

SAINT FERDINAND & GOOD SHEPHERD Catholic Churches

Saint Mary's Help of Christians Cemetery



PARISH BULLETIN | August 1, 2021, Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

WEEKEND MASSES:

St. Ferdinand

Saturday: 5:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m. (Español)

Sunday: 11:00 a.m.

Good Shepherd

Sunday: 9 a.m.

For a Complete weekday
Mass Schedule and Mass Intentions,
please see the next page

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION):

St. Ferdinand

Saturday: 4 p.m.

Good Shepherd

Sunday: 8:30 a.m.

(or by appointment)

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday through Friday
1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

WEBSITES:

WWW.STFERDINANDBLANCO.ORG

WWW.GOODSHEPHERDCTX.ORG

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:

25 MAIN STREET
BLANCO, TEXAS 78606

MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. BOX 757
BLANCO, TEXAS 78606

PHONE NUMBERS:

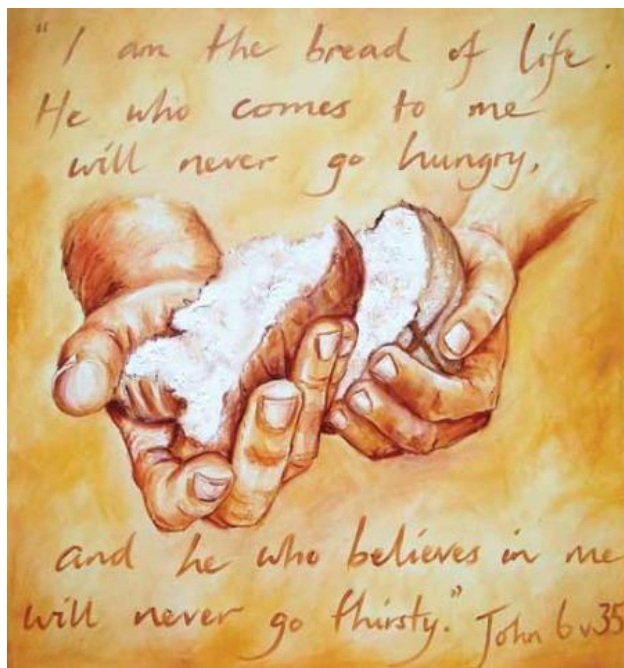
OFFICE PHONE: (830) 833-5227
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: (830) 833-0444

GENERAL INFORMATION:

ADMIN@STFERDINANDBLANCO.ORG

BULLETIN INQUIRIES:

ADMIN@STFERDINANDBLANCO.ORG



PARISH INFORMATION

Pastor

Rev. Fr. Brion Zarsky

frbrion@stferdinandblanco.org

Deacon Jessie Esquivel

dcn.jessie@stferdinandblanco.org

Cathy Cudd, Parish Secretary

cathy@stferdinandblanco.org

St. Ferdinand--DRE -- Susan Moore 830-833-0444

susan@stferdinandblanco.org

Office hours/Horarios de Oficina:

Wednesdays/Miercoles 12:00-6:00 p.m.

Good Shepherd--Margie Vasquez 830-833-5227

Coordinator of RE & Youth Minister

margie@stferdinandblanco.org

Adoration
of the Blessed Sacrament

Friday, August 6, 2021
9:30 am to 6:00 pm in the Chapel at St. Ferdinand

Welcome Visitors & Guests

Thank you for Celebrating the Mass with us. We are glad that you are here. If you have any questions about our parish or joining the Catholic faith, please contact the Church office. For information concerning reception of Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, Confirmation, Matrimony and Anointing of the Sick, contact the Church office. Parent interviews for Baptism need to be scheduled with the priest six weeks in advance. Marriage Arrangements need to be made with the priest at least six months in advance. Holy Communion can be brought to the sick on request. If you know of anyone in need, please call the office.



Masses for July 31, 2021 – August 7, 2021

Saturday, July 31st (SF)	5:00 p.m.
Repose of the Soul of Jose Torres by Zenaida Cabrera Torres and the Soul of Denise Campbell	
Saturday, July 31st (SF)	7:00 p.m.
Reposo de las almas de Jose Luiz Gonzalez by Fidel Gonzalez	
Sunday, August 1st (GS)	9:00 a.m.
Repose of the Soul of George Gage by Jenny Donovan	
Sunday, August 1st (SF)	11:00 a.m.
Repose of the Soul of Lucille G. Rodriguez by Yolanda Davila	
Tuesday, August 3rd (SF)	9:00 a.m.
Repose of the Soul of Lucina Serrano by Vicky Gonzalez	
Wednesday, August 4th (SF)	9:00 a.m.
Repose of the Soul of Jose Luis Gonzalez by Fidel Gonzalez	
Thursday, August 5th (SF)	9:00 a.m.
Health of Fr. Jim Harnan by Bill and Janie Cain	
Thursday, August 5th (GS)	6:00 p.m.
For all the Souls in Purgatory	
Friday, August 6th (SF)	9:00 a.m.
Repose of the Soul of Dan Kubin by Family	
Saturday, August 7th (SF)	5:00 p.m.
Repose of the Soul of Jose Luiz Gonzalez by Fidel Gonzalez	
Saturday, August 7th (SF)	7:00 p.m.
Reposo de las almas de Jose Serrano by Vicky Gonzalez	

With Heartfelt Sympathy

Our condolences go out to the family of Denise Campbell who passed away July 28, 2021. Rosary will be Sunday, August 1st at 7:00 pm at Crofts Funeral Home in Blanco. Graveside Service will be Monday, August 2nd at 11:00 am at St. Mary's Cemetery.



