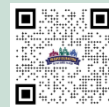
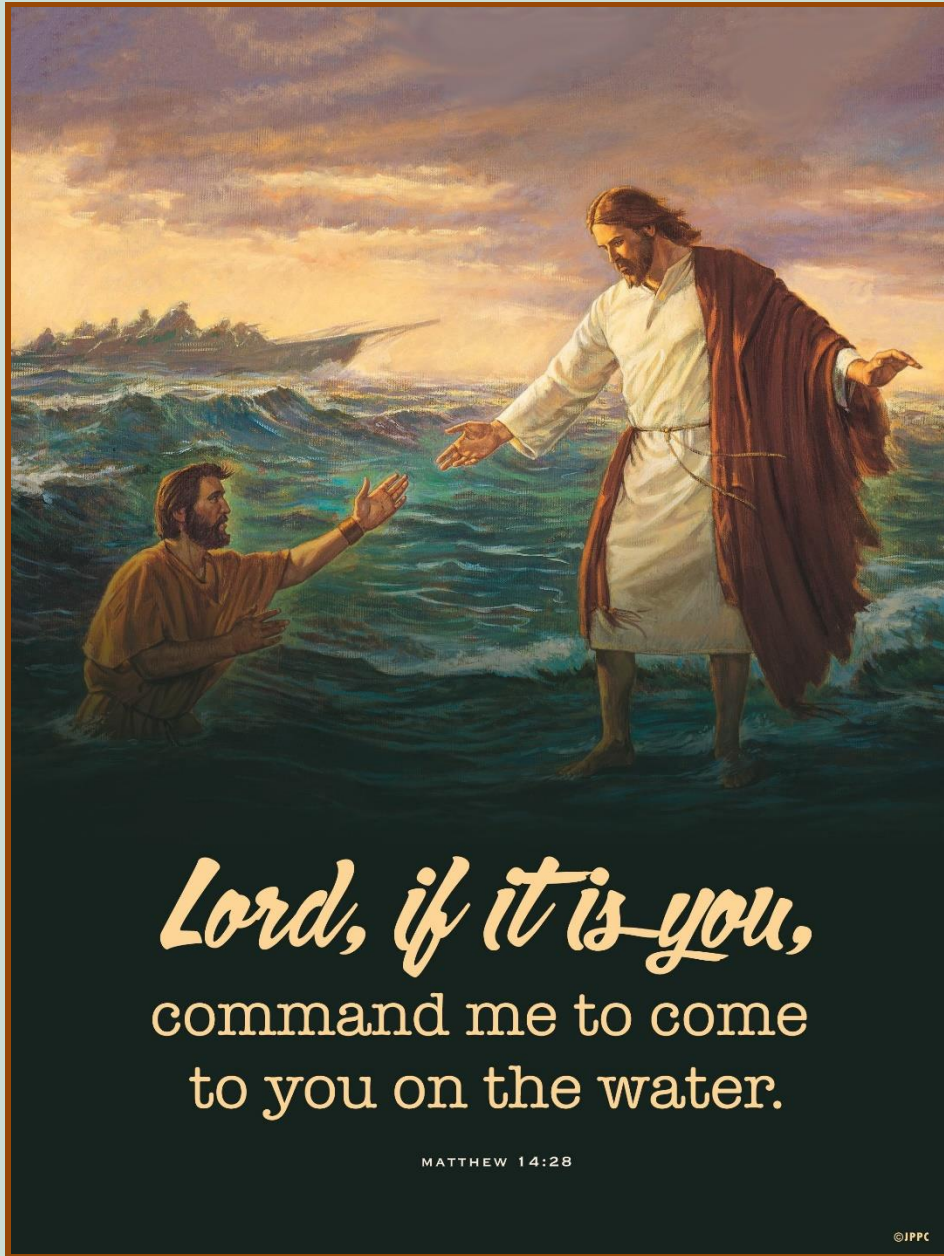


# Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

## August 13, 2023



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. Jean Howard, Business Manager  
Mrs. Elaine Corvese, Director of Religious Education  
Mrs. Lisa Serak, Principal, Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School  
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.smshschool.com](http://www.smshschool.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 (Summer)

Saint Mark 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 is offered on the first Friday of each month in **Saint Mark Church** (*for the summer months*), 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. Or you can use this link for online giving:

<https://app.gabrielsoft.com/guest/mafrdiocese/31>

Thank you for your ongoing support!

