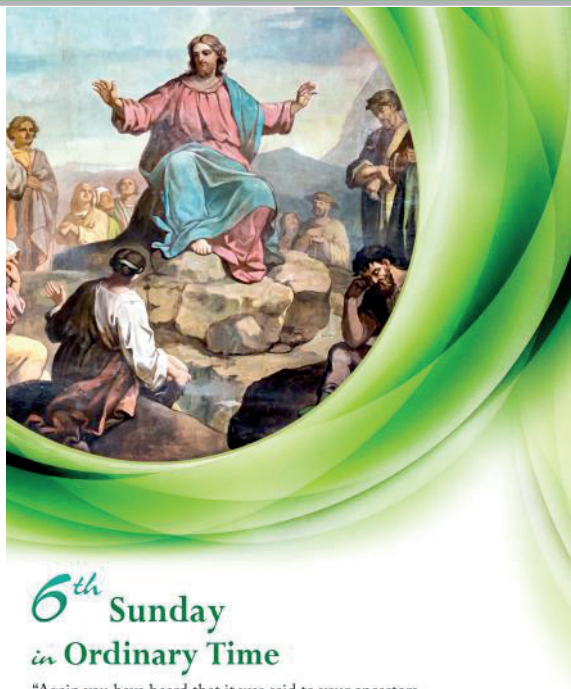


Saint Mary's Church

15164 Juniper Dr. Marne, MI 49435 / 616.677.3934 / www.saintmarysmarne.org

February 12, 2023 ~ The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time



"Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors,
'Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.'"
Matthew 5:33

Weekend Mass Schedule:

Saturday 4:30PM St Mary
Sunday 8:30AM St Michael
Sunday 10:30AM St Mary
Sunday 4:30PM St Michael

Weekday Mass Schedule:

Tuesday 9AM St Mary
Adoration begins after Mass until 2:00 pm
Wednesday 9AM - St Michael
Adoration begins after Mass until 2:00 pm
Thursday 9:00 AM St Mary
Friday 9:00 AM St Michael

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Saturday 3:30 PM—4:15PM-St Mary
Sunday 3:00PM -4:00PM St Michael
Wednesday 2:00 PM—3:00 PM St Michael
(or anytime by appt. please call parish office)

St. Mary Parish Office

Monday - 8:00AM - 4:30PM
Tuesday - 8:00AM - 4:30PM
Wednesday - 8:00AM - 11:30AM
Thursday - 8:00AM to 4:30PM

St Mary's Mission Statement: We, the Roman Catholic community of St. Mary's, by our baptism have become the People of God, dedicated to living and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are a community built on faith and the sharing of individual talents, abilities and skills for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Empowered by the Holy Spirit and strengthened by prayer and the sacraments, we continue the mission of Jesus to reveal God's presence in all of human life.

Pastor:

Rev. Michael Hodges / frmhodges@grpriests.org
616.677.3934
For emergency please call: 616.745.1409

Deacon:

Deacon Tom Roberts / troberts@saintmarysmarne.org
616.677.3934

Business Manager:

Todd Kline / businessmanager@saintmarysmarne.org

Parish Secretary:

Cathie VanGessel / secretary@saintmarysmarne.org

Director of Religious Education:

Rebecca Chicklon / dre@saintmarysmarne.org
616.677.5065

Youth Minister—Life Teen grades 9-12

Rebecca Chicklon / dre@saintmarysmarne.org
616.677.5065

Director of R.C.I.A: Jill Brown-616.677.3934

Maintenance/Custodian: Jim & Marian Looks: 677.3934

Liturgical Minister:

Gary Karr / 616.677.3934 / gkarr@saintmarysmarne.org

Music Director:

Dr. Bernie Stanko 616.490.3836 /
berniestanko@hotmail.com

Pastoral Council:

Sharon Davis, Becky Warners,
Vito Dolci, Geary Farrell, Doug Frantz

Finance Council:

Lisa Bradley, Jose Gomez, Ruth Kasul,
Todd Kline, Scott Lampe, Mel Northup

Martha League: Parish Office: 616.677.3934
(assistance with meals during illness or injury)

Prayer Line:

Parish Office 616.677.3934
or Linda at 677.3269 for evening requests
call Darlene 616.453.0157
or email: bfa1414@yahoo.com

Our Cluster Parish:

St Michael's - 17150 - 88th Avenue
Coopersville, MI 49404
616.384.4026
www.saintmichaels.us

