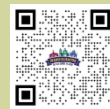
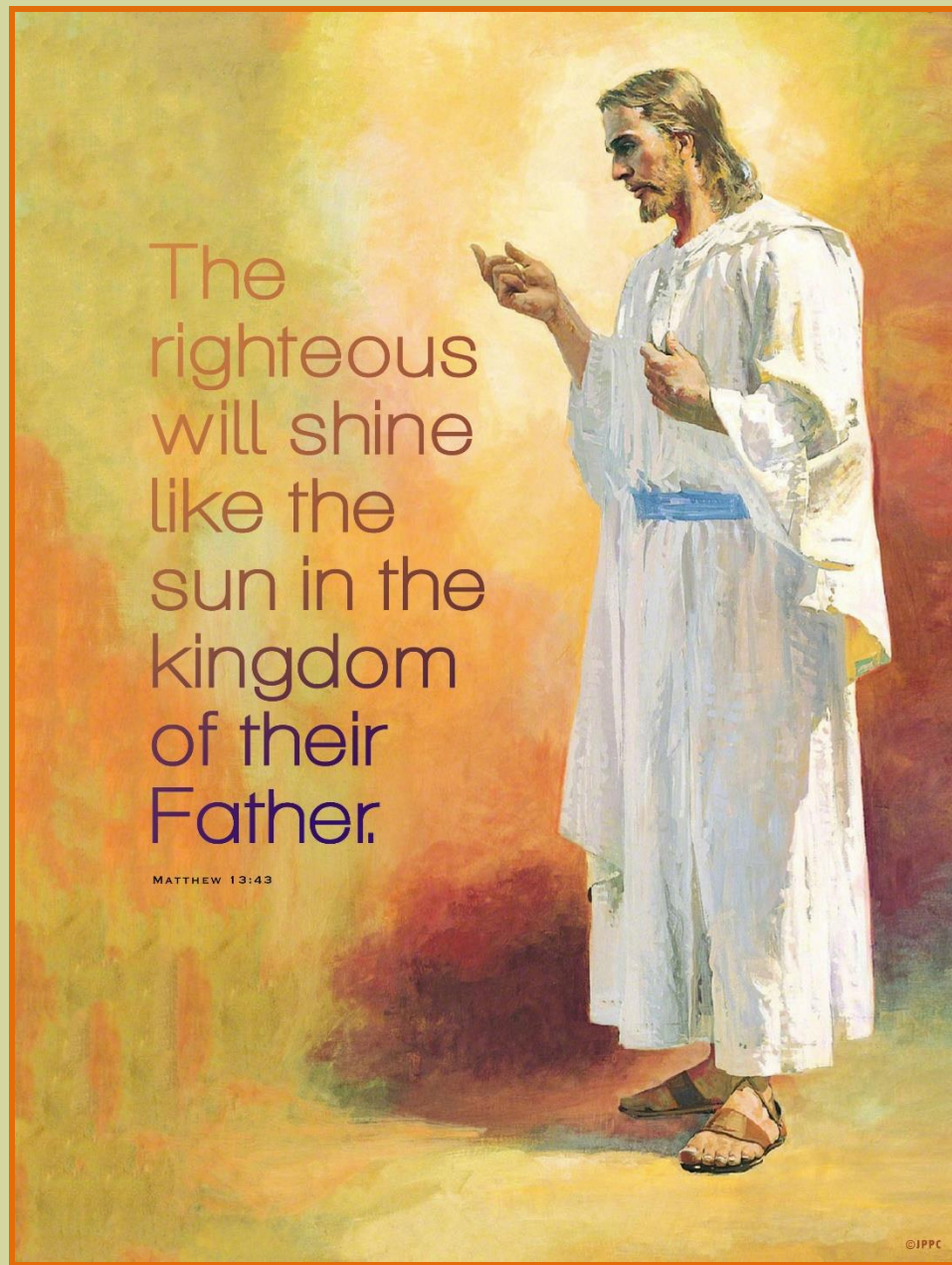


Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 23, 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 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 (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 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

