

October 2018  
Messenger

FR. MIKE'S CORNER

The political and cultural climate as we enter the last quarter of 2018 is disheartening, to say the least. I think if we could be truthful about ourselves without having to admit it to others, each of us sometimes has a very difficult time knowing what reality or truth is in any given situation. Whether an event is deeply personal, public, or political, we must learn to make judgments based on something that has its origins beyond our own dead reckoning.

In a contemporary version of the Bible called, *The Message*, Dr. Eugene Peterson has suggested this translation of Proverbs 9:1-6:

*Lady Wisdom has built and furnished her home;  
it's supported by seven hewn timbers.  
The banquet meal is ready to be served: lamb roasted,  
wine poured out, table set with silver and flowers.  
Having dismissed her serving maids.  
Lady Wisdom goes to town, stands in a prominent place,  
and invites everyone within sound of her voice.  
"Are you confused about life, don't know what's going on?  
Come with me, oh come, have dinner with me!  
I've prepared a wonderful spread—fresh-baked bread,  
roast lamb, carefully selected wines.  
Leave your impoverished confusion and live!  
Walk the street to a life with meaning."*

At many points in our experience, when trying to discern the difference between wrong and right, a great place to begin is with wisdom as God has revealed it in creation, in the person of His son, Jesus the incarnate Word, and in the inscripturated Word,



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Fr. Mike's Corner.....1-2  
A Sober Warning.....3-5  
Birthdays/Anniversaries ..... 4  
Christmas Bazaar.....6

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Oct. 11-Men's Club
- Oct. 14-Vestry Meeting
- Oct. 26-Men's Bible Study



## FR. MIKE'S CORNER (cont.)

Bible. Knee jerk reactions based on our personal preferences and sensibilities are not sufficient weight-bearing pillars.

Some of you may remember a song that I learned in Sunday school as a child. It is based on a parable Jesus told which is recorded in Matthew 7:24-27.

*The wise man built his house upon the Rock,  
The wise man built his house upon the Rock,  
The wise man built his house upon the Rock,  
And the rains came tumbling down.  
The rains came down and the floods came up,  
The rains came down and the floods came up,  
The rains came down and the floods came up,  
But the house on the Rock stood firm.*

*“... a great place to begin is with wisdom as God has revealed it in creation, in the person of His son, Jesus the incarnate Word. . .”*

*The foolish man built his house upon the sand,  
The foolish man built his house upon the sand,  
The foolish man built his house upon the sand,  
And the rains came tumbling down.  
The rains came down and the floods came up,  
The rains came down and the floods came up,  
The rains came down and the floods came up,  
And the house on the sand fell flat.*

*So build your life on Christ the Rock,  
So build your life on Christ,  
So build your life on Christ the Rock,  
And the blessings will come down.  
The blessings come down as your prayers go up,  
The blessings come down as your prayers go up,  
The blessings come down as your prayers go up,  
So build your life on the Lord.*

***If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*** James 1:5

Have a blessed October!

Fr. Mike+



*J.I. Packer*

*Note: In the following Dr. Packer uses the terms “general revelation” and “special revelation”. **General Revelation** refers to what God reveals through nature while **Special Revelation** mainly refers to what God reveals through Scripture. Fr. Mike.*

### Idolatry by J.I. Packer

“Paul’s words here endorse the consistent biblical testimony that idolatry is inexcusable. Scripture never condones idolatry on the grounds that men knew no better, but condemns it on the assumption that they did, and that irrespective of whether they had encountered any part of God’s special revelation or not (Is. 44:10-20; Hab. 2:18-20).

Quite so, says Paul; for it is out of general, not special, revelation that idolatry has been manufactured. Idolatry is a lie grafted on to some of the intuitions of general revelation in order to smother the rest; it was invented to provide sinners with gods they can worship while remaining their own masters. One of the contradictions of fallen human nature is the desire to be lord of what one worships.

As a creature, man yearns for a god to serve; as a sinner, he is resolved to play God himself, and demands that everything else should serve him. This image he made himself (Is. 44:10-20), while at the same time developing techniques of sacrifice, prayer and sympathetic magic for getting his imaginary god to do what he wants (1Ki. 17:25-28 with verses 36, 37 and Mt. 7:7).

