


Weekly Offertory		Capital Campaign
June 29th		Capital Campaign Goal:\$200,000
Regular	\$ 762.60	
July 6th		Raised: \$55,031.31
Regular	\$ 1226.00	
Capital Campaign	\$ 1475.00	Dispersed: -\$34,938.23
July 13th		
Regular	\$1093.00	(for church roof scheduled for after VBS)
Heat & Electric	\$ 708.00	
July 20th		Balance: \$20113.08
Regular	\$ 993.00	
July 27th		Please mark your donation
Regular		
Peter's Pence		"Capital Campaign"
August 3rd		
Regular		Thank you for your support!
Capital Campaign		
August 10th		
Regular		
Heat & Electric		
Amount needed weekly to run the Parish = \$1278.85		

Thank you for Supporting our advertisers	NORTHWOODS GENERAL PRACTICE 226 Main St., Sherman, Tel. 365-4335 M. Hrynick, M.D. Karen LaFlamme, PA-C	
	Ellis Family Market Shop 'n Save 5 Main St. Patten, ME (207) 528-2457 6 Main St. East Millinocket, ME (207)746-5019	
Bates Fuel Inc. #2, Kero, Diesel, Pellets, Heat Pumps, 24-hr Burner Service. Stacyville 365-4292; Houlton 532-1161	PATRICK E. HUNT, ESQ. Attorney at Law  SEVEN SHERMAN STREET POST OFFICE BOX 130 ISLAND FALLS, MAINE 04747-0130 TEL. 207-463-2285 • FAX. 207-463-2226 EMAIL: pat@patrickehuntpa.com	
TAYLOR'S KATAHDIN VIEW GATEWAY CITGO 98 Main St., Sherman 365-4856  Pat & Bob Taylor	QUALEY LOGGING, INC. P.O. Box 51, Benedicta, ME  IN BUSINESS OVER 40 YEARS	Delivering on A promise.  Dead River Company KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BENEDICTA COUNCIL #1859  IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL. kofc.org/joinus
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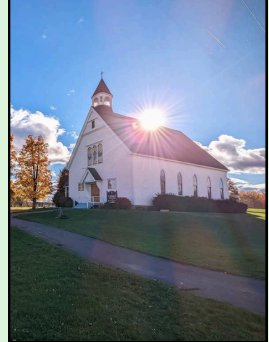


# ST. BENEDICT'S PARISH

St. Benedict's is a family-oriented community of faith, called through our baptism to give witness to trust, love, understanding, and patience.  
We are a family that is nourished by the sacraments, and led by the Spirit. Welcome to our Family!

**PASTOR: REV. FR. SEFEMBIY JUSTIN**

EMERGENCY NUMBER 765-4414 E-MAIL: SEFEMBIY.JUSTIN@PORTLANDDIOCESE.ORG



### The Jubilee Prayer 2025

Father in Heaven, may the Faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally. May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever.  
Amen.

### SUMMER MASS SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS 8:30 AM  
FRIDAYS 9:00 AM

### ADORATION & CONFESSION

⑧8:00AM FRIDAYS OR  
BY APPOINTMENT

### EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF THE MONTH  
AFTER MASS UNTIL 3:00PM

### COMMUNION FOR THE HOMEBOUND

CALL DEACON DAN (207) 731-8111

### FAITH FORMATION

ANNA ROBINSON (207) 267-0586

### PARISH OFFICE

1063 BENEDICTA ROAD  
P.O. BOX 27  
BENEDICTA, MAINE 04733  
(207) 365-4294  
LISA AMMERMAN, ADMIN. ASST.  
LISAAMMERMAN@PORTLANDDIOCESE.ORG

### OFFICE HOURS

TUES. 8:30-11:30 THURS. 8:30-11:30  
FRI. 9:30-11:30  
AFTER MASS ON SUNDAYS  
OR BY APPOINTMENT 746-7960  
STBENEDICTSMAINE.ORG

