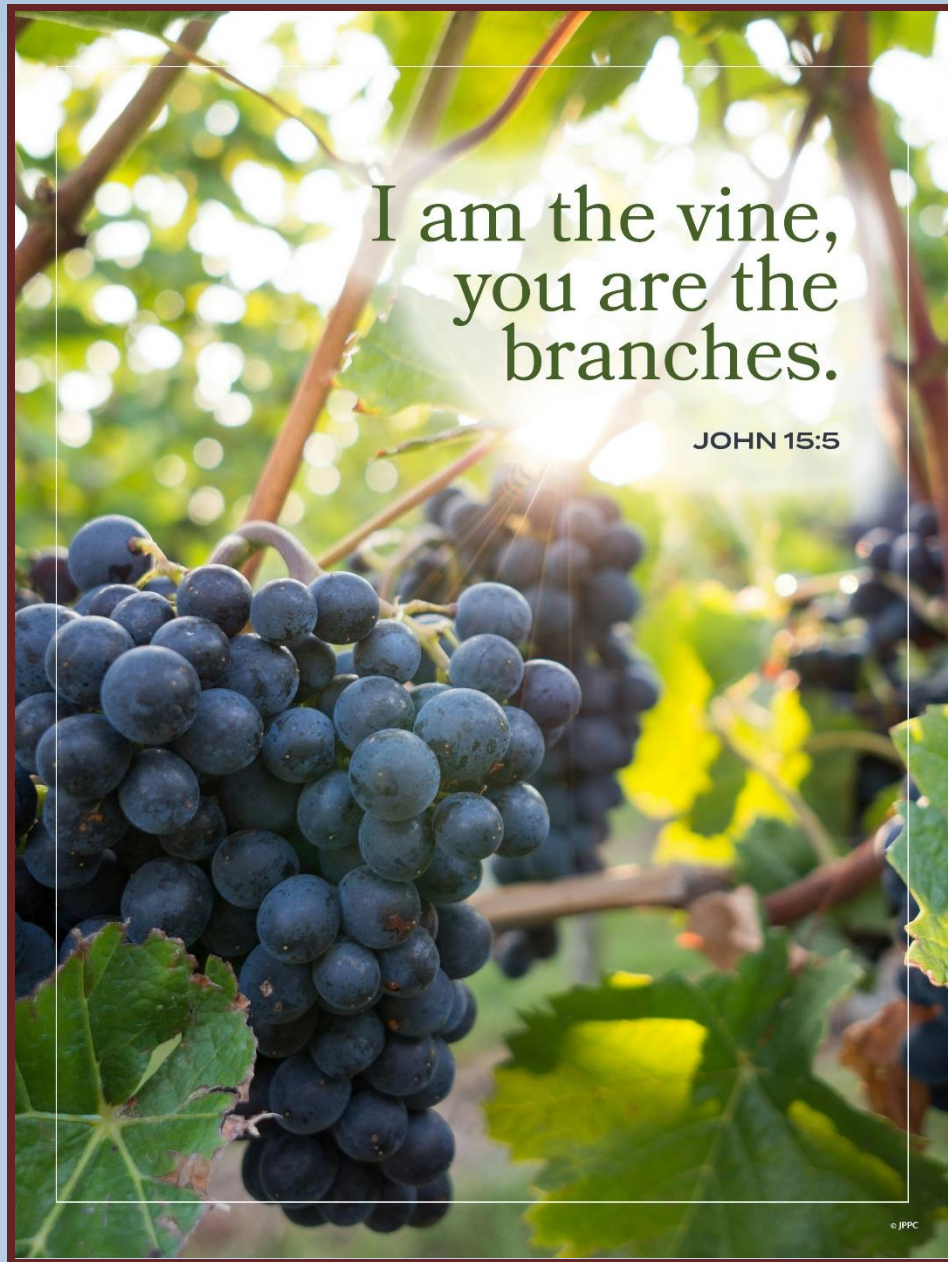


# The Fifth Sunday of Easter

## April 28, 2024



## Transfiguration of the Lord Parish

Saint Mary 14 Park Street + Sacred Heart 58 Church Street + Saint Mark 105 Stanley Street  
North Attleborough, Massachusetts

