

# St. Mary



# St. Michael

15164 Juniper Dr., Marne MI 49435  
616.677.3934 • [www.saintmarysmarne.org](http://www.saintmarysmarne.org)

17150 88th Ave., Coopersville, MI 49404  
616.384.4026 • [www.saintmichaels.us](http://www.saintmichaels.us)



## Pastor: Rev. Michael Hodges

[frmhodes@grpriests.org](mailto:frmhodes@grpriests.org) • For emergencies please call: 616.745.1409

### Saint Mary Parish Staff

#### St. Mary Parish Office Hours

**Monday** .....9:00AM - 4:30PM  
**Tuesday** .....9:00AM - 4:30PM  
**Wednesday** 9:00AM - 11:30AM  
**Thursday** .... 9:00AM to 4:30PM  
**Friday** ..... Closed

#### Deacon

Tom Roberts  
[troberts@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:troberts@saintmarysmarne.org)

#### Business Manager

Todd Kline  
[businessmanager@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:businessmanager@saintmarysmarne.org)

#### Parish Secretary

Cathie VanGessel  
[secretary@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:secretary@saintmarysmarne.org)

#### Director of Faith Formation

Debbie Veneklas  
[dre@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:dre@saintmarysmarne.org)

#### Maintenance

Jim Looks

#### Custodian

Marian Looks

#### Liturgical Minister

Gary Karr  
[gkarr@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:gkarr@saintmarysmarne.org)

#### Music Director

Dr. Bernie Stanko  
616.490.3836  
[berniestanko@hotmail.com](mailto:berniestanko@hotmail.com)

#### St Mary Prayer Line

616.677.3934 or  
Linda at 677.3269  
For evening requests call  
Darlene 616.453.0157 or  
email [bfa1414@yahoo.com](mailto:bfa1414@yahoo.com)

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#### Deacon

Tom Roberts  
[troberts@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:troberts@saintmarysmarne.org)

#### Business Manager

Todd Kline  
[bsmgr@saintmichaels.us](mailto:bsmgr@saintmichaels.us)

#### Parish Secretary

Beki Rotman  
[secretary@saintmichaels.us](mailto:secretary@saintmichaels.us)

#### Director of Faith Formation

Debbie Veneklas  
[childrensministry@saintmichaels.us](mailto:childrensministry@saintmichaels.us)

#### Maintenance

David Goosen

#### Custodian

Carol Reens

#### Liturgical Minister

Kevin Kilpatrick  
[liturgy@saintmichaels.us](mailto:liturgy@saintmichaels.us)

#### Scrip Coordinator

Brenda Kilpatrick  
616.837.6363

#### St Michael Prayer Line

Chris  
616-403-7110  
Judy Driedger  
616-899-2470

#### Director of O.C.I.A

Cliff Kozminski  
616.437.5318

### Weekend Mass Schedule

**Saturday** ..... 4:00PM • St Michael  
**Sunday** ..... 8:30AM • St Michael  
**Sunday** ..... 10:30AM • St Mary

### Weekday Mass Schedule

**Tuesday** ..... 12:00PM • St Mary  
*Adoration begins after Mass until 3:30PM*  
**Wednesday** ..... 12:00PM • St Michael  
*Adoration begins after Mass until 3:30PM*  
**Thursday** ..... 12:00PM • St Mary  
**Friday** ..... 12:00PM • St Michael

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

**Tuesday and Thursday** ..... 12:30PM to 1:30PM • St. Mary  
**Wednesday and Friday** ..... 12:30PM to 1:30PM • St. Michael  
**Saturday** ..... 3:00PM to 3:45PM • St. Michael

# Mass Schedule & Intentions

## Saturday October 25

4:00PM † Rory Byrne by Marcy Goosen .....MI  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:00 PM—3:45 PM - St Michael

## Sunday October 26

8:30AM † Jack VanderKlok by Kurt & Margaret Bouchard .....MI  
 10:30AM † Donald Swanson by M/M Gary Karr .....