And Scripture recognizes more forms of idolatry than polytheism. It says that idolatry exists whenever man gives himself up, heart and

## ADDRESS CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS

Help us save on postage by receiving the Messenger via e-mail. If you would like to receive your copy of the monthly Messenger by e-mail, please notify the church office at [SaintJohnsPorter-ville@gmail.com](mailto:SaintJohnsPorter-ville@gmail.com). If you have a new address or a correction, please let us know.

**HAPPY  
OCTOBER  
BIRTHDAY**

- 1-Jessie Lance
- 1-Sheriden Doyel
- 12-John Yarbro
- 16-Sal Massaro
- 23-Lynda Cordova

**Idolatry (cont.)**

soul, to mastering an adored object. Covetousness is thus idolatry (Col. iii. 5). So it by no means follows that sinners forsake idolatry when they abandon polytheism.

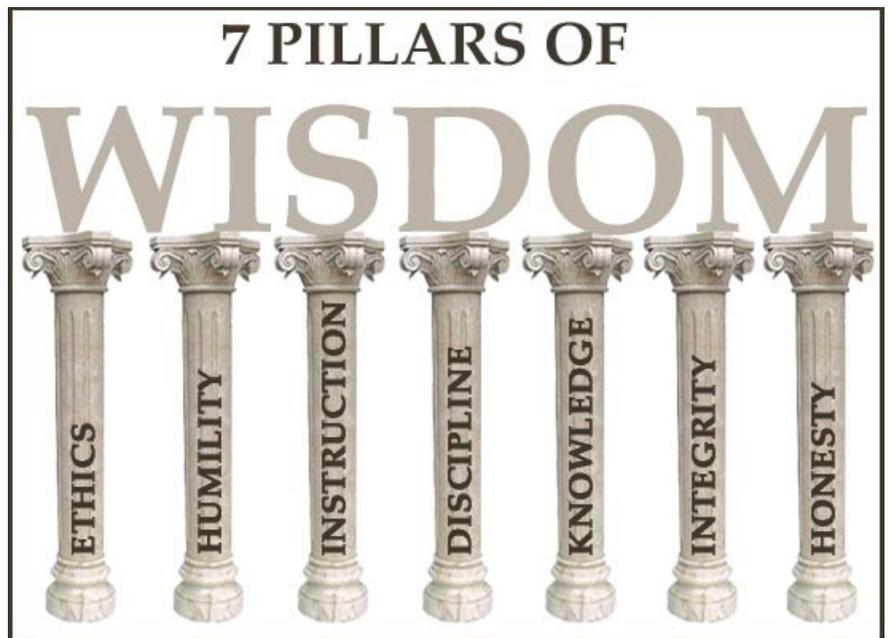
All that happens is that they change their gods. Some ‘idolize’ wealth; and Christ calls such the slaves of Mammon in just the same exclusive sense as the Christian is the servant of his God (Mt. vi. 19, 24). Others ‘idolize’ and live for ideas, ideals, a cause, power, a wife, children, country, beauty and many other things besides.