### Weekend Masses

Saturday 4:00 pm **Saint Mark Church (Summer)**

Sunday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**

Sunday 9:30 am **Saint Mark Church (Summer)**

Sunday 11:00 am **Saint Mark Church (Summer)**

### Weekday Masses

Monday 4:30 pm **Saint Mark Church (for Summer)**

*Rosary for Life 4:00 pm each Monday prior to 4:30 pm Mass*

Tuesday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**

Wednesday 4:30 pm **Saint Mark Church (for Summer)**

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

# MASS Intentions

*August 12/13- 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*

<u><b>Saturday</b></u>	<u><b>August 12 – Vigil (St. Mark)</b></u>
4:00 pm	Donald Lander, Jr. Edith Myers
<u><b>Sunday</b></u>	<u><b>August 13 (St. Mark)</b></u>
8:00 am	People of the Parish
<u><b>Sunday</b></u>	<u><b>August 13 (St. Mark)</b></u>
9:30 am	John Kostkan
<u><b>Sunday</b></u>	<u><b>August 13 (St. Mark)</b></u>
11:00 am	David Corvese

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<u><b>Monday</b></u>	<u><b>August 14 (St. Mark)</b></u>
7:00 pm	David Parenteau
<u><b>Tuesday</b></u>	<u><b>August 15 (St. Mark)</b></u>
8:00 am	Gloria Gaskin
<u><b>Tuesday</b></u>	<u><b>August 15 (St. Mark)</b></u>
12:05 pm	Joan Provost
<u><b>Wednesday</b></u>	<u><b>August 16 (St. Mark)</b></u>
4:30 pm	Minetta Pion
<u><b>Thursday</b></u>	<u><b>August 17 (St. Mark)</b></u>
8:00 am	People of the Parish

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*August 19/20- 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*

<u><b>Saturday</b></u>	<u><b>August 19 – Vigil (St. Mark)</b></u>
4:00 pm	Mike Malone
<u><b>Sunday</b></u>	<u><b>August 20 (St. Mark)</b></u>
8:00 am	Edward A. Rogers
<u><b>Sunday</b></u>	<u><b>August 20 (St. Mark)</b></u>
9:30 am	T. Leo LaBossiere Alexandra LaBossiere
<u><b>Sunday</b></u>	<u><b>August 20 (St. Mark)</b></u>
11:00 am	People of the Parish

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## Parish Contributions

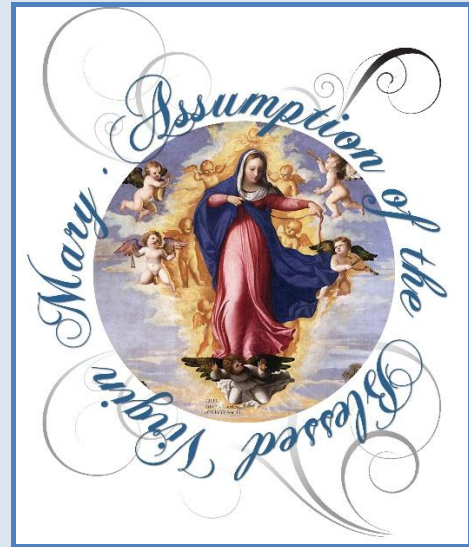
Collection for August 5/6: \$13,462.45

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## Rosary for Life

**Please note: the Rosary for Life will be prayed at 6:30 pm in Saint Mark Church on August 14<sup>th</sup>.** This Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, our parish will be offering a 7 pm vigil Mass for the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary. As such, there is no 4:30 pm daily Mass on August 14<sup>th</sup>. The communal Rosary will also be livestreamed for any participants who wish to join us remotely.