## Monday October 27 No Mass

## Tuesday October 28

11:00AM Funeral Mass for Donna Schwallier.....MA

## Wednesday October 29

12:00PM † Frankie Holmes by Larry & Diane VanDussen.....MI  
 Adoration begins after Mass until 3:30pm  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 12:30-1:30PM - St. Michael

## Thursday October 30

12:00PM † Jim Potts by M/M Jose Gomez .....MA  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 12:30-1:30PM - St. Mary

## Friday October 31

12:00PM † Bill Smith by Ruth Hecksel.....MI  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 12:30-1:30PM - St. Michael

## Saturday November 1

4:00PM † Marie Barkel by K of C #9909.....MI  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:00 PM—3:45 PM - St Michael

## Sunday November 2 The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls)

8:30AM † Sherry Maslowski by Jeff & Denise Parish.....MI  
 10:30AM † All Deceased Loved Ones of the Parish.....MA

MA=St. Mary MI=St. Michael's



## Scripture Readings for the Week of October 25, 2025

Sunday	Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Sir 35:12-14; 16-18; Ps 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23; 2 Tm 4:6-8, 16-18; Lk 18:9-14
Monday	Rom 8: 12-17; Ps 68:2 and 4, 6-7ab, 20-21; Lk 13: 10-17
Tuesday	Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles Eph 2: 19-22; Ps 19:2-3, 4-5; Lk 6:12-16
Wednesday	Rom 8:26-30; Ps 13:4-5, 6; Lk 13:22-30
Thursday	Rom 8:31b-39; Ps 109:21-22, 26-27, 30-31; Lk 13:31-35
Friday	Rom 9:1-5; Ps 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20; Lk 14:1-6
Saturday	Solemnity of All Saints Rv 7: 2-4, 9-14; Ps 24:1bc-2, 3-4ab, 5-6; 1 Jn 3:1-3; Mt 5:1-12a
Sunday	The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls) Wis 3:1-9; Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Rom 5:5-11 or Rom 6:3-9; Jn 6:37-40

## St. Michael's Liturgical Ministers

	Nov 1—4:00PM	Nov 2 —8:30AM
Altar Servers	Kassidy Britt MaKaelyn Britt	Adalyn Taylor Clare Taylor
Eucharistic Ministers	Deacon Tom NEED TWO	Debbie Veneklas Joe Hitchings Denise Nelson Mary Guilbault Rob Guilbault Peter Nielsen
Lector	Sue DeVos	Dennis Zimmer
Sacristan	Jane Vitunskas	Jane Vitunskas
Ushers	Mary Bueche Dan Schnieder	Jim Ponshair Ed Irwin Wade Lindberg Joe Meerman
Music	Craig Bleckley	Craig Bleckley

## St. Mary's Liturgical Ministers

	November 2 —10:30AM
Sacristan	Gary Karr
Altar Servers	Madeline Serge Lauren Serge Noah Davis
Precious Body	Deacon Tom Roberts Nettie Leale Margie Jirous
Precious Blood	Christina Withers Geary Farrell Bruce Kamp Need One
Hospitality	Leonard Horter
Lector	John Klein
Music	Bernie Stanko

## Congratulations & God's Blessings to Fr. Mike Hodges

on the 13th anniversary of your priest ordination!  
 October 27, 2012 ~ October 27, 2025

Please pray for Father Mike and his continued service as pastor of our Parish Cluster.

