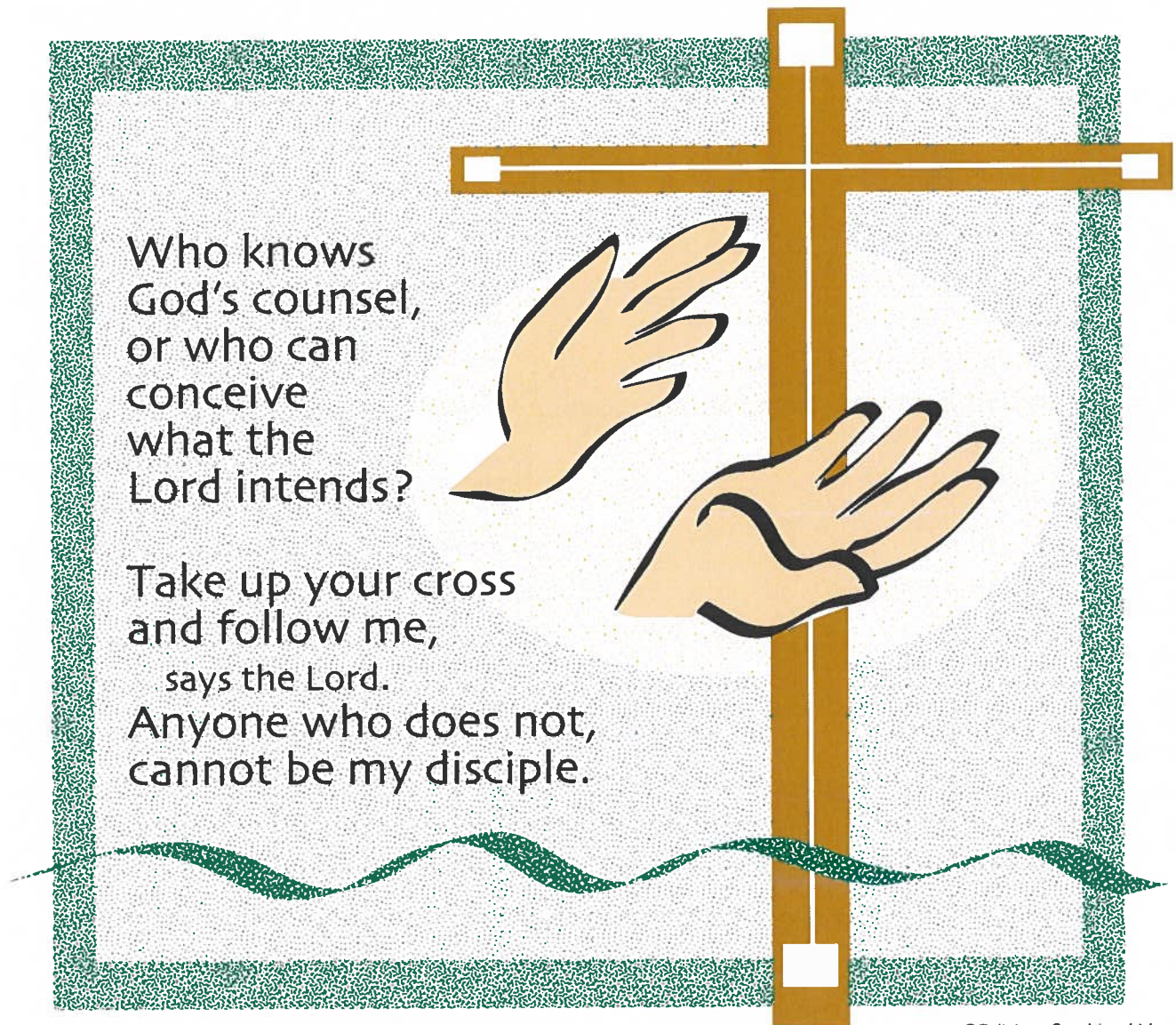


**The Roman Catholic Parishes of**  
**St. Margaret Mary, Herscher**  
**St. James the Apostle, Irwin**  
**Sacred Heart, Goodrich**

**23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**SEPTEMBER 6-7, 2025**



Who knows  
God's counsel,  
or who can  
conceive  
what the  
Lord intends?