## Transfiguration of the Lord Parish

Rev. David A. Costa, Pastor  
Rev. Deacon Joseph E. Regali, Parish Deacon  
Sister Kathleen A. Corrigan, S.U.S.C., Pastoral Associate  
Rev. Kenneth R. Sicard, O.P. & Rev. R. Gabriel Pivarnik, O.P., Weekend Assistants  
Mrs. Martha O'Neill, Administrative Assistant  
Mrs. Jean Howard, Business Manager  
Mrs. Elaine Corvese, Director of Religious Education  
Mrs. Lisa Serak, Principal, Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School  
Mr. Adam Turcotte, Director of Music  
Mr. Miguel Peixoto, Buildings Supervisor  
Mr. James Kitsock, Building Maintenance

### Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School

Mrs. Lisa Serak, Principal  
57 Richards Avenue,  
North Attleborough, Massachusetts 02760  
(508) 695-3072 FAX (508) 695-9074  
[smsh@smsh.dfrcs.org](mailto:smsh@smsh.dfrcs.org) [www.smhschool.com](http://www.smhschool.com)

### Saint Mary Cemetery

Mr. Jarrod Ward, Superintendent  
Towne Street  
North Attleborough, Massachusetts 02760  
(508) 695-1173 or email [ripco@comcast.net](mailto:ripco@comcast.net)

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saint Mary Church • Saturday 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm

### Sacrament of Baptism

Baptisms are celebrated on designated Sunday afternoons at 12:30 pm, with a limit of four families at each baptism. Please contact the office at [stmaryna@noozi.com](mailto:stmaryna@noozi.com) for more information and available dates/locations.

### Sacrament of Marriage

Marriage is usually celebrated on Saturday morning and afternoon. Please contact the Parish Office at least nine months in advance to begin preparation.

### Sacrament of the Sick

Pastoral care to those in need of the sacrament of the sick is arranged through the parish office. Please call to arrange a visit.

### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is offered on the first Friday of each month in **Saint Mark Church** beginning at 9:00 am and ending at 6:00 pm with Benediction.

### Parish Offering

If you are attending in person, you may drop your contribution in the collection basket. You are welcome to mail your budget envelope to the parish office, at 14 Park Street, North Attleborough, MA 02760. You may also leave your envelope in the drop box located outside the parish office door, to the right on the landing. Thank you for your ongoing support!

### Weekend Masses

Saturday 4:00 pm **Saint Mary Church**  
Sunday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**  
Sunday 9:30 am **Saint Mary Church**  
Sunday 11:00 am **Sacred Heart Church**

### Weekday Masses

Monday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**  
Tuesday 4:30 pm **Saint Mark Church**  
Wednesday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**  
Thursday 8:00 am Communion Service  
**Saint Mark Church**

*Links to:* Transfiguration of the Lord Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/Transfiguration-of-the-Lord-Parish-North-Attleborough-106529317647894/>

YouTube at <https://tinyurl.com/ysfaxaty>

### Parish Office

14 Park Street,  
North Attleborough, Massachusetts 02760

Parish e-mail • [stmaryna@noozi.com](mailto:stmaryna@noozi.com)  
Parish website • [www.saintmaryna.com](http://www.saintmaryna.com)  
Phone 508-695-6161 Fax 508-695-5248

Faith Formation • [TransfigurationRelEd@gmail.com](mailto:TransfigurationRelEd@gmail.com)  
Faith Formation • 508-695-3823

Music Ministry • [transfiguration.na.music@gmail.com](mailto:transfiguration.na.music@gmail.com)

# MASS Intentions

## April 27/28 – The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

**Saturday** April 27 – **Vigil (St. Mary)**  
4:00 pm Albert & Elsie Jette  
Joseph Smith

**Sunday** April 28 (St. Mark)  
8:00 am People of the Parish

**Sunday** April 28 (St. Mary)  
9:30 am Emma Zimmer Fitzpatrick

**Sunday** April 28 (Sacred Heart)  
11:00 am Robert Misisco  
Virginia Misisco

+++++

**Monday** April 29 (St. Mark)  
8:00 am Father Simon (*living intention*)

**Tuesday** April 30 (St. Mark)  
4:30 pm People of the Parish

**Wednesday** May 1 (St. Mark)  
8:00 am Gene Pion

**Thursday** May 2 (St. Mark)  
8:00 am Lynn Hawes

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## May 4/5 – The 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

