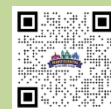
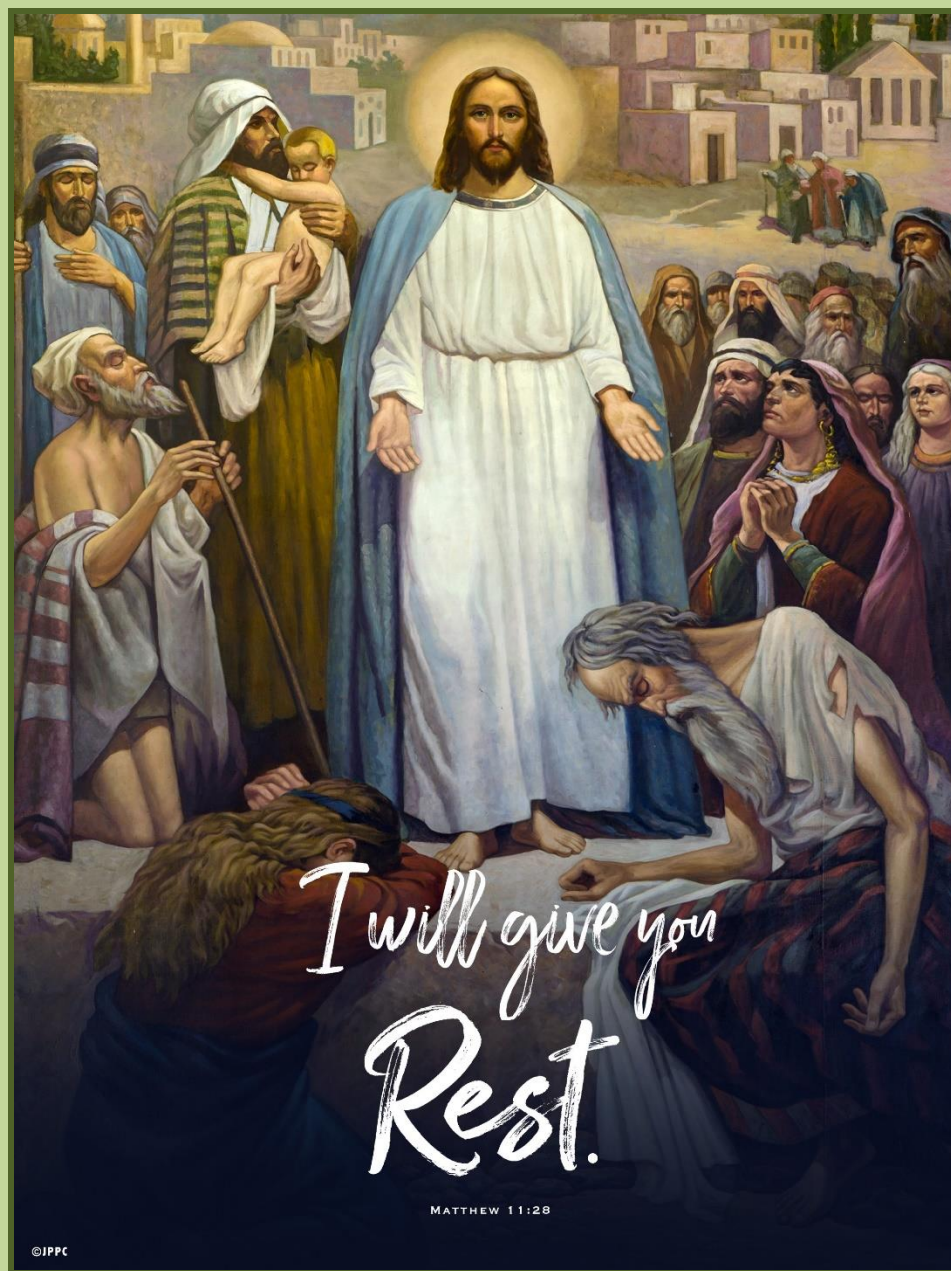


Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 9, 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 Sunday following the 11:00 am Mass in Sacred Heart. Baptisms are scheduled for 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.

