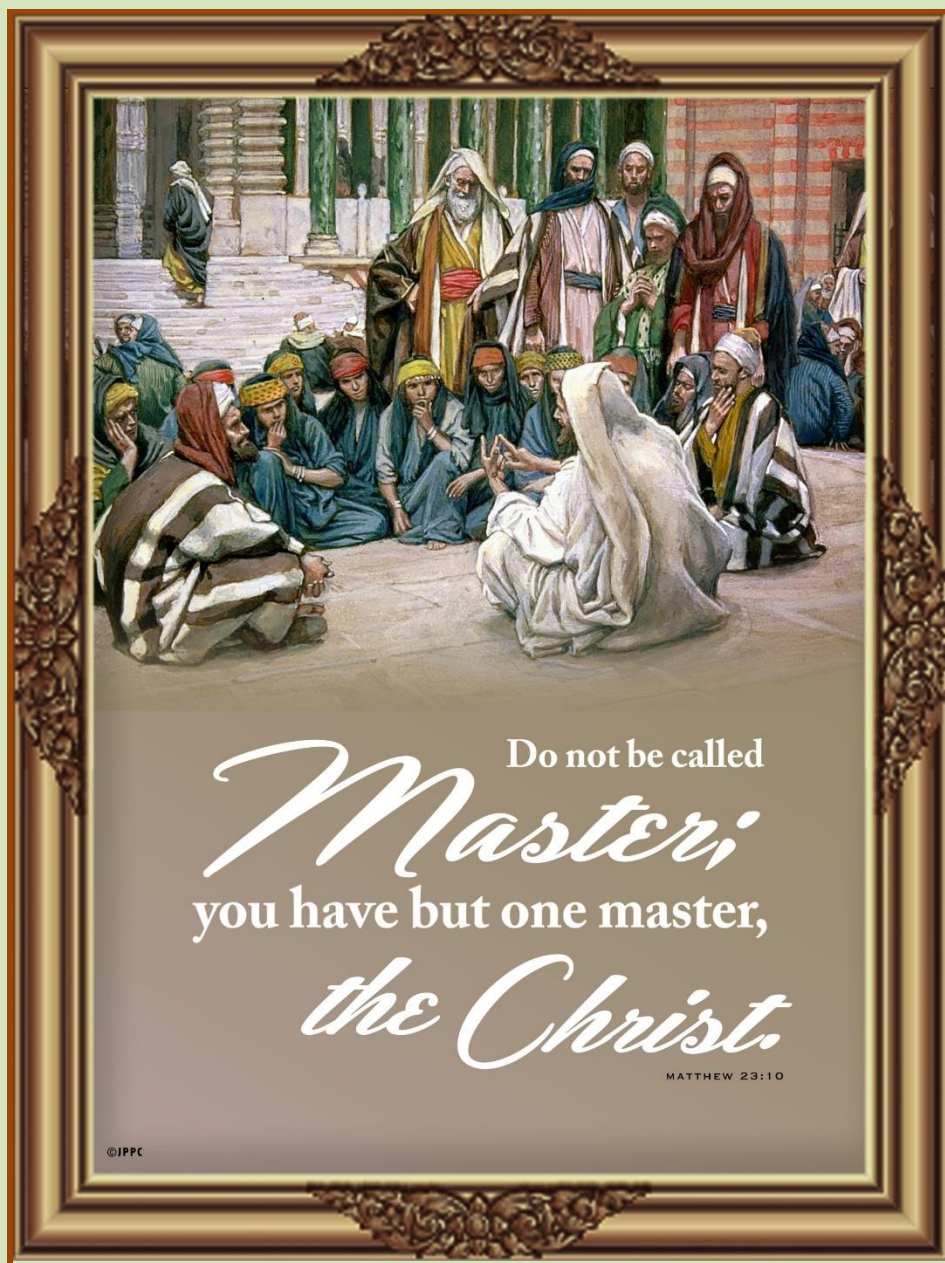


Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 5, 2023



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://app.gabrielsoft.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

