

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

O GOD, BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER.

LUKE 18:13



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

SERVING ST. MARY'S/MALTA, SACRED HEART/DODSON, ST. FRANCIS/SACO

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2025

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Contact Us

Fr. Felix Nayak, Pastor

Cell 406.946.2195 or Rectory 406.654.1446

Deacon Tom DePuydt

deacontom@saintmarysmalta.org or 406.674.7060

Administrative Assistant (Macie Hould) office hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 10am to 2pm at RE Center

Please check our website for additional information.

Weekly bulletins are posted in full color with several additions – check them out here: <https://www.saintmarysmalta.org/bulletins>

Confession – Friday's 9-10am, Saturday's 11-noon or contact Fr. Felix directly for an appointment.

Adoration – every Friday 9:00-10:00am immediately following daily Mass.

MASS SCHEDULE:

Saturday vigil – Malta 5:00pm

Sunday – Saco 8:30am, Malta 10:30am, Dodson 12:30pm

Homily by Fr. Felix:

XXX Sunday (C): Sir 35:12-14, 16-18; 2 Tim 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14)

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

Today's liturgy calls us to remember that our God is not distant or partial, but intimately present to those who humbly seek him. It encourages the lowly to trust and challenges the proud to remember that favor with God is not about social status or self-righteousness.

Today's first reading from the Book of Sirach reveals to us a God who listens, shows no partiality, and hears the cry of the poor. This is a profound theological truth that God's justice is revealed in His unwavering love for those who depend entirely on Him. Divine justice flows from God's very being as mercy. The God of Sirach teaches us that the most powerful prayer is not eloquence or ritual accuracy, but the humble cry of one who knows he needs God's mercy.

In the second reading, we see, St. Paul, near the end of his earthly journey, writes to Timothy with calm confidence and deep faith that he sees his life as a sacrifice poured out for God. He looks back not with pride, but with gratitude: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Notice the verbs fought, finished, kept. Paul's life was not easy, but he remained faithful. What sustained him was not his own strength, but the Lord's presence.

Paul's testimony teaches us that Christian faithfulness is not about success in human terms. It is about perseverance, about trust even when no one else stands with us. His confidence in "the crown of righteousness" is not self-reward, but trust in God's mercy the same mercy that justifies the humble

tax-collector in today's Gospel. We too are called to live our lives as an offering. Every act of love, every moment of forgiveness, every hidden struggle endured with faith, all these become libations poured out before God.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells a parable that pierces the heart: two men go up to the temple to pray.

One is a Pharisee, a model of religious observance, the other a tax collector, despised and sinful. The Pharisee thanks God but quickly turns inward: "I thank you that I am not like other men." His prayer is not a dialogue with God but a monologue of self-congratulation. He measures holiness by comparison and forgets that all righteousness is grace.

The tax collector, by contrast, stands at a distance. He cannot even lift his eyes to heaven. He simply says, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." In that one sentence is the whole theology of redemption. He acknowledges who God is, merciful, and who he is, in need of mercy. His humility opens him to grace. Jesus' verdict shocks his audience:

"This man went home justified, not the other." Justification, being made right with God, comes not from performance but from humility and trust. As we see the efficacy of prayer, the Pharisee's prayer was self-referential but the tax collector's was God-centered.

Today, Sirach reminds us that God hears the lowly. Paul shows us what humble faithfulness looks like in a life poured out for Christ. And Jesus teaches that the humble heart is the home of justification. So, let us come before the Lord not boasting in ourselves but trusting in His mercy. And may the God of justice, hear and answer our prayer. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

St. Mary's Religious Ed middle school and high school students will be participating in the **Malta Food Bank "Trick or Treat"** for canned goods on Wednesday, October 29th. This will be during regular scheduled class time – please dress for the weather

Thanks to all who attended the recent **Worship & Liturgy Commission** meeting – a full recap of the meeting is posted on our website. Planning continues and we will share more information as it evolves.

All interested are invited to join **Chair Exercise** with online instructions every Monday and Wednesday following daily Mass @ 9am in the church basement. It's low impact and easy to catch on.

