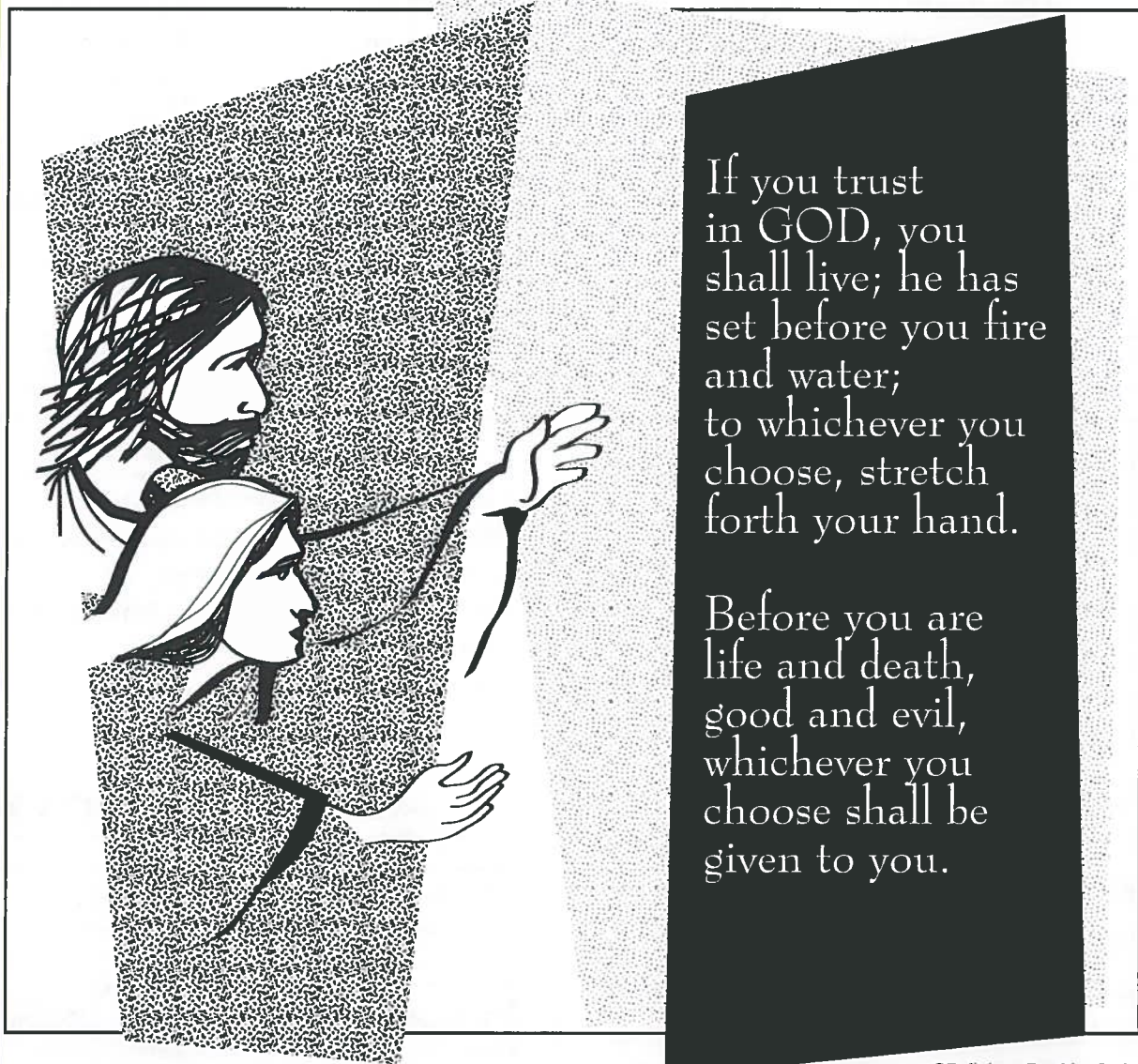


The Roman Catholic Parishes of
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher
St. James the Apostle, Irwin
Sacred Heart, Goodrich

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FEBRUARY 11-12, 2023



If you trust
in GOD, you
shall live; he has
set before you fire
and water;
to whichever you
choose, stretch
forth your hand.

Before you are
life and death,
good and evil,
whichever you
choose shall be
given to you.

