

Mary Immaculate of Lourdes

(Formerly St. Mary's Parish, 1870-1910)

Newton/Needham, Massachusetts

Newton & Needham's Oldest Roman Catholic Parish



October 28th, 2012 in the Year of Grace
Our Lord Jesus Christ the King and the
Thirtieth Sunday of the Year

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Mary Immaculate of Lourdes Parish

270 Elliot Street Newton, MA 02464

617 244 0558

Parish Staff

PASTOR: FATHER CHARLES JEREMIAH HIGGINS

VISITING ASSISTANT PRIESTS: FATHER ALVARO SILVA

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: JEAN JOHNSON (DIRECTOR)
PATTI STROM (LATIN MASS CHILDREN'S CATECHISM)

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: MRS. BOBBIE HOFFMANN

PARISH SECRETARY: MARGIE BIBBO

FIRST SACRISTAN: MANNY GOGUEN

SACRISTANS: FRANCIS GALLAGHER, CAMERON MACKENZIE,
TOM GOGUEN, PETER GOGUEN

SEXTON: SEAN WARD (RET. CEMETERY SUPERINTENDENT)

RECTORY HOUSEKEEPER: LAURIE SPINELLI

Telephones

Parish Office: 617-244-0558 / FAX 617-965-4815

Email: miol@parishmail.com

Website: www.maryimmaculatenewton.org

Parish Cemetery of Saint Mary's, Needham
GUARDIAN ESTATE MANAGEMENT INC.

Mr. Ron Goguen, Superintendent

**Guardian Staff on-site for service hours Mon.-Fri.,
9a.m.-3 p.m., April through November**

**For all Cemetery business, please call Margie
Bibbo at the Parish Office: 617-244-0558**

SACRIFICIAL OFFERINGS FOR THE SUPPORT OF OUR PARISH

*"What return can I make to the Lord for all His
kindness to Me?"*



**OFFERTORY FOR SUNDAY,
OCTOBER 21st: \$3,719.00 +
\$1,439.00 (OTHER OFFERINGS)
= \$5,158.00**

**PARISH AIR-CONDITIONING APPEAL AS
OF OCTOBER 21st:
\$5,548.00**

**WORLD MISSION SUNDAY:
\$1,283.00**

Mass Schedule

Sunday: 4:00 PM (Saturday Vigil), 7:30 AM
9:00 AM, 10:30 AM (Traditional Latin), 5:30 PM

Weekdays: Monday—Friday 7:30 AM

Traditional Latin Low Mass:

Mon., Wed. & Fri., 12:30 PM; Tues. & Thurs.,
5:30 PM, Sat. 9:00 AM.

Holy Days: if Mon-Fri., 7:30 AM., 12:30, 5:30 &
7:30 PM.; if on Saturday, 9 AM & 12:30 PM

SACRAMENTS

Baptism: Upon request. Please contact Father Higgins.

Penance (Confession):

Saturday 8:30-9:00 A.M. and 3:30-4:00 PM
Sunday, before and after the 10:30 a.m. AM Mass,
First Fridays (before the 12:30 p.m. Mass)

Matrimony:

Engaged couples should make arrangements with the
parish church so as to allow for adequate sacramental
preparation (six months), including a Pre-Cana program.

Pastoral Care of the Sick

Anointing of the Sick (for those who are gravely ill or
facing serious surgery); **Communion of the Sick for
the Homebound:** Please contact Father Higgins.

OCTOBER IS THE MONTH OF THE HOLY ROSARY



(Front Cover: Photograph of the tapestry of St. Kateri Tekakwitha hanging from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome at the Mass of Canonization last Sunday, October 21st, A.D. 2012. Kateri was 'raised to the altars' with six other saints by Pope Benedict XVI.)