### Weekly Reflection

### Pastor's Corner - Feed My Sheep (Table of the Word)

### Theme: The Power of Intercession

Dear God's, Wonderful people,

The readings of today, 17th Sunday of Ordinary Time, year C, invite us to meditate not only on the necessity of praying for ourselves , but also for others. In the first reading, Abraham stands before the lord pleading for God's mercy on Sodom and Gomorrah. He perseveres in asking God to spare the cities for the sake of the righteous. This reveals a profound concern for the people and a profound trust in God's Mercy. Abraham's prayer teaches us that intercessory prayers are powerful and that these pierce the heavens more than self-centered prayers. And God listens to them. In this form of prayers, Abraham invites us into a relationship where our concerns for others matter. Today's Psalm invites us to approach God with confidence, trust and hope, with our concerns and those of others. He is always present to all those who seek Him.

In the second reading from St. Paul's letter to the Colossians, we are reminded that through Christ's death and resurrection, our sins have been forgiven.. This profound and selfless gift of Christ emphasizes that our relationship with God has been restored, and we can approach Him in prayer. Our past should no longer define us. What matters is how we respond to God's love and relate with Him today. In Christ, with Christ and through Christ we have become children of the same Father and like today's Gospel acclamation tells us, we have received the spirit of sonship: In him we cry Abba!, Father. The concerns of one should be for all, for we are children of the same Father.

When Jesus teaches His disciples to pray in today's Gospel text, he bids them begin with our Father. This reminds us of our common origin and destiny and concerns. Notice Jesus' emphasis on the need to be concerned about others when in this ideal prayer, he uses Our Father rather than My Father, Give us rather than give me, Forgive us rather than forgive me, lead us rather than lead me. Our journey to heaven is communal. It should therefore be our concern reflected in a life of faith and prayer, that no one is left behind. Regarding our needs, this prayer requires that we ask day by day simply so that we may not hoard whatever is given to us and feel secure and fail to realize that we are limited and dependent beings. In telling the parable of the persistent friend after teaching the lord's prayer, Jesus conveys the nature and importance of prayers. It can move mountains even in impossible situations. Hence persistent asking and not giving up produces results like in Abraham's case in today's first reading and the woman seeking for Justice from the judge in the Gospel parable. This power of prayers is ascertained by Jesus' authoritative words in today's Gospel text, "ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door shall be opened for you." When we pray, God will give us. And more so when our prayer is not selfish. So Pray!

GOD IS GOOD. ALL THE TIME. ALL THE TIME, GOD IS GOOD. AND THAT IS HIS NATURE...WOW.





AUSPICE MARIA

*Most Reverend James Ruggieri  
Bishop of Portland*

*Letter to Parents: Natural Family Planning Awareness Week 2025*

Dear Parents,

This week, the Church observes Natural Family Planning Awareness Week, a time often focused on the beauty of the Church's teaching on human sexuality and openness to life. But today, I'd like to approach this week from a different, perhaps more foundational perspective—not with charts or methods or terminology, but with a simple encouragement: see, listen to, and love your children.

In our increasingly distracted world, one of the greatest gifts we can give our children is the assurance that they are known, valued, and cherished. Before they can embrace Church teaching on love, sexuality, or vocation, they need to experience love—not as an idea, but through a relationship. And the first and most important relationship is the one in your home, with you.

Many of you may be concerned about what you see in young people today: self-absorption, attention-seeking behavior, social media obsession, and even a seeming indifference to deeper truths. Sometimes these behaviors appear narcissistic—self-centered, superficial, or even arrogant.

*But let's pause and ask: What is narcissism?*

Psychologists tell us that narcissism is more than a personality flaw. It is often a psychological defense—a means of protecting oneself from deep-seated feelings of inadequacy, shame, or fear. Narcissism isn't primarily pride—it's pain. It's a fragile, frightened heart hiding behind a loud voice. And for many children and adolescents, it's a desperate cry: "See me. Know me. Love me."