Please continue to pray for comfort and healing for the sick in our parish community. In addition, please ask the Lord for wisdom for their doctors and nurses, rest for their caregivers, and peace and strength for their family and friends.

Patricia Althaus
Maggie Atkinson
Llano Baumgartner
Chris Berryhill
Don Blanton
Joanne Bodine
Gaelynn Brown
Vanessa Castillo
Barbara Crowley
Belinda Delgado
Roselle Fischler
Jane Foegelle
Jim Gronke
Mary Huser
Charles Jennings
Anna Lee Jones
Charles Michael Jones
Randall Jones
Virginia Kainer
Mike Kleiss
Abby and Judy Lantier
David Laumer

Jeanette Lavelle
Jane Martin
Segunda Martinez
Charles McKinney
Elsie Meurer
Tim Nance
Ivan Nelson
Roy & Doris Phipps
Gloria Preiss
Charles Reinert
Sid Reinert
Choppy Romero
Lupe Ruvalcaba
Josie Salazar
Margareta Schaeffner
Josh Strodbeck
Jacob Umanzor
Eva Vargas (Martinez)
Pedro Villegas
Connie West
Polo Zamora
Susie Zamora



We are proud of all those in our parish who are serving and protecting our country. Thank you and God bless all of you.

If you or someone you know needs prayer in a special way, please email: admin@stferdinandblanco.org.

WELCOME
new members

We would like to welcome our new parishioner to
Good Shepherd Church:

Ms. Btennan Weeks



Week of July 25, 2021

Thank you for your generosity!

St. Ferdinand:

Regular Collection	\$3,207.75
Diocese of Obusasi	\$1,143.00

Good Shepherd:

Regular Collection	\$623.00
Diocese of Obusasi	\$181.00

Second Collection for Today:

SF and GS: Building Fund

Calendar of Events

Good Shepherd

September 15 – Deadline to Submit Mexican Dinner Raffle Fundraiser Baskets

October 3 – Good Shepherd Mexican Dinner Fundraiser



Good Shepherd Mexican Dinner Raffle Update

Planning for the Raffle, an important part of our Mexican Dinner fundraiser, is taking shape.

Themed gift baskets, initiated by parishioners, will be a key focus for this year's raffle. Everybody can participate. Our goal is to have as many gift baskets as your imagination will allow.

- Baking items in a gift basket?
- Garden tools in a bucket or garden container?
- Wines with wine glasses and accessories?
- Snack & candy items, store bought or homemade?
- Various houseware items in a pretty basket?
- Golf balls, tees, ball markers, etc., for the golfers?
- Jellies and jams with crackers and cheeses?

Drop off a basket(s) and/or groups of raffle items at the social hall in the designated areas. Please, new or very good condition items only.

If anyone wants to step up and solicit raffle items from local merchants, that is fine too.



To allow us to stay organized, all items should be turned in by September 15th.

Parish Organizations & Meeting Times

Altar Server Training, St. Ferdinand

Meets every Sunday of the month at St. Ferdinand at 8:30 a.m. (following school schedule)

Good Shepherd Contemplative Prayer

Every 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Church, Contact George and Karen Gebhardt (210-216-6771 or 210-427-3060)

Good Shepherd Men's Club

Meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the parish hall.

St. Ferdinand Men's Club

Meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the St. Ferdinand Parish Hall.

St. Anne's Altar Society

Meets the 1st Wednesday of the month following the 9:00 am Mass in the St. Ferdinand Parish Hall.

St. Ferdinand's Parish Choir

Meets Wednesday nights at 5:00 p.m. Call 830-833-3210 for more information. Practices are currently suspended due to COVID.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)

Meets Thursday nights from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. in the St. Ferdinand RE Building.

Women's Bible Study

Meets every Thursday at 1 p.m. If you're interested in joining please contact Karen Gebhardt at 210-427-3060 or kgebhardt52@gmail.com.

Mass Preparation

August 8, 2021, Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: 1 Kings 19:4-8

The Lord feeds Elijah, strengthening him for his journey to Horeb.

Psalms 34:2-9

A prayer of praise to God for his goodness.

Second Reading: Ephesians 4:30 – 5:2

The Ephesians are encouraged to be imitators of Christ.