“LILY OF THE MOHAWKS”

Last Sunday Pope Benedict XVI formally canonized the American Indian Kateri Tekakwitha as a Saint of the Holy Catholic Church. St. Kateri lived from 1656-1680. Born of a Mohawk Indian Chief father and an Algonquin Indian Catholic mother, her short life was deeply marked by the Cross and superabundant in virtuous living. Her mother had been enslaved in the Mohawk village as a war captive. When the Chief took her as a wife, her slavery was ended but she still had to hide her Christian religion. To her baby daughter she confided the rudiments of the Christianity from the child's earliest understanding. At the age of

four the child's family was wiped out by small pox and she herself was badly scarred and nearly blinded. The village nicknamed her “Tekakwitha” (“she-who-stretches-out-her-arms”) because she had to grope her way around the village.

A Christian in her heart and living by the grace of natural faith, it was not until she was a young woman that she was able to seize the chance to be baptized a Catholic after French Jesuit missionary priests were admitted into the Mohawk village. At her baptism she took the name “Kateri”, after St. Catherine of Sienna. Terribly persecuted by her father's relatives for her baptism, she was taken to the safety of a “prayer village” of Mohawk converts near Montreal, Canada. There she lived, as far as she was able, in imitation of the life of the French nuns: praying, remaining an unmarried virgin, and tending to the sick and elderly of the village until her early death.

The Miracle for her canonization occurred in 2006. An American Indian boy of the Lummi Tribe in Washington State was dying of a flesh-eating bacterium which was disfiguring his face. The priest who was the visiting pastor for the Reservation had the community pray to Blessed Kateri. After two weeks, with hope for a medical cure at an end and the distraught parents facing the child's certain death, Sister Kateri Mitchell (herself a Mohawk), visited the dying boy in the hospital with a relic of Blessed Kateri and placed the relic on the boy as she prayed. That day the infection suddenly stopped and the boy began his full recovery.

(Fr. Higgins)

PHOTO: Jake Finkbonner, the “Boy of the Miracle”, who was delivered from a flesh-eating bacteria in 2006, after prayers were made to Kateri Tekakwitha and her relic placed on him. Here is his picture from the Canonization Mass of Sunday, October 21st, 2012.



October 21st, A.D. 2012 The 21st Sunday after Pentecost and the 29th of the Year
Mary Immaculate of Lourdes, Newton/Needham, Massachusetts



“Kateri impresses us by the action of grace in her life in spite of the absence of external help and by the courage of her vocation, so unusual in her culture [consecrated virginity for the sake of the Kingdom]. In her, faith and culture enrich each other. May her example help us to live

where we are; loving Jesus without denying who we are. Saint Kateri, Protectress of Canada and the First Native American Saint, we entrust to you the renewal of the Faith in the First Nations and in all of North America. May God bless the First Nations.”

—Pope Benedict XVI, Homily at Canonization Mass of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, October 21st. A.D. 2012

Don't Forget

FEAST OF ALL SAINTS,
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1st, 2012
(HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION)

Thursday of this coming week is the Feast of All Saints, a Holy Day of Obligation. Mass times at Mary Immaculate of Lourdes on the Holy Day will be as follows:

7:30 a.m. (English); 12:30 p.m. (Traditional Latin Low Mass); 5:30 p.m. (English—Sung Mass); 7:30 p.m. (Traditional Latin High Mass)



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd, 2012
ALL SOULS DAY

There will be a sung Requiem Mass for All the Faithful Departed at 7:30 p.m.

Other All Souls Day Masses: 7:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m. (Latin Low Mass)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Requiescat in pace. Amen.

‘ALL SOULS’ remembrance envelopes are in your pews and at the entrance tables to the church. The envelopes with the names of our beloved dead will be placed on the altars of the parish during the month of November beginning on November 2nd. (Envelopes may be placed in the Offertory Basket at collection time.)

