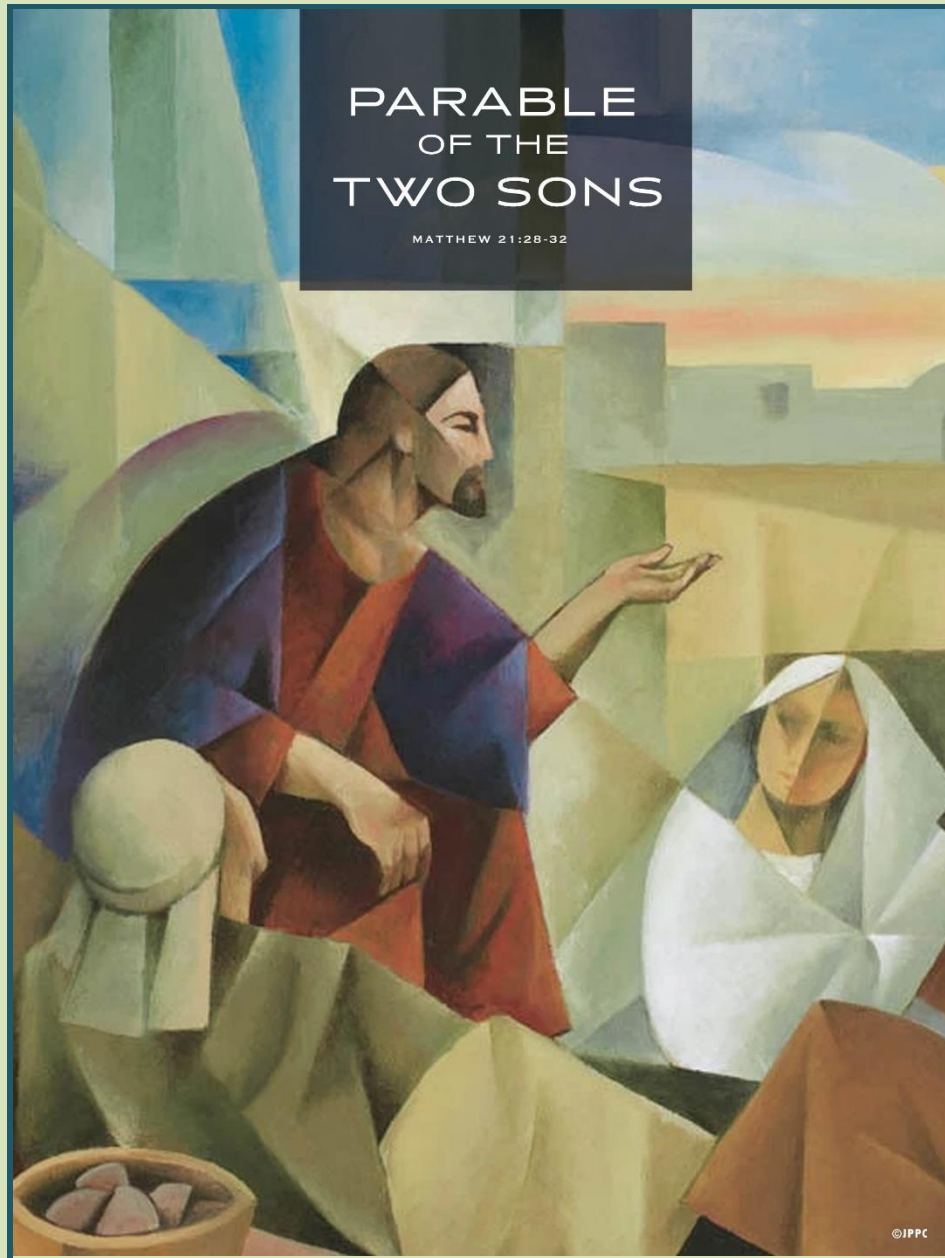


Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 1, 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. 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. 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 4:30 pm **Saint Mark Church**
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**
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

October 1 – 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday	September 30 – Vigil (St. Mary)
4:00 pm	Dan T. Hickey
Sunday	October 1 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	Special Intention-Kathleen Marie
Sunday	October 1 (St. Mary)
9:30 am	Elizabeth Sabal
Sunday	October 1 (Sacred Heart)
11:00 am	Arsen Shamshoian