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our priest, Father Mike. Through him, we experience your presence in the sacraments. Help him to be strong in his vocation. Set his soul on fire with love for your people. Grant him the wisdom, understanding, and strength he needs to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Inspire him with the vision of your Kingdom. Give him the words he needs to spread the Gospel. Allow him to experience joy in his ministry. Help him to be an instrument of your divine grace. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest, Amen



# Cluster News and Community News and Events

## Mass for God's Children

Nov. 3 | 7 p.m. Cathedral of Saint Andrew

The Diocese of Grand Rapids invites anyone who has experienced the loss of a child before baptism to this special Mass, including parents, grandparents, siblings, relatives and friends. A memorial rose with a naming card will be provided for families who have lost a child(ren). If you would like to reserve a memorial rose, contact Lauren Vandervort at 616.288.0588

## Walking with Moms in Need

A mother in need may be closer than you realize—perhaps in your parish, your community, or your home. Every parish should know where to turn when a mom needs help. Inspired by St. John Paul II's call to build a culture of life, Walking with Moms in Need works to increase our outreach to pregnant and parenting women facing difficulties. **Join us to learn how you can start a Walking with Moms in Need initiative in your parish! On Thursday, Nov. 20, Catholic Charities West Michigan will be hosting a training for the WWMIN initiative at Immaculate Heart of Mary parish from 1-4 p.m.** The training covers the five phases of developing the WWMIN resource to serve moms through your parish, including learning how to build a core outreach team. The need for support is growing. Not involved in WWMIN yet? RSVP for the training or direct any questions to Sally Cranson at [scranson@ccwestmi.org](mailto:scranson@ccwestmi.org) by November 13.

## Catholic Service Appeal - 2025

### St Mary

CSA 2025 Pledge Goal: \$50,516.00

Total Pledges Made: \$55,055.00 (109%)

**Balance: \$4,539.00 OVER- THANK YOU!**

Participation: 107 of 260 Active - Households (42%)

### St Michael

CSA 2025 Pledge Goal: \$52,297.00

Total Pledges Made: \$42,380.00 (81%)

Balance: \$9,917.00

Participation: 100 of 255 - Active Households (39%)

Totals as of October 21, 2025

Thank you for your stewardship!

Please keep in mind that any amount raised over our goal is returned 100% to the parish. Please continue to pray for the success of this important effort.



**STRENGTHENED IN CHRIST,  
RESPONDING WITH JOY.**

Diocese of Grand Rapids  
Catholic Services Appeal

## Bulletin Sponsor of the Week



**CONTRACT ELECTRIC INC.**

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL  
723 6 MILE RD., NW  
COMSTOCK PARK, MI 49321  
(616) 784-2393 FAX 784-0302

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR BULLETIN!

## Fr Mike's Musings



I hope you don't mind if I get "a little personal" in this week's "Musings", given the fact that tomorrow, October 27, I will celebrate the thirteenth anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood.

I was blessed to learn several truths from the many faith-filled men and women whom the Lord put in my life during the days and years of my youth—including good priests like Fr. Paul Johnson and Fr. William Reitz, and a grumpy, but dedicated and loving Dominican Sr. Julia Mae Groulx. But first and foremost I learned lessons at home: from a father who was not Catholic, but imparted to me the virtues of honesty and honor; and, of course, from a mother who took her personal faith life very seriously and who taught me, by word and example, to love our communal Catholic faith. I can definitely relate on a personal level to the words of St. Paul when he wrote, "From your infancy you have known the Scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

Please don't misunderstand, I didn't come out of the womb fifty-seven years ago spouting passages from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—but I did learn early on that the Bible was a very special book, and that it was filled with a lot of important insights that could help me in my life. I really believed there was stuff in there that could help me cope with my pains growing up. I was right, and I've been studying and contemplating the Scriptures ever since.

Let me add how grateful I am for the support my family gave me in my journey to the priesthood. That was a great gift. I say that because not every priest is blessed with support and affirmation from the people who are closest to him. Let me also distinguish here "support" from "pressure". I always felt my family's support for my vocation, but I never felt any pressure from them to become a priest—or even to enter the seminary, which I did not enter until the "tender" age of thirty-eight. My mother said it best: "If God wants you to be a priest, then I want you to be a priest; but if you discern that God doesn't want you to be a priest, then neither do I."