Take up your cross  
and follow me,  
says the Lord.  
Anyone who does not,  
cannot be my disciple.

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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:** "It is not the actual physical exertion that counts toward progress, nor the nature of the task, but the spirit of faith with which it is undertaken. "

—Saint Francis Xavier

**24th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**September 14-15, 2025**

Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, Sept. 6 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, Sept. 14 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, Sept. 7 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, Sept. 7 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron
Ushers	Dan Hoffman Todd Datweiler Bob Schultz Dave Emling	Dennis Pankey Jim Mallaney	Dan Forsythe Cathy Jensen Jeff Martin Jerry Ogrentz	Wayne Bisaillon Larry Wolles Erik Wheeler Corinn Wheeler
Lector	Hillary Smith	Cindy Gagnon	Andy Hansen	Steve Jacob
Eucharistic Minister				Wayne Bisaillon
Servers				
Greeters			Greeter—Donna Bernicky R. Leader—Reatta Gohlke	Wayne Bisaillon

**Mass Intentions for the Week**

**Monday, Sept. 8 (SH)**

8:00 am +Russ LaGesse (Jerry/Terri Weakley)

**Tuesday, Sept. 9 (SH)**

8:00 am No Mass

**Wednesday, Sept. 10 (SJ)**

8:00 am No Mass

**Friday, Sept. 12 (SJ)**

8:00 am +Jacob Peters (The Family)

**Saturday, Sept. 13 (SMM)**

5:00 pm +Mary Polvere (Darlene Dittus)

+Mary McDonald (Julie Splear)

**Sunday, Sept. 14**

7:30 am (SH) +Anthony Beedle (Rhonda/Joe Berns)

+Robert "Flip" Henry (Tom/Carol Henry)

9:00 am (SJ) +Harold & Louise Devine (The Family)

+Francis Dale Weber (The Family)

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

**A Look Ahead**

**Sept. 6/7—K of C Food Drive**

**Sun., Sept. 7** — Religious Ed begins at SH

**Sunday, Sept. 7**—Religious Ed Registration at SJ

**Tuesday, Sept 9**—SH CCW meeting 6:30 in church hall

**Monday, Sept. 15**— Prayer Meeting 7:00pm at SJ

**Monday, Sept. 15**—SMM CCW meeting 7:00pm

**Sunday, Sept. 14**—Religious Ed begins at SJ and SMM

**Wed., Sept. 24**—Adult Ed Classes begin 7pm 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](http://www.triparishcatholics.org)

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](mailto:jfulton.stmm@gmail.com)

Sacred Heart — Rhonda Berns — 426-5015

St. James—Tanhya Osenga [tosenga81@gmail.com](mailto:tosenga81@gmail.com)

**Parish Nurse** — Jackie Eberle — 815-421-4048

**Prayer Line—**

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 [Jdstreefarms@aol.com](mailto: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:**

How do I feel challenged by Jesus' demands of discipleship?



## Collections Weekend of August 30-31

St. Margaret Mary—\$1,925

Sacred Heart—\$958

St. James—\$1,210

Thank you for your generosity!

### The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

One day when large groups of people were walking along with him, Jesus turned and told them, "Anyone who comes to me but refuses to let go of father, mother, spouse, children, brothers, sisters—yes, even one's own self!—can't be my disciple. Anyone who won't shoulder his own cross and follow behind me can't be my disciple.

"Is there anyone here who, planning to build a new house, doesn't first sit down and figure the cost so you'll know if you can complete it? If you only get the foundation laid and then run out of money, you're going to look pretty foolish. Everyone passing by will poke fun at you: 'He started something he couldn't finish.'

"Or can you imagine a king going into battle against another king without first deciding whether it is possible with his ten thousand troops to face the twenty thousand troops of the other? And if he decides he can't, won't he send an emissary and work out a truce? "Simply put, if you're not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it good-bye, you can't be my disciple" (from Luke 14).