The very word narcissism comes from a myth that still speaks to us. Narcissus was a beautiful young man in Greek mythology who rejected the love of others. As punishment, the gods caused him to fall in love with his reflection in a still pool of water. He was captivated by the image but unable to connect with it. He wasted away, alone and unloved, gazing into the illusion of himself.

It's tragic but familiar. Many young people today are gazing into a kind of mirror—screens, likes, and filtered images—longing for affirmation but receiving only fleeting reflections. They're not truly seen. And perhaps they're afraid that if they were, they wouldn't be loved.

Parents, that's why you matter so much. An antidote to narcissism isn't shaming or moralizing. It's relationship. It's presence. It's love. Your children don't need perfect parents. They need present parents. They need you to sit with them, laugh with them, ask about their day, and talk with them about the deeper things of life.

Let me say this gently but directly: we cannot avoid conversations about sexuality, identity, and love. If we don't speak, the culture surely will—and often does, loudly, persuasively, and destructively. The Church teaches that sexual intimacy is a sacred gift, created by God for the context of marriage, where love is total, faithful, fruitful, and free. Many young people engage in premarital sexual activity, not because they are immoral, but because they are searching for love, or acting out a distorted version of it—one that sees love as use, not gift.

What are the consequences? Often, pain. A lowered sense of self-worth. A feeling of being treated—and treating others—as a commodity, something to be consumed rather than cherished.

Your precious children are not commodities. They are unrepeatable persons, created in the image of God, with a capacity for deep love and lifelong commitment. Parents, you know this better than anyone else. You see their beauty, their potential, their goodness. Please tell them. Show them.

So, this week, in honor of Natural Family Planning Awareness Week, I'm not asking you to start with catechesis or moral theology. I'm simply asking you to give your children something more basic—and more powerful.

*Spend extra time with them.*

*Put your agenda aside, and make them the agenda.*

*Talk to them about real things.*

*Affirm that they are seen, known, and loved.*

As you do, the deeper conversations about sexuality, vocation, relationships, and the meaning of life will begin to open naturally. And you will fulfill your sacred role of being the first and most important teachers of your children in the ways of faith, truth, and love.

The world is noisy and often confusing, but your home can be a sanctuary of clarity, trust, and love. Your presence matters. Your voice matters. Your love plants the seeds that will bear fruit for generations to come. Thank you. God bless you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Bishop James T. Ruggieri

The Catholic Appeal: The Portland Diocese of Maine Week 9

We've now reached \$2,921,749, bringing us to 81% of our overall goal!

Congratulations to Our Lady of the Lakes for reaching their Catholic Appeal goal!

*In Memory of:*

Joseph J. McAvoy  
(09/10/1933—08/30/2021)



**Wesley "Jim" Cunningham**

(10/26/31 ~ 01/11/08)

**Richard M Cunningham**

(03/14/62 ~ 11/06/21)



*Lovingly Remembered*

**Anders Staats Nielsen**

07/07/2019



**Basil & Margaret McAvoy**

(8/5/1921 ~ 7/31/1969; 9/29/1923 ~ 12/30/2014)

**Linda McAvoy Bouchard**

(2/22/1945 ~ 1/6/1982)

**Mary McAvoy Lowe**

(10/15/1957 ~ 2/9/2005)

**Anna McAvoy**

(6/28/1964 ~ 7/30/2011)



**Fred Lewis**

(11/25/1897 ~ 7/05/1995)

**Ethel Lewis**

(5/12/1897 ~ 10/07/1981)

**W. H. Lewis**

(4/19/1923 ~ 03/28/2001)

**Helen Lewis**

(7/23/1926 ~ 10/19/2005)

**Susan L Brooks**

(8/01/1954 ~ 1/20/2009)



