



# Our Lady of Mercy *parish newsletter*

14 January 2024 | Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

## Deepening Our Friendship with Christ

This week's readings on the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time explore the concept of our relationship with God as a deeply personal and intimate friendship, a notion that is central to our faith journey.

To understand this concept, we must first look to the call of Samuel in the First Reading. God's call to Samuel was so personal, so human, and so intimate that Samuel mistakenly thought it was Eli, a close companion of his, who was calling out to him. This shows us that God's offer of friendship was so near and so familiar that it could be mistaken for the voice of a close friend. It reminds us that God

knows each of us, intimately and personally. As St Augustine eloquently put it, God is "nearer than my nearest self". This is how God calls each one of us, inviting us to a relationship that transcends our self-knowledge and self-understanding.

Furthermore, in the Gospel, we see Jesus meeting Simon, Andrew's brother, who would later become the leader of the Twelve Apostles and of the whole Church. Jesus gives Simon a new name, Peter, which signifies his calling to fulfil the mission he was created for. This action of Jesus shows us how God relates to each one of us. In

the same way that he renamed Simon, he also calls us all to our true identities and to accomplish the missions we were created for. God never ceases to seek us out, to draw us closer to Him and to help us realise our God-given potential.

So, if the meaning of life is found in friendship with Christ, then our highest priority should be to constantly deepen this friendship. There are three essential ways we can nurture this relationship.

The first one is through prayer. A mature prayer life involves not just reciting prayers and asking for good things from God, but also

reading and meditating on the Bible and filling our hearts with gratitude for God's many gifts. It involves fostering a conversation with God, listening as well as speaking, and seeking to understand His word and His will for our lives.

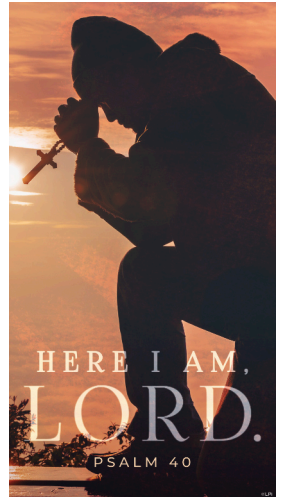
The second way is by building our lives around the sacraments. When John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the 'Lamb of God', he was alluding to the Old Testament lamb sacrificed right before the Exodus from Egypt. The blood of that lamb saved the Israelites from slavery. In the New Testament, this image is fulfilled in the Eucharist —

the body and blood of the real sacrificial lamb, Christ himself, who saves us from sin. Participating in the sacraments, such as adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, receiving Holy Communion, and confessing our sins, draws us deeper into the mystery of salvation by linking our lives more intimately with Christ's.

The third way to deepen our friendship with Christ is through obedience to His plan. Friendship involves shared interests and a common purpose. Therefore, friendship with Christ means aligning our will with His. As the Psalmist beautifully put it:

"Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will... To do your will, O my God, is my delight." We express this desire to do God's will by following His commandments and loving our neighbours as ourselves.

Prayer, sacraments, and obedience to Christ's plan are the foundation stones of a meaningful life, a life anchored in heaven where our friendship with Christ will reach its eternal fulfilment. As we reflect on these readings, let us strive to deepen our friendship with Christ, remembering that He knows us better than we know ourselves and that He is always calling us closer to Him.



