

# ST. BRENDAN CHURCH

29 Rockaway Avenue San Francisco CA 94127

Tel. No. (415) 681-4225

[www.stbrendanparish.org](http://www.stbrendanparish.org)

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 12, 2017



## Uncomfortable Religion: The Last Things



**A MESSAGE SERIES ON  
UNCOMFORTABLE RELIGION**

In the first episode of the fourth season of the popular television series, *Vikings*, legendary ruler and warrior, Ragnar Lothbrok, sees a vision of Valhalla.

According to Norse mythology, half of all warriors who fall in battle are taken by spirits of war, called the *valkyries*, to this “hall of the slain” belonging to the pagan god Odin. The hall is depicted as a splendid palace with an unending banquet of food and drink. Norsemen saw it as the highest honor to live there in the afterlife.

In the opening scene, Ragnar runs towards the immense gold doors of Valhalla, which are quickly closing. He can see the beautiful light inside and hear sounds of feasting and singing. Visions of his violent life flash before his eyes. As the doors shut before he can get inside, Ragnar falls prostrate on the front steps in despair.

In our eight-week message series leading up to Advent, called *More Than Lip Service: Living Out An Uncomfortable Religion*, we have been looking at some of the uncomfortable statements made by Jesus. We’ve been reading through the latter part of the gospel of Matthew. Jesus has spoken of neglected vineyards, deserted banquets, the demands of Christian discipleship, and the danger of hypocrisy.

He then turns his attention to the events connected with the end of the age, setting before us scenes of judgment and distress, a temple in ruins, and a period

of “great tribulation” before the coming of the Son of Man at an unknown day and hour (Matthew 24:1-44). This “eschatological discourse” continues with a series of three parables followed by a dramatic judgment scene that we will hear about in two weeks.

While all three of the parables stress the need for watchfulness and preparedness in the time leading up to the coming of the Son of Man at the end of the age, the parable of the ten virgins this week puts the point rather starkly. The doors to the unending wedding banquet will be locked to those of us who do not have sufficient oil for our lamps to find our way inside the great hall.

The oil for those lamps corresponds to good works that we perform while living on earth. Indeed, Jesus earlier compared good deeds to the light of a lamp that must “shine before others” (Matthew 5:16). To those of us who come with unlit lamps, the bridegroom will say, “I do not know you,” and will refuse to open the doors to the banquet hall. It is the same response those of us who merely pay lip service to the Lord but do not do “the will of the Father” will hear (Matthew 7:25).

As days grow shorter, the temperature outside begins to fall, and wintry weather settles into place, our thoughts naturally turn toward the last things. Indeed, we pray for the dead throughout the month of November. As Saint Ambrose wrote in the fourth century, “[w]e should have a daily familiarity with death, a daily desire for death. . . . The soul has to turn away from the aimless paths of this life . . . and reach out to those assemblies in heaven . . . to sing the praises of God,” who destroyed death forever. “Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”



Fr. Roger Gustafson,  
Pastor



# Everyone Needs A Spiritual Companion

By Ben Gerigk,  
Saint Brendan Catechist &  
Aspirant to the Priesthood

Each week, we will summarize a specific style, form, or approach to prayer, using the highly-acclaimed book by Robert J. Wicks, *Prayer in the Catholic Tradition: A Handbook of Practical Approaches* (Franciscan Media 2006). In this article, you will learn more about the art of spiritual direction.

Prayer is critical for the Christian life. But how do you know whether you're praying well or whether you're really communicating with God or just hearing your own voice in your head. Since God is neither visible nor comprehensible to us, it can be difficult to know how and when God is speaking to us. Fortunately, we don't have to make the spiritual journey alone. A group of specially trained individuals, called "spiritual directors," can help you answer these questions.

"Spiritual direction is help given by one believer to another," writes William A. Barry in his book, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, "which enables the latter to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship."

The goal is to help others discover the importance and meaning of their spiritual experiences. Spiritual directors work patiently and empathetically with their clients to help them come to (i) a fuller realization that God desires a loving, relationship with them and (ii) a greater understanding of what the Lord is asking them to do at particular times in their lives.

