

FOR EVEN THE SON OF MAN  
CAME NOT TO BE SERVED BUT  
*to serve others*  
AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE  
AS A RANSOM FOR MANY.

#### PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

You are welcomed and loved by St Anthony Community. We are transformed through prayer, acts of love, forgiveness, service and stewardship.

#### MEET OUR DEACONS

Deacon Nadim B. Daou / Deacon Michael Charchaflian  
Sub-Deacon James T. Demers / Sub-Deacon Antoine Nammour

#### SACRAMENTS

**Baptism & Confirmation:** 1 month in advance with the Pastor

**Donations:** Church & Priest: \$200

**Matrimony:** Couples should make arrangements six months prior to the wedding date

**Donations:** Church \$500—Priest : Free Will

**Reconciliation:** One hour Before Thursday & Saturday Liturgies, or by appointment

**Anointing of the Sick:** Please notify the Rectory if a member of your family is ill, hospitalized, or unable to come to Church and would like to receive communion at home

Please refer to our website for more Sacrament Celebrations Guidelines.



[www.facebook.com/SaintAnthonyLawrence](https://www.facebook.com/SaintAnthonyLawrence)

#### OUR CHURCH AT PRAYER

**Hours of Liturgical services changed due to COVID-19**

#### Weekday Liturgies

Mon - Thu: 9:00 AM

#### Saturday Liturgies:

4:00 PM Vigil (English)

#### Sunday Liturgies:

9:00 AM (English)

11:00 AM (English & Arabic)

#### Holy days of obligation:

Vigil Liturgy @ 7 PM

#### OFFICE HOURS

**M-TH:** 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

**Friday:** 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

**Saturdays:** By Appointment



## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE AND INTENTIONS

### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER HOLY CROSS - الأحد الأوّل بعد عيد الصليب

<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sep. 19</b>	4:00 PM	<b>For: + Amelia Kalil</b>
	<i>English</i>		
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Sep. 20</b>	9:00 AM	<b>For: 1 Year Anniversary- James Hajj</b> <i>By his Children &amp; their families</i>
	<i>English</i>		
	<i>Ara/Eng</i>	11:00 AM	<b>For: The Late President Bachir Gemayel &amp; the Martyrs of the Lebanese Forces</b> <i>By The Lebanese Forces - Methuen Chapter</i>
	<i>Church</i>		<b>For: + Elias Tabet</b> <i>By his son Ibrahim (Bob) Tabet &amp; family</i>
			<b>For: 40 Day Anniversary - Ghassan Tarabay</b> <i>(died in Lebanon) By his sister Samo wife of Elton McGray</i>
<b>Mon</b>	<b>Sep. 21</b>	9:00 AM	<b>For: + Joseph Hatem</b>
			<b>For: + Birthday Remembrance for Rocco Rossi</b> <i>By Theresa Rossi, Donna &amp; Roy Rossi and Lisa &amp; Robert Rossi</i>
<b>Tue</b>	<b>Sep. 22</b>	9:00 AM	<b>For: + Geogre A. Zraket</b> <i>By Subdeacon Jim Demes &amp; Family</i>
<b>Wed</b>	<b>Sep. 23</b>	9:00 AM	<b>For: + Nakhle, Victoria, Jean and Joseph Jabbour</b> <i>By Kamil and Mouna Hbaiter &amp; Family</i>
		9:00 AM	<b>For: +Parents Barbara &amp; Antonio, +Brothers John, All, + Larry's Parents</b> <i>By Dora Pereira</i>
<b>Thu</b>	<b>Sep. 24</b>	9:30AM-12Noon	<b>ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT</b>
<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sep. 25</b>		<b>No Liturgy</b>

### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER HOLY CROSS - الأحد الثاني بعد عيد الصليب

<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sep. 26</b>	4:00 PM	<b>For: Beatification of Fr. Antoun Tarabay, healing of Antoine Karam Asmar</b> <i>By his wife Nada Asmar</i>
	<i>English</i>		
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Sep. 27</b>	9:00 AM	<b>For: + John J. Purcell</b> <i>By his wife Najla</i>
	<i>English</i>		<b>For: + Michel Bou Sanayeh</b> <i>By his nieces Rita Bejjani, Hitaf Nammour &amp; his nephew Charles</i>
	<i>Ara/Eng</i>	11:00 AM	<b>For: 1st Year Anniversary- Dalal Kassas</b> <i>By her brother George Kassas, her daughter Sonia &amp; their families</i>
	<i>Church</i>		<b>For: 1st Year Anniversary- Josephine Jabbour Nehmeh</b> <i>By her son Charles Nehmeh &amp; family</i>