Mass Intentions

Saturday February 11

4:30PM † Arlyn Madura by Family.....MA

Sunday February 12

8:30AM † Paula Racziewicz-Kelly by Pam RacziewiczMI

10:30AM † Jeff LeMieux by M/M Joe LothschutzMA

4:30PM † Rita Goosen by Winnie SpencerMI

Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:00 PM—4:00 PM - St Michael

Monday February 13..... NO MASS

Tuesday February 14

9:00AM † Mary Klein by Terri SchoenbornMA

Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm

Wednesday February 15

9:00AM † Edna Schumaker by Carol TaskerMI

Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—3:00 PM

Thursday February 16

9:00AM † Leonard & Dorothy Schwallier by M/M Tom Schwallier MA

Friday February 17

9:00AM † Steven Rohen by FamilyMI

Saturday February 18

4:30PM † Arlyn Madura by M/M Rob RanderMA

Sunday February 19

8:30AM † Jamie Thomas by Mark & Val PattersonMI

10:30AM † Pat O'Connor by Jim FritzMA

4:30PM † Michael Karbon by The Wendt FamilyMI

Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:00 PM—4:00 PM - St Michael

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

Please Note: When there is inclement weather (where Coopersville Public Schools or Kenowa Hills Public Schools are closed) The Parish Offices will be closed and all events scheduled for that day will be cancelled. Daily Mass will also be cancelled. The Mass intention for that day will be rescheduled at our earliest opportunity. Additionally, when a Funeral Mass has been scheduled, Daily Mass will be cancelled

For the Week of February 12, 2023

Sunday Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sir 15:15-20; Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34; 1 Cor 2:6-10; Mt 5:17-37

Monday Gn 4:1-15, 25; Ps 50:1 and 8, 16bc-17, 20-21; Mk 8:11-13

Tuesday Memorial of Saints Cyril, Monk, and Methodius, Bishop
Gn 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10; Ps 29:1a & 2; 3ac-4, 3b & 9c-10; Mk 8:41-21

Wednesday Gn 8:6-13, 20-22; Ps 116:12-13, 14-15, 18-19; Mk 8:22-26

Thursday Gn 9:1-13; Ps 102:16-18, 19-21, 29 & 22-23; Mk 8:27-33

Friday Gn 11:1-9; Ps 33:10-11, 12-13; 14-15; Mk 8:34—9:1

Saturday Heb 11:1-7; Ps 145:2-3, 4-5, 10-11; Mk 9:2-13

Sunday Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
Lv 19:1-2, 17-18; Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13; 1 Cor 3:16-23; Mt 5:38-48

St. Michael's Liturgical Ministers

	Feb 19 / 8:30 AM	Feb 19 / 4:30 PM
Altar Servers	Lauren Meerman Claire Taylor	NEED TWO
Eucharistic Ministers	Deacon Tom Debbie Venekase Joe Hitchings Mark Phillips Adam Taylor	NEED TWO
Lector	Melanie Mayse	Joe LeMieux
CLW	Marissa B. & Cindy L.	NO CLW
Sacristan	Jane Vitunskas	Sue DeVos
Ushers	Mary Bueche Calvin Lindberg Ed Irwin Jim Ponshair	NEED TWO
Music	Craig Bleckley	Craig Bleckley

St. Mary's Liturgical Ministers

	February 18 4:30PM	February 19 10:30 AM
Sacristan	Need One	Gary Karr
Altar Servers	Need two	Hannah Davis Calvin Davis
Host	Rob Rander Lori Rander Lauren Petrauskas	Deacon Tom Geary Farrell Christina Withers
Cup	Breton Petrauskas Julie Lothschutz	Margie Jirous Jim Fritz
Hospitality Ministers	Matt Karr Scott Lampe Jeff Schneider Katie Greenland	Jim Looks Marian Looks Leonard Horter Need One
Lector	Vito Dolci	Jessica Pabst
Music	Bernie Stanko	Bernie Stanko

Prayer for our Volunteers & Ministers

Thank you for serving. We appreciate you.

God of Glory, your beloved Son has shown us that true worship comes from humble and contrite hearts. Bless our brothers and sisters, who have responded to the needs of our parish and wish to commit themselves to your service. Grant that their ministry may be fruitful and our worship pleasing in your sight. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

If you would like more information on becoming a Liturgical Minister, please contact the parish office. We always have a need for Altar Servers, Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, Sacristans, Hospitality and Musicians.



Cluster News and Community News and Events

Hearken unto the Mystery:

A Eucharistic Hymn Festival

February 20 7-8:15 p.m. / Cathedral of St. Andrew

Whether seeking new answers or contemplating what we already believe, the way of beauty can lead each of us to deeper faith. All are invited to the Cathedral to contemplate the mystery of the Eucharist through the Church's treasury of sacred music. By joining our voices in hymnody, meditating on the word of God, and experiencing the richness of our choral tradition, we will renew our commitment to offer ourselves with Christ in all we do. More details on the diocesan website, GRdiocese.org or diocesan Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofGrandRapids>

40 Days for Life ~ March 2, 2023

Would you be willing to pray for one hour?

