

SOLMUNITY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS
29 June 2025

Fr. Jim Fredericks

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PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY
Lectionary: 591

Reading I Acts 12:1-11

In those days, King Herod laid hands upon some members of the Church to harm them.

He had James, the brother of John, killed by the sword, and when he saw that this was pleasing to the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also.

It was the feast of Unleavened Bread.

He had him taken into custody and put in prison under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each.

He intended to bring him before the people after Passover.

Peter thus was being kept in prison, but prayer by the Church was fervently being made to God on his behalf.

On the very night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter, secured by double chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while outside the door guards kept watch on the prison. Suddenly the angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the cell.

He tapped Peter on the side and awakened him, saying, "Get up quickly."

The chains fell from his wrists.

The angel said to him, "Put on your belt and your sandals." He did so.

Then he said to him, "Put on your cloak and follow me."

So he followed him out, not realizing that what was happening through the angel was real; he thought he was seeing a vision.

They passed the first guard, then the second, and came to the iron gate leading out to the city,

which opened for them by itself.
They emerged and made their way down an alley,
and suddenly the angel left him.
Then Peter recovered his senses and said,

“Now I know for certain
that the Lord sent his angel
and rescued me from the hand of Herod
and from all that
the Jewish people had been expecting.”

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

R. The angel of the Lord will rescue those who fear him.

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the LORD;
the lowly will hear me and be glad.
R. The angel of the Lord will rescue those who fear him.

Glorify the LORD with me,
let us together extol his name.
I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.
R. The angel of the Lord will rescue those who fear him.

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,
and your faces may not blush with shame.
When the poor one called out, the LORD heard,
and from all his distress he saved him.
R. The angel of the Lord will rescue those who fear him.

The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
Taste and see how good the LORD is;
blessed the man who takes refuge in him.
R. The angel of the Lord will rescue those who fear him.

Reading II 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18

I, Paul, am already being poured out like a libation,
and the time of my departure is at hand.
I have competed well; I have finished the race;
I have kept the faith.
From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me,

which the Lord, the just judge,
will award to me on that day, and not only to me,
but to all who have longed for his appearance.

The Lord stood by me and gave me strength,
so that through me the proclamation might be completed
and all the Gentiles might hear it.
And I was rescued from the lion's mouth.
The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat
and will bring me safe to his heavenly Kingdom.
To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Alleluia Matthew 16:18

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church,
and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel Matthew 16:13-19

When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi
he asked his disciples,

"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah,
still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter said in reply,

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus said to him in reply,

"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah.

For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you,
but my heavenly Father.

And so I say to you, you are Peter,

and upon this rock I will build my Church,

and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.

I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven.

Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;

and whatever you loose on earth

shall be loosed in heaven."

PART TWO: REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

Note to reader: I preached on immigration last Sunday in
English. I am preaching on immigration again this Sunday,
this time in Spanish.

Last Thursday, the Church celebrated the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Today, I want to honor this beautiful solemnity by speaking to you from my heart.

I need to speak to you today about immigration.

I am a *Norteño*. I was born here – the fourth generation of my family to be born here in Sonoma County. When my grandnephew, Charlie, sits on my lap, he is the sixth generation to be born here.

So, I am not going to tell those who were born in Mexico, “Don’t be afraid.” There are good reasons to be afraid. The government is doing terrible things. I am not going to tell you, “The Church will protect you” – because, in fact, I fear that the Church can do little to stop the cruelty of this misguided government and its corrupt president

Most of all, I am not going to tell you stories about the suffering of immigrant families here in Sonoma. Since I am your priest, I need *you* to tell *me* such stories.

But I also want you all to know that, last week, I did tell a story about the suffering of an immigrant family.

At the 9:30 mass, preaching in English, I told the people of our parish about a little boy – just ten years old – who tried to harm himself. He did this because he is afraid that his parents will be arrested while he is in school. He is afraid that there will be no one to pick him up after school.

