

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

5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

APRIL 5-6, 2025



Forgetting what lies behind but straining forward
to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward
the goal, the prize of GOD's upward calling in
CHRIST JESUS.

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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: "Forgiveness is what we need when we think we don't and what we give when we think we shouldn't."
 —Sister Joan Chittister, O.S.B.

Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 12-13, 2025

Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, April 12 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, April 13 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, April 13 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, April 13 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron Neitzke	Fr. Ron Neitzke	Fr. Ron Neitzke Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron Neitzke
Ushers	Dan Hoffman Todd Datweiler Bob Schultz Roger Jensen	Kyle Ferris David Kirkpatrick	Dallas Ferris Arlen Hansen Bob Buente Jeff Martin	Darren Lovell Jeremy Wolles Larry Wolles Kim Smicker
Lector	Dave Emling Rob Landeck	Rhonda Berns Cindy Gagnon	Jeff O'Connor Dave Ladehoff	Julie Splear Dana Masching
Eucharistic Minister				
Servers				Sydney Weldon
Greeters			Greeter—Christine Forsythe R. Leader—Reatta Gohlke	Kim Smicker

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, April 7 (SMM)

8:00 am +Madeline Bouchard (Dennis/Janice Schnieder)

Tuesday, April 8 (SH)

8:00 am +Dolores Clodi (Kate/Gary Cloonen)

Wednesday, April 9 (SJ)

8:00 am (SJ) +Leola Ader (Diane Castongue)

Friday, April 11 (SMM)

8:00 am +Harold Fournier (Marianne Heinzl)

Saturday, April 12 (SMM)

5:00 pm For all the Parish Family

Sunday, April 13

7:30 am (SH) +Tom Buckley (Francis/Wanda Feller)

+Anna Wheeler (Rhonda/Joe Berns)

9:00am (SJ) +Special intention of Rita Thiesen (P.Cuchiara)

10:30 am (SMM) +Leo Giacametti (Dallas/Joyce Ferris)

+Anna Wheeler (Blessed Trinity K of C #15032)

A Look Ahead

Thursday, April 10- Night in Italy—SMM

Thursday, April 24—SH Spring Luncheon

Saturday, April 26—First Communion at SMM

Saturday, May 3—First Communion at SJ

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 [triparishcatholiccommunities](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
 Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015
 St. James—Tanhya Osenga tosenga81@gmail.com

Parish Nurse – Jackie Eberle – 815-421-4048

Prayer Line—

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 Jdstreefarms@aol.com
 St. James— Mary Offerman-602-670-8888 (call or text)
 Sacred Heart-Marilyn Pfeiffer 815-955-8246 (call or text)
 Terri Weakley— 815-514-8171

Question of the Week

This week, to whom can I extend the mercy that God has extended to me?

Collections Weekend of March 29-30, 2025

St. Margaret Mary—\$1,598

St. James—\$1,353

Sacred Heart—\$1,436

Thank you for your generosity!

LENTEN STATIONS OF THE CROSS SERVICES

Wed. April 9th, 7PM Scriptural Stations of the Cross SMM

Friday, April 11th Stations of the Cross 3:00 SMM

*Please note, when Stations are held at SMM plan on being here 10-15 minutes early to avoid school traffic.

Holy Week Schedule

Sunday, Apr. 13—Palm Sunday— regular weekend masses

Mon., Apr. 14—Seven Last Words—7:00 PM (SMM)

Tues., Apr. 15—Confession—7:00 PM (SJ)

Wed., Apr. 16—Tenebrae—7:00 PM (SJ)

Thurs., Apr. 17—Mass of the Last Supper—7:00PM (SMM)

Fri., Apr. 18—Stations of the Cross—3:00 PM (SJ)

Fri., Apr. 18—Liturgy of the Passion—7:00 PM (SJ)

Sat., Apr. 19—Blessing of Easter Baskets—Noon (SH)

Sat., Apr. 19—Easter Vigil—7:00 PM (SH)

Sun., Apr. 20—Easter Sunday—Regular Sunday Mass



Thank you to all my Sacred Heart and Tri-Parish family for all your cards, prayers, love, caring and continued prayers. I really appreciate everything. Thank you, thank you! You are a Special Blessing!