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 8/9- 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Saturday | July 8 – Vigil (St. Mark) |
| 4:00 pm | Anne Arminio |
| Sunday | July 9 (St. Mark) |
| 8:00 am | Sabatino Viscusi |
| Sunday | July 9 (St. Mark) |
| 9:30 am | Maria & Joseph Finocchi |
| Sunday | July 9 (St. Mark) |
| 11:00 am | Paul S. Dumas, Sr. |

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| | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Monday | July 10 (St. Mark) |
| 4:30 pm | Edward T. Fitzpatrick |
| Tuesday | July 11 (St. Mark) |
| 8:00 am | Jeanne H. Tzvetinovitch |
| Wednesday | July 12 (St. Mark) |
| 4:30 pm | People of the Parish |
| Thursday | July 13 (St. Mark) |
| 8:00 am | People of the Parish |

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July 15/16- 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Saturday | July 15 – Vigil (St. Mark) |
| 4:00 pm | Bob Chagnon Deceased Members of the Clark Family |
| Sunday | July 16 (St. Mark) |
| 8:00 am | Elizabeth D'Abate |
| Sunday | July 16 (St. Mark) |
| 9:30 am | George & Anne Fish |
| Sunday | July 16 (St. Mark) |
| 11:00 am | Paul Poirier |

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Parish Contributions

Collection for June 24/25: \$12,854.25

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82nd Annual Catholic Appeal Updates



82ND ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL
DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

A revised/final figure was not yet available at the time of submission due to early publication deadlines for the July 4th holiday. Please stay tuned!

From Fr. Costa . . .

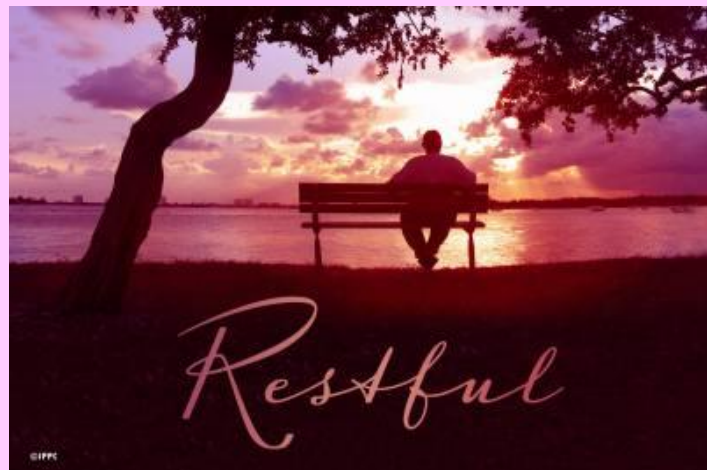
I hope you enjoyed a relaxing Fourth of July holiday.

As mentioned at all Masses last weekend, and posted on our website and Facebook pages, beginning this weekend, July 8 – 9, all four of our weekend Masses will be celebrated at Saint Mark Church. Daily Mass, the Monday Rosary, the monthly Prayer & Pizza, the weekly Communion Service on Thursday, and First Friday Adoration will all be celebrated at Saint Mark Church. Funerals and baptisms will continue to be celebrated in all three of our church buildings throughout the summer.

The first reason for this summer change is purely practical. We are blessed to have one of our three worship sites air conditioned. In these hot and humid New England summer days, we need to take advantage of our resources. The Lord does not expect us to swelter through Mass. A cooler environment can help us in our worship. Comfort is not a bad thing. I see it as a blessing.

