



Metanoia – Turning Around



The Alpha Course — Presenting and Encountering Christ

A fundamental theme of Pope Francis' papacy has been the Church's call to missionary activity. This activity is not simply the call of a few who will travel to distant lands. It is the call of every Christian: the call to participate in evangelization. Yet in our communities, workplaces, and homes, we often feel uncomfortable in this role, whether because the Christian message and lifestyle are counter-cultural or because we don't really know or understand what we believe, why we believe it, or why we do what we do.

The [Alpha Course](#) reaches out to those who have never really heard the Gospel or experienced life as Christians. One of the side-effects of the program, however, is to revitalize parish life. Long-time members of Christian communities, including Roman Catholics, (*Cont. p. 3*)



Metanoia: transformation and change

By Susan Mahan, PhD

“Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may judge what is God’s will, what is good, acceptable and perfect.” (Rom 12:2)

Many of us have a desire for closeness to God and the realization of all that we can be. Those goals inevitably call us to change. But, change is hard. And often we feel that we cannot make it happen.

In fact, we can not and do not make it happen. As Christians we realize that God makes it happen. We can let desire in. We can say “yes” to change even if it feels like an unknown path. We can push back fear and see the new possibilities as freedom from the past or as an adventure. But even these are with God's support. Left on our own, we humans fall into fear, laziness, and even anger that there is work involved in finding true happiness.

In his love, God has created us to transcend our natural selves. He has built into his creation a sense of beauty and love that goes far beyond the need to survive. (*Cont. on p. 3*)



Un Año Santo Extraordinario de la Misericordia Divina

En el 13 de marzo, el Papa Francisco anunció la convocación de un Jubileo extraordinario con oraciones y otras actividades especiales para celebrar la misericordia divina. El año se iniciará en la solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción (el 8 de diciembre de 2015) y concluirá con la solemnidad de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, Rey del Universo (el 20 de noviembre de 2016). El Jubileo de la Misericordia tendrá lugar en el quincuagésimo aniversario de la clausura del Concilio Vaticano II.

Se celebrará el año de jubileo con ceremonias y liturgias especiales. Puesto que este jubileo se llevará a cabo afuera de la secuencia regular de 25 o 50 años, se refiere a este como un Año Santo Extraordinario. El concepto del Año Santo se modela en el año de jubileo del los antiguos hebreos en el cual los campos quedaban sin plantarse, los esclavos fueron liberados, y las deudas se perdonaron. (*Sigue en la pág. 4*)

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ASK THEOLOGIKA

NOT SO COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Dear Theologika,

Why did Jesus ride a donkey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday? I thought he usually walked wherever he went. Did he get lucky and have a friend who'd lend him the donkey?

I'd rather ride!

Dear Rather Ride,

The choice of a donkey was an important symbolic statement by Jesus.

Typically, when a ruler was going to visit a city, he would send word in advance. The rich men in the city would be expected to put together a parade, feasts, games, and other forms of celebration to welcome the ruler. This was be very expensive and was not always a welcome duty (especially in conquered countries). The festivities and the process of putting them all together was known as *leitourgia* (a word we translate as liturgy). *Leitourgia* meant "work of the people". In ancient Greece, *leitourgia* was a public service that included more than just sponsoring festivals. It

was the way of funding government services. Today we use the term for the religious rituals of many cultures including Christianity.

In the case of a visit from the ruler to a community, it was expected that he would arrive in military dress and riding a chariot or a war horse. He rode into town with his hand raised in a salute and all knew exactly who was in charge of their lives and fortunes.

The description of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, was seen as a claim that he was the promised Messiah, the one whose coming was foretold by the prophet Zechariah nearly 500 years earlier, "See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey (NIV)." (Zech 9:9)

In promising that the Messiah would come riding on a donkey, God turns the world and its ways upside down. Rulers ride chariots and stallions into town. They come with their armies and military force. Their coming is expensive and dangerous. God's Chosen One comes into town on a donkey, a beast of burden ridden by women, children, or older men.

All four Gospels include this event. Jesus would have known what his action would imply, though John notes that it was only after the Resurrection that they all came to understand it. At the very least, Jesus was claiming to be coming on a mission from God. It was one of the actions that led to his crucifixion. When the story of Jesus was told later, his followers included this event to help explain who he was and what he came to do.