**PARISH SECRETARY:** [rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org)

**MEET OUR PRIESTS** **Pastor:** Fr. Elie Mikhael ....305-807-9087.... [pastor@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:pastor@stanthonylawrence.org)  
**Parochial Vicar:** Fr. Andrawos El Tabchi.... 978-241-2977 .... [pv@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:pv@stanthonylawrence.org)



**THANK YOU**

**Fr. ANDRAWOS**

Fr. Andrawos is assigned as Administrator of Saint Maron Church in Philadelphia, PA effective October 1st.

Farwell Liturgies will be celebrated

**Saturday September 26**


**&**

**Sunday September 27**

As thanksgiving for his ministry in our midst and for a blessed journey.

SEPTEMBER 25TH @7:30PM

# Debates over Drinks

 @ Saint Anthony Church

College-Aged & up  
Must be 21+ to drink

BYOH & BYOC



**BIBLE STUDY WILL RESUME IN OCTOBER**

**ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE:**

**1) Arabic Sessions:**

Continues the study of the **Book of Acts of the Apostles** followed by the **Book of Revelation**.

Wednesdays starting Oct. 7, 2020 @ 7:30 PM

**2) English Sessions:**

A. Perpetual parish formation and Certification in the **Book of Acts of the Apostles**.

Wednesdays starting Oct. 7, 2020 @ 7:30 PM

B. Continuous Formation in the **Book of Revelation**.

Tuesdays starting Oct. 6, 2020 @ 7:30 PM

*Remark: Registration fee is \$40.00, including workbook. It is recommended to complete the study in the Book of Acts of the Apostles before registering for the study in the Book of Revelation.*

**For more info and registration send an email to [rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org)**



**Join the life-saving registry!**  
**TEXT: Match4Michele**  
**To 61474**  
**or go to**  
[Join.BeTheMatch.org/Match4Michele](http://Join.BeTheMatch.org/Match4Michele)

**Match4Michele**

Please join us in helping Dr. Michele Couri, a physician, wife and mother of 6 children who desperately needs the help of the Lebanese community. Michele was diagnosed with a Myeloproliferative Neoplasm (MPN) called Myelofibrosis, which is a rare form of blood cancer. She recently found out that her disease has progressed, and she is in need of a blood stem cell (bone marrow) transplant, which is her only chance of survival.

If you are 18-44 years of age, all you have to do is text Match4Michele to 61474, or visit this webpage: [join.bethematch.org/Match4Michele](http://join.bethematch.org/Match4Michele) fill out a form on your cell phone, and a test kit will be mailed to you. Once you receive it, swab your cheek, send back the kit to be tested, and your information will be entered into the registry. It is painless to be tested. You will not have to pay for any of this as testing is free.

## Knights of the Altar

Dear Knight,

I hope you and your family are doing well. St. Anthony Parish has been doing everything it can to keep our church safe while still giving everyone the opportunity to worship our Lord as a community, either in person or from home through Facebook. We miss having you serve, but we wanted to make sure you would be as safe as possible before returning.

We're making changes to how we will serve to keep you healthy, and we would love to welcome you back in person. We are not pressuring anyone, and if you decide to begin serving again in the future, we will be happy to welcome you back then. For those who would have been promoted this past spring, that will happen once we are able to do it. You will not be forgotten, whether you are serving again or not.

We will be having our monthly meetings, with training, beginning on October 3, from 11:00 to 12:30, and meeting in the church. We plan to meet on the first Saturday of each month after that. Please bring your books as we will not be sharing books now. The meetings will change as well, with you having to sit apart from one another (except for brothers, who may sit together).

I will only put you on the schedule once you are attending meetings.

This lets me know you know what to do. Please wear your masks to the meetings and when serving. I will explain all the changes when we meet. May God continue to bless you and your families.

