

Holy Family Parish

5th Sunday of Lent
Sunday 3rd April 2022

FIRST READING : Isaiah 43:16-21;

Thus says the Lord, who made a way through the sea, a path in the great waters; who put chariots and horse in the field and a powerful army which lay there never to rise again, snuffed out, put out like a wick: No need to recall the past, no need to think about what was done before. See, I am doing a new deed, even now it comes to light; can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the wilderness, paths in the wilds. The wild beasts will honour me, jackals and ostriches, because I am putting water in the wilderness (rivers in the wild) to give my chosen people drink. The people I have formed for myself will sing my praises.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM : Psalm 125(126);

℟. The Lord has done great things for us, we are filled with joy.

When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage, it seemed like a dream then was our mouth filled with laughter, on our lips there were songs. *℟.*

The heathens themselves said: "what marvels the Lord worked for them!" what marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad. *℟.*

Deliver us O Lord from our bondage as streams in dry land. Those who are sowing tears will sing when they reap. *℟.*

They go out, they go out, full of tears, carrying seed for the sowing, they come back, they come back, full of song, carrying their sheaves. *℟.*

SECOND READING : Philippians 3:8-14;

I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For him I have accepted the loss of everything, and I look on everything as so much rubbish if only I can have Christ and be given a place in him. I am no longer trying for perfection by my own efforts, the perfection that comes from the Law, but I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ, and is from God and based on faith. All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death. That is the way I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead. Not that I have become perfect yet: I have not yet won, but I am still running, trying to capture the prize for which Christ Jesus captured me. I can assure you my brothers, I am far from thinking that I have already won. All I can say is that I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come; I am racing for the finish, for the prize to which God calls us upwards to receive in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL : John 8:1-11;

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. He looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away, and do not sin any more.'

'Prayer is the best weapon we have; it is the key to God's heart. You must speak to Jesus not only with your lips, but with your heart.'

St Padre Pio of Pietrelcina

Phone Bearers

by Fr. William Rock, FSSP

<https://fssp.com/phone-bearers/>

“As Tolkien’s stories also aim to illustrate...one of the greatest ironies of modern industrialization, technology, and its related consumerism is the way in which they have rendered human beings so helplessly dependent upon the very things that were supposed to set them free.”¹



J. R. R. Tolkien in 1940’s

These powerful and striking words were penned by Jonathan S. McIntosh for his *The Flame Imperishable – Tolkien, St. Thomas and the Metaphysics of Faërie*. In this work, McIntosh sets out to reveal the influence the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas had on Tolkien’s Middle Earth, with a particular focus on the creation account given at the beginning of *The Silmarillion*, the precursor to *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. The words quoted above are found in the chapter on evil: “The Metaphysics of Melkor.”

With very little reflection, the truth of the quote is ascertained. How many skills have been lost due to an over-reliance on technology? How has intellectual rigor decayed with so much information – but not knowledge and wisdom – at the ready? This dependence, however, does not just result in a decay of those who are dependent upon it; it makes them vulnerable as never before. Driving this point home, McIntosh quotes Peter Kreeft’s *The Philosophy of Tolkien*:

“The Industrial Revolution made slavery inefficient and unnecessary. But our addiction is the same whether the slaves are made of flesh, metal, or plastic. We have done exactly what Sauron did in forging the Ring. We have put our power into things in order to increase our power. And the result is, as everyone knows but no one admits, that we are now weak little wimps, Shelob’s slaves, unable to survive a blow to the great spider of our technology network. We tremble before a nationwide electrical blackout or a global computer virus...In our drive for power we have deceived ourselves into thinking that we have become more powerful when all the time we have been becoming less.”²

To be honest, Kreeft may have been setting the bar a bit too high. It is true that “we tremble before a nationwide electrical blackout,” but how quickly does work grind to a stop when the internet or electricity is just temporarily down?

Not only has modern man become dependent upon technology, but we have become, in a certain sense, slaves to it, as Kreeft points out. How much of our work, our energy, our money is put into purchasing, updating, or repairing our technology – the washing machine, the air conditioner, the car, the computer, the smart phone?

If anything exemplifies modern man’s slavery to technology, it is the smart phone. He always carries it with him, looking for hotspots to utilize it and outlets to power it with the charger he brings with him. The compulsion to constantly check it for new messages or online updates makes unrelenting demands upon a will that should be free. Phantom buzzing influencing, damaging the mind and body of the bearer.