**Saturday** May 4 – **Vigil (St. Mary)**  
4:00 pm Leon & Valentine Goulet  
Bob Chagnon  
Deceased Members of the  
Clark Family

**Sunday** May 5 (St. Mark)  
8:00 am Deceased Members of the  
Blais, Genest & Gauthier  
Families

**Sunday** May 5 (St. Mary)  
9:30 am James & Patricia Bradley  
Louis Abdou

**Sunday** May 5 (Sacred Heart)  
11:00 am Philip Darragh  
Thomas Mournighan

+++++

### Parish Contributions

Collection for April 20/21: \$10,624.10

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### Tuesday Communal Rosary Schedule



**Tuesday, April 30, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)**  
Tuesday, May 7, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)  
Tuesday, May 14, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)  
Tuesday, May 21, 2024: Prayer & Pizza (5PM)  
Tuesday, May 28, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)

### Pope St. Pius X Youth Award

Each year, Bishop da Cunha and the Diocese of Fall River recognize you people from our 69 parishes who give generously of their time and talent in service to the Church. The award is named after Pope St. Pius X, founder of the Diocese of Fall River (in 1904), noted for his dedication to young people.

We are very happy to announce that this year's recipient from Transfiguration of the Lord Parish is **Isabella Carlisle**. Isabella, daughter of Peter and Lisa, is a senior at North Attleboro High School. Since Grade 3 (first with her brother Troy), Isabella has been one of our faithful altar servers, always available to assist, not only at the altar, but at any time she was called upon. Now, as a senior altar server, Isabella is a great role model of faithful, dedicated service for our younger servers, and assists with their training with patience and always a smile.

Thank you, Isabella for your dedication, generosity, and service. You are most deserving of this honor! Isabella will receive the Pope St. Pius X medal at a prayer service on Monday, May 6, at Saint Mary Cathedral in Fall River.

### 2024 Mass Intention Book

The 2024 Mass Intention Book is open. The current Mass schedule provides for fewer opportunities for parishioners to remember their beloved dead at weekend Masses. For this reason, we will schedule, when necessary, multiple intentions for weekend Masses. There is no limit on the number of daily Mass intentions. Please contact the office via email, phone, or in writing with your requests.

### 2024 Lenten Parish Charity

This weekend is the last weekend to make your contribution to our 2024 Lenten Charity project: the Holy Union Sisters' ministries in Tanzania, Africa.

As we noted over the weeks of Lent and Easter, the Holy Union Sisters have been ministering in this developing African nation since 1973. As they mark their 50th anniversary of presence and service in Tanzania, the Sisters are focusing on three projects: a new autism center at their school for physically challenged children & youth; a new formation house for Tanzanian women desiring to join the Holy Union congregation; and a health care center for a growing rural village where the Sisters already operate a large school. Our donations will help make these projects a reality.

As of this printing, our parishioners have donated a remarkable **\$21,305.00** for the good work of the Holy Union in Tanzania! To all who have donated most generously, "THANK YOU!" If you have not had the opportunity to join us in this special project, there is still time to make your gift. You may drop your donation in the collection basket or send it to the parish office. Please do so by this Wednesday, May 1, that we may forward our parish donation to the Sisters.

On behalf of the Sisters and those they serve throughout Tanzania:

**Mungu awabariki sana!**  
(May God bless you abundantly!)

## Baptism Congratulations

Our prayerful best wishes are extended to five of our children and their families who recently celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism. Please welcome and remember:

### *Sophia Marie Costa*



Child of Cynthia & Paul Costa  
Godchild of Jessica Wescott & Jeff Costa

### *Fredrick Joseph DeVitto, IV*



Child of Caroleen (Chutjian) & Fredrick DeVitto, III  
Godchild of Kayleigh Chabot-Livingston & Mario DeVitto

### *Molly Elizabeth MacKenzie*



Child of Jacqueline & Joseph MacKenzie  
Godchild of Jessica Mugford & Matthew MacKenzie

### *Remi Noelle Roselli*



Child of Morgan & Gregory Roselli  
Godchild of Samantha Persechini & Jonathan Bennett

## Rosary for Life

The Respect Life Committee of Transfiguration of the Lord Parish is pleased to announce that we will lead a Rosary for Life at 4:00 pm, prior to the 4:30 pm daily Mass in **Saint Mark Church** on the *first, second, fourth, and fifth Tuesday* of each month. The communal Rosary is also livestreamed for any participants who wish to join us remotely.