There will be a Second Collection next Sunday, November 4th, for the CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

**FIRST FRIDAY CONFESSIONS
BEFORE THE 12:30 P.M. MASS,
NOVEMBER 2nd.**



**FATIMA DEVOTIONS FOR THE
FIRST SATURDAY OF
NOVEMBER (NOV. 3rd)
AFTER THE 9 A.M. MASS**

*PHOTO: Rosary of St. Bernadette
Soubirous*

**NURSING HOME MASSES FOR THE MONTH OF
NOVEMBER:**

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1st: STONE INSTITUTE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8th: WINGATE MANOR**
(Masses at 2:00 p.m.)

**SAINT MARY'S CEMETERY:
Water will be shut-off for the winter
months by November 1st.**



Requiescat in Pace
Ann Moreau, aged 85

Religious Education

Sunday, October 28th:
Grades Kindergarten-Grade 5, 8:30 a.m.
Pre-Confirmation Grades 6-8,
4:15-6:30 p.m.
(Classes in lower church hall)

FOOD DRIVE

The Religious Education Classes invite the parish to join with them in contributing to a food-drive for the Newton Food Pantry. Donations of non-perishable food may be left in the baskets provided in the front vestibule of the main church. The food drive will continue through Sunday, November 11th. Thank you in advance for your generosity.



“WINGS” (Women in God’s Spirit) All women of Mary Immaculate of Lourdes are warmly invited to attend.

Wednesday, October 31st: “*Transfiguring Our Lives*”, Sister Kathryn Hermes, FSP (Daughters of St. Paul) is the author of numerous works including Surviving Depression: The Journey Within and Beginning Contemplative Prayer. She has an M.T.S. from Weston Jesuit School of Theology. Sister will share her insights on deepening our prayer-life and will help us see how time alone with Jesus can change our hearts.

WINGS meets Wednesday mornings from 9:45-11:30 a.m. in the Linse Room at Saint Joseph’s Parish, Needham. For more details, please visit the parish website at www.saintjoes.com (Ministries and Prayer Ministries).

MARY IMMACULATE OF LOURDES: PARISH PURGATORIAL SOCIETY

By this Purgatorial Society, the names of our dead friends and relatives may be enrolled (either as individuals or in aggregate), and prayed for especially in the 52 Masses that will be offered in the parish each year for the intention of the Purgatorial Society. The requested offering for a perpetual enrollment is \$20.00. (White leatherette enrollment envelopes are available in the vestibule of the rectory.) The prayers we have offered at Mass for the souls of the faithful departed are both an expression of our belief in individual survival after the event of bodily death and of a charity towards our neighbor which reaches beyond the grave.

A partial list of the souls enrolled, including the most recent additions:

Leland J. Pearl III, Denise McNamara, Edward J. Flanagan Jr., Josep Jim Kim, Charles K. Stickney, Jerome J. Molacek, Michael A. Aufiero

(New members’ names will be printed in the parish bulletin at the end of each month. Please let us know if any names have been transcribed incorrectly or if you think your enrollment may have been overlooked.)

“It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.”
(II Machabees 12:46)



“If a compassionate charity towards all that are in any distress, even towards the most undeserving, be an essential ingredient of a Christian spirit, and one in which the very soul of religion and piety towards God consists, how much more should we exert our charity for those in spiritual need, no longer able to help themselves, and perhaps bound to us by ties of blood or friendship?”
—Fr. Herbert Thurston, S.J.

Calendar of Masses

(Intention of the Mass—Special Remarks—Requested by)

