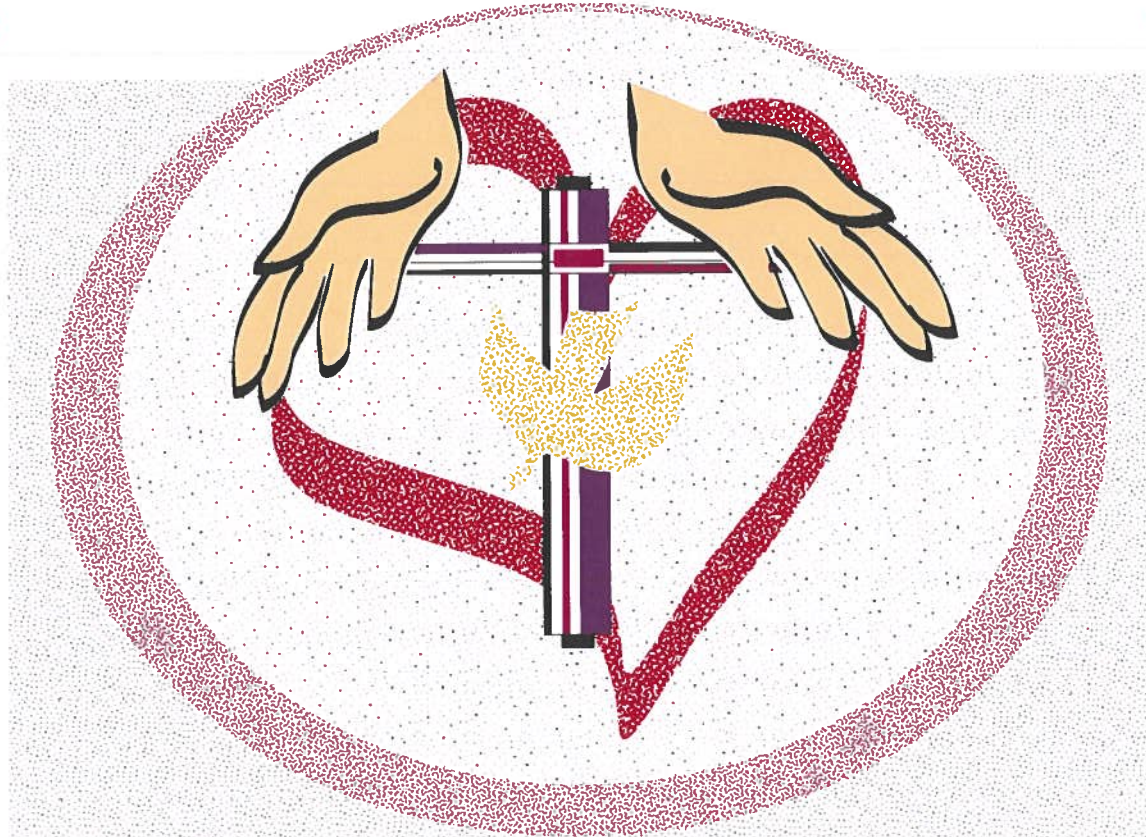


The Roman Catholic Parishes of
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher
St. James the Apostle, Irwin
Sacred Heart, Goodrich

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 21-22, 2026



If the SPIRIT of GOD
who raised JESUS from the dead
dwells in you, GOD will give life
to your mortal body also,
through his SPIRIT dwelling in 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 - 4:45pm
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Church Mailing Address:

207 E. 5th Street

Herscher, IL 60941

Phone: 815-426-2550

Quotable: "Christ, risen in glory, never tires of shining His light into our darkness. "

—Cardinal Anders Aborelius, O.C.D.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord				March 28-29, 2026	
Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, March 28 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, March 29 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, March 29 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, March 29 10:30 am	
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron	
Ushers	Brett Buza Roger Jensen Todd Datweiler Gery Wright	James Mallaney David Kirkpatrick	Bob Buente Arlen Hansen Mary Offerman Duane Papineau	Darren Lovell Larry Wolles Kim Smicker Joe Smolkovich	
Lector	Dave Emling Hillary Smith	Terri Weakley Mike Hertz	Mary Peerbolte Carrie Abrassart	Corinn Wheeler Julie Splear	
Eucharistic Minister			Reatta Gohlke	Hollie Lovell	
Servers				Sydney Weldon Avery Adams	
Greeters			Greeter—Jerry Ogrentz R. Leader—The Peerboltes	Kim Smicker	