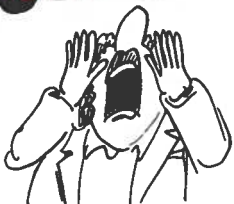
### Religious Education classes will be starting up again soon at all three parishes.

**St. James**—Registration for classes at St. James will be held on September 7th after the 9:00 am Mass. Our Kick-off is September 14, the first Sunday of classes.



**St. Margaret Mary**— StMM RE kickoff is Sunday September 14 at 9:30am. Anyone new to RE at StMM can email [ifulton.stmm@gmail.com](mailto:ifulton.stmm@gmail.com) to get the registration link

# Volunteers!



**St. James Religious Ed** is still in need of three teachers this year— kindergarten, 1st grade, and 6th grade. What a great opportunity to share our faith with the students! Please contact Tahnya at 815.530.4406 if you are interested or have questions.

### Parish News:

#### All Parishes—

- ⇒ *Our Adult Ed class will resume in the fall. If you are interested in attending, please call the office to register. As in the past it will be on Wednesday nights. We will start our sessions on September 24 at St. James. Classes begin at 7:00 pm.*
- ⇒ *It's time for a new Pictorial Directory! Our dates are Oct. 16-18. Just for participating you will receive a complimentary 8 x 10 portrait and a church directory. Be watching for more upcoming information,.*
- ⇒ *Wits Workout will be moved to St. James hall from August 25 until further notice. Everyone is welcome; you can begin at any time. Wits Workout is on Monday from 1-2pm. If you would like to join us, please call Natalia at Catholic Charities at 815-933-7791 ext. 9954.*
- ⇒ *Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.*

#### St. Margaret Mary-

- ⇒ *SMM CCW meeting will be held Monday, September 15 at 7PM in the hall*
- ⇒ *Weekday masses til further notice are Mondays at Sacred Heart and Fridays at St. James.*

#### St. James-

- ⇒ *All are invited to our St. James CCW meeting on Sunday, September 14 following the 9 am mass. We will be discussing activities and ideas for the 2025-2026 year.*

#### Sacred Heart-

- ⇒ *Religious Ed begins Sept. 7 at Sacred Heart*
- ⇒ *Sacred Heart C.C.W.'s next meeting is Tuesday Sept. 9th at 6:30 p.m. at the church hall. Hostesses are Laurie Palinski & Marie Feller*
- ⇒ *Sacred Heart is looking for volunteers to paint the outside of the hall. There is a sign up sheet in the entrance of the church.*
- ⇒ *Sacred Heart Church will be selling tickets for their "Fall Cash Bash" which will take place Sat., November 22 from 4p.m. till 8 p.m. in the church hall. Tickets are \$50 a piece and will admit 2 adults with a chance of a 1st Prize of \$1,500 or \$500 2nd Prize.*



**Obscure saint of the week: St. Cloud (Sept. 7)** was born to the French royalty. He was the son of King Clodomir and Clotilde, and grandson of King Clovis and Saint Clotilda. His father died in battle when his children were still quite young. The king's sons were raised in Paris, France by their grandmother, Saint Clotilda, until an ambitious uncle murdered two of them in a power grab. Clodoaldus escaped, renounced all claims to the throne, and lived as a studious hermit.

Cloud was the spiritual student of Saint Severinus the Hermit. Young Cloud withdrew to Provence to live as a prayerful hermit, but when his identity became known, his hermitage became a destination point for pilgrims, and he returned to Paris. Cloud became a priest, he built a monastery near Paris, a house later known as *Saint Cloud*, retired there, and led a community of holy brothers by his example. The town of Saint Cloud grew up around the monastery.



**Obscure saint of the week: St. Gratus of Aosta (Sept. 7)** became the bishop of Aosta, Italy sometime after 451. He evangelized his people, established charities, and was known as a miracle worker.

### **Gospel Shorts - Backtalk From the Mirror**

Much has been said over the centuries about "the cost of discipleship." And it always is appropriate once again to be reminded of that. It is not easy being a follower of Jesus Christ. It is not "cheap." It is not a "snap" or a "breeze." Sometimes Jesus calls us to look into the mirror of our souls and to ask some important questions about our commitment. And we may not always like what we hear back from the mirror of our faith.