MASS Intentions

November 4/5 – 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday 4:00 pm	November 4 – Vigil (St. Mary) Francis J. Leary, Sr. Beatrice O. Leary Mildred E. Leary Francine L. Leary
Sunday 8:00 am	November 5 (St. Mark) Deceased Members of the Blais Family
Sunday 9:30 am	November 5 (St. Mary) Larry Flint Carl Battista, Jr.
Sunday 11:00 am	November 5 (Sacred Heart) Scott Temple

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Monday 8:00 am	November 6 (St. Mark) Connie Pion
Tuesday 4:30 pm	November 7 (St. Mark) Nicholas H. Murray
Wednesday 8:00 am	November 8 (St. Mark) Fanny Clerc
Thursday 8:00 am	November 9 (St. Mark) Charles Obrist

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November 11/12 – 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday 4:00 pm	November 11 – Vigil (St. Mary) Joseph Clayton, Sr. Desire “Buster” Larocque John J. Brown
Sunday 8:00 am	November 12 (St. Mark) Thomas Huber John “Jack” D. Coyle, Jr.
Sunday 9:30 am	November 12 (St. Mary) Beatrice O. Leary & Francis J. Leary, Sr.
Sunday 11:00 am	November 5 (Sacred Heart) Eva Blake & Christopher Blake

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Parish Contributions

Collection for October 28/29: \$11,893.94

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Tuesday Communal Rosary Schedule

Tuesday, November 7, 2023: Rosary for Life (4PM)
 Tuesday, November 14, 2023: Rosary for Life (4PM)
 Tuesday, November 21, 2023: Prayer & Pizza (5PM)
 Tuesday, November 28, 2023: Rosary for Life (4PM)
 Tuesday, December 5, 2013: Rosary for Life (4PM)
 Tuesday, December 12, 2013: Rosary for Life (4PM)
 Tuesday, December 19, 2023: Prayer & Pizza (5PM)

From Fr. Costa:

Since February of 2023, our parish has been without a Director of Music. We have been blessed with the generosity and talent of parishioners, David Avila and Madeline Calves, who have stepped up and provided music for our Masses these many months. Many, many thanks to David and Madeline for their able assistance! You will continue to see and hear David and Madeline as our music ministry continues to grow.

I am very pleased to introduce our parish's new music director, Mr. Adam Turcotte. Adam, a native of Fall River, is a graduate of Durfee High School. He recently purchased his first home in Swansea, MA. In addition to his role as music director, Adam serves as a registered nurse at Charlton Hospital in Fall River. He received his nursing degree in June of 2022 from the University of New Hampshire.

Adam has training in both keyboard and voice. He has experience in liturgical music having served in parishes located in Fall River and Somerset. In addition, Adam has over 15 years of experience in musical theater and currently serves as music director for Marquee Productions. Welcome to Transfiguration, Adam!

In today's bulletin, you will read Adam's invitation to join our music ministry, especially as we prepare for the Christmas holy days. We have many talented individuals within our community and I strongly encourage you to consider sharing your musical gifts and talents to enhance our prayer and liturgies. If you have any questions, please feel free to stop by the organ or piano after Mass and speak with Adam.

Parish Grand Annual Appeal

We are approaching the final stretch of our 2023 Grand Annual Appeal. You, our faithful parishioners, have responded most generously to this extra “ask” which will assist our parish in maintaining and growing ministries and services, complete larger renovation and upkeep projects on our properties, allow us to plan for future development and growth, and provide a financial “cushion” for any unexpected needs that may arise. (I'm not saying the “s” word!)

As of this writing (October 31), the total for the 2023 Grand Annual Appeal stands at approximately **\$185,000.00!** This amazing amount has been donated by approximately 550 households. Many, many thanks for your concern, dedication, trust and generosity!