According to Sr. Mary Ann Scofield in her book, *Sacred is the Call* (Crossroad Publ'g Co. 2005), the "director 'tunes in' like a person fiddling carefully with a radio dial, spinning from one music clip to another, one fragment of speech to the next, until 'Aha, this is it!': the director recognizes the presence of God in the conversation, and then helps the directee to explore further what has occurred or is occurring." The most common format of spiritual direction is inspired by the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit religious order. But there are others.

While priests, religious, and seminarians often have their own spiritual directors, the practice of spiritual direction is not just for clergy and religious. Everyone needs someone to talk to about their spiritual life. If you think you would like a spiritual director, try looking for

someone who exhibits the fruits of the Holy Spirit, such as joy, peace, and self-control.

Spiritual directors do not have to be priests. Trained lay people also are good candidates. Mercy Center Burlingame is one of the major centers for the teaching of spiritual direction in the United States and can connect you with the right spiritual director. Call (650) 340-7416 or email [mgruccini@mercywmw.org](mailto:mgruccini@mercywmw.org) for more information.

Or, consider joining one of Saint Brendan's twelve small group experiences. The leaders are not necessarily trained in spiritual direction, but you will be able to talk about important issues, pray, and just do life together with other people, all in a relaxed, informal, and safe environment. To learn more, visit our website at [www.stbrendanparish.org/small-groups.html](http://www.stbrendanparish.org/small-groups.html).



# Really, Really Practical Ways To Be Contemplative

As part of the Saint Brendan *Small Bytes* speaker series, Jesuit Father Joe Spieler recently spoke to a group of about fifty parishioners about the *Contemporary Experience of Contemplative Prayer*. During an interactive session, Father Spieler explained how each of us can grow closer to God with just a few minutes a day of contemplative prayer.

“Each of us has the capacity for contemplation,” Spieler remarked. “Contemplation is a long, loving look at the real, which could be the face of God” or something in which we see the reflection of God. “Less is more in this style of prayer,” he said, and “words are not used very much.” To listen to Father Spieler’s complete talk, visit our website at [www.stbrendanparish.org](http://www.stbrendanparish.org), click on the “Our Messages” image, and scroll down.

Last week we included an article on the meaning of contemplative prayer. This week we provide some really practical ways to get started below.

### Breathing Exercises

Place your feet flat on the floor. Take five or six deep, slow breaths. Feel the air coming in and going out. Let your attention rest on your respiration.

Notice your breath for another four or five cycles. Then become aware of the beating of your heart.

After a few minutes, quietly offer this or another similar prayer: “Father, I offer my entire self to you. I offer my very breath, the beating of my heart, and my entire life.”

After twenty to thirty seconds, open your eyes slowly.

### The Jesus Prayer

The “Jesus Prayer” was practiced by early Christians for centuries. It is a repetitive prayer that can be sustained for a short or remarkably long period of time.

Center yourself with your feet flat on the floor and close your eyes.

Become aware of your breathing.

As you inhale say the first syllable (J-E) and exhale with the second syllable (S-U-S).

The Jesus Prayer is very simple but can be very satisfying and deep.

### Body Awareness Exercise

Place your feet flat on the floor. Let your eyes close. If your forehead is carrying tension, relax it. Let your jaw drop. Let your hands be relaxed, wherever they are.

Become aware of the sensations on the outside of your head. Then become aware of your face and move down to your shoulders, arms, and hands. Ask yourself what you feel?

Then become aware of the back of your neck. Feel the support of the chair on your back. Move down to your hips, thighs, knees, and ankles. Feel the shoes around your feet. Notice the support of the floor under your shoes.

Repeat the body scan again. Head . . . face . . . shoulders . . . arms, hands, and fingers . . . back, legs, and feet.

Make sure you are still breathing in and out quietly. Now do the scan a third and fourth time.

Now become aware of an uncomfortable part of your body, perhaps a place that is sore or in pain. In an imaginative way, breath in and imagine that the healing and strengthening power of the Lord’s Spirit comes into your body and goes right to where that pain is.

Take 3 big breaths, open your eyes, and stretch.

# Stewardship



Stewardship is the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts and shares them generously in love of God and neighbor. Stewardship is not about money or fundraising. It is a spirituality. It is a way of life.