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Monday	October 2 (St. Mark)
4:30 pm	Irene LaMothe
Tuesday	October 3 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	Marie Christensen
Wednesday	October 4 (St. Mark)
4:30 pm	Jeanne Paquin
	Deceased Members of the
	McGrath & Coogan Families
Thursday	October 5 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	People of the Parish

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October 8 – 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday	October 7 – Vigil (St. Mary)
4:00 pm	Mark Vandette
Sunday	October 8 (St. Mark)
8:00 am	Living Intention to Celebrate
	Edouard LaPlante on his 80 th
	Birthday
Sunday	October 8 (St. Mary)
9:30 am	David & Beverly Laliberte
	Joseph Raymond "Ray" Lacasse
Sunday	October 8 (Sacred Heart)
11:00 am	Barbara Burns

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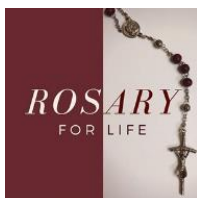
Parish Contributions

Collection for September 23/24: \$9,763.00
Cardinal Medeiros Residence Fund: \$1,000.00

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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.



Grand Annual Appeal Continues

As we move into the month of October, our Grand Annual Appeal continues with great momentum. Many, many thanks to all who have given most generously to this appeal. The funds collected will allow us to maintain and grow parish ministries, continue upkeep of our parish properties, plan for future projects and allow us a financial cushion for unforeseen emergencies.

An added, nonfinancial benefit to this project is that our parish census can be updated, as a number of former parishioners have moved from the area and their information may be removed from our data base when envelopes are returned as undeliverable.

There is still time for you to participate in this united parish project. Flyers and donation cards are found near the doors of all three of our church buildings. You may also visit our parish website and donate online. A pledge allows you to spread out your donation over a period of time. Please know that 100% of your donation remains here in the parish and all funds collected are not subject to a diocesan tax. The Grand Annual Appeal will continue through the month of October.

2024 Mass Intention Book



The 2024 Mass Intention Book will officially open on Monday, October 2, 2023. The current Mass schedule provides for fewer opportunities for parishioners to remember their beloved dead at weekend Masses. For this reason, we will schedule, when necessary, multiple intentions for weekend Masses. There is no limit on the number of daily Mass intentions. Please contact the office via email, phone, or in writing with your requests.

2023 Quarter 4 Ministry Schedule



The liturgical ministry schedule which begins this weekend, September 30/October 1 and continues through and including December 30/31 was emailed via group email in the past week. It is also available on the parish website at www.saintmaryna.com under the "Quick links" to the right of the home page. If you did not receive the group email and would like a copy of the schedule, please contact the office and one will be sent to you. Thank you to all of our liturgical ministers for serving and enriching our parish community!

October is Respect Life Month

We expect to pay more for something that will last a long time - things that are durable. We value rare or unique things. Works of great beauty can be extremely expensive.

Yet, our society seems to place little value on the one thing that is truly priceless - human life itself. If we compare human life to things that we prize, by every measure, human life comes out on top. Think about it:

Durability: human beings last forever. Everything on earth will pass away; the earth itself will pass away. But God offers each of us *eternal* life.

Uniqueness: every human person is unique, unrepeatable and irreplaceable. Even identical twins have different fingerprints, facial expressions, personalities. Never in the history of the world has there been another you, nor will there ever be.

Beauty: is there anything more beautiful, anything you'd rather look at a dozen times a day, than the face of a loved one?

From the moment of conception, the awesome complexity of a new human life unfolds. Parents provide the 46 chromosomes, but God supplies the human soul to create the person known and loved from all eternity. Even before birth, human life is miraculous, the differentiation of cells, the development of organs with highly specialized functions, the maturing of the brain, the memory and the five senses. Every human being shares the same origin, nature and destiny, but our features and physique, skills, interests, tastes and habits are astonishingly diverse.

What is most miraculous about human life is why we exist at all. God created every human person in his image and likeness. You, me, one-celled human embryos in lab dishes, unborn children and their impoverished parents living in the slums of less-developed nations, people who struggle with disabilities, comatose or dying patients, convicted killers on death row. Each and every one possesses inherent God-given dignity equal to that of every other human.

As individuals and as a faith community, we can change the face of our world to reflect the value and dignity of every human life. Life is a gift, ours to take care of - not to throw away and never to take from another. God calls each one of us to safeguard our own life and the lives of those in need of assistance, attention, prayer.

