

Stella Maris

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**Apostleship
of the Sea**

Supporting Seafarers Worldwide

Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea) is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 339 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world.

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

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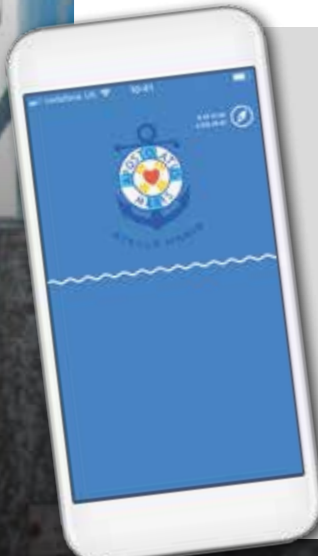
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Stella Maris provides seafarers with practical support, information and a listening ear



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Port Focus: Charleston, USA



The first English settlers arrived in Charleston (then called Charles Town) in 1670. It soon became a major port and by 1750 was the hub of the Atlantic trade in the southern colonies. By the time of the American Revolution, Charleston was the fourth largest port on the east coast, after only Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. With the exception of the British siege during the Revolution and the Federal siege during the American Civil War, the port of Charleston continued to grow in size and importance. Today Charleston ranks as the second largest container port on the east coast of the United States.

Seafarers' ministry in the Port of Charleston dates back to 1821 when the Charleston Port Society established a mariners' church near the wharves. The church was in use until it was destroyed in the Great Charleston Earthquake of 1886. It was replaced by the Church of the Redeemer and the Harriott Pinckney Home for Seaman which were completed in 1916. The church and seaman's house operated for nearly 50 years. However, in the 1950's the changing nature of the port and the maritime industry caused the trustees to sell the properties. In 2001 several local residents saw the need to revive the ministry and formed the Charleston Port and Seafarers' Society, Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea) participates as part of the larger ministry.

Today the ministry operates dockside centers at three of the terminals in the port. The centers are open 24-hours a day, 365 days a year so that seafarers can access free WiFi and computers for communicating with their families and friends and other needs. Staff are on hand to greet the seafarers



and provide transportation for shopping or other needs from 0900-1600 each day. Religious items such as prayer cards and books, rosaries, bibles, and saint medals are also available free of charge in each center. Volunteers visit vessels bringing these items and holding prayer services including Communion Services. Communion services are also held in the centers.

Deacon Paul Rosenblum (pictured) was appointed as the Stella Maris Diocesan Port Minister in 2015. His team of 12 lay volunteers help bring the Catholic Church to the nearly 25,000 men and women who call at the Port of Charleston each year.



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Sunday at Sea

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 September

Commentary by Fr Colum Kelly

Gospel Luke 14:1,7-14

On a sabbath day Jesus had gone for a meal to the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this, "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished person than you may have been invited, and the person who invited you both may come and say, "Give up your place to this man." And then, to your embarrassment, you would have to go and take the lowest place. No; when you are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your host comes, he may say, "My friend, move up higher." In that way, everyone with you at the table will see you honoured. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

Then he said to his host, 'When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not ask your friends, brothers, relations or rich neighbours, for fear they repay your courtesy by inviting you in return. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; that they cannot pay you back means that you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again.'



The Gospel and You

In our gospel today we again find Jesus speaking in the context of a meal, a very common occurrence in Luke's gospel. Here he addresses a parable to the guests and gives advice to his host.

Don't look for places of honour, looking to assert yourself as more important than others. You might be in for a lesson in humility if another comes and is invited to take the special place you thought was yours by right.

In turn he warns his host not just to invite those he thinks might return the favour. In doing something good he must serve freely without regard for his own prospects. In this parable, the message of Jesus is: "Accept others; be open to others. Don't put up barriers against others, like the Pharisees."

Another possible interpretation is that we ourselves are the poor, the lame and the blind. God has invited us to the banquet-hall, out of sheer good will. God invites us so that divine mercy and goodness may be shown to all the world.

In order to follow Jesus, gentleness, compassion, acceptance of the other, must become guiding values in our way of life. In a society based on ambition, aggression, 'going for it' regardless of consequences, being meek and humble can seem like a recipe for failure. But this is the point. What the Gospel presents is the direction we must take in order to build a just society with room in it for all.