SATURDAY October 27th	4:00 p.m.	Lila & Nicholas Larach	Memorial	Rosa Larach
SUNDAY October 28th <i>Thirtieth Sunday of the Year/The Feast of Jesus Christ the King</i>	7:30 a.m.	Pro Populo		
	9:00 a.m.	Len McCormick	90th Birthday Memorial	Van McCormick
	10:30 a.m.	Special Intention Francis McCarthy Arthur Dinon Nora Boyle	Memorial 11 yr. Memorial	Anthony & Victoria Angelucci Mary McCarthy Catherine Dinon Mr. & Mrs. William Kasper MacKenzie Family
	5:30 p.m.	Diane Mooney	Birthday Intention	Mike & Heidi McCarthy
	7:30 a.m.	Bill Connelly	Memorial	
MONDAY October 29th <i>Votive Mass in Honor of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Virgin</i>	7:30 a.m.	Purgatorial Society of Mary Immaculate of Lourdes Parish	Memorial	
	12:30 p.m.	Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed	Memorial	
TUESDAY October 30th <i>Ferial Day</i>	7:30 a.m.	James F. McCloskey	100th Birthday Memorial	James & Helen McCloskey Bennett Family
	5:30 p.m.	Margie Casey	Memorial	
WEDNESDAY October 31st <i>Vigil of All Saints</i>	7:30 a.m.	<i>Intention of the Celebrant</i>		
	12:30 p.m.	Arlene Covalli	Special Intention	Susan Goeller
THURSDAY November 1st <i>All Saints Day</i>	7:30 a.m.	<i>Intention of the Celebrant</i>		
	12:30 p.m.	In Honor of All Saints		Maria Centofanti
	5:30 p.m.	John M. Mullen	Birthday Remembrance	Kay Mullen
	7:30 p.m.	Pro Populo		
FRIDAY November 2nd <i>All Souls Day</i> <i>First Friday</i>	7:30 a.m.	All Souls		
	12:30 p.m.	All Souls		
	7:30 p.m.	All Souls		
SATURDAY November 3rd <i>First Saturday</i>	9:00 a.m.	Louisena Dominique Mrs. Hesser Donald Mahoney Michael Angelucci Family All Souls	Memorial Memorial Memorial Special Intention	Geraldine Jean-Pierre Bennett Family Gloria Pazasis Anthony & Victoria Angelucci Antoinette Paoletti
	4:00 p.m.	Edward Hinds	5th Year Anniversary	Hinds Family & Raschel

HEALTH OF THE SICK

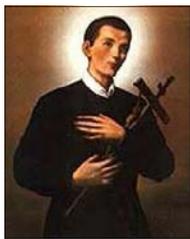
“In every man there is Jesus, but in the sick we see Jesus twice.”

—Padre Pio

For all those on our parish prayer list, especially for... Joseph Nolan, Barbara Nyhen, Rev. Walter Cuenin, Ronald Orlando, Dominic Gundrum, Louis Komuves, Sr. Catherine Grandfield, Mary Adams, Hugh Doyle, Lorraine Orlando, Rob Quagan, Paul Wenger, Nathan Johnston, Frank Downey, Janet Pino, Fr. Carney Gavin, Irene Campana, Gerry Mazzarella, Maureen Nyhen, Francis McNary, Warren Yee, Betty Chishi, Marie Rappazzini, Mary Trombetta, Helen Reid, Brenda Winegarner, Jean Johnson, Lois Ludwig, Paula Apothacary, Jeanne Ciocca, Sam Adams III, Altair da Silva, Christina Kwash, Kitty Ward, Missy Ochsner, Spagnuolo Family, Katie O’Connell, Janet Bourgeois, Judy Sartell, Lana Tomchik, Matthew Banks, Patrick Rainey, Judy Pederson, Ed Donovan, Danny O’Brien, Evelyn Donovan, Helen Donnelly, Priscilla Brossard, Mary Sims, Billy Hickey, Lee-Anne Ketchum, Arthur Nauss, Rod MacLeod, Monica Wellenstein, Teresa Tambunan, Mary Platt, Sean Monaghan, Bill McIlheny, Sheila Whittle, Michelle Fay, Bobbie Hoffmann, Beverly Balconi, Martial Rainey, Dennis McCarthy, Edward Crestitelli, Sharon Kopchik, Erin Marie Fell, Dominic Cantillo, Theresa Higgins, Lita Uilaoghaire, Norman Alibrandi, Joyce Higgins, Karen Starbird, Jack Buckley, Edward Fahey, Nancy Daly, Mary Hoffmann, Marie Schroter, Dorothy Alibrandi, Annie Procopio, Marie Danca, David Kase, Thaddeus Davulis, Andrew McCloskey, Barbara Sullivan, Wanda Lempitski, Thomas Corcoran, Tony Palladino, Joe Bellino, Lucia LoPresti, Polly Sullivan, Fred Strom.