Surely, we can do no less than heed his call.

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:

October 1st: **Grades 3 & 4**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

October 1st: **Grade 9**, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

October 2nd: **Grade 8**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

NOTE: Due to the Columbus Day holiday, Faith Formation classes will not be held on Sunday, October 8th and Monday, October 9th.

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.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)



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

Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School - JOIN NOW!

Flourish with FAITH, Family and Fundamentals!
Celebrating 100 Years of Catholic Education in the town of North Attleboro



A Catholic education is one of the best gifts you could ever give your children. From preschool through Grade 8, our SMSH students grow in faith, knowledge, character, and grace, thriving in an atmosphere where they feel respected and loved by their teachers and fellow Saints. We invite you to learn more about our school by visiting our website: www.smshschool.com.

**Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Women's
Guild: Gift Certificate Calendar**

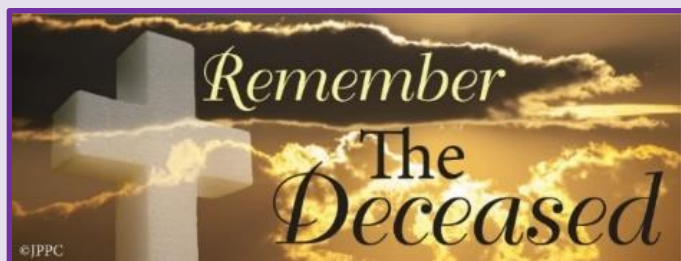


Want 31 chances to win some great gift certificates? The Women's Guild will be selling their Gift Certificate Calendar at Masses the last few weeks in September and drawings will start on October 1st and go to October 31st. The cost is \$20 per calendar. **Here is how it works:** Once you buy a calendar for \$20, this puts your name into a drawing, and a name is drawn each day during the month, If your name is drawn you win the gift certificate for that day, which could be worth up to \$50! Your name is then put back into the drawing so you have another chance to win again on another day and so on. All proceeds from this fundraiser calendar are used to help supplement our monthly meeting expenses for the Transfiguration of the Lord Parish Women's Guild Program.

**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.



Please Pray for our Deceased:

Carl Battista, Jr.

Brittany L. Pilling

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



Pope Benedict XVI once said:

"In a world where there is so much noise, so much bewilderment, there is a need for silent adoration of Jesus concealed in the Host. Be assiduous in the prayer of adoration and teach it to the faithful. It is a source of comfort and light, particularly to those who are suffering."

Please join us at **Saint Mark church**, Friday, **October 6th**, 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.

Parish Calendar & Ministry Groups

As parish ministry groups return to regular meetings and activities, leaders are reminded to please forward any schedule requests and plans for use of parish properties to Martha at the parish office. We need to keep the parish calendar up to date and avoid any scheduling conflicts. Your assistance is very much appreciated!



Bishop Feehan High School Open House

At Bishop Feehan High School we believe that great things are always within reach. Are you ready to be bold with us, to believe in yourself and to reach higher than you ever thought possible. If so, we can't wait to help you get to know us and get started on an amazing high school journey. Join us at our Open House on Sunday, October 15th at 1pm. This is a great opportunity to meet the Feehan community, tour campus and learn about academic programs, athletics and club activities.



BishopFeehan.com/getinfo

Saint of the Week:
Mother Theodore Guerin
October 3rd

Trust in God's Providence enabled Mother Theodore to leave her homeland, sail halfway around the world, and found a new religious congregation.

Born in Etables, France, Anne-Thérèse Guérin's life was shattered by her father's murder when she was 15. For several years she cared for her mother and younger sister. She entered the Sisters of Providence in 1823, taking the name Sister Saint Theodore. An illness during novitiate left her with lifelong fragile health, but that did not keep her from becoming an accomplished teacher.

At the invitation of the bishop of Vincennes, Indiana, Sr. Saint Theodore and five sisters were sent to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, in 1840, to teach and to care for the sick poor. She was to establish a motherhouse and novitiate. Only later did she learn that her French superiors had already decided the sisters in the United States should form a new religious congregation under her leadership.

Mother Theodore and her community persevered despite fires, crop failures, prejudice against Catholic women religious, misunderstandings, and separation from their original religious congregation. She once told her sisters, "Have confidence in the Providence that so far has never failed us. The way is not yet clear. Grope along slowly. Do not press matters; be patient, be trustful." Another time she asked, "With Jesus, what shall we have to fear?"