I remember being told many times "know your place!" These were often spoken as words of criticism but the truth is that Our Place is in the embrace of a loving God who showers us with many gifts because of his tremendous love for us. From that special place those gifts should be shared freely.

The Kingdom of God is for everyone and our hospitality should embrace all especially people who are overlooked by those who think they are more important.

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

8th September

Gospel Luke 14:25-33

Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and spoke to them. 'If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

'And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying, "Here is a man who started to build and was unable to finish." Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions.'



The Gospel and You

Today's gospel sets a real challenge. We easily understand Christ's words about carrying the cross, but what can he mean by "hating father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters" – a teaching that seems to fly in the face of natural love. We are told in the scriptures to love and honour our Father and Mother, so what is Jesus referring to?

As he moves on to Jerusalem Jesus once more challenges his disciples to weigh up the cost of true discipleship. Merely walking behind is not enough. It certainly will not be an easy, pain free journey. Does Jesus call upon his followers to stop honouring their parents? Most definitely not! He did, however, call them to a life of radical discipleship, so that in comparison to their love for their parents, their love for Him would be even greater. Even that is an enormous challenge.

Discipleship is an all-consuming vocation. It must be accepted after all the consequences have been considered. Jesus uses two examples: a wise builder would never consider taking on a project without first knowing he could complete the work and only someone deranged would go into a battle without considering the chances of success.

At first glance, this seems to recommend a prudence and caution far from the boldness he ordinarily asks from his followers. But that is not really the message of these comparisons. The mission he gives his followers is so important that nobody should commit to it without very careful thought. Jesus calls for a mature reflection. It is reckless to act without reflection.

When a follower of Jesus begins to hold anything back, discipleship becomes a charade. We need to think carefully before we follow the road laid out by Jesus.

Of course we will stumble along the difficult way but the love of the God who called us on that journey will always give strength to rise to the next challenge.

Does Jesus call upon his followers to stop honouring their parents? Most definitely not!

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time 15th September

Gospel Luke 15:1-10

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. 'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he spoke this parable to them:

'What man among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders and then, when he got home, call together his friends, and neighbours? "Rejoice with me," he would say "I have found my sheep that was lost." In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine virtuous men who have no need of repentance.

'Or again, what woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? And then, when she had found it, call together her friends and neighbours? "Rejoice with me," she would say "I have found the drachma I lost." In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner.'



The Gospel and You

Scripture makes it very clear that God's will is universal and that God's deep, constant, passionate longing is that everyone, absolutely everyone, regardless of their attitude and actions, should be somehow brought into his house. God, it seems, does not want to rest until everyone is home, eating at the same table.

The shepherd is like the lady with the lost coin. He cannot rest until his family is once again complete.

In today's gospel Jesus, teaches the same thing. He threads together two stories to make this point: The shepherd who leaves the 99 sheep in order to search for the one stray. And the woman who has ten coins, loses one, and cannot rest until she has found her lost coin.

I particularly like the story, about the woman with the lost coins: A woman has ten coins (each worth about a penny), she loses one, frantically searches for it, puts on extra lights and sweeps her house, and finally she finds it, is overjoyed, calls in her neighbours, and has a celebration that obviously costs more than what the coin itself was worth. Why her frantic pursuit of one small coin? And why her great joy in finding it?

The point here is not the value of the coin but the loss of wholeness: For a Hebrew at the time, 10 was a number of wholeness, 9 was not. The same holds true for the shepherd who leaves the 99 sheep to search for the lost sheep. The number 99 did not mark wholeness, but the number 100 did. The shepherd is like the lady with the lost coin. He cannot rest until his family is once again complete.

The church is not an exclusive club. The Pharisees resent God's mercy. The parable of the lost sheep or coin does not deny the goodness of the virtuous majority but makes the point that there's a special place for the lost to return to.

Our heaven too must be a wide one. We too shouldn't be satisfied when others are separated from us. The family is only happy when everyone is home. And why would we deny anyone the right to return.

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time 22nd September

Gospel Luke 16:10-13

Jesus said to his disciples: The man who can be trusted in little things can be trusted in great; the man who is dishonest in little things will be dishonest in great. If then you cannot be trusted with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? And if you cannot be trusted with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own?

'No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.'

The Gospel and You

In today's gospel Jesus returns to the theme of use of wealth and privilege. I have to admit that in 46 years of preaching I still find this parable one of the most to difficult to interpret. Let's try to keep it simple. In a puzzling parable, Jesus praises a man who is a self-absorbed cheat. Does Jesus encourage dishonesty?