I also explained the teaching of the Church to our people. The Church teaches that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God. Every human body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit. Today, on this beautiful solemnity, the Church teaches that every human heart is an embodiment of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Therefore, every human being has been endowed by God with a dignity that must be respected – the *dignitatis humanae*. In the eyes of God, persons are more real than the artificial borders that human beings have set up to separate countries and to protect wealth.

And I told the people that governments - all governments - must respect the dignity of the human person, no matter where that person was born, no matter what papers that person might have or not have.

But today, I am speaking to you who have come from Mexico to be with us here at Saint Leo's. What should I say to you about immigration?

I want to say thank you.

Thank you for coming here to Saint Leo's. As your priest, I want to say how grateful I am that you have come here to be with us in this beautiful church in this beautiful valley.

I want to tell you how grateful I am for your hard work.

You work in our fields and in our restaurants. You build our houses in the heat of the day and you scrub our toilets. You do this hard work with great dignity. Truly, your work is an expression of the dignity of the human person. All work, no matter how humble, is an expression of the dignity of the worker. This is a teaching of the Church that everyone - including employers and governments - must recognize and respect.

I also want to thank you for your children.

Here, at mass, your children are like the poppies that greet us in springtime when the fields are still green. Thank you for supporting your children's schools. As an old college professor, I want to thank you for sending your children to college. You have accomplished so many great things in your lives. Among your greatest achievements is the academic, moral and religious education of your children. Your children are a gift to Saint Leo's, to Sonoma and to America. In your children, you are giving us a future. Thank you for this gift.

But most of all, as your priest, I want to thank you for bringing your faith and sharing it with us here at Saint Leo's.

Is this not your greatest blessing to us? The faith of the immigrants – the Italians and the Irish, the Polish and the Filipinos, the Vietnamese and, of course, the Mexicans – the faith of the immigrants is the great gift that God has given to the Church in the United States of America.

Thank you for coming to be with us and sharing your faith.

You have taught me that Our Lady of Guadalupe is the *Madre de Todas las Americas...* and I believe this from the bottom of my heart. *La Virgen Morena* crosses borders. Her sons and daughters have brought her with them as they have immigrated to this side of the border.

And I want you to know this: *La Morenita* cannot be deported. She is the Mother of All the Americas. She is my Mother – you have given her to me. She lives in my heart (and Mr. Trump can't deport me).

I am not going to say to you: "Don't be afraid." And I am not going to pretend that the Church can protect you. But the Church can accompany you in your suffering and open her heart to you.

Last Thursday was the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I want the Church to embrace the Sacred Heart. Let our heart embrace the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

And so, I am saying to all the people here at Saint Leo's – and to the people of the United State: open your hearts. Open your hearts to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Open your hearts to the immigrants who have come here from Mexico to share their faith with us.

[X][X][X]

El jueves pasado, la Iglesia celebró la Solemnidad del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús. Hoy, quiero honrar esta hermosa solemnidad hablándoles desde mi corazón.

Necesito hablar con Uds. hoy sobre inmigración.

Soy norteno. Nací aquí; soy la cuarta generación de mi familia en el condado de Sonoma. Cuando mi sobrino

nieto, Charlie, se sienta en mi regazo, El es la sexta generación nacida aquí en mi familia.

Por eso, no me voy a decir a quienes nacieron en México: "No tengan miedo". Con razón tienes miedo. El gobierno está haciendo cosas terribles. No les voy a decir: "La Iglesia les protegerá a Uds", porque, de hecho, me temo que la Iglesia puede hacer poco para detener la crueldad de este gobierno mal aconsejado y su presidente corrupto.

Sobre todo, no les voy a contar historias sobre el sufrimiento de las familias inmigrantes aquí en Sonoma. Soy su sacerdote. Por eso, necesito que Uds. me cuenten historias sobre sus sufrimientos.

Pero también quiero explicar lo que predico la semana pasada en la misa de las 9:30. Predicando en inglés, les conté a la gente de nuestra parroquia sobre un niño pequeño, de tan solo diez años, que intentó hacerse daño. Lo hizo por miedo a que arrestaran a sus padres mientras estaba en clase. Temía que no hubiera nadie que lo recogiera después de la escuela.