Parish website • www.saintmaryna.com

Phone 508-695-6161 Fax 508-695-5248

Faith Formation • TransfigurationRelEd@gmail.com

Faith Formation • 508-695-3823

MASS Intentions

July 22/23- 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <u>Saturday</u> | <u>July 22 – Vigil (St. Mark)</u> |
| 4:00 pm | Mark Vandette |
| <u>Sunday</u> | <u>July 23 (St. Mark)</u> |
| 8:00 am | John & Elizabeth McCarthy |
| <u>Sunday</u> | <u>July 23 (St. Mark)</u> |
| 9:30 am | Edward & Barbara Joyce |
| <u>Sunday</u> | <u>July 23 (St. Mark)</u> |
| 11:00 am | Shaun Kenney |

+++++

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| <u>Monday</u> | <u>July 24 (St. Mark)</u> |
| 4:30 pm | Anthony Sellner |
| <u>Tuesday</u> | <u>July 25 (St. Mark)</u> |
| 8:00 am | Donna Johnson |
| <u>Wednesday</u> | <u>July 26 (St. Mark)</u> |
| 4:30 pm | People of the Parish |
| <u>Thursday</u> | <u>July 27 (St. Mark)</u> |
| 8:00 am | Richard F. Barrett |

+++++

July 29/30- 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <u>Saturday</u> | <u>July 29 – Vigil (St. Mark)</u> |
| 4:00 pm | Diana Larocque |
| <u>Sunday</u> | <u>July 30 (St. Mark)</u> |
| 8:00 am | Raymond Gauthier |
| <u>Sunday</u> | <u>July 30 (St. Mark)</u> |
| 9:30 am | Anne Hare |
| <u>Sunday</u> | <u>July 30 (St. Mark)</u> |
| 11:00 am | People of the Parish |

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Parish Contributions

Collection for July 8/9: \$11,922.23
Collection for July 15/16: \$10,629.15

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Rosary for Life

The Respect Life Committee of Transfiguration of the Lord Parish is pleased to announce that every Monday we will lead a Rosary for Life at 4:00 pm, prior to the 4:30 pm daily Mass in **Saint Mark Church**. The communal Rosary is also livestreamed each week for any participants who wish to join us remotely. Please note the revised location for the summer months.

Eucharistic ADORATION

©JPPC

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, **August 4th**, 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.

82nd Annual Catholic Appeal Updates



82ND ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL
DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

*Thank you for your most generous support of the 2023 Catholic Appeal! In 2022, our parish contributed a total of \$103,210, an increase over 2021 of \$962.00! A final figure is not yet available for this year's appeal, but so far, our community has contributed **\$96,290.00** in 2023!*

Please note, the Catholic Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts is still collecting and counting gifts received toward the 2023 Catholic Appeal. We will continue providing these updates until the books officially close on the 2023 Catholic Appeal. At that time, we will report the final total for the parish...stay tuned!

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). 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.



Thank you for sponsoring our new Ritual Books!

We are extremely grateful for the outpouring of support and interest in sponsoring the purchase of new ritual books for each of our 3 churches. Given their importance and the respect these books deserve, we are able to invest in some new editions thanks to your generosity. As of the printing deadline for this week's bulletin, **ALL** ritual books have now been sponsored.

Memorial names will be inscribed on the inside cover of each book and will be recognized in an upcoming edition of the parish bulletin. We are most appreciative of your kindness and generosity!

~Father Costa

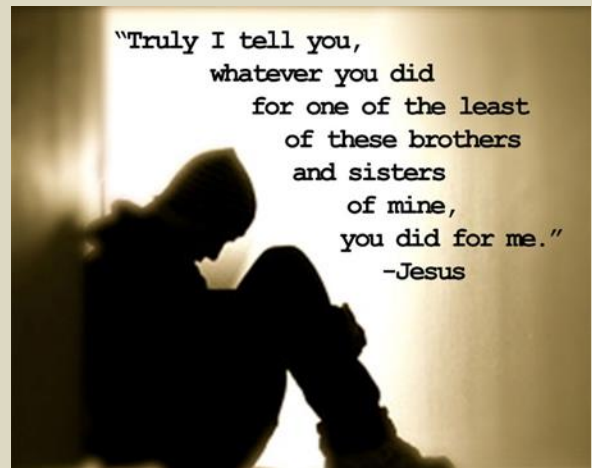
From Fr. Costa:

Our parish is blessed with a very active Saint Vincent de Paul Society. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is composed of women and men who seek their personal holiness through works of charity. In this essential way, the Society differs from charitable associations or agencies whose principal objective is not the spiritual advancement of their members but the doing of good for someone else. The Society leads women and men to join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering.