Dad was also supportive, but more subdued. He reminded me that the choice was mine, but if I give my word to serve I must keep it—no matter the difficulties that might arise. The decision was always between God and me—which is precisely the way it should have been. That's the way it should be for everyone, regardless of what their vocation is in life.

Every vocation—the vocation to the priesthood, the vocation to marriage, the vocation to the single life—has its joys, its struggles, its challenges and its disappointments. So in every vocation perseverance is needed (many of you have already discovered that, I'm sure): the perseverance that comes from God's grace, and is rooted in prayer.

I thank God for helping me to persevere joyfully in His service as a priest for the last thirteen years. I ask you to pray for me, that He will continue to grant me that grace until He calls me home.

Let me close with this thought: I suppose the ultimate question for any person in any vocation is this one: Would you do it again? If you could go back in time and had the chance to start over, would you choose the same path? My answer to that would be: Without question! In spite of all the difficulties and challenges, I'm glad I made the choice I made. I do miss my former life as a teacher, and I long for the opportunity to be offered such a position again—while still a priest, of course. Hopefully you are also glad that I discerned a different path in life, one that has brought us together in our faith communities. Please pray for me and for all priests every day, that we will always be faithful to the awesome call that we've received from Jesus Christ. The call to worship, to serve, and to teach—albeit in a different "classroom".

## Exploring priesthood?

### Annual Seminary Visit is Nov. 13-15

The Diocese of Grand Rapids and St. John Vianney College Seminary are offering men who are juniors or seniors in high school and want to discern their vocation an opportunity to take a closer look at the priesthood. Travel with Father Rob Mulderink, director of the Office of Priestly Vocations, to experience a few days at St. John Vianney College Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Transportation, accommodations, and meals are provided at no cost. Space is limited. **Register by contacting Pattie Reynolds, [preynolds@GRdiocese.org](mailto:preynolds@GRdiocese.org).**



**October 26, 2025 ~ The 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

View this bulletin online at [www.DiscoverMass.com](http://www.DiscoverMass.com)

# St. Mary's Parish News

## St Mary Faith Formation

**Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLW):**  
Pre-School thru 2nd Grade During 10:30 AM Mass.

**1st-7th Grade Faith Formation Classes -**  
Wednesdays at Hall / 6:00- 7:30pm

**8th Grade - Confirmation Classes -**  
Wednesdays at Hall / 6:00- 7:30pm

**For more information** or any questions on any of these programs Please contact Debbie Veneklas at [dre@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:dre@saintmarysmarne.org) or 616.677.3934

## Prayers for Debbie

Continued prayers of healing, peace and strength for Debbie (our friend and Religious Education Director) as she begins treatment for CML- Chronic Myeloid Leukemia.

*Heavenly Father, we commend our friend Debbie to your loving care. Please touch her with your healing hand to restore her strength, comfort her heart, and bring her peace. May she feel your presence and know your love as she recovers. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen*



## Welcome

We are pleased to **welcome** our newly baptized child of God into the St Mary's parish family

**Oakley Lewis Lampe**  
Baptized on October 26, 2025  
Son of Austin and Ashley (Rose) Lampe



Through this baptism you have received the light of Christ; walk in this light all the days of your life. Shine as a light in the world, to the glory of God the Father. Congratulations and May God Bless you all!

## Looking Ahead-Save the Dates

Oct 27	Fr Mike Ordination of Priesthood Anniversary- 13years
Nov 2	Cookies After Mass - Volunteers needed
Nov 11	Our Lady of Fatima Guild Meeting 7PM Community Room
Nov 22	COR- 7AM Community Room
Nov 26	Thanksgiving Eve Mass-Grocery Collection, Annual Slide Show 6PM St Mary
Nov 30	Advent by Candlelight 6:30 Parish Hall

## Knights of Columbus #11581 News

How to become a Knight: You can enroll in the Knights of Columbus immediately as an "Online Member" by scanning the QR Code. Once you complete and submit the form on that page a local council will contact you. For additional information or to learn more about what the Knights do, Contact Grand Knight: Bruce Kamp [b.kamp@charter.net](mailto:b.kamp@charter.net) / Phone 616-780-4941



## Blood Drive Update from Versiti

Thank you for your incredible support in helping make our recent blood drive a success! We're excited to share the results and recognize some amazing milestones from your donor community. Every unit of whole blood collected has the potential to save three lives and each double red has the potential to save two lives, which means your drive impacted 66 lives! Thank You.