Often, we need to be forced to look at ourselves, to take stock of where we are, and who we are. But when we do, we can find that indeed we can be strengthened in our witness and that we can know that Christ is with us no matter what we have to face.

### **Reflection The Power of Prayer**

As John Heird, a student in Southwestern Seminary, sat at a desk in a Fort Worth motel room, a bandit entered, pressed a revolver to his head, and said, "I am going to kill you!"

In speaking of the frightful incident later, Heird said, "Though trembling with fear, I closed my eyes and began to pray for the bandit. Then I began quoting verses from the Bible.

"Stunned and flabbergasted, the bandit asked, 'Aren't you afraid to die?' Then he pushed me into the bathroom and tied my hands to the door."

Freeing himself, the student returned to his desk. The bandit and Heird's Bible were gone. Cartridges which might have been used to take the life of the student were left!



CONGRATULATIONS AND BLESSINGS TO KEVIN AND KIM MAURITZEN WHO WERE MARRIED ON APRIL 5, 1975 AT MATERNITY BVM CHURCH IN BOURBONNAIS. THEY CELEBRATED 50 YEARS WITH A MASS & RENEWAL OF WEDDING COMMITMENT LEAD BY BISHOP RONALD A. HICKS. IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL CEREMONY WITH MANY COUPLES AT ST. RAYMOND CATHEDRAL IN JOLIET, IL ON AUG. 17, 2025

*Happy 50th Anniversary*



Catholic Snacks, Get Fed  
7 Saints for the Back to School Season  
The Church gives us saints to guide, strengthen, and inspire our learning.

It's here already—back-to-school season.



Every August, it seems to sneak up on us. The start of a new school year can feel a little overwhelming, but it's also a fresh opportunity, for students and non-students alike, to get organized, refocus our priorities, be inspired to keep learning, and pursue excellence.

As Catholics, we don't have to face this season on our own. The saints are powerful intercessors and faithful friends who want to help us along the way.

Here are seven saints to pray with during this back-to-school season:

**St. Thomas Aquinas – Patron of Scholars**

St. Thomas is a classic patron for students. He wasn't just brilliant—he also knew how to place his learning in service of God. His famous prayer before study is still prayed by students today.

*Pray to him when:* you need focus, clarity, and the wisdom to use your studies well.

**St. Joseph of Cupertino – Patron of Exams**

Known for his struggles in academics, St. Joseph passed his priestly exams by a small miracle. His story gives hope to anyone who feels overwhelmed by tests.

*Pray to him when:* you're facing exams or presentations and need peace and confidence.

**St. Catherine of Alexandria – Patron of Students and Philosophers**

Brilliant, articulate, and courageous, St. Catherine defended the faith with wisdom that amazed scholars of her time.

*Pray to her when:* you're writing essays, preparing debates, or need courage to stand up for the

**St. Monica – Patron of Mothers**

St. Monica prayed faithfully for her son, St. Augustine, through years of difficulty. She is a model of perseverance and trust in God.

*Pray to her when:* you feel worried about your children's choices or need encouragement to stay patient and prayerful.

**St. Joseph – Patron of Workers and Families**

As the foster father of Jesus, St. Joseph balanced the demands of family life and daily work with quiet strength. He understands the challenges of providing and caring for a household.

*Pray to him when:* you're balancing schedules, work, and family life during the hectic school year.

**St. Frances of Rome – Patron of Homemakers**

Known for managing her household with love and holiness while still serving the poor, St. Frances shows how ordinary tasks can be sanctified.

*Pray to her when:* you need grace in the busyness of chores, errands, and after-school routines.

**St. Gianna Molla – Patron of Mothers and Physicians**

A modern saint, St. Gianna was a doctor, wife, and mother who managed the challenges of modern family life with deep faith.

*Pray to her when:* you're stretched thin between family responsibilities and personal demands, and need peace in the middle of it all.

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**Reflection**

**In the Stillness of Thine Heart**

A traveler lost in the desert despaired of ever finding water. He struggled up one hilltop after another in the hope of sighting a stream somewhere. He looked in every direction with no success.