We usually associate Vincentians with food collections, food pantries, or soup kitchens. Feeding the hungry is one of the major ministries of our local group. But they are also noted for assisting with both homelessness and housing. When we think of North Attleborough, we don't usually think of homeless men and women or even families with children. Believe it or not, our Vincentian conference is frequently called upon to assist our homeless brothers and sisters. And, in typical Vincentian generosity and that one-on-one presence for which they are noted, they respond.

In the few weeks I have been in North, I have received at least five calls for housing assistance! Interestingly, one of my many online resources recently featured an article concerning homelessness. The author, a Benedictine Sister from Indiana, shared a ten-point list of "takeaways" concerning homelessness. As I read the list I was enlightened. I include it here for your reflection as we thank the members of our parish St. Vincent der Paul Society for responding – in the name of Jesus and in the name of our parish – to the homeless among us!

10 Takeaways about the Homeless:



1. *It's not just a big city problem. It's a nationwide issue that affects rural, suburban and urban areas alike.*
2. *The homeless population is diverse. Homelessness affects people of all ages, races, genders and backgrounds.*
3. *Homelessness is not always a choice. Factors like job loss, mental illness, domestic violence and family breakdown can contribute to homelessness.*
4. *Homelessness isn't a short-term problem. While some people experience brief homelessness, others are homeless for months or even years at a time.*
5. *Homelessness is on the rise. Despite efforts to combat it, the number of people experiencing homelessness in the United States has been increasing in recent years.*
6. *Homelessness disproportionately affects certain groups. At-risk populations include veterans, LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities and people of color.*
7. *Affordable housing is a major solution to homelessness. The lack of affordable housing is one of the primary drivers of homelessness in the United States.*
8. *Homelessness has significant economic costs. It can result in increased healthcare costs, lost productivity and other economic impacts.*
9. *Homelessness is often invisible. Individuals may be sleeping in their cars or couch-surfing with friends and family, making them less visible.*
10. *Homelessness is a complex issue. Addressing homelessness requires a multi - faceted approach that includes affordable housing, access to healthcare, education, job training and other social services.*

FAITH FORMATION

Director of Religious Education ~ Mrs. Elaine Corvese

508-695-3823

transfigurationreled@gmail.com

Faith Formation Program 2023-2024

Summer Office hours from July 3rd to August 9th:

Monday and Tuesday

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Faith Formation Office hours (after August 9th):

Monday – Thursday

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

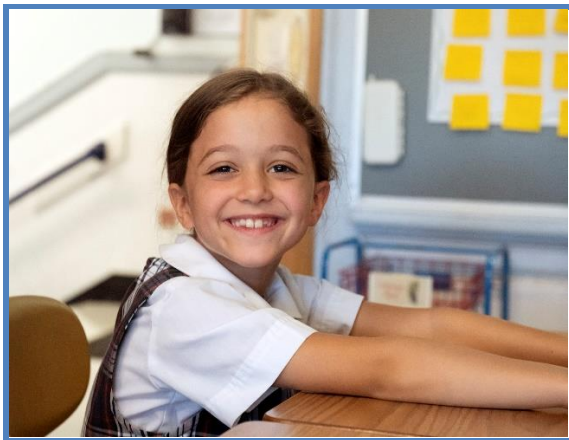
The students currently enrolled in the Faith Formation program will be promoted to the next grade level. Parents/guardians will receive information regarding their child's grade in August 2023.

Registration for students entering first grade or are new to the program will begin on August 9th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Contact the Faith Formation office at: 508-695-3823 or transfigurationreled@gmail.com to register.

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!



Catholic schools like Saint Mary-Sacred Heart integrate the teachings of Jesus Christ into every subject throughout the day, every day of the school year. What a wonderful gift to bestow onto your student or students! We invite you to learn more about our school by visiting our website www.smshschool.com. If you want your student 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 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.



**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.

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!

Saints of the Week: Saints Anne & Joachim

Tradition refers to St. Anne and St. Joachim as being the parents of the Virgin Mary. Although not written of in the Bible, Anne is given credence in the non-biblical gospel of James.