40 Days for Life is a unique pro-life effort that consists of 40 days of prayer, fasting and peaceful vigil in front of abortion clinics. This will be the 27th campaign in Grand Rapids, and it will take place in front of Heritage Clinic for Women at 320 East Fulton Street. This is the only free-standing surgical abortion facility still operating in our community. Dozens of area churches have adopted a day of prayer. **Our parish family has chosen Thursday, March 2, 2023~** Would you be willing to pray for one hour to fill in the time slots to pray to end abortion and close the Heritage abortion clinic in Grand Rapids? Contact Lisa Potts 616-723-3213 or potts.lisa99@gmail.com to sign up or for more information. We will need 2 prayer volunteers from 7 am till 7 pm throughout the day. This is a powerful and proven effective way to close abortion centers and show the Mother's that we are praying and thinking about them and their babies. Please consider a hour of your time~ If you are unable to attend that day you may go to the clinic and pray any time! Thank you for your commitment to LIFE! God bless! www.40daysforlife.com/GrandRapids

Please Note: Fr Mike will be leading the Rosary at 11 AM for our prayer group on March 2.



Knights of Columbus News

St. Mary's Knights of Columbus #11581

The St Mary's Knights meet on the 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00PM in the Parish Hall. For more info please contact Grand Knight Rob Rander: robrander82@gmail.com or visit: <https://www.saintmarysmarne.org/knights-of-columbus>

**Next Breakfast & Blood Drive:
February 12 & October 8**



St. Michael's Knights of Columbus #9909

The St. Michael's Knights meet on the 1st Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. For more information, visit <https://saintmichaels.us/knights-of-columbus-9909>

Fr. Mike's Musings

In the minds and hearts of the Hebrew people, God's greatest gift to them is the Mosaic Law. The love and respect for this set of laws are unmatched anywhere in human history. To observe the law is to find the meaning of life, happiness, and true divine blessing.

The substance of the law is God's revealed teaching for of humanity. The original law is embodied within the Torah—the last five books of the Hebrew Bible, the Pentateuch. Within the Torah is God's expressed will for His people. Through the centuries other commentaries and addendums to the law came into being and were applied to all facets of life in the Hebrew world.

Jesus comes along announcing, "I have come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it." (Matthew 5:17) This statements added a whole new set of directives to the already heft 970+ statutes of the Mosaic Law. While remaining respectful of the legal traditions of His people, Jesus invites His followers to go beyond the law. Jesus desires His listeners to observe and to be guided more by the spirit of the law rather than by its literal text. Evidence that God does not force His will on anyone.

God holds free will for everyone in high regard. But in choosing to obey the laws of one's faith and conscience will lead to a life of peace, harmony, and blessings. Not choosing to do this brings about restlessness and an unsurety of what to expect, if anything, in the life beyond this world.

The lesson we should take from our Gospel this week is to take note of the continuity between two legal models—the Law of Moses and the Law of Jesus Christ. This continuity instructs us that our living faith is not simply encompasses by the Ten Commandment, the Decalogue, but by our will to live beyond them in the model of Christ. Jesus desires us to examines our internal motives in all of decisions and actions and to ask God's guidance and grace when faced with indecisions or doubt. We are not only to avoid sin, but to structure out lives along the law and the message and example of Christ in the positive pursuit of good.

This is at the core of adhering to Christ and His fulfillment of the law. We continue a line of faith wrought by our Hebrew ancestors at the foot of Mt. Sinai, continued and expanded upon through the ministry of Jesus, and still calls us to obedience to the will of the One whose love for His people transcends all of human and cosmic existence. With this on our minds and in our hearts who could not feel the least bit privileged to know that we are the heirs of His eternal love and of the promise of eternal life.



High School Youth Ministry

High School Youth Ministry

Are you interested in participating in a Mission Trip or Youth Conference such as Steubenville this Summer? On Sunday, Feb. 19, we will offer a session about all the summer event options for 8th-12th grade Youth. We will meet 6-7:30 p.m. Please contact Rebecca for the location.

Spiritual Stock Fundraiser:

Thank you to all who have already made a donation! We really appreciate your donation and we are even closer to our goal this week!

We are still in need of more donations and hope you will consider supporting Youth Ministry by investing in our Youth. Spiritual Stock envelopes are in the back of Church. You may donate with check or cash. Please make check out to St. Michael Youth Ministry. If you have questions or would like any help making your donation please feel free to contact Rebecca Chicklon. Your support is much appreciated!