Are you missing details from our weekly church bulletin? Yes, the bulletin has been paired down some to save on printing – BUT you can view a full color bulletin with added pages that include: Weekly Prayer, Worship & Meditations, Practicing Catholic, Liturgical Life and a printable Kids Corner page – all on our parish website <https://www.saintmarysmalta.org/bulletins>

Deacon Tom will lead an OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation for Adults) class. If you are interested in joining the Catholic Church or know of someone interested in the faith, please have them contact Deacon Tom at 406.674.7060. Please note - because of the distance and travel time, many of the classes will be held over Zoom.

Parish Potluck, immediately following Mass on Sunday, November 9th in Malta @ St. Mary's. This will be in conjunction with Fr. Ponessa's 50th Golden Jubilee and Ministry Fair – please make plans to join us.

General Fall Church Cleaning will be on Saturday, November 15th beginning at 9AM – there will be task lists divided by PCCW bands, but all parish members are invited to join in. If you are unable to join the group cleaning on the 15th, please complete a task as an individual or family and cross it off the list. Thank you in advance for your dedication to our parish facilities and keeping them clean and maintained.

****If you would like to have another Priest perform a service (funeral, wedding, baptism, etc.) in our parish, Please contact Father Felix so he may grant his permission.**



Father Joseph Ponessa
**50TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION**
Come celebrate Fr. Ponessa's Golden Jubilee in the Priesthood.
NOVEMBER 8 & 9, 2025
Saturday 4:00 pm Sacred Heart/Dodson (NO Malta Mass on Saturday),
Sunday 8:30am St. Francis/Saco and 10:30am St. Mary's/Malta
**Potluck Meal and Ministry Fair immediately
following Sunday Mass at St. Mary's/Malta in the
church basement. All invited and encouraged to
join in the fellowship and celebration**

Prayer Requests

If you have a prayer request, please contact **Dianne Salsbery at 406-654-4675**. Names will be listed in the bulletin for a minimum of 30 days.

Please pray for – the families of Staci French, Skyla Sisco, for the family of Norma Wyse, Carletta Benson, Joe Simanton, Judy Henry, Lorena James, Adalyn McCollom, Ramona Kienenberger, Gloria Combs, Corky LaBrie, Brian Shevlin, Kristi Shettel Peterson, Dianne Salsbery, Bob Kaluza, Tammy Peterson and those from our area serving in the military.

For the repose of the souls of – Staci French, Shirley Eklund, Alvina Doucette, Derek Davis, KJ Wilke, Jim Robinson, David Williamson, Lee Stevens and all souls in need and pray also for their families that they find comfort and peace.

Mass Intentions - to schedule an intention, please fill out an envelope in the back of the church. Each intention is \$10.

Saturday 10.25 .25	Repose of the soul of Father Greg Staudinger r/b St. Mary's
Sunday 10.26.25 10:30 Malta 8:30am Saco 12:30 Dodson	For uncared for pets r/b Lana Fortin For the faithful of our parish For the Poor souls in Purgatory r/b B&D Cummings
Monday 10.27.25	For my family r/b Lana Fortin
Tuesday 10.28.25	The deceased in the LaFond Family r/b Darlene and Bruce Cummings
Wednesday 10.29.25	For Jack Miller r/b Deb Sjostrom
Thursday 10.30.25	For Tom LaBrie r/b Corky & Bonnie LaBrie
Friday 10.31.25	For my friends r/b Lana Fortin
Saturday 11.1.25	Repose of Derrick Davis r/b Lana Fortin
Sunday 11.2.25	For the faithful of our Parish

Readings for the week of October 26, 2025

Sunday: Sir 35:12-14, 16-18/Ps 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23 (7a)/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: 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: Rv 7:2-4, 9-14/Ps 24:1bc-2, 3-4ab, 5-6/1 Jn 3:1-3/Mt 5:1-12a

Next Sunday: 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

Calling all November Anniversaries and Birthdays!

First Sunday (weekend) of each Month – please join as Fr. Felix gives a special blessing for everyone in our parish celebrating either a birthday or marriage anniversary during the coming month. Youth can come forward and adults can simply stand at their seat or raise their hand to be recognized. First Sunday weekend will be November 1&2nd Masses.