If you have not made your donation to this appeal, you still have time to join your fellow parishioners. Flyers and donation cards may be found at the doors of all three of our church buildings. Any and every donation counts. Please contact the parish office if you have any questions.

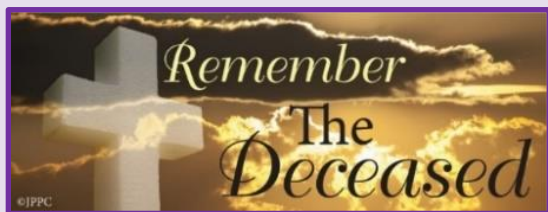
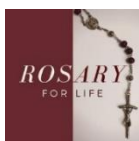
May God bless your generosity and support!

~Fr. Costa



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.



Please Pray for our Deceased:

Pauline C. Elliott

Frances M. Drzal

Laurence "Larry" B. Lanoie

David L. Stanley

Donald G. Fiola

Eternal rest grant unto our beloved dead, O Lord.

Let perpetual light shine upon them.

Knight 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.

November Women's Guild Meeting

The Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Women's Guild will be meeting on Tuesday, November 14, 2023. All women of the parish are invited to join us at 6:00 p.m. at St. Mary's in the Upper Church for a short business meeting and refreshments followed by our guest speaker Jim Hale of the North Attleborough Historical Society. Come for a little entertainment and a little education about the history of the Town of North Attleborough. We hope to see you there!



If you are interested in joining our choir or becoming a cantor, please scan the appropriate QR code(s) and fill out the form.

To join the **choir**:



To become a **cantor**:



If you are unable to complete the form online, please see Adam Turcotte after any Mass to pick up a paper copy.

November Memorial Book

During the month of November, the Church traditionally honors our beloved dead. We invite you to write their names on the **purple insert** included in the October 22nd bulletin, and return it to the parish office via the collection basket or by mail. In addition, you may write the names of your deceased family members and friends on the pages provided in our Memorial Books before or after Mass. *Please note that all of the names which were included on the All Souls envelopes are included in the Memorial Books as well.* During November, the books will be placed in prominent positions in each of our churches to remind us of our loved ones and our prayer for them.



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.

Brown Bag Project:



We want to thank our parishioners for your continued support of this year's Brown Bag Project, and the works of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. This is our primary way of keeping our pantry well stocked, and we appreciate all of your help. Gift cards to Stop & Shop, Shaw's & CVS are always welcome to purchase pantry items. Bags can still be returned at all Masses **this weekend, November 4-5.** You may also return filled bags at the parish office during normal business hours. Our pantry is being utilized more than ever by our friends in need and **any** help you can provide is very much appreciated. *A special thank you to E. A. Dion for printing our labels for the Brown Bag Project, and to Stop & Shop for their continued generosity to our food pantry!*

Adopt-A-Family Bowl-A-Thon: THANK YOU!



Thank you so much to everyone who came out to support our Adopt-A-Family Bowl-A-Thon on October 20th! It was a great success and we know those who attended had a fun-filled evening and won some great raffle prizes! So many of you support this project year after year, whether donating a raffle item, being a sponsor, working the event or participating in the event and we are so grateful. Special thanks to Father Dave who helped us with the raffle.

Betty Poirier has been at the forefront of this project for so many years and has helped so many families in our local community that truly needed the help and support during difficult times. Thank you all again from the bottom of our hearts and hope everyone had a wonderful time.

God Bless,

Deb Fitzgibbons, Adopt-A-Family Committee Member

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:

November 5th: **Grades 3 & 4**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

November 6th: **Grade 8**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

**Please note change in schedule for November 12th:
Grades 1, 2, & 9 are canceled (Veteran's Day Holiday)**

November 13th: **Grade 5**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

November 19th: **Grades 3 & 4**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

Please note change in schedule below for grade 6 & 7:

November 20th: **Grade 7**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

November 27th: **Grade 6**, 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.

Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School - JOIN OUR FAMILY!