## Second Sunday of the Year

Fr John Muir

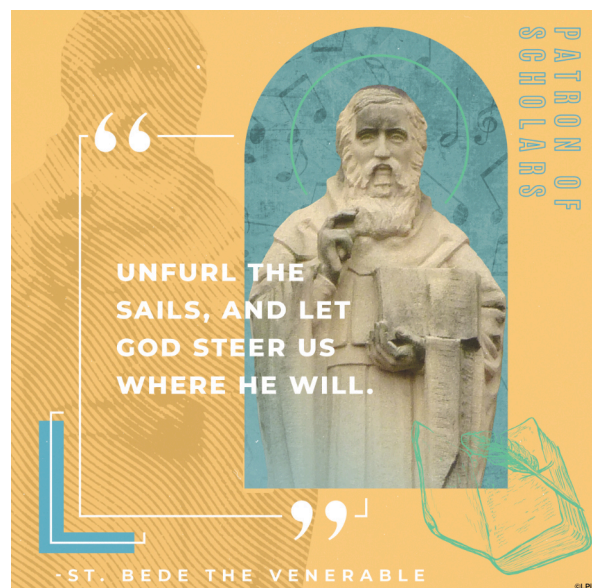
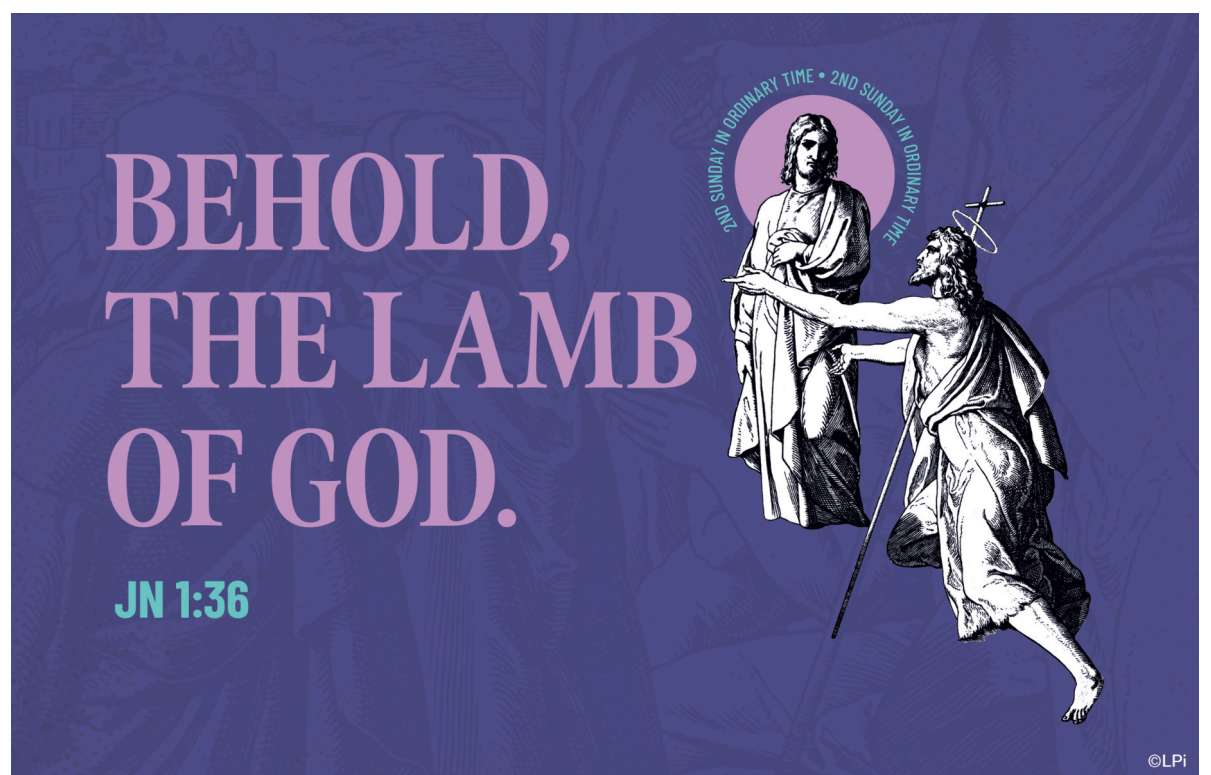
As a priest, I'm amazed how happily married couples remember the tiniest details of their earliest encounters. They effortlessly report things like: "he wore a blue shirt," "we ordered Brussels sprouts," "her hair was up in a bun," and "he spilled shrimp cocktail sauce at my family's open front door when it was ten degrees below zero," (that one's courtesy of my mom). We delight in remembering and speaking of when our new life of love began. The little details are glorious reminders that it's all real.

It's similar for John the Apostle. He tells us of the two disciples who followed Jesus

into his house, "...they stayed with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon." Why does that tiny detail matter? Because that's the time of day when they encountered the love of Jesus the Messiah in their lives. Our religion is not primarily about abstract truths about God, no matter how true or sublime. It is about God meeting and saving us in our human nature. It's about a human relationship.

What was the time of day when you first recall encountering Christ and his Church? Who was there? What did you feel? How did things look and smell? What happened? Take some time to recall it in detail. For me, it was inside an old,

rickety church on a hillside in Jerome, Arizona. It was about 9 p. m. on a Saturday evening. I was with my friends Jenny, Brad, and Laura. We were praying, singing, and laughing. When was it for you? Remembering the details isn't empty nostalgia. It reminds us now that God's love for us in our humanity is real.