Allow me, please, to be a little more blunt with my second and larger reasoning. Four years ago, the legacy parishes of Saint Mary, Sacred Heart, and Saint Mark, were suppressed and the new, united parish of Transfiguration was erected. We are one Catholic community, blessed with three worship sites, served on the weekends by three priests, a permanent deacon, a religious sister, and a team of dedicated liturgical ministers. Hopefully, by this time, we are moving away from the “my church” mentality and moving toward feeling welcome and comfortable in whatever church building we chose to worship in on a particular day. Happily, I’m sensing this is happening and I am grateful!

I totally understand that change is difficult and truly appreciate your patience and understanding. Have no fear, this is a summer arrangement. We will return to our three worship sites after Labor Day. In the meantime, join us in our “summer chapel” and enjoy a “cool” Mass!



Eucharistic Adoration

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.

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

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.**

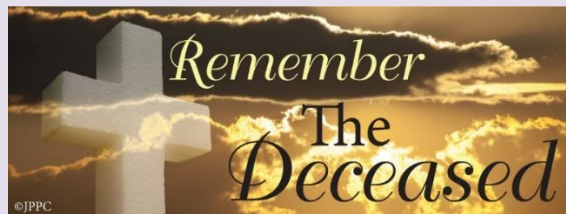
Prayer and Pizza

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, July 19, 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.



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 at
jim.schromm@verizon.net with any questions.



Please Pray for our Deceased:

F. Mark O'Korn

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

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.smshschool.com. If you want your child to attend a school that balances faith with education, consider joining the Saints community of learners.

our children
CATHOLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION
our future

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.

Memorial Opportunities

The condition of the large ritual books – Roman Missal (the altar prayer book), Book of the Gospels (used by the deacon for the proclamation of the Gospel and carried in the opening procession), and Lectionary (the book of the Scripture readings used during the Liturgy of the Word) – we use for Sunday Mass in our three churches is a bit shabby, to say the least. This is the fault of constant use. Given their importance and the respect these books deserve, it is time to invest in some new editions.

We are currently accepting donations for these new sacred books. The approximate costs are as follows:

Roman Missal: \$185.00

Book of the Gospels: \$93.00

Lectionary: \$98.00

Memorial names will be inscribed on the inside cover of each book and will be recognized in the parish bulletin.

If you would like to make a donation, please send your gift in an appropriately marked envelope with your check and the name(s) to be remembered. Many thanks for your consideration.

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. Please note there are no meetings during the summer months.** 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).

Saint of the Week: Saint Benedict

It is unfortunate that no contemporary biography was written of a man who has exercised the greatest influence on monasticism in the West. Benedict is well recognized in the later *Dialogues of Saint Gregory*, but these are sketches to illustrate miraculous elements of his career.

Benedict was born into a distinguished family in central Italy, studied at Rome, and early in life was drawn to monasticism. At first he became a hermit, leaving a depressing world—pagan armies on the march, the Church torn by schism, people suffering from war, morality at a low ebb.

He soon realized that he could not live a hidden life in a small town any better than in a large city, so he withdrew to a cave high in the mountains for three years. Some monks chose Benedict as their leader for a while, but found his strictness not to their taste. Still the shift from hermit to community life had begun for him. He had an idea of gathering various families of monks into one “Grand Monastery” to give them the benefit of unity, fraternity, and permanent worship in one house. Finally he began to build what was to become one of the most famous monasteries in the world—Monte Cassino, commanding three narrow valleys running toward the mountains north of Naples.

The Rule that gradually developed prescribed a life of liturgical prayer, study, manual labor, and living together in community under a common abbot. Benedictine asceticism is known for its moderation, and Benedictine charity has always shown concern for the people in the surrounding countryside. In the course of the Middle Ages, all monasticism in the West was gradually brought under the *Rule of St. Benedict*.

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info@franciscanmedia.org

What does the Medal of St. Benedict mean?