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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 glory of Christianity is to conquer by forgiveness."*

—William Blake

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 18-19, 2023

Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, February 18 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, February 19 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, February 19 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, February 19 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron
Ushers	Gery Wright Todd Datweiler Dan Hoffman Gary Nelson	Daryl Ferris David Kirkpatrick	Jeff Martin Dallas Ferris Dan Forsythe Jerry Ogrentz	Jeremy Wolles Larry Wolles Kim Smicker Corey Eich
Lector	Dave Emling	Alicia Kirkpatrick	Dave Ladehoff	Dana Masching
Servers				Bella Eich
Greeters			Greeter — C. Forsythe R. Leader — Rita Thiesen	Kim Smicker Mary McDonald

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, February 13 (SMM)

8:00 am +Bob Deany (Dittrich Family)

Tuesday, February 14 (SH)

8:00 am +George Grosso (Bud/Gen Caise)

Wednesday, February 15 (SJ)

8:00 am +Karen Batdorf (The Hertz Family)

Friday, February 17 (SMM)

8:00 am +Denise Jepsen Blake (Her Family)

Saturday, February 18

5:00 pm For All the Parish Family

Sunday, February 19

7:30 am (SH) +Dolores O'Connor (Joe/Rhonda Berns)

9:00 am (SJ) +Tom & Nina Smolkovich (Steve/Lisa Burton)

10:30am (SMM) +Mike Halpin (John Smolkovich Family)

+John Koerner (Sheila Koerner)

Question of the week:

When do the temptations of anger, lust, or deceit affect what I say or do? How can I build the habit of treating everyone else with honesty, mercy, and love?

A Look Ahead

Wednesday, Feb. 22—Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, Feb 22— 2nd Collection Friday, Feb. 24—
SMM Lenten Fish Fry 4:30—7 pm

March 4-5—Knights of Columbus Family Food Drive

March 6,7,8—Parish Mission



INSTRUCT ME IN YOUR WAYS, O LORD

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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](https://www.facebook.com/triparishcatholiccommunities)

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)

Collections Week of February 5, 2023

St. Margaret Mary—\$1,926

St. James—\$3,115

Sacred Heart—\$878

Thank you for your generosity!

Gospel Shorts On Leaving Your Gift at the Altar

When Jesus taught, many people were afraid he was throwing out the laws that Moses had given, and replacing them with his own. They were afraid he was relaxing the law or disregarding it. Jesus' response to his critics was swift and strong. "I haven't come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it." Not a word in the law will be changed. I don't even want a dot removed from an i or a cross taken from a t. Rather than relax the law, Jesus made it more difficult, because he didn't deal with just the letter of the law, but with the heart of law.



Give blood.
Give life. ♥

Knights of Columbus Blood Drive

Tuesday, February 28

3pm—7 pm

at St. James Parish Hall

For appointments call or text

Joe Petersen 815-861-9634

Mike Hertz 815-822-0474

Appointments preferred

A Stewardship Moment Sixth Week in Ordinary Time Weekend of February 11-12, 2023

In today's Gospel, part of his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus does not speak of replacing the law of the Old Testament. He goes beyond it. He obliges his followers to work at being holier than even the strictest of Pharisees. But the work is not accomplished by following a religious "law", it requires growing in love for other human beings. Followers of Jesus know they are required to be good stewards of others. In what way will you exercise good stewardship over other people this week?



Please pray for the repose of the soul of

+James Jepsen

husband of Cathy Jepsen

May he and all the faithful departed rest in eternal peace.

Our sincere sympathy to his family and friends.

Our Community Quilters have had a very busy 2022!

This past year they have lovingly provided our community with:

28 baby quilts, 44 burp cloths, 9 pillowcases,
and 1 receiving blanket (Kankakee and Coal
City Pregnancy Resource Center)

53 Christmas Stockings (Bourbonnais Terrace)

1 quilt (family - victims of a house fire)



Parish News:

St. Margaret Mary—

- Come celebrate Chocolate Month with us at our CCW meeting on Feb. 21 at 7 pm and enjoy a tasting of several different chocolates!
- Our Night in Italy will be held on March 16. Watch the
- bulletin for more information in the next few weeks.

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—

- Sacred Heart C.C.W. will have our meeting in the church hall February 14th at 7 pm. Denise Wenzelman is host. All ladies of the parish over 18 yrs. are welcome.

All Parishes:

- Adult Education Classes
The schedule for February is:

Monday Feb. 13th

Monday Feb. 20th

Tuesday Feb. 28th.

All sessions in February will be held at St.

Margaret Mary.

