

Homily

32nd Sunday OT - C

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
November 09-10, 2019

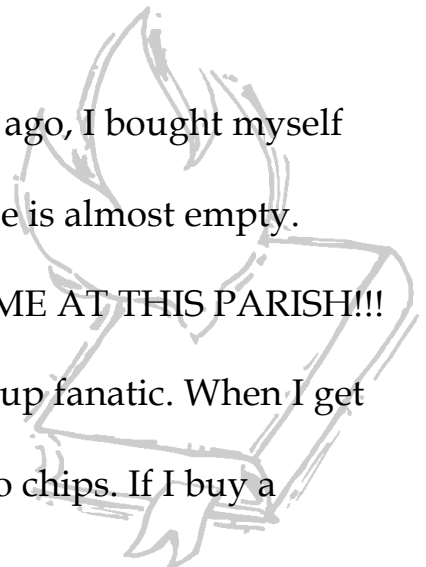
2 Mc 7: 1-2, 9-14
Ps 17: 1, 5-6, 8, 15
2 Thes 2: 16 - 3: 5
Lk 20: 27-38



With the auto accident that took place on Friday and with all the stress that I have encountered while trying to deal with all the problems that have presented themselves at the three parishes I serve, I was reflecting this weekend how fellow colleagues may compensate for all the struggles they endure in life and how I endure my struggles as well. I suppose that some with difficult experiences in life revert to the bottle or drugs or sex or embezzlement or gambling or some vice in life to take their mind off their ills. As for me, I revert to this (the ketchup bottle)...

When I started at these parishes a few month ago, I bought myself this brand-new bottle of ketchup. Now this bottle is almost empty. LOOK WHAT ALL OF YOU HAVE DONE TO ME AT THIS PARISH!!!

Yes, my friends, this is my vice - I am a ketchup fanatic. When I get stressed, I put ketchup on french fries and potato chips. If I buy a



hamburger at a fast food joint, I put more ketchup over the ketchup on the burger. At the risk of alienating half the community in these pews, I also put ketchup on hot dogs, which is a “no-no” for those in the Chicagoland hot dog community. The only things on which I will not put ketchup is on a pancake (which one parishioner at Mass this weekend claims to do), unless it is wrapping a mongo slab of pork sausage. I also went to Poland one year where a family treated me to a pizza with pickles on it which they dipped in ketchup (there are so many things wrong with that image!).

As I was soaking my tears this weekend in my institutional-sized bottle of tomato heaven, I reminded myself of why I buy Heinz ketchup in the first place (I should get residuals from the Heinz company for this homily, BTW). Every time I take a university class to the local Jewish synagogue in Joliet, Rabbi Charles Rubovitz always references that bottle of ketchup and the symbol to the right of the letter “P” that becomes ever so smaller each year the bottle is in existence. The symbol in question is the letter “U” with a circle around it, which represents the kosher “seal of approval” by the orthodox Jewish rabbis who examine

the manner in which the ketchup is produced and whether the manufacturing of this product follows the Jewish processing standards or not.

I came to find out this weekend from those who work at Van Drunen and Silva farms in Momence that each year, a Jewish rabbi comes to visit their facilities and inspect what they do in order to determine whether the process they use is considered worthy of the kosher symbol. Of course, I am waiting for Van Drunen and Silva Farms to ask me to inspect their farms as well so that I can put a cross on their products... actually, I am just looking for the free meal (which, in fairness, Ted Petersen offered me with a grilled cheese sandwich last month, so I have that going for me...).

To be a good orthodox Jew is to follow the guidelines set forth in the Book of Leviticus and whether the food or process in question is considered "clean" or not. In the world of fruits, vegetables or processed foods, to be kosher is to be free of chemicals or preservatives that are considered unclean to the Jewish faith. All fruits, nuts and vegetables must be naturally grown and not chemically enhanced to be considered

kosher. Kosher birds fly and are not predators (predators are necessary to clean and protect the lands, so they must be untouched); this means that ostriches and hawks or eagles are not kosher. In the sea, kosher fish must have fins and scales, which means that sharks and whales are off limits; shellfish are not kosher because their job is to clean the ocean floors (so orthodox Jews do not eat shrimp, clams or oysters).

