

## PARISH BULLETIN

**SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – February 12, 2023**

**SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – February 19, 2023**

The schedule published herein continues to the weekend of February 26, 2023



*Sermon on the Mount by Laura James*

### **Saint John XXIII Roman Catholic Church**

**3390 Portage Avenue**

**Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3K 0Z3**

**Telephone: 204-832-7175 • Fax: 204-885-2447**

**Email: office@johnxxiii.ca • Website: www.johnxxiii.ca**

**Office Hours:** On designated afternoons 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm  
and at other times for pre-arranged appointments

#### **SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST**

##### **SUNDAY LITURGIES (MASSES)**

Saturday 4:00 p.m., Sunday 9:00 a.m. and 11:45 a.m.

##### **WEEKDAY LITURGIES**

*As announced in the schedule in this bulletin.*

##### **ASSISTANCE TO THE SICK AND SHUT-IN**

For emergencies, you may contact the parish office

##### **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSIONS)**

As circumstances permit, on Friday afternoons or by appointment

Please continue to follow the rules of good hygiene including hand washing/sanitizing and cough etiquette.  
For the safety and comfort of all, please self-screen before coming to church. **Stay home if you are sick.**  
**Individuals may continue to use face masks based on their preference, personal risk, or other reasons.**

### **PARISH PASTORAL TEAM**

**Pastor: Reverend Fr. Robert Polz**

204-832-7335      rpolz.johnxxiii@gmail.com

**Pastoral Assistant: Sharon Camier**

204-832-7206      sharon@johnxxiii.ca

**Trustee: Loris Vendramelli**

204-888-8200      lvendro8@gmail.com

**Trustee: William Gould**

204-832-7175      william.d.gould@gmail.com

**Custodian: José Barrera**

204-888-9340

**Music Ministry: Donna Vendramelli**

204-888-8200      d\_vendramelli@mymts.net

**Building and Maintenance Chair: Brad McKay**

204-795-6788      br.mckay@outlook.com

**Parish Pastoral Council Facilitator: Laurette Burch**

204-885-6988      burchd@mymts.net

#### **FAITH FORMATION:**

Contact our Pastoral Assistant (Sharon) for further information concerning catechism materials for lessons to take place in the home setting and/or at church on Sunday mornings as circumstances permit.

**SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION (BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, EUCHARIST):** Contact our Pastoral Assistant for further information.

**SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK:** Contact the Pastor (Fr. Robert).

**SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE:** Arrangements for preparation and celebration should be made at least six months in advance.

**CELEBRATION OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS:** Contact the parish office before finalizing arrangements with funeral directors.



## Ash Wednesday this year is on February 22, 2023

*Please bring last year's palms to church by February 19<sup>th</sup> so they may be burned in preparation for Ash Wednesday.*

**Ash Wednesday Mass with the distribution of ashes will be celebrated at 7:00 p.m. in Saint John XXIII Church.**



*As circumstances permit, we hope to livestream Ash Wednesday Mass via our parish YouTube channel.*



## LECTIO DIVINA

**Wednesday evenings during Lent  
immediately following Mass**

*Archdiocese of Winnipeg Synod Implementation  
Global Initiative #35: "We encourage all the baptized  
to acquire familiarity with Sacred Scripture"*



This Lent, as part of the ongoing process of the implementation of our Archdiocesan Synod in our parish, we invite you to connect with family and friends in a very special way using **Lectio Divina** or "Breaking open the Word." This ancient method of praying with sacred texts dates to the fourth century. The four simple steps of **Lectio Divina** are READING, MEDITATION, PRAYER, and CONTEMPLATION. **During Lent here at Saint John XXIII Parish, we will hold a Lectio Divina small group session following Mass on Wednesday evenings in the Guadalupe Room.** We will listen together and reflect on the Gospel passage for the following Sunday. All those interested are welcome to participate!



## DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE RELIEF EFFORTS

**FOR TURKEY AND SYRIA:** On Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, a powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake rocked southeastern Turkey and northern Syria, toppling hundreds of buildings and killing more than 20,000 people. Development and Peace is joining the Caritas

Internationalis family in responding to this tragedy. Donations can be made on the Development and Peace website, by calling 1-888-664-3387, or by mailing a cheque written in favour of Development and Peace and marked "Emergency – Earthquake Turkey/Syria". For further information go to [www.devp.org/en/](http://www.devp.org/en/)



**The following items are available at the parish office for a very reasonable cost as noted:**

<b>NRSV Bible – Catholic Edition, hardcover</b>	<b>\$20.00 per Bible</b>	<i>(\$40.00 for LARGE PRINT edition)</i>
<b>Living with Christ SUNDAY MISSAL 2022 – 2023</b>	<b>\$6.95 per copy</b>	
<b>Living with Christ Missalette – monthly edition</b>	<b>\$5.00 per copy</b>	
<b>Candles blessed on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord</b>	<b>\$6.00 per box</b>	<i>(each box contains two candles)</i>

## **Please pray for the loved ones of our community in need of healing and comfort:**

Dora Auger, Gladys Barton, Annette and Maynard Bates, Monica Bird, George Bonnefoy, Freda Broughton, Barry and Sharon Burke, Ken Burke, Donna Burns, Alan and Cathleen Critchley, René Defries, John and Marina Foucart, René Gobeil, Helen Hallack, Darryn Hellofs, Bev and Steve Hewitt, Angela Krassie, Violet Lebedeff, Marie Mangin, Norman Mangin, Tim Mangin, Frances Mijker, Zonia Patson, Shirley Payment, Owen Robertson, Carol Ann Robinson, Jerome Strachan, Joe and Maria Wallack, and Helen Yankoski.



## TABERNACLE LAMP OFFERING

**February 12 – 18, 2023** *Intentions of Alfred and Marietta Gendive, requested by Henrietta Zhanel*

**February 19 – 25, 2023** *For those injured in the recent Quebec day-care bus crash, for the repose of the souls of those killed, and for their families, requested by Henrietta Zhanel*

*If you wish to have the Tabernacle Lamp in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of Saint John XXIII Church burn in memory of a loved one, to honour a special occasion, or for a particular intention, you may make arrangements through the Parish Office.*





## THE SEASON OF LENT:

Lent is the annual forty-day season of preparation leading up to the celebration of the Sacred Paschal Triduum of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In current western Church tradition, the season of Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday until just before the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. Without getting into all the nuances of the historical development and understanding of Lent over the centuries, if Sundays are excluded from the count, this season of prayer and fasting is still understood to last approximately forty days.

The forty-day length of Lent is rooted in the biblical usage of the number forty. Forty is typically indicative of a time of testing, trial, penance, purification, and renewal. In the New Testament, forty days is the length of Jesus' time of trial in the desert in preparation for his public ministry of proclaiming the Gospel.

During this special season for the ascent to the holy mountain of Easter, the Catholic faithful are advised to focus on the three main practices of Lent: PRAYER, FASTING, and ALMSGIVING. Doing these three things helps to open our hearts to confession of sin and commitment to repentance. During Lent we are called to own up to our mistakes and poor choices, to remove temptations, and to prepare our hearts for the journey ahead, especially by celebrating the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

In addition to penance, the season of Lent focuses on recalling and preparing for Baptism. Alongside the catechumens, "the Elect" who enter into an intense season of prayer in preparation for the Easter Sacraments of Christian Initiation, the rest of the Christian faithful recall and reflect on their own baptismal dignity in preparation for the renewal of their Baptismal Promises at Easter.

During this holy season we unite our Lenten disciplines with the needs of those all around the world. By our prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, by the conversion of our hearts, we stand in solidarity with all who suffer and we do our part so they too may experience hope, love, and the mercy of God.



*8th Annual*  
*Multi-Faith*  
**LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST**  
SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER  
**MAYOR SCOTT GILLINGHAM**  
"For the Sake of the City"  
**TUES  
FEB  
28  
2023  
7:30 AM**  
**RBC CONVENTION CENTRE**  
TICKETS: \$40 AT [EVENTBRITE.CA](http://EVENTBRITE.CA)  
SPONSORED BY  
 MANITOBA  
MULTIFAITH  
COUNCIL

**St. Charles Catholic School  
Spring Fundraiser**

**PLACE YOUR ORDER ONLINE UNTIL APRIL 15<sup>TH</sup>**  
Shop early to avoid disappointment at [www.glenleagreenhouses.com](http://www.glenleagreenhouses.com)

**\$25 Plant Cards** also available! It's a perfect gift for any plant enthusiast!  
Gift Cards are a physical card that can be used in store or at our booth at any of the markets we attend. They are not accepted as payment for wholesale or fundraiser purchases.