*Lovingly Remembered*

**James C. (Buster) Guiggey**

(4/8/1927 ~ 12/4/2010)



*In Loving Memory Of*

**Lloyd E. Bryant** (1928 ~ 1987)

**Esther Grass Bryant** (1931 ~ 1988)



*In Loving Memory Of*

**Joseph P. Rush, Jr.**

(11/02/1928 - 04/12/2013)

**Jane M. Rush**

(02/03/1930 - 09/02/2013)

**Jacqueline M. Rush-Johnson**

(05/04/1972 - 03/26/1996)



**Francis H. Qualey**

(5/22/1914 ~ 2/28/2000)

**Margaret R. Qualey**

(11/6/1919 ~ 5/01/2018)

**Peter Qualey**

(12/17/1948 ~ 09/07/2020)



*In Loving Memory*

**Chris Marston**

(3/13/1978 ~ 8/24/2018)

**Aaron Marston**

(04/14/1975 ~ 10/19/2022)



*In Loving Memory Of:*

**Frank Duffy** (7/18/37 ~ 03/08/96)

**Bobby Duffy** (3/21/72 ~ 10/08/93)



**Arthur Qualey**

(3/5/1916 ~ 10/24/2008)

**Rita Qualey**

(1/13/1924 ~ 9/4/2011)



*Lovingly Remembered*

**Joan Filanowski**

(5/26/1935 ~ 6/14/2000)



**John J. Cummings**

(8/23/1907 ~ 4/18/1993)

**Lucile E. Cummings**

(8/19/1908 ~ 3/15/2003)

**Cecelia R. Cummings**

(11/18/1933 ~ 2/18/2013)

**Earl L. Cummings**

(7/04/1929 ~ 3/10/2018)



*Lovingly Remembered*

**Leo Joseph Crowe**

(9/5/1935 ~ 1/8/2019)



*In Loving Memory Of*

**Leo Crowe**

(3/19/1893 ~ 12/17/1975)

**Molly Crowe**

(2/13/1900 ~ 11/18/1967)

**Mary Crowe McDonough**

(2/27/1937 ~ 9/28/2002)



*In Memory of:*

**Robert Taylor**

(12/13/1948 - 10/19/2023)

**Charlene Taylor**

(01/07/1943 ~ 02/20/2020)



*In Loving Memory Of*

**Richard Rush**

(01/02/1931—1/24/2024)

**Celine Rush**

(07/08/1936 ~ 11/04/2021)

**Christopher Rush**

(4/17/55 ~ 1/8/22)



*In Loving Memory Of:*

**Robert Allen** (10/13/46 ~ 10/18/21)

**Andrew Allen** (06/14/65 ~ 12/05/20)



**Albert J. Qualey**

(08/20/1923 ~ 06/11/2012)

**Rowena Qualey**

(9/22/1927 ~ 8/01/2017)



*In Loving Memory*

**Martin Qualey**

(2/16/1984 ~ 7/24/2017)



**Edward Rush**

(5/25/1920 ~ 10/17/2013)

**Mary Rush**

(12/04/1921 ~ 6/05/2005)



**John W. Allen**

(1912 ~ 1/02/2004)

**Margaret L. Allen**

(4/03/1924 ~ 11/19/2005)



**Otis M. Hunt**

(6/15/1936 ~ 5/30/1999)

**Mary Ellen Hunt**

(1/30/36 ~ 4/17/17)



*"Oh Jesus, bless those living and dead, who have led me to the Holy Altar."*

*A Remembrance of the Ordination to the*

*Priesthood of*

**Rev. James Clifford Brown**

(6/6/1936 ~ 4/6/1941)

**Brother Benedict Brown, O.F.M.**

(3/23/1891 ~ 7/18/1969)

Sons of St. Benedict's Parish





"MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK"



WILL YOU LEND YOURS TO  
COUNT THE OFFERING?  
TO JOIN THE ROTATION OF OFFERTORY  
COUNTERS PLEASE CONTACT THE  
OFFICE, OR STOP IN AFTER MASS!  
*THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP*



THANK YOU FOR  
CLEANING OUR CHURCH!