Finance Council members include:

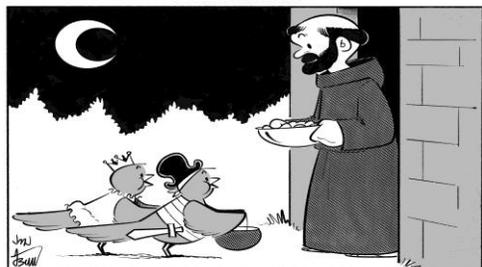
- Deb Sjostrom** 406-654-1451, sjostrom@itstriangle.com.
- Lance Hould** 406-539-5772, lanceh_99@hotmail.com
- Mike Ereaux** 406-658-2613 (H), 406-654-7803 (C), mfe7195@itstriangle.com
- Scott King** 406-654-7302, sbking1959@gmail.com
- Shyla Sunford** 406-399-1484, shylasunford@gmail.com (Saco)
- Bonnie Lankford** 406-390-2276, Bonnie4339@hotmail.com (Dodson)

Meetings are generally the 3rd Thursday of the month. If interested in serving please contact a member of the finance council.

Parish Council members include:

- Alora Snider**— 399-1675, alora_lynn_09@hotmail.com
- Shawn Bleth**— 654-7303, shawn.bleth@gmail.com
- Nancy Ereaux**—658-2613
- Jeff Van Heel**—406-266-1133
- Joy DePuydt**—674-5560, joyful@itstriangle.com (Saco)
- Leona Kienenberger**—383-4459, leona_kienenberger@yahoo.com (Dodson)

“What did the birds say to St. Francis on Halloween?”



“Twick-or-Tweet!”



St. Francis of Assisi is often depicted with birds, a nod to his witness of preaching God’s goodness to all creation.

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Weekly Prayer

Sunday's Readings

First Reading:

The one who serves God willingly is heard;
his petition reaches the heavens. (Sir 35:20)

Psalm:

The Lord hears the cry of the poor. (Ps 34)

Second Reading:

The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat
and will bring me safe to his heavenly kingdom.
To him be glory forever and ever. Amen. (2 Tm 4:18)

Gospel:

“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled,
and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”
(Lk 18:14)

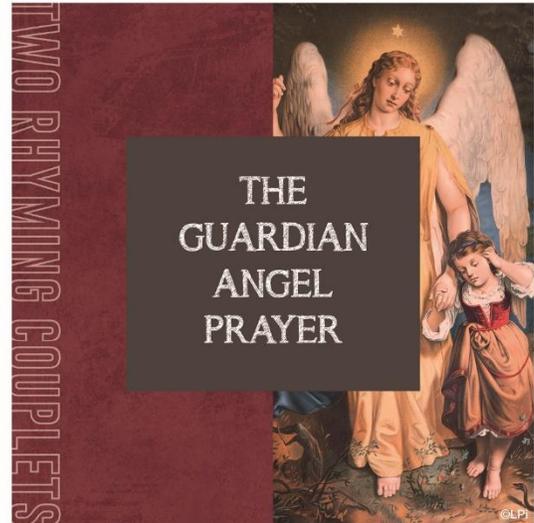
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Live The Liturgy Inspiration of the Week

The Pharisee took such pride in his good deeds that he forgot to ask God for forgiveness; the tax collector acknowledged his many sins, and went home justified. Remember that we are saved not by our own merit, but by the mercy of God.

Observances for the week of October 26, 2025

Sunday:	30th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Tuesday:	Sts. Simon and Jude, Apostles
Friday:	All Hallow's Eve
Saturday:	All Saints
Next Sunday:	The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day); Daylight Saving Time Ends



Devotions, *Explained!*

Often one of the first prayers taught to children, the Guardian Angel Prayer consists of two rhyming couplets invoking the protection of one's guardian angel. Its exact authorship is unknown, but it originated in the medieval period.

Prayer of Praise

Dear God,
As we look to the week ahead,
help us to remember that You will
accompany us at every moment
— You who greet us with mercy
anew every morning, and grace in
abundance each night.
Amen.