Hello Everyone,  
This year's spring fundraising campaign will be a sale of excellent quality and competitively priced bedding plants, perennials, hanging baskets, vegetables, herbs, succulents, and container gardens. Fall Garden Mums can be easily ordered now in the spring for delivery shortly after Labor Day in the early Fall. Gift Cards are also available.

You as the customer can follow these simple steps to shop and pay online at Glenlea Greenhouses website at [www.glenleagreenhouses.com](http://www.glenleagreenhouses.com).

1. On their homepage select **Spring Fundraiser**.
2. Once you are finished shopping, go to the **cart** page and select "**to support & pick up at a fundraiser group**". Afterwards, three fields will appear.
3. Please select from the dropdown **St. Charles Catholic School**
4. Under **Name of Seller** (the name of the individual you are supporting with this fundraiser's name) **input Name of Seller Info Here\*** optional field, state "**leave empty**" if your group does not need this field as it will still appear on our website as a field.
5. Lastly, check the **Checkbox** to confirm all the information in the above fields are correct and click **check out & pay**.
6. Input your email and personal information and click **Continue**.
7. Select "**Fundraiser - To Support and Pickup at the Fundraiser Group I selected on CART page**" then click **Continue** to payment method.
8. Once on the payment method screen, payment can be completed with VISA, MASTERCARD, and AMERICAN EXPRESS credit cards or INTERAC e-transfer to the Greenhouse.

Shortly after completion of the order, an email confirmation is sent to the email address provided confirming delivery location and date, along with the products ordered. **Online orders will be accepted until 11:59 pm on April 15th.**

The plants will be delivered to **St. Charles Catholic School** on **Tuesday, May 23, 2023** and we will need all orders to be picked up by **2:00-6:00 pm**. All the proceeds from this fundraiser will go towards **St. Charles Catholic School**.

We thank you for your support!

Top: Impatiens Beacon, Middle: Callibachoa Cabaret, Bottom: Proven Winners Vegetable & Herb Raised Planter.

**CCRS OF MB - 40 DAY FASTING SIGN UP FOR LENT 2023:** The CCRS of Manitoba will be leading a 40-day Bread and Water personal fasting for Lent 2023 – Starting on **Ash Wednesday February 22, 2023 and ending on Easter Sunday April 09, 2023**. You can visit their website - [www.catholicrenewalservices.com](http://www.catholicrenewalservices.com) – for more information or fill out the sign up form [here](#).

**ONE: WORSHIP IN THE ROUND:** Join the Youth & Young Adult Ministries of the Archdioceses of Winnipeg and St. Boniface on **February 24, 2023, 7:00 pm** at Mary Mother of the Church Parish for Worship in the Round. Our theme is **ONE** taken from Ephesians 4:5 "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." in which we are all called to be one with our Lord and to live out our baptismal calling. This evening will begin with Mass followed by the worship proper in the parish hall. Let us come together as young people of faith to re-center ourselves in Christ as we enter the season of Lent. This event is free to attend and please [register through this link](#) and get your event ticket! We hope to see you there!

### **CATHOLIC MARRIAGE CONFERENCE: BREATHE – Recharge and Refresh Your Marriage**

A Catholic Marriage Conference will be held IN PERSON, **March 17 and 18, 2023** in Winnipeg, hosted by the Saint Emile Parish Marriage, Family & Life Ministry in partnership with the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface and the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. This is an opportunity to invest in your relationship by stepping away from the busyness of life in order to recharge, refresh and journey deeper into the sacrament of Marriage. Early Bird Price - \$199 per couple - SAVE \$60 - From January 5<sup>th</sup> to February 16<sup>th</sup>, after the 16<sup>th</sup> it's \$259 per couple. Schedule: Friday, March 17, 2023 from 6:00 pm to 9:45 pm / Saturday, March 18, 2023, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Speakers: Gerald and Denise Montpetit from Cat.Chat Productions, John and Tracy Connelly from Bruno, SK. Find information and registration at: [www.catholicmarriageandfamily.com](http://www.catholicmarriageandfamily.com)