A Sense of Ordinary Time

What do the words “Ordinary Time” mean? Dorothy Day observed, “The words ‘Ordinary Time’ in our prayer books put me in a state of confusion and irritation. To me, no time is ordinary.” She was right. The “Ordinary” in “Ordinary Time” refers to ordinal – counted – time, not to a lack of something to celebrate. Here is what the Roman document, *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*, has to say: “Apart from those seasons having their own distinctive character [Advent, Christmastime, Lent, Triduum, and Eastertime], 33 or 34 weeks remain in the yearly cycle that do not celebrate a specific aspect of the mystery of Christ. Rather, especially on the Sundays, they are devoted to the mystery of Christ in all its aspects.”

How do we celebrate “the mystery of Christ in all its aspects”? We gather every Sunday. Sunday is the original feast day in our tradition. Christians have gathered every Sunday – the day of Christ’s resurrection, the first day of the week – ever since there were Christians.

When we gather on Sundays in Ordinary Time, as always, we hear the scriptures proclaimed. This summer, we hear the gospel according to Matthew every Sunday. The church reads straight through this gospel, often picking up one week where we left off the last. The first readings, from the Hebrew Scriptures, have been chosen for their relationship with the gospel passages. Many voices are heard this summer – Isaiah, Wisdom, the first and second books of Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others. For the second readings, we listen to Paul’s letter to the Romans for many weeks. The mystery of Christ “in all its aspects” unfolds.

What is the heart of our Sunday celebrations? We do our eucharist; that is, we do our thanksgiving. We praise and thank God for all creation, we pray for the whole world, as we remember Christ’s death and resurrection. We share the bread and wine, the body and blood. We are sent forth to be the body and blood of Christ in our homes, our workplaces, our neighborhoods, our towns, our cities, our country, our world.

“What happens in our churches every Sunday is the fruit of our week. What happens as the fruit of the week past is the beginning of the week to come. Sunday is simultaneously a point of arrival and departure for Christians on their way to the fullness of the kingdom. This is not ordinary at all. This is the fabric of Christian living.” (*Saint Andrew Bible Missal*, [Brooklyn: William J. Hirten, Co., 1982.])

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Reflections for the Week beginning Sunday, July 09, 2023

Sunday, Jul 09, 2023

The unexamined life is not liberating

Interested in ministering, healing, and caring? Intrigued by dream analysis, speaking in tongues, or miracles? Seeking transcendence or the art of meditation? Does your attention reside at the intersection of faith and psychology? If any of the above concern you, there's a Morton Kelsey book with your name on it. Episcopal priest, Jungian therapist, and prolific author, Kelsey notes that we're controlled by what we assume and have never thoughtfully considered: "You can't come to a new point of view until you realize what your brainwashing has been." Take the first step toward inner freedom. Review your assumptions.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Zechariah 9:9-10; Romans 8:9, 11-13; Matthew 11:25-30 (100). *"Although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones."*

Monday, Jul 10, 2023

Don't let setbacks throw you

The first bishop of Denver, Joseph Machebeuf, who died on this day in 1889, was the basis for the character Joseph Vaillant in Willa Cather's 1927 novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. Machebeuf was born in France and his character's French last name means "courageous"—for promoting the faith, in his case. In real life, Machebeuf was thrown from a carriage and disabled from his injuries, but went on to found schools and hospitals while overseeing the enormous growth of the Catholic population in Colorado. May his life inspire you to be valiant in overcoming challenges in your service to God.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 28:10-22a; Matthew 9:18-26 (383). *"Courage, daughter! Your faith has saved you."*

Tuesday, Jul 11, 2023

The Bible according to Benedict

When a team of theologians, medievalists, and artists began work on Saint John's Illuminated Bible in 1995, certain core values of Benedictine spirituality served as guiding principles. The finished product—the first hand-wrought copy of the Bible since the printing press in the 1400s—embodies some undeniable basics from Benedict's Rule, such as: the holiness of ordinary objects (simple goose quills for calligraphy) and the dignity of manual labor (vellum pages were hand-sanded repeatedly). But it's the larger themes of hospitality, transformation, and justice for God's people that make it a rich text for our time. Contemplate this Bible's full significance at the Library of Congress website.