God's work gets done by people ready to take risks and to work hard—always remembering what Saint Paul told the Corinthians, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth." Every holy person has a strong sense of God's Providence.

Mother Theodore was buried in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, in what is now the Shrine of St. Mother Theodore, in Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana. She was beatified in 1998, and canonized as Saint Theodora Guérin eight years later, one of the newest saints of the Catholic Church in the United States. Her congregation, The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary of the Woods, continue her work across our country. For many years the Sisters staffed schools in the Boston area and in New Hampshire. The provincial house for the eastern part of the congregation was located in the city of Fall River.

St. Mother Theodore Guerin



"Carefully guard every word; watch over yourselves that nothing imprudent may escape you and thus give the ill-disposed a reason for their complaints."

-St. Mother Theodore Guerin (October 3rd)

Adopt-A-Family Updates

On behalf of Transfiguration of the Lord Parish and former Representative Betty Poirier (R) North Attleboro, we would like to personally extend an invitation to participate in our upcoming Adopt-A-Family Fundraiser bowl-a-thon to be held at North Bowl Lanes on **Friday, October 20, 2023**. So many of you who have experienced this fun-filled event in the past can attest to what a wonderful time they had coming together with our Catholic community. It is a great evening of fellowship, laughter, friendship, and many chances to win some awesome raffle items!



Date: Friday, October 20, 2023

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. for bowling

(NOTE: the event starts at 6:00 p.m. for everyone to come and take chances on raffles and also get a drink and a bite to eat before bowling start.)

Cost: \$20.00 per person

Call Deb Fitzgibbons at 978-884-1945 with any questions or to secure a lane! If you are interested in pulling together a team, please let Deb know, or if you do not have a team, we can put you on a team. Also, if you are interested in sponsoring a lane, we will develop a "personalized" banner for you! Don't miss out . . . this event is has grown every year and there is SO MUCH FUN to be had!

God Bless,
Debbie Fitzgibbons and Betty Poirier,
Adopt-A-Family Committee Members

Reflections for the Week beginning Sunday, October 1, 2023

Sunday, Oct 01, 2023

Seamless unity

We work best when we work together. A society pulling in opposite directions tears itself apart. The final prayer Jesus offers at the Last Supper is for unity among his friends. Saint Paul likewise implores his communities to be of one heart. Today, on Respect Life Sunday, we soberly confess that we can't both honor the sacred gift of life and allow poverty, injustice, exclusion, and indifference to remain unchallenged. Coincidentally, it's the International Day of Older Persons, in a world where people over 60 outnumber children under 5. Make this world a welcome place for everyone.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 18:25-28; Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 21:28-32 (136). *"Complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing."*

Monday, Oct 02, 2023

Watching over us

What exactly does the church teach about angels? "The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls 'angels' is a truth of faith," says the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The church venerates angels as servants and messengers of God. And one is particularly looking out for you. But, as Pope Francis says, not just to protect but to prod: "The angels help us; they push us to continue on the journey [of life]." These pure spirits who are in communication with God encourage us to "be not afraid" and take risks. Join the church in welcoming these—and your—special guardians.

MEMORIAL OF THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS

TODAY'S READINGS: Zechariah 8:1-8 (455); Matthew 18:1-5, 10 (650). *"I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father."*

Tuesday, Oct 03, 2023

The Lord loves justice

Mother Theodore Guerin, whose feast is today, was a missionary to the United States who established schools, a pharmacy, and orphanages. But her love of Christ made her denounce injustices, too. She described a slave auction: "These Americans, so proud of their liberty, thus make game of the liberty of others. Poor negroes! I would have wished to buy them all that I might say to them, 'Go! Bless Providence. You are free!'" Her mission continues today with her Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, who strive for peace and justice, particularly in the area of racial equality and equity, criminal justice reform, human trafficking, and immigration. Take to heart Mother Guerin's words as you work to transform the world: "Above all things; justice, justice. If any preference may be shown let it be to the poorest or most abandoned."