**SAVE THE DATE: 2023 CARITAS AWARD DINNER:** Join the Catholic Foundation of Manitoba for their annual Caritas Award Dinner on **April 27, 2023**. This year's theme is Creating Health Relationships, One Conversation at a Time. The Caritas Award Honourees are Janelle Delorme & Norma McDonald, CSC. The Service Award will go to Most Reverend Murray Chatlain, Archbishop of Keewatin-The Pas. The event will support this year's charity of choice: Returning to Spirit. **Tickets available for purchase online at [www.catholicfoundation.mb.ca](http://www.catholicfoundation.mb.ca).**

**ST. MARY'S ACADEMY FOUNDATION MARIAN AWARDS GALA:** St. Mary's Academy Foundation is delighted to host its Marian Awards Gala on **Friday, May 5, 2023** at the RBC Convention Centre. Join them to honour the Legacy of Women at St. Mary's Academy who continue to Hold High the Torch. Recipient(s) will be announced in the coming months. Funds raised will directly support school programs which open doors for young women such as the Academy's new Tartan Technology & Innovation Centre. Find out more details, purchase tickets and see **Sponsorship Opportunities** at [www.smamb.ca/events/marian-awards](http://www.smamb.ca/events/marian-awards). Anyone with questions is asked to reach out to Kaylene Kessler, Advancement Manager, at [kkessler@smamb.ca](mailto:kkessler@smamb.ca) or 204-478-6031.

*For other news and events in and around the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, go to the website: [www.archwinnipeg.ca](http://www.archwinnipeg.ca)*



## **Burying the Dead, Grieving Well**

A Guide for Catholics on Bodily Disposition and Grief



## **BURYING THE DEAD, GRIEVING WELL**

### **A Guide for Catholics on Bodily Disposition and Grief**

In recent decades, there have been numerous changes to the treatment of the bodily remains of the deceased within our Canadian and North American societies, due to rapid developments in the technologies used in bodily disposition. The new practices concerning the treatment of the bodies of the departed have direct consequences on the way we live out our grief. They also influence our ability to embark upon a path of healing after the loss we have experienced. The Catholic Bishops of Canada are proposing to the faithful and to all people of good will this reflection on the ways we treat the bodies of the deceased and live out our grief when faced with the death of a loved one. We are offering this guide to dealing with death and the various forms of bodily disposition, as well as the Catholic liturgical and pastoral practices that accompany the grieving process. We hope it will be useful for families and friends dealing with the loss of a loved one, for pastors and those who welcome and accompany the bereaved, as well as for those in the funeral industry who take the religious dimension into account.

The full document can be accessed on the CCCB website at [bit.ly/cccb\\_buryingthedead](http://bit.ly/cccb_buryingthedead).

# SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY 12 – 26, 2023

*As circumstances suggest, the schedule published here may be subject to change.*