As he staggered onward, his foot caught on a dry bush and he stumbled to the ground. That's where he lay, with no energy, no desire to struggle anymore, no hope of surviving.

As he lay there, he suddenly became aware of the silence of the desert. On all sides a majestic stillness reigned, undisturbed by the slightest sound. Suddenly he raised his head. He had heard something. Something so faint that only the sharpest ear and the deepest silence would lead to its detection: the sound of running water.

Heartened by the hope that the sound aroused in him, he rose and kept moving till he arrived at a stream of fresh, cool water.

## Tri-Parish Prayer Group

God invites each of us to develop a deeper prayer life, to listen for his voice, and seek his guidance. In our busy lives, this can be hard to do, especially when we feel alone, anxious, or discouraged. Perhaps the TriParish Prayer Group could be your opportunity to spend an hour in communal prayer beyond the Sunday Mass celebration. Together we can be schooled in St. Paul's entreaty to "pray without ceasing." 1 Th 5:17. Praying with and for others is an experience guiding us to include different forms of prayer: song, adoration, thanksgiving, and intercession. The TriParish Prayer Group meets each Monday evening at 7 pm at St. James Hall. YOU are invited.



### Questions Catholics Ask

#### If Jesus is God, isn't his humanity a form of play-acting?

Sooner or later, religious seekers ask this question. Being divine does seem to give Jesus a celestial advantage that puts him in a whole different category from the rest of us. In fact, our creed confirms his distinctness. Jesus is "God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, one in being with the Father." These statements are variant ways of saying Jesus shares the essence of the one he calls Father, who is the source of life and all that is.

Does this mean the sinless life and brutal death of Jesus is, in reality, a mirage? It seems contradictory to claim, as Christians do, that Jesus is truly God and truly human. One cancels out the other, since God is eternal, while mortals suffer and die. Divinity enjoys special super-natural powers over creation, whereas humans are subject to the laws of space and time and endure significant limitations.

One way to reconcile these opposing natures is through the concept of *kenosis*, or self-emptying. Saint Paul is the first to take this approach in the Hymn to Christ quoted in the letter to the Philippians. It's unclear if Paul wrote this hymn or simply refers to it. But it describes how Jesus, who's in the form of God, chooses not to cling to his privilege. Instead, Jesus empties himself of favored status and commits to the human condition. He doesn't cease to be divine, but he elects to embrace mortal existence.

Consider a missionary from the U.S. who chooses to go live in the developing world. She may spend the rest of her life, privileged education, and talent in bringing her advantages to a community that can't even dream of them. While the missionary never ceases to be a person of privilege who could easily make a phone call and be swooped away from human misery, she elects not to make that call. Such a person may well be martyred in her chosen land, subject to the same dangerous forces that claim the lives of those with whom she has cast her lot.

Is the missionary's sacrificial life a mirage? Is her violent death mere play-acting? When Jesus chooses to be incarnate in our humanity, the stakes are real. Kenosis is the kind of self-emptying we can all make, of whatever privileged status we enjoy, for the sake of others.

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:26-27; 3:5-6; Isaiah 52:13—53:12; Matthew 26:39; John 1:1-5, 14; 10:17-18; 17:5; Romans 8:3-13; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 4:4-7; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:16-18; 5:8-10; 12:2



If one of you decides  
to build a tower... LK.14:28

### A Stewardship Moment

#### Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

#### Weekend of September 13/14 2025

Among the primary themes in today's Gospel when we hear Jesus' well-known parable of the Prodigal Son is forgiveness and the need to repent. But from a stewardship point of view what is also interesting is one of the secondary themes: the failure to use responsibly the gifts that have been so generously bestowed. The youngest son who demanded his inheritance and left home broke no laws or religious commandments. His wrong doing was that he wasted his inherited wealth, the abundant gifts given to him. His sin was in his extravagant living; squandering his gifts in pursuit of selfish pleasures. Good stewards acknowledge that everything they have comes from God, and they are required to cultivate these gifts responsibly. What are our God-given gifts? Do we use them responsibly? Do we exercise good stewardship over them?