Sincerely, Sub. James Demers

Meetings Schedule:

October 3 / November 7 / December 5 (*none for January*) / February 6 / March 6 / April 3 / May 8

Training will cover:

- Wearing of masks
- Hand sanitizer
- Cleaning of acolyte candles and cross
- The new altar candles
- Personal robes and laundering
- Cleaning of crosses and cinctures
- Sign of peace
- Standing at lectern and pulpit



*Our Lady of Lebanon Sodality* group is putting together a Parish Cookbook! If you are interested in having a recipe featured (open to all!), please contact Bassima Aboujaoude (603-571-3003) or the Parish Office **by September 15** to submit your name and the dish you want to share!

## Religious Education

If you wish to register your child for Religious Ed, you may register on line at

<https://www.stanthonylawrence.org/registration-form/>

Calendar 2020-2021

<https://www.stanthonylawrence.org/calendar-classes-and-events/>

## St. Anthony Knights of Mary

ONLINE REGISTRATION FORM:

<https://www.stanthonylawrence.org/registration-form-4/>

For Calendar and Health and Safety Protocols, Please Check our Website:

<https://www.stanthonylawrence.org/events-2/>

Sessions will start at 5:15 p.m. and end at 7:00 p.m.

## Saint Anthony Kids Choir

Registrations are open either by Contacting Mr.

Wissam Merheb @ 978. 853.5145

or by emailing the parish at

[rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org)

**SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE**

**Danny Abourjeili & Marla Maroun**

*Congratulations on your wedding and may your marriage be crowned with love, joy and God's presence.*

**Charlotte Hope Motta**

daughter of Gerald Motta & Nicole Dahbour  
*Received the Sacrament of Baptism and Confirmation . Wishing all blessings upon the Charlotte and her family*

**NEWLY BORN:**

**YOUSSEF DAVID BESHARA**

SON of Daveed Beshara & Emily Gannuscio  
May the Lord Bless the Baby and his family

**STEP UP YOUR  
WEEKLY / MONTHLY / ANNUAL  
GIVING COMMITMENT**

REGISTER FOR ONLINE DONATION: TO KEEP UP WITH OUR NEEDS AND, NOT TO FALL SHORT OF OUR FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP GOAL. **Apply Online:**

[stanthonylawrence.org/donate-now/](http://stanthonylawrence.org/donate-now/)

**TREE OF LIFE**

**REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES BY PUTTING THEIR NAMES ON TREE OF LIFE BRASS ALUMINUM PLAQUES SIZES:**

1.5" X 3" = \$75 / 3"X 6"= \$150 / 4"X8"= \$250

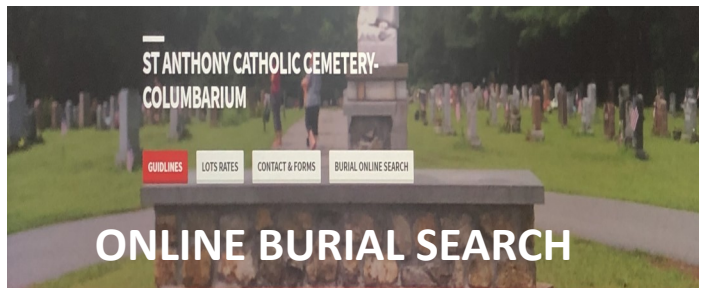
Please submit your request either by phone: 978.685.7233 or by E-mail: [rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org)

**A Message from Arabic School:**

Arabic School at St. Anthony's will be returning, starting this September. The registration fee will be \$150 for child per school year. Siblings will have 30% discount. Please check the bulletin and your email, for more information soon.

**TITHES & OFFERINGS**

**SAINT ANTHONY'S PARISH** depends on donations from our parishioners and benefactors to live and expand our Mission. Your donations fund the many ministries and activities of the parish, Sunday and weekly Masses, faith formation for children, youth and adults, fellowship for our welcoming community, and provides outreach to those in need.



**UPDATE YOUR LOVED ONES RECORD !!**

The following steps will help you access the tool:

1. Go to [www.stanthonylawrence.org](http://www.stanthonylawrence.org)
2. Scroll to the bottom and click on **BURIAL ONLINE SEARCH**.
3. Type in the last/first name or in some cases just last name and click search.
4. Click on the name.
5. In the middle of the page, look for **"Do you know more about this person or their ancestors"?** **Click here.**
6. You can then complete any or all the fields and click submit.
7. If desired, you may send obituary notice, special documents, letters, receipts etc. to [rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org) and we will attach that to your loved one's record.