## The Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary August 14/15



The summer holyday of obligation, The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, will be celebrated on August 15.

There will be three Masses for the holyday; all celebrated at Saint Mark Church. The schedule is as follows:

**Monday evening, August 14 – Vigil Mass at 7:00 pm**

**Tuesday morning, August 15 – Mass at 8:00 am**

**Tuesday afternoon, August 15 – Mass at 12:05 pm**

As is our custom, the collection taken at the holyday Masses will go entirely to our parish Saint Vincent de Paul Society to help fund their charitable work. Your generosity and concern are very much appreciated.

*NOTE: due to the 7 p.m. vigil Mass, there is no 4:30 p.m. daily Mass on Monday, August 14.*

## Prayer and Pizza

Are you looking for another way to deepen your spirituality? Do you have “knots” in your life that you need help undoing? Please join us on the third Wednesday of each month for “Prayer and Pizza.” Following the 4:30 pm Mass on **Wednesday, August 16**, we together will pray the rosary, which will be offered up to Mary, Undoer of Knots ([maryundoerofknots.com](http://maryundoerofknots.com)). Whether you pray the rosary daily or have never prayed it before, please consider joining us for “Prayer and Pizza.” All are welcome! Please contact Rick Leco (508 930 9264) or Vicky Curran (508 930 3306) with any questions.







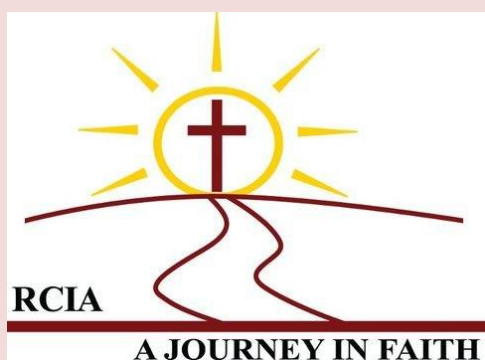
Archbishop Fulton Sheen once said:  
*"A Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration is a sharing in the work of Redemption."*

Please join us at **Saint Mark Church**, Friday, **September 1st**, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. with Benediction. **Please note the revised location for summer Adoration.** 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.

### The Sacrament of the Sick

If an ill family member is desirous of or in need of the comfort and grace of the Sacrament of the Sick, please call the parish office to make an appointment for Fr. Costa to visit. With the present vocation crisis in our Diocese, priest chaplains are not available at Sturdy Hospital. Pastoral Care of the Sick is provided ably and graciously by Deacon Del Malloy. If a family member is at Sturdy and would like to celebrate the Sacrament of the Sick, please call the parish office in order for Fr. Costa to visit as soon as he is able. The hospital does not send out notifications to the parishes when parishioners are admitted.



Are you or someone you know interested in becoming Catholic? The RCIA program will begin in early October. For more information, please see Father Costa after Mass, or call Arlene Hall at (508) 801-2243.

### FAITH FORMATION

Director of Religious Education ~ Mrs. Elaine Corvese

508-695-3823

[transfigurationreled@gmail.com](mailto:transfigurationreled@gmail.com)

### Faith Formation Program 2023-2024

**Faith Formation Office hours:**

**Monday – Thursday**

**10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

The students currently enrolled in the Faith Formation program will be promoted to the next grade level. Parents/guardians will receive information regarding their child's grade in August 2023. Registration for students entering first grade or are new to the program is now open. To register, contact the Faith Formation office at: 508-695-3823 or [transfigurationreled@gmail.com](mailto:transfigurationreled@gmail.com).

### PARENTS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN:

If your child attends Catholic School and is a candidate for Confirmation (Grade 9) you need to register your son/daughter into the parish sacramental program. For more information, contact the Faith Formation office.