What the Lord notices in the man's dubious behaviour are three things of spiritual importance: 1) he knows that he is in a difficult situation; 2) he makes an honest self-assessment; and, 3) most importantly, he acts.



He reduces the debts of those who owe money to his master, hoping they might return the favour to him when he is removed from his job. Interestingly, he wasn't charged with dishonesty, but with wastefulness.

The comparison in this parable is between the steward and the disciples of Jesus. The steward is praised for being "shrewd" or "wise". If the steward, an ordinary person was wise, how much more wise should Jesus's disciples be. Jesus's appeal is for the "children of light" to be as enterprising in their pursuit of the kingdom as this steward was in trying to ensure his place in the world.

Jesus was making an analogy in his parable: just as the steward was called to account for the use of his master's resources, so will Jesus's disciples be accountable for their use of the resources, physical and spiritual, that they have received from their Master. We the present-day disciples of Jesus, face a similar challenge. We also have been entrusted with many gifts not exclusively for our own personal use. How we use them in the service of others will show our true commitment to the Lord.

We are being told to treat this life seriously, not waste our time here on earth, to have a wholehearted commitment to God and to place great value on our spiritual lives.

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

29th September

Gospel Luke 16:19-31

Jesus said to the Pharisees: 'There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast magnificently everyday. And at his gate there lay a poor man called Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to fill himself with the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even came and licked his sores. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

'In his torment in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus in his bosom. So he cried out, "Father Abraham, pity me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames." "My son," Abraham replied "remember that during your life good things came your way, just as bad things came the way of Lazarus. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony. But that is not all: between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, to stop anyone, if he wanted to, crossing from our side to yours, and to stop any crossing from your side to ours."

'The rich man replied, "Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father's house, since I have five brothers, to give them warning so that they do not come to this place of torment too." "They have Moses and the prophets," said Abraham "let them listen to them." "Ah no, father Abraham," said the rich man "but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent." Then Abraham said to him, "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead."



The Gospel and You

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is one of the most dramatic and pointed of all the parables. It is the only one where the main character is named. Lazarus is translated as "the one whom God helps". There is no help from anyone else in the story until he dies and we are told "is carried off by the angels".

He is a beggar who trusts in the Lord. The nameless rich man is anyone who ignores all the human misery that goes unaided. The rich man has lavish food and a luxurious wardrobe. He isn't necessarily a bad man. He simply ignores the fact that just outside his gate lies a poor man in rags and is starving. Even the scraps of food that fell from the rich man's table were not offered to him. The rich man is clearly at fault by his self-absorption. In this story he is blind to the person in need who is sitting outside his gate and isn't that a problem for many of us?

Our blindness leads us to make excuses for why we shouldn't help those who appear in need. We call them lazy, work-shy addicts, in fact anything that would justify our reluctance to help.

We need to believe that the poor stand before us always as that place where we are judged. We get to show the real depth of our faith on the basis of our response to them. But, as we know, it's not easy to actually feed the hungry, clothe the naked, console the sorrowful, or help the downtrodden. Why?

Mainly because we never see them. We think we do, but in reality we don't. In fact, that's the point the gospels make when they show us the dangers of riches, namely, wealth blinds us so that we don't see the poor.

This reminds me of a phrase I heard some time ago

You will never get to heaven without a *letter of reference from the poor!*... now there's a thought.

"The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is one of the most dramatic and pointed of all the parables."



Faith Stories

Danny Turns His Life Around

On an evening in September of 1998 the phone rang at the Seafarers Centre. The seafarer on the other end of the line asked for me. It was Danny, an American seafarer I met five years earlier when the ship he was on docked in Galveston every 10 days for six months.

Back then, Danny was well into abusing alcohol and drugs, womanizing and getting himself and some of his shipmates into trouble. At one point another crew member was killed after many of them, including Danny went on a drinking binge in Mexico and the young man fell overboard and was swept away by the current.

Those were dark days in Danny's life. We had many long talks whenever I visited his ship. He knew he'd have to change his life or die but he wasn't ready to or strong enough to do it.

For a time after the ship changed routes and Danny signed off. I kept in contact with him through letters but eventually we lost contact when he moved, leaving no forwarding address.