The self-contradictory lust of sinful man to have something he

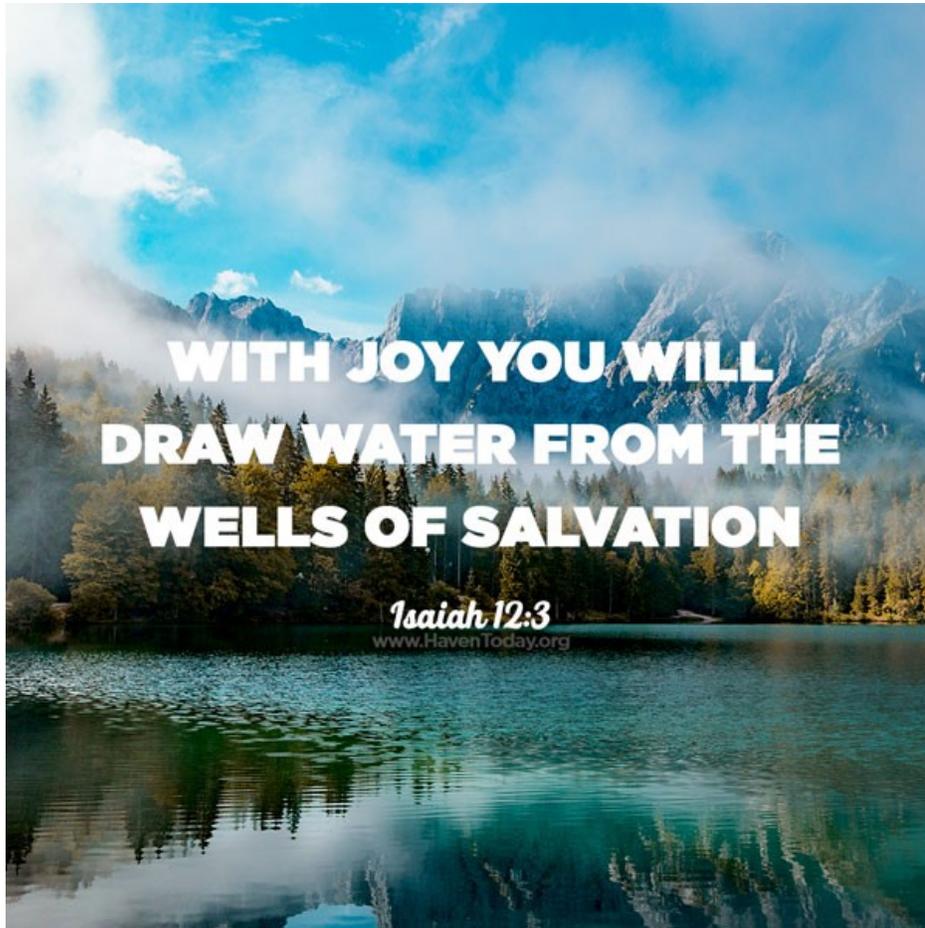
can worship and master at the same time takes countless forms, each exhibiting the same pathetic ambivalence.

Trying to rule what one serves—being enslaved by what one tries to rule—trying to play God to one’s gods, and ending up the captive of them all—that is idolatry, in all its forms. It is a satanic parody of man’s original relation to his Maker, and a source of endless misery to all its practitioners.”

-James I. Packer, “Some Thoughts on General Revelation,” *Christian Graduate* 9.3 (1956); 119.



“When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone away from the well’s mouth and water the sheep. Then they would return the stone to its place over the mouth of the well.” Genesis 29:3



The shepherd was always thinking of the care of his sheep—especially for water to quench his flock’s thirst. Many ancient wells were kept carefully sealed by their owners until high noon, the hour of watering. When the stone was removed, those entitled to the water could approach the well.

A crowd had gathered at the well in Paddam Aram when Jacob arrived. He was just inquiring for his uncle when the beautiful shepherdess Rachel came to water her sheep. Jacob was smitten by her, and later she would indeed become his wife. He had found the love of his life at the well.

Praise be to God that the well of salvation is never sealed for us. We need not wait till “high noon” to approach Him and drink deeply of His compassion and forgiveness. “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. . . For great is the Holy One of Israel among you” (Isaiah 12:3,6). Jesus, our live-giving water, freely gives to all His flock, His chosen ones. In Him you will find true satisfaction for your life’s thirst. Seek Him today!

## Save the Date

### Annual Christmas Bazaar December 1, 2018



This year's Annual Christmas Bazaar will be held on Saturday, December 1, 2018 from 9:00a.m to 1:00p.m. in Brandon Hall at St. John's Church, 308 North D St., Porterville, CA 93257.

The Men's Club will be providing a delicious BBQ hamburger lunch for only \$8.00. Included is a grilled Hamburger with bun, potato salad, baked beans, lettuce, onions (grilled or not), tomatoes and all your favorite condiments. fresh fruit, and a drink.

Twenty raffle tickets will be mailed out to those on our mailing list for the following prizes.

\$300 gift certificate-Hansen Travel

\$150 gift certificate-Town and Country Market

\$100 gift certificate to Crowdaddy's

Be sure to send in your money and completed ticket stubs to be included in the drawing.

We will also have a Rajah Elephant Sale, Silent Auction, Famous Baked Goods, Farmer's Market, and a Craft section.

In reading through the reminiscences (from 1909) of St. John's Parish by Mrs. H.W. Oakley, I came across this paragraph

"In due time those interested in forming a Guild (Guyld as the press called it) got together at Mrs. White's home on North Second St-five young women endowed with more enthusiasm than training. Rules were adopted that probably hold to this day. . . .we even chose the name St. John's which gave the present St. John's (Church) its name. This was late summer, and by constant application and team work we accumulated enough "fancy work" to hold our first money making event, a "tea" with Christmas gifts for sale. The affair was a great success, and we were proud of our \$56 net. We were so pleased that we chose the day, the first Saturday in December, as the permanent time for our Annual Bazaar."