Kosher land animals must have split hoofs and chew their own cud; I would explain what “cud” means but then I have to talk about the biology of two stomachs, which I choose not to do. Thus, a camel is not kosher because it does not have a split hoof; pigs are not kosher because they do not chew their own cud.

I bring all this up because in our first reading today from Maccabees, the family mentioned refused to eat pork, which would not be considered kosher in the Jewish faith. In this period of our history, we learn from the fourth and third century before Christ’s time that the Greek leaders were ruling the Jewish faithful in Jerusalem. Now the Greek culture was very important in our life of faith; besides giving us a language that Christians embrace in the bible, the Greek culture

introduced us to the concept of philosophy and the art of thinking.

Greek culture introduced us to the concept of “zero,” which was foreign to the Jewish faith. Greek culture introduced certain forms of art and literature that strongly influenced the world of entertainment.

The Greek leadership of the time also tried to force Jews to conform to the Greek way of living, which included the eating of pork. Now if you were (are) a faithful Jew, this means you would be forced to eat unclean foods forbidden in the Book of Leviticus (in this case, Chapter 11). In the first reading today, the family in question refused to cave into the bullish nature of the Greek way of life to the point of death, described in such gruesome detail.

For many of us, we probably would think that this Jewish family was nuts to die rather than to eat pork, which so many in today’s society would eat readily at the breakfast table with our eggs or from the grill in the form of pork sausage or whatever cuts of grilled pig that we might enjoy. Many of us would probably think that Hindus are crazy people because they do not eat anything from a cow, which they consider the most sacred and timid of animals. Many of us would probably shudder

to think that those of the Jain religion would rather push a bug to the side rather than kill the mosquito or complain about pesticides in the crops.

Of course, many in society think we Catholics are nuts because we do not eat meat on Fridays of Lent or on Ash Wednesday. Faithful Catholics before Vatican II would refrain from eating meat on all Fridays of the year; the bishops of the Second Vatican Council stated that if we *do* eat meat on Fridays outside of Lent, we should then replace that custom with some other form of penance. We Catholics engage in this practice because that small sacrifice each Friday reminds us of the infinitely greater one that Jesus sacrificed for us on the cross, a sacrifice that makes possible our salvation in the faith.

I strongly believe in these rituals in all the faiths because when we lose these signs, symbols and rituals that point us to our ultimate reality and purpose in life, we then start to lose the importance of what our faith really means. Just this weekend, I was hanging up crucifixes in all the rooms of my house as a reminder of Christ's presence in every room I enter. If I forget about Christ's presence, then I forget about why I have

been called to this particular vocation. Every room should have a cross, a rosary, a religious image or something that points to the divine.





I have come to learn that when they don't, I often forget about my faith life and I return to what CS Lewis calls the gradual descent into hell (from The Screwtape Letters), the easy path that starts with the small sins of life, leading to the bigger sins. Without those reminders, I end up forgetting about the presence of God in my life and, when I do, I start placing other gods ahead of the one, true God... I forget to put God first on Sundays... I start to disrespect my parents and other superiors... I start to lie, cheat, steal, kill, engage in adultery or covet those things not necessary in life.










For me, at least, I need these signs, symbols and rituals to keep God ever-present in my life and so do you. Without these images, we get trapped in a secular world that eventually comes to an end for us instead of focusing on a God that is eternal. If I keep seeing the presence of God in every room I enter, in every person I encounter, then I remind myself that God is within me as well and that I have a true purpose in life.








For that reason, that ketchup bottle is important to my faith life... and it should be important to yours. Perhaps every time you buy a processed food or whatever you eat, you might want to look and see if that kosher symbol is attached to that product. We need to remind ourselves of what is clean and unclean, both in the faith life of others and certainly in our own. Let us give thanks that these reminders exist all around us and, if we are attentive enough to pay attention, that we can see God in everything we encounter. Let us embrace those sacred images and what they represent. Let us teach that faith well to the people that we meet. This is our prayer.