MEMORIAL OF BENEDICT, ABBOT

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 32:23-33; Matthew 9:32-38 (384). *"I have seen God face to face," he said."*

Wednesday, Jul 12, 2023

Foundation for a just society

The Knights of Peter Claver was incorporated on this day in 1911, the fruit of a collaboration between three Josephite priests and three laymen in Mobile, Alabama. The black Catholic fraternal order was founded for African Americans in an age when much of the U.S. Church was still segregated and many Knights of Columbus councils refused to accept black members. Named for the historic Spanish Jesuit missionary to South America, the order has since gone on to incubate justice-minded Catholics in the United States and also in Saint Peter Claver's own mission base of

Colombia. The organization added a Ladies Auxiliary in 1922, which now outstrips the men in membership and activity. If you're interested in the intersection of the Catholic faith and social justice, support the Saint Peter Claver Foundation.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 41:55-57; 42:5-7a, 17-24a; Matthew 10:1-7 (385). *"Go . . . to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"*

Thursday, Jul 13, 2023

Let it reign

The kingdom of God, or reign of God, means many things to many people. The term appears in today's gospel and in fact appears in the New Testament alone well over 100 times. Theologians have discussed its meaning over the centuries. They propose that in various contexts it refers to a heavenly reward, to Jesus himself, to the faithful as they pursue righteousness on Earth, to a culture based on love, mercy, and justice, and other variations on these themes. Like any big concept, there might not be one "right answer." How do you envision the kingdom of God?

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 44:18-21, 23b-29; 45:1-5; Matthew 10:7-15 (386). *"As you go, make this proclamation: 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"*

Friday, Jul 14, 2023

A touch of faith

"She who gropes her way" is an English translation of the Mohawk name Tekakwitha, Saint Kateri's second given name. That epithet is likely related to the fact that an outbreak of smallpox left Kateri orphaned, scarred, and visually impaired at the age of 4. As Kateri felt her way through her short life, she experienced the glories of nature, the riches of Catholic teachings, and the dignity of every soul. With help from family, friends, and a host of strangers, she discovered her true calling: to dedicate her life to God and give voice to God's truths. Pray to Saint Kateri that your vocation becomes crystal clear.

MEMORIAL OF KATERI TEKAKWITHA, MOHAWK

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 46:1-7, 28-30; Matthew 10:16-23 (387). *"Do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say. You will be given at that moment what you are to say."*

Saturday, Jul 15, 2023

What we leave behind

History was not kind to the remains of Saint Bonaventure (1221-74), an Italian cardinal and minister general of the Franciscans. His many works of philosophy and theology are carefully preserved. But his body? Not so much. His torso was burned by invading Huguenots in 1562. His head, discovered to be uncorrupted 160 years after his death, was lost in the destruction of a church during the French Revolution. Only a lone arm has survived, resting in a church in Bagnoregio, Italy. Though your body will not last, your legacy can. Make it a good one.

MEMORIAL OF BONAVENTURE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 49:29-32; 50:15-26a; Matthew 10:24-33 (388). *"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul."*

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



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*14th Sunday in Ordinary
Time - July 9, 2023*



First Reading

**A reading from the Book of the Prophet
Zechariah**

Thus says the LORD:

Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion,
shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king shall come to you;
a just savior is he,
meek, and riding on an ass,
on a colt, the foal of an ass.
He shall banish the chariot from Ephraim,
and the horse from Jerusalem;
the warrior's bow shall be banished,
and he shall proclaim peace to the nations.
His dominion shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

**R. I will praise your name for ever, my
king and my God.**

I will extol you, O my God and King,
and I will bless your name forever and
ever.

Every day will I bless you,
and I will praise your name forever and
ever.

