

The Illusion of Our Own Goodness: *Fr. Ronald Rolheiser OMI*

One of the great tragedies in all literature is the biblical story of Saul. Saul makes Hamlet look like a Disney character. Hamlet, at least, had good reasons for the disaster that befell him. Saul, given the gifts with which he started, should have fared better, much better. His story begins with the announcement that in all of Israel none measured up to him in height, strength, goodness, or acclaim. A natural leader, a prince among his peers, his extraordinary character was recognized and proclaimed by the people. The beginning of his story is the stuff of fairy tales. And so, it goes on, for a while. But, at a point, things begin to sour. That point was the arrival on the scene of David – a younger, more handsome, more gifted, and more acclaimed man. Jealousy sets in and envy slowly turns Saul's soul to poison. Looking at David, he sees only a popularity that eclipses his own, not another man's goodness, nor indeed how that goodness can be a gift to the people. He grows bitter, petty, cold, tries to kill David, and eventually dies by his own hand, an angry man who has fallen far from the goodness of his youth.

What happened here? How does someone who has so much goodness, talent, power, and blessing, grow into an angry, petty man who kills himself out of disappointment? How does this happen?

The late Margaret Laurence, in a brilliant, dark novel, *The Stone Angel*, gives us an interesting description of exactly how this can happen. Her main character, Hagar Shipley, parallels somewhat the biblical Saul.

Hagar's story begins like his: She is young, good, and full of potential. What's to become of such a beautiful, bright, talented, young woman? Sadly, not much at all. She drifts into everything: adulthood, an unhappy marriage, and into a deep unrecognized disappointment that eventually leaves her slovenly, frigid, bitter, and without energy or ambition. What's as remarkable as it is sad, is that she doesn't recognize any of this as happening to her. In her mind, she remains always the young, good, gracious, popular, attractive young girl she was in high school. She doesn't notice how small her world has become, how few friends are around, how little she admires anything or anyone, or even how physically unkempt she has let herself become.

Her awakening is sudden and cruel. One winter day, shabbily dressed in an old parka, she rings the doorbell of a house to which she is delivering eggs. A young child answers the door, sees Hagar, and Hagar overhears the child tell her mother: "That horrible, old egg-woman is at the door!" The penny drops.

Stunned, she leaves the house and finds her way to a public bathroom where she puts on all the lights and studies her face in a mirror. What looks back is a face she doesn't recognize, someone pathetically at odds with whom she imagines herself to be. She sees in fact the horrible, old egg-woman that the child saw at the door rather than young, gracious, attractive, big-hearted woman she still imagines herself to be. How can this happen? she asks herself. How can we, imperceptible to ourselves, grow into someone we don't even recognize?

To a greater or lesser degree, this happens to us all. It's not easy to age, to absorb the death of much of what we dreamed for ourselves and to watch the young take over and receive the popularity and acclaim that once were ours. Like Saul, we can easily fill with a jealousy and an anger to which we are blind and, like Hagar, do not notice inside ourselves. Others, of course, do notice.

But, for most of us, as this is happening, we remain still good and generous people, except that we are more caustic, cynical, and judgmental than we once were. We remain good people, but whine too much, feel too sorry for ourselves, and curse more than bless those who have replaced us in youth, popularity, and status. Hence, one of the pre-eminent human and spiritual tasks in the second-half of life is precisely to recognize this jealousy, this ugliness, inside ourselves and to come back again to the love and freshness of our youth, to revirginize, to come to a *second nativete*, and to begin again to give others, especially the young, the gaze of admiration.

At the beginning of the Book of Revelations, the author, speaking in God's voice, has this advice for us, at least for those of us who are beyond the bloom of youth: "I've seen how hard you work. I recognize your generosity and all the good work you do. But I have this against you – *you have less love in you now than when you were young!* Go back and look from where you have fallen!"

We might want to hear those words from scripture before we overhear them from some young girl telling her mother that a bitter, ugly, old person is at the door.

Pob Bendith. God bless you&Keep you. Fr Pius CMI



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28th July 2024 17th Sunday Ordinary Time

LITURGY OF THE WEEK: Psalter Week I

Mass times: Mon:10am Tue:7pm, Wed-Friday 10am. Sat.5.30pm. Sun.11am

Live Streaming Link:

<https://www.churchservices.tv/mold>

27th July Saturday 5.30pm

For People of the Parish

28th July Sunday 11am

Claire Finlow RIP (The Cotter Family)

Monday
29th July

Mem. Martha, Mary and Lazarus
Int. Kathy Jackson, B'day (*Bob Jackson*)

Tuesday
30th July

Liturgy of the day **7pm**
Int. Susan Finney&Family

Wednesday
31st July

Mem. St. Ignatius of Loyola
Thomas Danby RIP (*Anne Cheetham*)

Thursday
1st Aug

Mem. St. Alphonsus Leguori
Patrick Reilley RIP (*Josephine Reilley*)

Friday
2nd Aug

Liturgy of the day
Sara Hughes RIP (*Agnes Christmas*)

Eucharistic Adoration until 11am

18th Sunday of Ordinary Time B

3rd August Saturday 5.30pm
For People of the Parish

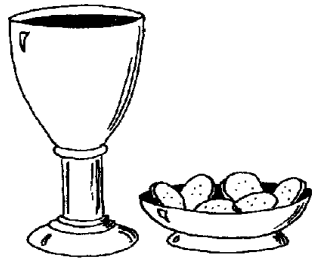
4th August Sunday 11am
Rose Bryan RIP
(The Cotter Family)

Confessions
On Saturdays
and Sundays
before the
Mass
(Saturdays
5pm to 5.20
and Sundays
10.30am to
10.50).
Weekdays
after the Mass,
on Request.