Peace and joy be with you,



Coming Soon – An Extraordinary Jubilee of Divine Mercy

On March 13, Pope Francis announced a special year of prayer and other special activities to celebrate God's unlimited mercy. Divine mercy is one of the Pope's major themes in his preaching and pastoral activity. The year will officially begin on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 8, 2015) and end on the Feast of Christ the King (November 20, 2016). The Holy Year of Mercy also marks the 50th anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council. It will be marked by special ceremonies and liturgies. Since this Holy Year is outside the traditional 25 or 50 year interval for regular Holy Years, it is called an Extraordinary Holy Year.

The concept of the Holy Year is modeled on the Old Testament Jubilee Year in which the fields rested, slaves were freed, and debts were forgiven.

The Holy Father declared "Dear brothers and sisters, I have often thought about how the Church might make clear its mission of being a witness to mercy. It is a journey that begins with a spiritual conversion. For this reason, I have decided to call an *extraordinary Jubilee* that is to have the mercy of God at its center. It shall be a Holy Year of Mercy. We want to live this Year in the light of the Lord's words: 'Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.' (Lk 6:36)"

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Finding Our Own Sanctuary in Daily Living



Terry Hershey defines sanctuary as “a place where your soul can catch up with your body.” We all need these places, yet we don’t often give

ourselves permission to go there. Nevertheless, a healthy physical and spiritual life requires taking time to rest and simply be at peace.

Sanctuary is not simply an ideal, far-off place that can only be found by hermits or others who leave the modern world behind. Sanctuary is a place here and now that can be entered by any one of us. We simply have to decide to do it and recognize what it is for us personally.

Entering Into Sanctuary

A *portal exists* for each of us through which we must pass to enter into our sanctuary. There’s something we do, somewhere we go, or a mental image we invoke, that opens a different “space” to us.

A *sanctuary has boundaries*. It’s a type of container/space in which we can be ourselves unreservedly.

Sanctuary is a place to slow down. As a wise grandfather once said,

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Rev Bryan N Massingale – Marquette University

The Blind Man Sees – Limrick by Dennis Johnston, Image by Jesus MAFA

Time for Change Puzzle – Theologika.net

“Sometimes it’s not the fish we’re after, it’s the fishing.”

A place of sanctuary engages all the senses. When we enter into the “holy ground” of sanctuary, we take our shoes off, figuratively if not literally. Like Moses, we need to feel the holy ground, savor it with all our senses, and enjoy our time there.

Entering into sanctuary is an intentional action. We need to set a time and enter regularly. We do it for ourselves, not for anyone else. To the extent we fail to enter our sanctuary, we have less to offer to others. We must enter sanctuary in order to be re-charged and ready to carry out our own calling and mission in life.

Terry is an engaging speaker and an inspirational author. His most recent book, *Sanctuary: Creating a Space for Grace in Your Life*, is available now.

(Metanoia Cont. from p. 1)

Humans have the ability to choose consciously and to know if an act is harmful to self or others. We can distinguish our accomplishments from our fundamental orientation. Still, we find ourselves wondering at times if all the effort we put into a goal is worth it.

Metanoia, sometimes translated as repentance, refers to a change of mind. A lasting *metanoia* happens in our lives because of an experience of God. It is different for each person. It can be a sense of divine closeness, or an answer to prayer, or the knowledge that one has been saved from an entanglement or a threat, or consolation at Eucharist.

Experience of God is the possible and expected point of prayer. Give God some time to meet you in prayer. Let him lead you to your experience of him, to your *metanoia*.

(Alpha Course, Cont. from p 1)
experience a revitalization of their faith as they see it anew through the eyes of the newcomers.

Fr. John Riccardo, pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Plymouth, Michigan, explains that we as Catholics tend to focus on sacramentalizing: introducing our parishioners to the sacraments and helping them grow in their sacramental life. According to Fr. Riccardo, if we teach the people about the faith and the sacraments without introducing them to the person of Christ, it is like throwing seeds on concrete. Nothing will grow.

The Alpha Course has a simple method. People come together for a meal and a discussion, not just in a church setting but wherever people gather. The attendees are primarily people who are currently outside the Church. Over a period of ten weeks the participants come to an experience of the Risen Christ as their loving friend and savior.

The Alpha Course began in a Church of England parish in London and is now widely used by many denominations. It is opening doors to ecumenical cooperation and discussion about the centrality of Christ in our faith. Over 1 million Catholics in Canada alone have been through the course.

