

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 11, 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 www.smshschool.com

Saint Mary Cemetery

Mr. Jarrod Ward, Superintendent
Towne Street
North Attleborough, Massachusetts 02760
(508) 695-1173 or email 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 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. Or you can use this link for online giving:
<https://chms.ecatholic.com/guest/mafrdiocese/31>
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
Parish website • www.saintmaryna.com
Phone 508-695-6161 Fax 508-695-5248
Faith Formation • TransfigurationRelEd@gmail.com
Faith Formation • 508-695-3823
Music Ministry • transfiguration.na.music@gmail.com

MASS Intentions

February 10/11 – 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday	February 10 – Vigil (St. Mary)
4:00 pm	People of the Parish
Sunday	February 11 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	People of the Parish
Sunday	February 11 (St. Mary)
9:30 am	Jeanette, Russell, & Allan Watson
Sunday	February 11 (Sacred Heart)
11:00 am	Brian F. Coyle

+++++

Monday	February 12 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	Jane Sellner
Tuesday	February 13 (St. Mark)
4:30 pm	People of the Parish
Wednesday	February 14 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	Mass with Ashes
Wednesday	February 14 (Sacred Heart)
9:30 am	Liturgy of the Word with Ashes
Wednesday	February 14 (St. Mary)
12:05 pm	Liturgy of the Word with Ashes
Wednesday	February 14 (St. Mark)
7:00 pm	Mass with Ashes
Thursday	February 15 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	People of the Parish

+++++

February 17/18 – The 1st Sunday of Lent

Saturday	February 17 – Vigil (St. Mary)
4:00 pm	Richard E. “Dick” Quinn, Jr.
Sunday	February 18 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	People of the Parish
Sunday	February 18 (St. Mary)
9:30 am	Denise Gaudette
Sunday	February 18 (Sacred Heart)
11:00 am	For the Intentions of Sister Rachel Pinsonnault

+++++

Parish Contributions

Collection for February 3/4: \$14,957.30

+++++

Tuesday Communal Rosary Schedule



Tuesday, February 13, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)
Tuesday, February 20, 2024: Prayer & Pizza (5PM)
Tuesday, February 27, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)
Tuesday, March 5, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)
Tuesday, March 12, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)

Ash Wednesday: February 14th



The season of Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday, February 14**. While this is *not* a holy day of obligation, it is an important day for us as individuals and as a community to commence our 40-day journey of prayer, fasting, and charity, preparing for the Easter sacraments and the renewal of our baptism commitment to Jesus. The ashes we wear to begin this holy season are a stark and dramatic reminder of the call to repentance – our turning away from sin and turning toward the Lord, changing for the better.

We invite you to join as a family of faith to begin Lent. There will be **four** opportunities on Ash Wednesday, February 14, to join in prayer and to receive ashes. The schedule is as follows:

8:00 a.m. Mass with ashes at Saint Mark Church

9:30 a.m. Liturgy of the Word with ashes at Sacred Heart Church

12:05 p.m. Liturgy of the Word with ashes at Saint Mary Church

7:00 p.m. Mass with ashes at Saint Mark Church

2023 Donation Statements Are Now Available

The 2023 year-end tax reports will be available, PER YOUR REQUEST, for those parishioners using the budget envelope system. **Loose checks mailed or placed in the collection are not recorded by the budget company.** Please contact Martha in the office at smaryna@noozi.com or call 508-695-6161 and leave a message with your name and address if you would like your statement. Contribution letters will be mailed. Thank you for your support of our parish community.



Stations of the Cross

Stations of the Cross will be prayed each Friday evening during Lent at 7:00 p.m. in Saint Mary Church. Each week we will use a different set of themed meditations for our prayer which will be led by Deacon Joe, Sister Kathee, or Fr. Dave. All are invited to participate. Join us for Stations of the Cross this **Friday, February 16**, led by Fr. Costa. This will include Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and will conclude with Benediction!



Lent 2024

Reflection Booklet: Each household of the parish is invited to use a daily reflection booklet entitled, "*The Season for Healing Hearts*," by Fr. Joe Sica. Fr. Joe offers a reflection for each day of Lent followed by a practical action, and a short prayer to use throughout your day.