ACTION REPLAY

Think what it was that Jesus did in the sight of the 5,000. He took the bread (and fish). He said a blessing of



thanks to God. He broke the bread. And he gave it to the disciples to hand it out.

Ring any bells? Of course it does. Those four actions, (taking, blessing, breaking and giving) are exactly what Jesus did at the Last Supper. After the resurrection the apostles continued to repeat these actions when they gathered together to remember their Lord. And right down to today they are the same actions that Christians perform when they celebrate the Eucharist.

We take the bread and wine. Not only physically presenting it and pre-

paring it on the altar, but also recalling that these elements were given to us first by God and now we refashion them and set them before God.

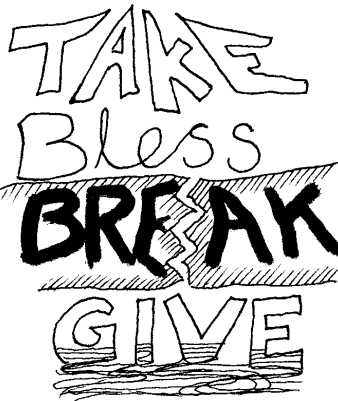
In a prayer of thanksgiving we then bless God for creating and redeeming us in Christ, and we ask God's blessing upon the bread and wine that by the power of the Holy Spirit it may become for us the body and blood of Christ.

We break the bread that is to be shared in communion. Communion is not first and foremost just about me and God, about my host or wafer. St Paul tells us that the bread is made from grain scattered on the hillside, and that we share in the one loaf and one cup in order to become one body in Christ.

Finally, the priest and other ministers give the body and blood to us in communion. Because we share a unity and peace with each other

as brothers and sisters in Christ, we move forward together to eat and drink the food of life, to share communion with God and each other.

These four actions, take-bless-break-give, are the key to understanding what Christians do when they cel-



eborate the Eucharist. Our "Amen" when we receive communion is a sign of our readiness as a community to actually become what we eat: the Body of Christ, the Church.



QR Code for Today's Readings.

News, Notices and Events

Prayer Meeting

There will be a Prayer Meeting in the Church Hall on Saturday 3rd. August. We begin at 1.30pm with a shared lunch followed by Prayer, Praise and Worship. Healing Ministry will be available. Do come along and join us, we will be delighted welcome you and share the joys of praying together. We are one in the Spirit. We are one in the Lord. Look forward to seeing you there.

Teresa Davies.

Change Good as a Rest

Six weeks holiday from school! It's what we look forward to all the year round and then it seems to come and go so quickly. Much more quickly than many of the lessons we sit through...So what we will do during the holidays? Stay in bed...watch TV all day...text our friends...or just doss around? It's tempting to do nothing, but we soon get bored with just hanging around each day with nothing particular in mind. The real purpose of holidays is to recharge our batteries. Holidays are for doing something different. Something that sparks our interest, gives us a buzz, and challenges us. Men and women were made by God to keep growing and learning, never stopping still and feeling that they've made it. We say that learning is life-long: it's from womb to tomb. So by all means have a bit of a rest, but make sure you don't miss out on discovering new things to do, new things to see, new skills to perfect. You may have earned your R and R, but remember that a change is as good as a rest.

Small Things that Lead to Big

Lord, I need to keep an eye on the small things in my life as well as the bigger issues, because my thoughts become my attitude, my attitude becomes my words, my words become my actions, and my actions form my character. Be there, Lord, in that instant before every thought, that I may choose wisely my thoughts and my attitude, my words and my actions, so that I grow as the person you call me to be.
Amen.

Columban Fathers Mission Appeal On 3rd/ and 4th August

Fr. Pat O'Beirne from the Missionary Society of St. Columban will be making an appeal for their missionary activities in Africa and Far East at all the Masses on the first weekend of August here at St. David's and at Our Lady of the Rosary, Buckley.

There will be a collection at the door after Mass to support the Columban Fathers.

SVP Film Club

The next 'silver screen' film showing will be at **2pm on Wednesday 31st July** in the Church Hall. To mark the centenary of the famous 1924 Olympics, and coinciding with this summer's Paris Olympics, the film will be **Chariots of Fire**.

If you'd like to come along please sign the list in the church porch. Admission is free, and tea and coffee will be served. Everyone is warmly welcome! **Mary, Chris and Sr Helen**

Let us Pray for the sick::

Deacon David Joy, Tricia Evans, Rianna Taylor and family, Debra Roberts, Lauren Dunlop, Pam Cox, Anne Jones, and Franciszek Williams

We remember in our prayer

Those whose anniversaries occur this week

(27th July) John Cafferty, Patrick Michael Brennan (28th July) Lawrence Brannan, Peter Saxe Coburg (29th July) Patrick Brannan, George O'Neill, Samson Williams (31st July) John Daly, Mary Jacinta Roberts, Lilian Muter, (1st August) Maria Teresa Bardini, Winefride Cliffe, Ethel Cotter, David Maher (2nd Aug) John James O'Neill, Margaret Parry, Martin Carney, Michael Bravey, Patricia Hannah, Maria Williams