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, March 23 (SMM)

8:00 am +Ronald Schneider (Dale & Marilyn Pfeiffer)

Tuesday, March 24 (SH)

8:00 am +Emilie Denault (Joe & Rhonda Berns)

Wednesday, March 25 (SJ)

8:00 am +Vickie Peerbolte (Joe & Connie Legris)

Friday, March 27

8:00am +Sheila Koerner (The Family)

Saturday, March 28 (SMM)

5:00 pm +Tom Buckley (Scott Frerichs)

+Gertrude Gappa (Uta Dubravec)

Sunday, March 29

7:30 am (SH) +Raymond Berns, Bessie Riley, Roberta Gagnon, Mario DalCanton (The Family)

9:00 am (SJ) +Paul Muhlstadt (Kathy & Richard Dumas)

+Beth Hubert (Steve & Dena Coy)

10:30 am (SMM) All the Parish Family

Looking Ahead

Mondays—1:00 Matter of Balance 1pm at SMM

Monday, March 30—7 Last Words 7pm SH

Tuesday, March 31—Confessions PM SJ

Wed., April 1—Tennebrae 7pm SMM

Thursday, April 3— Holy Thursday 7 pm SH

Friday, April 4—Good Friday SJ 7pm SMM

Saturday, April 5—Easter Vigil 7pm SJ

Thursday, April 9—SH CCW Spring Luncheon

Thursday, April 16—SMM Night in Italy

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 triparishcatholic communities

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—

What sins are keeping me entombed, isolated from God's love and from others? What can I do to free myself from my tomb?

Collections Weekend of March 14-15, 2026

St. Margaret Mary—\$1,728
Catholic Relief - \$397
St. James—\$1,616
Catholic Relief - \$597
Sacred Heart— \$ 1,417
Catholic Relief - \$568

The Risen Life

Death seems like an all-powerful and overwhelming force in our human lives. Physical death is something that is unavoidable but there is also another kind of death that can be experienced long before that moment in time. There is the death that can occur from within a person; kind of deadness that can dwell below the surface of a person's daily life. This deadness can manifest itself in a variety of ways. John 11:1-45 places emphasis on how Jesus is master over life and death. The story of Lazarus is employed to emphasize how Jesus is "the resurrection and the life." The fullness of this risen life is experienced in and through our commun-

Sacred Heart's Kids Helping Kids

Thank you to all who supported Our Kids helping Kids donut Sunday. Our basket winners were Jackie Cross, Kate Cloonen, and Samantha Dodds. Our 50/50 winner was Terri Weakley who generously donated part of her winnings back

We still have our jug at the entrance of the church. It will be there until the last Sunday in April for anyone who wishes to drop money in it.

Again, thank you for your support of our students and the Ronald McDonald House.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of



+Richard "Dick" Emling

Husband of Debbie Emling

May he and all the faithful departed rest in eternal peace.
Our sincere sympathy to Dick's family and friends.

Reflection— Fasting, Alms, Prayer, Lent

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Thursday evening. It begins with ashes, the solemn reminder of all our limits and the church's call to conversion. Its forty days are for remembering and becoming what baptism made us. Such a season means that the community, like the individual, puts aside much of the business that occupies it all year long. We cannot keep Lent unless it has its own space, greatly free of the usual round of activities.

What is Lent to be free *for*? For staying close to the catechumens as they take the final steps toward baptism, for hearing and pondering the scriptures that hold us to the shape and meaning of our own baptism. In practice, Lent is free for the disciplines of prayer and of fasting and of almsgiving that provide us the way to charge into the battle with all that we renounced at baptism.