Daily Mass: Join us for daily Mass, Monday through Wednesday, and a Communion Service on Thursday morning. The Scripture readings and prayers of Lent offer much food for thought, prayer, and action. Our individual journeys are supported and strengthened by the prayer and presence of others in community. The daily Mass schedule is slightly adapted for Lent to afford the opportunity for those who work to participate at daily Mass at least once during the week. All Masses/Communion Service are celebrated at Saint Mark Church. The schedule is as follows:

Monday – Mass at 8:00 a.m.

Tuesday – Mass at 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday – Mass at 6:30 p.m.

Thursday – Communion Service at 8:00 a.m.

Stations of the Cross: Stations of the Cross will be prayed each Friday evening of Lent beginning at 7:00 p.m. in Saint Mary Church. Sister Kathee, Deacon Joe, and Fr. Dave will lead the Stations using various themed meditations.

Scripture Study: All are invited to a two-part presentation on the Passion of Jesus as found in Saint Mark's Gospel. Saint Mark's Passion is proclaimed on Palm Sunday this year. Fr. Costa will offer insights on Mark's gospel in general and also focus on the nuances and insights the evangelist offers in his Passion account. The dates for these presentations are: **March 6 & March 13.**

Our Lenten Charity: The three disciplines of Lent – prayer, fasting, and charity – are interwoven. Fasting, is a concrete way of clearing, making space, for prayer and charity. We invite you to choose one or two things (food, "extras," activities) that you will "give up" for the season of Lent. The money you would spend on these would then be donated to our parish Lenten charity.

This year we invite you to support the quickly growing mission of the Holy Union Sisters in Tanzania, Africa. Since 1973, Holy Union Sisters have served in education, (primary, secondary and college levels), parish ministry, and religious education. The Sisters also conduct a center for children with physical disabilities/needs, serving both children and families. The Tanzanian area of Holy Union is steadily attracting vocations with over 16 women currently in formation.

In celebration of their fiftieth anniversary of service and presence in Tanzania, the Sisters are focusing on three projects: an autism center, a new formation house, and a health center. Our donations will help further these new endeavors and their ongoing ministries. On Palm Sunday, envelopes for our parish Lenten charity project will be distributed.

Lenten Reconciliation Opportunities

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (confessions) is celebrated every Saturday afternoon from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. at Saint Mary Church. We will be scheduling an evening later in Lent where a number of priests will be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As soon as this date is set we will post information in the parish bulletin and on our social media sites.



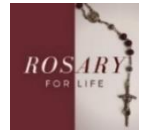
February Women's Guild Meeting



The Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Women's Guild will be meeting on **Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.** in the **St. Mary's Parish Center**. Come enjoy a decadent evening of sweets and games with chocolates made by our own Shirley Nolin. Please come and relish in an evening of friends, indulgence, and fun! Please contact Diana Gray with any questions at: dgraysix@yahoo.com or 508 695-1143.

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.



Winter What-Not Shoppe: Season Ending Sale



Before we pack up and close...

Please join us to shop at the **What-Not Shoppe** in **St. Mary's Church Hall**, on Saturday, **February 17th** from **10:00am to 4:00pm**. We hope to see you there!

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.



SAINTS

SAINT MARY-SACRED HEART

Alumni Spotlight: Sister Rachel Pinsonnault



Sister Rachel Pinsonnault graduated from Sacred Heart School in 1934, and went to High School in Canada where she was taught by the Presentation of Mary Sisters. She eventually joined the order and has had a remarkable career. She was assigned to the Missions in Japan, and was instrumental in setting up some schools there. After fifty years of service in Japan, she returned the Canadian Mother House and was later transferred to Methuen, MA to help her sister (also a member of the order) who needed assistance during the final years of her life. Sister Rachel is now in residence at an assisted living convent in Maine, and she will be celebrating her 102nd birthday *this* Sunday, February 11th. If you would like to join the SMSH students in congratulating Sister Rachel, she can be contacted at the following address: **Sister Rachel Pinsonnault, St. Joseph Convent, 409 Pool Street, Biddeford, ME 04005.**

+++++

SMSH Auction - Friday, March 8, 2024, Luciano's Lake Pearl in Wrentham, MA:

This year's auction is particularly special as we celebrate the centennial of our school. We are expecting 200 in-person guests and will reach even more through our online auction. We greatly appreciate any donations you can make to support our cause. Whether it's a family vacation getaway or gift baskets filled with items from local businesses, every contribution is valuable. We also offer advertising and sponsorship opportunities for those who prefer to contribute in that way. Please reach out to our Auction Co-Chairs, Lisa Augusto O'Neill or Jillian Figueiredo at the following email address: SMSHauctioncommittee@gmail.com. Thank you for considering our request. We truly appreciate your support!