Worship & Meditation

Readings for the week of October 26, 2025

Sunday:

Sir 35:12-14, 16-18/Ps 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23
(7a)/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:

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:

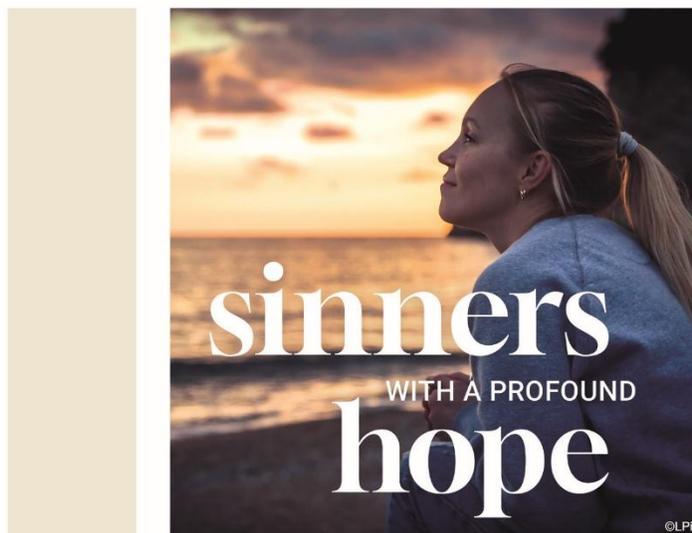
Rv 7:2-4, 9-14/Ps 24:1bc-2, 3-4ab, 5-6/
1 Jn 3:1-3/Mt 5:1-12a

Next Sunday:

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



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Gospel Meditation

Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

Every now and then readers of these reflections write letters in which they object to something. Years ago, this Gospel of Luke 18 prompted such an email. A man wrote to me: "I find it deeply offensive that you suggest we are still sinners once we are God's sons and daughters." His objection stirred in me a profound awareness of the paradox at the heart of our faith. Are we sinners or beloved children of God?

In this Gospel (Luke 18:9-14), a tax collector appears as one who has missed the mark. His sins have isolated him. His breast-beating is not an act of self-flagellation for pride's sake but a heartfelt admission of his failure and unworthiness. Remarkably, Jesus honors the candid humility of the parable's penitent. Why? Because we are always in need of mercy, always. But even more, perhaps because on the cross, Jesus will fully embrace a similar place of humiliation and rejection. He will enter into the most shameful, offensive place of the sinner so that we might "go home justified."

There is a sacred tension in admitting that we are sinners and yet have profound hope. We are beloved sons and daughters of God, growing precisely through our honest acceptance of failure. When we cry, "Have mercy on us," during Mass or when we repeat the "Jesus Prayer" in quiet moments, or in the confessional, we embrace our imperfections as fertile ground for divine grace. In doing so, we follow Christ's example — finding true exaltation in the humble acknowledgment of our human frailty.

— *Father John Muir*

Liturgical Life

(PRACTICING) CATHOLIC

Mini Reflection: The Pharisee did the right thing sometimes. He fasted. He tithed. But he gazed so long at his own holiness that he became blinded by it. He stood before God, and he could only think of what he had done right.

Tunnel Vision

There are some parents on the playground I really can't stand.

You know them, probably, if you're a parent, or if you're not, you know a different version of them. They'll tell you about how their little Brayden is a bilingual violin prodigy who sleeps through the night and only ever asks to snack on vegetables. But as soon as Brayden starts to chase your screaming kid with a stick, they're conveniently scrolling on their phone, unaware.

You're not irritated that their kid is smarter than yours and likes veggies (well, maybe you are, a little). You're irritated that they have tunnel vision. In striving for perfection, they have become unable to acknowledge imperfections.

If you're reading this, you're probably in church. If you're in church, you're probably someone who is concerned with what is right and what is wrong. I've got news for you: that might just make you (and me) more at risk of being like Brayden's parent than the people who stayed home today.

Unclutch your pearls! It was good of you to come to Mass. Definitely keep doing that. That's the right choice. Just don't forget that in making the right choice, we don't *become righteous*.