<b>Sunday, February 12</b>	<b>SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME</b>
4:00 pm Saturday	MASS – <i>Dolores Medina+</i> (d. January 15 <sup>th</sup> ), requested by Medina family
5:15 pm Saturday	Valentine's Dinner and Dance (parish hall)
9:00 am	MASS (livestreamed) – <i>Matt and Emily Bostwick+</i> , requested by Bev and Steve Hewitt
11:45 am	MASS – "Pro populo" / Intentions of parishioners
1:15 pm	Confirmation Preparation Session (parish hall)
<b>Monday, February 13</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
	Mass (offered in private) – <i>In thanksgiving to St. Rita, req. by Cathleen and Alan Critchley</i>
<b>Tuesday, February 14</b>	<b>MEMORIAL: SAINT CYRIL, Monk and SAINT METHIDIUS, Bishop</b>
	Mass (offered in private) – <i>All the faithful departed+</i> , requested by Tannena Korolyk
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Office Hours – call or ring door buzzer for assistance
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Knitting Group (downstairs in room 8)
<b>Wednesday, February 15</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
6:45 pm	<b>OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP DEVOTIONS</b>
7:00 pm	MASS – <i>Intentions of Benjamin Gendive (health)</i> , requested by Alfred and Marietta Gendive
<b>Thursday, February 16</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
	Mass (offered in private) – <i>Albin Joseph Polz+</i> (4 <sup>th</sup> anniv.), requested by the Polz family
<b>Friday, February 17</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
10:45 am	MASS at Sturgeon Creek I Retirement Residence, 10 Hallonquist Drive – <i>Intentions of Melody Plummer (re birthday)</i> , requested by Mona Harper
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Office Hours – call or ring door buzzer for assistance
3:00 pm	Recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy
<b>Saturday, February 18</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
4:00 pm	MASS for Sunday – <i>Dolores Medina+</i> , requested by Blaquera family
<b>Sunday, February 19</b>	<b>SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME</b>
9:00 am	MASS (livestreamed) – <i>Andres Ticzon+</i> , requested by Conrado and Vicky Tualla
11:45 am	MASS – "Pro populo" / Intentions of parishioners
<b>Monday, February 20</b>	<b>FERIAL – "LOUIS RIEL DAY"</b>
	Mass (offered in private) – <i>Intentions of Mary Capri (health)</i> , requested by Tannena Korolyk
<b>Tuesday, February 21</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
12:00 pm	Praying of the Angelus
12:10 pm	MASS – <i>Tillie Lavallée+</i> , requested by Mona Harper
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Office Hours – call or ring door buzzer for assistance
<b>Wednesday, February 22</b>	<b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b>
	<b>THE HOLY SEASON OF LENT BEGINS</b>
	<b>*** UNIVERSAL DAY OF FASTING AND ABSTINENCE FROM MEAT ***</b>
7:00 pm	MASS (livestreamed) – "Pro populo" / Intentions of parishioners
	<i>Mass this evening will include the blessing and distribution of ashes</i>
7:45 pm approx.	LECTIO DIVINA or "Breaking Open the Word" (ALL WELCOME – in the Guadalupe Room)
<b>Thursday, February 23</b>	<b>THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY</b>
	Mass (offered in private) – <i>Fr. Raphael Glofcheski+</i> (bequest)
1:30 pm	<i>Fr. Robert is scheduled to participate in a meeting of the Western Diocesan and Eparchial Coordinators of Ecumenism (WDECE)</i>



<b>Friday, February 24</b>	<b>FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY</b>
12:00 pm	Praying of the Angelus
<b>12:10 pm</b>	<b>MASS</b> – <i>Angela Kalichak+ (bequest)</i>
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	<b>Office Hours</b> – call or ring door buzzer for assistance
<b>3:00 pm</b>	<b>Recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy</b>
<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>WAY OF THE CROSS</b>
<b>Saturday, February 25</b>	<b>SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY</b>
<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>MASS for Sunday</b> – <i>Intentions of Olga Bonnefoy (blessings and thanksgiving on her birthday), requested by Henrietta Zhanel and Nina Turner</i>
<b>Sunday, February 26</b>	<b>FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT</b>
<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>MASS (livestreamed)</b> – <i>“Pro populo” / Intentions of parishioners</i>
<b>10:15 am</b>	<b>Faith Formation Gathering for the First Sunday of Lent</b> (parish hall)
<b>11:45 am</b>	<b>MASS</b> – <i>Genevieve Groome+, requested by Joan Dale</i>

**HARVEST MANITOBA:** If you are able to help in the ongoing food drive for Harvest Manitoba, please donate by placing food items in our parish’s Harvest donation box located under the pamphlet rack at the south church entrance. Dry food donations may be deposited there when you come to church for liturgies. Please be sure to follow safe protocols. Alternatively, food donations may be placed in Harvest donation bins found at local food retailers: e.g. Save on Foods, Sobeys, and Safeway. **THANK YOU to parishioners of Saint John XXIII for your continued support of Harvest Manitoba. Your generosity is most appreciated!**



**KNITTING GROUP:** The next gathering of the Knitting/Crocheting Group will be held on **Tuesday, February 14, 2023 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm** downstairs in Room 8. Over the years we have been creating "welcome baby" layettes to support mothers and babies assisted by *Villa Rosa* or *Thrive Community Support Circle* and sometimes for other worthwhile causes. For further information, you may contact Beverly Hewitt at 204-885-1202 or [bevhe Witt@mymts.net](mailto:bevhe Witt@mymts.net)