Tradition holds that Saint Anne was born in Bethlehem and married Joachim from Nazareth in Galilee. Joachim was a shepherd given the task of supplying the temple of Jerusalem with sheep for sacrifices. After twenty years of marriage Anne and Joachim had no children. Once, when Joachim overheard ridicule because of their childless state, he is said to have gone into the desert to plead with God to give them a child. After a time of fasting an angel appeared to assure Joachim that he and Anne would be given a child they were to name Mary and dedicate to God.

In the meantime Saint Anne wondered where her husband had gone and, in her despair at having been barren, she prayed while she watched newborn birds in their nests in her garden. She cried out, "Why was I born, Lord?" That is when an angel appeared to tell her she would soon give birth to a daughter she was to name Mary. The story continues with Anne and Joachim's joyous reunion at the golden gate of Jerusalem.

After her birth, Anne and Joachim dedicated Mary to God at the temple of Jerusalem, and she spent much of her childhood there. When Mary was fourteen, they betrothed her to Joseph of Nazareth; and so Mary's story continues with the birth of her son, Jesus, and his life on earth.

The life of Saint Anne and her connection as holy mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus was very popular to early Christians. In the year 550 a church was built in honor of St. Anne in Jerusalem. It is believed to be near where Anne, Joachim and Mary lived.

Since the seventh century the Greek and Russian Churches have celebrated feasts honoring St. Joachim and St. Anne. The Western Churches began to celebrate the feast of St. Anne in the sixteenth century. The feast of Sts. Anne and Joachim is July 26th (western) or July 25th (eastern calendar). There is no mention of Anne or Joachim in the New Testament. Their story comes chiefly from the Protoevangelium of James which only dated back to the second century.

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World Day of Prayer for Grandparents & the Elderly: Sunday, July 23



On Sunday, July 23, the Church marks the third annual World Day of Prayer for Grandparents and the Elderly. This day is observed each year on the fourth Sunday in July, close to the feast of Jesus' grandparents, Saints Joachim and Anne. Pope Francis instituted this Day in 2021 since, he believes, grandparents are often forgotten, yet they "are the link between generations, passing on the experience of life and faith to the young." We offer this prayer for all who are grandparents or the elder members of our community. May God continue to bestow gifts of good health, strength, and wisdom upon them!

*Lord Jesus,
you were born of the Virgin Mary,
the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne.
Look with love on grandparents the world over.
Protect them! They are a source of enrichment
for families, for the Church and for all of society.
Support them! As they grow older,
may they continue to be for their families
strong pillars of Gospel faith,
guardians of noble domestic ideals,
living treasures of sound religious traditions.
Make them teachers of wisdom and courage,
that they may pass on to future generations the fruits
of their mature human and spiritual experience.*

*Lord Jesus,
help families and society
to value the presence and role of grandparents.
May they never be ignored or excluded,
but always encounter respect and love.
Help them to live serenely and to feel welcomed
in all the years of life which you give them.*

*Mary, Mother of all the living,
keep grandparents constantly in your care,
accompany them on their earthly pilgrimage,
and by your prayers, grant that all families
may one day be reunited in our heavenly homeland,
where you await all humanity
for the great embrace of life without end. Amen!*

Reflections for the Week beginning Sunday, July 23, 2023

Sunday, Jul 23, 2023

God's kind of justice

Our exercise of justice can be remarkably heartless. Too often we confuse justice with judgment, imagining justice is only served by lowering the boom on the offending party. The writer of the book of Wisdom describes God's justice as both mighty and clement: that is, powerful and merciful at the same time. Among the loveliest recommendations in the Old Testament is this: "Those who are just must be kind." Written 50 years before the time of Jesus, Wisdom demonstrates why Jesus came to heal, forgive, and rescue—not destroy, condemn, and disown. Make kindness your partner in justice.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Wisdom 12:13, 16-19; Romans 8:26-27; Matthew 13:24-43 (106). *"And you taught your people, by these deeds, that those who are just must be kind."*

Monday, Jul 24, 2023

Unburden yourself

With so many things to do, places to go, and people to see, how could the average busy person these days possibly relate to contemplative hermits? Maybe the holy example of hermits, like Sharbel Makhlûf, is exactly what our hectic times need to help us detach from all that consumes us. This 19th-century Lebanese saint was a shepherd-turned-priest who later became a monk and then a hermit. After his death, miracles were attributed to his intercession. At his beatification in 1965, Pope Paul VI said: "May he make us understand, in a world largely fascinated by wealth and comfort, the paramount value of poverty, penance and asceticism, to liberate the soul in its ascent to God."