## Women's Guild Closing Banquet



What a delightful year it's been for our Women's Guild Program! We've had the pleasure of forging new friendships within our Transfiguration of the Lord Parish community while enjoying enriching experiences in both faith and social activities. As we reflect on these moments, we eagerly anticipate our closing banquet scheduled for **Thursday, May 9th at 6:00 p.m.** at Conrad's Casual Dining Restaurant in Foxborough. The dinner will be buffet style and will include "Conrads Famous Steak Tips", Stuffed Chicken Breast, and Baked Haddock. The cost will be \$35.00 pp. To RSVP for this special occasion, kindly reach out to Karen Smith at (508) 212-7377 or Diana Gray at (508) 695-1143.

## Baptismal Preparation Classes Have Resumed

Parents requesting the baptism of their child should be registered members of the parish who attend weekend Mass here at Transfiguration of the Lord Parish on a weekly basis. Please pick up and complete one of the Parish Census forms if you have not already registered with the parish. If this is your first Baptism here at Transfiguration Parish, parents are asked to attend a brief baptismal preparation session. The next session will be held on Sunday, **May 19, immediately following the 11 am Mass in the Sacred Heart Church Meeting Room**. Please use the side door by the elevator to enter the church building. Advanced registration is required. Please call Martha at the parish office or email at [stmaryna@noozi.com](mailto:stmaryna@noozi.com) for more information.

### *Coraline Adelaide Traynor*



Child of Felisha Marques & Matthew Traynor  
Godchild of Jeffrey Marques

## Knights of Columbus Council #330



**Knights of  
Columbus®**

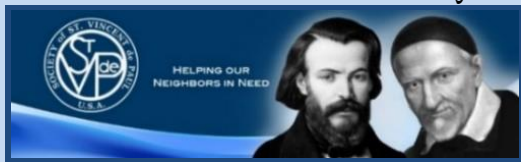
### Monthly Meeting:

Council #330 of the Knights of Columbus has been serving the Catholic Community of North Attleborough for 125 years. The Knights meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7pm, in the St. Mary Church Hall. Please drop by on meeting nights if you'd like to learn more about the Knights. Council #330 is committed to assisting local charities that align with the values of our Faith such as the Parish, the Parish school, and Abundant Hope. Please contact Jim Schromm via email with any questions: [jim.schromm@verizon.net](mailto:jim.schromm@verizon.net).

### Knights of Columbus Diaper Drive:

The Knights of Columbus are organizing a Diaper Drive to benefit Abundant Hope Pregnancy Resource Center. We are requesting donations of diapers in all sizes, but Abundant Hope is in dire need of larger size diapers, (sizes 4, 5 and 6). We are also requesting donations of diaper wipes. We will have containers at each of the three North Attleborough churches, this weekend of April 28, and continuing into the month of May. Thank you very much for your support of Abundant Hope and the Knights!

### Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Saint Vincent de Paul Society



Inspired by Gospel values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization, leads women and men to join to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are in need or are suffering, in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul. The Society meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month in the parish hall in Saint Mary Church at 6:30 pm. Please join us!

### Call for Assistance:

If you need assistance, please call the help line for our parish Saint Vincent de Paul Society. They can offer information about the types of assistance available. Please call **508-212-4755** for help or more information.



Please join us at **Saint Mark Church** on Friday, **May 3<sup>rd</sup>**, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. with Benediction. Remember, as we share in the work of Redemption, so will we be rewarded with our own redemption. For more information call Joanne Regali (508-643-3821) or Arlene Hall (508-801-2243). Please leave a message if the call is not answered immediately.

