

15<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time Year C  
July 9-10, 2022

*Holding Everything Together*

Readings: Deuteronomy 30: 10-14; Colossians 1:15-20; Luke 10:25-37

“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” At one time or another, each of us has felt a gnawing sense that we’re hanging on by bare threads. It can happen in a difficult class at school, amid a stressful project at work, or even in a family situation. It is not a good feeling. But when we feel that the peace of our society is hanging by a thread, it feels worse. It is so overwhelming as to threaten to paralyze us.

In today’s reading from Colossians, St. Paul gives voice to our belief that Christ Jesus is the image of the invisible God and in him all things are held together. Believers cling to the hope of Jesus; we trust in his Word to transform the world, but God will never do so absent our cooperation.

And thanks to a question posed to Jesus by a scholar of the Law, that cooperation is beautifully summed up in today’s Gospel. The man was likely a scribe, and though designed as a trick question, it afforded Jesus the opportunity to expounded on what it means to be a neighbor. Luke’s Gospel cites the book of Deuteronomy, a key passage in the Torah. We are called to love the Lord with our whole, heart, soul, mind and strength and our neighbor as ourselves. Imagine if our society did this.

Our neighbors include women who, feeling trapped, contemplate ending innocent life in the womb. We pledge to be there, and as Archbishop Lori, chair of the USCCB pro-life committee said, “to fulfill America’s promise to guarantee the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all people.”<sup>1</sup> The building of a society in which every woman has the needed resources to bring her child into this world in love is a tall order indeed. This is what it means to love the Lord with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves. Many have shared with me in recent days their bewilderment over the Church’s lack of response to the actions elected officials professing the

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<sup>1</sup> Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, July 9, 2022. [Read the full statement here.](#)

Catholic faith. I have heard you; know that you are not alone.

Just this past week, it was both discouraging and deeply disturbing and to learn that President Biden signed an executive order protecting access to abortion, rather than using his authority to increase support and care to mothers and babies. When signing this order, his remarks included a misleading statement about treatment in the case of a “life-threatening” miscarriage.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, pro-life legislation “explicitly makes clear that treatment for miscarriages does not fall under the legal meaning of abortion.” Nor would any existing law criminalize a doctor for treating an ectopic pregnancy—it is an entirely different case. “No existing definition of abortion applies to the treatment of ectopic pregnancy.”<sup>3</sup>

Such rhetoric appeases only the abortion lobby. It surely will not bring our country together to help women to carry their pregnancies to term by offering needed pre- **and** post-natal assistance. So, what ought to be our response to these developments? For starters, it must be one in love.

Above all, do not let discouragement enter your hearts. Resist this temptation. Stay focused on living the truth in love and humility. Seek a better way. Do we take Saint Paul’s words seriously? Do we truly believe that Christ Jesus can hold all things together? The Lord’s commands are neither too mysterious, nor remote. God is not asking of us something too difficult, only to obey His laws, which include caring for the least among us, bearing one another’s burdens and seeking to live in peace.

Fifty years ago, Pope Paul VI addressed the relationship between peace and justice in his New Year’s Address:

But it is precisely from this place that the invitation we give to celebrate Peace resounds as an invitation to practice Justice: ‘Justice

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<sup>2</sup> July 8, 2022 remarks: “She’s expressing and experiencing a life-threatening miscarriage, but the doctor is going to be so concerned about being criminalized for treating her, they delay treatment to call the hospital lawyer who is concerned the hospital will be penalized if a doctor provides the lifesaving care.”

<sup>3</sup> National Right to Life Press Release, on their website.

will bring about Peace' (Cf: Is 32:17). We repeat this today in a more incisive and dynamic formula: 'If you want Peace, work for Justice.'"<sup>4</sup>

Justice is all-encompassing. It includes protecting the rights and dignity of rich and poor, young and old, born and unborn.

Moses challenged the people to realize that the commandments are neither too mysterious, nor too remote- we are to love our brothers and sisters, seeing that what truly unites us is that we are all members of God's family. May we strive to put this teaching into practice.

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<sup>4</sup> Pope Paul VI, Message of His Holiness for the Celebration of the Day of Peace, 1 January 1972