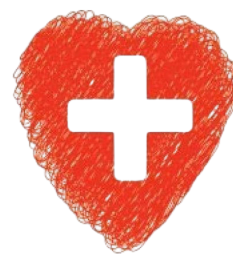
TO JOIN OUR VOLUNTEERS, PLEASE VISIT THE SIGN-  
UP SHEET BY THE ENTRANCE.

*Thank you so much!*

SATURDAY'S HOT  
DOG/BAKE SALE CLEARED  
\$717.50  
FOR THE CAPITAL  
CAMPAIGN.



A SINGLE SUNBEAM IS ENOUGH TO DRIVE AWAY MANY SHADOWS - ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI



Give blood.  
Give life. ♥

## Blood Drive

St. Peter's  
Friday August 1st  
12:00PM - 4:00PM  
Schedule your appointment  
online at [redcrossblood.org](https://redcrossblood.org) or  
call 1-800-REDCROSS

Would you like to join any of our ministries?

Please contact the office.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Date	Lector	Extra-ordinary Minister of the Eucharist	Alter Server	Offertory Counters*	Greeters
July 27th	Dustin	Pat	Rob	Ken, Rose & Deb	John & Jill Duffy
August 3rd	Lana	Anna Q	Anna Q	Andrew Harold & Ken	Deb D. & Rose
August 10th	Earl	Tom	David	Pat, Rob & John	Deb D. & Rose
August 17th	Chris	Brenda	Rob	Rose, Cindy & Andrew	Deb D. & Rose
August 23rd	Brenda	Chris	Anna Q	Ken, John & Rob	Deb D & Rose

July - Cindy  
September - Chris  
August - Mike  
Sacristans:

\*3 Counters are required. Volunteers welcome!

# Faith Formation News



## 2025 BLUE MASS

Honoring law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency personnel  
for faithful commitment and self-sacrifice.

Celebrated by Bishop James Ruggieri

Sunday, September 21 at 10:00 a.m.  
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception  
307 Congress Street, Portland

Sunday, September 28, 10:30 a.m.  
St. Mary of the Visitation Church  
110 Military Street, Houlton

More Info: <https://portlanddiocese.org/BlueMass>

## Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - July 27, 2025

"Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Luke 11:9) If you feel God is calling you to a vocation, ask for His guidance in prayer. Lord I will go where You want me to go. I will be who You want me to be. I will do what You want me to do. Just make it my will, and make it clear to me. Talk to your priest or reach out to the Vocation Office at (207) 613-1091 or via email: [vocations@portlanddiocese.org](mailto:vocations@portlanddiocese.org).



In his homily on June 1, Pope Leo XIV said  
"...families become privileged places in which to encounter  
Jesus, who loves us and desires our good, always."

Your family is that privileged place of encounter—  
encountering the Lord in shared play, work, & prayer.

Join Bishop Ruggieri on **August 30, 2025** to:

- Learn from Bishop & parents about what works to foster faith in our children and a vibrant Catholic family life in the home.
- Pray with other families
- Engage in fun, family activities

Faith grows strongest  
when we live it together.  
I look forward to sharing  
this day with you and  
your family.

### Schedule—9:45am-5:45pm:

9:45am Registration  
10:00am Guided Adoration  
10:30am Snack & fun break  
10:45am Bishop Ruggieri - Message for Families  
11:30am Break  
11:45am Small groups sessions for kids and parents  
12:15pm Lunch and more fun!  
1:15pm Living Rosary  
2:00pm Family discussion and activity  
3:00pm Parent Panel Discussion & Kids Activities  
4:15pm Vigil Mass with Bishop Ruggieri  
5:45pm Supper on-site or to-go

Registration Fee: \$25/family—including lunch, snacks, & supper either on site or to go

Location: St. Mary's  
Catholic Church,  
Houlton, ME

Sponsored by:  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland  
Office of Lifelong Faith Formation

REGISTER ONLINE: [portlanddiocese.net/faithfamilyfunday](https://portlanddiocese.net/faithfamilyfunday)



Lend us your voices!

