Prudence, Boldness and the Eucharist

I am jealous of Pope Francis. He seems to be able to turn a phrase perfectly. My copies of his writings are heavily underlined and littered with marginal notes that say, “Quote this!”

There’s a line of his that’s been quoted a good bit lately, re-tweeted by none other than Fr. James Martin SJ, another writer of whom I am more than a little envious. Perhaps you’ve heard this too, in the media coverage of the recent decision of a South Carolina pastor to deny the Eucharist to former Vice President Joseph Biden. The line comes from Pope Francis’s 2013 apostolic exhortation, The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium). Francis said that

the Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine, a nourishment for the weak.

I went back to the document to read the passage in its entirety. It comes at the conclusion of Evangelii Gaudium’s opening chapter, in a section that speaks of the open doors and open heart of the church. As zingy a quote as it is, the sentence that follows it really caught my attention:

These convictions have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness. Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse, it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone with all their problems (EG 47).

Prudence? Boldness? Lately I’ve noticed how much

Pope Francis talks about each of these. Perhaps you heard that Pope Francis opened the recent Synod on the Amazon with a homily that asked the Holy Spirit to grant “daring prudence” to the Synod and asked those assembled to “welcome the Spirit’s bold prudence.”

This is not, as Pope Francis pointed out, a contradiction in terms.

In the Catholic tradition, prudence is a virtue, even a cardinal, fundamental virtue, that guides all other virtues. It is not caution. Prudence “disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1806).

In other words, prudence is a lot of work. To exercise prudence, you must know the practical circumstances—not superficially, but in depth, and in particular from the perspective of those people most directly involved and affected by those
**12:05 Daily Mass Intentions and Presider**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Mass</th>
<th>Presider</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Thomas L Farris (D)</td>
<td>Fr. Modrys SJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>11/27</td>
<td>Old St. Joseph’s Memorial Society</td>
<td>Fr. O’Donnell SJ</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>11/28</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Day</td>
<td>Fr. O’Donnell SJ</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>11/29</td>
<td>Edward and Mary Britt Family (D)</td>
<td>Fr. Gillespie SJ</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>Winifred Grace (D)</td>
<td>Fr. Gillespie SJ</td>
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<td><strong>Saturday–Sunday</strong></td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
<td>Presider: Fr. Gillespie SJ</td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
<td>12/1</td>
<td>7:30 AM</td>
<td>Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ</td>
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<td>9:30 AM</td>
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<td>6:30 PM</td>
<td>Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ</td>
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**RCIA at Old St. Joseph’s**
The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults is a time of discernment and formation for those considering initiation to or full communion with the Catholic Church. If you are an adult seeking baptism, eucharist or confirmation, please speak with any member of the pastoral staff or email rcia@oldstjoseph.org.

**Ministers’ Scheduled Posted Online**
The December/January schedule for altar servers, eucharistic ministers, lectors, and ushers has been posted online. Please log in to check your assignments and fill any vacancies that you can. New volunteers—especially altar servers and ushers—are also welcome to sign up through the Ministry Scheduling Program at www.oldstjoseph.org.

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**In your prayers,**

please remember our sick and homebound brothers and sisters and our ministry at Pennsylvania Hospital.

Douglas Adler, George Bernato, Deborah Brooks, Ann Crowther, Jane Crowther, Mary Kay Crowther, Elizabeth Davies, Fr. Ed Dougherty SJ, Barbara Epting, Tessie Griffin, Carol Herman, Fr. Mike Hricko SJ, Imani Ivie, Sharon Krinsky, Bruce Maloney, Allen May, Fr. Jerry McAndrews SJ, D. Minter, Julius Mingroni, David Roberts, Donovan Schmidt, Dennis Scott, Sara Smith, Mary Turner and Patricia Yusko.
circumstances. Empathy is required, yes, and analysis: a willingness to ask why—to understand not just the facts, but the larger social, economic, cultural and historical contexts.