The choice of the word “bearer” here is not inadvertent, for it calls to mind the Ring Bearers of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, those who carried the One Ring forged by Sauron. This Ring affected the mind and will of the Bearers, influencing and manipulating them with the purpose of being returned to its master and maker. Beyond this influence on the will, the effect of the smart phone on its bearer is similar to other effects the One Ring had on its Bearers. When worn, the One Ring would turn the Bearer invisible, effectively separating him from those around him. Kreeft explains this situation as follows:

“Invisibility also means isolation. God alone can endure this (and only because He is a Trinity of persons, a society in Himself). He is God alone; there is no other. Yet He is other in Himself and never alone. God is a community. That is why He needs no community, as we do. The Ring cuts us off from community, and contact. We are alone with the Eye. There is no room for an Other in the One Ring. This is why the Ring surrounds emptiness. If We-ness, or Relationship, or Love, or Trinity is the name of ultimate reality, then the Ring makes us unreal by isolating us. It plunges us into its own emptiness, like a Black Hole. Its circular shape is an image of that the emptiness: it encloses nothingness with its all-encompassing circle of power.”³

When one is seen with his head bowed towards the screen, it sends the message that he has cut himself off from those around him. The body language sends a message that he is not open to interacting with others. Such behaviour, when prolonged, cannot help but have a negative influence on one’s prayer life, where one is invited to have an intimate and personal friendship with His Creator. If one has the habit of closing himself off to other men, whom he senses, how can he possibly be open to having a relationship with God Whom he cannot (see 1 Joh 4:20)?

Interestingly, McIntosh argues that the reason why the One Ring had no power over Tom Bombadil (“a merry fellow; Bright blue his jacket is, and his boots are yellow”⁴) is because Tom Bombadil is “one of the earthiest characters in Tolkien’s fiction and the one whose whole identity is most tied to his love of and devotion to other things.”⁵

Tom Bombadil's devotion to other was explained by Tolkien in one of his letters as follows: he desires "knowledge of other things, their history and nature, because they are 'other' and wholly independent of the enquiring mind, a spirit coeval with a rational mind, and entirely unconcerned with 'doing' anything with the knowledge."⁶

But not only does wearing the One Ring make the Bearer invisible to others, it makes him more visible to Sauron, who can be understood as a personification of evil, and his Eye. In a similar way, those who use smart phones, without the proper self-control and, if necessary, protections, are exposing themselves to levels of evil and depravity unthinkable to previous generations. And the more one uses the One Ring, the more one uses the smart phone, the more permanent and damaging the effects are. As Gandalf (an incarnated/embodyed angel for all intents and purposes) explained "if one 'often uses the Ring to make himself invisible, he fades: he becomes in the end invisible permanently, and walks in the twilight under the eye of the dark power that rules the Rings...Yes, sooner or later...the dark power will devour him.'" ⁷ How many long-term smart phone users do not feel the same as Bilbo after he possessed the Ring for as long as he did – "I am beginning to feel it in my heart of hearts...I feel all thin, sort of stretched, if you know what I mean: like butter that has been scraped over too much bread. That can't be right. I need a change, or something?" ⁸

