was the nearest I could get to contrition. It was the reaction of nature. It proved nothing except that I was still, at least, morally alive: or rather that I had still some faint capacity for moral life in me. The term "morally alive" might obscure the fact that I was spiritually dead. I had been that long since!

Here I was, scarcely four years after I had left Oakham and walked out into the world that I thought I was going to ransack and rob of all its pleasures and satisfactions. I had done what I intended, and now I found that it was I who was emptied and robbed and gutted. What a

strange thing! In filling myself, I had emptied myself. In grasping things, I had lost everything. In devouring pleasures and joys, I had found distress and anguish and fear.

There is a paradox that lies in the very heart of human existence. It must be apprehended before any lasting happiness is possible in the soul of a man. The paradox is this: man's nature, by itself, can do little or nothing to settle his most important problems. If we follow nothing but our natures, our own philosophies, our own level of ethics, we will end up in hell.

The word virtue: what a fate it has had in the last three hundred years! The fact that it is nowhere near so despised and ridiculed in Latin countries is a testimony to the fact that it suffered mostly from the mangling it underwent at the hands of Calvinists and Puritans. In our own days the word leaves on the lips of cynical high-school children a kind of flippant smear, and it is exploited in theatres for the possibilities it offers for lewd and cheesy sarcasm.

As November began, my mind was taken up with this one thought: of getting baptized and entering at last into the supernatural life of the Church. In spite of all my studying and all my reading and all my talking, I was still infinitely poor and wretched in my appreciation of what was about to take place within me. I was about to set foot on the shore at the foot of the high, seven circled mountain of a Purgatory steeper and more arduous than I was able to imagine, and I was not at all aware of the climbing I was about to have to do. The essential thing was to begin the climb.

But without this ideal, I was in real and constant danger of carelessness and indifference, and the truth is, that after receiving the immense grace of Baptism, after all the struggles of persuasion and conversion, and after all the long way I had come, through so much of the no-man's land that lies around the confines of hell, instead of becoming a strong and ardent and generous Catholic, I simply slipped into the ranks of the millions of tepid and dull and sluggish and indifferent Christians who live a life that is still half animal, and who barely put up a struggle to keep the breath of grace alive in their souls.

READER 3 COLM H: The Book of Wisdom

A part of this was read at St. Carlos Acutis's funeral by his younger brother who had never met him in real life

Wisdom is with you and knows your actions; she was present when you made the world. She knows what pleases you, what is right and in accordance with your commands. Send her from the holy heavens, down from your glorious throne, so that she may work at my side, and I may learn what pleases you. She knows and understands everything, and will guide me intelligently in what I do. Her glory will protect me. Then I will judge your people fairly, and be worthy of my father's throne. My actions will be acceptable.

Who can ever learn the will of God? Human reason is not adequate for the task, and our philosophies tend to mislead us, because our mortal bodies weigh our souls down. The body is a temporary structure made of earth, a burden to the active mind. All we can do is make guesses about things on earth; we must struggle to learn about things that are close to us. Who, then, can ever hope to understand heavenly things? No one has ever learned your will, unless you first gave him Wisdom, and sent your holy spirit down to him. In this way people on earth have been set on the right path, have learned what pleases you, and have been kept safe by Wisdom.

READER 4: LYLE M Gospel: A Reading from 1 Corinthians: 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

Sharing: All are invited to express their thoughts

Hymn: [A New Commandment](#)

READER 5: SOLINE H: Kindness by Naomi Shihab Nye

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to mail letters and purchase bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.

READER 6: MAEVE W: Prayers of the Faithful

God calls each of us to lives of holiness, rooted in simple acts of love and everyday kindness. Trusting in the infinite mercy, let us bring forth our prayers and petitions.

For the faithful: That the Church may always reflect the gentle face of Christ to the world through acts of radical love and unwavering compassion.

Response: *Lord, fill us with your grace*

For the wars in our world and the leaders and policymakers who have the power to make a change. That God may soften hearts hardened by division, and inspire decisions guided by peace, justice, and genuine kindness toward the most vulnerable.

Response: *Lord, fill us with your grace*

For our community and those called to sainthood: That we may remember that holiness is not reserved for the distant few, but is built daily in small acts of mercy, forgiveness, and selfless love in our homes and workplaces.

Response: *Lord, fill us with your grace*

For those who feel unloved, lost, lonely, anxious, uneasy, forgotten, or overburdened: That they may encounter the healing warmth of Christ through the unexpected kindness of neighbours and strangers.

Response: *Lord, fill us with your grace*

For young people seeking purpose and direction: Such as those in India with the NEET exam crisis. That they may look to the lives of the saints as inspiring models of courage, faith, and authentic love.

Response: *Lord, fill us with your grace*

For our departed loved ones: That they who strived to love well in this life may be welcomed into the eternal joy and company of all the saints in heaven.

Response: *Lord, fill us with your grace*

You sent Your Son to teach us how to love as You love. Hear these prayers we bring before You today, and give us the grace to walk daily on the path to sainthood through lives of quiet kindness. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: *Amen.*

READER 7: SOLINE H: The Eucharist

Holy God, Maker of heaven and earth, we praise you for your boundless love. You created us in your image, and when we turned away, you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us, to teach us to love one another as you have loved us.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, *"Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."*

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, *"Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."*

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon these gifts, that they may be for us the Body and Blood of Christ. Unite us in his love, renew our faith, and bring us to the fullness of your kingdom.

And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

The Lord's Prayer, together in our native tongues

Amen.

[Hymn: Because of You](#)

Please play from 3.00-6.01

READER 8: COLM H: Final Prayer

As temperatures soar where snow once brought cold and joy, as tempers flare where love once spread like wildfire, as this very world we inhabit crumbles to dust, piece by fragile peace... We, here, together, join our hands in prayer and hope that our people are renewed, washed with a faith so fresh that all we see is a light ahead and a flame that guides us through the dark path.

Help us to love, to begin again with ourselves and with one another. For it is in loving me that I can love you better, in self-care that I can be selfless. With an ounce of how Lord Jesus showed love and compassion for those less fortunate and for all. For what does it profit a man to gain the world but lose his soul.

With this, we pray for love and happiness, for ourselves and for the world over. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Final Song: [Love and Happiness](#)