~Mrs. Elaine Corvese

### SAINT MARY-SACRED HEART SCHOOL - JOIN NOW!

*Give the gift of a Catholic education - the faith formation and goal of creating saints is priceless!*



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.smschool.com](http://www.smschool.com). If you want your child to attend a school that balances faith with education, consider joining the Saints community of learners.

## 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. 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.

## Pax Christi at LaSalette Shrine

**Save the Date!** Pax Christi at LaSalette Shrine, Attleboro, will host an evening program entitled "Building a World Without Nuclear Weapons," on **Thursday, September 28, at 7:00pm at the Shrine**. The guest speaker will be Peter Metz, a retired MIT-educated engineer who, motivated by his Catholic faith, works on social action initiatives, chief among them the creation of a world without nuclear weapons. The program is free and open to the public. Mark your calendars now!



## Transfiguration of the Lord Respect Life Group

The next meeting of the Respect Life Group will take place on Monday, **September 11, 2023 at 6:30 pm in Saint Mary Church Hall**. In the meantime, please mark your calendars: the Secretariat of the New Evangelization's Family and Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Fall River will be hosting two Respect Life events on Sunday October 22, 2023 to mark Respect Life Month. The Annual Respect Life Mass with Bishop da Cunha will be held at Cathedral of St Mary of the Assumption in Fall River at 10:30 AM. Following this Mass, there will be a Respect Life Conference at White's of Westport for \$35 (lunch and speakers). It is sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. Tickets can be purchased by contacting Joanna Wissler (508-243-5307 or [wissler5@verizon.net](mailto:wissler5@verizon.net)).

## Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Women's Guild Opening Banquet

We are excited to kick off our 2023-2024 Women's Guild Program starting with our Opening Banquet scheduled for Monday, September 11, 2023. The Women's Guild Program at Transfiguration of Lord Parish is a fantastic opportunity for our women to come together, strengthen our faith, build connections and friendships, and enjoy social, spiritual, and educational activities. Details of our opening Banquet are as follows:



**Date: September 11, 2023**

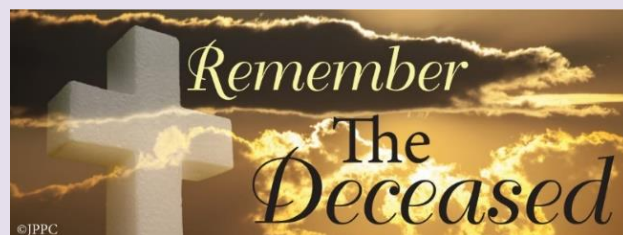
**Time: 6:00 p.m.**

**Place: Vilorio's Italian Bistro, 6 N Washington St,  
North Attleboro**

**Cost: \$38.00 per person**

All women of the parish are welcome. Please contact Karen Smith at (508) 212-7377 or Diana Gray at (508) 695-1143 **no later than September 1<sup>st</sup>**.

You can always find complete information on our website at: <https://nawomensguild.weebly.com/>