FAITH + Fundamentals = Proven Education!

Saints in Action: Laundry Drive



Service is at the heart of every Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School Saint. At SMSH, our students learn the importance of living out a life serving others as part of their experience each and every day. In addition to learning about social justice and Catholic social teachings, an emphasis is placed on ensuring that our Saints recognize the responsibility that each of us has to the greater world around us. We would love for you to join our Saints Family. To learn more about our Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School students and programs, please visit our website: www.smschool.com.

Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Annual Christmas Fair at Saint Mary Church



Join us as we plan for Transfiguration Parish's Christmas Fair at St. Mary Church. The Festival of Trees opens Friday, November 24th from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm and Saturday, 9 am - 2:00 pm upstairs for exhibit, raffles and silent auction. On Saturday, November 25th the Fair continues from 9 am-4:00 pm in the Parish Center (downstairs). If you have never been involved with the Fair, please consider joining us! This is a great way to meet parishioners and share your gifts and talents.

Sponsors Needed

We are looking for **Christmas Fair sponsors**. If you or any area businesses would like to sponsor the fair, please contact Karen Smith at 508-212-7377 for more information. All sponsors will be recognized at the fair and in our parish bulletin.

Silent Auction

Our fair is just **three** weeks away and our **Silent Auction** table needs your help! Do you have tickets to a sporting event or theater/concert performance you can't use? Would you like to host a dinner party or donate a restaurant gift certificate? Are you an artist or crafts person who has an item you have created that you would consider donating? In the past we have had donations of sports equipment, computers, and jewelry. If you would like to make a donation, please contact Gerry Brunell at 508-695-1914 or Andrea Pariseau at 774-278-7222.

Theme Raffle Baskets

Your help is needed to fill our raffle baskets for the fair! Poster boards with suggested themes can be found near the entrances of each of our churches: (1) Choose a "**Theme**" and peel it off the board. (2) Take a basket. (3) Fill the basket & bring it back to any of the 3 churches (*with your theme*). Please return baskets by **Sunday, November 12th**. We will arrange the basket and wrap it for you! Thank you for your assistance and support!

*Please clip and drop in collection basket or mail to the office:
14 Park Street, North Attleborough, MA 02760*

Transfiguration Parish Christmas Fair November 25, 2023

We need everyone's help in making our Christmas Fair a big success! Listed below are ways **you** can make a difference. Please circle your choices below!

Yes, I can help with the Christmas Fair this year!

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Please circle what you would like to do:

Help with set-up ~ Help to decorate ~ Bake

Make candy ~ Donate a gift card ~ Donate a bottle of wine

Sponsor a table ~ Help with the Festival of Trees

Work the day of the Fair

Hours available to work: _____

Please contact Karen Smith (508-212-7377) or

Miles Miller (508-369-1349) with any questions.

To volunteer, please contact Colleen Buckley at 508-455-8446.

Festival of Trees

The ever-popular "Festival of Trees" will return to our parish Christmas Fair on Friday evening, November 24, and Saturday, November 25. The center of aisle of Saint Mary Church will become a winter wonderland of lights and themed Christmas trees showcasing the talents of our parishioners. We need your help to make this aspect of our annual Christmas Fair a success. You are invited to sign-up to decorate a tree after any of our Masses. Trees of various sizes are now available for the taking, or you can purchase your own. You choose the theme and use your imagination and creativity to fashion a masterpiece! Many of the stores in our area have their Christmas decorations available now. **Trees need to be returned to St. Mary Church by Wednesday, November 22.** We look forward to displaying your creativity and raffling off your masterpiece!

What-Not Shoppe

Dana Frederick is collecting gently-used household items and new gift items you may have received but cannot use. *Please remember that we cannot accept used electronic items such as TVs, computers, printers, etc.* **You may drop off your donations after any Mass at St. Mary Church, or at the parish office during normal business hours (8am-4pm).** If you need to schedule a different time, or if you have any questions, please contact Dana Frederick at 508-695-3859.