We have taken needed precautions to ensure the safety of our parishioners as we open the Church for worship

**Upon Arrival:**

- All church doors will be **opened wide** to avoid touching of door handles
- **Masks must be worn by all, ages 5+**, while inside the church. No one will be admitted without a mask, unless for health reasons.
- Masks (if needed) and **Hand Sanitizer are available at Church Entrance.**
- A **contact-less collection bin** has been placed in the foyer. Please drop your offering right into the bin.

**During Liturgy:**

- Every **other church pew is blocked off** to allow for physical distancing.
- The **center communion aisle has been marked with 6-ft markers** to allow for physical distancing.
- **Red Qurbono books have been removed.** All Liturgical texts are available online and throughout the church, you can find a **QR Code** that directs you to the online text for your convenience.
- Communion of the Eucharist may be received **on the hand** or by intinction on tongue.

**Between Liturgies:**

All church pews and doors will be sprayed down with **hospital-grade disinfectant.**



## Second Letter to Timothy 2: 1-10

Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and what you have heard from me through many witness-es entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. Share in suffering like a good sol-dier of Christ Jesus. No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer. And in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing ac-cording to the rules. It is the farmer who does the work who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David that is my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure every-thing for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

## Gospel: Saint Mark 10: 35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to Jesus and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' And he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.' But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' They replied, 'We are able.' Then Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.' When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, 'You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

### AS WE PRAY ON YOUR ANNIVERSARY

**Sep 19:** Rodney & Mary Pica

**Sep 20:** Joseph & Jill Ann Beshara  
Danny & Chantale Maroun

**Sep 21:** Tony & Shannon Khoury

**Sep 24:** Raymond & Lisa Germanos  
Elie & Elizabeth Nehme

**Sep 25:** Michael & C. Gabriela Fiato  
Tony & Joumana Hashem

### AS WE PRAY ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

**Sep 19:** Joseph Akiki, Melanie Awad,  
Maureen Demers, Renee Fontaine,  
Alaina Pelletier, Jill Ramey

**Sep 20:** Rana Abdilmasih, Joseph Andrawas,  
Elie Bouraphael, Michael Faris,

### AS WE PRAY ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

**Sep 20:** Kenneth Gabriel, Maya Geha,  
Maroun Geha, May Maroun, Peter Sarkis

**Sep 21:** Rami Karam, Rachel Ramey,  
Kristine Sader

**Sep 22:** Ibrahim T. Ata, Vatina Hassan,  
Christina Khoury, Gabriella Maroun,  
Michael Ota

**Sep 23:** Edgar Andary, David Flanagan,  
Saria Geha, Mariane Hayek, Anthony Panto,  
Grace Pappalardo, Salina Sahyouni

**Sep 24:** Kyle Bishop, Elias Bou-Chaaya, Maria  
Geha, Brian Khoury, Christopher Merheb,  
Joy Sadek

**Sep 25:** Jane El Hachem, Bassam Geha,  
Chloe Mazraani



## رسالة القديس بولس الثانية إلى طيموتاوس 2: 1-10

يا إخوتي، وأنت، يا أبنِي، تَشَدَّدْ بِالنِّعْمَةِ الَّتِي فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ. وَمَا سَمِعْتَهُ مِنِّي بِحُضُورِ شُهُودٍ كَثِيرِينَ، اسْتَوْدِعْهُ أَنَا سَأَ أَمْنَاءَ، جَدِيرِينَ هُمْ أَيْضًا بِأَنْ يُعْلَمُوا غَيْرَهُمْ. شَارِكُنِي فِي أَحْتِمَالِ الْمَشَقَّاتِ كَجُنْدِيٍّ صَالِحٍ لِلْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ. وَمَا مِنْ جُنْدِيٍّ يَنْهَمُكَ فِي الْأُمُورِ الْمَعِيشِيَّةِ، إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يُرْضِيَ مَنْ جَنْدَهُ. وَمَنْ يُصَارِعُ لَا يَنَالُ إِكْلِيلًا إِلَّا إِذَا صَارَعَ بِحَسَبِ الْأُصُولِ. وَالْحَارِثُ الَّذِي يَنْعَبُ لَهُ الْحَقُّ بِالنَّصِيبِ الْأَوَّلِ مِنَ الثَّمَرِ. تَأَمَّلْ فِي مَا أَقُولُ: وَالرَّبُّ سَيُعْطِيكَ فَهْمًا فِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ! تَذَكَّرْ يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحَ الَّذِي قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، وَهُوَ مِنْ نَسْلِ دَاوُدَ، بِحَسَبِ إِنجِيلِي، الَّذِي فِيهِ أَحْتَمَلُ الْمَشَقَّاتِ حَتَّى الْفُيُودَ كَمُجْرِمٍ، لَكِنَّ كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُفَيِّدُ. لِذَلِكَ أَصْبِرُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَجْلِ الْمُخْتَارِينَ، لِيَحْصَلُوا هُمْ أَيْضًا عَلَى الْخَلَاصِ فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ مَعَ الْمَجْدِ الْأَبَدِيِّ.