***Please Pray for our Deceased:***

***Eleanor G. Bertino***

***Joan E. Murphy***

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

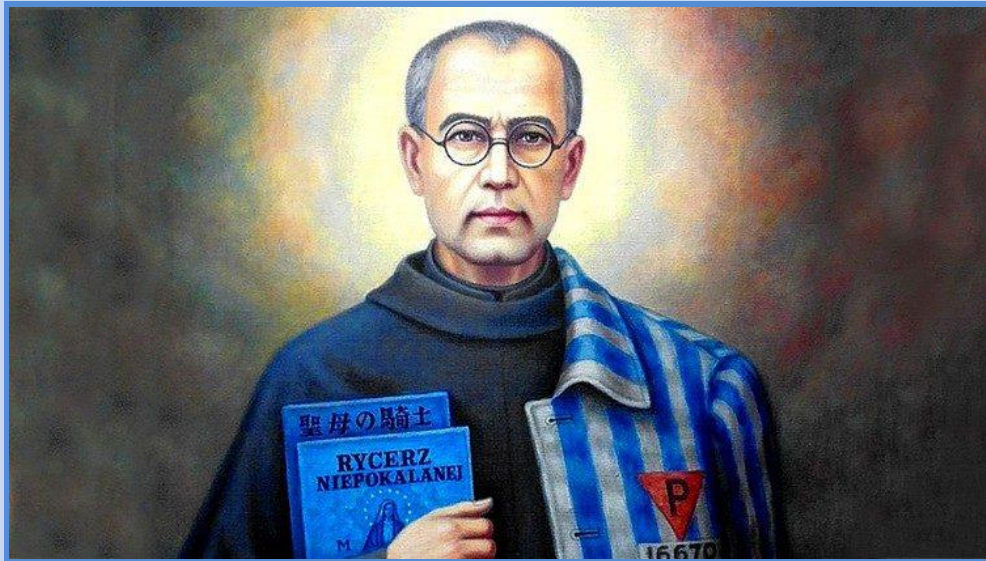


**Knights of  
Columbus®**

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. Contact Jim Schromm with any questions: [jim.schromm@verizon.net](mailto:jim.schromm@verizon.net).



## Saint of the Week Saint Maximilian Kolbe



“I don’t know what’s going to become of you!” How many parents have said that? Maximilian Mary Kolbe’s reaction was, “I prayed very hard to Our Lady to tell me what would happen to me. She appeared, holding in her hands two crowns, one white, one red. She asked if I would like to have them—one was for purity, the other for martyrdom. I said, ‘I choose both.’ She smiled and disappeared.” After that he was not the same.

He entered the minor seminary of the Conventual Franciscans in Lviv—then Poland, now Ukraine—near his birthplace, and at 16 became a novice. Though Maximilian later achieved doctorates in philosophy and theology, he was deeply interested in science, even drawing plans for rocket ships.

Ordained at 24, Maximilian saw religious indifference as the deadliest poison of the day. His mission was to combat it. He had already founded the Militia of the Immaculata, whose aim was to fight evil with the witness of the good life, prayer, work, and suffering. He dreamed of and then founded *Knight of the Immaculata*, a religious magazine under Mary’s protection to preach the Good News to all nations. For the work of publication he established a “City of the Immaculata”—Niepokalanow—which housed 700 of his Franciscan brothers. He later founded another one in Nagasaki, Japan. Both the Militia and the magazine ultimately reached the one-million mark in members and subscribers. His love of God was daily filtered through devotion to Mary.

In 1939, the Nazi panzers overran Poland with deadly speed. Niepokalanow was severely bombed. Kolbe and his friars were arrested, then released in less than three months, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. In 1941, Fr. Kolbe was arrested again. The Nazis’ purpose was to liquidate the select ones, the leaders. The end came quickly, three months later in Auschwitz, after terrible beatings and humiliations.

A prisoner had escaped. The commandant announced that 10 men would die. He relished walking along the ranks. “This one. That one.” As they were being marched away to the starvation bunkers, Number 16670 dared to step from the line. “I would like to take that man’s place. He has a wife and children.” “Who are you?” “A priest.”

No name, no mention of fame. Silence. The commandant, dumbfounded, perhaps with a fleeting thought of history, kicked Sergeant Francis Gajowniczek out of line and ordered Fr. Kolbe to go with the nine. In the “block of death” they were ordered to strip naked, and their slow starvation began in darkness. But there was no screaming—the prisoners sang. By the eve of the Assumption, four were left alive. The jailer came to finish Kolbe off as he sat in a corner praying. He lifted his fleshless arm to receive the bite of the hypodermic needle. It was filled with carbolic acid. They burned his body with all the others. Fr. Kolbe was beatified in 1971 and canonized in 1982.

Father Kolbe’s death was not a sudden, last-minute act of heroism. His whole life had been a preparation. His holiness was a limitless, passionate desire to convert the whole world to God. And his beloved Immaculata was his inspiration.