50/50 Raffle

We will be selling tickets for the 50/50 raffle at all Masses starting November 4th through November 19th and at the Fair. Tickets are sold as books of **6 for \$5**. Good luck!

Wine Wheel

Donations are needed for our Wine Wheel. If you have an extra bottle of wine (*or more*) that you would like to donate, we would be most grateful. Donations can be returned after any of the Masses, or by setting up an appointment with a committee member at a convenient time for you. Please contact Kathy Scholtes at 508-930-0119 for more information.

Sewing, Knitting & Crafts

We are looking for any hand-made/sewn items, and any crafts for the fair. Donations can be returned after any of the Masses. Please contact Connie Schnack at 508-695-9774 or Noreen Kiff at 508-310-3570 for more information.

Bakery & Candy Shoppe

Please consider baking some tasty treats for our fair. Our famous meat pies will also be available for sale. Baked goods, candy, and fudge can be dropped off on **Friday, November 24th from 9AM to noon**. Thank you!

BAPTISM

We Welcome in Baptism:

On Sunday, October 15, 2023 we welcomed a new member into our Catholic faith at Transfiguration of the Lord Parish. We welcome: **Abigail Elizabeth Flynn**, daughter of David & Michelle Flynn, and godchild of Daniel Flynn & Kathleen Flynn. Congratulations to Abigail, her parents, godparents, family and friends on this joyous celebration of faith and family!



Transfiguration of the Lord Respect Life Group Monthly Meeting:

The next meeting of the Respect Life Group will take place on Thursday, **November 30, 2023 at 6:30 pm in Sacred Heart Church's Library**. We hope to see you there!

Rosary for the Family:

The Respect Life Committee extends a heartfelt invitation to our Parish Family to attend a "**Rosary for the Family**". It will be held on Saturday November 18, 2023 at 9AM (*weather permitting*) at Saint Mary Church at the statue of the Blessed Virgin.

'The Family that prays together stays together'
-Father Patrick Peyton

Madonna Manor Christmas Bazaar



Madonna Manor is very excited to announce the return of their annual Christmas Bazaar, a special holiday tradition, which has been suspended for the past few years due to COVID. The Bazaar will be held on:

Friday, December 1, 2023 (9:00 am – 4:00 pm)

Saturday, December 2, 2023 (9:00 am – 2:00 pm)

Madonna Manor, 85 N. Washington St., N. Attleboro

The Bazaar will feature:

Bakery Items	Face Painting
White Elephant	Handmade Items
Raffle Items	Hot Dogs & Chowder
Lottery Raffles	Photos with Santa
50/50 Raffle	...and more...

All proceeds are to benefit the residents of Madonna Manor.

Veneration of the Saints

Showing honor is a natural human response to the goodness, even the greatness, of another human being. We honor the founders and other leaders of our country from throughout history. We name cities after them, write books about them, make statues of them to erect in public places. We paint pictures of them to display in schools and government buildings. We speak reverently and gratefully of them on patriotic holidays.

We do similar things for great scientists, great leaders of social movements, great artists and musicians. Why? Because it's a matter of justice to recognize their gifts and contributions to us. Justice means giving to each his due, and we recognize that we owe much to these great human beings, and we want to say so in different ways.

In all these ways, we are venerating these great men and women — we are giving them honor. And so we shouldn't be surprised that the Catholic Church venerates the great heroes of the Faith, who over the centuries have embodied in an extraordinary manner the way of life to which we're called as Christians. Now that these men and women have been perfected by God and are saints standing face to face with Him in heaven, we have even more reason to venerate them.

Some may object that if we venerate the saints God will be jealous, because we should give honor to Him alone. But He is a God of justice, so it is His will that honor be given where honor is due. Scripture tells us, "Pay ... honor to whom honor is due" (Rom 13:7).

