

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

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FEBRUARY 3-4, 2024

*Praise the Lord
for he is good;
he heals the
brokenhearted
and binds up
their wounds.*

*He sustains
the lowly;
the wicked
he casts to
the ground.*



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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

Collections Week of Jan. 27-28, 2024

- St. Margaret Mary—\$1,275
 - Latin America—\$296
 - St. James—\$4,392
 - Latin America—\$266
 - Sacred Heart—\$1,242
 - Latin America \$380
- Thank you for your generosity!

Parish News:

- St. Margaret Mary—CCW meeting Feb. 19th 7PM
 - Sacred Heart— The Blessed Virgin Mary Candle burns in memory of Aaron Mills.
 - CCW Meeting Feb. 13 7 PM In the Hall-Denise Wenzelman is hostess
 - St. James—
 - All Parishes—
- ◆ Don't forget to pick up your offertory envelopes in each parish. If you don't find yours, please call the office.



Wishing condolences to Marilyn Pfeiffer and family on the loss of her brother Jerry Monk. May he rest in peace.

St. Margaret Mary CCW Meeting—Monday February 19th. We will be having our (postponed) non holiday gift exchange, gift up to \$20 and discussing the upcoming Night In Italy

St James Religious Education Request:

Spring Cleaning??

We are looking for some larger baskets for our 2024 Christmas raffle.

Drop any baskets off in the St James Hall outside of office door. Thank you!

BISHOP BLANCHETTE SCHOLARSHIP

Bishop Blanchette Scholarship applications are available for our parishioners who attend Catholic high school.

At Sacred Heart Call Terri Weakley at 815-514-8171

St James call—Jennifer Hansen

St. Margaret Mary—Julie Splery



North Iroquois Catholic Community
welcomes back

Fr Jim Sichko

Come to St John the Baptist Church, L'Erable
for a **Pre-Lenten Mission**,
given by world-reknowned,
"Missionary of Mercy,"
Fr Jim Sichko



Everyone is Welcome! At 6pm
Sunday, Monday, Tuesday
February 4th, 5th, & 6th

Questions Catholics Ask

What are the corporal and spiritual works of mercy?

Listing the 14 works of mercy is easy; appreciating their breadth takes time. Let's begin with the corporal works of mercy: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, and bury the dead. Where do these come from? Six derive from the Final Judgment teaching in the Gospel of Matthew: "What you do for the least of these, you do for me." The seventh work is grounded in traditional Hebrew respect for the body.

Feeding the hungry goes beyond soup kitchens to the level of economic reform. Satisfying thirst includes the politics of water rights and the ecology of preserving seas and rivers. Clothing the naked involves respecting the dignity of the poor as well as surrendering your cast-off attire. Visiting the imprisoned recognizes many kinds of captivity: domestic violence, sexism, racism, educational impoverishment. Sheltering the homeless includes welcoming the marginalized and lobbying for affordable housing. Visiting the sick expands to creating access for the disabled and inviting the infirm elderly into the greater community. Burying the dead can include pardoning those who injured us long ago.

The spiritual works of mercy are next: admonish the sinner, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the sorrowful, bear wrongs patiently, forgive all injuries, and pray for the living and the dead. These teachings are gathered from the New Testament and 2 Maccabees in Hebrew scripture. This eclectic list was compiled later than the first to balance the temporal (worldly) and spiritual obligations we owe each other. Saint Augustine of Hippo recorded both lists in 421 C.E.; perhaps he was promoting what was already within Christian tradition.

While Jesus obliges all Christians to practice corporal works of mercy, some of the spiritual works are not binding until we're spiritually mature enough to undertake them. We can all comfort the sad and must forgive trespasses and pray "unceasingly" for the needs of others, living and deceased. Bearing wrongs patiently takes practice, but we can begin at once to achieve some. But correcting sinners, teaching the ignorant, and counseling the hesitant are best left to those more advanced in Christian virtue and knowledge. Mercy has been called the meeting ground of love and justice. In works of mercy, compassion ascends to the level of service. Scripture

- 2 Maccabees 12:38-46; Matthew 18:15-35; Matthew 25:34-40; John 20:26-29; Colossians 1:3, 9; 3:5-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:12-15; 2 Thessalonians 3:15; 1 Timothy 4:6-16; James 5:7-19

February 4, 2024

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jb 7:1-4, 6-7 | 1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23 | Mk 1:29-39

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

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

Why me? It could be a flat tire, a lost job or a serious illness. When inconvenient, unpleasant or even downright horrible things happen, it is understandable to wonder why God allows it. I know that is what goes through my head in extreme adversity. God can do all things, so why wouldn't he change "this thing" for me? In the Gospel, we see Jesus curing Simon Peter's mother-in-law of her illness, but many of us don't have our prayers answered like that. Instead, we may relate more to Job in today's first reading when he says life is a "drudgery" and he "shall not see happiness again." The reality is that God's ways are not our ways, so we can't know why some people endure hardship while others receive miracles. But we can change how we respond to those hardships when they arrive. Just as this passage from Job is understood better within the context of the whole book, discrete events in our lives are part of something larger than ourselves. Praying with Scripture, including reading more of Job, can help us understand how God is molding, refining, and yes - always loving us.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

When we are tempted to feel like Job is a good time to embrace the age-old practice of "offering it [suffering] up." As a child, my parents explained that offering it up meant I was telling God I would happily suffer in exchange for it helping someone else. What does this really mean? Everything stems from our being united to Christ in our baptism and being participants in his priestly, prophetic and royal office. We offer ourselves, our whole being, including our worship, praise, joy, gratitude, bodies and even sufferings to God as sacrifice. So, to "offer it [suffering] up" is a powerful way of taking a bad situation and allowing it to be used for something good; to give our inconvenience, pain and grief to the Lord and ask him to unite it to Christ's suffering for the good of others. It is a redemptive act, a form of love-in-action. St. Paul is a great example of someone who suffered gladly, and in today's second reading he shares that "to the weak [he] became weak, to win over the weak."

PRAY Offering up our sufferings and difficulties is a way to participate in the redemptive work of Christ. It is a simple way to pray and can keep our focus on God throughout the day. There isn't any one specific prayer for doing this. Instead, when something unpleasant or painful happens, take a moment to acknowledge it and give it to the Lord. It can be as simple as saying, "Lord, I am happy to endure this for the benefit of others." You may want to insert a specific intention or offer it for the souls in purgatory. It's not always easy - especially when your suffering is great - but give it a try this week.



The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law by James Tissot, 1856