Prudence also examines the choices and challenges that a given set of circumstances present: what is to be gained, what may be lost, and at what cost and to whom. Faith’s understanding of prudence overlaps with the common-sense definition only in that prudence isn’t rash or hurried. It takes time to consider the means of achieving our true good.

No less painstaking is the work of “discerning the true good.” Discernment is a word often heard in church circles, but what does it mean? Consider Pope Francis’s description in Gaudete et Exsultate, his 2018 apostolic exhortation on the call to holiness in today’s world: “discernment is something more than intelligence or common sense. It is a gift we must implore” of the Holy Spirit, one that “we must then seek to develop through prayer, reflection, reading and good counsel” (GE 166). We do that by immersing ourselves again and again in Scripture, in the tradition and teaching of the church and in prayer. These prepare us to discern, to catch glimpses, of the Spirit’s work and call to us.

All this study and prayer also dispose us, Pope Francis suggests, to boldness, because our God is eternal newness [who] impels us to constantly set out anew, to pass beyond what is familiar, to the fringes and beyond, [who] takes us to where humanity is most wounded (GE 135).

Such boldness is, according to Pope Francis, “a sign of holiness in today’s world,” an impulse to evangelize (GE 129). It doesn’t seek newness for its own sake or to follow a fad or trend. Boldness recognizes that God isn’t confined by the familiar borders of what we know and protect. It seeks God in unexpected people and places, even where we don’t expect to glimpse God at all. In his homily at the opening of the Synod on the Amazon, Pope Francis warned that if we spend our days content with the status quo, the way things have always been, then the gift of the Spirit will vanish.

And this is perhaps why Pope Francis can say that the Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect. None of us are perfect. Our daring prudence and our boldness lead us to recognize that there is always more to ask for, more to understand, more to change. We are the ones who are the weak who need the Eucharist’s nourishment. We are not the arbiters of grace, but the ones grateful that the church’s doors and God’s heart are open to us and all our problems. We cannot deny the power of the Eucharist to heal all that is sick and broken and to transform us into what we receive, the presence of Christ in our world.

—BJ Brown
Pastoral Associate

Front page image by Steve Harvey via Unsplash.
Announcements

*Magis* Lay Formation Opportunity
The Office of Ignatian Spirituality of the Maryland and USA Northeast Provinces of the Society of Jesus is now accepting applications to its lay formation program, *Magis*. The program will explore Ignatian spirituality and the Jesuit mission and way of proceeding. The next cohort will gather for four two-day seminars over the course of eighteen months beginning in March 2020. Meetings will alternate between Jogues Retreat in Cornwall, NY and Campion Center in Weston, MA. Additional information is available at jesuitseast.org/programs or by emailing kobrien1@jesuits.org. The application deadline is **December 1**.

Waldron Mercy Open House
Waldron Mercy Academy will hold an Open House on **Tuesday, December 3, beginning at 9:00 AM**. Waldron Mercy, a Catholic, coeducational, independent school, is sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. The school serves students from age 3 to grade eight, with attention to their spiritual life, service learning, academic excellence and advanced technology. Please register by emailing Sr. Joellen McDonnell, Director of Admissions, at jmcdonnell@waldronmercy.org or by visiting www.waldronmercy.org.

Save the Date: Spirit@Work, an Ignatian Young Adult Retreat
All young adults are encouraged to save the date for the third annual Philadelphia Charis Ministries retreat! The retreat will be over the weekend of **Friday, March 6–Sunday, March 8** at St. Raphaela Retreat Center in Haverford, PA. Carpooling and train options will be available from the city. Charis Ministries is a retreat ministry in the Jesuit tradition for those in their 20s and 30s. Registration opens at straphaelacenter.org on **December 1**. Questions? Email ignatianyaretreats@straphaelacenter.org.