## (Practising) Catholic Those Who Seek the Truth

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

In my work as a freelance writer, I have a regular column in the archdiocesan paper writing profiles of ordinary people in the local church. Laity, religious, and clergy alike — I hound them all to give me an interview, and when I do, the answer is almost always this: "You don't want to talk to me. There's nothing special about me."

I always try to convince them that there is something remarkable about everyone who is searching for the truth. It is easy to think we are not made for holiness because we are ordinary people with ordinary habits, ordinary abilities, and ordinary sins. It is easy (and very convenient) to designate holiness as something belonging to Better People. People like the saints. People like the Disciples.

The Bible gives us next to no personal information about the disciples. There is no archdiocesan newspaper profile on Andrew and Simon that can give us insight into who they were before they became St. Andrew, Inaugural Disciple and Announcer of the Messiah, and St. Peter, First Pope and the Rock-Upon-Which-Christ-Built-His-Church.

Yet I find myself insatiably curious about it. What was

their childhood like? What games did they play with each other as the sun set, before their mother called them into bed? What did they think of as they fell asleep at night? What secret jokes did they share to make each other laugh? What were they afraid of? What did they hope for? Who did they want to be?

Before they were towering figures of salvation history, Simon and Andrew were just two men searching for the truth. When they looked at Christ, there was something that made it click. Perhaps they themselves could not

identify what it was, but their hearts whispered it nonetheless: There it is. We finally found it.

Isn't that the best we can all hope for?

"Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, 'What are you looking for?'" — John 1:38

### Live the Liturgy

"Come and see," Jesus said to the disciples who were curious to know about him. Have courage — go, and see what Christ has to show you.



**First reading: 1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19**  
Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord, where the

ark of God was, when the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' He answered, 'Here I am.' Then he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I

am, since you called me.' Eli said, 'I did not call. Go back and lie down.' So he went and lay down. Once again the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' He replied, 'I did not call you, my son; go back and lie down.' Samuel had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. Once again the Lord called,

the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' Eli then understood that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, 'Samuel!

Samuel!' Samuel answered, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'

Samuel grew up and the Lord was with him and let no word of his fall to the ground.

**Responsorial Psalm 39(40):2,4, 7-10**  
*Here I am, Lord! I come to do your will.*

1. I waited, I waited for the Lord and he stooped down to

me; he heard my cry. He put a new song into my mouth, praise of our God.

2. You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings, but an open ear. You do not ask for holocaust and victim. Instead, here am I.

3. In the scroll of the book it stands written that I should do your will. My God, I delight in your law in the depth of my

heart.

4. Your justice I have proclaimed in the great assembly. My lips I have not sealed; you know it, O Lord.

**Second reading 1 Corinthians 6: 13-15, 17-20**  
The body is not meant for fornication: it is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. God, who raised the Lord from the dead, will by his power raise