A steward recognizes that God is the source of all life and every blessing and that all gifts of time, talent, and treasure come from God. A steward is grateful for those gifts. A steward takes care of and increases those gifts, and

No one wants to be called a fool. I suspect all of us would rather be perceived as sensible and full of wisdom, understanding, and insight. Fortunately, prudence is easily attainable, if you believe what the bible says today. "She is readily perceived by those who love her, and found by those who seek her," the first reading this week assures us. Indeed, wisdom "hastens to make herself known."

For years, I gave nothing to the Church. I attended Mass every Sunday but otherwise offered none of my extra time to the Lord. Nor did I use my talents to aid the Church in her mission of spreading the good news of Christ. I was a fool, lacking in wisdom. Even after I started to immerse myself in ministry and service at my home parish in Atlanta, I still gave almost nothing financially.

I attended the annual conference of the International Catholic Stewardship Council for the first time four years ago. What I found was a large group of people absolutely devoted to the idea of stewardship. The level of enthusiasm at the conference was so high, and the people that attended were so passionate about the topic that I drank the Kool-Aid, so to speak, and became a convert. In fact, it changed my life. Soon after the conference, I began increasing my own giving. I now give every week to the general Sunday collection and tithe ten percent of my income. I still don't feel that's enough and am working on ways to increase my offering.

I look back and wonder why I couldn't see the wisdom of living a life of gratefulness and generosity so much earlier in my life. As the Scripture promises, wisdom will "graciously appear to [us]" and meet us "with all solicitude." But we have to be willing to "keep vigil" and "watch for her at dawn."

—Father Roger Gustafson, Pastor

The early Christians waited for the return of Christ, or the *parousia*, with eager anticipation. They believed it would come quickly in their lifetimes. In the second reading, Paul writes to the Thessalonians, who had become fearful that those in the community who had died before the *parousia* would be left behind. Paul reassures them that, when the day comes, both the dead and the living will go out to meet the Lord like a delegation greeting a king. What will we have to offer Christ the King when he comes? What can we say we have done for his kingdom?

We invite you to make a planned, proportionate, and sacrificial financial commitment to this parish and to the poor. The biblical standard is a tenth of our income, before taxes or anything else is taken out, half to the Church and half to the poor. It's a huge step and takes trust, but we can never out give God.

**SECOND COLLECTION  
NEXT WEEK:  
CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT**

**SUNDAY COLLECTION  
November 5, 2017**

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>\$ 9,500</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 11,081</b>
<b>Over</b>	<b>\$ 1,581</b>





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# SAINT BRENDAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

## Church

29 Rockaway Avenue  
San Francisco CA 94127  
Rectory Phone: (415) 681-4225  
Mon - Thurs: 8:30 am - Noon, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.  
Sun: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm  
[www.stbrendanparish.org](http://www.stbrendanparish.org)

## School

940 Laguna Honda Blvd.  
San Francisco CA 94127  
Tel. (415) 731-2665  
[www.stbrendansf.com](http://www.stbrendansf.com)

## Convent

Canossian Sisters  
234 Ulloa Street  
San Francisco CA 94127  
Tel. (415) 681-3465

### MASSES

Sunday: 7:00, 8:00, 9:30, 11:30 AM  
Mon-Fri: 6:30 & 8:30 AM  
Saturday: 8:30 AM 5:00 PM  
Holy Days: 6:30 AM, 8:30 AM and 6:00 PM

### CONFESSIONS

Saturday: 4:15 - 4:45 PM  
Wednesday: 7:15 - 7:45 PM

### EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Wednesday: 7:00 - 8:00 PM  
Saturday: 4:00 - 4:45 PM

### BAPTISMS & WEDDINGS

For information, please see our website at  
[www.stbrendanparish.org](http://www.stbrendanparish.org) or call us at (415)  
681-4225.