“I do not promise to make you happy in this life, but in the next”—Our Lady of Lourdes to St. Bernadette, February 18th, 1858



SPECIAL INTENTION: *For all the expectant mothers of our parish family.*

“St. Gerard Majella, pray for us”

Prayer for Motherhood:

O good St. Gerard, powerful intercessor before God and Wonderworker of our day, I call upon thee and seek thy aid. Thou who on this earth didst always fulfil God’s designs, help me to do the Holy Will of God. Beseech the Master of Life, from Whom all paternity proceedeth, to render me fruitful in offspring, that I may raise up children to God in this life and heirs to the Kingdom of His Glory in the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER LINE OF THE
POOR CLARE COLLETTINE
SISTERS**



Hawarden, Wales
www.poorclarestmd.org

MILITARY SERVICE PRAYER LIST:

We remember all of our military servicemen and women, especially ... *Mark Gaudet, Army Special Forces, Pierre K. Ripert, USN, Matthew Simard, 1st Lt., USMC (Afghanistan), Michael Simard, PFC, USMC, Christopher Raymond, 82nd Airborne (Afghanistan), Lance Cpl. Alex Tomchik, USMC, Brian Rainey, US Army (Afghanistan), Joseph Rainey, US Army, Sgt. Kevin James Howard, USMC (Afghanistan), Sgt. Brian Joseph Howard, USMC Afghanistan), Sgt. William J. Duggan, U.S. Army, 342nd Military Police Detachment, deployed to Afghanistan March, 2010; 2nd Lt. Richard S. Pluta, deployed to Iraq; Sgt. 1st Class David Garduque; ;Sgt. Jeffrey R. Quinn, USMC; (Please let us know if you would like someone on active duty prayed for by name.)*

Pray for Tommy Holcum, severely wounded in a Taliban ambush in Afghanistan.

Pray for Pfc Bowe Bergdahl, captured by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

IN THANKSGIVING: Sgt. Dennis Geary and his unit have returned safely from Afghanistan.



LATIN MASS TEXTS

Traditional Propers

Feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King

Vestments: White

INTROIT: Apoc. 5.12; 1.26 The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor; to Him be glory and empire for ever and ever. *Ps.* Give to the King, O God, Thy justice, and to the King's Son Thy judgment. *V.* Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT Almighty everlasting God, who in Thy beloved Son, King of the whole world, hast willed to restore all things anew; grant in Thy mercy that all the families of nations, rent asunder by the wound of sin, may be subjected to His most gentle rule. Who with Thee liveth and reigneth.

EPISTLE: Colossians 1:12-20 Brethren: Giving thanks to God the Father, Who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath transferred us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins; Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations, or principalities or powers. All things were created by Him and in Him; and He is before all, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the Body the Church, Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things, He may hold the primacy; because in Him, it hath well pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, making peace through the blood of His Cross, both as to the things on earth and the things that are in Heaven, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

GRADUAL: Psalm 71:8-11 He shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. *V.* And all kings shall adore Him, all nations shall serve Him.

ALLELUIA: Daniel 7:14 Alleluia, alleluia. *V.* His power shall be an everlasting power, which shall not be taken away; and His Kingdom a Kingdom that shall not decay. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew John 18:33-37 At that time: Pilate said to Jesus: Art Thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me? Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee up to me: what hast Thou done? Jesus answered: My Kingdom is not of this world, My servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My Kingdom is not from hence. Pilate therefore said to Him: Art Thou a King then? Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I am a King. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth My voice.

OFFERTORY: Ps. 2:8 Ask of Me and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the end of the earth for Thy possession.