## Please Remember our Deceased Parishioners:

*Gerald O. Flamand  
Louis R. LeBlanc, Sr.  
Glenna (Childs) Butler*



*Eternal rest grant unto our beloved dead, O Lord.  
Let perpetual light shine upon them.*

### Faith Formation Program 2023-2024

*Director of Religious Education ~ Mrs. Elaine Corvese*  
508-695-3823; [transfigurationreled@gmail.com](mailto:transfigurationreled@gmail.com)

### Faith Formation Office hours:

**Monday – Thursday: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

### Dates of First Communion:



HOLY EUCHARIST

**May 4, 2024: 10:00 a.m. Saint Mary Church**  
**May 4, 2024: 1:00 p.m. Saint Mary Church**  
**May 11, 2024: 10:00 a.m. Saint Mary Church**

### Mother's Day Roses



Honor all mothers by purchasing a silk rose after Mass on Mother's Day weekend, May 11/12! **Any donation is appreciated.** You may give the rose to a special woman in your life or place it in a vase to honor our Blessed Mother. Proceeds benefit the Massachusetts Citizens for Life, a charitable organization that promotes public policy and education for the dignity of every human life from conception to natural death. Thank you from the Transfiguration Respect Life Group!

### New Website & New Online Giving Platform



Please note that we are in the process of redesigning our parish website and plan to roll out our new online presence within a few weeks. As part of this process (and it is a lengthy process, for sure!), our online giving platform will also change.

At present, our parish uses two distinct online giving companies. These were both used before the merging of the parishes into the new Transfiguration Parish. The new website company has an online component which ties directly into our parish census allowing for more streamlined financial recording and tracking. There are many threads that need to be woven together before this process is up and running.

When all of these moving parts are in place and ready to work for us, we will be doing a full roll-out of the new website and the new online giving platform. Your patience is GREATLY appreciated!

# SAINTS

## SAINT MARY-SACRED HEART

Make SMSH Middle School Part of Your Story!



The goal for our middle school students is that they are disciplined and well-prepared for high school; engaged in learning about Catholic faith and morals; and challenged to practice those ideals in their lives. Most importantly, we feel it is our obligation to ensure each student practices responsible behavior and become independent learners who are leaders at the school.

Prospective middle school students are invited to join our vibrant SMSH community as they shadow and embody the spirit of being a SMSH Saint for a Day!

During this special day, your student will immerse themselves in the SMSH community by making new friends among our SMSH Saints, attending classes, sharing lunch and engaging with our amazing faculty and staff. Your student will have the opportunity to ask questions of all kinds, or simply observe and absorb the unique atmosphere of SMSH.

Participating in this program provides a firsthand experience of community life at SMSH and a chance to see what it's like to be a part of our Saints community.

Middle Schoolers interested in taking part in the SMSH Saint for a Day shadow experience can easily sign up by contacting Mrs. O'Heir in the main office at 508-695-3072. Schedule your day now!!

### Friends of SMSH: Upcoming Outings

As announced, the Friends of SMSH is offering various one-day and multi-day outings:

Join us on Wednesday, May 22 for the **"Ricky Nelson Remembered"** show, at Lake Pearl in Wrentham, MA. Price per person is **\$89.00** and includes luncheon, tax and gratuity, and show ticket. Information flyers are available at the doors of the church or you may contact Nancy Chapman or May Courbron at 508-243-2904 or by email: [friendsofsmsh@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofsmsh@gmail.com) for more information. Please note that tickets are NOT sold at the door.

In addition, please consider joining us on July 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024 for the **Boothbay Harbor & Cabbage Island Lobsterbake**, an amazing adventure featuring some of Maine's most picturesque areas. Price per person is **\$599 (double occupancy)**, or **\$729 (single occupancy)**. For more information, please call Pat Bishop at 508-243-2904.

Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School: We are Saints!



*When I say "we are" - you say "Saints!" We are Saints!*

Congratulations to our Saints Cheer team. They participated in a Cheer Showcase with several other Catholic elementary/middle schools at Saint Raphael Academy!



Our students participate in a variety of sports offerings from cross country to basketball to cheerleading to volleyball to track and field - we have something for everyone. Skill building and sportsmanship are the foundation of our SMSH athletic program. We invite you to learn more about our sports teams and Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School by visiting our website: [www.smshschool.com](http://www.smshschool.com).