- St. Margaret Mary's Men's Club Annual Fish Fry will be held on Friday, Feb. 24 at the Herscher Legion Hall from 4:30—7:00pm
- Call or email the parish office to request your statement of donations to the parish for 2022.



Reflections A Christian Home

A Christian home, if it is to endure, has to be built according to God's building code.

The blueprint is the Bible, the foundation is Jesus Christ, and the superstructure is the love and understanding that make up the everyday relationship.

The Bible is full of practical solutions to home problems, and when you begin to apply it, you and your character begin to change.

♥ Happy Valentines Day ♥

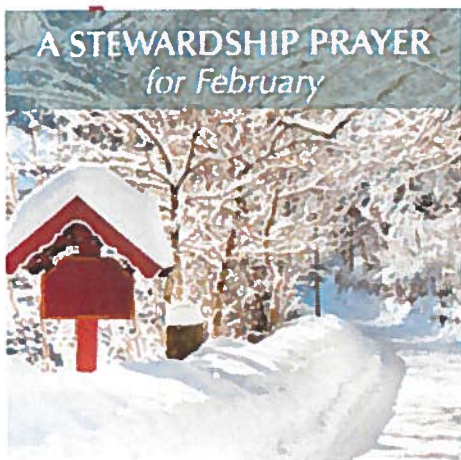
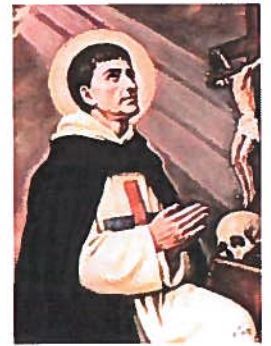
Saint of the week: St. Martinian (Feb. 13) was a hermit from age 18 and was known as a miracle worker. There are a couple of stories attached to Martinian; in them the line between fact and a good story probably blurs a little.



Legend says that one day a miserable, bedraggled woman named Zoe showed at his door requesting a traveller's hospitality. He took her in, but her true colors soon showed as she cleaned up and showed herself to be a beautiful woman who tried to seduce Martinian. When he realized how tempted he was, he built a fire and put his feet in it; the pain, as you might imagine, was excruciating. Martinian said, "If I cannot stand this fire, how will I tolerate the fires of Hell?" He counseled her while she treated his wounds, converted her, and she became a nun in Bethlehem.

To save himself from his own weakness, the saint moved to a large rock surrounded by the sea. There he lived on bread and water brought to him by a Christian sailor who visited three times a year. After six years living exposed on the rock, he had a visitor – a young woman who washed up on the rock after her ship had gone down at sea. Before she could speak, he gave her all his provisions, promised to send his friend the sailor to rescue her when he returned, then threw himself into the sea. He washed up on shore, and two months later had the girl rescued. He then spent the rest of his days in Athens.

Other saint of the week: St. Juan Garcia Lopez-Rico (Feb. 14) was the fifth of eight children born to Xixón and Isabel García Marcos López-Rico; three of his siblings entered religious orders. As a child he was so drawn to follow the example of the saints that he nearly starved himself and endangered his health trying to live an ascetic life. At the age of 15 he met Saint Teresa of Avila which left him with a fascination with the Carmelites. He studied with the Carmelites in Almodóvar, Spain, and then at seminaries in Baeza and Toledo. Juan joined the Trinitarians on June 28, 1580, and made his profession on June 29, 1581. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1585. On August 20, 1599 he received approval from Pope Clement VIII to begin a reformation of the Trinitarians; he based his efforts on the example of Saint Teresa of Avila and the original Rule of the Order which required six hours of prayer a day. In addition to reforming existing houses, he founded more monasteries that followed this new, invigorated form. Juan was a prolific writer on theology.



A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER
for February

Heavenly Father,
You made the light
to shine out of darkness,
a light that reveals the goodness
of all you have created.

*Your Son tells us
we are the light of the world.
It is a dark world in desperate need
of your infinite love and mercy.*

*Help us to be good stewards
of the light you shine in our hearts
so that through this precious gift,
we too may reveal your handiwork*

*And by the power of Your Spirit,
show us how to shine our light before others,
that they may see our good deeds
and glorify you.*

*We pray this in the name of Christ Jesus,
your Son, who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever.*

Amen.

Catholic Snacks, Get Fed,

What is the incredible story of Elisabeth and Felix Leseur?

He was a staunch atheist and she was a devout Catholic, but Elisabeth never ceased praying for union with her husband in God and His Church.