Rabbinic Kosher Symbols








St. Patrick's Catholic Church








	The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations 333 Seventh Ave, New York, NY 10001 212 563-4000 Fax - 212 564-9058 Rabbi Menachem Genack, Rabbinic Administrator Our Website is: www.ou.org
	The Organized Kashrus Laboratories 391 Troy Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11213 (718)756-7500 Fax - (718) 756-7503 Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, Kashrus Administrator Our Website is: www.ok.org
	Star-K Kosher Certification 11 Warren Road Baltimore, MD 21208-5234 (410) 484-4110 Fax - (410) 653-9294 Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, Rabbinic Administrator
	KOF-K Kosher Supervision 201 The Plaza, Teaneck, NJ 07666 (201) 837-0500 Fax - (201) 837-0126 Rabbi Ahron Felder, Director of Kosher Standards
	VAAD Vaad HaKashrus of the Five Towns Rabbi Moshe Chait (516) 569-4536
	Kashruth of The Central Rabbinical Congress Rabbi Yidel Gruber (718) 384-6765
	BAIS DIN OF CROWN HEIGHTS Rabbi Dov Ber Levertov (718) 774-7504

	<p>K'hal Adath Jeshurun (Breuer's) 85-93 Bennet Avenue New York, NY 10033 212 923-3582 Fax - 212 781-4275 Rav Zachariah Gelley, Rav</p>
	<p>THE "CHOF KOSHER" Rabbi Solomon B. Shapiro (718) 263-1574</p>
	<p>The "Sefer Torah-Kasher" The Vaad Harabbonim of Flatbush Rabbi Eli Skaist, Rabbinic Administrator (718) 951-8585</p>
	<p>Chicago Rabbinical Council 3525 W. Peterson Avenue, Suite #315 Chicago, IL 60659 Phone: (773) 465-3900 Fax - (773) 588-2141 Rabbi Dovid Jenkins, Kashruth Administrator</p>
	<p>Star-D 11 Warren Road Baltimore, MD 21208-5234 (410) 484-4110 Fax - (410) 653-9294 Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, Rabbinic Administrator, Rabbi Boruch Beyer</p>
	<p>Rabbi M. Weissmandl (Rav of Nitra-Monsey)</p>
	<p>National Kashrut 101 Route 306 Monsey, NY 10952 (914) 352-4448 Fax - (914) 356-9756 Rabbi Yacov Lipshutz, President</p>
	<p>Vaad Hakashrus of Massachusetts 177 Tremont Street Boston, MA 02111 (617) 426-2139 Fax - (617) 426-6268 Rabbi Abraham Halfinger, Rabbinic Administrator</p>
	<p>Kashruth Council of Toronto 4600 Bathurst Street Suite #240 North York, Ontario M2R3V2 (416) 635-</p>

	9550 Fax - (416) 635-8760 Rabbi Mordechai Levin, Executive Director
	Montreal Vaad Hair 6825 Decarie Blvd, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3W 3E4 (514) 739-6363, Fax: (514) 739-7024 Rabbi Peretz Jaffe Kashrut Coordinator, Rabbi Saul Emanuel Executive Director E-Mail: semanuel@mk.ca Website: http://www.mk.ca
	Orthodox Rabbinical Council of British Columbia 8080 Fancis Road, Richmond, British Columbia, Canada V6Y1A4 Rabbi Levy Teitlebaum Phone: (604) 275-0042 - Fax: (604) 277-2225
	THE HEART "K" Kehila Kosher Rabbi Avromon Teichman (323) 935-8383 (Los Angeles, California)
	The "RCC" Community Kashrus Division of the Rabbinical Council of California Rabbi Nissim Davidi and Rabbi Avromon Union - Rabbinic Administrators Phone: (213) 489-8080; Fax: (213) 489-8077 Our Website is: WWW.RCCVAAD.ORG
	Kosher Supervision of America P.O. Box 35721 Los Angeles, CA 90035 (310) 282-0444 Fax - (310) 282-0505 Rabbi Binyomin Lisbon, Kashrus Administrator
	THE CALIFORNIA "K" Kehilla Kosher (Igud Hakashrus of Los Angeles); Rabbi Avrohom Teichman (323) 935-8383
	Rabbinical Council of Orange County & Long Beach (714) 846-2285