# Reflections for the Week beginning Sunday, August 13, 2023

## Sunday, Aug 13, 2023

### Value your vocation

Immigrant Catholic families faced the nightmare of living one step away from ruin in the 19th century, when only the least desirable and most dangerous jobs were available to them. Knights of Columbus founder Michael McGivney had to leave seminary to support his family after his father's death. Ordained later, McGivney determined to build a community dedicated to protecting vulnerable families and spent his priesthood promoting the valuable vocation of the laity. Continue the legacy with your own vocation, religious or lay, equally valued and necessary.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:22-33 (115). *"At once Jesus spoke to them, 'Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.'"*

## Monday, Aug 14, 2023

### Holiness becomes you

Maximilian Kolbe is best known for the manner of his death—he volunteered to die in the place of a stranger, who was a man with children, at Auschwitz during World War II. But his path to sainthood began at the age of 10 when his exasperated mother said to her troublemaker son, "I do not know what will become of you!" The Blessed Mother stepped in with a couple options—appearing to the boy in a vision and offering him purity or martyrdom. He gave her the surprising answer: "I choose both." Remarkable conversion, however unlikely, is possible—in others and yourself. Believe it!

MEMORIAL OF MAXIMILIAN KOLBE, PRIEST, MARTYR

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 10:12-22; Matthew 17:22-27 (413). *"The Son of Man is to be handed over to men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day."*

## Tuesday, Aug 15, 2023

### Without a doubt, love reigns

Thanks to Thomas the Apostle—that so-called "Doubting Thomas"—Catholic tradition has its earliest account of Mary's Assumption. This tradition holds that, just as Thomas was elsewhere when the other apostles were visited by a resurrected Jesus, he'd likewise been away when Mary, surrounded by the apostles, drew her last earthly breath. As Thomas returned to Jerusalem, three days after Mary's burial, it is said that he saw her gloriously lifted into the heavens. This time, it was the other apostles' turn to doubt Thomas. With great skepticism, tradition tells us, they opened her tomb and found it empty. Pope John Paul II, quoting Saint Francis de Sales, insisted that Mary died "in love, from love, and through love." Love like Mary today.

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION)

TODAY'S READINGS: Vigil: 1 Chronicles 15:3-4, 15-16; 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:54b-57; Luke 11:27-28 (621); Day: Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; 1 Corinthians 15:20-27; Luke 1:39-56 (622). *"He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly."*

## Wednesday, Aug 16, 2023

### Infectious faith

An oft-forgotten holy figure, Saint Roch died on this day in the 14th-century Holy Roman Empire, having lived a distinctive life from his birth. He is traditionally regarded as having been conceived by a miracle and later became an ascetic said to have

worked miracles. The patron saint of dogs, he is said to have been healed from the plague by a dog that brought him bread while he was recovering. He modeled for the world a divine confidence in the face of pestilence, which inspired great faith in God among his peers. Having survived a pandemic ourselves, will we trust God with our future as Saint Roch did?

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Matthew 18:15-20 (415).

*"Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*

## Thursday, Aug 17, 2023

### Harvest is plenty

Farmers and home gardeners are often busy in mid-August if their crops have done well. It is a time of intense work: harvesting, processing, selling, canning. The spiritual parallel is often made: Our missionary impulse is to plant the seeds of faith in word and action, in hopes that the seeds bear fruit. When times seem difficult, it is heartening to look around for signs of fruit, of God's love made manifest. Take a moment to revel in the witness of a Christian you know who makes God's love visible.