## إنجيل القديس مرقس 10: 35-45

دَنَا مِنْ يَسُوعَ يَعْقُوبُ وَيُوحَنَّا، ابْنَا زَبْدَى ، وَقَالَا لَهُ: ”يَا مُعَلِّمَ، نُرِيدُ أَنْ تَصْنَعَ لَنَا كُلَّ مَا نَسْأَلُكَ“. فَقَالَ لَهُمَا: ”مَاذَا تُرِيدَانِ أَنْ أَصْنَعَ لَكُمَا؟“. قَالَا لَهُ: ”أَعْطِنَا أَنْ نَجْلِسَ فِي مَجْدِكَ، وَاحِدٌ عَنِ يَمِينِكَ، وَوَاحِدٌ عَنِ يَسَارِكَ“. فَقَالَ لَهُمَا يَسُوعَ: ”إِنِّكُمَا لَا تَعْلَمَانِ مَا تَطْلُبَانِ: هَلْ تَسْتَطِيعَانِ أَنْ تَشْرَبَا الْكَأْسَ الَّتِي أَشْرَبُهَا أَنَا؟ أَوْ أَنْ تَتَّعَمَدَا بِالْمَعْمُودِيَّةِ الَّتِي أَتَّعَمَدُ بِهَا أَنَا؟“. قَالَا لَهُ: ”نَسْتَطِيعُ“. فَقَالَ لَهُمَا يَسُوعَ: ”الْكَأْسُ الَّتِي أَنَا أَشْرَبُهَا سَتَشْرَبَانِيهَا، وَالْمَعْمُودِيَّةُ الَّتِي أَنَا أَتَّعَمَدُ بِهَا سَتَتَّعَمَدَانِ بِهَا. أَمَّا الْجُلُوسُ عَنِ يَمِينِي أَوْ عَنِ يَسَارِي، فَلَيْسَ لِي أَنْ أَمْنَحَهُ إِلَّا لِلَّذِينَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ“. وَلَمَّا سَمِعَ الْعَشْرَةُ الْآخَرُونَ، بَدَأُوا يَغْتَاظُونَ مِنْ يَعْقُوبَ وَيُوحَنَّا. فَدَعَاهُمْ يَسُوعَ إِلَيْهِ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ: ”تَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ الَّذِينَ يُعْتَبَرُونَ رُؤَسَاءَ الْأُمَمِ يَسُودُونَهُمْ، وَعَظَمَاءَهُمْ يَنْسَلُطُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ. أَمَّا أَنْتُمْ فَلَيْسَ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَكُمْ هَكَذَا، بَلْ مَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَكُونَ فِيكُمْ عَظِيمًا، فَلْيَكُنْ لَكُمْ خَادِمًا. وَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَكُونَ الْأَوَّلَ بَيْنَكُمْ، فَلْيَكُنْ عَبْدًا لِلْجَمِيعِ؛ لِأَنَّ ابْنَ الْإِنْسَانَ أَيْضًا لَمْ يَأْتِ لِيُخْدَمَ، بَلْ لِيُخْدَمَ، وَيَبْدُلَ نَفْسَهُ فِدَاءً عَنْ كَثِيرِينَ“.

**Every Thursday 9:30am-12pm**

PLEASE CONTACT THE RECTORY

@ 978-685-7233

TO RESERVE AN HOUR SO THAT THE BLESSED  
SACRAMENT IS NOT LEFT ALONE.

