

The Roman Catholic Parishes of
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher
St. James the Apostle, Irwin
Sacred Heart, Goodrich

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

JANUARY 28-29, 2023

He began to teach them, saying

BLESSED

are the

POOR in **SPIRIT**

the **PEACEMAKERS**

the **MEEK**

the **MERCIFUL**

those who mourn

the **CLEAN** of **HEART**

they who hunger for **JUSTICE**

For theirs is the **KINGDOM** of

HEAVEN



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Weekend Masses:

St. Margaret Mary Sat. 5:00 pm Sun. 10:30 am

Sacred Heart Sun. 7:30 am

St. James Sun 9:00 am

Confessions:

St. Margaret Mary

Sat. 4:15 pm

Sacred Heart

Sun. 7:05-7:20 am

St. James

Sun 8:35-8:50 am

Church Mailing Address:

207 E. 5th Street

Herscher, IL 60941

Phone: 815-426-2550

Quotable: "The foundation of our way to God is to advance on the way of life with great patience, humility, poverty of spirit, and meekness. All these lead us to justice—and by justice, we mean the Lord himself." ~Macarius

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 4-5, 2023

Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, February 4 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, February 5 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, February 5 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, February 5 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron
Ushers	Dan Hoffman Roger Jensen Todd Datweiler Dave Emling	Daryl Ferris Kyle Ferris	Dave Ladehoff Dan Forsythe Cathy Jensen Jerry Ogrentz	Wayne Bisailon Joe Smolkovich Marko Smolkovich Corey Eich
Lector	Bobbi Buza	Darlene Cipcich	Carrie Abrassart	Steve Jacob
Servers	Xander Buza			Garrett Smolkovich
Greeters			Greeter – Dallas Ferris R. Leader – Joyce Ferris	The Wheelers

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, January 30 (SMM)

8:00 am +Tom Smolkovich (Dale/Marilyn Pfeiffer)

Tuesday, January 31(SH)

8:00 am +Leland Denault (Jackie Eberle)

Wednesday, February 1 (SJ)

8:00 am +Mark Benoit (His Family)

Friday, February 3 First Friday (SMM)

8:00 am +Joan Scanlon (Scott Frerichs)

Saturday, February 4 (SMM)

5:00 pm +Bill Fritz (John/Dawn Deany)
+Tom Lane (Mariann Lane)

Sunday, February 5

7:30 am (SH) +Verna Emling (Terri/Jerry Weakley)
9:00 am (SJ) +Dennis Bush (Cathy/Bruce Jensen)
+George Grosso (Cathy/Bruce Jensen)

10:30am (SMM) For All the Parish Family

A Look Ahead

Friday, Feb. 3—First Friday Mass & Adoration at SMM
Wednesday, Feb. 22—Ash Wednesday
Friday, Feb. 24—SMM Lenten Fish Fry



The next Knights of Columbus next Food for Families collection is February 4-5 at all three parishes. This is a great way to give to help those in need.
"For I was hungry and you gave me food..."
Matthew 25:35

Pastor— Fr. Ron Neitzke- 815-426-2550
Deacon – Ron Gagnon— rjgckg@aol.com
Home—815-933-4077
Parish Email – smm_sja_sh@yahoo.com
TriParish web page – www.triparishcatholics.org
Like us on Facebook triparishcatholic communities
Tri Parish Church office –Barb Riker 426-2550
Julie Bisailon 426-2550
Bulletin – Debbie Jensen - 426-2550
debjen04@gmail.com
Religious Education –
St. MM – Jill Fulton jfulton.stmm@gmail.com
St. James – Carolyn Levyclevystjames@gmail.com
Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015
Parish Nurse – Jackie Eberle – 815-421-4048
Prayer Line– SMM—Pat Wagner 815-592-0773
SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 Jdstreefarms@aol.com
St. James— Mary Offerman—602-670-8888 (call or text)

Question of the week:

At what times do you find it most difficult to be "poor in spirit"?

Collections Week of January 22, 2023

St. Margaret Mary—\$1,561 Latin America—\$339
St. James—\$1,202 Latin America—\$324.7
Sacred Heart—\$1,873 Latin America—\$348

Thank you for your generosity!

Parish News:

St. Margaret Mary—

St. James—

- We will be having our first winter meeting of the St. James CCW on Sunday, February 12th after mass. All are invited

Sacred Heart—

- For the week of January 28-29, the Blessed Virgin Mary candle burns in memory of Carson Cross. The St. Joseph candle burns in thanksgiving for answered prayers.