TODAY'S READINGS: Zechariah 8:20-23; Luke 9:51-56 (456). *"Every nationality, speaking different tongues, shall . . . say, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"*

Wednesday, Oct 04, 2023

Make mercy your song to all creation

The feast of Saint Francis of Assisi is a great date to reflect on one's care for creation, as we are often wont to think all that matters in the spiritual life is our connection to God and other humans. The great Franciscan founder showed us by his life, including preaching to the creatures of the air and the field, that all of creation is listening to hear what we have to say. Is our

message that of compassion and prudence, or rather convenience and the "throwaway culture"? Perhaps God himself is choosing to lend an ear by means of all God's creatures, great and small.

MEMORIAL OF FRANCIS OF ASSISI

TODAY'S READINGS: Nehemiah 2:1-8; Luke 9:57-62 (457). *"Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head."*

Thursday, Oct 05, 2023

Mercy prevails

Saint Faustina Kowalska is one of a long list of saints who held low status but whose intense relationship with God fueled a power that gained attention. A peasant who became a nun assigned low-level jobs, Faustina's mystical visions of Jesus—at first doubted by church authorities—eventually were embraced widely. They are the foundation of Divine Mercy Sunday, characterized by an image of Jesus with rays of mercy emanating from his heart. Faustina's focus on God's mercy is a message that helped her native Poland through harrowing years of war and repressive government, and it continues to inspire. Commit yourself to an act of mercy today.

MEMORIAL OF FAUSTINA KOWALSKA, RELIGIOUS

TODAY'S READINGS: Nehemiah 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12; Luke 10:1-12 (458). *"Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.'"*

Friday, Oct 06, 2023

Leading indicators

The stories of the founders of religious institutes most often begin with reluctant souls who feel unworthy to accept such an important task. But, luckily for the church and all blessed by their service and legacy, they eventually take up the mantle of leadership. The decision is not without its benefits, according to Saint Bruno, founder of the Carthusians: "God gives his athletes the reward they desire: a peace that the world does not know and joy in the Holy Spirit." And, for Blessed Marie Rose Durocher, founder of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, prayer is key to finding the answers you seek when unsure of next steps: "I suggest that you pray to Our Lord that He assist you and give you the direction you need." Gain strength from the witness of these two great leaders.

MEMORIALS OF BRUNO, PRIEST; BLESSED MARIE ROSE DUROCHER, RELIGIOUS

TODAY'S READINGS: Baruch 1:15-22; Luke 10:13-16 (459). *"Whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."*

Saturday, Oct 07, 2023

By any name

Today's celebration has seen a lot of changes over the centuries. It started out as the Feast of Our Lady of Victory to commemorate the Christian defeat of the Turkish army on this date in 1571. A few years later Pope Gregory XIII changed the name to the Feast of the Holy Rosary. Pope Clement XI in 1716 changed the date to August 5. Pius X changed it back to October 7. John XXIII changed the name to the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Rosary. Then Paul VI changed the name to Our Lady of the Rosary. However you name it, today's Joyful Mysteries invite you to celebrate Christ in your life.

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

TODAY'S READINGS: Baruch 4:5-12, 27-29; Luke 10:17-24 (460). *"I have given you the power 'to tread upon serpents' and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you."*

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



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26th Sunday in Ordinary Time - October 1, 2023

READINGS FOR THE WEEK



First Reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

Thus says the LORD:

You say, "The LORD's way is not fair!"

Hear now, house of Israel:

Is it my way that is unfair, or rather, are not your ways unfair? When someone virtuous turns away from virtue to commit iniquity, and dies, it is because of the iniquity he committed that he must die. But if he turns from the wickedness he has committed, and does what is right and just, he shall preserve his life; since he has turned away from all the sins that he has committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;
teach me your paths,
guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my savior.

R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.

Remember that your compassion, O LORD,
and your love are from of old.
The sins of my youth and my frailties
remember not; in your kindness remember me,
because of your goodness, O LORD.

R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.

Good and upright is the LORD;
thus he shows sinners the way.
He guides the humble to justice,
and teaches the humble his way.

R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians

Brothers and sisters:

If there is any encouragement in Christ,
any solace in love,
any participation in the Spirit,
any compassion and mercy,
complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the
same love, united in heart, thinking one thing.
Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory;
rather, humbly regard others as more important than
yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests,
but also for those of others.