Since 1909, for the past 109 years, the annual bazaar is still held the first Saturday in December. Thank you to all those who have worked over the years to ensure the bazaar runs smoothly or have attended and supported the bazaar to make our event a success.

# Transfigured

Posted by [Jill Carattini](#), on October 5, 2018

Topic: [A Slice of Infinity](#)

A nurse named Melanie was on her way to work when something in the trash bin caught her eye. She was immediately taken with the possibilities in the discarded treasure. It was a cello, slightly cracked in several places, but nonetheless a discard of great character, a piece quite charming to the eye. Her boyfriend, who is a cabinetmaker, also saw the cello's potential. Together they thought it could be turned into a beautifully distinctive CD holder.

At first glimpse, this story seems to evoke a mantra commonly upon artists' and antique-hunters' minds alike: "One person's trash is another person's treasure." With a mother as an antique dealer, I have an endless bank of similar stories. Yet this one was deemed newsworthy and is thus worth retelling.

The discarded cello was indeed old and it in fact had really been abandoned, though authorities are not sure why or how it ended up in the trash that day. But a most shocking revelation to the nurse (and possibly to the thief as well) was the fact that it was not merely an old, interesting cello. It is one of only 60 like it in the world, made by master craftsman Antonio Stradivari in 1684. The 320-year-old masterpiece, valued at 3.5 million dollars, was stolen from a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestra just weeks before it sat rescued in Melanie's apartment with dreams of becoming a CD holder.



In the music world, "Stradivarius" is an untouchable description. Neither scientist nor musician understands the difference between the voice of a Stradivarius versus the voice of modern violins and cellos, but the distinction is real—and *costly*. They are the most sought after musical instruments in the world—works of art in their own

right—coveted by collectors and players alike. To be in the presence of a Stradivarius is to be in the presence of something great, regardless of whether it is recognized or not.

Of course, Melanie knew for sure that she had found a treasure (and there are countless people overwhelmed with thanksgiving that she felt this way). She saved a magnum opus from landing in a truck of garbage because she saw the potential in a piece of trash. But she had no idea how true her thought actually was, until reports of the missing cello transfigured the precious masterwork before her eyes.

## Transfigured (cont.)



I wonder if our experiences of God do not sometimes hint at something similar. Like the disciples on the mount who fell on their faces as the Jesus they knew suddenly became “like the sun” and “as white as light,” God can bring us to that place where we are awed by God’s glory, goodness, mystery—or even fearful existence. And like the disciples, like Job and Isaiah and the long history of surprised followers, we can be unexpectedly reminded that we are in the presence of the Father in all his glory, or remarkably present with the Son, or suddenly aware of the Spirit. Yet whether we are aware or it or not, God is always near, God’s glory declared day after day, the work of God’s hands proclaimed night after night.

A poem penned by Augustine of Hippo describes the delight of soul at being surprised by God, even amid the lament of realizing belatedly that God is there. Writes Augustine, “Slow was I, Lord, too slow in loving you. To you, earliest and latest beauty, I was slow in love. You were waiting within me while I went outside me, looking for your there, misshaping myself as I flung myself upon the shapeless things you made. You were with me all the while I was not with you, kept from you things that could not be except by being in you. You were calling to me, shouting, drumming on deaf ears. You thundered and lightened, piercing my blindness.” (1) His words plead with the ordinary moment to taste and see the bounty of God *today*, presently, in this very glimpse. There is surely rejoicing in being found at all times, but perhaps, too, lament in not seeing sooner how near God was all along.

Like Melanie who saw beauty but did not grasp the true splendor of all she was holding, like the thief who held a masterpiece but saw fit to discard it, what if we are unaware of how near we are to God and the vicarious humanity of the Son who makes his kingdom in this world of flesh and bone and soul? It is like treasure hidden in a field, taught Jesus, like a merchant looking for fine pearls.

*Jill Carattini is managing editor of A Slice of Infinity at Ravi Zacharias International Ministries in Atlanta, Georgia. (1) Saint Augustine, Confessions, trans. Garry Wills, (New York: Penguin, 2006), 234.*

Painting is “The Transfiguration” by Carl Bloch