Are we somehow denying God the honor that is due Him when we honor His saints? By no means! They are His perfected handiwork, His masterpiece (see Eph 2:10). When we praise the craftsmanship, all the accolades go to the Craftsman. Meanwhile, as the old saying goes, "Imitation is the sincerest form of praise." And so the Church urges us to imitate the saints, to follow their example of holiness. In the end, that's the best way to honor them.



Saint Padre Pio once said:

"A thousand years of enjoying human glory is not worth even an hour spent sweetly communing with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament."

Please join us at **Saint Mark church** on Friday, **December 1st**, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. with Benediction. Remember, as we share in the work of Redemption, so will we be rewarded with our own redemption.

For more information call Joanne Regali (508-643-3821) or Arlene Hall (508-801-2243). Please leave a message if the call is not answered immediately.

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time - November 5, 2023



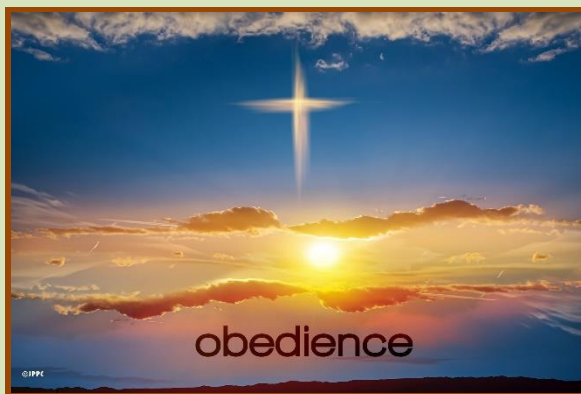
First Reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Malachi

A great King am I, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations. And now, O priests, this commandment is for you: If you do not listen, if you do not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, says the LORD of hosts, I will send a curse upon you and of your blessing I will make a curse. You have turned aside from the way, and have caused many to falter by your instruction; you have made void the covenant of Levi, says the LORD of hosts. I, therefore, have made you contemptible and base before all the people, since you do not keep my ways, but show partiality in your decisions. Have we not all the one father? Has not the one God created us? Why then do we break faith with one another, violating the covenant of our fathers?

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



Responsorial Psalm

R. In you, Lord, I have found my peace.

O LORD, my heart is not proud,
nor are my eyes haughty;
I busy not myself with great things,
nor with things too sublime for me.

R. In you, Lord, I have found my peace.

Nay rather, I have stilled and quieted
my soul like a weaned child.
Like a weaned child on its mother's lap,
so is my soul within me.

R. In you, Lord, I have found my peace.

O Israel, hope in the LORD,
both now and forever.

R. In you, Lord, I have found my peace.

Second Reading

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

Brothers and sisters:

We were gentle among you, as a nursing mother cares for her children. With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become to us. You recall, brothers and sisters, our toil and drudgery. Working night and day in order not to burden any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

And for this reason we too give thanks to God unceasingly, that, in receiving the word of God from hearing us, you received not a human word but, as it truly is, the word of God, which is now at work in you who believe.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*You have but one Father in heaven
and one master, the Christ.*

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

† A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew

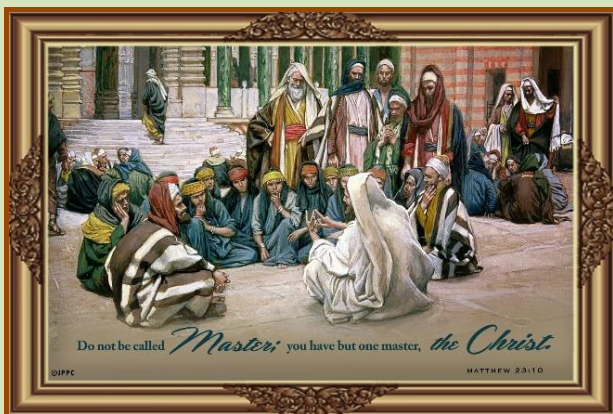
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying,

"The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.' As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Leaders:

The best leaders are models of character. They speak well. They act well. They walk their talk. Jesus is that kind of leader. He asks his disciples to lead as he did, by serving.