ADORATION OF THE

BLESSED SACRAMENT

**THE SANCTUARY LAMPS**

BOTH SANCTUARY LAMP WILL BURN IN MEMORY OF:  
MARTYRS OF LEBANESE FORCES

## MOVING BEYOND MISTAKES AND WEAKNESSES *By Ronald Rolheiser*

The excusable doesn't need to be excused and the inexcusable cannot be excused.

Michael Buckley wrote those words and they contain an important challenge. We're forever trying to make excuses for things we need not make excuses for and are forever trying to excuse the inexcusable. Neither is necessary. Or helpful.

We can learn a lesson from how Jesus dealt with those who betrayed him. A prime example is the apostle Peter, specially chosen and named the very rock of the apostolic community. Peter was an honest man with a childlike sincerity, a deep faith, and he, more than most others, grasped the deeper meaning of who Jesus was and what his teaching meant. Indeed, it was he who in response to Jesus' question (Who do you say I am?) replied, "You are the Christ, the son of the Living God." Yet minutes after that confession Jesus had to correct Peter's false conception of what that meant and then rebuke him for trying to deflect him from his very mission. More seriously, it was Peter who, within hours of an arrogant boast that though all others would betray Jesus, he alone would remain faithful, betrayed Jesus three times, and this in Jesus' most needy hour.

Later we are privy to the conversation Jesus has with Peter vis-à-vis those betrayals. What's significant is that he doesn't ask Peter to explain himself, doesn't excuse Peter, and doesn't say things like: "You weren't really yourself! I can understand how anyone might be very frightened in that situation! I can empathize, I know what fear can do to you!" None of that. The excusable doesn't need to be excused and the inexcusable cannot be excused. In Peter's betrayal, as in our own betrayals, there's invariably some of both, the excusable and the inexcusable.

So what does Jesus do with Peter? He doesn't ask for an explanation, doesn't ask for an apology, doesn't tell Peter that it is okay, doesn't offer excuses for Peter, and doesn't even tell Peter that he loves him. Instead he asks Peter: "Do you love me?" Peter answers yes – and everything moves forward from there.

Everything moves forward from there. Everything can move forward following a confession of love, not least an honest confession of love in the wake of a betrayal. Apologies are necessary (because that's taking ownership of the fault and the weakness so as to lift it completely off the soul of the one who was betrayed) but excuses are not helpful. If the action was not a betrayal, no excuse is necessary; if it was, no excuse absolves it. An excuse or an attempt at one serves two purposes, neither of them good. First, it serves to rationalize and justify, none of which is helpful to the betrayed or the betrayer. Second, it weakens the apology and makes it less than clean and full, thus not lifting the betrayal completely off the soul of the one who has been betrayed; and, because of that, is not as helpful an expression of love as is a clear, honest acknowledgement of our betrayal and an apology which attempts no excuse for its weakness and betrayal.

What love asks of us when we are weak is an honest, non-rationalized, admission of our weakness along with a statement from the heart: "I love you!" Things can move forward from there. The past and our betrayal are not expunged, nor excused; but, in love, we can live beyond them. To expunge, excuse, or rationalize is to not live in the truth; it is unfair to the one betrayed since he or she bears the consequences and scars.

Only love can move us beyond weakness and betrayal and this is an important principle not just for those instances in life when we betray and hurt a loved one, but for our understanding of life in general. We're human, not divine, and as such are beset, congenitally, body and mind, with weaknesses and inadequacies of every sort. None of us, as St. Paul graphically says in his Epistle to the Romans, ever quite measure up. The good we want to do, we end up not doing, and the evil we want to avoid, we habitually end up doing. Some of this, of course, is understandable, excusable, just as some of it is inexcusable, save for the fact that we're humans and partially a mystery to ourselves. Either way, at the end of the day, no justification or excuses are asked for (or helpful). We don't move forward in relationship by telling either God or someone we have hurt: "You have to understand! In that situation, what else was I to do too? I didn't mean to hurt you, I was just too weak to resist!" That's neither helpful, nor called for. Things move forward when we, without excuses, admit weakness, and apologize for betrayal. Like Peter when asked three times by Jesus: "Do you love me?" from our hearts we need to say: "You know everything, you know that I love you."