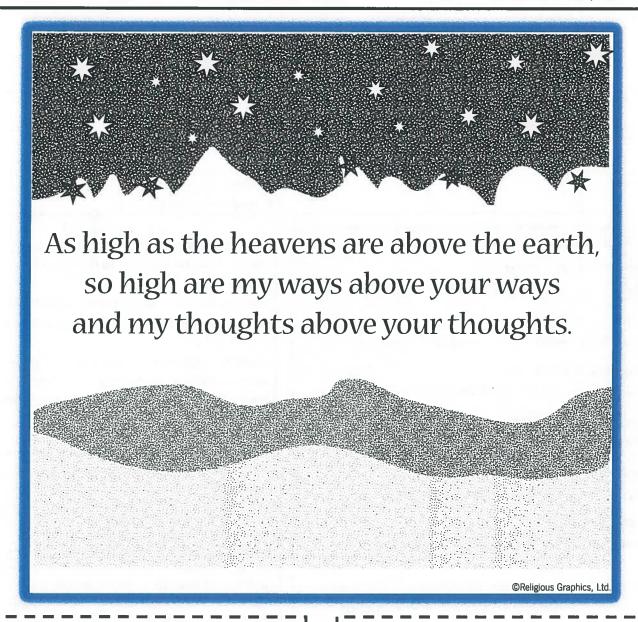
The Roman Catholic Parishes of St. Margaret Mary, Herscher St. James the Apostle, Irwin Sacred Heart, Goodrich

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SEPTEMBER 23-24, 2023



Weekend Masses:

St. Margaret Mary

Sat. 5:00 pm Sun. 10:30 am

Sacred Heart

Sun. 7:30 am 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: "Our sins are nothing but a grain of sand alongside the great mountain of the mercy of God."

—Saint John Vianney

October 1, 2023		26th Sunday in Ordinary Time		
Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, September 30 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, October 1 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, October 1 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, October 1 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron
Ushers	Dave Emling Dan Hoffman Roger Jensen Gery Wright	Kyle Ferris Daryl Ferris	Dallas Ferris Dave Ladehoff Dan Forsythe Cathy Jensen	Joe Smolkovich Marko Smolkovich Erik Wheeler Corinn Wheeler
Lector	Wayne Bisaillon	Rhonda Berns	Carrie Abrassart	Dana Masching
Servers				Caroline Fulton
Greeters			Greeter- Jerry Ogrentz R. Leader-Joyce Ferris	Stacy Powers

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, Sept. 25 (SMM)

8:00 am +Bob & Rita Deany (Jackie Eberle)

Tuesday, Sept. 26 (SH)

8:00 am (SH) +Dick Fitch (Jerry/Terri Weakley)

Wednesday, Sept. 27 (SJ)

8:00 am +Dick Fitch (Dallas/Joyce Ferris)

Friday, Sept. 29 (SMM)

8:00 am +Leland Denault (Julie Splear)

Saturday, Sept. 30 (SMM)

5:00 pm For All the Parish Family

Sunday, October 1

7:30 am +Joann Anderson (Jackie Cross)

+Ron Meli (Kathy Meli)

9:00 am (SJ) +Joan Smith (Tom/Maureen O'Connor)

+Virginia Fritz (Jeyy/Jolene Ogrentz)

10:30am (SMM) +Donna Ruder (Bev/Tom Buckley)

+Harold Fournier (Marrianne Heinzl)

Questions of the week:

How can I prioritize generosity over fairness in how I regard and treat others?

A Look Ahead

Sunday, Sept. 24—Religious Ed classes begin at all three parishes

Saturday, Sept. 30—Blessing of the Police Squads 12pm **Sunday, October 1**—SH CCW Bake Sale at Bonfield

8am—11:30 am

Saturday, October 14—Rosary Rally 12:00 pm at SMM

Saturday, October 14—Blessing of the Pets SMM 1 pm

Sunday, October 22—St. James Donut Sunday after Mass

November 13-15—Parish Mission

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 – <u>www.triparishcatholics.org</u>
Like us on Facebook triparishcatholic communities

Tri Parish Church office -Barb Riker 426-2550

Julie Bisaillon 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 Sept. 16-17, 2023

St. Margaret Mary—\$1,766 St. James—\$1,356 Sacred Heart—\$617

Thank you for your generosity!