También, en mi homilía, expliqué las enseñanzas de la Iglesia a nuestra comunidad. La Iglesia enseña que todo ser humano es creado a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Todo cuerpo humano es templo del Espíritu Santo. Hoy, en esta hermosa solemnidad, la Iglesia enseña que todo corazón humano es la encarnación del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús.

Por lo tanto, todo ser humano ha sido dotado por Dios con una dignidad que debe ser respetada: la *dignitas humana*. A los ojos de Dios, personas son más reales que las fronteras artificiales que los seres humanos han establecido para separar países y proteger la riqueza.

Y le dije a la gente que los gobiernos deben respetar la dignidad de la persona humana, sin importar dónde haya nacido esa persona, sin importar qué papeles tenga o no tenga.

Pero hoy me dirijo a ustedes, que han venido de México para acompañarnos en la parroquia de San León. ¿Qué les puedo decir sobre la inmigración?

Quiero darles las gracias.

Gracias por venir a San León.

También, como su sacerdote, quiero expresarles mi agradecimiento por su arduo trabajo.

Uds. trabajan en nuestros campos y en nuestros restaurantes. Construyen nuestras casas en pleno calor del día y limpian nuestros baños. Realizan este arduo trabajo con gran dignidad. En verdad, su trabajo es una expresión de la dignidad de la persona humana. Todo trabajo, por humilde que sea, es una expresión de la dignidad del trabajador. Esta es una enseñanza de la Iglesia que todos, incluidos los empleadores y los gobiernos, deben reconocer y respetar.

También quiero agradecerles por sus hijos.

Aquí, en la misa, sus hijos son como las amapolas que nos saludan en la primavera, cuando los campos aún están verdes. Gracias por apoyar las escuelas de sus hijos. Trabaje como profesor de teología en una universidad por treinta años. Quiero agradecerles por enviar a sus hijos a la universidad. Uds. han logrado muchas cosas maravillosas en sus vidas. Entre sus mayores logros se encuentra la educación académica, moral y religiosa de sus hijos. Sus hijos son un regalo para San Leo, para Sonoma y para los Estados Unidos. En sus hijos, nos están dando un futuro. Gracias por este regalo.

Pero sobre todo, como su sacerdote, quiero agradecerles por traer su fe y compartirla con nosotros aquí en San Leo.

¿No es esta su mayor bendición para nosotros? La fe de los inmigrantes –italianos, irlandeses, polacos, filipinos, vietnamitas y, por supuesto, mexicanos– es el gran regalo que Dios ha dado a la Iglesia en los Estados Unidos de América.

Gracias por venir y compartir su fe.

Uds. me han enseñado que Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe es la Madre de Todas las Américas... y lo creo de todo corazón. La Virgen Morena cruza fronteras. Sus hijos e hijas la han traído consigo al emigrar a este lado de la frontera.

Y quiero que Uds. sepan esto: La Virgencita no puede ser deportada. Ella es Madre de todas las Américas. Es mi Madre también; ustedes me la dieron. La Virgen Morena vive en mi corazón (y el Sr. Trump no puede deportarme).

No les voy a decir: "No tengan miedo". Y no voy a fingir que la Iglesia puede protegerles. Pero la Iglesia puede acompañarles en su sufrimiento y abrirles su corazón.

El jueves pasado fue la Solemnidad del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús. Quiero que la Iglesia siempre abrace al Sagrado Corazón. Que nuestro corazón abrace al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús.

Y por eso, les digo a todos aquí en San León, y al pueblo de Estados Unidos: abran sus corazones. Abran sus corazones al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús. Abran sus corazones a los inmigrantes que han venido de México para compartir su fe con nosotros.

PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as "a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys"). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't rush. You are not looking for information or instructions.

You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually “reading” the Bible. Rather, we are “listening” to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the homily on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?