Parish News:

All Parishes—

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

St. Margaret Mary-

St. James-

⇒ Our St. James Lenten Project is Georgie's Closet. Georgie's Closet is an organization that is dedicated to providing children in foster care and their foster families the essentials needed to feel loved and supported. We will be collecting monetary donations to aid in scholarships for families to cover kids' sports, extracurricular activities, hair care and other random expenses. Donations can be dropped off in the hall or in the Sunday collection. Checks should be written out to Georgie's Closet.

Sacred Heart—

-The week of March 22, the Blessed Virgin Mary candle burns in prayer for Julianna Meli

⇒ "SPRING IS COMING" and that means so is Sacred Heart C.C.W.'s Spring Luncheon with Bunco on Thursday April 9th, 11:00 a.m. in Sacred Heart's parish hall. There will be a delicious lunch, bunco with prizes, cash & basket raffles, 50/50 and door prizes. Continue returning cash raffle money & stubs in the Sunday collection. If you have a basket that you wish to donate, be sure to list the items on a paper on the outside of the basket. All baskets and (door prizes of \$5 value and up) may be dropped off at the hall and placed on the bar. Hope to see you April 9th!

You Are Invited



Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026 at 7p.m.

Maternity BVM Parish will once again be presenting the Living Last Supper. Come and join us for this free event held inside our historic church depicting the Last Supper from each of the disciples' points of view as they wonder, "Is it I?"

THE SEASON OF LENT

Prepare your heart for the Lord



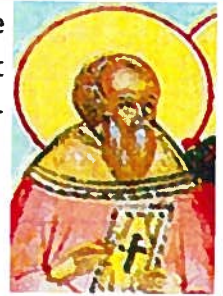
Lenten devotions for the week of March 23rd

Tuesday March 24th Evening Prayer 7:00 SMM

Wednesday March 25th Scriptural Stations of the Cross 7:00 SMM

Friday March 27th Traditional Stations of the Cross 3:00 SMM

Obscure Saint of the week: St. Basil of Ancyra was a priest in Ancyra, Galatia (in Asia Minor). He fought against the Arian heretics in the reign of emperor Constantius and against the iconoclast heretics in the persecutions of Julian the Apostate. His defense of orthodox Christianity led to his imprisonment, torture and execution.



Other obscure Saint of the week: St. Benevenuto Scotivoli of Osimo studied law at Bologna, Italy, a student with Saint Sylvester Gozzolini. Benevenuto became the archdeacon in Ancona, Italy. Later he became a Franciscan. Benevenuto was chosen bishop of Osimo, Italy by Pope Urban IV. He served for 13 years during the Guelph and Ghibelline war. Knowing the date of his death, he gave away all his property to the poor just before passing on.

Questions Catholics Ask

What do Catholics believe about the Eucharist?

The centrality of Eucharist to Catholic life can't be overemphasized. It's "the source and summit" of Christian life. (*Lumen Gentium*, no.11) This means our life as disciples begins at the Table of the Lord and always returns here.

Eucharist means thanksgiving. Eucharist refers to the ritual of the Mass as a whole, or is shorthand for the Body and Blood of Christ we share in communion. The term reminds us that what brings us together is gratitude. What are we grateful for? The mystery of Christ who has died, is risen, and will come again in glory. This past/present/future reality of Christ includes us in its magnificent unfolding. We're not bystanders at a miracle, but participants in a never-ending feast.

Like many of our Protestant sisters and brothers, Catholics celebrate Eucharist as a *memorial* of the last supper Jesus shared with his friends. However, we also believe this sacrament *renews* the sacrifice Jesus makes of his life expressed in his words: "Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body... Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my Blood..." What was, now is. Our participation in this supper transforms us into the Body of Christ for the world right now.

When the early church gathered for what they called "the breaking of the bread" or "the Supper of the Lord," they did more than eat and drink. They also listened to instruction from local leaders, prayed, supported each other, shared financial resources with those in need, and received teachings from the apostles—whether in person, delivered by an eyewitness, or by means of a letter passed among the communities. The gathering also served in a variety of ministries as the Spirit inspired the members to do. We preserve these elements of Eucharist in the prayers, Scripture readings, homily, and collection, as well as opportunities for faith formation and service practiced in various ways by each parish community.