Gospel Shorts The Rating Game

The equality of God's grace can be a two-edged sword. Those who think they are undeserving get more than they expected; those who believe they are more deserving receive less than anticipated. In the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, the laborers who spent twelve hours in the vineyard got a denarius. And those who worked only one hour also got a denarius. Where's the fairness in that?

Jesus was attempting to teach us that because we are all equal before God, no one is graded, or rated, or considered more valuable. No one gets ahead of the rest. There aren't four—star Christians or one—star Christians. We are men and women and children accepted into God's great love.

Reflection

Three important ingredients for effective prayer are:

- 1. You must pray with **HUMILITY**. God does not listen to the voice of the proud—when you pray, remember your own past infidelities—Realizing what you are, beg the help you need from the mercy of God.
- 2. You must pray with **CONFIDENCE.** Trust in the mercy of God and believe that if you pray, you will receive the grace you need.
- 3. You must pray with **PERSEVERANCE**. You must continue to ask for the grace you need—until you receive the favorable sentence of eternal life.



Eucharistic Adoration
Friday, October 6 at Sacred Heart 8:30am—
3:00 pm It will conclude with
Benediction at 3:00 pm

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

-St. John Vianney

A Stewardship Moment 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 23-24, 2023

From an early age, we tend to distort the concept of "fairness":
"I am good. I deserve good things. I am not receiving good
things. Something must be wrong. Who's going to fix it?" We
also know the age-old expression: "Who ever said life was fair?"
Jesus knew this expression when he offered his parable in today's Gospel reading. Christian stewards acknowledge, with humility, that they receive good things from the Lord in abundance; even if these gifts are not the ones they think they need
when they need them. Consider which servants you identify
with most in the Gospel reading, the ones who demand
"fairness", or that final servant who, seemingly, deserves the
least.

Parish News:

St. Margaret Mary-

St. James-

Sacred Heart-

- Thank you for your generous and thoughtful gift. May God's blessing be upon you all. Deacon Ron
- The Fall Cash Bash tickets are available before and after Mass and from any of the members of the Church Council.

All Parishes-

- Don't forget our Blessing of the Squads will be held Sept. 30.
 at SMM. If you are attending, please bring your lawn chairs.
- Adult Education—Classes will begin on Wednesday, September 27 at St. Margaret Mary.
- Be on the lookout for The Boxes of Joy at all three parishes coming soon. Filling a box for a needy child is a great way to kick off the holiday giving season.

The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

"God's kingdom is like an estate manager who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. They agreed on a wage of a dollar a day, and went to work.

"Later, about nine o'clock, the manager saw some other men hanging around the town square unemployed. He told them to go to work in his vineyard and he would pay them a fair wage. They went.

"He did the same thing at noon, and again at three o'clock. At five o'clock he went back and found still others standing around. He said, 'Why are you standing around all day doing nothing?'

"They said, 'Because no one hired us.'

"He told them to go to work in his vineyard.

"When the day's work was over, the owner of the vineyard instructed his foreman, 'Call the workers in and pay them their wages. Start with the last hired and go on to the first.'

"Those hired at five o'clock came up and were each given a dollar. When those who were hired first saw that, they assumed they would get far more. But they got the same, each of them one dollar. Taking the dollar, they groused angrily to the manager, 'These last workers put in only one easy hour, and you just made them equal to us, who slaved all day under a scorching sun.'

"He replied to the one speaking for the rest, 'Friend, I haven't been unfair. We agreed on the wage of a dollar, didn't we? So take it and go. I decided to give to the one who came last the same as you. Can't I do what I want with my own money? Are you going to get stingy because I am generous?'

"Here it is again, the Great Reversal: many of the first ending up last, and the last first" (from Matthew 20).

From the Pastor's Pen

Saint of the week: St. Wenceslaus of Bohemia (Sept. 28) was the son of Vratislav I, Duke of Bohemia, whose family had been converted by Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius and Drahomira, daughter of a pagan chief, who was baptized on her wedding day, but who apparently never seriously took to the faith. He was also the grandson and student of Saint Ludmilla. He became the Duke of Bohemia, ascending to power when his father was killed during a pagan backlash against Christianity, which he fought against with prayer and patience. Wenceslaus was murdered by his brother Boleslaus at the door of a church; killed for political reasons, but normally listed as a martyr since the politics arose from his faith. Miracles have been reported at his tomb. He is the subject of the Christmas carol *Good King Wenceslas*.