+++++

Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School Alumni:

Did you, your child, grandchild or other relative graduate from St. Mary's School, Sacred Heart School or Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School? If so, please go to the Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School website www.smshschool.com and under the Alumni tab fill in the form on reconnect with SMSH. We appreciate your support in this important part of our school's history!

Faith Formation Program 2023-2024

Director of Religious Education ~ Mrs. Elaine Corvese
508-695-3823; transfigurationreled@gmail.com

Faith Formation Office hours:

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

Class Schedule:

February 11th: **Grades 3 & 4**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

February 12th: **Grade 7**, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

February 25th: **Grades 1 & 2**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

February 25th: **Grade 9**, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

February 26th: **Grade 8**, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Please see website: saintmaryna.com for the 2023-2024 calendar for all grades. Faith Formation classes are held at Saint Mark Church hall in Attleboro Falls.

Dates of First Penance:



RECONCILIATION

February 13, 2024: 6:30 p.m. Saint Mark Church

Date of Confirmation:



CONFIRMATION

April 7, 2024: 1:00 p.m. Saint Mary Church

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

Cancellation of classes: In the event of cancellation of classes due to inclement weather, the Faith Formation Office will notify parents/guardians by email and the cancellation notice will also be on the answering machine of the Faith Formation office at 508-695-3823. Please note: if the North Attleboro School Department cancels school, Faith Formation classes are automatically canceled.

Please Remember our Deceased Parishioners:

Gertrud K. Birle

Jeanne E. (Morrisseau) Duphiney

Pauline L. (Dyer) Arruda

Eleanor (Grimaldi) Legere

H. William "Bill" Donnelly

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

Saint of the Week: Saint Valentine

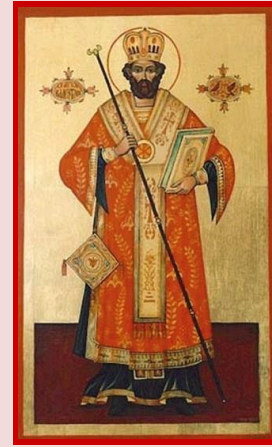
Saint Valentine, officially known as Saint Valentine of Rome, is a third-century Roman saint widely celebrated on February 14 and commonly associated with "courtly love." Although not much of St. Valentine's life is reliably known, and whether or not the stories involve two different saints by the same name is also not officially decided, it is highly agreed that St. Valentine was martyred and then buried on the Via Flaminia to the north of Rome. In 1969, the Roman Catholic Church removed St. Valentine from the General Roman Calendar, because so little is known about him. However, the church still recognizes him as a saint, listing him in the February 14 spot of Roman Martyrology.

One common story about St. Valentine is that in one point of his life, as the former Bishop of Terni, Narnia and Amelia, he was on house arrest with Judge Asterius. While discussing religion and faith with the Judge, Valentine pledged the validity of Jesus. The judge immediately put Valentine and his faith to the test. St. Valentine was presented with the judge's blind daughter and told to restore her sight. If he succeeded, the judge vowed to do anything for Valentine. Placing his hands onto her eyes, Valentine restored the child's vision. Judge Asterius was humbled and obeyed Valentine's requests. Asterius broke all the idols around his house, fasted for three days and became baptized, along with his family and entire 44 member household. The now faithful judge then freed all of his Christian inmates.

St. Valentine was later arrested again for continuing to try to convert people to Christianity. He was sent to Rome under the emperor Claudius Gothicus (Claudius II). According to the popular hagiographical identity, and what is believed to be the first representation of St. Valentine, the Nuremberg Chronicle, St. Valentine was a Roman priest martyred during Claudius' reign. The story tells that St. Valentine was imprisoned for marrying Christian couples and aiding Christians being persecuted by Claudius in Rome. Both acts were considered serious crimes. A relationship between the saint and emperor began to grow, until Valentine attempted to convince Claudius of Christianity. Claudius became enraged and sentenced Valentine to death, commanding him to renounce his faith or be beaten with clubs and beheaded. St. Valentine refused to renounce his faith and Christianity and was executed outside the Flaminian Gate on February 14, 269.