TODAY'S READINGS: Joshua 3:7-10a, 11, 13-17; Matthew 18:21—19:1 (416). *"How often must I forgive [my brother]?" ... Jesus answered, 'I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.'"*

## Friday, Aug 18, 2023

### Moved by movies

As the weekend emerged in the last century as a two-day break in the workweek for leisure and spiritual pursuits, filmgoing became a major form of recreation. At its height in the 1930s, 65 percent of the U.S. population went to the movies weekly. "Going to the movies" may now simply mean clicking on a streaming app, but watching films remains a popular weekend pastime. Over the years the Vatican has recognized film as a valuable art form deserving of "praise and support." With that in mind, in 1995, in honor of the 100th anniversary of cinema, the Vatican named 45 important films worthy of watching. Make your way through this fascinating list on a given weekend, and enjoy a guilty pleasure, without the guilt.

TODAY'S READINGS: Joshua 24:1-13; Matthew 19:3-12 (417). *"They fought against you, but I delivered them into your power."*

## Saturday, Aug 19, 2023

### It's humanitarian nature to help

According to the U.N., this year a staggering 117 million people will be driven from their homes by war, violence, and poverty. Two billion people don't have access to sanitary water at home. World Humanitarian Day, celebrated today, commemorates the lives of the men and women serving in some of the most challenging situations in the world. The voiceless victims of war and poverty need help to alleviate their suffering and draw attention to their plight. Donate to a humanitarian organization like Catholic Relief Services. Do some humanitarian work in your community. Contact your elected leaders and let them know you're concerned.

TODAY'S READINGS: Joshua 24:14-29; Matthew 19:13-15 (418). *"Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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# *19th Sunday in Ordinary Time - August 13, 2023*

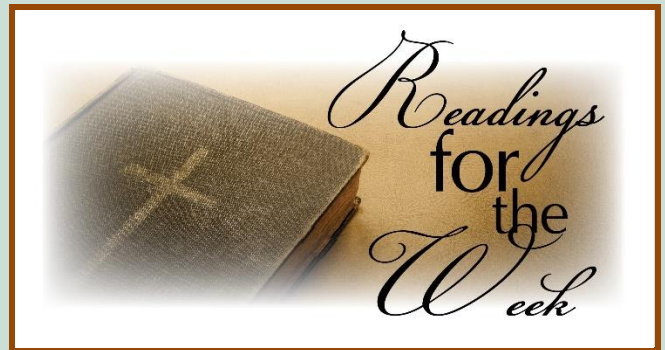
## *First Reading*

**A reading from the first Book of Kings**

At the mountain of God, Horeb,  
Elijah came to a cave where he took shelter.  
Then the LORD said to him,  
"Go outside and stand on the mountain before the  
LORD; the LORD will be passing by."  
A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains  
and crushing rocks before the LORD—  
but the LORD was not in the wind.  
After the wind there was an earthquake—  
but the LORD was not in the earthquake.  
After the earthquake there was fire—  
but the LORD was not in the fire.  
After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound.  
When he heard this,  
Elijah hid his face in his cloak  
and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*



## *Responsorial Psalm*

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

I will hear what God proclaims;  
the LORD — for he proclaims peace.  
Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear  
him, glory dwelling in our land.

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

Kindness and truth shall meet;  
justice and peace shall kiss.  
Truth shall spring out of the earth,  
and justice shall look down from heaven.

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

The LORD himself will give his benefits;  
our land shall yield its increase.  
Justice shall walk before him,  
and prepare the way of his steps.

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**



## Second Reading

### A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie; my conscience joins with the Holy Spirit in bearing me witness that I have great sorrow and constant anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh.

They are Israelites; theirs the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; theirs the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.