Obscure saints of the week: St.Chariton of Palestine (Sept. 28) was a hermit in the Kidron Valley near Jericho. His reputation for holiness attracted so many would-be spiritual students that he retreated to the desert of Jericho. He founded the Souka Abbey at Wadi Chareitun near Bethlehem, Palestine, and served as its first abbot; he founded several houses in the desert of Judea. He was known for spending his days in manual labor and prayer, fasting till after sunset, and even then, eating little and plainly.

Catholic Snacks, Get Fed

Why do Catholics confess their sins to a priest? Why can't I just confess my sins directly to God?

The first and best answer to this question is: because Jesus said so!

In St. John's Gospel, Jesus appeared to His Apostles after His Resurrection and said to them:

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

—John 20:21-23

Christ clearly states in this passage that He wishes to act *through* the Apostles in order to forgive men their sins. Since the Church is founded on Peter and the Apostles, the powers given to them are communicated to their successors.

Why might Jesus have chosen to effect the forgiveness of sins in this way?

One reason is so we never have to worry about whether our sins are forgiven. God has given us a simple formula—Confession—for getting back into His graces when we have failed. It's not based on subjective feeling, but a sacred rite. Within Confession, our contrition doesn't even have to be perfect, although perfect contrition is the ideal. "Perfect contrition" is being sorry for a sin because it offended God. "Imperfect contrition" is sorrow for sin due to a natural fear of punishment.

Imperfect contrition is all that is necessary within the Sacrament of Confession. God does the rest.

Wow, what a gift. A way to confess and do penance without all the worry of "Have I done it right?"

Other reasons include the sacramental graces we receive in Confession and the advice of the priest, both of which assist us in avoiding sin and growing in virtue.

Jesus is Wisdom Itself. He is the Word of God. He never did anything that was unnecessary—sacramental confession included. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, and knows just what we need.

You'll find more passages to help you understand and defend sacramental confession and other Catholic doctrines in Patrick Madrid's <u>Where is THAT in the Bible?</u> In the short, concise chapters of this pocket-sized book, a veteran apologist takes you through the basic doctrines of the Church and the biblical passages that support them. A vital tool, especially for discussing our beliefs with our Protestant brethren.

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2023 PUBLIC SQUARE ROSARY RALLY

Where: St. Margaret Mary Church, Main St., Herscher, Illinois

When: October 14, 2023 - ROSARY WILL BEGIN AT 12:00 NOON



IDOE JOIN OS IN PRATING FOR DUR NA!

Please bring a lawn chair.

For more information, please contact: Cindy Gagnon – (815) 933-4077; Rhonda Berns – (815) 426-5015; Kathy Meli – (815) 928-8988



St. Peter's Parish in Clifton would like to invite you to their chicken dinner being held on Sunday, September 24 from 11 am to 3 pm. The cost is \$13 per dinner.





Humor Practicing What You Preach

An honest man was being tailgated by a stressed out woman on a busy boulevard. Suddenly, the light turned yellow just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection.

The tailgating woman hit the roof, and the horn, screaming in frustration as she missed her chance to get through the intersection.

As she was still in mid—rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, finger—printed, and photographed, and then placed in a holding cell.

After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you, and cussing a blue streak at him. I noticed the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'What Would Jesus Do?' bumper sticker, the 'Follow Me to Sunday School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk. Naturally, I assumed you had stolen the car!"

Questions Catholics Ask

Why does God let bad things happen?

This is one of those questions that are as old as humanity: Could it really be possible that a good and all-powerful God not only allowed evil and sin to come into the world but also continues to tolerate them?

Looking at the world, the case for the prosecution seems pretty strong. The human race can't seem to rid itself of its addiction to violence in all its many splendored forms. It can't figure out how to share its considerable resources so that everyone has enough. It seems bent on destroying the planet on which it depends for existence. It doesn't take very good care of many of its children.

Ignorance, selfishness, meanness, short-sightedness, vulgarity, corruption, and dishonesty are commonplace. Many people are so wrapped up in themselves that they barely notice anything around them beyond what they want or what is getting in their way. Most days are pretty much the Seven Deadly Sins on Parade. Pockets of goodness exist, but somebody doing something nice for another person is a news story.

On top of all that, things don't seem to have changed much. In the early church a movement of Christians called Gnosticism looked at all the badness going on around them and concluded creation was just that—bad—and that the God they had been taught to believe created the world couldn't really be God, given the results. There had to be some other, true God.