Gospel Reading: John 6:41-51

Jesus responds to the murmurs of the crowd, who wonders what he means when he says that he came down from heaven.

Good Shepherd Vocations Chalice

If your family feels called to pray with the Vocations Chalice, please contact Warren Davis before or after Mass or by calling him directly at 713-569-9491.



Jesus, the Bread of Life

Would that we had died at the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, as we . . . ate our fill of bread! (Exodus 16:3)

As the old saying goes, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." It's better to have a sure thing than to hope for something better that's not guaranteed. That seems to capture the Israelites' complaint to Moses. They would rather be enslaved in Egypt and have enough to eat than trust God to lead them to the Promised Land. After all, they are hungry!

It might seem shortsighted. God had just freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. He parted the Red Sea for them to pass through and provided water in the desert. Why didn't they trust him to take care of them? Why were their sights set so low, on such immediate needs?

The short answer is, it's human nature. The needs that loom before us can make us forget God's faithfulness. It's like the crowd following Jesus in today's Gospel: they searched for him, not because they had seen healings and miracles, but

because he had filled their bellies (John 6:26). Even when Jesus told them that he was the "bread of God," the One who came down from heaven to give life to the world, they still seemed preoccupied with physical food (6:33).

It can be hard to trust that in the long term, God will bring good out of a hard situation when all we want is relief. It can be a challenge to remember his promises when all we can see is what we're lacking. We need a sign of God's faithfulness, a reminder that he takes care of us.

The Eucharist is that reminder. Day after day, Jesus offers himself: the Bread come down from heaven. So today, when you receive Communion, place those pressing needs before the Lord. Receive him and know that he has you in the palm of his hand.

"Lord Jesus, you are the Bread of Life. Help me hunger for the food that endures."

Tell us so we may believe. Show us so we may follow. Father, Son, and Spirit, guide us ever homeward. Amen.

O que hubiéramos muerto a manos del Señor en la tierra de Egipto, como nosotros. . . ¡nos llené de pan! (Éxodo 16:3)

Como dice el viejo refrán: "Un pájaro en la mano vale más que dos en el monte". Es mejor tener una cosa segura que esperar algo mejor que no esté garantizado. Eso parece capturar la queja de los israelitas a Moisés. Preferirían ser esclavizados en Egipto y tener suficiente para comer que confiar en Dios para llevarlos a la Tierra Prometida. Después de todo, ¡tienen hambre!

Puede parecer miope. Dios acababa de liberar a los israelitas de la esclavitud en Egipto. Partió el mar rojo para que pasaran y proporciono agua en el desierto. ¿Por qué no confiaron en él para cuidar de ellos? ¿Por qué sus miras estaban tan bajas, en necesidades tan inmediatas?

La respuesta corta es, es la naturaleza humana. Las necesidades que se ciernen ante nosotros pueden hacernos olvidar la fidelidad de Dios. Es como la multitud que sigue a Jesús en el Evangelio de hoy: lo buscaron, no porque

hubieran visto curaciones y milagros, sino porque él había llenado sus vientres (Juan 6:26). Incluso cuando Jesús les dijo que él era el "pan de Dios", Aquel que bajó del cielo para dar vida al mundo, todavía parecían preocupados por la comida física (6:33).

Puede ser difícil confiar en que a largo plazo, Dios sacará el bien de una situación difícil cuando todo lo que queremos es alivio. Puede ser un desafío recordar sus promesas cuando todo lo que podemos ver es lo que nos falta. Necesitamos un signo de la fidelidad de Dios, un recordatorio de que él nos cuida.

La Eucaristía es ese recordatorio. Día tras día, Jesús se ofrece a sí mismo: el Pan bajado del cielo. Así que hoy, cuando recibas la Comunión, coloca esas necesidades apremiantes ante el Señor. Recíbalos y sepas que él te tiene en la palma de su mano.

"Señor Jesús, tú eres el Pan de Vida. Ayúdame a tener hambre de la comida que perdura."

Díganos para que podamos creer. Muéstranos para que podamos seguir. Padre, Hijo y Espíritu, guíannos siempre hacia casa. Amén.

St. Ferdinand Men's RENEWAL Retreat, September 23-26, 2021

Calling all MEN: The RENEWAL retreat is a three day and three night retreat presented by laymen like yourself, men who are committed to the idea that we can make our faith more a part of our daily lives. A RENEWAL Retreat weekend provides an opportunity for you to put everyday worries aside and concentrate on your spiritual needs. All men of the community are invited to attend! The cost is \$100 and a \$50 deposit is required to save your spot. Scholarship opportunities are available. Please don't let cost keep you from joining us.

For more information on the 2021 Men's and Women's retreats, please contact one of the following coordinators:

Men's Retreat
September 23-26
John Fortune
210-862-5568

Women's Retreat
October 21-24
Maria Nunn
830-237-2010



QUE SON LOS TALLERES DE ORACION Y VIDA?