To hear his voice on the phone that night was a joy. And to hear his new ship was in Galveston after five years of not seeing him was a blessing. And as Danny spoke and told me how he'd been working hard to turn his life around that was the best news. He told me how he had been sober for several months and that he was making a conscious effort to repair relationships and make amends. He realized, during his dark years, that he could have died for many different reasons but God had other plans for his life.

That night Danny talked to me for two hours. He said most of the guys on the ship went into town for the night. He wasn't into that scene anymore and needed to call me to have someone to talk to. It was his way of staying safe - not getting talked into going ashore. He asked for a directory of Seafarers Centres so that wherever he went he could go where someone will care about him.

His ship was staying in port a few more days so we made a plan to meet at the Seafarers Centre the next day. Danny came into the Centre that night and the smile on his face told all. It was so good to see him and so good to see him healthy. He talked for three hours, I listened. It was important for him to tell me the details of the last five years including his suicidal thoughts and plan. He had since sold the gun he stared at the night he wanted to die. At the end of the evening he thanked me for having faith in him and never giving up that he would find his way. I continue to keep Danny in my prayers.

From Diary of a Port Chaplain by Karen M Parsons OFS Published by NAMMA Publishers.





The Good Life: Sepsis

Although a precise estimate of the global sepsis cases is difficult to ascertain, some scientific publications report that it affects more than 30 million people worldwide every year, potentially leading to six million deaths. (Source: World Health Organization)

What is sepsis?

Sepsis is a rare but potentially life-threatening condition. It is caused by the body's overreaction to an infection, and affects the organs and tissues, which can lead to death.

What are the risk factors?

We still don't know why some people who get an infection develop sepsis, and others don't. People are more likely to develop sepsis after a viral illness like a cold or a minor injury. But it can affect anyone, regardless of age or state of health. However, some people are more likely to get severe sepsis, including those who:

- are very young or very old
- are diabetic
- are on long-term steroids or on drugs to treat cancer or other conditions

- have had an organ transplant and are on anti-rejection drugs
- are malnourished (your body hasn't had enough food)
- have serious liver disease
- have a serious illness that affects your immune system (the way your body protects itself from infection), such as leukaemia
- have an infection or a complication after an operation
- are pregnant or have just given birth

How do we get sepsis?

Sepsis can result from an infection anywhere in the body such as:

- a chest infection causing pneumonia
- a urine infection in the bladder
- a problem in the abdomen, such as a burst ulcer or a hole in the bowel
- an infected cut or bite
- a wound from trauma or surgery
- a leg ulcer or cellulitis

Worldwide, one-third of people who develop sepsis die. Many who survive are left with life-changing effects, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic pain and fatigue organ dysfunction (organs don't work properly) and/or amputations.

Case study

A 45-year-old male has reported flu-like symptoms; he has self-medicated with two 500mg paracetamol tablets and gone to bed to sleep it off. 24 hours later, he is a little disorientated and realises that he hasn't passed urine for several hours.

Is this sepsis?

Unless you are a medical professional, used to spotting the signs of sepsis, you could be forgiven for thinking that this crew member just had the flu. Let's take a look at some simple signs that you can look for to see if this is a potential case of sepsis.

- S** – Slurred speech or confusion
- E** – Extreme shivering or muscle pain
- P** – Passing no urine (in a day)
- S** – Severe breathlessness
- I** – It feels like you are going to die
- S** – Skin mottled or discoloured

You cannot say for sure that this person has sepsis, but the symptoms certainly match some of those in the S E P S I S checker above. Therefore, it is advised to request urgent medical assistance and begin the treatment for sepsis.

How do I treat sepsis?

Guidelines have been developed to help us treat sepsis as effectively as possible. On board, we don't have access to all the recommendations, but listed below are some of the treatments that we may be able to start:

- Check their oxygen levels using a pulse oximeter, and give them enough oxygen to keep their oxygen saturation above 92%
- Give antibiotics in accordance with a doctor's advice
- Give fluids – intravenously, if possible
- Measure how much urine they pass
- Urgent medical evacuation

Prevention methods

There are two main steps to preventing sepsis:

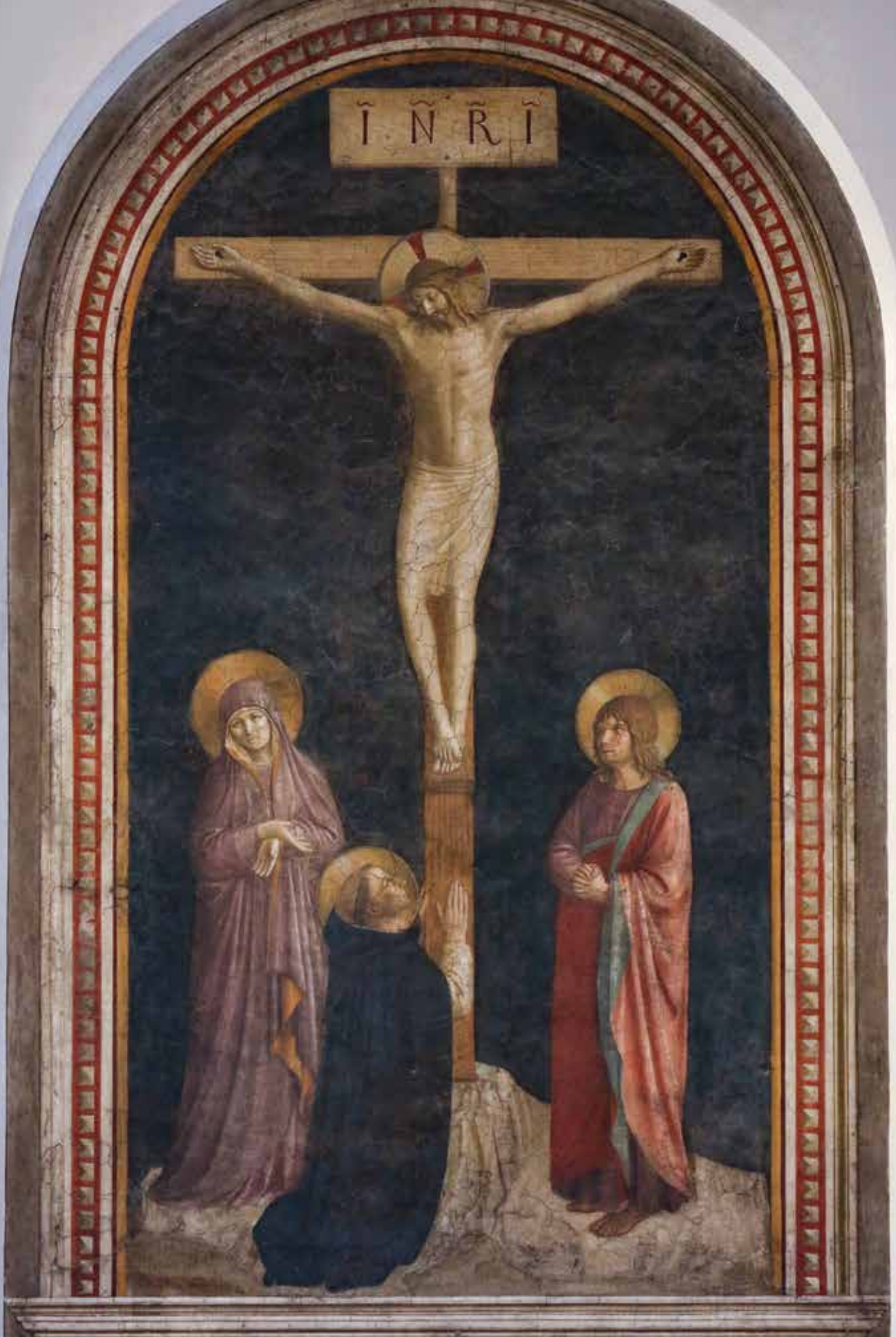
- Prevention of microbial transmission and infection
- Prevention of the evolution of an infection to sepsis conditions

Prevention of infection involves using effective hygiene practices, such as hand washing and safe preparation of food, improving sanitation and the quality and availability of water, providing access to vaccines, particularly for those at high risk, as well as appropriate nutrition.

Prevention of the evolution to sepsis requires the appropriate antibiotic treatment of infection, including reassessment, prompt seeking of medical care, and the early detection of sepsis signs and symptoms. This advice was compiled in collaboration with Red Square Medical www.redsquaremedical.com

Article originally published by UK P&I





O God, who willed that your Only Begotten Son should undergo the Cross to save the human race, grant, we pray, that we, who have known his mystery on earth, may merit the grace of his redemption in heaven.
Amen



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