Early church fathers like Saints Irenaeus and Augustine recognized that to challenge the most basic belief of all—about God—threatened the entire faith on which that belief was based, so these great theologians spent a lot of time refuting Gnostic-type beliefs. They realized though, that they had to come up with their own explanation of how evil and sin came into the world and how God allowed—and continued to allow—them to exist.

The argument went like this. When God creates something, that something is by necessity outside of God, which means God's perfect power and goodness do not translate into what is created, which thus has limits, imperfections, and flaws. Like many people of faith of his time, Augustine looked to the biblical story of the Fall of humanity and suggested that the flaw that allowed Adam and Eve to disobey the one and only rule God gave them was *pride*. Pride was a kind of self-willfulness. It gave you a sense you could exist on your own without reference to God.

All that theology may be cold comfort in response to death, illness, accident, injury, betrayal, cruelty, and other bad things, but the "good news"—literally—is that throughout all time God has revealed that it is the divine intention to bring God's beloved creation back into harmony. The gift of God's only Son has been the greatest demonstration of that offer of love. That Son was himself the victim of evil and sin, yet God was able to draw the great good of salvation and eternal life from even that cosmically bad event.

Sin turns you away from God and others, and while the possibility of sin may be unavoidable in this created world, it is always possible to choose to go from being self-centered to other-centered.

Save the Date—Saturday, November 18th

Sacred Heart Parishes Fall Cash Bash 4pm—8 pm The cash bash will include: Euchre and Texas Hold'em Tournaments, basket and silent auctions, 50/50, Black Jack and more.

Tickets are available this weekend at the entrance to the church. This fundraiser will be replacing the stag donation. Plan on coming and enjoying an evening of fun.





The next Knights of Columbus next Food for Families collection is Oct. 7-8 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



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September 24, 2023

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 55:6-9 | Phil 1:20c-24, 27a | Mt 20:1-16a

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

Today's readings should bring us great joy. They are a reminder that our Lord may have high standards, but he is also "generous in forgiving" and "near to all who call upon him." In the Gospel, we hear the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. Some work all day while others arrive at the last hour. However, all are paid the same. Similarly, we can all receive God's heavenly reward – whether we are faithful Catholics since birth or converts in our final hour. This parable may evoke mixed feelings for those who see themselves as the laborers who have toiled all day and wonder why their reward is not greater. But rather than making us jealous, this parable should make us rejoice: How wonderful that everyone has the opportunity for everlasting life with the Lord! And what great comfort to know that if we falter and lose our way, it is never too late to return to God.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Sometimes, knowing that we are the recipients of God's bountiful mercy, we can be tempted to lead a life focused mostly on worldly pleasures. To paraphrase St. Augustine: Make me holy Lord ... just not yet! Of course we know this isn't the right attitude or approach to life, but it's certainly tempting. Let's return to the message of the Gospel for a moment. Yes, the Lord is generous in giving all the workers the same wage. But perhaps equally as important is that we are called to be workers in the Lord's vineyard, and what an honor and privilege that is! Serving in the Lord's kingdom here on earth is not drudgery; it is life-giving and fills us with God's love and grace. Let us recall the words of St. Paul in today's Letter to the Philippians. Although he longs to "depart this life and be with Christ," he knows that staying here on earth means "fruitful labor for me." Let us also strive to keep our eyes on the Lord and labor in his field for as long as we are able.

PRAY The first reading from Isaiah reminds us that the Lord works in ways we can't understand: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord." Let us ask God this week for the fortitude to reorient our thoughts and ways to his will, not ours, so as to "conduct [ourselves] in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ."



Sunday, Sep 24, 2023

At home in the world

Free to leave, free to stay. Liberty of movement is a right most of us take for granted. Have you resided in more than one place? On this 109th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Pope Francis asks us to imagine a world in which everyone has the option to stay or go as they please. It necessitates a world in which staying is safe: free from discrimination, violence, and dire poverty. All would have the protection of equal rights and respect, and could reach their potential in their present circumstances. Until that day, welcoming the stranger is our sacred obligation.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 55:6-9; Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a; Matthew 20:1-16a (133). "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord."