Talleres de Oracion y Vida son un servicio eclesial que el Padre Ignacio Larranaga inicio en 1984. El taller consta de quince sesiones, cada sesion dura dos horas y la sesion es semanal. El trabajo principal se realiza durante la semana, en la vida diaria. Los Talleres son dirigidos por un Guia, el cual recibe de antemano una preparacion intensiva, llamada "Escuela de Preparacion para Guias" durante un ano. Al frente de los Guias hay un Equipo Local, cuya funcion es organizar y controlar la marcha de los Talleres. Tambien existen los Equipos Nacionales, Zonales e Internacionales.

EL TALLER ES:

- a. **Una Escuela de Oracion:** se aprende y profundiza en el arte de orar con un caracter experimental y practico, desde los primeros pasos hasta la proundidad de la contemplacion.
- b. **Una Escuela de Vida:** El asistente va superando paso a paso, el mundo interior de angustias, ansiedades, miedos y tristezas y va inundandose de paz, a travez del conocimiento de **DIOS** y de uno mismo.
- c. **Una Escuela Apostolica:** Se quiere que el Taller sea una fuente de vocaciones apostolicas.

En suma, los **TALLERES DE ORACION Y VIDA** son un eficaz programa de **NUEVA EVANGELIZACION**
El taller compromete al asistente en tres dimensiones: Con **DIOS**, consigo mismo y con los demas.

Vengan – Los esperamos!!

Iniciaremos

el 27 de Julio de 2021

7:00 PM a las 9:00 PM

ST FERDINAND Catolic en Blanco TX

Para mas informacion llame a:

MARIA RODRIGUEZ 830-613-0291



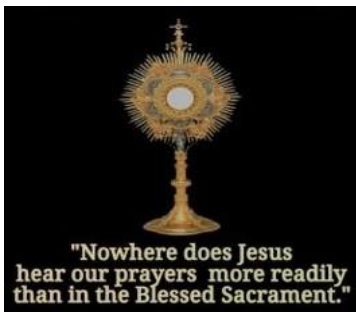
TALLERES DE ORACIÓN Y VIDA
UNA NUEVA EVANGELIZACIÓN

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Friday, August 6, 2021

9:30 am to 6:00 pm in the St. Ferdinand Chapel

You are invited Friday, August 6th, to come and receive the graces promised from the source of ultimate love, Jesus Christ.



Won't you set aside time this Friday to go to Adoration?



The Feast of the Transfiguration

The Feast of the Transfiguration, Friday, August 6, invites us to look at the mystery of Jesus Christ, living among us. This Jesus is truly God and yet truly human. At the time of His baptism and then at the time of the Transfiguration, the Divine breaks through and a voice is heard: "This is my beloved Son." The Baptism of Jesus is the beginning of His public ministry, but it is also a baptism into death, a baptism into our human condition, a baptism into the will of the Father. The Transfiguration echoes that baptism: it is a preparation for the death of the Lord, a preparation to see Him die in our human condition, a preparation for his complete accepting of the will of His father.



The Transfiguration was experienced by Peter, James and John—not by the other Apostles or disciples or followers of Jesus—not even by Mary His Mother. Peter will be placed by Jesus as the head of His followers. James is the first to die for Jesus. John is the disciple that Jesus loved. Jesus does not always share with us his reasoning about why He does things and so we are invited to wonder—as surely did the other followers of Jesus. And even though Jesus tells these three not to share the vision with anyone until He, Jesus, has been raised from the dead, surely the others were aware that something had happened. We can try to imagine what answer these three would have given when the others asked: what happened up there?

For us, the Transfiguration draws us deeper into the mystery of Jesus. Our faith and the practice of our faith must rest on our belief that Jesus, fully human, is God. God breaks through into our human history once more in Jesus Christ. The Incarnation is not that God sent another Prophet or another Anointed one. It is that, yes, but this Prophet, this Anointed One, is God Himself, present in our human condition, One like us in all things but sin. God loves us!

Religious Education

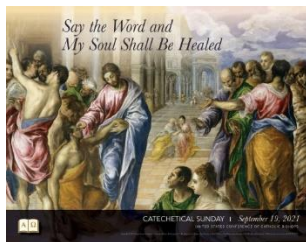
St. Ferdinand

Calendar:

Sunday, September 19 –
Catechetical Sunday

**Say the Word and My Soul
Shall be Healed**

*"Do not abandon yourselves to
despair. We are the Easter people
and hallelujah is our song." - Pope John Paul II*



FORMED for KIDS – Summer fun!

Help your children grow in faith and in character this
summer with engaging children's materials including:

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Young George and the Dragon
The Value of Life
Brother Francis
Lukas Storyteller
And more!

All of these are free through our parish wide subscription
to Formed.org.

Are you new to Formed? Go to formed.org, select Sign Up,
then Sign up as a parishioner and select St Ferdinand in
Blanco, then enter your name and email. A link will be
sent to your email address. It's that easy!