All Parishes:

- Adult Ed this week will be on Monday January 30th at St. James. The schedule for February is:

Tuesday Feb. 7th

Monday Feb. 13th

Monday Feb. 20th

Tuesday Feb. 28th.

All sessions in February will be held at St. Margaret Mary.

- Call or email the parish office to request your statement of donations to the parish for 2022.

TAX TIME

9 DAYS FOR LIFE

PRAY TO PROTECT HUMAN LIFE!

JANUARY 19-27

9 Days for Life is a novena for the protection of human life. Each day's intention is accompanied by a short reflection and suggested actions to help build a culture of life. Join today at www.9daysforlife.com!



Gospel Shorts What is the Price of Happiness?

Are you happy? Were you happy yesterday? When was the last time you were happy for a whole week? Last year's vacation in a condo on the beach? For most of us, unless we've recently survived a heart attack and are happy just to be alive, happiness is associated with certain people or circumstances or environments. We often mistakenly connect physical pleasure, emotional excitement, being in total control as lasting sources of happiness but often we realize that the price we end up paying is higher than we thought.

In our Gospel, our Lord offers an alternative pathway to happiness ... eight attitudes of the heart and spirit which result in a happiness that lasts regardless of externals. We call them The Beatitudes and they are spelled out in a progressive series of spiritual growth steps, each step being taken as the previous one is completed. Are you willing to consider a different kind of happiness than the one you're used to? The price is costly. It may cost you your whole self.



Eucharistic Adoration

Friday, Feb. 3 at St. Margaret Mary 8:30am—3:00 pm

"Every consecrated host is made to burn itself up with love in a human heart."

-St. John Vianney

Reflections Where Does God Live?

A little girl was standing with her grandfather by an old-fashioned open well. They had just lowered a bucket and had drawn some water to drink.

"Grandfather," asked the little girl, "where does God live?"

The old man picked up his little granddaughter and held her over the open well. "Look down into the well," he said, "and tell me what you see."

"I see a reflection of myself," said the little girl.

"And that's where God lives," said the grandfather. "He lives in you."

A Stewardship Moment Fourth Week in Ordinary Time Weekend of January 28-29, 2023

In today's Gospel, Jesus begins his Sermon on the Mount with a series of blessings, the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes are a summary of the fundamental attitude of a Christian steward. This speech sets the themes and tone for Christ's public ministry. He calls for a radical change in how we respond to the human condition. Good stewards understand that conversion is a lifelong process and trying to live the Beatitudes is fundamental to this process. Make it a point to reflect on this Gospel reading during the week. Identify the blessing you relate to the most. Which one is the most challenging for you?



Saint of the week: St. Blaise (Feb. 3) was a physician and later the bishop of Sebaste, Armenia. He lived in a cave on Mount Argeus. A healer of people and animals; according to legend, sick animals would come to him on their own for help but would never disturb him at prayer.

Agricola, governor of Cappadocia, came to Sebaste to persecute Christians. His huntsmen went into the forests of Argeus to find wild animals for the arena games and found many waiting outside Blaise's cave. Discovered in prayer, Blaise was arrested, and Agricola tried to get him to recant his faith. While in prison, Blaise ministered to and healed fellow prisoners, including saving a child who was choking on a fish bone; this led to the blessing of throats on Blaise's feast day.

Thrown into a lake to drown, Blaise stood on the surface and invited his persecutors to walk out and prove the power of their gods; they drowned. When he returned to land, he was martyred by being beaten, his flesh torn with wool combs (which led to his association with and patronage of those involved in the wool trade), and then beheading.

Blaise has been extremely popular for centuries in both the Eastern and Western Churches. In 1222 the *Council of Oxford* prohibited servile labor in England on his feast. He is one of the *Fourteen Holy Helpers*.

Other saint of the week: St. Ansgar (Feb. 3) was born to the French nobility. He became a Benedictine monk at Old Corbie Abbey in Picardy (in modern France) and New Corbie in Westphalia (in modern Germany). He studied under Saint Adelard of Corbie and Saint Paschasius Radbert. He accompanied the converted King Harold to Denmark when the exiled king returned home. He later became a missionary to Denmark and Sweden. In addition, he founded first Christian church in Sweden c.832. Ansgar was appointed the abbot of New Corbie c.834. Ansgar became the archbishop of Hamburg, Germany, ordained by Pope Gregory IV. He was named the papal legate to the Scandanavian countries. He established the first Christian school in Denmark, but was run out by pagans, and the school was burned to the ground. He campaigned against slavery. Later in life he was named the archbishop of Bremen, Germany. He converted Erik, King of Jutland. Known as a great preacher, a miracle worker, and greatly devoted to the poor and sick. Sadly, after his death most of his gains for the Church in the north were lost to resurgent paganism.