September 7, 2025

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

## Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Wis 9:13-18b | Phlm 9-10, 12-17 | Lk 14:25-33

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

I am particularly struck by this line from Solomon's prayer in today's first reading from the Book of Wisdom: "Or who ever knew your counsel, except you had given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high?" Solomon doesn't seem to be seeking direct answers to the questions he presents today, but rather, uses them as a sort of poem of praise to honor God in all his glory. In modern language, we could rephrase his questions: *What do we know that God has not instilled into our minds? What wisdom do we have that was not infused by the Holy Spirit?* There are many things that we cannot understand without the wisdom God gives us. May we, like Solomon, praise and thank God for this gift. Let us trust that where our feeble, corruptible humanity falters, our heavenly Father is our refuge in every age.

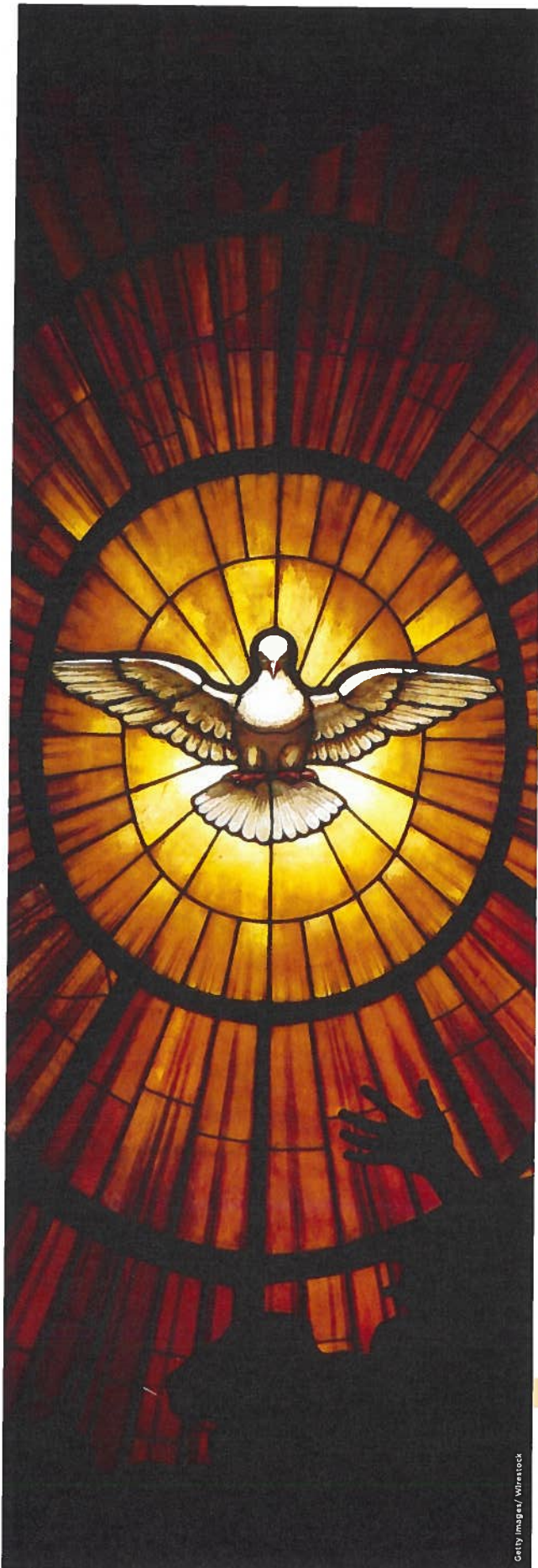
### **GO EVANGELIZE**

#### PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Today's Gospel is certainly one that we need God's wisdom to understand. This reading always makes me do a double take or a read-over. "*What did Jesus just say?!*" His words today are stark and can feel disconcerting. "If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." When I encounter a challenging Scripture such as this one, I try to immediately root myself in concrete truths about the Lord. First, I acknowledge that he is good and desires *my* good. He is all-knowing, all-powerful and all-loving. After centering on those realities, I can look at this Gospel again, but this time through a clearer lens. Ultimately, this Gospel is a piercing reminder of the radical renunciation desired by the Lord. It is a rubric for the narrow road and for sanctity. Jesus does not mince his words, nor does he seek to confuse or confound: to follow Jesus is to release our hearts from earthly attachments, to embrace our cross and to set our lives in proper order. Clear and direct? Certainly. Easy? Not at all. But doing this in union with Jesus? *Absolutely possible.*