The romantic nature of Valentine's Day may have derived during the Middle Ages, when it was believed that birds paired couples in mid-February. According to English 18th-century antiquarians Alban Butler and Francis Douce, Valentine's Day was most likely created to overpower the pagan holiday, Lupercalia. Although the exact origin of the holiday is not widely agreed upon, it is widely recognized as a day for love, devotion and romance. Whoever he was, Valentine did really exist, because archaeologists have unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to St. Valentine.

The Feast Day of Saint Valentine: February 14th



Friends of SSMH Outing

As announced in our parish bulletin a few weeks back, the Friends of SSMH is offering various one day and multi-day outings. Join us on Wednesday, April 24 for *The Beach Boys Ultimate Tribute* 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: friendsofssmh@gmail.com for more information.

Irish Night: Saturday, March 16th



Get ready to immerse yourself in the spirit of the Emerald Isle at our much-anticipated Irish Night Event! It's time to don your best green attire and embrace the warmth of Irish hospitality, complete with a scrumptious corned beef dinner, live music entertainment, and exciting raffles that could bring a touch of luck your way. The Irish Night event will be held on **Saturday, March 16th** starting at **6:30 p.m.** in **St. Mary Church Hall**. Tickets cost **\$20.00** per person and will be sold at all weekend Masses on the weekends of **March 3rd** and **March 9th**, or by calling **Karen Smith** at **(508) 212-7377**. Those of you who have attended this wonderful event in the past can attest to how much was had by all. We hope you can join us!

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. Contact Jim Schromm with any questions: jim.schromm@verizon.net.

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:

Cameron Charles Anderson



Son of Corey & Deanne (Scarpulla) Anderson
Godchild of Thomas Anderson & Michaela Martin

Grayson Fredrick Clemente



Son of Tyler Clemente & Alexandra "Lexie" Sarkis
Godchild of Reid Clemente & Rachel Degidio

Virginia James Curran



Daughter of Timothy & Michaela (Harris) Curran
Godchild of Robert Curran & Victoria Curran

Matthew William Longendorfer



Son of Russell & Kelly (Burke) Longendorfer
Godchild of Michael Horton & Kelly Cerrone

Transfiguration of the Lord Respect Life Group

RESPECT LIFE

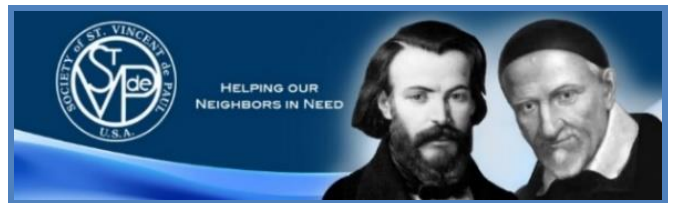
Sisters of Life Talk:

Abundant Hope Pregnancy Resource Center invites you to attend a free inspirational and educational talk by the nationally known Sisters of Life, a Catholic religious community whose members take a fourth vow to protect the sacredness of life. Join us this **Thursday, Feb 15th** from **3-5 PM** for a presentation, refreshments and "Meet & Greet" at the LaSalette Shrine Welcome Center. For questions, please contact Abundant Hope at 508-455-0425.

Monthly Meeting:

The next meeting of the Respect Life Group will take place on Thursday, **March 7, 2024 at 6:30 pm in Sacred Heart Church's Library**. We hope to see you there!

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 2nd 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.

Henry Michael Patch



Son of Tyler & Jacqueline (Johnson) Patch
Godchild of Bradford Johnson & Jane Kuntz

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time - February 11, 2024



First Reading

A reading from the Book of Leviticus

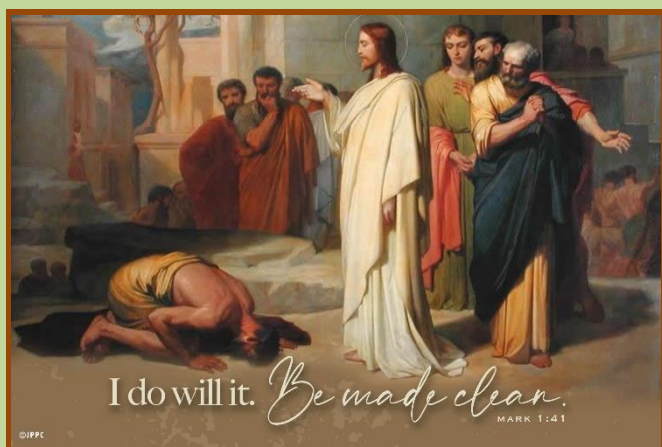
The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

“If someone has on his skin a scab or pustule or blotch which appears to be the sore of leprosy, he shall be brought to Aaron, the priest, or to one of the priests among his descendants. If the man is leprous and unclean, the priest shall declare him unclean by reason of the sore on his head.