St. Benedict's own Youth Choir is  
looking for members!

The Choir sings at the last Mass of  
every month, and rehearses weekly  
according to singers' schedules. We  
believe God loves all voices and we do  
not judge. Join us!



AUSPICE MARIA

Most Reverend James Ruggieri  
Bishop of Portland

THIS WEEK'S EPISODE OF THE  
AUSPICE MARIA PODCAST IS NOW LIVE!

EPISODE 10: "WHERE IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?"

ALL EPISODES OF OUR PODCASTS ARE  
AVAILABLE ON SPOTIFY, APPLE PODCASTS,  
AND YOUTUBE. ALL CAN BE FOUND ON OUR  
WEBSITE, TOO AT:

[HTTPS://PORTLANDDIOCESE.ORG/PODCASTS](https://portlanddiocese.org/podcasts)

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND WHERE  
DO WE FIND IT? IN THIS EPISODE, BISHOP  
RUGGIERI REFLECTS ON THE HEART OF JESUS'  
MESSAGE—A KINGDOM ALREADY AMONG US,  
YET STILL TO COME IN FULLNESS.  
HE INVITES US TO CONSIDER HOW THE CHURCH  
IS CALLED TO LIVE THIS KINGDOM NOW: BY  
BUILDING A CULTURE OF LOVE, LIFE, AND  
MERCY. THIS IS NOT JUST A FUTURE HOPE, BUT  
A PRESENT CALL—TO LIVE AS CITIZENS OF  
HEAVEN WHILE STILL ON EARTH.



MASSES & INTENTIONS

Saturday, July 26th: St. Martin of Tours at 4:00PM: (D) **Bertha Raymond** (1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary)  
*by Debbie, Terry, Marianne, Bryan, John & Natalie*

Sunday, July 27th : St. Benedict's at 8:30AM: (D) **Basil & Margaret McAvoy** *by Mike & Betty*  
 St. Peter's at 10:00AM: (D) **Donald Morin** (In honor of his birthday) *by Jeff & Lucia Jones*  
 St. Martin of Tours at 12:30PM: (D) **Jimmy Bouchard** (30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)  
*by Cathy, Troy, Tracy & Jami*

Monday, July 28th: St. Peter's at 8:30AM: A Living Intention for **Arlene Daigle** *by George, Judy and Michelle*

Tuesday, July 29th: St. Peter's at 4:30PM: **To Be Announced**

Wednesday, July 30th: *Father Justin's Day Off*

Thursday, July 31st: St. Martin of Tours at 4:30PM: (D) **Shane Barr**, (D) **Scott Somers** & (D) **Jack Swanson**  
*by Mark & Karen Emerson*

Friday, August 1st: St. Benedict's at 9:00AM: (D) **Reid Stanley** *by Randy & Bev Cullins*

Saturday, August 2nd: St. Martin of Tours at 4:00PM: (D) **Danny Thibodeau** (Happy Birthday) by Siblings

Sunday, August 3rd: St. Benedict's at 8:30AM: (D) **Trina McNally Lento** *by the Girls*  
 St. Peter's at 10:00AM: (D) **Danny & (D) Tina Dishon** *by Mom & Dick*  
 St. Martin of Tours at **12:30PM:** (D) **Ellen Clark** *by David & Shirley Oliver*

