

June 14, 2026—Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Upon reaching Mount Sinai, God established the covenant that would make the Israelite people His special possession. Through Moses, God told them: **“You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.”** At the first Passover in Egypt, it was the father of each family who acted as a priest for his family by sacrificing a lamb and leading the prayers at the sacred meal. God’s desire was that they would be a priestly people. That changed after the golden calf incident. As Moses received the Ten Commandments, the people turned to idolatry by making the image of a calf from their gold jewelry and worshiping it. God then set up the Levite tribe as His priests because they didn’t participate in the idolatry.

It was still His plan to make a priestly, kingly, holy people. St. Paul, in the Second Reading, put it bluntly, calling us enemies of God. He wrote: **“Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by His life.”** That is the Divine Life that comes to us first through sanctifying grace in Baptism.

After the water is poured in Baptism, the baby is anointed with the oil of Sacred Chrism on the crown of the head. In the Old Testament, this fragrant oil was used to anoint kings and priests. We use it in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the ordination of priests and bishops. The words for anointing are: **“Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has freed you from sin, given you new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and joined you to His people. He now anoints you with the Chrism of salvation, so that you may remain as a member of Christ, Priest, Prophet and King, unto eternal life.”** Through Baptism, God’s great plan to make a priestly, holy people is accomplished. The rest of life is all about cooperating with grace or rejecting it.

Sometimes, people will describe themselves by saying: “I am a good person”. I would like to respond with “I am a bad person”, because I know I am a sinner. That phrase can mean many things to many people. While, not a bad idea, God is calling us to something more than being a good person! He is calling us to become saints, to become holy.

Many years ago, in another parish, in an RCIA class, I said that we are called to be saints. One of the Catholic sponsors came early the next week and was upset over what I said. I knew she was a faithful Catholic from a good family, but she had the idea that to become a saint meant you had to spend most of your time in prayer like a nun. So, I explained what I meant. No matter what your vocation might be,

married or single, work in the home or out of the home, sister, brother or priest, we are all called to become holy. We do it by obeying the commandments, by being a good example to our coworkers, by doing our work well, by having a consistent prayer life and by living our Catholic faith, day in and day out.

St. Francis de Sales, the bishop of Geneva, Switzerland who died in 1622 was a champion of holiness for the lay faithful. He taught that the spiritual life or what he called “devotion” must be lived differently by different people. He wrote, **“Tell me, whether it is proper for a bishop to want to lead a solitary life like a Carthusian (hermit); or for married people to be no more concerned than a Capuchin (Franciscan) about increasing their income; or for a working man to spend his whole day in church like a religious. . .”** No matter what one’s occupation is, St. Francis de Sales said, you can have a prayer life and become holy: **“It is a heresy to exclude the exercise of devotion from military divisions, from the artisans’ shops, from the courts of princes, from family households. . . Therefore, in whatever situations we happen to be, we can and we must aspire to the life of devotion.”** Sometimes it means you must find 10 minutes here or 15 minutes there, to fit prayer into a busy day. Remember, Jesus is calling you to be a saint and you cannot answer that call without prayer.

St. Josemaria Escriva, a priest who founded Opus Dei, and died in 1975 taught that our daily work was not a hindrance to sanctity but could be a means to it. **“Work and any other activity, carried out with the help of grace, is converted to a means of daily sanctification.”** Every task that we do from carrying out the trash, to hours of study or working at a computer, to the construction of a building can be offered to God and become a means for us to reach heaven. **“Work, family life and the ordinary events of each day are opportunities for growing closer to Christ, and making Him known to others.”** You need to consciously offer your daily tasks to God and do it well for love of Him. That is how to sanctify work and make it a path to holiness.

In the Gospel, Jesus looked out upon the crowd listening to Him; Matthew reports that **“Jesus’ Heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd.”** Jesus loves us with both a divine and human love. His human Heart is a symbol for that love. Although you can trace devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to the Gospel of John and the piercing of His Heart by the soldier’s spear, it was at the revelations to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the late 1600’s in France that the devotion took the form we know today. Many images depict Jesus showing His human Heart, like

our statue in the back of Church. June is the month dedicated to the Most Sacred Heart and we just celebrated the big feast day of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Jesus' love is tender, **“Come to me all you who are labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest . . . for I am meek and humble of heart”** (Matt. 25). It is also powerful; it redeemed us and strengthens us in our battles with sin. More than anything else, besides the sacraments, it is through the struggles of life and bearing our crosses that we are united to His Heart, which makes us a priestly, kingly, holy people. **Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Thy Kingdom come!**