Recent Catholic theology also directs our attention to the "dangerous memory" contained in our Eucharist. Christ's passion points to the reality of unjust suffering, the need for its redress, and the hope of transcendence from a world marred by sin and death. Our Eucharist reminds us that the call to justice sounds every time we "proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes."

Scripture:

Mark 14:22-25; Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20; John 6:34-59; Acts of the Apostles 2:42; 4:32-35; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26



THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS IN YOU

The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

A man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. This was the same Mary who massaged the Lord's feet with aromatic oils and then wiped them with her hair. It was her brother Lazarus who was sick. So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Master, the one you love so very much is sick."

When Jesus got the message, he said, "This sickness is not fatal. It will become an occasion to show God's glory by glorifying God's Son."

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, but oddly, when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed on where he was for two more days. After the two days, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

They said, "Rabbi, you can't do that. The Jews are out to kill you, and you're going back?"

Jesus replied, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in daylight doesn't stumble because there's plenty of light from the sun. Walking at night, he might very well stumble because he can't see where he's going."

He said these things, and then announced, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. I'm going to wake him up."

The disciples said, "Master, if he's gone to sleep, he'll get a good rest and wake up feeling fine." Jesus was talking about death, while his disciples thought he was talking about taking a nap.

Then Jesus became explicit: "Lazarus died. And I am glad for your sakes that I wasn't there. You're about to be given new grounds for believing. Now let's go to him."

That's when Thomas, the one called the Twin, said to his companions, "Come along. We might as well die with him."

When Jesus finally got there, he found Lazarus already four days dead. Bethany was near Jerusalem, only a couple of miles away, and many of the Jews were visiting Martha and Mary, sympathizing with them over their brother. Martha heard Jesus was coming and went out to meet him. Mary remained in the house.

Martha said, "Master, if you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died. Even now, I know that whatever you ask God he will give you."

Jesus said, "Your brother will be raised up."

Martha replied, "I know that he will be raised up in the resurrection at the end of time."

"You don't have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Master. All along I have believed that you are the Messiah, the Son of God who comes into the world."

After saying this, she went to her sister Mary and whispered in her ear, "The Teacher is here and is asking for you."

The moment she heard that, she jumped up and ran out to him. Jesus had not yet entered the town but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When her sympathizing Jewish friends saw Mary run off, they followed her, thinking she was on her way to the tomb to weep there. Mary came to where Jesus was waiting and fell at his feet, saying, "Master, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her sobbing and the Jews with her sobbing, a deep anger welled up within him. He said, "Where did you put him?"

"Master, come and see," they said. Now Jesus wept. The Jews said, "Look how deeply he loved him."

Others among them said, "Well, if he loved him so much, why didn't he do something to keep him from dying? After all, he opened the eyes of a blind man."

Then Jesus, the anger again welling up within him, arrived at the tomb. It was a simple cave in the hillside with a slab of stone laid against it. Jesus said, "Remove the stone."

The sister of the dead man, Martha, said, "Master, by this time there's a stench. He's been dead four days!"

Jesus looked her in the eye. "Didn't I tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

Then, to the others, "Go ahead, take away the stone."

They removed the stone. Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and prayed, "Father, I'm grateful that you have listened to me. I know you always do listen, but on account of this crowd standing here I've spoken so that they might believe that you sent me."

Then he shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" And he came out, a cadaver, wrapped from head to toe, and with a kerchief over his face.

Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him loose."

That was a turnaround for many of the Jews who were with Mary. They saw what Jesus did, and believed in him (*from John 11*).



Lazarus, come out!
JN. 11:43

Catholic Snacks, Get Fed
Is the Mass modeled after the Book of Revelation?

If you've ever wondered why the Catholic Mass sometimes *feels* so majestic, symbolic, and almost otherworldly, you're not alone. Many Catholics sense that something extraordinary is happening in the liturgy — something that transcends time and space.

What many do not realize is that the Mass as we know it is not only shaped by the Last Supper and Christ's command to "do this in memory of me." In a profound way, it is modeled after the **heavenly worship described in the Book of Revelation**.