OBSERVANCES FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 27TH

SUNDAY: 17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TUESDAY: SAINTS MARTHA, MARY, AND LAZARUS

WEDNESDAY: ST. PETER CHRYSOLOGUS, BISHOP

THURSDAY: ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, PRIEST

FRIDAY: ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

SATURDAY: ST. EUSEBIUS OF VERCELLI, BISHOP, ST. PETER JULIAN EYMARD, PRIEST

SUNDAY: 18TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Readings for the Week

Sunday -Gn 18:1-10a/Ps 15:2-3, 3-4, 5 (1a)/Col 1:24 28/Lk 10:38-42

Monday - Ex 14:5-18/Ex 15:1bc-2, 3-4, 5-6/Mt 12:38 42

Tuesday - Sg 3:1-4b or 2 Cor 5:14-17/Ps 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9/Jn 20:1-2, 11-18

Wednesday - Ex 16:1-5, 9-15/Ps 78:18-19, 23-24, 25-26, 27-28/Mt 13:1-9

Thursday - Ex 19:1-2, 9-11, 16-20b/Dn 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56/Mt 13:10-17

Friday -2 Cor 4:7-15/Ps 126:1bc-2ab, 2cd-3, 4-5, 6/ Mt 20:20-28

Saturday - Ex 24:3-8/Ps 50:1b-2, 5-6, 14-15/Mt 13:24 30

“We need to love peace. if and when we do, it will strengthen us and bless all those we touch. We will bring peace to the spheres of people and settings in life where God has placed us.”  
 ~St. Peter Chrysologus



Prayer List

Cathy Cyr Duffy

Riley Wheaton

Ryan Robinson

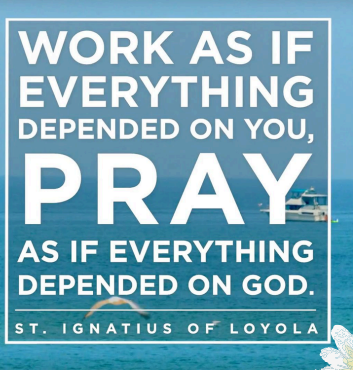
Beckham Willett

Janie Cummings

Irene Heath

† Families Afflicted by Addiction

† Our Men and Women In the service



SAINTS MARTHA, MARY, AND LAZARUS



In the household of Bethany the Lord Jesus experienced the family spirit and friendship of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, and for this reason the Gospel of John states that he loved them. Martha generously offered him hospitality, Mary listened attentively to his words and Lazarus promptly emerged from the tomb at the command of the One who humiliated death.  
 ~Congregation for Divine Worship, February 2, 2021

“Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” (John 11:5). This is how John’s Gospel describes Jesus’ relationship with these siblings whom we honor together today. Of course, Jesus loves all people equally with the perfection of divine charity. So why does John’s Gospel single these three out this way? In the Gospel passage, the word “love” does not only mean the perfect charity in the Heart of Christ for all people. It also implies that Jesus had a special relationship with them, perhaps throughout His life, but at least during the time of His public ministry. This fact is helpful to ponder since it gives us a glimpse into the authentic humanity of Jesus. He formed friendships. He enjoyed spending time with those friends. As both God and man, He ate with them, laughed with them, listened to them, and loved them. Now, from Heaven, Jesus wants to extend that human and divine love He perfectly offers to everyone.

In Luke’s Gospel, after Jesus begins His public ministry in Galilee, northern Israel, He travels with His disciples to Jerusalem and continues His ministry. It is on that journey that Martha and Mary are introduced. Luke 10:38–42 tells the familiar story of Jesus entering their home in Bethany, just several miles east of Jerusalem, where He is a guest for dinner. As Jesus reclines, Mary also reclines with Him, at His feet, listening to Him. Martha, busy preparing the meal, rebukes her sister by asking Jesus to tell Mary to help her with the meal preparation. “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me.” Jesus responds, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.”