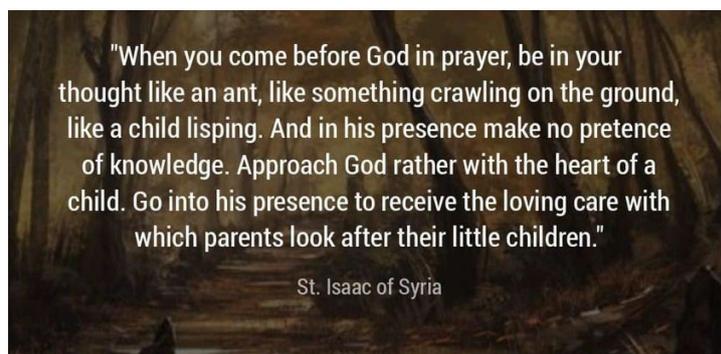
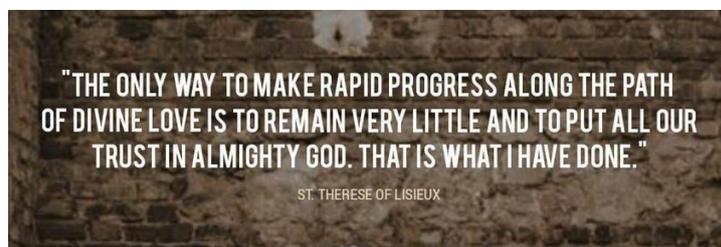
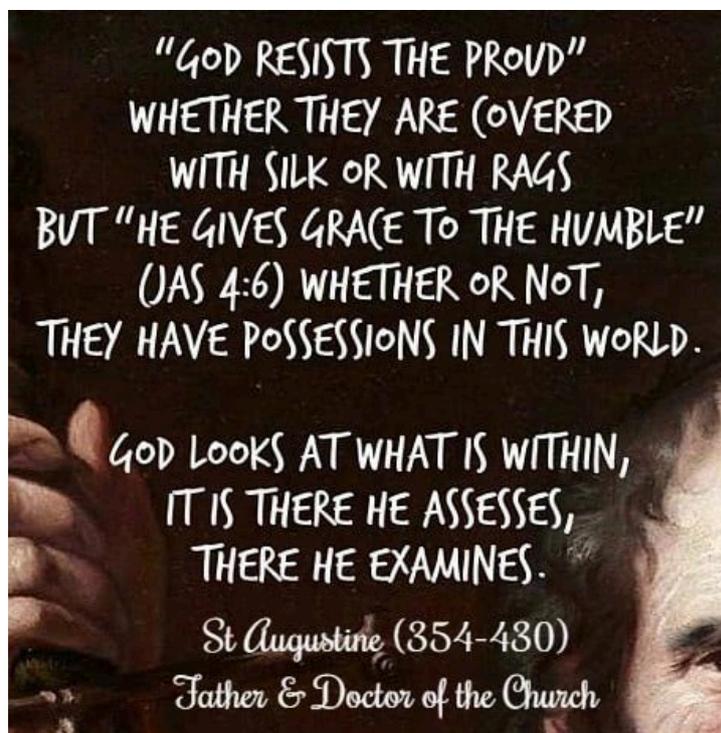
There is another way in which the One Ring is similar to a smart phone. In order to forge the One Ring, "the instrument of his domination,"⁹ Sauron put part of his power, part of his being, part of himself into the artifact. So tied was he to the Ring, that when it was destroyed, his own power and being was dissolved. When one's smart phone is misplaced, lost, damaged, or destroyed, does not the owner feel like part of himself has been destroyed? That he is incomplete until he finds it or has it replaced? On this point, McIntosh wrote the following: "Tolkien makes the serious, real-world metaphysical point that, in the process of aggrandizing ourselves through materialistic acquisitiveness and scientific mastery of nature, we have in fact emptied ourselves, denied our own nature, and sacrificed something of our own inherent and authentic being."¹⁰

There is not a one-size-fits-all solution to the problems described above, but a reconsideration and reordering of this dependence on technology is necessary so that the negative accompanying consequences can be minimized or avoided altogether. Solutions should be sought by utilizing Christian prudence and principles. But, if any of the Tolkien's characters should be presented as a model to be followed in such an undertaking, it can be none other than Tom Bombadil with his connection to creation and nature, and, especially, his openness to other persons – an openness which is so necessary and fundamental to the Catholic spiritual life.

William Rock, FSSP was ordained in the fall of 2019 and is currently assigned to Regina Caeli Parish in Houston, TX. March 25, 2022

END NOTES

1. McIntosh, Jonathan S. *The Flame Imperishable* – Tolkien, St. Thomas and the Metaphysics of Faërie. Kettering: Angelico Press, 2017, pp. 242-243.
2. Kreeft, Peter. *The Philosophy of Tolkien*, pp. 187-188 as quoted by McIntosh, p. 243.
3. Kreeft, p. 181 as quoted by McIntosh, p. 236, footnote 63.
4. Tolkien, J. R. R., *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Chapter 7: "In the House of Tom Bombadil."
5. Tolkien, Letter 196 as quoted by McIntosh, p. 22, footnote 58 [emphases in the original].
6. McIntosh, pp. 236-237.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 237 quoting Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Chapter 2: "The Shadow of the Past."
8. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Chapter 1: "A Long-Expected Party" as quoted by McIntosh, p. 237, footnote 64.
9. McIntosh, p. 244.
10. *Ibid.*



NEXT SUNDAY:

10th April 2022

Palm Sunday

Is 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11;

Lk 22:14 – 23:56;