Élisabeth and Felix were young and very much in love—more in love with each other than with their faith. When Felix told his soon-to-be-bridal that he was practicing the Faith only to keep up appearances, she didn't mind in the least. Neither of them expected any tension to arise from the situation.



After their marriage in 1889, however, the young couple gradually grew apart in their spiritual lives. Felix became increasingly atheistic; Élisabeth, after great confusion, was inspired to learn about her faith. The more she learned, the more devout she became. Meanwhile, Felix filled the house with atheistic books. Husband and wife soon clashed.

Finally Élisabeth decided that the only argument that could win Felix back to the Church was intense and undistracted prayer.

For the next fifteen years, she dedicated her life to prayer for her husband's conversion. She recorded her spiritual journey secretly in a diary. Around the same time, her health crumbled and she lived in intense physical suffering.

Just before her death, she wrote a note to Felix, saying, "In 1905 I begged Almighty God to send me sufferings with which to pay the price of your soul. The day I die, that price will be paid. There is no greater love to be found in a woman than when she gives her life for her husband."

Élisabeth passed away in 1914 at the age of forty-eight.

When Felix found her diary, his own spiritual journey began. In 1917 he returned to the Faith. Six years later, he was ordained a Dominican priest.

Élisabeth persevered in her faith with humility and fervent devotion despite hostility and ridicule from her beloved husband.

Living the Faith well can be difficult even among those who share the same beliefs: so let Élisabeth's example be an encouragement to you in your everyday struggle towards a deep and purposeful spiritual life. [*The Secret Diary of Élisabeth Leseur*](#) contains the spiritual writings of this holy woman as she navigated the difficult waters of adhering to God while maintaining a harmonious marriage.

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Questions Catholics Ask

Is the Mass a "holy sacrifice" or a "celebration"—or both?

When I celebrate, I don't think of it as a sacrifice, and vice versa. Ancient religious sacrifices, however, were both: part obligatory expense (which God requires), part festival (we're right with God again!). The use of the phrase the "holy sacrifice of the Mass" is rooted in this earlier understanding.

Biblically, Jewish shrine and temple worship could be a messy affair. Because the covenant with God involved blood (circumcision, Abraham's nocturnal pact in Genesis 15, ritual offerings of animals), the word sacrifice was not misused. But when people gather together, it's time to party, and the good news at these events far outweighed the bad for participants. Personal and communal sin was expiated: We're back in the black on God's books. What better reason to eat, drink, and be merry?

By the time of Jesus, however, late Judaism had already begun to steer away from the idea that ritual sacrifice alone, or even primarily, was what God wanted. Obedience and fidelity could be symbolized by the ritual moment but should not originate or end there. The "sacrifice of praise" was pleasing to God, as were hearts uplifted and whole lives rendered to God's service.

We might see these developments as a maturing of the spiritual life; actually, they were quite practical for a community that had known migrations, captivity, exile, and oppression. Some generations had no access to the Temple. The best they could do was raise hands, hearts, and voices to God.

Continued pg. 6

Questions...continued

The gospels tell us Jesus saw his own looming fate as an act of obedience and giving glory to God. His blood would be poured out for the sins of many, and he was “lifted up” as an offering on the cross. When Saint Paul talks about the Eucharist, he doesn’t hesitate to use sacrificial language familiar to his Jewish audience. By the 3rd century the church fathers regularly promoted the activity of the Mass as a joint sacrifice of Christ and his body, the church.

Later Protestant reformers would reject sacrificial language applied to the Eucharist because it seemed to diminish the unique action of Jesus on the cross. The Roman Catholic Council of Trent in 1562 took pains both to affirm that the Eucharist is the “unbloody” sacrifice of that same Jesus and to clarify that his self-offering is not repeated but “made present” in every Eucharist. What better reason to celebrate?

Scripture

• [Mark 14:22-24](#); [Luke 22:19-20](#); [John 6:51](#); [1 Corinthians 5:7-8](#); [10:14-22](#); [11:23-26](#)

Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

“Don’t suppose for a minute that I have come to demolish the scriptures—either God’s Law or the Prophets. I’m not here to demolish but to complete. I am going to put it all together, pull it all together in a vast panorama. God’s Law is more real and lasting than the stars in the sky and the ground at your feet. Long after stars burn out and earth wears out, God’s Law will be alive and working.