## Blood Drive Results

Drive Goal: 20 units, Appointments: 24, Donors Registered: 24  
Successful Donations: 21 whole blood + 1 double red + 1 rbc = 24 units  
Every donation counts - One donation can offer hope, healing, and even a second chance at life. Your commitment helped make that possible, and we can't thank you enough.

## Donor Highlights: First-Time Donor

A warm welcome and heartfelt thanks to this first-time donor: Breton Petrauskas

**Next Blood Drive & Breakfast will be Feb 1, 2026**



1st Prize \$250 Gift Card  
2nd Prize \$150 Gift Card  
3rd Prize \$100 Gift Card

## Knight of the Month

Knight Person of the Month-  
October: Mark & Debbie Veneklas  
Knight Family of the Month-  
October: Doug Frantz



The Knight Person / Family of the month is a way of recognizing someone who has gone above and beyond, or done something extra for the council or our church community. Congratulations and Thank you for service and commitment to our Parish Family!

## In Memory of our Loved Ones

During the month of November we take the time to remember our deceased loved ones. Everyone is invited to bring in a **framed picture** of your deceased loved ones to be on display in church for All Souls Day Masses and through out the month of November. Please drop off pictures to the parish office or leave in the designated area in the Narthex. If you have any questions, please contact the parish office.



**Sunday, November 2-All Souls Day Mass Schedule**  
8:30AM St Michael , 10:30AM St. Mary

## Giving Back to God

<b>Mass: Attendance</b> 10/19	<b>166</b>
Adult Contributions	\$2650.00
Children Contributions	\$21.75
Loose Contributions	\$122.00
Capital Improvement	\$75.00
Online Giving	\$2620.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5488.7</b>
World Mission Sunday	\$533.00
Weekly Offertory Needed for Budget	\$5563.67
Offertory-YTD Budget vs YTD-Actual	+4094.71

**Thank you** for your continued support and generosity! To donate now, open your phone camera, scan the QR code and follow instructions.



## Welcome to the Cluster Parishes of St. Mary and St. Michael

## St. Michael's Parish News

**Scrip News**— Thank you to our 10 families that purchased Scrip this week. Our total profit was \$114.01.



## St. Michael's Sanctuary Lamp

for +Becky Schmidt  
by Larry & Diane VanDussen



### St. Michael's Parish Family

**Remembers in Their Prayers:** Kevin Johnson, Anne Pols, Alexandria Gordon, George Langlois, Brooke Campbell, Linda Abel-Carroll, Jackie May, Dennis Goosen, Jean Mayse, Debbie Venekase, Ken Heflin, Marvin Hecksel, Payton Patterson, Pat Harlett, the victims of abortion, & the men and women in the military.

## St. Michael's Faith Formation

**Faith Formation Registration** for the 2025-2026 school year: **Classes have started. It is not too late to join us.**

**Children's Liturgy of the Word:** CLW program is offered on Sunday

during 8:30 Masses. Children 3-9 years old are welcome to join us each week as we pray, read and explore the Sunday Gospel from a child's viewpoint. We include the Gospel Acclamation so children understand the importance of preparing our mind and heart for the Gospel reading.



**Elementary Faith Formation:** The elementary program is for students in grades 1-5. We meet on Wednesday from 6:00- 7:30 pm in the parish school. Registration forms are in the back of church and on the parish website.

**Middle School Faith Formation:** Grades 6, 7 and 8 meet on Sundays from 9:45-11:15am in the Youth Room. The 8th Grade students will also receive Confirmation Preparation.