Old St. Joseph’s Advent Giving Tree
OSJ’s Advent Giving Tree will return on the weekend of **November 30–December 1**. It will be adorned with ornamental tags requesting gifts for students from the Gesu School and the Aquinas Center’s neighborhood after-school program. You are invited to take a gift tag ornament, and return it attached to the requested new, unwrapped gift by **December 15**. Gifts will be distributed to Gesu School and Aquinas Center students later that week.

*The Gesu School* is an independent school in the Catholic tradition. Inspired by the traditions of the Jesuit and Immaculate Heart of Mary religious communities, Gesu seeks to help its students transcend poverty through rigorous, innovative education. Gesu School has requested that OSJ’s Advent Giving Tree provide a new book to each of its 35 pre-kindergarten and 50 kindergarten students.

The mission of the *Aquinas Center* is to build unity in diversity, support learning and inspire action, beginning in its own neighborhood at 17th and Tasker Streets in Philadelphia. The Aquinas Center offers an after-school program three days a week for students in grades one through six. The after-school program has requested that the Advent Giving Tree provide a wished-for gift to each of the 23 students in the after-school program.
Announcements

Daily Reflections:
Waiting in Joyful Hope
The OSJ Ignatian Spirituality Committee invites all parishioners to set aside a few minutes each day in Advent to pray at home through this beautiful season. This year’s book of reflections, based on the daily Scripture readings, is written by Fr. Daniel G. Groody CSC and entitled Waiting in Joyful Hope. Each entry includes suggestions for applying the passages to your own life. Booklets will be distributed after all Masses on November 23–24 and November 30–December 1.

A Special Invitation to Children’s Liturgy of the Word
On Sunday, December 1, parents are invited to join their children in Barbelin Hall for the Children’s Liturgy of the Word at 9:30 AM Mass. Carol Hanlon, a guest catechist, will be modelling for us ways to pray with young children during Advent.

Parish Cookout Dinner
Mark your calendar for the next parish cookout dinner, Sunday December 8 in Barbelin Hall after 6:30 PM Mass.

Lessons and Carols, December 15
On Sunday, December 15 at 3:00 PM, Old St. Joseph’s will celebrate our annual Service of Lessons and Carols. This Advent service is rooted in the Divine Office, the daily prayer of the Church. Nine scripture readings, along with Advent antiphons and Christmas carols sung with the help of OSJ’s Schola Cantorum, will trace God’s promise of salvation from Genesis and the prophets through the Annunciation and Incarnation. Please join us for a beautiful time of prayer amid the season’s busyness. There will also be a light reception following the service in Barbelin Hall.

Mass on Thanksgiving Day
On Thanksgiving Day, November 28, Mass will be celebrated at 10:00 AM—there will be no confessions or 12:05 PM Mass that day.

Book Group
The Old Saint Joseph’s Reading Group will meet on Tuesday, December 3 at 7:30 PM in the Loyola Room of the parish offices. Our December book is The Dutch House by Ann Patchett. New members are welcome; for more information, contact Carol at shlosscarol@gmail.com.

Advent by Candlelight
Advent by Candlelight, an evening of prayer for women, will be Wednesday, December 4, at 7:00 PM in Barbelin Hall. Jaclyn Newns, director of campus ministry at Chestnut Hill College, will lead us in Dreaming and Beholding: an evening of prayer, art, song and fellowship that draws us deeper into God’s invitation of love this Advent. Live music will center us. New ritual will empower us. Dwell in a desire for this season to mean more. Just arrive, and we will take care of the rest. All participants will receive a gift to take with them, with the intention of creating a symbolic prayer space in your own home. O Come, O Come, Seekers and Bearers of Light!