SECRET We offer Thee, O Lord, the victim of man's reconciliation; grant, we beseech Thee, that He whom we immolate in our present sacrifices, may Himself bestow on all nations the gift of unity and peace, our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, Who with Thee liveth and reigneth.

Preface of Christ the King: It is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation that we should at all times and at all places give thanks unto Thee, O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Everlasting God. Who with the oil of gladness hast anointed Thine only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as Eternal High Priest and Universal King: that offering Himself on the altar of the Cross as an immaculate host and peace-offering, He might complete the mysteries of human redemption; and all creatures being made subject to His dominion, He might deliver into the hands of Thine infinite Majesty a kingdom eternal and universal, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace. And therefore with the angels and archangels, with the thrones and dominions, and with all the heavenly host, we sing a hymn to Thy glory, saying without ceasing:

COMMUNION: Psalm 28.10, 11 The Lord shall sit a King for ever. The Lord shall bless His people in peace.

POSTCOMMUNION Having received the food of immortality, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that we who glory in our service under the standard of Christ the King, may be able to reign with Him forever in His heavenly abode. Who with Thee.

Music Programs for this Sunday's Masses

Mass of Pope Paul VI (1970 Missal)

October 28th, A.D. 2012, Saturday vigil, 4 p.m.
Sunday 7:30 and 9:00 a.m.

Thirtieth Sunday of the Year

Introit: Ps 105:3,4 **Laetetur cor**

"Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice; seek the Lord and be strengthened; seek His face for evermore."

Kyrie – Chant

Gloria – Missa De Angelis (English)

Responsorial Psalm

Gospel Acclamation

Credo I: (extra sheet)

Offertory: Ps 119:107,125 **Domine, vivifica me**

"O Lord, grant me life according to Your word, so that I may learn Your commandments."

Mass Setting: Mass VIII Missa De Angelis

Sanctus(English)

"Mortem tuam annuntiamus, Domine, et tuam resurrectionem confitemur, donec venias."

Lord's Prayer

Agnus Dei

Communion: Ps 20:6 **Laetabimur**

"We shall rejoice in Your salvation; and in the name of the Lord our God shall we place our pride."

Post Communion Hymn: Salve Regina
(Gregorian Chant Solemn Tone)

Recessional Hymn:

God Father, Praise and Glory
(Parish Hymnal No.117)

Mass of St. Gregory the Great (1962 Missal)

October 28th, A.D. 2012, Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King

Processional Hymn: Vexilla Christus Incluya
(Gregorian Chant)

Asperges: Chant

Introit: Apoc. 5:12; 1:6; Ps. 71:1

"Dignus est Agnus qui occisus est, accipere virtutem, et divinitatem et sapientiam, et fortitudinem, et honorem. Ipsi gloria et imperium in saecula saeculorum. (Psalm) Deus, iudicium tuum Regi da: et iustitiam tuam Filio Regis."

Ordinary Prayers: "Heiligmesse" Hob. XXII:

(Franz Joseph Haydn, b. 1732)

(Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei)

Gradual: Ps. 71:8,11

*"Dominabitur a mari usque ad mare, et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrarum. Et adorabunt eum omnes reges terrae: omnes Gentes servient ei." **Alleluia:** Dan. 7:14*

"Allelúja, allelúja. Potestas ejus, potestas aeterna, quae non auferetur: et regnum ejus, quod non corrumpetur. Allelúja."

Offertory Verse: Ps. 2:8

"Postula a me, et dabo tibi Gentes hereditatem tuam, et possessionem tuam terminos terrae."

Offertory Hymn:

Te Saeculorum Principem
(Gregorian Chant)

Communion Hymn: Anima Christi
(L.Dobici)

Communion Verse: Ps. 28:10,11

"Sedebit Dominus Rex in aeternum: Dominus benedicet populo suo in pace."