**Start Your Story at SMSH!**



Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School's Kindergarten is a child-centered program designed to establish a strong foundation for learning in the early years. SMSH provides a caring, Catholic learning environment – one that promotes cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual development of all children. We invite you to learn more about our school's strong curriculum by visiting our website [www.smshschool.com](http://www.smshschool.com). If you want your child to attend a school that balances faith with education, consider joining the Saints community of learners.

## Saint of the Week: Saint Catherine of Siena

The value Catherine makes central in her short life and which sounds clearly and consistently through her experience is complete surrender to Christ. What is most impressive about her is that she learns to view her surrender to her Lord as a goal to be reached through time.

She was the 23rd child of Jacopo and Lapa Benincasa and grew up as an intelligent, cheerful, and intensely religious person. Catherine disappointed her mother by cutting off her hair as a protest against being overly encouraged to improve her appearance in order to attract a husband. Her father ordered her to be left in peace, and she was given a room of her own for prayer and meditation.

She entered the Dominican Third Order at 18 and spent the next three years in seclusion, prayer, and austerity. Gradually, a group of followers gathered around her—men and women, priests and religious. An active public apostolate grew out of her contemplative life. Her letters, mostly for spiritual instruction and encouragement of her followers, began to take more and more note of public affairs. Opposition and slander resulted from her mixing fearlessly with the world and speaking with the candor and authority of one completely committed to Christ. She was cleared of all charges at the Dominican General Chapter of 1374.

Her public influence reached great heights because of her evident holiness, her membership in the Dominican Third Order, and the deep impression she made on the pope. She worked tirelessly for the crusade against the Turks and for peace between Florence and the pope. In 1378, the Great Schism began, splitting the allegiance of Christendom between two, then three, popes and putting even saints on opposing sides. Catherine spent the last two years of her life in Rome, in prayer and pleading on behalf of the cause of Pope Urban VI and the unity of the Church. She offered herself as a victim for the Church in its agony. She died surrounded by her “children” and was canonized in 1461.

Catherine ranks high among the mystics and spiritual writers of the Church. In 1939, she and Francis of Assisi were declared co-patrons of Italy. Pope Paul VI named her and Teresa of Avila doctors of the Church in 1970. Her spiritual testament is found in *The Dialogue*.

Though she lived her life in a faith experience and spirituality far different from that of our own time, Catherine of Siena stands as a companion with us on the Christian journey in her undivided effort to invite the Lord to take flesh in her own life. Events which might make us wince or chuckle or even yawn fill her biographies: a mystical experience at six, childhood betrothal to Christ, stories of harsh asceticism, her frequent ecstatic visions. Still, Catherine lived in an age which did not know the rapid change of 21st-century mobile America. The value of her life for us today lies in her recognition of holiness as a goal to be sought over the course of a lifetime.



## Feast Day of Saint Catherine of Siena: April 29<sup>th</sup>



## Transfiguration of the Lord Respect Life Group

### Monthly Meeting:

The next meeting of the Respect Life Group will take place on Thursday, **May 2, 2024 at 6:30 pm in Sacred Heart Church's Library**. We hope to see you there!

### Local Walk for Life - May 10th | 9:30am-2pm:

Diocese of **Fall River**  
Secretariat for **The New Evangelization**

**LOCAL WALK FOR LIFE**  
The National Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette, North Attleboro  
**May 10, 2024**

**Most Rev. Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.**  
**Massachusetts State Legislature Representative Alan Silvia**

Individuals are invited to attend the Local Diocesan Walk for Life on Friday, May 10th, at La Salette Shrine in North Attleboro. The day will include Mass with Bishop da Cunha, keynote by Massachusetts State Legislature Representative Alan Silvia, Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Adoration, and Walk for Life. Registration for Mass is -required due to limited seating. Register yourself or a group here:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/cjsz3fg>  
For more information, email [irobinson@dioc-fr.org](mailto:irobinson@dioc-fr.org).

# The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter - April 28, 2024

READINGS FOR THE  
WEEK



Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

## First Reading

### A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When Saul arrived in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. Then Barnabas took charge of him and brought him to the apostles, and he reported to them how he had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. He moved about freely with them in Jerusalem, and spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord. He also spoke and debated with the Hellenists, but they tried to kill him. And when the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him on his way to Tarsus.