“The one who bears the sore of leprosy shall keep his garments rent and his head bare, and shall muffle his beard; he shall cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean!’ As long as the sore is on him he shall declare himself unclean, since he is in fact unclean. He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



Responsorial Psalm

R. I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.

Blessed is he whose fault is taken away,
whose sin is covered.

Blessed the man to whom the LORD imputes
not guilt, in whose spirit there is no guile.

R. I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
my guilt I covered not.

I said, “I confess my faults to the LORD,”
and you took away the guilt of my sin.

R. I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you just;
exult, all you upright of heart.

R. I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.



Second Reading

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters, Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Avoid giving offense, whether to the Jews or Greeks or the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in every way, not seeking my own benefit but that of the many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*A great prophet has arisen in our midst,
God has visited his people.*

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

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

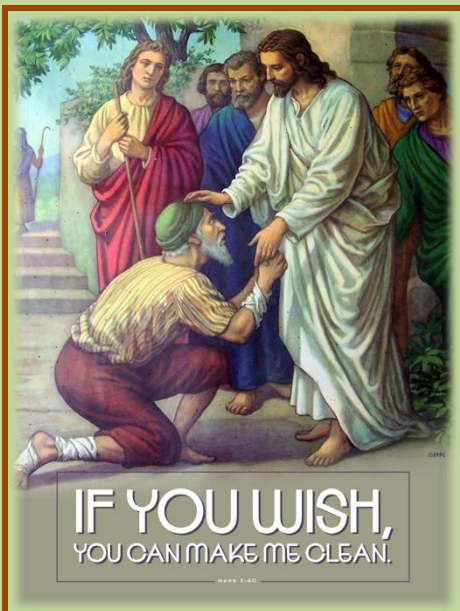
A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. Then, warning him sternly, he dismissed him at once.

He said to him, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them."

The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The Pain of Isolation:

When Winston was five years old, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. In the early 1950s many young children with this disease were taken from their families and placed in a quarantine hospital. By today's standards of parenting, that's a frightening thought. Experts now tell us how important the early formative years are. Quarantined children surely must have felt isolated and frightened. Parents must have felt robbed. Lepers and their families must have experienced similar feelings in the severe isolation that was brought about by their disease.

Comment:

The law described in Leviticus is harsh. The Israelites were not only frightened of the dreaded contagious disease of leprosy, but fresh in their memories was the plague of boils God sent the Egyptians and their livestock. They knew God sent the plagues because Pharaoh opposed God's will. They feared the same would happen to them if they did not obey God's law. At the time of this law, the people perceived a close connection between sickness and sin. If someone contracted this deadly disease, it must have been because they or their parents had sinned. So great was the people's ignorance about leprosy that they quarantined people who had any sort of skin disease. If by chance the victim was cured, he or she had to appear before a priest. If the priest agreed that the person was healed he or she could return to the community.

It is his observance of this law that endeared Jesus to many people the day he cured the leper. Kneeling and beseeching, the leper came to find Jesus. So strong was the man's faith, so desperate his situation, so hopeless his isolation, that he risked breaking the law to come into the midst of the people. Jesus was so moved to compassion that he proceeded to do things that would bring him some wanted and unwanted notice. First Jesus cured the leper. He had the power to defeat the disease. He had a divine power by which he could show others God's love. But not everyone was ready to know this love. Jesus knew there would be problems with careless stories of healings and miracles, so he asked the leper to go quietly among the crowd and show himself to a priest. Jesus respected the law described in Leviticus and encouraged the leper to carry it out. It was important to the community that the man be declared clean and return to a normal life among the people. The healed leper did not, however, go about this quietly. In his grateful excitement, he told everyone he met about this awesome man Jesus. What Jesus feared had now come to be. He could no longer walk openly into a city. Nevertheless, many people that day came to believe in him.

Reflection:

One of the greatest fears we have about many diseases today is the fact that there is no remedy and little treatment. It's a fear not unknown to those (and their loved ones) who suffer from AIDS, cancer, cystic fibrosis, and tuberculosis. People in Jesus' day did not know when leprosy would strike. They weren't even sure what skin diseases were truly leprosy so they lumped them all together. They only knew the ugliness and contagiousness of the disease.