Recessional Hymn

"Hallelujah Chorus"

Messiah, HWV 56

George Frideric Handel b.1685

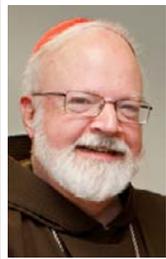
Noon Angelus (Chant)

The Pilot

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Ten reasons to oppose Question 2

There are many groups opposing the legalization of assisted suicide in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and that are urging a “No on Question 2” vote this Nov. 6. In total, more than 100 reasons to oppose this ballot measure have been shared with me since we began our educational efforts on this issue. Some arguments are based on principle, others on prudence, and still others on process — and all of them are valid. Today, I want to share with you ten of the most compelling. In turn, I encourage you to share these reasons with all those you know between now and Election Day.



Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, OFM Cap.

(1) Question 2 would legalize assisted suicide; suicide is always a tragedy and never a dignified way to die. For many people, opposition to assisted suicide is based on respect for God's law, “Thou shalt not kill.” However, one does not need to be a person of faith to understand the tragedy of suicide. Our society admires suicide prevention organizations like the Samaritans that stand ready to

help people in the throes of depression and suicidal thoughts. Their hotlines are staffed with volunteers, always prepared to try to bring solace and help to those suffering from suicidal impulses. There are also heroic first responders who often risk their lives to help stop someone from taking one's own life. Yet, proponents of Question 2 are trying to convince us that assisted suicide at the end of life is not suicide — they strive to avoid the word suicide — and rather a compassionate response to the plight of people who have a terminal illness. It is not. Do not be misled by the seductive language of “dignity,” “mercy,” “compassion” or “aid in dying.” True compassion does not put a lethal weapon, in this case a prescription of 100 capsules of Seconal, into the hands of a person to help take his or her life.

(2) Suicide always impacts others beyond the individual that takes his or her life. Proponents of Question 2 assert that “dignity” requires a radical form of autonomy and control in which one should be able to determine the manner and time of one's death. They ignore the profound interconnectedness of our lives and the impact suicide has on family members, colleagues and society in general. Suicide researchers describe the “copycat syndrome” where the publicity of one suicide in a community leads others to contemplate or act on it. Suicide prevention organizations worry that suicides in the general population will increase if society legalizes assisted suicide because it creates the message that suicide is an acceptable and legal “choice” in some situations. As a society, we shouldn't sanction suicide as a response to hardship.

(3) Doctors strongly oppose assisted suicide and Question 2. Organizations of physicians, including the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) and American Medical Association (AMA), have argued that assisted suicide would bring about a massive change in the nature of medical care and the doctor-patient relationship. Not only will it violate the values and oaths of the medical profession, but it will destroy trust between patients and doctors because some patients will see doctors and

nurses as possible executioners, rather than as defenders of life. Doctors worry that cost-containment pressures in health care will make a prescription for assisted suicide seem attractive for certain conditions. They fear being coerced to write prescriptions or to make referrals to “specialists” who barely know the patient but will write an assisted-suicide prescription. They are also concerned that there is no requirement that the doctors who write the prescription will have particular training in terminal diseases or end-of-life care. Doctors from these organizations believe that the discussion should be about how we can improve care at the end of our lives, not to improve “options” to help patients end their lives.

(4) Advocates for the disabled strongly oppose assisted suicide and Question 2. They point to the lack of adequate safeguards, which could open the door to abuse, manipulation and coercion. They state that the lack of safeguards could lead to increased elder abuse, because it allows a witness to the patient's signed request for assisted suicide to be an heir, beneficiary or possibly exploitative caretaker. Question 2 even allows proxy requests that allow someone familiar with the mode of communication of a terminally-ill person to indicate that they are requesting suicide. Advocates for the disabled are concerned that Question 2 may eventually lead to “quality of life” standards in our society where those with a lower perceived quality of life receive fewer benefits or protections, or to situations like the Netherlands where there is “non-voluntary” and involuntary euthanasia. In short, they believe that assisted suicide will make the vulnerable more vulnerable.