The church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers.

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

WHEN SAUL ARRIVED IN  
JERUSALEM, HE TRIED TO JOIN THE  
DISCIPLES, BUT THEY WERE ALL  
AFRAID OF HIM, NOT BELIEVING  
THAT HE WAS A DISCIPLE.

- ACTS 9:26

## Responsorial Psalm

**R. I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

I will fulfill my vows before those who fear the LORD. The lowly shall eat their fill; they who seek the LORD shall praise him: "May your hearts live forever!"

**R. I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; all the families of the nations shall bow down before him.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

To him alone shall bow down all who sleep in the earth; before him shall bend all who go down into the dust.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

And to him my soul shall live; my descendants shall serve him. Let the coming generation be told of the LORD that they may proclaim to a people yet to be born the justice he has shown.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

## Second Reading

### A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*



## Gospel Acclamation

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*Remain in me as I remain in you, says the Lord.  
Whoever remains in me will bear much fruit.*

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

## Gospel

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

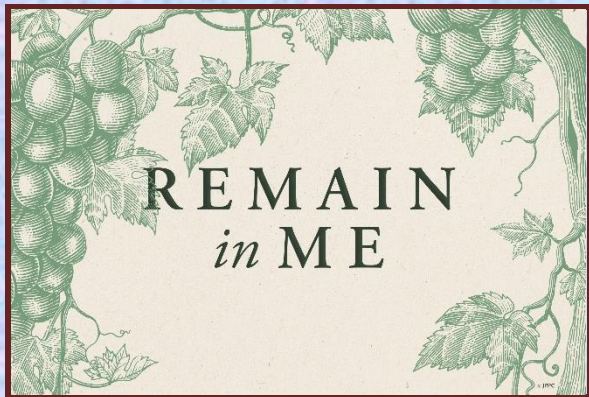
† A reading from the holy Gospel according to John  
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*



## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### Tending:

For as long as memory serves, agricultural peoples have tended vines and orchards. Spring was pruning season, when the strongest branches were strengthened, the weak and dead branches fed to the fire. When Jesus looked out over the vineyards at night, he saw the small fires burning the discarded branches. All day long the vines were trussed and tended. Before long, there would be good new wine.

### Comment:

The Gospel for this Sunday is drawn from Jesus' long Last Supper discourse. This is Passover time; the moon is full. The signs of spring tending are everywhere. The apostles know well that this is the time of trussing and splicing of branches. Jesus uses these strong reminders to speak of his relationship to the apostles. They must be tightly grafted to him, as branches are to the vine. He is the strong vine from which they all draw their life. Jesus does not speak here of the apostles' solidarity with one another, but focuses instead on the source of that solidarity—himself. He is the source of each life. They can flower from this single, vital source. He will be the source of their life and of all of their relationships. The first reading offers a glimpse of this flowering, which takes the form of a formidable challenge. Here we have the newly converted Saul, moving rather casually, it seems, among the disciples in Jerusalem who are understandably very frightened of him. They are not entirely sure of this one-time ferocious enemy. So, Barnabas takes on the challenge of introducing Saul to the apostles and explaining how he had spoken fearlessly "... in the name of Jesus." Barnabas is successful, and in the end, it is not the new Christians who locked horns with Saul, but rather the Greek-speaking Jews. As a result of their wrath, the apostles think it best to spirit Saul away and send him home to Tarsus until things cool down.