Laurie Palinski



Our Tri-Parish community is seeking individuals who would be interested in serving as eucharistic ministers for our homebound. This is a beautiful opportunity to share God's love and bring connection to those who cannot join us in person. We do have one minister who is serving those in Herscher. There is a need for rural ministers as well. We currently have several individuals who would be so grateful to be able to partake in Communion each week. Please call the church office at 815-426-2550 if interested or have questions. Thank you!

Parish News:

St. Margaret Mary-

⇒ We will be collecting non perishable food for Herscher Council of Churches spring food baskets (Easter Baskets). Please place in the bin at the back of the church.

⇒ Ladies, please join us in the kitchen after mass on Sunday, April 6 to make our delicious spaghetti sauce for our A Night in Italy event on April 10.

⇒ Please watch for details on the Night In Italy 2025. It will be held on Thursday, April 10th. Sign up sheet for volunteers and food donations in back of the church.

St. James

⇒ Our Lenten Project will be the Food Pantry of Kankakee. Items will be collected starting March 5.

Sacred Heart-

⇒ The week of March 30th, the Blessed Virgin Mary candle burns for the special intentions of Jackie Cross as she celebrates her 90th birthday

⇒ Our CCW congratulates Connie Ferris as our "2025 Woman of the Year". She has served on many committees that have benefited the parish greatly. Connie, her husband Daryl, sons Brett, Tyler, Kyle and their families are an important part of our church community.

⇒ Sacred Heart CCW will meet Tues., Apr. 8 at 6:30 pm. Hostesses are Marilyn Pfeiffer and Tina Petersen.

All Parishes-

⇒ Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.

⇒ Call the parish office to request your statement of donations to the parish for 2024.

⇒ Tri-Parish Knights Dartball Team Wins! After just an average regular season, your Tri-Parish Knights dartball team peaked at the final season tournament winning second place out of nine teams. Way to go Team! Looking forward to next season and more great accomplishments!





Obscure saint of the week: St. Eutychius of Constantinople (April 6) was the monk at Amasea in Pontus (in modern Turkey) at age 30. Later he was named the archimandrite of a monastery in Constantinople (modern Istanbul, Turkey). Eutychius rose to become the patriarch of Constantinople in 552, nominated by Justinian the Great and confirmed by Pope Vigilius. With Apollinarius of Alexandria and Domnus III of Antioch, he called and led a council from May to June 2, 553 to deal with the Three-Chapter Controversy, and Eutychius composed the decree against the Chapters. He consecrated the re-building of the Hagia Sophia church in 562.



Beginning in 564, Eutychius came into theological conflict with emperor Justinian who began to believe the Aphantodocetae who taught that Jesus's body was incorrupt, not subject to pain, and thus that he was not fully human as well as fully God. Bishop Eutychius began to speak and write against this heresy, which led to his arrest, while celebrating Mass, on January 22, 565. Justinian tried to have a show trial, but Eutychius refused to cooperate, which led to him being exiled for over 12 years.

In October 577, with the support of emperor Justin II, Eutychius was recalled and resumed his seat as patriarch of Constantinople. He was welcomed back to the city by Christians who were so happy to see him that there was a festival and banquets; the Communion line at his first Mass lasted six hours. Toward the end of his life, Eutychius got it into his head that the return of Christ would be spiritual, with no physical return, which is heretical, but he later returned to orthodox thinking on the matter. A surviving biography of his life was written by his chaplain, Eustathius of Constantinople.

Other obscure saint of the week: St. Galla of Rome (Apr. 6) was born to the Roman nobility. She was the daughter Symmachus the Younger who served as consul in 485; sister-in-law of Boethius. Galla was a lay woman, marrying soon after her father's murder, but widowed after a year of marriage; legend says she grew a beard to avoid further offers of marriage. She became a wealthy and pious recluse on Vatican Hill, joining with a community of women near Saint Peter's Basilica, caring for the poor and sick. She founded a convent and hospital. She was reputed to have once healed a young deaf and mute girl by blessing some water, and having the girl drink from it.