Humor

Moses

George W. Bush, in an airport lobby, noticed a man in a long flowing white robe with a long white beard and flowing white hair. The man had a staff in one hand and some stone tablets under the other arm.

George W. approached the man and inquired, "Aren't you Moses?" The man ignored George W. and stared at the ceiling.

George W. positioned himself more directly in the man's view and asked again, "Aren't you Moses?" The man continued to peruse the ceiling.

George W. tugged at the man's sleeve and asked once again, "Aren't you Moses?" The man finally responded in an irritated voice, "Yes I am."

George W. asked him why he was so uppity, and the man replied, "The last time I spoke to a Bush I had to spend forty years in the desert."

Help Socially Isolated Seniors!

Catholic Charities' Senior Companion Program (SCP) is looking for people 55 years and older who are interested in visiting with another senior who is homebound and living in Kankakee County. This is strictly a friendly visit; no homecare duties are involved. Volunteers who meet income eligibility guidelines will receive a tax-free hourly stipend and a mileage reimbursement for time spent with clients.

Senior Companion volunteers provide assistance and friendship to older adults who have difficulty with daily living tasks. This program helps seniors stay independent longer and provides respite to family caregivers. Senior Companion volunteers report better health and longevity having served the community. Are you ready to forge new relationships and make a significant difference in the lives of others?

If you are lonely and would be interested in receiving a companion, please feel free to reach out as well!

In Kankakee County, call Bry Williams at 815-933-7791 ext. 9928 or mail americorpsseniors@cc-doi.org. For more information about the programs and services provided by Catholic Charities. Visit catholiccharities.org

Questions Catholics Ask What should I believe about Hell?

Jean-Paul Sartre once claimed, "Hell is other people." But he was a philosopher, not a theologian. He also didn't know some of the heavenly people I do. Witty and notorious Oscar Wilde declared more objectively, "We are each our own devil, and we make this world our hell." Shakespeare seemed to agree with him in *The Tempest*: "Hell is empty, and all the devils are here." Civil War General William T. Sherman was briefest: "War is hell," while church father Saint John Chrysostom was perhaps the most provocative: "Hell is paved with priests' skulls."

So what's the church's official word on the subject? Hell is the "state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1033). That underscores that hell is a deliberate choice; no one falls into it by accident. Hell is realized immediately upon death for those who die mortally (fatally) sinful. The irrevocability of this decision is a "call to responsibility" and "to conversion" (CCC no. 1035-36) for the living. No one is predestined for condemnation, and it's not God's intent that anyone should perish in this way (CCC no. 1037).

What impresses me is that more folks concern themselves with hellish details than seek to learn about heaven. If hell unnerves us, there's an easy solution: Remain on the path of love. If hell is self-chosen alienation from God, then heaven is self-selected union. God is love, so stick with love and hell becomes literally a dead subject. Because God never rejects us but aims most passionately and personally at forgiving us, we alone can reject God and choose the suffering that is the fruit of sin and pavement of hell—priests' skulls notwithstanding.

For this reason Jesuit Father John Sachs calls hell an "anti-creation": not the world divinely engineered and ordained "good" from the start, made of the fabric of peace and plenty, but a realm of disorder, evil, anguish, and want. If we don't care to live in God's world, we're free to fashion another epitomized by God's absence as much as creation is charged with the grandeur of Sacred Presence.

Sachs cautions against imagining heaven and hell as equal-and-opposite attractions. The gospel presents hell as an ultimate possibility and heaven as an absolute reality. The apocalyptic language used to express these realms isn't a snapshot of their literal aspects but a means of conveying the seriousness of what we, ultimately, do with our freedom.

Scripture

• [Matthew 5:21-22, 29-30](#); [7:13-14](#); [10:28](#); [13:36-50](#); [25:31-46](#); [Mark 9:42-48](#); [Hebrews 9:27-28](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#); [1 John 3:14-16](#)

Get Fed, Catholic Snacks

Who is the patroness of the unborn?

"Am I not here, who am your Mother? Am I not your fountain of life?"



