



*From the Pastor's Desk*

*"And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."* (Mark 9:47-48)

This Sunday's gospel reading emphasizes the importance of following God's ways.

Unlike other places in the gospel, where Jesus speaks literally (such as eating his flesh and drinking his blood [John 6:53-56] or recognizing his real presence in the Eucharist [Luke 22:19-20]), Jesus' admonition about removing one's body parts to avoid sin is considered hyperbole.

The Free Dictionary defines hyperbole as

*"A figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect, as in I could sleep for a year or This book weighs a ton."*

Jesus does not intend for people to excise those body parts that abet their temptation to and involvement in sin. Instead, he wants people to appreciate the gravity of their choice to disregard God's ways.

For those who sincerely desire to follow God's ways and who are committed to do so through a reformation of life, prayer, and the sacraments, God will provide them with the grace they need to be faithful to Christ's life and teaching.

To emphasize the seriousness of avoiding the occasion of sin, there's a praiseworthy story about a follower of St. Pius of Pietreclina, more familiarly known in life as Padre Pio (whose memorial was celebrated last Thursday, September 23).

One day, Padre Pio, known both for his stigmata and his many miracles, asked this follower, who was blind from birth, if he would like Padre Pio to restore his vision. The man responded that, if the gift of his sight would threaten his holiness or his eternal reward, he would prefer to remain blind.

With that, Padre Pio left the man in his physical blindness. We would surmise that the man's total concern for his good relationship with God, in Christ, that his spiritual sight was excellent!

St. Pius of Pietreclina certainly gave his follower a greater gift than his physical sight: he allowed the man to receive God's grace for his immediate commitment to Him and in the later reward this man would receive in heaven.

Nothing in the created world can compare with our participation in the life of our eternal and uncreated God. Worse yet is one's everlasting separation from God's friendship.

It is no wonder Jesus uses extreme language to caution us about our real commitment to God's friendship and way of life. Our everlasting salvation relies on it!

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Next **Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>**, we celebrate the **Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels**, our parish namesake.

We will begin with **Adoration** at St. Barbara Church from **2:30pm to 3:30pm**, followed by a **Eucharistic Procession** to the St. Louise de Marillac Church, where we will celebrate **Benediction and the 5pm Mass**.

Following Mass, everyone is invited to a light **reception** in the Colonnade Room, where we will have the opportunity to make ornaments for the **Holy Guardian Angels' Christmas tree at Brookfield Zoo**.

The **Hitzeman family** has purchased a tree for our parish at Brookfield Zoo. The Holy Guardian Angels' Christmas tree, decorated (**on November 14**) with ornaments made by our parishioners, will be on display during the Advent Season at the zoo. More information on this event will be coming soon.

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I am in process of locating a **bulletin editor** for the parish, so that we can resume publishing hard-copy bulletins for distribution after weekend Masses.

In the meantime, please continue to refer to our website at **HGAParish.org** for parish news and information.

-Fr. Brian Kean