A brief biography of her was written by Saint Gregory the Great in his *Dialogues*. She was believed to have been the inspiration for *Concerning the State of Widowhood* written by Saint Fulgentius of Ruspe. An image now above the altar of Santa Maria in Campitelli, Italy and formally housed in a church dedicated to Galla, is thought to have been based on a vision Galla received of Our Lady.

The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

Jesus went across to Mount Olives, but he was soon back in the Temple again. Swarms of people came to him. He sat down and taught them.

The religion scholars and Pharisees led in a woman who had been caught in an act of adultery. They stood her in plain sight of everyone and said, "Teacher, this woman was caught red-handed in the act of adultery. Moses, in the Law, gives orders to stone such persons. What do you say?" They were trying to trap him into saying something incriminating so they could bring charges against him.

Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger in the dirt. They kept at him, badgering him. He straightened up and said, "The sinless one among you, go first: Throw the stone." Bending down again, he wrote some more in the dirt.

Hearing that, they walked away, one after another, beginning with the oldest. The woman was left alone. Jesus stood up and spoke to her. "Woman, where are they? Does no one condemn you?"

"No one, Master."

"Neither do I," said Jesus. "Go on your way. From now on, don't sin" (from John 8).

During the
Season of Lent
contemplate
your heart and
look at our
world with
Hope.

Artwork: Mary Judine Bruch, BVM

Questions Catholics Ask

What's the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls? I want to know—but not enough to read them!

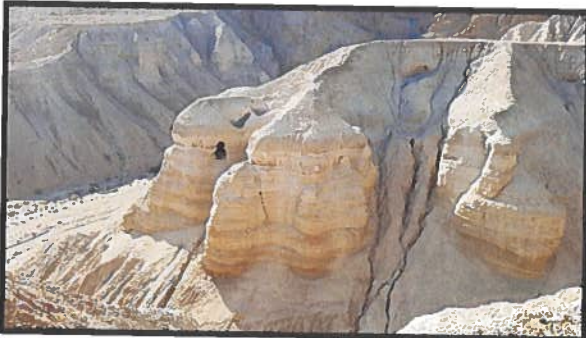
Reading them would be tough—unless you know Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The story of the scrolls isn't complete even now, more than 70 years after the first collection was discovered by a Bedouin boy in search of a lost sheep in 1947. As recently as March 2021, archeologists announced new findings in yet another cave, including fragments from some books of prophecy. Who knows what else lies undiscovered in the Judean desert, with its excellent conditions for preserving ancient artifacts?

The Dead Sea Scrolls raise more questions than they supply definitive answers. To the disappointment of many, the scrolls aren't a smoking gun linking the Qumran community (which consigned these writings to their caves) with Jesus, John the Baptist, or Christianity. No New Testament texts appear among the thousands of fragments so far unearthed. Yet every Jewish biblical book except Esther is logged among the findings. The original 11 caves, uncovered between 1947 and 1956, contained some 900 distinct manuscripts, most of them extra-biblical. What we learned from Cave 1, which seems to have been a deliberate library for the community, is that a great deal of attention at Qumran focused on the present and the future, not just the past. The rules by which this community—presumed by most scholars to be the Essenes—would live was a paramount concern. The Essenes were among three significant subgroups within Judaism between 150 BC and 68 AD, when Roman soldiers destroyed Qumran. Unlike the Sadducees, who ran the Temple and cooperated with the Roman occupiers, the Essenes withdrew from Jerusalem and rejected the legitimacy of the Temple leaders. Rather than participating in the customary ritual sacrifices, the Essenes anticipated the rabbinic movement to come which would replace Temple worship with study of the Law of Moses.

Like the third movement of the period, that of the Pharisees, the Essenes were dedicated to religious purity. Young men found their zeal and idealism attractive, and would enter the community for a time. However, a longstanding practice of celibacy deterred some from remaining. A study of gravesites around Qumran revealed that the community relaxed the celibacy requirement at a later date. A more recent gravesite included women and children buried separately, at a discreet distance, from the men.