That's right—Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patroness of unborn babies.

Before Spain brought the Faith to Mexico in the 16th century, the Aztec religion had formed a culture of death in the native Mexican peoples. The "gods" required human blood to atone for offending them and to ward off their wrath. War and slaughter were a central part of their lives.

When the Holy Virgin appeared to Juan Diego, carrying within her the unborn God-man, she brought a culture of life to Mexico. Where missionary efforts had met with little success, she brought about **9 million conversions** to the Catholic faith and the devout adoration of the only true God. Because of this apparition, she has been named Patroness of the Americas.

In our own times, we have seen the Culture of Death rise again in America. When the Supreme Court ruled in favor of *Roe vs. Wade*, it created a loophole which was quickly monopolized. Pro-abortionists cried out that abortion was now legal, and for the next fifty years life has been held as cheaply in our culture as it was in the Aztec religion.

The Patroness of the Americas, however, has triumphed. Last year, the Supreme Court ended the wholesale "legal" abortion torrent: the first step in restoring respect and gratitude for Life—a Culture of Life—to America. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn and of the Americas, will continue to lead us in the defense of Life. We just have to be faithful.

As the battle for Life continues, take up *your* holy weapon and join in the fight. Fashioned of white jade and pale-hued agate and hilted with a silver St. Benedict Crucifix, this "Life Is Precious" Rosary fits comfortably and smoothly in your fingers. When you pray for the Unborn, the medal depicting the Madonna cradling her Child will remind you that the Blessed Mother is right there with you, praying for and protecting the vulnerable children.

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DIOCESAN FORTY HOURS DEVOTION NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL

In celebration of the National Eucharistic Revival year of the Diocese, everyone in Diocese is invited to spend some time in prayer at the Cathedral of St. Raymond Nonnatus in Joliet on February 8, 9, 10. There will be silent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the day and scheduled communal Prayer Services led by various Diocesan Parishes and Groups. Mass times and celebrants are listed below.

Wednesday, February 8

6:30am Very Rev. William Dewan, Celebrant

11am Led by Rev. Jeff Raths, OSA, St. Jude Church, New Lenox

2pm Led by the 8th Graders, Cathedral of St. Raymond School, Joliet

5pm Filipino Communities led by Deacon Gerrie Mempin, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Bolingbrook

8pm Hispanic Communities led by St. Andrew, Romeville, Rev. Eduardo Flores, Celebrant

Thursday, February 9

8am Rev. John Abulag, Celebrant

11am Led by Rev. Steven Borello, Diocesan Director of Vocations, St. Raphael Parish, Naperville

2pm Led by Very Rev. Christopher Groh, St. Bernard Parish & St. Mary Magdalene Parish, Joliet

5pm Special Needs Communities, led by Rev. John Abulag, Celebrant

8pm Polish Communities, led by Rev. Andrzej Maslej, S. Chr. Divine Mercy Parish, Lombard and Rev. Tomasz Sielicki, S. Chr., Holy Cross, Joliet, Celebrants

Friday, February 10

8am Most Reverend Ronald Hicks, Celebrant

11am Led by Diocesan Department of Catechesis & Evangelization, Blanchette Catholic Center, Crest Hill

2pm Led by Rev. Burke Masters, St. Isaac Jogues Parish, Hinsdale

5pm African American Community led by Sacred Heart Parish, Joliet Very Rev. William Dewan, Celebrant

8pm Closing of Forty Hours Devotion led by Most Reverend Ronald Hicks, Celebrant, prepared by Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, Darien

EVERYONE IN THE DIOCESE IS ENCOURAGED TO CONSIDER COMING TO THE CATHEDRAL DURING THESE THREE DAYS TO JOIN WITH OUR DIOCESAN CHURCH TO CELEBRATE A TIME OF SPIRITUAL DEVOTION BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AS WE CELEBRATE THE NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL. WHEN YOU COME TO THE CATHEDRAL PLEASE ENTER BY WAY OF THE FRONT AND NORTH DOORS.



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The Gospel in Everyday English

When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said:

"You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

"You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought.