### MASS INTENTIONS (November 13-19, 2017)

#### Weekday

	6:30 a.m.	8:30 a.m.
Monday	Rosario Aguirre (L)	Sadie Tainter (D)
Tuesday	Dr. Lloyd & May Wilson (D)	Jose Tamprong (D)
Wednesday	Jesus Figueroa (D)	Ryan Aguirre (L)
Thursday	Edward Hall (D)	Magdalena Aguirre (L)
Friday	Christen Aguirre (L)	Neal Murphy (D)

#### Weekend

SAT 8:30 a.m.	Ricardo S. Morada (D)
SAT 5 p.m.	Mr. & Mrs. So Ka Wing (D)
SUN 7 a.m.	Michael Lane (D)
SUN 8 a.m.	Felix Dayrit (D)
SUN 9:30 a.m.	People of St. Brendan Parish
SUN 11:30 a.m.	Edward & Helen Flynn (D)

### STAFF

<b>Pastor</b> Fr. Roger Gustafson fatherrogergustafson@gmail.com	Ext.220
<b>Parochial Vicar</b> Fr. Peterson Tieng ftpete@stbrendanparish.org	Ext.214
<b>In Residence</b> Fr. Paul Warren	Ext. 208
<b>Pastoral Associate</b> Sr. Angela Furia, FdCC srandela@stbrendanparish.org	Ext. 201
<b>Director of Evangelization &amp; Faith Formation</b> Manolito Jaldon manolito@stbrendanparish.org	Ext. 205
<b>Music Director</b> Mario Balestrieri	(415) 218-1767
<b>School Principal</b> Dianne Lakatta dlakatta@stbrendansf.com	(415) 731-2665
<b>Parish Manager</b> Lisa Rosenlund lisa@stbrendanparish.org	(415) 969-6815
<b>Finance Manager</b> Venetia Hui Gatus venetia@stbrendanparish.org	Ext. 202
<b>Administrative Assistant</b> Maeve O'Reilly maeve@stbrendanparish.org	Ext. 101

### Parish Leadership

**Advisory Board :** Mike Modesti  
**Finance Committee :** Eoin O'Connor

### Children and Youth

**Under Five Ministry:**  
Kendra Perlitz      Devon Klinefelter

**Girl Scouts:**  
Lisa Shaskan      Kirstin McFarlane

**Boy Scouts:**  
Boy Scouts: Maureen Hurley  
Cub Scouts: Robert Rees (rdrees@gmail.com)

**Youth Ministry:**  
Stacey Simpson      Gus Del Puerto

### Religious Education & Sacramental Preparation

**Infant Baptism & RCIA for Children**  
Sr. Angela Furia (415) 681-4225, Ext. 201

**Adult Faith Formation/Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA):**  
Manolito S. Jaldon, Jr. (415) 681-4225, Ext. 205

**Sunday Children's Liturgy:**  
Marco & Karen Donaldson

**Preparation for Reconciliation & First Holy Communion** Grade 2: Stephanie Stanko

**Faith Formation:** Grade 3: Tara Donohue  
Grades 4 & 5: Christina Bui

**Preparation for Confirmation:**  
Grade 6: Manolito S. Jaldon, Jr. & Ben Gerigk  
Grade 7: Liza Bonpin  
Grade 8: Mary Zell Spellman

**Youth of St. Brendan: A Life Teen Ministry (Post Confirmation & High School):**  
Manolito S. Jaldon, Jr. & Ben Gerigk

### Liturgical Ministries

**Lectors:** Richard Pinto  
**Eucharistic Ministers:** Charlotte Bautista  
**Ushers:** Mike Casazza  
**Sacristan:** Jack Mona  
**Liturgy Committee:** Anne Kearney

### Parish Life

**Welcome Committee**  
Kathleen Bost      Jeremy Straus  
(sbwelcomecommittee@gmail.com)

**Hospitality Committee**  
Maria Evangelista

**Mothers' Club**  
Lori Doyle

**Men's Club**  
Joshua Shaskan

**Respect Life**  
Mary Ann Schwab

**Knitting Ministry**  
Marie Jean Longa

**Experienced Navigators:**  
Tony Fernandez

**Married Couples Club:**  
Angela Riordan & Elia Gonzalez  
sbmarriedcouplesclub@gmail.com

### Outreach Ministries

**Consolation Ministry**  
Merry Jean Chan      mjchanstb@gmail.com

**Detention Ministry (San Dimas)**  
Julio Escobar (415) 244-5594

**Marian Servers**  
Dr. Lou Scheerer

**St. Vincent de Paul Society**  
Tad Tassone (415) 587-3849