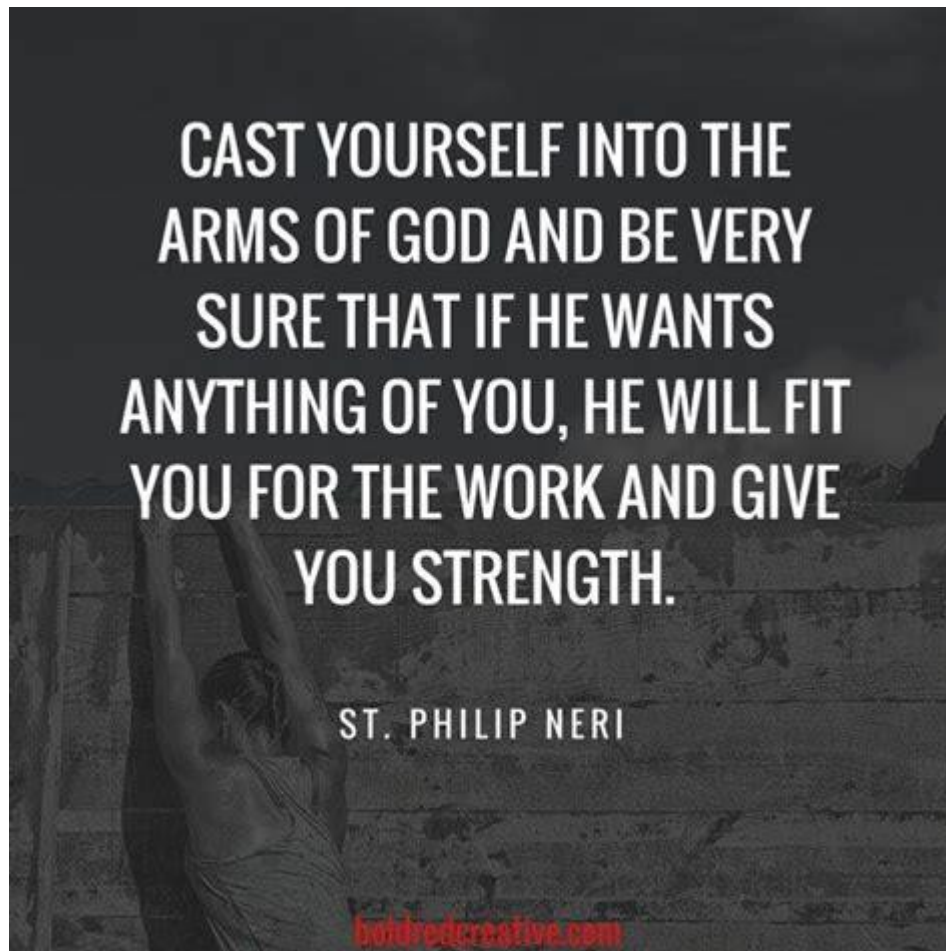


FROM FATHER JOHN: “Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD, and let your faithful ones bless you. Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might. The eyes of all look hopefully to you, and you give them their food in due season; you open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is just in all his ways and holy in all his works. The LORD is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth.” ~ Psalm 145

The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs!!!



You may have heard of one of the great composers of the early 20th century; Giacomo Puccini. If you haven't heard of him, or heard his name before, you have probably heard his music at some point in time without ever realizing it. But, I would guess that most of us have certainly heard the name of at least one of his most famous works; either *Madame Butterfly* or *La Boheme* or *Tosca*.

In 1922, Puccini began what many consider his best work; *Turandot*. As he was composing the opera he became terribly sick. The diagnosis that the doctors gave him was cancer. He had very little time left to live and decided to finish his masterpiece rather than dwell on his looming death. So, Puccini raced to finish *Turandot* before he died. But, unfortunately, he couldn't finish the masterpiece. The disease kept getting worse and worse, the toll it was taking kept getting worse and worse. Finally, Puccini announced to his students that if he could not finish the opera, they should finish it for him.

When he died in 1924 his great masterpiece had not been completed. His students assembled all his notes and manuscripts, they studied them in great detail and then they followed their master's command and proceeded to finish his great work.

Two years later, in 1926, the world premiere of *Turandot* was performed in the famous opera house of Milan, La Scala. Arturo Toscanini, Puccini's most prized pupil, conducted the work. The opera proceeded beautifully until Toscanini came to the end of the part of the opera that had been written by Puccini.

The maestro then stopped the music, put down his baton, and turned to the audience. "Thus far the master wrote until he died," Toscanini announced. There was a long pause. No one moved. Then with tears in his eyes, Toscanini said, "But his disciples finished his work." The conductor picked up the baton again and the opera concluded to thunderous applause and a permanent place in the annals of the great works.

Puccini's students were imbued with the spirit of the great composer. They reflected on his spirit and knew what he would do with each note, each voice, each instrument. He had given himself to them and they had accepted his gift and developed his spirit.

In an infinitely greater way, we are empowered by our Lord and Master to finish His great work; the salvation of that part of creation made in His image and likeness. Jesus entrusted His work to his prized disciples. He entrusted His work to His Church. He entrusted His great work to each of us; the members of the Body of Christ, His instruments in the world.

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, “‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ He then said to him a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, ‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ (Jesus) said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’”
(John 21:15 -17)

He gave us the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Church was born. We are imbued with the Holy Spirit, we are sent into the world by our Lord Jesus, we respond as St. Peter did, we say *“Yes, Lord, you know that I love you”* and our Lord Jesus says to us *“Feed my Sheep.”* We are called to finish the Great Work of our Lord Jesus with our words, with our prayers, with our actions and with our prayers. And, then, our Lord’s Great Work of Salvation continues.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.