	<p>Vaad Harabanim of Greater Seattle 5100 South Dawson Street, Suite #102 Seattle, WA 98118-2100 (206) 760-2100 Fax - (206) 760-0905 David Grashin, Administrator</p>
	<p>Vaad Hoer of Saint Louis 4 Millstone Campus St. Louis, MO 63146 314 569-2770 Fax - 314 569-2774 Rabbi Sholom Rivkin, Chief Rabbi</p>
	<p>The Vaad Hakashrus of Denver 1350 Vrain Street Denver, CO 80204 (303) 595-9349 Fax - (303) 629-5159 Rabbi Y Feldberger, Rabbinic Administrator</p>
	<p>Vaad Hakashrus of Dallas - THE "DK" 7900 Northaven Road Dallas TX 75230 (214) 750-8223 - Fax (214) 368-4709 Rabbi David Shawl, Kashrus Administrator (Formerly Dallas Kashrut Council)</p>
	<p>The Texas K & International Kosher Supervision 351 East Price Street Suite #200 Keller TX 76248 (817) 337-4700 Phone - (817) 337-4901 Fax Rabbi Dovid Jenkins, Rabbinic Administrator</p>
	<p>Atlanta Kashruth Commission 1855 La Vista Road Atlanta, GA 30329 404 634-4063 Fax - 404 320-7912 Rabbi Ilan Feldman, Dean</p>
	<p>Tri-State Kashruth, Vaad Hoer of Cincinnati 6446 Stover Avenue Cincinnati, OH 45237 Phone: (513) 731-4671 Fax: (513) 531-5665 Rabbi Yacov Toron, Rabbinic Administrator Our Website is: www.cincinnati-kosher.com</p>

	<p>VAAD HARABONIM OF FLORIDA Orthodox Rabbinical Council of South Florida; Rabbi Growner (305) 931-6204</p>
	<p>Orthodox Vaad of Philadelphia; 7505 Brookhaven Road, Philadelphia, PA 19151 Rabbi Aaron Felder 215-545-2968, Rabbi Shlomo Caplan 215-473-0951 and Rabbi Yehoshua Kagnaff 215-742-8521 Fax for all of them is: 215-473-6220</p>
	<p>Rabbinic Administrator of Upper Midwest Kashrut Rabbi Asher Zeilingold (612) 690-2137 (Minneapolis, Minnesota)</p>
	<p>The "K-COR" Vaad Harabonim of Greater Detroit and Merkaz; Rabbi Beryl Broyde, Rabbi Joseph Krupnik (810) 559-5005</p>
	<p>The "MK" Manchester Beth Din Dayan O. Westheim 061-740-9711</p>
	<p>AGUDAH The Beth Din Zedek of Agudath Israel 02-385-2514</p>
	<p>The London Beth Din Court of the Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Berel Berkowitz 01-387-4300</p>
	<p>KEDASSIA Kedassia, The Joint Kashrus Committee of England 67 Amhurst Park, London, England 44181-800-6833</p>

	<p>Glatt Kosher - Nevei Achiezer Rav Shlomo Mahpud, (03) 769-702 Rav Baruch Roshgold, (03) 797-172</p>
	<p>Bais Din Tzedek of the Eida Hachareidis of Jerusalem 011-972-2-251-651</p>
	<p>BELZ The Bais Din Tzdek of K'hal Machzikei Hadas 02-2-385-832 or 02-795-414</p>
	<p>Rabbi Moshe Y. L. Landa (/Rav of Bnei-Brak)</p>
	<p>Rabbi Nuchem Efraim (Noam) & Teitelbaum (Volver Rav)</p>
	<p>Rabbi Shlomo Stern (Debraciner Rav)</p>
	<p>H.K.K. Kosher Certification Service of Hong Kong, Rabbi David Zadok Phone: (852) 2540-8661 - Fax: (852) 2549-9344 E-mail: zadok@netvigator.com</p>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum (Nirbater Rav) (718) 851-1221</p>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>Rabbi Zevulun Charlop (212) 960-5344</p>

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