### **REFLECT**

Today, consider reflecting on your attachments – the places you cling to anything that is not Christ. As you go into these tender places, invite Jesus to gently reveal where he wants to grant you his freedom.



## SPIRITUALITY

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Ps 119:135

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Let your face shine upon your servant,  
and teach me your laws.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel Luke 14:25-33; L129C

Great crowds were traveling with

Jesus,

and he turned and addressed them,

"If anyone comes to me without hat-

ing his father and mother,

wife and children, brothers and

sisters,

and even his own life,

he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not carry his

own cross and come after me

cannot be my disciple.

Which of you wishing to construct a

tower

does not first sit down and calculate

the cost

to see if there is enough for its

completion?

Otherwise, after laying the foundation

and finding himself unable to finish the

work

the onlookers should laugh at him and

say,

'This one began to build but did not

have the resources to finish.'

Or what king marching into battle would

not first sit down

and decide whether with ten thousand

troops

he can successfully oppose another

king

advancing upon him with twenty thou-

sand troops?

But if not, while he is still far away,

he will send a delegation to ask for

peace terms.

In the same way,

anyone of you who does not renounce

all his possessions

cannot be my disciple."

### Reflecting on the Gospel

Many who have undertaken a path of doing great things for God, by founding a new ministry or working toward a difficult goal, for example, have realized that it is one thing to set out on a path and another to sustain a commitment for the long haul. Such a scene confronts us in today's gospel.



Great crowds who were being healed and fed by Jesus were following him as he traveled. He addresses them in very sober terms about what it takes to stay with him for the whole way. He speaks about calculating the cost, not to dissuade any potential disciples, but rather to be sure that they are aware of what commitment to him demands, lest they be caught unaware. He names three of the greatest stumbling blocks: attachment to family, to possessions, and to life itself. None of these in themselves are wrong, but for disciples these attachments cannot take priority over attachment to Jesus.

The saying about hating one's own family members is jolting to our ears, as it was to Jesus's first followers. In Jesus's time, people did not conceive of themselves as individuals but derived their identity and social standing from their family, clan, village, and religious group. It would be unimaginable to cut oneself off from family; this would be tantamount to losing life itself.

Looking at other passages in the Gospel of Luke, we see that Jesus himself does not renounce his family. Unlike Mark (3:30-34), Luke (8:21) leaves open the possibility that Jesus's blood kin can also be disciples. In fact, Luke portrays Jesus's mother as one who faithfully hears the word of God and obeys; and in the story of Pentecost (Acts 1:14), Luke notes that Jesus's mother and siblings are among the disciples in the Upper Room. What Jesus asks, however, is that a disciple be willing to embrace as kin others who are not related by blood. Disciples must act as brother and sister toward those who are different, whether by physical ability or any other status marker. For some disciples, this new family will cause tension and even rupture in one's biological family. A disciple needs to be forewarned of this difficulty and be prepared to confront it. We see a concrete example in the second reading, in which Paul implores Philemon, the slave owner, to accept the slave Onesimus as a brother and an equal.

There is a curious twist in the gospel, as the parables Jesus tells would seem to advise building up one's resources in order to accomplish one's ends. The final verse takes us in exactly the opposite direction—calculating the cost of discipleship leads one to total divestment! In addition, we might note that although Luke envisions only male disciples in 14:26, elsewhere he clearly depicts women disciples (e.g., Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and the Galilean women in Luke 8:1-3, 23:44-56, and 24:1-12; Tabitha in Acts 9:36; Lydia in Acts 16; and Prisca in Acts 18), whose attachment to Jesus superseded love of family, possessions, and life itself.