Supporters of the Alpha Course include the American bishops’ conference (USCCB), Fr. Rainero Cantalamessa, preacher to the papal household, and Cardinal Rino Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization. Rev. Mr. Steve Mitchell, a deacon of the Archdiocese of Detroit, is the national director for Alpha USA.

Growing into an Adult Morality



Fr. Bryan N. Massingale, in his workshop at the 2015 Los Angeles Religious Education Congress, "Virtues for Adult Christians", explained that Christian morality is about decisions we make that are motivated by faith in Christ. They are a response to God's prior gift of love and expressed in our choices and decisions about what we do and the kind of person we are.

Morality, like much of human experience, is different for children than for adults. Childhood is a time of formation and growth. Adulthood is a time of internalization of what has

been learned and growth in wisdom. For children, morality is something that comes from the outside. For adults morality reflects what is inside.

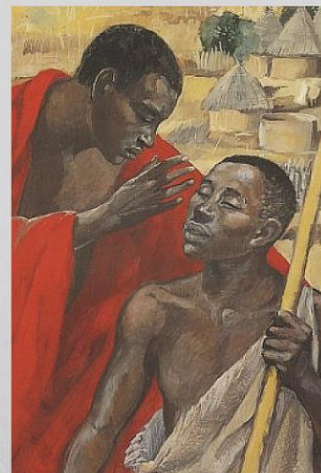
Traditional lists of virtues are divided into two groups: Theological Virtues (Faith, Hope, Love) and Cardinal Virtues (Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice). The Cardinal virtues are sometimes known as "hinge" virtues because others flow from them.

In contrast to the virtues, we also have lists of vices. Interestingly, the vices come in two versions: an excess or a lack of that quality that makes a virtue the good quality that it is. For example the vice that is opposite to Hope may be seen as Despair (too little hope).

Fr. Massingale suggests that for today's adult Christians, a list of some contemporary virtues should include: Courage, Compassion, Self-Love, Forgiveness, and Wisdom. If these are missing, our lives get all messed up.

(El Año Santo – a continuación)

En su mensaje, el Santo Padre afirmó:
"Queridos hermanos y hermanas, con frecuencia he pensado en cómo la Iglesia podría hacer clara su misión de ser testigo a la misericordia. Es un viaje que comienza con una conversión espiritual. Por eso, he decidido convocar un Jubileo extraordinario que tenga en el centro la misericordia de Dios. Será un Año Santo de la Misericordia. Lo queremos vivir a la luz de la palabra del Señor: 'Sean misericordiosos como el Padre'. (Lc 6:36)"



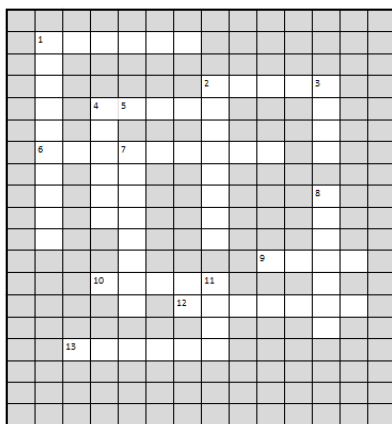
The Blind Man Sees

A Limrick by Dennis G. Johnston
March 30, 2014

On the blind man's eyes Jésus rubbed clay
Sightless man saw his first light of day.

This miraculous sign
Parisées would malign --
For Christ's mércy and lóve, shout "Hooráy!"

A Time for Change



Across:

- The term metanoia actually means a _____ of mind.
- The upcoming Extraordinary Jubilee celebrates Divine _____.
- An excess or a lack of a the qualities known as virtues is known as a _____.
- A place to rest and be at peace.
- A place for your _____ to catch up with your body.
- A theological virtue whose lack is known as unbelief.
- A virtue that might also be called fortitude, the opposite of cowardice.
- A good habit or way of being/acting.

Down:

- The ability to identify with another person and offer help.
- A Greek word referring to a change of mind (and behavior).
- A Jubilee is also known as a Holy _____.
- Jesus rode into Jerusalem riding on a _____.
- "Hinge" virtues -- ones from which others flow.
- The work of the people - in ancient times and in worship today.
- A theological virtue whose opposite is despair.



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Praying with Pope Francis

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