MEMORIAL OF SHARBEL MAKHLÛF, PRIEST

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 14:5-18; Matthew 12:38-42 (395). *"She came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon."*

Tuesday, Jul 25, 2023

Walk this way

Annually an estimated 350,000 pilgrims walk the Camino de Santiago—the Way of Saint James. The Camino has a series of medieval routes, but the French Way is most popular. On foot it takes 30 days, crossing foothills of the Pyrenees and many fields, towns, and villages before traversing Galicia. Each route leads to the city of Santiago de Compostela with its magnificent cathedral, believed to be the final resting place of Saint James the Greater, who brought Christianity to Spain. Pope Callixtus II declared in 1122: "The city of Compostela, through the support of Blessed James, has been made sacred for the faithful and a help for those coming to it." Visit the American Pilgrims website to be inspired.

FEAST OF JAMES, APOSTLE

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 4:7-15; Matthew 20:20-28 (605). *"The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve."*

Wednesday, Jul 26, 2023

Honor your ancestors

Though we only know of Joachim and Anne from early Christian writings, not biblical texts, it is logical to give a place of prominence to those who, after all, were Jesus' grandparents. It is said they struggled greatly to give birth until God, seeing their holiness, granted them the supreme privilege of parenting Mary, the mother

of God. In the Orthodox Church of America, they carry a title of great respect: Holy Ancestors of God. Think of the sacrifices your own grandparents likely made in raising your parents. Let your life honor them.

MEMORIAL OF JOACHIM AND ANNE, PARENTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 16:1-5, 9-15; Matthew 13:1-9 (397). *"And he spoke to them at length in parables."*

Thursday, Jul 27, 2023

Help build a church with a conscience

Many Catholics take for granted the existence of a robust Catholic social service network. But back in the early 20th century, that was not the case. Poverty was common and social work was emerging as a profession. The social-concerns encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and Father William J. Kerby, co-founder of what became Catholic Charities USA, were two important influences that helped develop social consciousness among U.S. Catholics. Thanks to Kerby, who died on this date in 1936, and other activists and thinkers, the American church now includes many anti-poverty efforts. What can you do to further this critical social legacy?

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 19:1-2, 9-11, 16-20b; Matthew 13:10-17 (398). *"Prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it."*

Friday, Jul 28, 2023

Blessed are those who hear the word

Blessed Charlie Stanley Rother is on the path to sainthood, a surprise for many who knew him as a rather shy and grumpy lad. Stanley grew up in Oklahoma. He was skilled at farming and could fix practically anything. He also felt called to the priesthood. After ordination, another calling came, this time, to go to Guatemala. There, Stanley used his gifts as he lived and worked among the people. With them, he too faced the terror of the raging Guatemalan civil war. He was martyred on July 28, 1981. Befriend Blessed Stanley and ask him to accompany you as you listen for God's calling.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 13:18-23 (399). *"The seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold."*

Saturday, Jul 29, 2023

Even the savior of the world needs friends

Martha, Mary, and Lazarus held a privileged place in Jesus' heart. As a wandering preacher who had "no place to lay his head," Jesus knew he always had a place to call home in visiting his three dear friends. Each gifted him in a special way, as the 2021 decree combining their veneration from the Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacraments points out: "Martha generously offered him hospitality, Mary listened attentively to his words, and Lazarus promptly emerged from the tomb at the command of the one who humiliated death." Cherish and nurture your dearest friendships; they are a treasure through thick and thin.

MEMORIAL OF MARTHA, MARY, AND LAZARUS, FRIENDS OF JESUS

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 24:3-8 (400); John 11:19-27 or Luke 10:38-42 (607). *"Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother [Lazarus, who had died]."*

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



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16th Sunday in Ordinary Time - July 23, 2023