**CALLING VOLUNTEERS TO SERVICE:** Every baptized person is endowed with indispensable gifts for the service of the Church and the world. Especially as we emerge from the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is time for us to rebuild participation in the liturgical and other ministries of Saint John XXIII Parish. As described in detail in previous recent bulletins, this includes Altar Servers, Communion Ministers, Hospitality Ministers (Ushers), Music Ministers, Readers (Lectors), Sacristans and others who assist in liturgical art and environment. Please prayerfully consider your participation as a full member in the life of our parish. **If you are willing to help in any of the liturgical or other ministries of the parish, please contact our pastor, Father Robert Polz, and/or our parish pastoral assistant, Sharon Camier, or any other member of our parish pastoral team.**

### **Saint John XXIII Parish Stewardship of Treasure**

***Your assistance is very much appreciated – every gift, great or small, helps!***

**PARISH OFFERINGS:** You may place your offering envelopes in the COLLECTION BASKET passed by the ushers to those sitting in the pews during Sunday liturgies. Or you may mail your contribution to the parish via CANADA POST. Or you may leave a message with the parish office to make arrangements with one of our parish staff to drop off your offertory donations at a safe drop off location. For donations to the parish, please make cheques payable to “St. John XXIII Parish”.

**PAD OPTION:** Alternatively, we encourage you to consider being an “intentional giver” by registering for PRE-AUTHORIZED DEBIT. Please leave a message at the parish office and someone will contact you and assist you.

**ONLINE OPTION:** If you wish to donate to the parish ONLINE, a link to CanadaHelps.org can be found on our website. Go to [www.johnxxiii.ca](http://www.johnxxiii.ca) and click on the DONATE NOW tab at the top of the *Links* column on the home page.

**Alternatively, you may donate to St. John XXIII Parish via the Archdiocese of Winnipeg Mobile APP on your mobile device. Go to the Apple APP Store or Google Play Store to download the Archdiocese of Winnipeg Mobile APP. See info on page 8.**

**OFFERING ENVELOPE BOXES FOR 2023:** **In this New Year, please use 2023 envelopes only.** Parishioners are encouraged to register for pre-authorized debit. New parishioners are encouraged to contact the parish office to register for pre-authorized debit or regular offering envelopes. Donations also may be made via the Archdiocese of Winnipeg Mobile APP.

## Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time February 12, 2023

### Sirach 15:15-20

God's commandments of are not meant to condemn but to save us.

### Psalms 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

The great song of the law unfolds the wonder of living in God's ways.

### 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

The depths of God are known to the Spirit given to us for guidance.

### Matthew 5:17-37

Far from negating law and tradition, Jesus aims to improve and extend it.



## EXPLORING THE WORD

### Do you love the law?

Few of us love the law. In a country that sometimes views government with hostility and authority with suspicion, our reflexive stance toward rules is to shred first, reconsider later. Maybe. Many of us don't even read the operating instructions on what we buy, though our personal safety may be compromised: Just plug it in, hit the ON button, and hope for the best!

When we live this way—start it up and full speed ahead, without considering the rules of the road—it can lead to trouble, even mortal peril. Though we often regard laws as barbed wire designed to entrap our freedom, they might also be viewed as the means to secure our liberty. If any idiot on the road could do as he or she pleases, travel would be open only to those who value their lives and the lives of others quite lightly.

To a society like ours, the community proposed in early Hebrew writings is impossible to imagine. These people were into law. In Psalm 119, the famous love song to the law which is also the longest chapter in the Bible, no fewer than eight synonyms for *torah* are used: word, law, commandment, rule, decree, precept, teaching, and way.

Interestingly, though, the psalm is not concerned with the regulations that comprise much of the Pentateuch, nor does it mention the commandments at Sinai or the person of Moses. Law, this post-exilic psalm makes clear, is more properly understood as a "word to the wise." For the closest parallel to this approach, the rabbis point to the writings of Sirach.