Good Shepherd

Religious Education Classes:

PreK – 7th Grade: Classes have ended for the Summer – We
will resume in person classes in the fall.

8th Grade (Pre-Confirmation): Last Class was held on
Jun 12th

*If you would like to register your child for Religious Education
for the next school year, please contact Margie Vasquez at
margie@stferdinandblanco.org or the parish office at
(830) 833-5227.*

High School RICH Youth Ministry: Classes have ended for
the Summer – We will resume in person classes in the fall.
Classes will be held on Sunday's at St. Ferdinand in Blanco.

RCIA Classes: The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults and
Adapted for Children is offered at Good Shepherd. Please
schedule an appointment with Margie Vasquez to discuss the
process and class times.

Pre-Confirmation Classes: All young adults from 8th grade
and up must complete one year of pre-confirmation formation
before signing up for Confirmation classes. If you need
information about Pre-Confirmation requirements, please
contact Margie Vasquez.

Confirmation Classes:

**Confirmation Retreat on August 8th from 8:00am-
8:00pm (held in Johnson City at the RE Bldg.)**

**The Celebration of Confirmation will be held this year on
November 13, 2021 at 5:00 pm in Blanco at St. Ferdinand
Catholic Church.**

*I would like to thank the parents and teachers that
helped this year with volunteering, with donation of
supplies and for your constant prayers and support.*

I hope everyone has a safe and happy summer.

Volunteers/Catechist: If anyone is interested in helping in
our RE program or would like to make donations of supplies
for the classroom – Please contact Margie Vasquez or call the
parish office during regular business hours. Remember to
volunteer you must be EIM compliant. Please refer to the
bulletin or the Diocese Website for upcoming EIM workshops
in our area.





Middle School EDGE Youth Ministry: There will be no Summer Classes – Classes to resume in the fall with in-person classes held at Good Shepherd in Johnson City.

Blanco and Johnson City middle school students can join EDGE Youth Ministry, EDGE is part of the LIFE TEEN Middle School youth ministry. We focus on Leadership, Prayer, Service and Unity.



High School RICH Youth Ministry: There will be no Summer Classes – Classes to resume in the fall with in-person classes.

*Classes are usually held on Sunday nights in the St. Ferdinand Parish Hall. Blanco and Johnson City high school students can join RICH Youth Ministry, **RICH (Resting in Christ Hands)** utilizes the Life Teen Program. Life Teen is an environment in which high school youth can come into a deeper relationship with God through spiritual, educational, emotional, and social experiences. Our Youth Ministry follows the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) guidelines for comprehensive youth ministry programs.*



Confirmation Retreat on August 8th from 8:00 am-8:00 pm (held in Johnson City at the RE Bldg.)

The Celebration of Confirmation will be held this year on November 13, 2021 at 5:00 pm in Blanco at St. Ferdinand Catholic Church.

All Blessings come to us through our Lord. He will teach us, for in beholding His life we find that He is the best example. - Saint Teresa of Avila



I would like to thank the parents and teachers that helped this year with volunteering, with donating meals, donation of supplies and for your constant prayers and support. Our Youth Ministry Teachers this year were Mary Jane Hill, Carl Struck, Liza Struck, Bernie McDaid and Margie Vasquez. We want to thank them for sharing their gifts, talents, love, and time to help teach and support the youth religious education program in our parish.

We also want to wish our graduating seniors and all the youth of our parishes a safe and happy summer.

Youth Ministry Volunteers/Catechist: If anyone is interested in helping in our program or would like to make donations of supplies for the classroom – Please contact the parish office during regular business hours or email margie@stferdinandblanco.org. Remember to volunteer you must be EIM compliant. Please refer to the bulletin or the Diocese Website for upcoming EIM workshops in our area.



"Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in What you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity". 1 Timothy 4:12

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Regional President

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NMLS #730040

MELISSA SEYMOUR

Operations Officer

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Fax: (830) 833-0242

Johnson City Pharmacy



Phil Lietz, R.Ph.
Pharmacist/Owner

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Thank you Lord

There's a roof up above me
I've a good place to sleep
There's food on my table
And shoes on my feet
You gave me your love Lord
And a fine family
Thank you Lord, for your
Blessings on me

Fr. Greg Gerhart, Vocations Director
Diocese of Austin—Vocations Office

God CALLING YOU? +



We are challenged today to seek what will last. Give Jesus, the Bread of Life, your priority and you will always be satisfied. (John 6:24-35). If you think God is calling you to be a priest, brother, or sister, visit www.godiscalling.me, or phone 512-949-2430.

“No trabajen por el alimento que perece sino por el que perdura hasta la vida eterna” ¿Has sido escogido para ayudar a alimentar y dar vida al pueblo de Dios como sacerdote o religioso/a? Visita www.godiscalling.me, o llama 512-949-2430.