The scrolls provide evidence to the complexity of religious ideas circulating in the generations around Jesus. Judaism was fractured. The interpretation of sacred texts was seriously debated. Jesus wasn't the only teacher of his time calling for a reexamination of what Pilate once wondered: What is truth?

Scriptures: Matthew 24:3-14; 1 Timothy 1:3-11; 4:1-16; 6:3-6; 2 Timothy 2:14-26; 3:10-17



The Dead Sea Scrolls raise more questions than they supply definitive answers.

Sponsored by
Sacred Heart Parish C.C.W.
at St. James Church Hall
4372 Main St., Irwin, IL

Spring Luncheon

With

Bunco & Cards

Cash & Basket Raffles, 50/50
Door Prizes

Thurs. April 24th

11:00 a.m.

Delicious Lunch Buffet
Ticket \$10.00 at the door
Call Terri for more info. 815 514-8171



The prize to which God calls me.
PH. 3:14

Let the first among you
who is without sin
cast the first stone

You are cordially invited to the Diocese of Joliet
Jubilee Mass for Persons with disabilities
June 1, 2025
12:30 p.m.
Cathedral of St. Raymond
604 N. Raynor Ave.
Joliet, Illinois

The Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Ronald Hicks, refreshments and fellowship to follow. Those with disabilities, and their caregivers, will receive a special blessing.

Gospel Shorts Spiritual Arithmetic
 Imagine a man working 60 to 70 hours per week for 20 years spending every available minute providing for his family, and after 20 years of marriage his wife decides to leave him because he's never paid any attention to the family for his whole married life. He sits alone in the empty house and says to himself; "This just doesn't add up. I work all these years for my family, and then my family leaves me. It just doesn't figure." Life arithmetic. We do it all the time. We place certain values on certain activities, believing they will produce a certain result. Instead, we end up with the opposite.

Often, what we believe is worth everything, turns out to be worth very little. And that which we place low priority on, turns out to be of the utmost importance. Scripture is full of what we might call spiritual arithmetic. And nowhere is there a clearer statement of what adds up than on today's epistle lesson from Paul's letter the Philippians. He is making up his spiritual list of assets and liabilities and he says simply, "I count. I figure. I calculate all things to be loss compared to the unsurpassing value of knowing Christ."

Reflections Drawing Nearer to Thee

Imagine a circle with its center and radii or rays going out from this center. The farther these radii are from the center, the more widely are they dispersed and separated from one another; and conversely, the closer they come to the center, the closer they are to one another. Suppose now that this circle is the world, the very center of the circle, God, and the lines (radii) going from the center to the circumference or from the circumference to the center are the paths of people's lives. Then here we see the same. Insofar as the saints move inward within the circle toward its center, wishing to come nearer to God, then, in the degree of their penetrations, they come closer both to God and to one another; moreover, inasmuch as they come nearer to God, they come nearer to one another, and inasmuch as they come nearer to one another, they come nearer to God.

JUBILEE YEAR 2025 APRIL CELEBRATIONS

On April 25-27, our Holy Father will be remembering in prayer and celebrating with teens. Every parish has teenage parishioners, and we recognize them for their importance to the life of the parish community. We give thanks, along with the Holy Father for our parish teens and their families during their gathering in Rome.

"A Night In Italy"
 Thursday, April 10
 5:00 - 7:00 pm
 St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church Parish Hall

Spaghetti with Homemade Pasta Sauce & Lasagna
 Salad, Garlic Bread,
 Dessert & Drink
 -Eat in or carry out-
 Free will donation

A Stewardship Moment
Fifth Sunday of Lent Weekend of April 5/6, 2025
 Strong words come from Saint Paul in today's second reading. He reveals in no uncertain terms that life in Christ is our goal. Everything else, he maintains, is "rubbish." Junk. Trash. Garbage. Is that true? Is everything else "rubbish" compared to deepening our relationship with the Lord? What about putting recreational activities ahead of attending Mass? Or preferring uninterrupted hours playing the latest video games or watching TV to spending time in a bible study group, choir practice or serving in a soup kitchen? Or keeping late hours at work over sharing the gospel with friends and neighbors? To what extent do we exercise stewardship over our relationship with Christ?