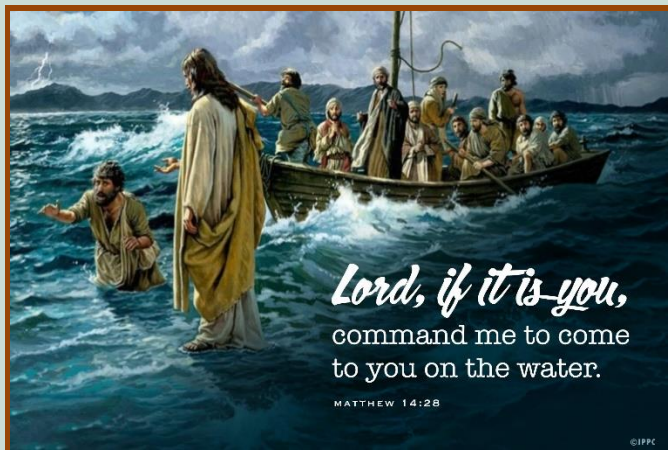
*Thanks be to God.*

## Alleluia

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

*I wait for the Lord;  
my soul waits for his word.*

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**



## Gospel

The Lord be with you.

**And with your spirit.**

† A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

After he had fed the people, Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it.

During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear.

At once Jesus spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

He said, "Come."

Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught Peter, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God."

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### Comment:

Elijah was willing to wait for the Lord. He was open to all the customary manifestations. After all, the first manifestation of the Lord on Mount Sinai was accompanied by great rumbling and smoke. Elijah would be right to expect some natural disturbance, some deep shaking and groaning of the earth as it bears witness to God's amazing, frightening appearance. But God is not in the earthquake nor in the mighty wind nor in the fire. No, God is present in the quietest possible breeze. One holds one's breath watching Elijah who waits. One is quietly satisfied and delighted at Elijah's apprehension of the Lord's appearance and his response to it. Elijah, the non-writing prophet, is truly a man of God. He was in the Lord's presence, and he knew it. He is a prophet worth heeding.

Now we turn to another story in which a natural phenomenon figures. In this, it resembles the first reading. In the first reading, God is the central figure and Elijah is the object of God's attention. In the Gospel reading, Jesus is central and Peter is the object of his attention, and ours. Matthew, Mark, and John all tell the story of the storm at sea. They all set before us the arresting image of a small boat battered by the angry winds. But the stories differ in significant ways. Mark and John have Jesus walking over the waters toward the boat. Peter stays put. The endings of these three stories all differ also. The disciples are amazed and speechless. Only Matthew has Peter act and speak. Jesus summons Peter to meet him on the waters. Peter does fine as long as he is focused on Jesus; he begins sinking the moment his focus is on himself. Without skipping a beat, Jesus reaches out to steady Peter. Jesus also locates the cause of Peter's near drowning— "Why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31) Peter does not respond. Jesus boards the small craft. The wind ceases. Then comes the confession of faith by the apostles, "Truly, you are the Son of God."

### Reflection:

Miracles attract attention and they are signs of something. But, they are often ambiguous. It is commonly noted that seeing is believing. For example, in heaven one is not likely to need faith. For in heaven one will possess vision; one will see. John the Evangelist and apostle calls Jesus' miracles signs of God's active presence among us. What are we to make of spectacular happenings such as the calming of the sea, not to mention walking on water? We know that in the temptation stories, Jesus forsook spectacular actions that would only serve to dazzle people without also fundamentally strengthening them in mind and body.

What are we to make of today's Gospel? What is it teaching us? Among other things, it graphically shows us the Church—a small boat tossed about by the storm at sea. It is a picture that helped the early Church, and it is one that helps us now. When this Gospel was written, well within the first century, the Church was small indeed, and the strong winds were blowing against it, threatening its survival. The vision of Jesus walking on water inspired fear and awe. After Jesus calls them to task, Peter makes a conditional request. "If it is you ..." And Jesus simply challenges Peter by issuing the command: "Come!" Peter is clearly the leader. It is he who fixes his eyes on the one who summoned him. And it is Peter who falters. But more importantly, it is Peter who recovers by grasping the hand of the One who reaches out to him.

This reaching out to grasp the proffered hand is enough for the Church. In the strength of Christ, the Church can stand against the sinful forces of the world in which it finds itself. The Church will falter when its faith falters. It will fail when it doubts the presence of its Lord. It will experience the poise and calmness of soul that comes with firm faith in the presence of Jesus Christ in its midst.

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