Understanding Mark Ch 6:3 - The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus

In Mark Ch. 6:3 we read the reaction of the people of Jesus hometown of Nazareth as *“Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?”* Understandably many people are confused by this, especially considering the teaching of the Catholic Church on the perpetual virginity of Mary. With such a seemingly glaring contradiction, particularly for non-Catholics, most people who are confused about this passage often either choose to take one side or another, or just ignore the contradiction and believe what they have always been taught. I’d like to offer a third alternative, understanding what Mark wrote by looking at what the text actually says in the original Greek.

As any person who speaks more than one language can tell you, trying to translate a word or phrase from one language can often be difficult, and at times almost impossible. This can often be the case for Biblical Greek, however, one of the larger barriers to overcome in translating Greek into English is that while English conjugates only verbs, Greek conjugates not only verbs, but nouns as well. Another major complication for translator is the loss of context. The original writers of the Bible would not have explained things that they and their audience would have simply understood. As such, translation can often be more difficult because there was no real way for translators to know how a phrase was meant to be understood. And these are just two of the many issue’s translators must contend with when translating the Bible from Greek into English or any language.

With that general background, let’s look at the verse from Mark that is in question. First, it’s important to point out, the word that used for brother in Greek is *adelphos*, and this word has multiple meanings that must be determined by the context of the surrounding text. Before we start, however, it’s important to define the word *adelphos*. *Adelphos* is defined the same as it is in English: a brother, whether born of the same two parents or only of the same father or mother.

Mark himself uses the word *adelphos* in this meaning earlier in the gospel at Mark 1:16 when Jesus begins to call the disciples he says: “...passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen.” The Greek word there is *adelphos* and whenever we encounter that word, Simon and Andrew his brother, we assume rightly that what that means is that Simon and Andrew were siblings, and that Andrew was the brother of Simon Peter. That’s the primary meaning of the word *adelphos*, brother. However, in Greek the word *adelphos* can, in other contexts, also mean a close relative or what today we would call a cousin. In those cases, the meaning has to be determined by the context. In other words, there must be some clue in the surrounding text that would make you think that the word doesn’t mean a sibling but rather a relative or a cousin. To understand this, let’s look at a couple examples of this from the Old Testament. The best example is from the Book of Chronicles, 1 Chronicles 23. Now in 1 Chronicles 23:21-23 is often cited as the best example of how brothers can mean cousins in the Old Testament. There are other

examples, this, however, is the clearest and easiest for people to understand. So, if you look at 1 Chronicles 23:21-22 this is what it says:

“The sons of Mahli [were] Eleazar and Kish. And Eleazar died, but he had no sons, only daughters. And the sons of Kish, their brothers, married them.”

In this passage, the word used for brother in Greek is adelphoi. Some translations of the Bible translate this as kinsman; however, the literal word is brothers in both the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint, and in the original Hebrew. Now what's helpful to this discussion about the passage from Chronicles, is that you can see that Eleazar and Kish are blood brothers, they have the same father, Mahli. The story tells us that when Eleazar dies, he doesn't have any sons he only has daughters. Because of this, they end up marrying the sons of Kish, who the text calls their “brothers,” but who from the context of the story, are obviously the sons of their uncle and therefore their cousins. This is just one of many examples that can be found throughout the Bible. And you don't only have to rely on the Bible to see examples of this either. For example, the First Century Jewish writer Josephus, in his book on the Jewish war, in book 6 paragraph 356-357, he uses the word brothers, again same way. Later in the book, however, he switches to the word relatives or cousins as an alternative expression.

So, in other words, in 1 Chronicles 23 we know that the word *adelphos* can't mean sibling because if the daughters of Eleazar were marrying their siblings they would be committing incest, which is only the first problem. A second problem with translating *adelphos* brother here is even more direct, namely that the text itself tells you that their so-called brothers are not the sons of their father, but the sons of their uncle and therefore their cousins. So, this establishes for us basic principle. Whenever you see the word *adelphos* in the gospels you should ordinarily assume that it means brother or sibling, just like in English, unless there's something in the context that gives you evidence to the contrary.

With this as our basis, let's return to the Gospel of Mark, where we can ask the question, is there anything in the context that would suggest to us that the word brother means something other than sibling? In other words, is there anything to suggest that these brothers of Jesus (James, Joseph, Simon and Judas) are not the children of Mary? Most Catholics would probably answer this question something along the lines of, well the Church teaches the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity, so those men must not be the siblings of Jesus. But for non-Catholic Christians who don't accept that doctrine, who don't accept that tradition, that argument is not going to carry any weight for them. So, it's also important to be able to show that there is not just a doctrinal reason for thinking *adelphos* doesn't mean brother here, but that there's also a literary reason. One that we can see in Mark's gospel itself. So, what is that reason?