Comment:

The book of Malachi is the last of the prophetic books, and a short one it is—only three chapters. The name of the book, Malachi, is a proper noun for the Hebrew word that simply means “my messenger.” This anonymous messenger of the Lord had reason to fly beneath the radar. His was a distressing message delivered during a wobbly time—the resettlement of Israel after the exile. The people could barely see the sun, and they were unsure whether it was rising or setting on their nation, their lives.

In the resettled Israel, a new Temple had been built, but the reforms of Nehemiah were yet to come. The state of religious worship was dismal, and Malachi lay the fault squarely at the feet of priest and people alike.

Today's first reading concerns the leaders—the priests of the tribe of Levi. He describes the worship of people who have no heart for it. Malachi warns of the corrosive effect of this empty worship that distances the people from God and from one another.

In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks the same language as Malachi. He excoriates the behavior of the teachers, even as he upholds their teachings. The problem is not located in the Law of Moses, says Jesus, but in those called to uphold it. Jesus urges the faithful to follow the honorable teachings but not the teachers.

Jesus enumerates the ways in which the holiest images, words, and behaviors are stood on their head. The best is too often betrayed by the teachers themselves. Phylacteries that contain the written words of faith were prescribed to be near to hand and mind to recall forever Israel's covenant with the Lord. But now in Jesus' time, the place and meaning of these phylacteries and tassels are subverted to call attention to the bearer, not to the message. The leaders relish the title rabbi—“my great one,” “my master”—but nothing is done to be worthy of this title. Teachers lay heavy burdens on the followers, who stumble in the darkness created by the very teachers they look to.

Reflection:

In no uncertain terms, Jesus teaches that this must not be the leadership style of his followers. His words aim at the disciples' inner disposition. He urges avoidance of grand titles and trappings. He reminds us that we have one Father and all are the children of that Father. “Children of their Father” is our primary title. The qualities of humility, fidelity, and honor set the standard for all other titles that might be used and all actions that flow from the necessary hierarchies that help order our lives.

Elsewhere in the Gospels, we learn of Jesus' style of leadership as he does the work commonly undertaken by slave and shepherd. He doesn't advocate a run to the bottom of a society's pecking order, but he does advocate the attitude of minister, comforter, companion no matter what one's title or level of responsibility.

Paul got the message of Jesus, which he passed on to his beloved Thessalonians. Paul brought the message of the risen Lord to his time and place. But he was not the sole carrier of religious news. The Mediterranean area was rife with new cults and ideas and mystery religions. Generally, these cults rose and fell on the persuasiveness of the guru, or cult figure.

Paul stands in counterpoint to this cultic style. He is not preaching or teaching a cult religion dependent on his personal charm and insight. He is in service to the Word of the Lord, which is at work in the assembly at Thessalonica. As leader and teacher in that small community of converts, Paul presents himself as one who is among them as a mother with nursing children. This image, as well as those Jesus spoke of and demonstrated, are transparent images of care and presence. No one is lording it over anyone.

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Reflections for the Week beginning Sunday, November 5, 2023

Sunday, Nov 05, 2023

Vocation 101

It's National Vocation Awareness Week! What's your parish or Catholic organization doing to promote the call to ordained and religious life in your community? Consider the threefold tasks of "prayer, invitation, and education": to *pray* for vocations, *invite* likely candidates to consider them, and *educate* others about the joy of service to Christ and his church. Also check out the website of the National Religious Vocation Conference. They offer Conversation Cards to keep handy: business-style cards that say "You would make a great priest/ sister/ brother/ nun" on the front. The back reads: "Imagine the possibilities."