# This Week

|    |  |       |                              |                           |   |
|----|--|-------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 13 | Saturday   | 6.00  | VIGIL MASS                   | St Cecilia's              | Tony Furey                                      |
| 14 | <b>SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B)</b>  | 8.00  | Morning Prayer               | Mercy Chapel              |   |
|    |  | 9.00  | MASS                         | Convent                   | Ints of Linda Holden                            |
|    |  | 10.30 | MASS                         | St Mary's                 | David Selva & Shaun Dover (RIP)                 |
|    |  | 3.00  | Parish Stewardship Committee | Upper Room                |   |
|    |  | 5.00  | MASS                         | St Mary's                 | People of the Parish                            |
| 15 | Monday   | 8.00  | Morning Prayer               | Mercy Chapel              |   |
|    | <i>Week 2 of Ordinary Time B(II)</i>   | 9.30  | MASS                         | Convent                   | Dec'd of Garvey & Hogan Families                |
|    |  | 12.05 | MASS                         | St Mary's                 | Ints of Margaret Wilson                         |
|    |  | 12.45 | Chaplet of Divine Mercy      | St Mary's                 |   |
| 16 | Tuesday  | 8.00  | Morning Prayer               | Mercy Chapel              |   |
|    | <i>Week 2 of Ordinary Time B(II)</i>   | 9.30  | MASS                         | Convent                   | Mary Stonely (RIP)                              |
|    |  | 12.05 | MASS                         | St Mary's                 | Ints of Fred Pye & Family                       |
| 17 | Wednesday  | 8.00  | Morning Prayer               | Mercy Chapel              |   |
|    | Saint Antony, Abbot  | 9.30  | MASS                         | Convent                   | Ints of Institute of Sisters, Our Lady of Mercy |
|    |  | 12:05 | MASS                         | St Mary's                 | Dec'd of Barry Family                           |
|    |  | 6.30  | RCIA                         | Upper Room                |   |
| 18 | Thursday   | 8.00  | Morning Prayer               | Mercy Chapel              |   |
|    | <i>Week 2 of Ordinary Time B(II)</i>   | 9.00  | Church Cleaning              | St Mary's                 |   |
|    |  | 9.30  | MASS                         | Convent                   | Sr Anne McCarthy (RIP)                          |
|    |  | 10.00 | Confessions                  | St Cecilia's              |   |
|    |  | 10.30 | Open House                   | St Mary's Catholic Centre |   |
|    |  | 10.30 | MASS                         | St Cecilia's              | John & Catherine McConville (RIP)               |
|    |  | 11.15 | Christian Mindfulness        | St Cecilia's Church Hall  |   |
|    |  | 12.05 | MASS                         | St Mary's                 | Holy Souls                                      |
|    |  | 5.00  | Student Prayer               | Mercy Chapel              |   |
| 19 | Friday   | 8.00  | Morning Prayer               | Mercy Chapel              |   |
|    | <i>Saint Wulstan, Bishop, Religious</i>  | 9.30  | MASS                         | Convent                   | Ints of Sr M Stephen                            |
|    |  | 12:05 | MASS                         | St Mary's                 | Eveline Rodgers (RIP)                           |
|    |  | 12.45 | Holy Rosary                  | St Mary's                 |   |
| 20 | Saturday   | 8.00  | Morning Prayer               | Mercy Chapel              |   |
|    | <i>Saint Fabian, Pope, Martyr; or Saint Sebastian, Martyr; or Saturday memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> | 10.30 | Confessions                  | Mercy Chapel              |   |
|    |  | 11.00 | MASS                         | St Mary's                 | Holy Souls                                      |
|    |  | 11.45 | Confessions                  | Mercy Chapel              |   |
|    |  | 6.00  | VIGIL MASS                   | St Cecilia's              | Joseph Jacob (RIP)                              |
| 21 | <b>THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B)</b>   | 8.00  | Morning Prayer               | Mercy Chapel              |   |
|    |  | 9.00  | MASS                         | Convent                   | Ints of Srs of Mercy of the Union G.B.          |
|    |  | 10.30 | MASS                         | St Mary's                 | Lorraine Elizabeth Purdy (RIP)                  |
|    |  | 5.00  | MASS                         | St Mary's                 | People of the Parish                            |



## Announcements

**No Masses 24 January**  
Please note that all the the clergy are away for a training day on 24 January and there will be no Mass in the Convent or at 1205 in St Mary's. There will however, be a communion service at St Mary's.

**Morning Prayer**  
Every morning we pray Morning Prayer in the Mercy Chapel at 8 a.m. It's a great way to start the day. If you live or work in the city centre why not make it part of your routine to come and pray with us?

**Christian Mindfulness**  
New Year, new you? Our popular course of Christian mindfulness with Andy Carton is returning in the New Year. It is

Bernie, Craig, Veronica, Mary, Vicky, Marjorie, Paul, Barbara, Bill Ken, Kelly, Catherine, Florence

John Alpin, Winifred Una Tindile, John Robert Hubbard, Kevin Anderson, Mary Stonely, Sheila Robson and all the faithful departed

suitable both for people who did the course in the summer and for new people.  
It takes places on Thursdays at 11.15 until 12.30 and starts on 11 January for 4 weeks. Contact: andrewcarton7@gmail.com

**Prayer of Discernment**  
Dear Lord,  
Here I am! Help me to know the path You would have me walk, to speak the words You would have me speak, to love and serve those You put in my path. Amen.

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Canon Alec Barrass • Bishop Séamus Cunningham

## Questions for the Week

**First Reading:** In the Lord's call to Samuel, Eli teaches Samuel the importance of "listening" to God's voice. Can you name something you have heard

from the Lord?  
**Second Reading:** Paul saw our physical bodies as a temple of the Holy Spirit, destined to be raised after death just as Je-

sus was raised from the dead. What are some ways to treat your body with reverence and respect?  
**Gospel:** In John's account of the call of the first disciples, we hear the first words Jesus

speaks in the Gospel of John: "What are you looking for?" How can you convince family or friends that Jesus is what we all should be looking for?