Well, it's actually very simple. Two of these brothers, James and Joseph, the first two mentioned, are also identified elsewhere in the Gospel of Mark as the sons of another woman named Mary, that is, the sons of another Mary. In order to see this, you must look at Mark 15:40. There in Mark's account of the crucifixion, of Jesus, James and Joseph,

this pair of brothers, also appear in the gospel. And this is what it says. After Jesus dies on the cross it says:

There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome, who, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered to him; and also, many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

Notice that Mark singles out three women there at the foot of the cross: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and then Salome. And then, later in the account Mark's refers to this woman again. He'll call her Mary the mother of Joseph in Mark 15:47 and then he'll call her Mary the mother of James in Mark 16:1.

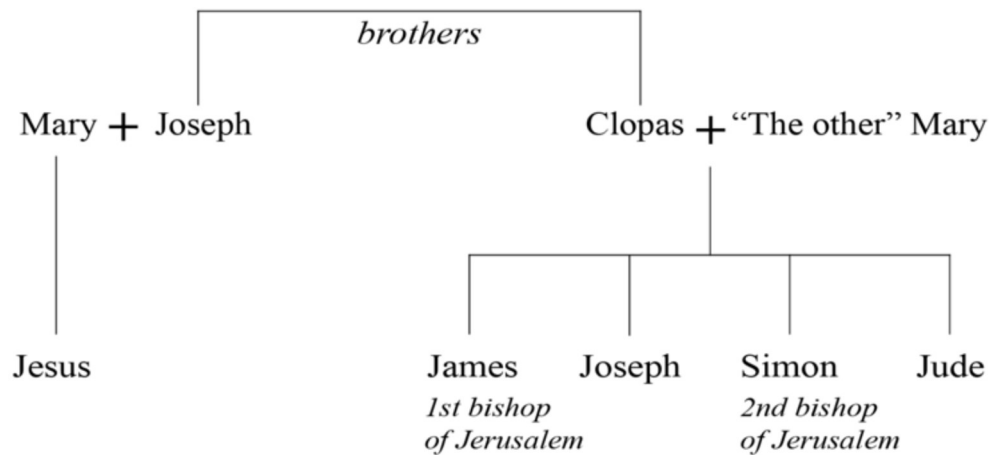
So, what does this mean regarding Jesus' brothers and sisters? Scholars on Mark agree, and this is not just Catholic scholars but Protestant scholars too, recognize that when Mark refers to James and Joseph, these two brothers in Mark 15 & 16, this is clearly the same two James and Joseph that Mark referred to in chapter 6 who are there called the brothers of Jesus. He introduces them here without any explanation and assumes that you recall these two figures from earlier in the gospel. Now the question becomes, who is this woman Mary, their mother, who's at the cross? Mark identifies her as one of the women who travel with them from Galilee, but what scholars have pointed out, is that she cannot be the same woman as the mother of Jesus. This is because elsewhere in Mark's gospel, whenever he wants to refer to Mary as the mother of Jesus, he does so by calling her the mother of Jesus. The other gospel evangelists do the same thing, which would be the obvious way to refer to his mother. And so, as the scholars pointed out, it doesn't make any sense to refer to the mother of James and Joseph as the mother of James and Joseph and not the mother of Jesus. That is, unless she is a different woman. So, who is she? Well, she's the mother of these two men who are called the brothers of Jesus in Mark 6. And so, when you put those two things together, Mark 6 them being called his brothers, and then Mark 15 & 16 which they're called the children of this other woman named Mary, it becomes really clear then that the word brother has to mean something other than sibling. It brings us to the second definition of *adelphos*, that they must be relatives of Jesus, they must either be his cousins or some other type of relative.

If you have any doubts about this, you can also look at Mark 6 where Jesus says as much. Unfortunately, you can't see it if you're just reading in English. So, let's go back to Mark 6 and see what it says. After these brothers of Jesus get named James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas in verse three, Jesus responds to the scandal of the community by saying something interesting. He says, "a prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own kin." Now in English we don't really use the word kin anymore to refer to relatives. But the Greek word there *syngenēs* literally means relative, which can also be translated as cousin. For example, the old King James version of the Bible and the Douay-Rheims use this word to refer to Elizabeth. When Gabriel appears to Mary, he says Elizabeth your *syngenēs*, your cousin, is now with child, and we all think

of Elizabeth as Mary's cousin. What we tend to miss this in Mark 6, however, because the way this is translated into English, is that Jesus basically just identified what the nature of this relationship was. Jesus has just been rejected by the members of the town of Nazareth, including James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. Notice that they're mentioned as not just being his brothers, but as those who are among the Nazarenes. And what does Jesus say? He says that he's not accepted by his own town or among his own cousins. The Greek word there is *syngenēs*, he's not accepted by his cousins or among his relatives. So, another reason for thinking that the so-called brothers and sisters of Jesus are not his siblings is because Jesus, is precisely because that's what Jesus calls them, which is important. He says a prophet is not accepted among his cousins, among his relatives, the *syngenēs*.