LITURGY ROSTER

Readers: L. Ahio, C. Tagiilima

Gospel Readers: S. Shaw, R. Cardoza

Prayers of the Faithful: B. Molloy

Offertory: La'akulu Family

Special Ministers: S. Molloy

ANNIVERSARIES THIS WEEK

3 Apr: *Mara Viskovich*

5 Apr: *Patrick McMeekin,*
Patricia Hogan

6 Apr: *Bernard Tubberty*

7 Apr: *Josefa Belich, Dawn Bolton*

8 Apr: *Clare Sharkey,*

Johanna Verbieson

9 Apr: *William Hennah, John Williams*

PARISH FINANCES

Parish \$2,470.62

Priests \$1,235.31

Total AP's \$3,705.93

HOLY WEEK TIMETABLE

~ PASSION SUNDAY ~

10th April

**The Commemoration of the Lord's
Entrance into Jerusalem**

8:00am Latin Mass

10:00am English Mass

~ HOLY THURSDAY ~

14th April

The Mass of the Last Supper –

7:00pm

*Adoration till 12am (Midnight) in
Church*

~ GOOD FRIDAY ~

15th April

The Passion of Christ

Veneration of the Holy Cross

Stations of the Cross – 10:00am

Veneration of the Holy Cross –

3:00pm

~ HOLY SATURDAY ~

16th April

Vigil of Light – 7:00pm

Please bring:

a bell to ring during the Gloria

*Please note: We are providing
candles this year.*

~ EASTER SUNDAY ~

17th April

The Resurrection of the Lord

8:00am Latin Mass

10:00am English Mass

**Please make a note of the times as
they differ from last year.*

PROCESSIONAL HYMN:

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the cross of Christ, my God:
All the vain things that charm me
most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature
mine, That were an off'ring far too
small; Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

OFFERTORY HYMN:

*Ave Regina Caelorum,
*Ave Dómina Angelórum:
Sálve rádix, sálve porta,
Ex qua mundo lux est órta :
Gáude Virgo gloriósa.
Super ómnes speciósa :
Vále, o valde decóra,
Et pro nóbis Christum exóra.*

COMMUNION HYMN:

Even if I had committed
every possible crime,
forever would I have the same
confidence, because I know that this
multitude of offences is but a drop of
water thrown into a blazing fire,
is but a drop of water thrown into a
blazing fire.

Oh how I need a heart
burning with tenderness,
On whom I can rely with no turning
back who loves me as I am and even
my weakness, and who will leave me
not throughout both day and night,
and who will leave me not
throughout both day and night.

I was not able to find any other living
creature who loved me in this way
and who would never die,
because I need a God who makes
Himself like me, whom I can call a
brother, and who can suffer too,
whom I can call a brother and who
can suffer too.

Oh yes I know this well, that all our
acts of justice do not have in your
eyes the slightest worth at all,
and so to give a price to all my
sacrifices, I want to throw them all
into your heart divine.

I want to throw them all into your heart
divine.

God of Mercy and Compassion,
Look with pity upon me,
Father let me call Thee Father,
'Tis thy child returns to Thee.

*Jesus Lord, I ask for mercy; let me not
implore in vain; All my sins,
I now detest them, never will I sin again.*

See our Saviour, bleeding, dying, on the
cross of Calvary; To that cross my sins
have nail'd Him, yet he bleeds and dies
for me.

RECESSIONAL HYMN:

Hail, Queen of heav'n, the ocean star,
Guide of the wand'rer here below;
Thrown on life's surge,
we claim thy care:
Save us from peril and from woe
Mother of Christ, star of the sea.
Pray for the wand'rer, pray for me.

O gentle, chaste, and spotless maid,
We sinners make our prayers through
thee; Remind thy son that he has paid
The price of our iniquity.
Virgin most pure, star of the sea,
Prayer for the sinner, pray for me.

Sojourners in this vale of tears,
To thee, blest advocate, we cry:
Pity our sorrows, calm our fears,
And soothe with hope our misery.
Refuge in grief, star of the sea,
Pray for the mourner, pray for me.

Parish Notices

Pledge Envelopes – are ready for collection.
Your receipts will be ready from the 24th
April. If I have your email they will be
emailed to you or sent in the post.

Diocesan Notices

**Let's talk about Life & Love with Sr
Jeanne Marie from the Sisters of Life** The
evenings will include time for discussion
and Q&A. Free supper! Sister will give two
talks at Catholic Tertiary Chaplaincy, 110
Symonds Street, Auckland City. **Young
Adults: Sunday 3 April @ 7pm** and **Years
12/13: Monday 4 April @ 7pm**. Register
online at
www.thenextgeneration.org.nz or to find
out more contact Amie Kaufman, 027 350
8227 or werthenextgen@gmail.com.

Palm Sunday 10 April – 7:30pm
outside the Auckland Medical Aid Centre
(AMAC), 283-289 Dominion Rd, Mt
Eden. Join us for the final hour of 40 Days
for Life For more information please visit
www.fli.org.nz/40daysforlife or contact
Simon Archer 021 400 729 or
simon@fli.org.nz