The idea may sound unfamiliar, but it's deeply rooted in Scripture and early Christian imagination — and one of the clearest theological explorations of this is found in [The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth](#) by Professor Scott Hahn.

A Heavenly Feast Foretold

In Revelation 5 and 7, John's vision draws us into the throne room of God:

"Then I saw a Lamb, looking as though it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne... and they sang a new song..." (Revelation 5:6, 9)

Later he sees a great multitude crying out: "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:10)

What makes Hahn's book so captivating is his observation that the *structure* of the Mass reflects this vision of heaven.

In Revelation, worship begins with **adoration** before the throne. The Mass begins with the Introductory Rites and the Kyrie. In heaven, the Lamb is presented, slain yet victorious. In the Mass, we present the Lamb in the Eucharist — crucified, risen, and present.

Then the heavenly assembly proclaims praise, thanks, and glory. In the Mass we hear the Gloria (outside of penitential seasons), the Sanctus, and the Eucharistic Prayer — all lifted in praise and thanksgiving.

One striking detail Hahn highlights is the connection between the **Table of the Lord** and the **table before the throne** in Revelation.

In Revelation 19:9, the heavenly angels say:

"Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb."

This "wedding feast" language is not incidental. In the ancient world, a banquet was a symbol of covenant friendship. God's ultimate covenant in Christ is sealed not with a handshake, but with a feast — the Eucharist.

Hahn points out that the *structure* of the Mass — the Liturgy of the Word followed by the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the prayers of offering, the breaking of the bread, and the sending forth — mirrors the pattern of divine worship described in Revelation.

In other words, when we gather for Mass, we are not just remembering Christ's Last Supper. We are *entering a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy* — the marriage feast of the Lamb.

In *The Lamb's Supper*, Professor Hahn recounts a moment from his own experience as a convert and Scripture scholar. Early in his Catholic journey, he was struck by how often Revelation wasn't quoted in Protestant worship but was central to the Catholic imagination of liturgy. It wasn't a random academic curiosity — it was a lived reality in the prayers, gestures, and signs of the Mass itself.

He noticed that several elements of the Mass — the procession, the prayers of praise, the offering, the "amen" chorus — had uncanny parallels in the heavenly scenes of Revelation. It was a pivotal insight, not only for his scholarship, but for his experience of the Mass as participatory, cosmic worship.

Why This Matters for Us

Understanding that the Mass is patterned on Revelation does more than satisfy theological curiosity. It transforms our participation.

The Second Vatican Council teaches that the liturgy is "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed" and "the font from which all her power flows" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10). When we see the Mass as *heaven on earth*, it becomes clear that we are not in a classroom, not in a meeting, not even simply in a meal. We are entering into the same worship the saints and angels offer around the throne of God.

The Catechism echoes this mystery:

"In the liturgy we are given a share in what is 'going on' in heaven: Christ is there in person... and the worship of the Church is united with that of the whole heavenly liturgy." (CCC 1136)

In every Eucharistic celebration, heaven and earth meet. The veil between this world and the next is thin. The Lamb who was slain stands with us, and we with Him.

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March 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ez 37:12-14 | Rom 8:8-11 | Jn 11:1-45

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

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

The raising of Lazarus marks an irreversible turning point in Jesus' ministry. It's impossible to publicly raise someone from the dead and continue to fly beneath the radar. It's no surprise that the next time we meet Jesus, he'll be greeted with Hosannas and palm branches as the promised Son of David. But we also know that by raising Lazarus, Jesus attracts the attention of his enemies and sets himself on a course that ultimately leads to the cross. In our own life of discipleship, there may be times when we will have to step up and make a decisive and public choice for our faith or our values. Standing up for what's right may bring praise and admiration, or lead to misunderstanding or even persecution. We can draw strength in these decisive moments from the knowledge that the One we follow is the resurrection and the life. Any risk we take in following him is worth it in the end.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Today's Gospel passage features the shortest and perhaps one of the most profound verses in all of Scripture: "And Jesus wept." This text reveals that before he restored his friend to life, we have a God who weeps with us over the losses and tragedies of our lives. Likewise, before we can announce the Good News of the Gospel, we must learn the "art of accompaniment," as Pope Francis reminded us in *Evangelii Gaudium*. (169) This requires that we offer "our closeness and our compassionate gaze" to all those we seek to evangelize. When our first action consists of compassion, empathy, and entering into the joys and sorrows of others, our efforts at evangelization will bear much fruit.