This passage provides us with much to prayerfully ponder. First, it’s clear that Jesus is very familiar with Martha and Mary. Martha would not have spoken so bluntly, in an almost critical way toward Jesus, if she did not know Jesus well. Hence, this passage highlights the very real human friendships Jesus enjoyed. Second, Martha’s work of preparing the meal should be seen as a labor of love. Though she is frustrated, that doesn’t change the fact that her service is a service of love and is very important to the fostering of the siblings’ friendship with Jesus. Third, the image of Mary sitting at Jesus’ feet is often used as an image of the contemplative life in which we are all called to sit at His feet in adoration. This “better part” must remind us that nothing is better or more important than prayer. The activity and good works we do will always pale in comparison to the act of adoration of God. Furthermore, only when adoration and worship of God come first do good works follow.

Martha, Mary, and Lazarus appear for the first time in John’s Gospel toward the end of Jesus’ public ministry, just prior to the first Holy Week (see John 11:1–44). The context of the story makes it clear that Jesus and His apostles are all very familiar with these three siblings from Bethany. Lazarus is ill, at the point of death, and Martha and Mary summon Jesus. Jesus waits for two days until Lazarus dies before He journeys to Bethany, converses with Mary and Martha, and then raises Lazarus from the dead. In this passage, Martha emerges as the witness to faith, not Mary. In her conversation with Jesus, Martha proclaims, “I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.” This is true faith in the face of the painful situation of the death of her beloved brother.

In contrast to Martha who had run out to meet Jesus when He arrived, Mary stayed home, sorrowful, perhaps sulking. When Martha told Mary that Jesus wanted to see her, she went out to see Jesus in apparent despair. The Gospel says that Jesus became “perturbed” at the weeping of Mary and “the Jews who had come with her.” The Greek word literally means “He snorted in spirit,” which seems to be a response to Mary’s lack of hope. After this, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.

In the next chapter of John’s Gospel, John 12:1–8, Jesus is once again at dinner in Bethany with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, just six days before Passover, six days before His death. While there, Mary enters the room with a “liter of costly perfumed oil made from genuine aromatic nard” and pours it on Jesus’ feet, drying them with her hair. Though some have associated this act with the sinful woman in Luke 7:36–39 who came crying at Jesus’ feet, the two people might or might not be the same. What is clear, however, is that the anointing of Jesus in Bethany is not the same as the anointing in the home of Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7, which took place in Galilee to the north. Was Mary of Bethany the sinful woman? Did she first anoint Him in Galilee and then later, again, in Bethany? We will never know for certain, but most scholars agree today that she is not the same person as Mary Magdalene. Hence, there might be two or even three women who have traditionally been confused as the same person: Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the unnamed sinful woman in Luke 7.

All three of today’s saints appeared in the 1749 (updated in 1916) Roman Martyrology, the Church’s official list of saints. Of them it says, “At Tarascon, in France, Saint Martha, virgin, the hostess of our Savior, and sister of blessed Mary Magdalene and Saint Lazarus.” However, only Saint Martha appeared on the General Roman Calendar as a memorial until 2021 when Pope Francis added Saint Mary and Saint Lazarus to the July 29 memorial, and clarified that Mary of Bethany was not the same person as Mary Magdalene, although either of them might be the sinful woman.

As we honor these sibling saints, ponder the real, personal, and human friendship that the Savior of the World had with them. He loved them as God and as a man, with a pure, perfect, and holy love. In so many ways, this is exactly what Jesus wants with you. He wants you to know Him, spend time with Him, converse with Him, worship Him, and trust Him in good times and bad. Today’s sibling saints are not much different than you. Seek to imitate them, learn from their holy witness, and even from their mistakes. Become a friend of our Lord by inviting Him to dine in the home of your soul.

Prayer:

Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, you befriended Jesus as your Lord and God, and as the Son of Man, to Whom you opened your home and lives. Please pray for me, that I will also open the home of my soul so as to befriend Him Who is my God and is the Resurrection and the Life. Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.

From “My Catholic Life”