Have in you the same attitude
that is also in Christ Jesus,
Who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
something to be grasped.
Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
coming in human likeness;
and found human in appearance,
he humbled himself,
becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
Because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
which is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

Gospel Acclamation

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord;
I know them, and they follow me.*

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 said to the chief priests and elders of the people:

"What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' He said in reply, 'I will not,' but afterwards changed his mind and went. The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, 'Yes, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did his father's will?"

They answered,

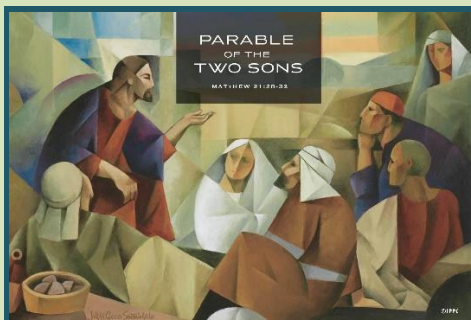
"The first."

Jesus said to them,

"Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



Transfiguration of the Lord Respect Life Group

The next meeting of the Respect Life Group will take place on Thursday, **October 5, 2023 at 6:30 pm in Sacred Heart Church's Library**. In addition, 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.

Hospice Talk:

Believing that all life is sacred from conception to natural death, the Respect Life Committee is offering an evening conversation on the topic of hospice. What is hospice? Does hospice accelerate the pace of death? What is the difference between hospice and palliative care? Can Catholics be on hospice? What happens when somebody is on hospice? What are advanced directives and why is it important? These questions and many more will be answered at our gathering. Please join us at Sacred Heart Meeting Room, October 24th at 7:00 p.m. **ALL ARE WELCOME.**

October is Respect Life Month:



"Radical solidarity compels us to come alongside vulnerable mothers in profound friendship, compassion, and support for both them and their preborn children. It requires us to address the fundamental challenges that lead an expectant mother to believe she is unable to welcome the child God has entrusted to her. We must do all we can to provide mothers, children, and families with the support they need to flourish. This cannot be accomplished by laws or policy alone, but requires the continual transformation of our own hearts."

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

Respect Life Reflection: "Radical Solidarity"
(respectlife.org/radical-solidarity-reflection)

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Freedom of Choice:

Miss Havisham in Dickens' Great Expectations could not change the past, so she made the choice to live in it. She sat at a long banquet table covered with cobwebs, nibbling mice, and rotted food, waiting for her husband-to-be. She wore a yellowed wedding dress as tarnished and torn as her view of life. While she held desperately to the past, the present was not negotiable. Living in the past with regrets and mistakes causes us to despair and lose hope. All the readings today encourage us to change from the harmful ways of the past and live in good emotional and spiritual health during the present.

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18:25–28

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 25:4–5, 6–7, 8–9

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1–11 [1–5]

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:28–32

Comment:

During the Babylonian exile, the prophet Ezekiel told God's people that they were responsible for their own actions. They did not accept their responsibility for their own behavior and blamed their separation from God on their ancestors. They made excuses for their behavior and blamed their problems on the sinfulness of the generations before them. Ezekiel challenged them to get in the present and take responsibility for their own actions, to do what they knew was right regardless of past events.

Paul's message to the Philippians also encouraged them to live obediently in the present. For the Philippians, they had the advantage of having Jesus as an example. They saw how fullness came to Jesus because he was humble and obedient before God. Jesus gave us the example of living God's law of love—to love one another more than ourselves.

Matthew asked the question about who would inherit the promises of God. Last week we discovered that we would inherit the Kingdom because of God's generosity. This week, the parable shows us how we will live with God because of choices we make and actions we take. When a father wanted his two sons to work in the field, one said "no," but later changed his mind and went to the field to work. The other son said he would go, but never did. The parable shows us how God calls us to change our lives from saying "no" to saying "yes" by our actions of repentance. It is far worse to be like the son who said "yes" but did nothing. To act this way would be like telling people that we are Christian and love God but not having our actions fit our words.

Reflection:

God gives us free will to choose. We can choose to say "yes," or we can choose to say "no." The most saintly among us will say "yes" right away and go to work in the field at once. Others of us say "no," but change our minds and hearts and try to live God's command to love one another. Still others of us say "yes" but do nothing. We are lazy, stubborn, or have a well-worked list of excuses for not showing our love.

By giving us free will, God shows us unconditional love. We are responsible for ourselves and our own actions, but with unconditional love God embraces us and our mistakes with mercy and pardon.

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