"You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

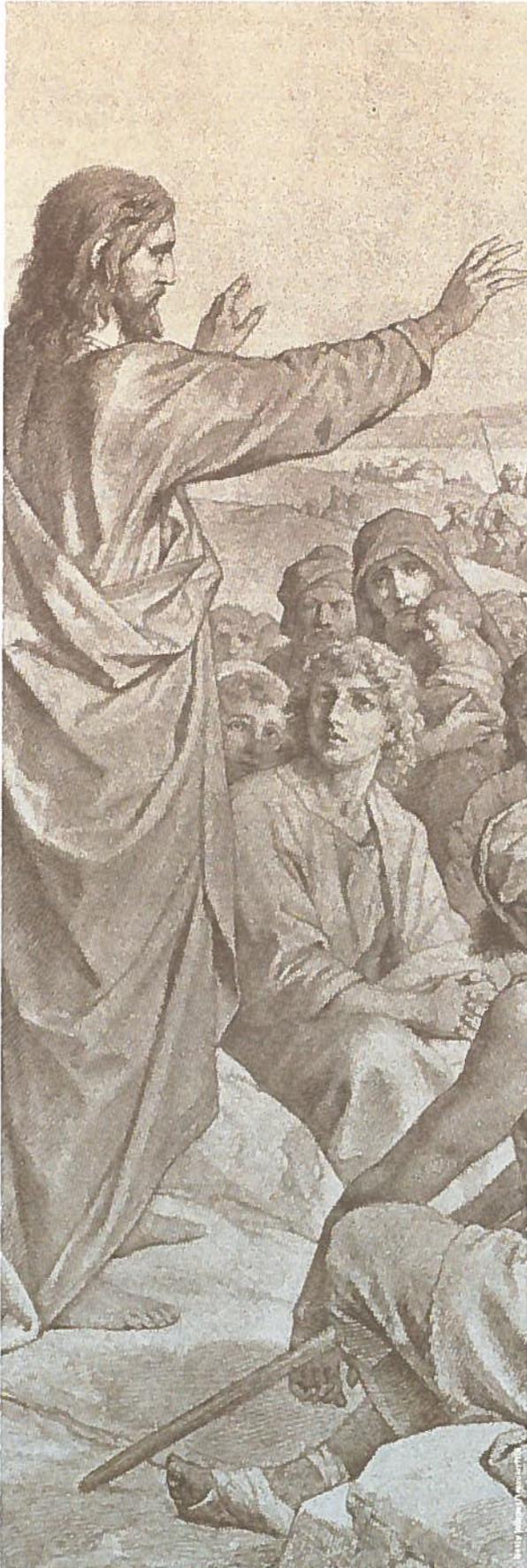
"You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full,' you find yourselves cared for.

"You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

"You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

"You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

"Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble."



January 29, 2023

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Zep 2:3; 3:12-13 | 1 Cor 1:26-31 | Mt 5:1-12a

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

I have a competitive streak. Whether it's guessing Wordle in one try, grabbing the last Doorbuster deal at Kohl's or snagging Boardwalk early in a game of Monopoly, I like to win. For this reason, the readings today especially challenge me. In a world that values success, wealth and "winning," today's readings turn things upside down when it comes to status and justice. In Zephaniah, God chooses the "humble and lowly." In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus lays out a road map to lasting happiness that bears little resemblance to what the world tells us, and even what our own instincts may tell us, about being "happy." I'll still buy Boardwalk at the first opportunity, but Jesus' words invite me to focus on seeking righteousness, and to be merciful and "clean of heart." They encourage me to seek the happiness that only Christ can give. Through prayer and reflection on these words, we can ask the Lord to transform our hearts and lives to align with what it truly means to be blessed.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Pope Francis has referred to the Eight Beatitudes as a kind of Christian "identity card." (General Audience, Jan. 2020) And he had a suggestion for those of us, like me, who love to listen to the Sermon on the Mount but may not be sure where to start when it comes to living it. His suggestion is simple: "There are eight Beatitudes, and it would be nice to learn them by heart and to repeat them in order to keep this law that Jesus gives us in our mind and in our hearts." Perhaps we can place each Beatitude on a sticky note by the mirror, incorporate them into our morning prayers, teach them to our children or discuss them with friends. Practice makes perfect, yes? As Pope Francis reminds us, "the Beatitudes always bring you to joy; they are the paths to reach joy."

STUDY Memorize the Eight Beatitudes. Learn about each one by reading the writings of Pope Francis or another theologian such as Bishop Robert Barron. Ask God to help you incorporate them into your daily life.