What is it? The PaperGator® is a fundraiser where St. Michael's is paid to collect paper products for recycling.

#### What CAN go in the bins?

Newsprint  
Catalogs/Magazines  
Junk Mail  
Phone Books  
Office/School paper  
Hard and soft cover books

#### What CANNOT go in the bins?

Paperboard (Grocery Item boxes)  
Plastic  
Metal  
Trash  
Glass  
Cardboard

### PANCAKE BREAKFAST



Next Sunday, November 2, from 9:30—11:30 a.m.  
Adults, \$12.00; Children 6-12, \$7; Under 6, free;  
Immediate Family Max: \$33  
*Come support the Knights and their efforts!*

## Giving Back to God

October 18/19

<b>Mass Attendance:</b> 10/18- 4:00PM:	103
<b>Mass Attendance:</b> 10/19: 8:30 PM	145
Adult Envelopes	\$2,483.00
Loose Cash	\$242.00
Children's Envelopes	\$8.05
<b>Total</b>	\$2,733.05
World Mission Sunday	\$646.00
Building Fund	\$20.00
<i>Weekly Offertory Needed for Budget</i>	\$5,488.86
<i>Offertory-YTD Budget vs YTD Actual</i>	+\$1,625.98

**Thank you for your continued support!**

### Online Giving —

Now there's an even more convenient way to contribute to St. Michael's! To donate now, open your phone camera, scan the QR code and follow instructions. Or text the word GIVE to: 616-384-5011.



**October 26, 2025 ~ The 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

View this bulletin online at [www.DiscoverMass.com](http://www.DiscoverMass.com)

## "At Least I'm Not a Hypocrite!" (Said the Pharisee)

When I was first ordained, I was in a country where many people would come to confession only once a year, at Easter time, and they had no sins! They probably had not been to Mass since the previous Easter, but they didn't bother to mention that. If asked, they would say, "I don't go to Mass, but I'm not a hypocrite! The people who go to Mass, they talk about their neighbors, they lie, they cheat. I wouldn't do business with them. Mass I don't need, but I am a good Christian. I am faithful to my wife, I don't talk bad about anybody, and I am honest in my business. I am just not a hypocrite."

The strange thing is, they really didn't have any of the sins they saw as sin. I used to go through the ten commandments with them, and except for "keeping holy the Sabbath day" with Mass, they came up clean on every one. It puzzled me.

I am a slow learner. It took me two years to realize that I was seeing today's Gospel lived out in action. Only now the Pharisee is standing outside the Church saying, "Thank God I'm not like most people who call themselves Christian—grasping, crooked, adulterous—or like those hypocrites in there at Mass. I'm no Pharisee: I don't lie or cheat; I'm faithful to my wife. The last place I need to be is in there with them!"

And the people inside the Church, the ones who are supposed to be the Pharisees, what are they doing? They are lined up outside the confessional, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

The real Pharisees are the people who have only one sin: they don't love God. And they have never really experienced or accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, because they feel no need of him. They are upright, moral people who are satisfied they are doing perfectly well on their own. They feel no need for anything more.

Let's get a little closer to home. What of the people who do go to Mass every Sunday, because they know this is a law, but who feel no need for anything else? They don't come to adult religious formation sessions; they don't take part in programs for spiritual growth; they don't belong to any prayer group or study Scripture with anyone; they

OCTOBER 26, 2025

30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18;  
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14

don't really take part in parish life except to do what is of obligation. And they are living upright, moral lives. They are not big sinners. But they get along without thinking too much about Jesus in their family, social, and professional lives. They have no sense of failing as Christians, and they feel no need for any more contact with Jesus Christ than they get at Sunday Mass. What about them?

Do you feel like you're being talked about? Can you identify with the kind of person described above? If so, think about this Gospel.