Monday, Sep 25, 2023

Be creative for the sake of creation

The Season of Creation, an annual ecumenical celebration of prayer and action for our common home, began on September 1 (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) and ends on October 4 (the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi). There is still more than a week left for you, your family, your cohort of friends, your school, and your parish to renew your relationship with the Creator and with creation, through celebration, conversion, and commitment together. How? Pray. Read Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato si'. Coordinate a cleanup project or other sustainability effort. Use your voice and advocate for climate justice. Best idea yet? Come up with one no one has thought of!

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 1:1-6; Luke 8:16-18 (449). "No one who lights a lamp conceals it ... rather, he places it on a lampstand so that those who enter may see the light."

Tuesday, Sep 26, 2023

Freely share the gifts you've been given

Cosmas and Damian were legendary. Many churches have been built in their honor, and their names make the short list of saints enshrined in Eucharistic Prayer I, used during the Mass. During the final years of Rome's brutal persecution of Christians, the twin physicians lived in Syria—then an eastern province of the Roman Empire. Not only were they gifted healers, but they refused to charge for their services. As they explained, "We treat the infirm by the power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and take no payment for rendering aid to the sick, because our Lord commanded His disciples, 'Freely have you received, freely give.'" How have you been blessed by God, and how can you share that with others?

MEMORIAL OF COSMAS AND DAMIAN, MARTYRS TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 6:7-8, 12b, 14-20; Luke 8:19-21 (450). "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it."

Wednesday, Sep 27, 2023

Now on tour

Today is World Tourism Day. According to the United Nations, the tourism sector employs one in every 10 people on Earth, and millions more benefit economically from tourism, though the wealth generated isn't always shared equitably. For tourists, exploring new places and enjoying favorite ones can be exhilarating—but bad behavior can ruin a trip. Keeping an attitude of openness and gratitude, as well as respect for local people and customs while on

vacation or a tour can transform the experience. Archbishop Rino Fisichella of the Vatican's Dicastery for Evangelization wrote in anticipation of today's observance, "A tourism that respects the person and the environment opens the way to perceiving the goodness of the Father who reaches out to everyone with his love." It's hard to imagine a better souvenir than that.

MEMORIAL OF VINCENT DE PAUL, PRIEST TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 9:5-9; Luke 9:1-6 (451). "Then they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the good news and curing diseases everywhere."

Thursday, Sep 28, 2023

Lighten the load

You may have heard the old English Christmas song about a Bohemian king who became Saint Wenceslaus, in part because of his great charity. The most famous tale from the charitable king's life was recorded in the carol "Good King Wenceslaus." The king helps a poor man keep from freezing by trodding a path in the snow for him, easing the man's journey to shelter. It ends with an admonishment to do likewise for anyone who suffers and "[you] shall yourselves find blessing." Do a favor for someone in need today, and like Wenceslaus, you will find blessing.

MEMORIAL OF WENCESLAUS, MARTYR TODAY'S READINGS: Haggai 1:1-8; Luke 9:7-9 (452). "Who then is this about whom I hear such things?"

Friday, Sep 29, 2023

Entertaining angels

Care for strangers has always been a strong imperative in Christianity. Yet in today's highly politicized environment, it is challenging to reach out to strangers who some have deemed to be threats—people like refugees and other marginalized communities. Scripture is clear: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." Angels? It's far easier to see angels from the safety of a holy card or a statue. But think for a moment and see if you have at some point encountered an angel through the presence of a stranger.

FEAST OF MICHAEL, GABRIEL, AND RAPHAEL, ARCHANGELS TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 or Revelation 12:7-12ab; John 1:47-51 (647). "How do you know me?"

Saturday, Sep 30, 2023

Christianity, by the book

As early Christianity distanced itself from Judaism, Christians began to lose touch with their faith's deep Jewish roots. Saint Jerome (born around 340) helped to reestablish the link. He learned Hebrew from a Christian monk who had converted from Judaism. More unusual for the time, he studied with Jewish rabbis to gain a better understanding of Hebrew scripture. He then spent 15 years producing the foundational Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible, which we know as the Old Testament. He later said, "For if, as Paul says, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and if the man who does not know Scripture does not know the power and wisdom of God, then ignorance of Scriptures is ignorance of Christ." Crack open the Good Book today, in honor of a key figure who helped shape it.

MEMORIAL OF JEROME, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH TODAY'S READINGS: Zechariah 2:5-9, 14-15a; Luke 9:43b-45 (454), "Jesus said to his disciples, 'Pay attention to what I am telling you."

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



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