“Trivialize even the smallest item in God’s Law and you will only have trivialized yourself. But take it seriously, show the way for others, and you will find honor in the kingdom. Unless you do far better than the Pharisees in the matters of right living, you won’t know the first thing about entering the kingdom.

“You’re familiar with the command to the ancients, ‘Do not murder.’ I’m telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder. Carelessly call a brother ‘idiot!’ and you just might find yourself hauled into court. Thoughtlessly yell ‘stupid!’ at a sister and you are on the brink of hellfire. The simple moral fact is that words kill.

“This is how I want you to conduct yourself in these matters. If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God.

“Or say you’re out on the street and an old enemy accosts you. Don’t lose a minute. Make the first move; make things right with him. After all, if you leave the first move to him, knowing his track record, you’re likely to end up in court, maybe even jail. If that happens, you won’t get out without a stiff fine.

“You know the next commandment pretty well, too: ‘Don’t go to bed with another’s spouse.’ But don’t think you’ve preserved your virtue simply by staying out of bed. Your heart can be corrupted by lust even quicker than your body. Those leering looks you think nobody notices—they also corrupt.

“Let’s not pretend this is easier than it really is. If you want to live a morally pure life, here’s what you have to do: You have to blind your right eye the moment you catch it in a lustful leer. You have to choose to live one-eyed or else be dumped on a moral trash pile. And you have to chop off your right hand the moment you notice it raised threateningly. Better a bloody stump than your entire being discarded for good in the dump.

“Remember the scripture that says, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him do it legally, giving her divorce papers and her legal rights?’ Too many of you are using that as a cover for selfishness and whim, pretending to be righteous just because you are ‘legal.’ Please, no more pretending. If you divorce your wife, you’re responsible for making her an adulteress (unless she has already made herself that by sexual promiscuity). And if you marry such a divorced adulteress, you’re automatically an adulterer yourself. You can’t use legal cover to mask a moral failure.

“And don’t say anything you don’t mean. This counsel is embedded deep in our traditions. You only make things worse when you lay down a smoke screen of pious talk, saying, ‘I’ll pray for you,’ and never doing it, or saying, ‘God be with you,’ and not meaning it. You don’t make your words true by embellishing them with religious lace. In making your speech sound more religious, it becomes less true. Just say ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ When you manipulate words to get your own way, you go wrong.”
(from Matthew 5).



February 12, 2023

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sir 15:15-20 | 1 Cor 2:6-10 | Mt 5:17-37

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

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

Just the other day some of my friends agreed on a new way to approach the new year: Select one word, a kind of mantra for 2023. Ironically, even though I am indecisive to a fault, I had no trouble deciding on mine: “Choose.” I often get stuck, whether it’s deciding which online clothing purchases to return, what to order on the menu ... and don’t get me started on major life decisions. Today’s reading from Sirach reminds us of the choice that matters most: If we *choose* to keep the commandments, they will save us. “Before man are life and death, good and evil, whichever he chooses shall be given him.” We are well into 2023, but it bears reminding that each day we have an opportunity to choose anew: To follow God’s law, fulfilled in the words and example of Jesus. He will show us the way. “If you trust in God, you too shall live.”

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

We’ve probably all heard the term “quiet quitting” by now. It’s a workplace phenomenon where employees do the bare minimum rather than going above and beyond. I thought of that phrase when reading Matthew’s Gospel today. How many of us Christians have “quietly quit,” doing the minimum required – going to Mass on Sunday, being faithful to our spouse, not resorting to violence when we get angry with someone. Jesus challenges us to go above and beyond the Ten Commandments. You shall not kill, but you should not stay angry either. You shall not commit adultery, but you shall also love your spouse with your whole heart. Today’s readings challenge us to rediscover God’s law and challenge ourselves to go “above and beyond” in our daily lives.

PRAY Pray today’s psalm (119): “Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!” How might you specifically follow the law of the Lord just a little bit better, or above and beyond, today? Each day?

Sunday, Feb 12, 2023

Create a genuine love story

No one ever said relationships were easy. Commitments, whether in marriage, religious life, or elsewhere, take spiritual insight to discern, patience to maintain, time to mature, and a whole lot of love to keep the engine moving on the tracks. Today's celebration of World Marriage Day is meant to support the development of a culture of life and love within our most fundamental relationships. As Pope Francis declared in *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love): "The welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and that of the church." Take the journey to joy and love. Work to make each relationship life-giving.

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 15:15-20; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Matthew 5:17-37 (76). "We speak a wisdom to those who are mature, not a wisdom of this age."