Keeping the law, keeping out of sin, is not what Christianity is all about. Christianity is a religion of intimate, loving relationship with God. Unless we are growing in understanding of the Father's mind, growing in loving intimacy with Jesus Christ as a person, becoming more like him in mind and heart and desire, becoming more and more committed to carrying out his mission on earth, we are not really living the Christian life. We are just law keepers. And we may be Pharisees. We should think about it.

The paradox is that the more we come to know Jesus Christ, and the more we draw near to him in understanding and in love, the more unworthy we feel! We feel loved, yes. Accepted, yes. Secure, yes. But the more we experience Christ's love, the less we feel we are returning it. The more we give ourselves to continuing his work on earth, the less we feel we are doing for him. Oddly enough, the closer we are to him, the more distant we sometimes feel, and the more need we feel for deeper, more frequent contact with him. That is when we stop being Pharisees, and when our Christianity comes alive.



## REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

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### Thirtieth Week of the Year

*Pray daily: Lord, speak to my heart of love. Teach me to show my love for you the way you showed your love for me: seeking me out, inviting me to intimate communion of mind and will and heart with you. Draw me to experience you in knowing you, and to know you in experiencing you. Amen.*

**Monday:** Luke 13:10-17: “A woman was in the synagogue who for eighteen years had been...bent over, completely incapable of standing erect. When Jesus saw her, he...laid his hands on her, and she at once stood up straight and glorified God.” Although you too are in church, are you in any way bent over, incapable of standing up straight in vigor and joy? Is it because you focus on laws more than on growing in love?

**Tuesday:** Luke 10:18-21: Jesus said, “To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch of dough was leavened.” What is causing the level of your spiritual life to rise? What is the “yeast” that is working in you? What keeps you growing?

**Wednesday:** Luke 13:22-30: “Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’ But he will say, ‘I do not know where you come from. Go away from me, all you evildoers!’” If Jesus were your pastor, how would he know you by name? Where would he see you and get to know you? When he teaches in the parish, are you there?

**Thursday:** Luke 13:31-35: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how many times I yearned to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were unwilling!” Could Jesus make this lament over you? When do you experience him “gathering you together” with others to nourish you? Is Sunday Mass sufficient for this?

**Friday:** Luke 14:1-6: Jesus said to them, “If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on the sabbath day?” When you examine your conscience or evaluate your religious observance, do you stop short after asking whether you are

keeping all the laws? Or do you ask whether your way of keeping the laws is healing and nourishing people? Who is growing spiritually because of your help?

**Saturday:** Luke 14:1, 7-11: Jesus said, “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor.” What marks of prestige do you accept without thinking about it? Do you have a reserved parking place where you work? Do people address you by a title of honor? Do you accept service in shops and restaurants as if Jesus were serving you, washing your feet? How do you positively express your belief that affluence and position do not make you superior to anyone?

## LIVING THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

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**As Christian:** Begin each morning with conscious awareness of your need for Jesus as Savior. What will you need him for today at work, in your family and social life? How will you make him part of everything you do?

**As Disciple:** Decide when and how often you will use the Sacrament of Reconciliation, not just for forgiveness, but as a regular “progress report” and evaluation of your response to God. Be as systematic about this as you are about business appointments: put it on your agenda, prioritize it, and assign a date and time.

**As Prophet:** During the Penitential Rite of the Mass, consciously identify with the tax collector Jesus spoke about: bow your head or strike your breast as a sign that you are present as a sinner in need of grace to change things in your life.

**As Priest:** As you start your activities each morning, recall the words of Jesus to Peter, “If you love me, feed my sheep.” Be alert for opportunities to minister to others, conscious you are consecrated to this by Baptism.

**As King:** Each time you see something in the city that does not reflect the reign of Christ—substandard housing, derelicts camped out at bus stops, run-down neighborhoods, pretentious affluence in homes and office buildings, degrading advertisements—accept corporate responsibility with the rest of the Church for not having transformed the world yet. Ask God humbly to teach you how to be a faithful steward until Christ comes again.

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