INVITATION

St. Paul tells us to "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." (Rom 12:15) As we enter the final week of Lent and prepare for Holy Week, spend some time thinking about who in your life is experiencing a particular moment of joy or sorrow at this time. Consider one concrete action you can take to be present to them: it could be dropping off a meal to someone who recently had surgery, sitting with someone who lost a loved one and listening as they share stories of their lives together, or, bringing a special treat to celebrate a friend's recent accomplishment. Then - do it.

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 11:25a, 26

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;
whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will
never die.

Gospel

John 11:1-45; L34A

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from
Bethany,
the village of Mary and her sister
Martha.

Mary was the one who had anointed
the Lord with perfumed oil
and dried his feet with her hair;
it was her brother Lazarus who was
ill.

So the sisters sent word to Jesus
saying,

“Master, the one you love is ill.”

When Jesus heard this he said,

“This illness is not to end in death,
but is for the glory of God,
that the Son of God may be glorified
through it.”

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister
and Lazarus.

So when he heard that he was ill,
he remained for two days in the place
where he was.

Then after this he said to his disciples,
“Let us go back to Judea.”

The disciples said to him,

“Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to
stone you,
and you want to go back there?”

Jesus answered,

“Are there not twelve hours in a day?”

If one walks during the day, he does
not stumble,

because he sees the light of this
world.

*Continued in Appendix A, p. 278, or
John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45 in Appendix A,
p. 279.*

Reflecting on the Gospel

One thing you want to be able to depend upon is that your loved ones will be with you in time of need. So the most puzzling part of today’s gospel is that Jesus does not go right away to be with his dear friend Lazarus and his sisters after he receives word of Lazarus’s illness. Why does he delay? Martha says to him forthrightly, “Lord,

if you had been here, my brother would not have died” (v. 21), and soon afterward her sister Mary confronts him with the very same complaint (v. 32). Later, the onlookers ask, “Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?” (v. 37). The troubling question, voiced three times, is: Where is Jesus when you need him?

It adds to the puzzlement that at other times in the Gospel of John, Jesus does come to the aid of persons in need of healing: the royal official’s

son in Capernaum (4:46-54), a man who was paralyzed at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-18), and a man born blind near the pool of Siloam (9:1-41). Why would Jesus extend himself to these people and not to his close friends?

The two days Jesus delayed in going to Bethany may have been time that he needed to discern whether it was “the hour” for him to take this fatal step. It is clear that to go to Judea would put Jesus at great risk. His disciples twice try to dissuade him from going there (11:7-8, 12). Thomas’s wry remark, “Let us also go to die with him” (11:16), proves to be exactly true; the chapter ends with the Sanhedrin planning to put Jesus to death (11:53).

As Jesus’s followers try to build communities of equal disciples, it is a challenge to embrace as friends those who are not kin and those to whom they are not naturally drawn. It is even more difficult to be willing to lay down one’s life for any of those befriended, as Jesus does. In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus’s mission is to bring life to the full for all (10:10) by offering friendship to all persons and drawing them to himself (12:32). Jesus loves Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (vv. 3, 5, 35). But he also loves all other persons—to the death. There are no favorites or best friends. The anonymous Beloved Disciple stands for each person who allows himself or herself to be loved by Jesus and to love him in return. All of us beloved of Jesus can put ourselves in the place of the one who rests on Jesus’s bosom (13:23).

When one chooses to abide in Jesus, then he is always present, even if not in the same physical, earthly way the first beloved disciples wanted him to be. As Martha professes her belief in the risen One, she affirms that he is always truly present and that all who die believing in him are likewise living and present still. Such belief does not take away grief for the dear departed but turns our mourning into hope-filled joy.