First Reading

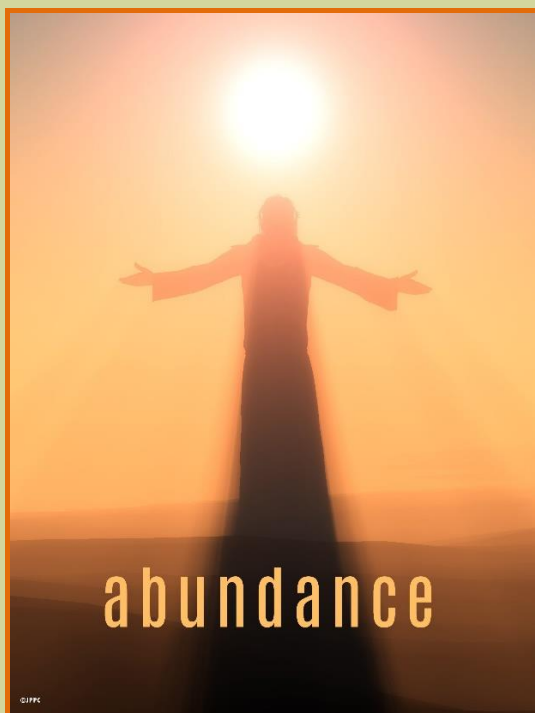
A reading from the Book of Wisdom

There is no god besides you who have the care of all, that you need show you have not unjustly condemned. For your might is the source of justice; your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all. For you show your might when the perfection of your power is disbelieved; and in those who know you, you rebuke temerity.

But though you are master of might, you judge with clemency, and with much lenience you govern us; for power, whenever you will, attends you. And you taught your people, by these deeds, that those who are just must be kind; and you gave your children good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for their sins.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



Responsorial Psalm

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

You, O LORD, are good and forgiving, abounding in kindness to all who call upon you. Hearken, O LORD, to my prayer and attend to the sound of my pleading.

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

All the nations you have made shall come and worship you, O LORD, and glorify your name. For you are great, and you do wondrous deeds; you alone are God.

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

You, O LORD, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity. Turn toward me, and have pity on me; give your strength to your servant.

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the
Romans

Brothers and sisters:

The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Alleluia

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

*Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.*

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.

Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying:

"The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off.

When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. The slaves of the householder came to him and said, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' His slaves said to him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

He replied, 'No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

He proposed another parable to them. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants.

It becomes a large bush, and the 'birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.'"

He spoke to them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened."

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world.

Then, dismissing the crowds, he went into the house. His disciples approached him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He said in reply, "He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. Just as weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Patience for a Good Harvest

A friend of mine is a death row chaplain. He was there the night a man was brought to prison on a murder charge. The arrested man had committed one hundred twenty-nine crimes in nine weeks in order to support a cocaine habit. The man was angry, violent, and out of control. Patiently, the chaplain prayed, at first alone, then with the prisoner. My friend did not judge the man. Instead he persevered mercifully and with compassion. In time, the prisoner had a conversion. Although he faces death, the man is now baptized and has helped prepare a video tape for youth, urging them to make good decisions. His witness has led three other death row inmates to Christ. Good can, indeed, come from something that at first looks bad. Weeds in the wheat field, at first, seem bad; but who knows? With patience, mercy, and love something good may come of them.

Comment

God's supremacy is clear in the reading from Wisdom. God is all-knowing, just, and powerful. Our hearts, thoughts, and actions are clear to God before we even know them. Even with incomprehensible power, God is patient. The words of Wisdom show us how God tempers justice with mercy and how God's actions teach us to be patient, fair, and hopeful.

Paul encouraged the Romans to be patient through the trials of this life. The fretting is really not worth the effort when compared to the glory God has in store for us. We are saved in the hope of what is unseen, and we need to be patient in order to receive God's promise of heaven. Even when we lack patience, the Spirit helps us and gives us the heart to hope, wait, and pray.

Jesus tells a parable about wheat and weeds in Matthew's Gospel. After planting good seeds of wheat, an enemy came along to the field and spread weed seeds. When the plants popped through the soil, the workers were upset to see so many weeds and wanted to pull them out. The owner encouraged the workers to be patient—to let them grow together until the harvest. Whatever weeds were left, the workers were to bundle and burn.

Reflection

All three readings today challenge us to be patient. That's a tall order for a culture immersed in satellite dishes, fax machines, mobile phones, the Internet, and compact discs filled with volumes of information. Often we are in such a hurry that we don't take the time to look at all the aspects of a situation. Our hurry causes us to judge quickly. We may judge other people, or judge a case, coming to the conclusion that it does not warrant our time. Patience, however, gives us time to do God's work among the wheat and the weeds. Rather than appraise the weeds as evil and lost causes, we are shown by God's example to wait patiently and lovingly for the final judgment that belongs to God alone.

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