Monday, Feb 13, 2023

Make a petition, not a deal

It can be tempting, especially when we're desperate, to try to bargain with God: "If you do this one thing for me, I'll quit a bad habit forever and never miss Mass again." But that's not how our relationship with God works. For starters, Jesus told us not to bargain, but to simply ask for what we need (Matthew 7:7-11). God already knows what we need better than we do but wants us to ask anyway, persistently even—because a willingness to be vulnerable and share intimacy are central to any healthy relationship. For that reason, petitionary prayer isn't always easy. Open up with your longings and offer God your trust, rather than a deal.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 4:1-15, 25; Mark 8:11-13 (335). "Amen, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."

Tuesday, Feb 14, 2023

Speak the language of love

More than 1,000 years before Vatican II—with its directive to translate the Latin liturgy into the vernacular—two missionary siblings, Cyril and Methodius, got the blessing of their pope to do the same for the Slavic people. In doing so, they created the Cyrillic alphabet. And as Pope John Paul II noted, they impacted not only the "history of the church, but also the civil and the political history of a great part of the European continent. . . . Cyril and Methodius [are] not only the apostles of the Slavic peoples but also the fathers of their culture." On this Valentine's Day, how can you translate love into your vernacular?

MEMORIAL OF CYRIL, MONK, AND METHODIUS, BISHOP

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10; Mark 8:14-21 (336). "Do you not yet understand or comprehend? Are your hearts hardened?"

Wednesday, Feb 15, 2023

A pioneer priest who broke a color barrier

On this day in 1880, Augustus Tolton departed the United States on a holy mission: to enter a Catholic seminary as an African American. After several years of trying to become a priest stateside and experiencing rejection due to racism, Tolton's friends and allies successfully arranged for his passage to study at the Urban College in Rome, where he was ordained as the world's first openly African-American Catholic priest in 1886. He would return to his home state of Illinois, eventually settling in Chicago

where he founded the city's first black parish. He died of heat stroke in 1897 at the young age of 43 and has since been on the path to sainthood. In these times of continuing anti-black discrimination, may we look to his witness for hope and sustenance. Venerable Father Tolton, pray for us!

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 8:6-13, 20-22; Mark 22-26 (337). "My vows to the LORD I will pay in the presence of all his people. Precious in the eyes of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones."

Thursday, Feb 16, 2023

Take the path of Saint Francis

Christian theology has often encouraged human domination over creation. Saint Francis of Assisi had another view, one that has become more prominent in the church as the climate crisis intensifies. Franciscan Sister Rose Dowling expresses one facet of it: "The Earth with which we are so intimate is our primary teacher about who God is and how God wants to relate with us. . . . I see a God who has set into being a creation that continues to grow, evolve, become more conscious, become more complex. I see that as a human I, like the rest of creation, have the potential to grow and become *more* . . ." How will you become more conscious of all of creation today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 9:1-13; Mark 8:27-33 (338). "Peter said to him in reply, 'You are the Christ.'"

Friday, Feb 17, 2023

To Mary, in times of sorrow

The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order were 13th-century Florentine cloth merchants who banded together in prayer, solace, and community during politically tumultuous times. From the beginning, the Servites dedicated themselves to Mary, the Sorrowful Mother. Today their mission is to "gather in fraternal communion to be with those suffering and sorrowful." The Servites developed the three most common devotions to Our Lady of Sorrows, namely the Scapular of the Seven Dolours of Mary, the Novena to Our Sorrowful Mother, and the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows. In the closing prayer of the Rosary chaplet, we say, "Pray for us, O most sorrowful Virgin. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ." That is certainly a prayer to remember as we face each day's trials.

MEMORIAL OF THE SEVEN HOLY FOUNDERS OF THE SERVITE ORDER

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 11:1-9; Mark 8:34—9:1 (339). "Whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it."

Saturday, Feb 18, 2023

Good to be here

Were you ever so enamored of something that you just wanted it to last forever? That's what Peter was experiencing on the Mount of Transfiguration. But Jesus and his inner circle had to move on. They had to come down the mountain. There was more that needed to be done, people who needed to be served. In his 1967 encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples), Pope Paul VI wrote, "Genuine progress . . . consists in an economic order designed for the welfare of the human person, where the daily bread that each [one] receives reflects the glow of love and the helping hand of God." Pray that we become enamored by justice and help transfigure the world in Jesus' image!

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 11:1-7; Mark 9:2-13 (340). "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents."

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



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