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Malachi 1:14b—2:2b, 8-10; 1 Thessalonians 2:7b-9, 13; Matthew 23:1-12 (151). *"With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well."*

Monday, Nov 06, 2023

All paths designed to lead to holiness

Some people hear their call early in life, and it's loud and clear. Others grapple longer and harder with figuring out their vocation. Regardless of where you fall on that spectrum of discernment, and no matter what state of life God intends for you, keep in mind during this National Vocation Awareness Week (Nov. 5-11) that we are all called in essence to the same thing. Let the words of Carmelite nun Saint Thérèse of Lisieux to her friend upon her marriage reassure you: "The road we are following is different, however, the goal is the same purpose: to become holy in the way God has traced out for us."

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 11:29-36; Luke 14:12-14 (485). *"You will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."*

Tuesday, Nov 07, 2023

Honor wise council

On this day in 680, the Third Council of Constantinople convened. Ecumenical councils summon a representative constituency of church leadership to settle important questions and fine-tune church teaching. Earliest councils, beginning in 325, solidified basics of Christian faith, often tackling heresies about the true nature of Jesus Christ. Later councils wrestled with institutional growing pains. Let us be grateful that our ancestors cared about the deposit of faith enough to gather and debate at length in order to hand down to future generations such as ours the best the tradition has to offer.

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 12:5-16b; Luke 14:15-24 (486). *"We, though many, are one Body in Christ and individually parts of one another."*

Wednesday, Nov 08, 2023

Act decisively for justice

Today, we remember our forebear Joseph Rummel, the longtime archbishop of New Orleans during the era of Jim Crow segregation in the Deep South. As head of the diocese with one of the largest black populations in the nation, Rummel set out to desegregate local Catholic parishes and schools, including the archdiocesan seminary, beginning in 1948. After a letter from local segregationist Catholics to the pope was rebuffed by the holy father, Rummel declared all parochial schools desegregated in 1962. Famously, he later excommunicated several vocal holdouts

who protested his move. Where is such decisive action against racism among bishops today? We are all responsible for opposing injustice. How will you act for the common good?

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 13:8-10; Luke 14:25-33 (487). *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law."*

Thursday, Nov 09, 2023

Let the good times roll

Catholics have lots of words with their own twists, and one of them is "feast." While we don't all sit down to a giant meal for every "feast," in some corner of the world, Catholics may well be doing just that. In church language, "feast" means something special is celebrated on a particular day. Feasts range from the death days of saints, to events in Jesus' life, to the foundation of a church with a special history (such as today's feast of the Lateran Basilica). Many feasts have special followings in particular cultures. Let feast days remind you that sometimes devotion also calls for a good party!

FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17; John 2:13-22 (671). *"His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, Zeal for your house will consume me."*

Friday, Nov 10, 2023

You are simply divine

Known for his accessible preaching style, Pope Leo I helped his fifth-century flock and Christians down through the ages understand more fully the true nature of Christ and his saving gifts. By becoming human, explains Leo, "Jesus assumed the form of a servant without the stain of sin—enhancing what was human, not detracting from what was divine." As children of the light, we share in God's own nature. Therefore, our heads and hearts should reflect this holy inheritance. Or put simply by Leo: "Christian, remember your dignity."

MEMORIAL OF LEO THE GREAT, POPE, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 15:14-21; Luke 16:1-8 (489). *"I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me."*

Saturday, Nov 11, 2023

A veteran worthy of his day

Because Saint Martin of Tours (c. 320-397) was the son of a Roman army officer, he was required by law to serve in the Roman military. Two years after his conversion to Christianity he announced, "I am the soldier of Christ: it is not lawful for me to fight." He was arrested and charged with cowardice. So he volunteered to go into battle unarmed. Before he could make good on his offer, he was discharged from the military. This Veterans Day, we can remember those, like Saint Martin and Venerable Emil Kapaun, Army chaplain, who, for the sake of Christ, go into battle armed only with the love of Christ.

MEMORIAL OF MARTIN OF TOURS, BISHOP

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 16:3-9, 16, 22-27; Luke 16:9-15 (490). *"No servant can serve two masters."*

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



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