April 6, 2025

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Is 43:16-21 | Phil 3:8-14 | Jn 8:1-11

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

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

Today's culture creates and sees constant change, innovation, and novelty at record speeds. But even more astounding than the technological advancements we observe around us is God's power to inspire interior transformation in each individual life. In today's Gospel, instead of condemning the woman caught in adultery whose punishment was certain death, Jesus speaks words of mercy, forgiveness, and life. Their encounter lifts the woman out of the shame of her sin, restores her dignity, and strengthens her to "Go, and from now on do not sin any more." This woman, whom others saw as hopeless, is transformed because Jesus' mercy has touched her soul. Long before, the prophet Isaiah had alluded to this time in which the Messiah would bring new life even in the most desolate places: "See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers." God constantly calls us to leave sin behind, to keep moving forward - and we can be confident that he is with us at each new step to lead us to himself.

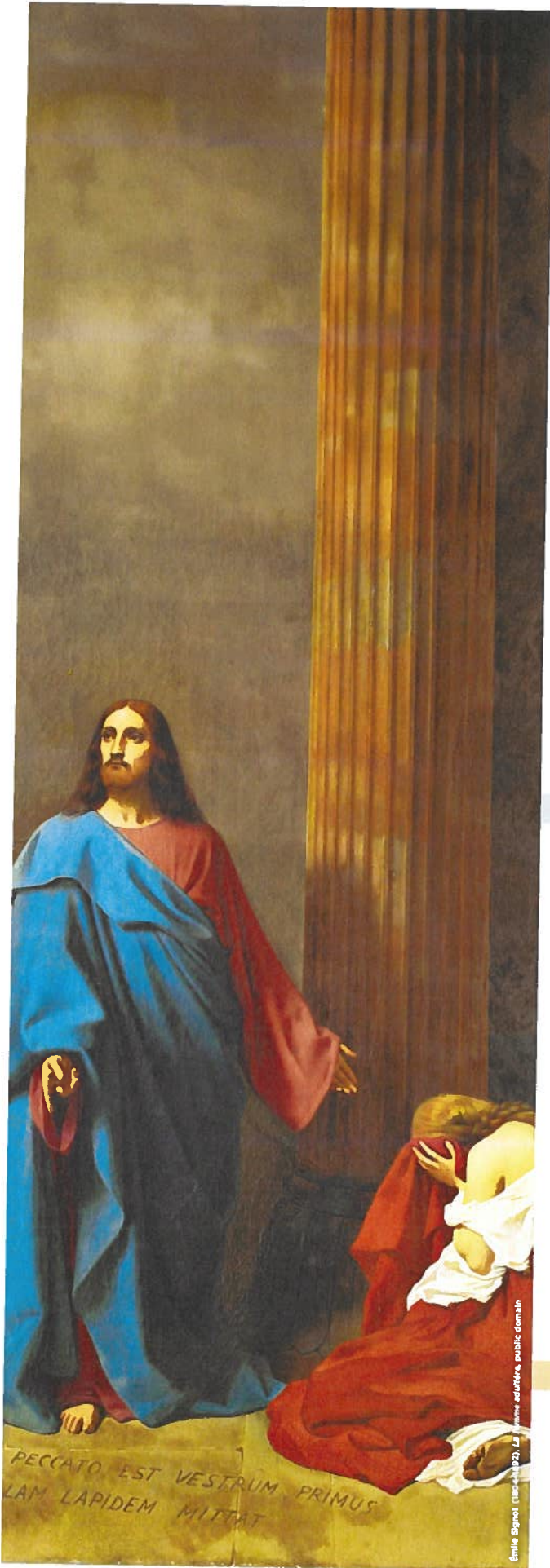
GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

How do we take these steps? How do we respond to God's call? In his Letter to the Philippians, Paul speaks of how he willingly gave up everything, even those things which made him righteous according to the laws of the Old Testament, and learned to depend on Jesus and the changing power of his resurrection. For us as for Saint Paul, each step along the path of transformation requires faith in God's ability and intention to heal us and draw us to himself. If we are willing to leave behind old identities and desires, we will see more clearly the true identity God created for us as we begin to live more like Jesus. Paul even describes being "taken possession of by Christ Jesus," because the change is so deep and powerful. For us as for God's chosen people in the readings from Isaiah, at first some parts of the path may look like an aimless desert, but the way will appear with each step of faith, and it is filled with mercy.