**R. I will praise your name for ever, my
king and my God.**

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

**R. I will praise your name for ever, my
king and my God.**

Let all your works give you thanks, O
LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.
Let them discourse of the glory of your
kingdom
and speak of your might.

**R. I will praise your name for ever, my
king and my God.**

The LORD is faithful in all his words
and holy in all his works.
The LORD lifts up all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down.

**R. I will praise your name for ever, my
king and my God.**

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

You are not in the flesh;
on the contrary, you are in the spirit,
if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.
Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ
does not belong to him.
If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from
the dead dwells in you,
the one who raised Christ from the dead
will give life to your mortal bodies also,
through his Spirit that dwells in you.
Consequently, brothers and sisters,
we are not debtors to the flesh,
to live according to the flesh.
For if you live according to the flesh, you will
die,
but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of
the body,
you will live.

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.

At that time Jesus exclaimed:

"I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven
and earth, for although you have hidden these
things from the wise and the learned you have
revealed them to little ones. Yes, Father, such
has been your gracious will. All things have
been handed over to me by my Father. No one
knows the Son except the Father, and no one
knows the Father except the Son and anyone to
whom the Son wishes to reveal him."

"Come to me, all you who labor and are
burdened, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,
for I am meek and humble of heart;
and you will find rest for yourselves.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The Humble

This month, we in the United States celebrate our Independence Day. Perhaps during the celebration one may hear all or part of the poem inscribed on the Statue of Liberty: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free ... Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me ...” Interestingly, these words echo those of Jesus in today’s Gospel. Both speak of welcoming the humble.

Comment

People of Jesus’ day expected to see leaders as a notch or two above the common folk. They were accustomed to thinking of military leaders as people who wore stately uniforms with jewels and medals of precious value, rode the best horses, and drove the shiniest chariots. But Jesus, known for his use of opposites in order to convey a message, denied the norm and rode the colt of a donkey. This move pointed to the peacefulness of the kingdom he promised to rule. Throughout time, it has been hard for people to understand a different view from the norm, but eventually we will come to know that the reign Jesus promises is nothing like what we’ve experienced on earth.

It is difficult for people to shift their thinking. It’s especially tough for those who know too much—those who have been educated in a belief system filled with rules, idiosyncrasies, and misconceptions. Brainwashed and stubborn, set in their ways, there were people of Jesus’ time who refused to reshape their thinking. They were not open to any news of a kingdom they could not understand. Their closed-mindedness caused the truth to be hidden from them.

On the other hand, Jesus tells of those who, like a child, have not learned so much. Their minds are open and able to be shaped by the truth. It is these people who accept Jesus’ teachings. They are open and welcoming enough to understand the good news.

Paul tells us more about that kingdom. Even though it remains a mystery to us, it is clear that we must die first in order to live with Christ in his kingdom. The death we must undergo is a death that will relieve us of our burdens and labor-filled lives. Jesus himself promises us rest from those burdens. Further along in today’s Gospel, Jesus tells us his yoke is easy and his burden light.

Reflection

Sometimes it seems that the more material possessions we have the more we are a slave to them. Think of your car. If it’s an old beater, it takes just enough maintenance to keep it running. It requires minimal insurance, not much soap and polish, and theft protection is unnecessary. But, if you just purchased a car that cost more than your first house, you can bet it will be in a garage, insured extensively, equipped with anti-theft devices, and cleaned and polished often. Easier than any of this would be to ride a horse ... or a donkey colt.

Zechariah shows us that the king will come victoriously in peace riding humbly on a donkey colt. He has no need to flaunt his greatness. As a matter of fact, this king will do away with all that the world has come to know as greatness. He will do away with chariots and war horses.

So what does it mean for us to serve this king? He demands one thing of us: love. We must love God, our neighbors, and our enemies. This is not a crushingly heavy load for those with humble hearts. Jesus gives us a yoke of constraint, but also gives us the grace to carry it. We are never alone with the burden of Jesus.