Look, I'm not going to lie to you. Sometimes, it's my kids who are doing the chasing with the stick. They're kids, and kids do dumb things, just like everyone else. And maybe it's because they hate vegetables and sleep terribly that I'm less reluctant than Brayden's mom to admit their mistakes. It's a hard fall from the pedestal.

If we're churchgoing followers of Christ, we are hopefully people who earnestly want to do the right thing. Maybe, sometimes, we do exactly that. The Pharisee did the right thing sometimes. He fasted. He tithed. But he gazed so long at his own holiness that he became blinded by it. He stood before God, and he could only think of what he had done right.

We need to stay vigilant, folks. Just when you look away, that's when Brayden grabs the stick.

— Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Why do we do that?

Catholic Life Explained

Question:

Why do we kneel at Mass?

Answer:

Since the beginnings of the Church, kneeling has been a key posture of prayer. We see Sts. Peter and Paul in the Acts of the Apostles kneeling in prayer. Early in the 4th century, the Council of Nicea prohibited kneeling on Sundays and special feasts. Kneeling began more as a posture of penance for our sins, but in the history of the Church, it has become more a posture of reverence and solemn prayer.

You will notice that the times we kneel at Mass are tied to the consecration of the holy Eucharist. We kneel in both anticipation of what will occur and then in awe of what has taken place: Jesus Christ becomes truly present to us under the guise of bread and wine. The profoundness of this event has over time led the Church to mandate in the current General Instruction of the Roman Missal that kneeling is the only posture allowed during this time. The sheer awesomeness of the holy Eucharist leads us to fall to our knees in wonder and thanksgiving.

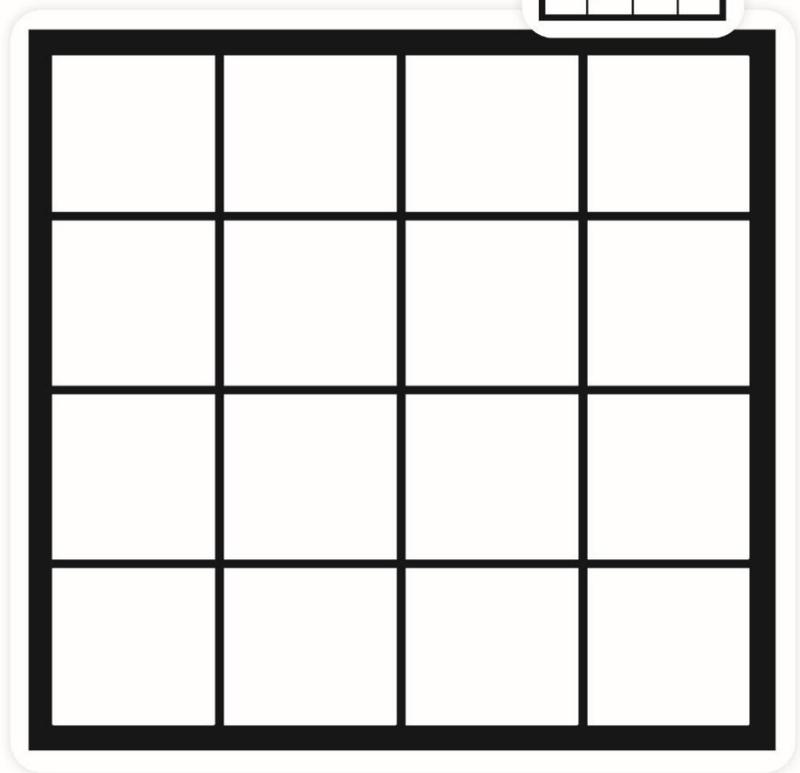
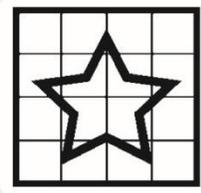
Prayer

Lord, please forgive me.

Mission for the Week

I will ask God for forgiveness morning, noon, and night.

Draw the star square by square.



Sharing the Gospel

During Mass you will hear the priest and people say, “Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.” It means, “Lord, forgive me.” You are human. You will make mistakes. God is proud when you are honest and admit that you did something wrong. He smiles when you forgive yourself and others. He frowns when you talk and act like you are better than others. God wants you to do right.

Now color the picture! →