Reconciliation in Advent
Old St. Joseph’s will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a community on Tuesday, December 10, beginning at 7:00 PM. We will share the Liturgy of the Word, examination of conscience and prayer of contrition as part of our Advent prayer and preparation for the Christmas season. Opportunity for individual confession will also be available.
INFORMATION

Pastor
Fr. Walter Modrys SJ (pastor@oldstjoseph.org)

Parochial Vicar
Fr. Fran Gillespie SJ (fgillespie@oldstjoseph.org)

In Residence
Br. Robert Carson SJ
Fr. Edward Dougherty SJ (dougherty@oldstjoseph.org)
Fr. Ed O’Donnell SJ (eodonnell@oldstjoseph.org)

Pastoral Associate
BJ Brown (bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org)

Business Manager
Eric German (germane@oldstjoseph.org)

Director of Music
Mark Bani (music@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Offices
(office@oldstjoseph.org)

Religious Education (PREP) Coordinator
Christine Szczepanowski (prep@oldstjoseph.org)

Faith, Food & Friends Director
Deborah Hluchan (faithandfriends@oldstjoseph.org)

Rectory Office Hours
Monday through Friday: 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM
Sunday: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Mass Times
Monday through Saturday: 12:05 PM
Saturday Vigil Mass for Sunday: 5:30 PM
Sunday: 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 AM and 6:30 PM
Holy Days: 12:05 and 7:00 PM

Medical Emergency
In a medical emergency when the need for a priest is urgent, please call the rectory.

Hearing Enhancements
Old St. Joseph’s is equipped with an audio hearing loop. Switch on the T-coil function of your device to use the loop. Booklets with the Sunday readings are available in the rear of the church.

Registration
Registration forms are available in the rectory office during normal office hours, on the bookcases in the back of the church and online at www.oldstjoseph.org. They can be returned to the parish office by mail or in person.

Sacrament of Reconciliation
A priest is available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation Monday through Saturday from 11:30 AM–12:00 PM or by appointment.

Sacrament of Baptism
If you want to arrange a baptism, please contact Fr. Gillespie (fgillespie@oldstjoseph.org) at least two months before the desired date.

Eucharist for the Homebound
To arrange to receive Communion at home, please contact the parish offices.

The Sacrament of Anointing
The Sacrament of Anointing (the sacrament of the sick) is offered during the 12:05 PM Mass on the first Saturday of each month. Homebound or hospitalized persons wanting to receive the Sacrament of Anointing should call the parish office.

Sacrament of Matrimony
If you want to be married at Old St. Joseph’s, please visit our website, oldstjoseph.org and read the material under the heading Weddings. Please call the parish office at 215-923-1766 at least nine months before your desired wedding date.

Rite of Christian Initiation
If you are an adult wishing to be baptized, or to receive First Eucharist and Confirmation, or are a baptized non-Catholic seeking full communion with Catholic Church, please call the parish office or email rcia@oldstjoseph.org.

Mass of Christian Burial
To schedule a funeral or memorial Mass, ask your funeral director to call the parish office.

Parish Pastoral Council
(osjpc@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Finance Council
Paul Shay, chair

Historic Preservation Corporation Board
Fr. Walter Modrys SJ, president

Adult Education
Rita O’Brien and Jeanmarie Zippo
(adulted@oldstjoseph.org)

Eldership
Pat Nelson (eldership@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Life
Joe Casey (parishlife@oldstjoseph.org)

Ignatian Spirituality and Formation
Len Mancini (osjsspirituality@oldstjoseph.org)

Women, Faith and Fellowship
Rana McNamara (wff@oldstjoseph.org)

Young Adult Community
(osjyc@gmail.com)

Altar Servers
Maria Ramirez (altarserver@oldstjoseph.org)

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
Bill Stewart (EM@oldstjoseph.org)

Hospital Ministry
Luanne Balestrucci (hospitalEM@oldstjoseph.org)

Homebound Ministry
Neal Hébert (homeEM@oldstjoseph.org)

Lectors
Lou Anne Bulik (lectors@oldstjoseph.org)

Ushers
Nikola Szgorich (ushers@oldstjoseph.org)

Children’s Liturgy of the Word
Peggy Connolly (clow@oldstjoseph.org)