### Why do we do that?



**Question:** Why do we make changes in the Mass? Some seem so small and unimportant. Are they really necessary?  
**Answer:** The celebration of the

Eucharist is at the heart of our identity as Catholics. Our purpose as a Church community revolves around the Eucharist. Everything we are and everything we do is measured not only by how well we celebrate, but also by how well we live the sacrament. If that is so, then we as a community will always strive to celebrate the Mass as best we can. The reasons for some changes might seem more obvious than others, but there is a reason behind each

one.  
The General Instruction of the Roman Missal is the introduction to the Missal that contains all the prayers for the celebration of the Mass. The Order of Mass we use now was issued in 1975 and, as often happens over the course of years, some questions have come up about the proper way of doing some things and whether or not other practices are acceptable. These changes clarify some things and make the celebra-

tion of the Mass more meaningful for everyone.  
The opportunity is presented to us to better learn and understand each part of the Mass, which in turn should help us deepen our appreciation for its beauty and meaning. We will be a better Church if we have a clearer understanding and knowledge of Who and what we celebrate.

## Saint of the Week



St. Clare of Assisi, (1194-1253), was born into a wealthy, politically influential, Catholic family in Assisi, Italy. When she was 12, her family decided she should marry. She begged them to allow her to

wait until she was 18 and they eventually agreed.  
As a teen, Clare learned of a priest named Francis (St. Francis of Assisi). After hearing him preach, she decided that her calling was to "live for the Gospel." She admired how Francis lived — in poverty, community, and service to the poor. After receiving permission from the bishop of Assisi, she left her family to join Francis and his followers. Once with them, Clare left her fancy life behind, donning a plain robe, simple veil, and

cutting her hair short, a symbol of her desire to reject marriage and live a religious life.  
Studying early on with the Benedictines, she was joined by her sister. Fearing for their safety from Clare's family who were determined that the daughters return, Francis and his followers built a home for them next to a church they restored, San Damiano, for their protection. While there, Clare and Francis established the Order of the Poor Ladies of San Damiano.  
Daily Mass, adoration, and the Eucharist were integral to the lives of Clare's Poor Ladies. The growing community's radical devotion to strict

poverty set them apart from other congregations. Following her order's eventual approval by the Pope, she wrote the order's Rule of Life based on the teachings of St. Francis — the first monastic rule known to be written by a woman.  
After St. Clare died, the Poor Ladies were renamed the Order of St. Clare or, the Poor Clares, in her honour. She passed away at the age of 59, one day after her Rule was approved. St. Clare, pray for us!

## Flock Notes

How did John the Baptist know Jesus? How did he recognise him among everyone else there that day?  
Yes, their mothers were cousins, but they hardly lived close by: Nazareth and the hill country of Judea are about 4 days away. They can't have met too often. Besides, how

did John know that Jesus was the Lamb of God, and not just cousin Jesus from Nazareth?  
During Advent (which already seems like a distant memory) we learned how to recognise Jesus as he comes to us in different ways: at his birth in Bethlehem and when he comes again in glory at the

end of time. Now that Advent and Christmas are behind us, it's time to put into practice what we have learned. Ordinary Time isn't boring and uneventful. It the time when we practice our discipleship and the first task of any disciple is to learn to recognise their Master.  
John knew Jesus was the Messiah because he was so in tune with the the Holy Spirit. It couldn't have been more

obvious to him if Jesus had a neon sign above his head.  
That's also our goal during Ordinary Time. We too need to learn to become so in tune with the Holy Spirit that we recognise Jesus in all the joys and sorrows of everyday life, as well as in everything we do and in everyone we meet.  
Jesus is already among us. It up to us to see him and point him out.



...continued  
us up too.

You know, surely, that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ; do you think I can take parts of Christ's body and join them to the body of a prostitute? Never! But anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.  
Keep away from fornication. All the other sins are committed outside the body; but to fornicate is to sin against your own body. Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God.

**Gospel Acclamation Jn1:41,17**  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Speak, Lord, your servant is listening: you have the message of eternal life. Alleluia!  
**Gospel John 1:35-42**  
As John stood with two of his disciples, Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God.' Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, 'What do you want?' They answered, 'Rabbi'— which means Teacher — 'where do you live?' 'Come and see' he replied; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about the tenth hour.  
One of these two who be-

came followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Early next morning, Andrew met his brother and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' — which means the Christ — and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John;



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