Sunday, Jan 29, 2023

Blessed are the children—meek and otherwise

Children come in all sizes, shapes, and colors. They possess abilities, talents, and interests, many of which may lie hidden for years to come. Not all young ones, to be sure, are properly described as meek. But it's certain that, one day, the children will inherit the land. Preparing them for this vital task is the job of every grownup in their lives. This week we celebrate Catholic schools, dedicated to assisting families in the education and formation of their children. Book learning is available at any school. Faith and character aren't always on the curriculum. Support our schools!

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Matthew 5:1-12a (70). *"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land."*

Monday, Jan 30, 2023

The only way they'll know you are a Christian

Mohandas Gandhi, who led India's campaign for independence from British rule and whose birthday is today, once said, "If it weren't for Christians, I'd be a Christian." Followers of all religions, including Gandhi's Hinduism, at times do reprehensible things that run completely counter to what those religions teach. As a member of a colonized people, Gandhi certainly saw the worst of what Christians are capable of. But his statement isn't entirely a rebuke—Christ spoke to his heart. Jesus told us that we will be recognized as his disciples by our love for one another. Ask yourself how well you represent your faith.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 11:32-40; Mark 5:1-20 (323). *"Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in his pity has done for you."*

Tuesday, Jan 31, 2023

A love that works

At the height of the Industrial Revolution, impoverished Italian boys were drawn to the city of Turin in search of factory work. But, for many reasons, they fell on hard times and were often jailed. Saint John Bosco helped them with lodging, education, vocational training, and just plain patience and loving care. He also protected young workers from unscrupulous employers by crafting signed apprenticeship agreements—the first real employment contracts used in Europe. He revolutionized the work of educators, too, writing: "Without confidence and love, there can be no true education. If you want to be loved ... you must love yourselves, and make your children feel that you love them."

MEMORIAL OF JOHN BOSCO, PRIEST, RELIGIOUS FOUNDER

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 12:1-4; Mark 5:21-43 (324). *"Consider how he endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart."*

Wednesday, Feb 01, 2023

May the force be with you

Faith gives us strength. It allows us to perform mighty deeds. But to be clear, as Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho explains, "Faith is not desire. Faith is will. Desires are things that need to be satisfied. Will is a force that changes everything around us." In God's realm,

where our faith resides, we are each whole and complete and nothing is impossible. Address today's challenges through the lens of faith.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15; Mark 6:1-6 (325). *"He was not able to perform any mighty deed there . . . He was amazed at their lack of faith."*

Thursday, Feb 02, 2023

Make a perfect offering of your life

Today's feast marks an ancient Jewish tradition in which the firstborn child was "consecrated to the Lord" by way of two sacrificial turtledoves or young pigeons offered at the Temple 40 days after birth. The mother, considered ritually unclean after giving birth, was also purified on this same day. But the visit of Mary and Joseph to present the infant Jesus is unique, marked by an outpouring of prophecy. Simon and Anna testify that a light has come into the world and that salvation is at hand. We honor the link to ancient tradition as we celebrate the Presentation today, but we also appreciate how Jesus not only fulfills but surpasses all the traditions of his time and place. Here at last is the perfect offering.

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

TODAY'S READINGS: Malachi 3:1-4; Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40 (524). *"The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him."*

Friday, Feb 03, 2023

Be a healing light

The historical details of Saint Blaise's fourth-century life in what is now modern-day Turkey are lost in the shroud of the centuries, but the tradition of his healing powers endures. The healing of throat diseases is what is most ascribed to him. When Blaise was imprisoned during a persecution of Christians, he apparently healed a choking boy with the aid of candles that lit his dark cell. On another level, the enduring tradition speaks to the ongoing need for healing that we all share. Whether it be a physical ailment or a wounded soul that needs tending, say a prayer today to Saint Blaise, the keeper of the flame.

MEMORIAL OF BLAISE, BISHOP, MARTYR

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 13:1-8; Mark 6:14-29 (327). *"The Lord is my light and my salvation. Your presence, O LORD, I seek."*

Saturday, Feb 04, 2023

Lift your voice in freedom's song

Today is the birthday of Rosa Parks, on the fourth day of Black History Month. Parks wrote: "I felt the Lord would give me the strength to endure whatever I had to face." When she refused to surrender her bus seat in 1955, she said her Christian faith told her "it was time for someone to stand up—or, in my case, sit down." Parks grew up in a devout family. Her own sweet dreams of freedom began with her mother singing old African-American spirituals that drew on biblical stories and psalms filled with cries of lament and hope for salvation. Tap into the strength of song as you play your part in the fight for justice. Choose a spiritual to pray with today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21; Mark 6:30-34 (328). *"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have."*

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



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