### Reflection:

We are assured in this reading that, excepting this incident, the Church was fundamentally at peace and growing steadily. Surface tensions may occur, and this is to be expected. Life is messy, after all. 'Twas always thus and 'twill always be. The only real trouble arises when the Church fails to adhere to Jesus as the sole source of its life. The second reading can be seen as operating instructions to help the Church avoid this sad state. We are advised to live by faith in the name of Jesus Christ and by a love that shows in deed and truth. That kind of active, honest love is a good test of our adherence to Jesus, the vine. Like the early Church, we may be faced with injustice and a lack of tranquility inside and outside our ranks. We are called to pray for peace and justice and to act in love and deed to bring about that very peace and justice. If we do not, there is no truth in our words. We can ask ourselves quietly and our communities out loud how willing we are to act as people grafted tightly to Christ. How willing are we to accept irresponsible disengagement from the place where we live? How willing are we to choose virtual lives, "wired" to someone else's machinery? Jesus calls for our solidarity in him, which is the source of our solidarity with one another. This solidarity means engagement. Our prayers and deeds and openness cannot exist in some ethereal realm. They must be down-to-earth and carried out by down-to-earth people, like us. Human connections have fragrance and taste and texture and warmth. First, we are called to consider the source, the risen Lord. Then to consider the flowering—the Church, that is, the people. This is the continuing Easter time of new growth and flowering. This is spring time for the soul. We are to support one another in our efforts to be at peace and to act in fairness. We are asked to take on the tough love that shows in the deeds that match our words.

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# Reflections for the Week beginning Sunday, April 28, 2024



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

28 April 2024

## WORD OF THE WEEK

### Doctor of the Church

ˈdäk-tər ˈæv ˈtʰə ˌtʰɜːrç

Doctor, from the Latin *docere*, meaning “to teach”; an eminent teacher of the faith, canonized and recognized as such by the pope or church council. Originally eight in number, four were chosen from the Eastern Church and four from the West. To date there are 37 **church doctors**, including four women.

*Pronunciation:* <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-Doctor-of-the-Church>

### CONTEXT

The **doctors of the church** were apostles of the pen.  
—*Homiletics & Pastoral Review*

**Doctor of the church** ... is an honorific reserved for those recognized as superlative sources of great wisdom and holiness.  
—*James Keene in America*

In theological discussion, particular respect is paid to the writings and opinions of those designated **doctors of the church**, because they are deemed to represent the Tradition in a noteworthy degree.  
—*Monika K. Hellwig*

### WHY IT MATTERS

Sometimes in the moral life you need an umpire who has the authority to call it fair or foul. **Doctors of the church** have proven that their careful perspective on matters of faith can be trusted, particularly by their witness of holiness and dedication to learning.

From the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' website: "To be declared a **Doctor of the Church** does not imply that all their writings are free from error but rather that the whole body of their work, taken together serves to advance the cause of Christ and his Church."

### RELATED WORDS

Holiness | Church fathers | Saints | Magisterium

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### Who are the doctors of the church?

**Doctors of the church** are always canonized saints, defined by three criteria: eminent learning, a high degree of sanctity, and proclamation by a pope or council. Their naming isn't an infallible decision and doesn't presume their writings are free from error. A doctor's primary significance is as Confessor of the faith. That is why martyrs, such as Ignatius and Cyprian, were originally excluded. Irenaeus of Lyon was added in 2022, however, so doctor-martyrs are now a possibility.

Currently, there are 37 **doctors of the church**, with 17 being from religious orders: Five Benedictines; three each of Carmelites, Dominicans, and Franciscans; two Jesuits; and one Redemptorist. Each doctor reveals an avenue of grace through unique achievements in such areas as apologetics, homiletics, history, education, science, art, music, poetry, catechesis, mysticism, morality, and spirituality.

—*Alice Camille, from Questions Catholics Ask* <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-Doctor-of-the-Church>

## REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

MEMORIAL OF CATHERINE OF SIENA, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH (APRIL 29)

### Follow the doctor's advice

Catherine of Siena transcended the narrow roles to which Medieval laypeople—and women in particular—were subject. She gave wise counsel to popes, negotiated settlements, kept a continuous correspondence with her followers throughout Italy, and composed *The Dialogue*, an account of her conversation with God, which is widely considered a masterpiece of spiritual literature and contributed to her being named a **doctor of the church**. Amazingly she accomplished all this despite being almost completely illiterate! How? She dictated everything.

READINGS: Acts 14:5-18; John 14:21-26 (285 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/042924.cfm>). "*The Advocate, the Holy Spirit . . . will teach you everything.*"

### FAITH IN ACTION

Each one of us has shortcomings. Today, before you feel defeated by a limitation, heed Catherine's advice: "Don't look at your weaknesses. Realize instead that in Christ crucified you can do everything."



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