(5) Terminal diagnoses are often wrong. Under Question 2, eligibility for assisted suicide is based on a terminal diagnosis of six-months or less. There is no specificity whether this six-month diagnosis is with or without medical treatment for the illness. Doctors know terminal diagnoses are simply their best estimate and that these predictions are often inaccurate. Patients often live months, even years, longer. Question 2 could lead people to make a life or death decision based on someone's guess, give up on treatment and lose good years of their lives.

(6) Question 2 is shockingly flawed. Even voters that might generally be in favor of assisted suicide have been shocked by some of the elements of Question 2 and have committed to vote no. Most people first think that “physician assisted suicide” consists of receiving one pill from their family physician to be ingested in the presence of a doctor. They are shocked to learn that, instead, a specialist (who likely doesn't know the person and who isn't required to have pain-management training) would provide a prescription for 100 pills to be dispensed at a neighborhood pharmacy and then ingested all at once with no doctor present. They are also shocked to learn that there is no oversight of the lethal drug once it is dispensed to the patient and that there need not be witnesses to the act of suicide to prevent abuse. They are astonished to learn that the death certificate won't indicate that they patient died of assisted suicide and that there are no enforcement provisions, investigative authority, oversight or data verification included in Question 2.

(7) Question 2 does not require a patient to consult with a psychiatrist or palliative care expert before receiving the lethal prescription. Many terminally ill

patients suffer from depression and there is no requirement that a psychiatrist determine that the person is of sound mind before the request is granted. Additionally, there is no requirement that the doctors who are consulted have expertise in palliative care to ensure that a fear or experience of pain, which can be managed, is leading to the request. Many attendees of our educational workshops have been surprised that these reasonable safeguards aren't included.

(8) Question 2 does not require family notification. There is no requirement that the patient notify family members. For example, a husband could receive a lethal prescription without his wife being required to be notified. A mother could feel a “duty” to not be a burden and to leave a large estate to her children without her children having a chance to state that they care more about her than her money. Out-of-state family members might not know that their loved one is contemplating suicide and have an opportunity to intervene. Compassionate care at the end of life should involve the loving support and involvement of family members.

(9) Assisted suicide would weaken efforts to expand and improve palliative care. Palliative and hospice care, and the loving support of family members, are better alternatives than suicide for the terminally ill. Palliative care is a person-centered approach that treats all of the different aspects of pain and suffering. Palliative care experts consider assisted suicide as a “lazy way out.” Rather than ending a life that is filled with pain and suffering, we should offer compassion, respect and dignity by providing the best in palliative care. That is where our efforts should be directed. However, the incentive to do so will be removed if assisted suicide becomes legal, because suicide will become a substitute for quality health care in some situations. It is also likely, palliative care leaders say, that investment in training for palliative care, effective pain management, and end-of-life communication will be undermined.

(10) Complex issues like assisted suicide should be decided in a legislative process rather than a ballot initiative. Some voters in Massachusetts oppose Question 2 because they believe that a ballot initiative process (dominated by 30-second commercials and sound bites) is not a good way to deal with a complex, ethical issue involving life and death. The legislature exists to review proposals, hold public hearings and build consensus on complicated issues.

When we grow old or sick and we are tempted to lose heart, we should be surrounded by people who ask “How can I help you?” We deserve to grow old in a society that views our cares and needs with a compassion grounded in respect, offering genuine support in our final days. The choices we make together now will decide whether this is the kind of caring society we will leave to future generations. Please join me on Election Day to stop assisted suicide by voting “No on Question 2.”

The Archdiocese of Boston has developed an educational website on the Church's teachings on end of life issues, www.SuicideIsAlwaysATragedy.org. The archdiocese is also part of a large coalition of groups from other faiths, from the medical community, and from disabilities rights groups that are advocating a no vote on Question 2. The coalition's website is www.StopAssistedSuicide.org.

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