PRAY

Transformation doesn't happen all at once. Reflect on your Lenten prayers, fasting, and almsgiving and consider how they've helped to conform your will to God's. How will you be found changed on Easter Sunday? Is there something you can improve upon during these final two weeks of Lent? It's not too late to offer a loving sacrifice to God!



SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Joel 2:12-13

Even now, says the Lord,
return to me with your whole heart;
for I am gracious and merciful.

Gospel John 8:1-11; L36C

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.
But early in the morning he arrived again
in the temple area,
and all the people started coming to him,
and he sat down and taught them.
Then the scribes and the Pharisees
brought a woman
who had been caught in adultery
and made her stand in the middle.
They said to him,
“Teacher, this woman was caught
in the very act of committing adultery.
Now in the law, Moses commanded us to
stone such women.
So what do you say?”
They said this to test him,
so that they could have some charge to
bring against him.
Jesus bent down and began to write on
the ground with his finger.
But when they continued asking him,
he straightened up and said to them,
“Let the one among you who is without
sin
be the first to throw a stone at her.”
Again he bent down and wrote on the
ground.
And in response, they went away one by
one,
beginning with the elders.
So he was left alone with the woman be-
fore him.
Then Jesus straightened up and said to her,
“Woman, where are they?
Has no one condemned you?”
She replied, “No one, sir.”
Then Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn
you.
Go, and from now on do not sin any more.”

*Year A readings may be used, see Appendix A,
pp. 278–279.*

Reflecting on the Gospel

In the gospel today the case seems clear-cut. A woman is caught in the very act of adultery. The evidence is indisputable, and the law is clear. It is just a matter of carrying it out. Jesus's opponents are not interested in the circumstances that led to the woman's actions—and one must wonder how her partner escaped judgment when both were caught in the act! The scribes and Pharisees are intent on being able to charge Jesus with transgressing the law. They quote the

law of Moses to Jesus and press him for his judgment. While they wait for an answer, Jesus bends down and begins to write on the ground with his finger.

Much ink has been spilt by commentators who speculate on what Jesus wrote. It is possible that Luke is making a connection with the giving of the law to Moses.

Exodus 31:18 says, “When the LORD had finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant, the stone tablets inscribed by God's own finger.” It is not the content of Jesus's

writing that is important; otherwise, the Evangelist would have told us what it said. It is Jesus's action of writing with his finger, replicating God's action in the giving of the law, that helps us understand that Jesus's interpretation of the law is in line with God's intent. The law was never intended as an instrument of condemnation but was to guide believers in a godly way of life.

Like Jesus's opponents in the gospel, Christian teachers and preachers have struggled to understand how Jesus could let a blatant sinner off without punishment. Saint Ambrose worried that the gospel could produce anxiety in the inexperienced and tried to dismiss the idea that Jesus could have made a mistake. John Calvin assured his followers that although Jesus remits our sins, he does not subvert the social order or abolish legal sentences and punishments. While the latter may be true, Jesus does, indeed, abolish the notion that our relationship with God is contained within rules and law. While these are necessary for the peaceable ordering of any organization, whether civil or religious, law does not express adequately how God relates to us. It is God's freely given gift of forgiveness, offered to us in the person of Christ, that binds us to God and invites us to a new way of life. It is a gift that is replicated every time we offer forgiveness and compassion to one another.

A marvelous image is given to us by Michelangelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican: God, surrounded by cherubs, with his left arm draped around a female figure, strains his right arm forward, with his index finger extended toward Adam. Instead of pointing the finger of guilt at human-kind, God is exerting every effort to draw the human creature into the divine loving embrace. Their fingers almost touch. If he wanted to, Adam could complete the connection.