It's what we do with our fears that challenges and defines us. Fear of the unknown can paralyze us in thought and action. We become stuck in our ignorance and either avoid the truth or disguise it in some way. Jesus allows us to become "unstuck."

He went directly to the leper who begged for healing. We, too, beg for healing. Through the sacrament of reconciliation, Jesus Christ heals in us the things that separate us from him. When we celebrate Eucharist, we are gathered and reaffirmed in the community of believers. Jesus Christ gives us the healing power of salvation. Over and over we have seen what the power of Christ and his love can do. We only need the heart to be healed and purified. This seems easy enough until the moment we are faced with the temptation to give in to our weakness. Like the leper, we need to recognize our sinfulness, seek help for its cure, and turn away from that which infects us. Jesus is there waiting for us.

Copyright © 2002, World Library Publications. All rights reserved.

Reflections for the Week beginning Sunday, February 11, 2024



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

11 February 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Fasting \ˈfa-stɪŋ\

Refraining from food and drink for religious purposes. Biblically, it implied not eating or drinking from morning till evening.

The Catholic Church defines **fasting** as one full meal a day, with two additional breaks. Catholics observe a eucharistic **fast** and abstain from food and drink one hour prior to receiving Holy Communion. They also **fast** annually on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday if in good health and between the ages of 21 and 59.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-fasting>

CONTEXT

Do you wish your prayer to fly toward God? Make for it two wings: **fasting** and almsgiving. —*Saint Augustine*

There's something about it that makes sense, Lent. You give something up, and everything's more joyful. —*Elaine Stritch*

When my stomach hungers from **fasting**, it is a reminder of the spiritual hunger my soul experiences at every moment of my existence. —*Bishop Robert Barron*

WHY IT MATTERS

When we're self-sufficient, it's easy to forget that God is our ultimate source of life and hope. **Fasting** is a visceral reminder to trust in God. **Fasting** helps us to detach from worldly things not because they are bad but to remind us that God is the source of all gifts.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "**Fasting** and abstinence . . . help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart" (2043).

RELATED WORDS

Abstinence | Sacrifice | Asceticism | Mortification

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Why do we fast?

Why **fast**? Our survival requires us to eat and drink. When we refrain from these most basic activities, it reminds us that "we do not live by bread alone." **Fasting** provides us with an opportunity to affirm our faith in God's providential care.

Fasting as a spiritual practice falls into the category of sacrifice. As in other acts of religious sacrifice, **fasting** takes something away from us. **Fasting** stirs us to contemplate justice—many in this world go without food—and motivates us to pray in a deeper, richer way. Because we don't want to do it, **fasting** is regarded as a penitential practice: We do it in reparation for sin, ours and the world's.

When you think of everything **fasting** can do—encourage fidelity and humility, awaken the spirit of justice, enhance prayer, assist those who are tempted—the question becomes: Why *not* **fast**?

—*Alice Camille, from Questions Catholics Ask <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-fasting>*

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

ASH WEDNESDAY, DAY OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE
(FEBRUARY 14)

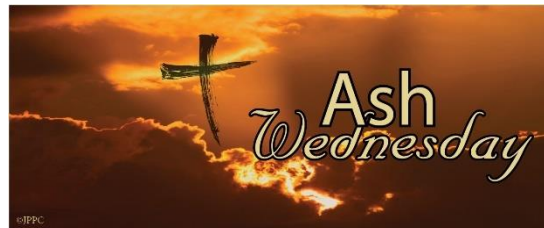
The spirit of our fasting

Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are ancient spiritual practices that foster humility and charity. In the words of fifth-century Doctor of the Church Peter Chrysologus: "When you **fast**, see the **fasting** of others. If you want God to know you are hungry, know that another is hungry. If you hope for mercy, show mercy. If you look for kindness, show kindness. If you want to receive, give."

READINGS: Joel 2:12-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 (219 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/021424.cfm>).
"When you **fast**, do not look gloomy."

FAITH IN ACTION

Use **fasting** as a way to see more clearly the things you've missed by inattention.



©2024 TrueQuest Communications. All rights reserved. Noncommercial reprints permitted with the following credit: *Reprinted with permission from TakeFiveForFaith.com.* Scripture citations from the New American Bible Revised Edition. Sign up to receive free weekly email at TakeFiveForFaith.com/subscribe. To receive Take Five Weekly in advance, subscribe to PreparetheWord.com.