Biblically speaking, divine law is equivalent to sanity. To live any other way is madness. Because God is the source of life, becoming familiar with the divine operating instructions is the best way to appreciate that gift. As Ben Sira writes, there's life and death out there, good and evil, fire and water. To whichever you choose, put out your hand—but do understand, these choices are not neutral. The outcomes will be dramatically different.

*Torah* will save you, the sage insists. It will keep you from making the mistake you live to regret—that is, if you live to regret it at all.

When Jesus extends the law in his Sermon on the Mount, he's not doing it to make life harder than it already is. Jesus builds a fence around the law, as the rabbis phrase it. He tells us that the road to murder begins on the path of anger; adultery's highway has an entrance ramp from lust. If sin is not your destination, then by all means don't travel its tributaries. Properly understood, law deserves its own fan club. God's laws are designed, after all, with your happiness and user-satisfaction in mind.

— Alice Camille

Alice Camille is a religious educator, scripture commentator, and author of many books including **This Transforming Word** and other titles found at [alicecamille.com](http://alicecamille.com)  
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## Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time February 19, 2023

### Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18

God issues an invitation for us to imitate the divine holiness.

### Psalms 103:1-2, 3-4, 8+10, 12-13

God's kindness and compassion are signature traits—and thank God for that!

### 1 Corinthians 3:16-23

As temples of the Spirit, we are hosts of the holiness of God.

### Matthew 5:38-48

What does it take to be a disciple of Jesus? Merely the desire to be perfect.



## EXPLORING THE WORD

### So you want to be perfect?!

As children, most of us believed in perfection as an attainable goal. Maybe not our own particular perfection (I was never going to get an A in science!), but the finish line was clearly marked out and someone was going to cross it. We were literally schooled into the quest for perfection: defined as an A+, or 100 percent answered correctly, or the coveted 4.0 at the end of the term. I could tell you quite dispassionately back then who was perfect and how: Patty was the kindest, Henry the smartest, Ed the fastest, Bernadette the holiest in the class. And I probably don't need to tell you who was going to win the writer's medal.

Back when perfection came marked with a letter grade, it was a straightforward matter as to how to get there from here. But no one, as I remember, was good at everything. Henry was clearly Einstein-brilliant; he's a doctor today. But he was a dunce at poetry and a social prig to boot. My report card was evenly divided between A's and C's: Ask me if I cared about social studies or phys. ed. To be perfect at everything—perfect at perfection—would be liking combining Patty, Henry, Ed, and Bernadette into one superchild! It would be like being God. That was Jesus' point exactly when he said: Don't imitate each other, or compete against each other. Imitate God and make divine perfection your only standard.

Our Lord is not trying to be difficult; he only takes after his Father, if Leviticus is any indication. For there God tells Moses: "Be holy—because I am," and goes on to delineate 613 ways that perfection is measured according to Deuteronomic law. The lectionary here chooses to highlight one: Love your neighbor as yourself. That's poignant for us, because Jesus makes the same choice in his teaching: Love God and love your neighbor. Are we to embrace that as the new definition of perfection?

The summons to be perfect sounds exhausting. Just being presentable takes a lot out of me some days. Far from wanting a challenge, most of us, to be honest, are hoping for a break. Gone are the days when our progress through life was measured and recorded at every turn: how tall were we, how many tests did we pass, whether we were eligible for Confirmation that spring? We'd like to phone in a few days a week now, answer "present" at work, and hope that counts for something. But the one place where our performance still counts for *everything* is the summons to love. Love God. Love neighbor. And prove it.

— Alice Camille

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As circumstances permit, especially for the pastoral needs of those who are sick or shut-in, we do our best to **LIVESTREAM SUNDAY MASS** from Saint John XXIII Church each weekend. To access livestreaming of parish liturgies via YouTube and/or an archive of liturgies posted online, go to links found on the home page of our parish website [www.johnxxiii.ca](http://www.johnxxiii.ca) *If you are technically inclined and willing to assist as a livestream technician, please contact Father Robert or Sharon Camier.*

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Please encourage your family members and fellow parishioners to download and install this app and ensure you engage with your community through your home parish page. With this application, you will be able to:

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- conveniently find the Archbishop's messages of hope that inspire us;
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***"Teach us to give and not to count the cost."* —Saint Ignatius of Loyola**