In summary then, what we're saying here is that Mark's gospel itself and Jesus' own words give us reason to believe that when Mark mentions the brothers of Jesus, he is not referring to children of Mary. Notice that they're never called the sons of Mary, they're just called the brothers of Jesus, because if they were called the children of Mary that would be a completely different context. But Mark's gospel itself never calls these brothers or sisters of Jesus the children of Mary. Rather he gives us evidence to believe that two of them, James and Joseph, are in fact the sons of another woman named Mary, who Mark very tellingly calls the mother of James and Joseph and not the mother of Jesus.

To clarify this a little more, let's also look at the Gospel of John. If you go to John's gospel, chapter 19, verse 25, he actually makes clear that this Mary that's at the foot of the cross, is Mary, the sister of the virgin Mary, who is also the wife of Clopas. He identifies her as Mary, the wife of Clopas. An interesting historical fact about that identification is, that if John is referring to the same woman as Mark, we know from early church writings of Eusebius and others, that Clopas was regarded as the uncle of Jesus and the father of James and Simon. James and Simon were also some of the first bishops of Jerusalem, and who obviously have some of the same names as these so-called brothers of Jesus. So, when you look at the evidence, Mark, having identified Mary as being the mother of James and Joseph. Matthew identifying that woman as the other Mary. Then John's gospel calling her the wife of Clopas, who we know from church history as the uncle of Jesus, it puts together a picture that helps make clear why the gospels use the word brothers to refer to these men, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. It's because they are the children of Mary and his uncle Clopas, and therefore they were his cousins, or his brothers in the common Semitic language. If that all sounds a little complicated, here is a genealogical chart of the family which will help you see, the holy family of Mary and Joseph who have one child, Jesus, and then the relatives of Jesus, Mary the wife of Clopas, and then their four sons, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. Two of whom are actually identified by church historians as the first two Bishops of Jerusalem.



This last point is important because it shows us that these so-called brothers of Jesus were not obscure figures in the early church, they were actually very famous, James was the first Bishop of Jerusalem. And so, the idea that James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, could have been a son of Mary, and at the same time the doctrine of her perpetual virginity have arisen is just absurd. The reason early Christians both believe that Mary was both perpetually virgin and that James the Bishop of Jerusalem was the brother of Jesus, is because they understood that calling him the brother of Jesus was a way of expressing the fact that he was a close relative of Jesus, that he was a cousin of Jesus. Remember, Christianity grew out of Jewish roots, it grew up in a Jewish context. Its only centuries later after people begin to lose that understanding of the Semitic meaning of the word brother as also referring to a cousin or relative, that people began to raise questions about who exactly who these brothers of Jesus were and whether were they the children of Mary the mother of Jesus. This only comes out much, much later in history. In the early church, people understood that brother could have multiple meanings, and that if the context gave us clues that they were children of someone else, then that was the reasonable interpretation of these texts.

As you might guess, the Catechism of the Catholic Church also deals with this question. The Catechism gives us an official magisterial interpretation of this entire section in the teaching on the perpetual virginity of Mary. Paragraphs 499-500, deals specifically Mary's perpetual virginity. The Catechism says:

[T]he Church celebrates Mary as *Aeiparthenos*, the “*Ever-virgin*.” Against this doctrine the objection is sometimes raised that the Bible mentions brothers and sisters of Jesus [Cf. Mk 3:31-35; 6:3] The Church has always understood these passages as not referring to other children of the Virgin Mary. In fact, James and Joseph, “brothers of Jesus,” are the sons of another Mary, a disciple of Christ, whom St. Matthew significantly calls “the other Mary.” [Mt 13:55; 28:1; cf. Mt 27:56]

And while we have been focusing on Mark because his Gospel is the one most often cited, the Catechism goes even further. Because if you look at the gospel of

Matthew's account of the crucifixion, he's even more explicit. Not only does he call her "Mary the mother of James and Joseph" but he calls her "the other Mary." It seems illogical, maybe even ridiculous, to assume that Matthew would ever refer to Mary the mother of Jesus as "the other Mary," when at the beginning of his Gospel he frequently calls her "the mother of Christ" or the "mother of Jesus." So, the Catechism is saying here that this is clearly the children of another Mary. Paragraph 500 emphasizes this at its end by saying:

They are close relations of Jesus, according to an Old Testament expression.

So, in closing, I think it is important for us to recognize that although some Catholics may be scandalized by this passage from Mark. Perhaps even questioning the perpetual virginity of Mary, the reality is that this passage from the Gospel of Mark in no way undermines the perpetual virginity of Mary. When looked at in its grammatical and historical context, it supports this teaching because it provides evidence to the fact that James and Joseph, two of the so-called brothers of Jesus, were actually, children of another woman named Mary, who is mentioned in the Gospel of Mark as simply "the mother of James" or "the mother of Joseph." One of whom, by the way, would go on to become the Bishop of Jerusalem and one of the first leaders in the early church. And whom St. Paul tellingly refers to as James, the so-called brother of Jesus, in the Book of Corinthians and the Book of Galatians.