Questions or comments

Please contact Rebecca Chicklon at 616-677-5065 or dre@saintmarysmarne.org



February 12, 2023 ~ The 6th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Religious Education

This Sunday's Gospel Reflection:

"Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?" We've all seen court scenes where a bailiff asks a witness to place one hand on the Bible and the other hand in the air and take an oath of honesty. In some ways, it's a lot like Jesus' instructions for us in this week's Gospel. Imagine that you and your friends are goofing around. You dare your friend to take a basketball out of your neighbor's yard. Your friend takes your dare, steals the item, and you both play with it at your friend's house. You hide it in your friend's garage. The next day, your parents get a call from the neighbor saying their basketball is missing, and they saw you leaving their yard with a friend. They think you took it. When your parents ask you if you stole it, you say no you didn't. Technically, that is the truth. You didn't steal it; your friend did. In your head, you know that you are answering the question completely. However, in your heart you know that you are part of the theft, and by not saying any more, you are also part of a lie. That is what Jesus is talking about in this week's Gospel. The Ten Commandments instruct us not to kill. Jesus says that is not the complete message. Not only don't kill, but don't be violent. Not only don't be violent, but don't even think violent thoughts against one another.

The same is true of other commandments.

It is not enough to follow through by not stealing. We are not to be jealous of what others have. We are not to think about taking something that is not ours. We are to live honestly with both our heads and our hearts. Jesus asks us to live "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Questions of the week: Why do we need laws and rules? Why do laws sometimes change? Why does Jesus add to the Ten Commandments? What is a rule that you will try to follow this week?

Children's Liturgy of the Word:

dismisses and meets during 10:30 a.m. Mass.

Questions or comments

Please contact Rebecca Chicklon at 616-677-5065 or dre@saintmarysmarne.org

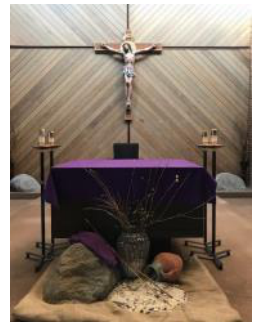
High School Youth Ministry

SEE CLUSTER PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS



Lent & Easter Church Decorating Volunteers Needed

Would you like to help create a prayerful environment here in our church worship space? We need help with decorating during Lent, Holy Week and Easter. No experience required. You would be responsible for setting up and watering the flowers through out Lent, Holy Week and Easter. You would also help with Putting up Lent and Easter Banners as needed. All members of our faith community, high school age or older, are eligible to be a part of this ministry. Please call the Parish Office if you are interested in helping.



Winter Weather News

Please Note: When there is inclement weather (where Coopersville Public Schools and/or Kenowa Hills Public are closed) The Parish Offices will be closed and all events scheduled for that day will be cancelled. Daily Mass will also be cancelled. The Mass intention for that day will be rescheduled at our earliest convenience.



2022 Church Contributions

2022 Contribution Statements are available in the Narthex. Please pick up after Mass or during parish open office hours. If you would like yours mailed or emailed, please call the parish office. Thank You. **Please Note: In an effort to save money on postage we will only mail statements if requested.**

Save the Dates

Feb 12	Knights of Columbus #11581 Community Breakfast and Blood Drive 8AM St Mary
Feb 22	Ash Wednesday 9AM Mass St Michael / 7PM Mass St Mary
Feb 24	Stations of the Cross 7PM St Mary / 7PM St Michael
March 2	40 Days for Life- Cluster Day of Prayer 7AM-7PM Heritage Clinic for Women at 320 East Fulton Street
March 3, 10, 7, 24	Stations of the Cross 7PM St Mary / 7PM St Michael
March 23	The Light is On for You, An Evening of Penance (Diocese Wide) 5:00PM to 8:00PM St Mary
March 25	Soup Supper 5:30PM St Mary Parish Hall. (Join us for 4:30PM Mass prior)
March 31	OUTSIDE Stations of the Cross at The St Mary Meditation Path Hosted by the Knights of Columbus Councils #11581 & 9909)

Giving Back to God

	Feb 4/5
Regular Contributions	\$5900.00
Capital Improvement	\$259.00
Online Contributions	\$1668.00
Children's Contributions	\$20.95
Total	\$7847.95

Thank you for your continued support and generosity!

St. Mary's Sponsor of the Week

RIDGE HEATING & COOLING

Rinke Family Owned ~ 616.520.8505 ~ RidgeHeatingandCool.com

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR BULLETIN!

St Mary Parish Prayer Line

If you would like to request a prayer for our parish prayer line please contact the parish office or Linda at 677.3269. For evening requests call Darlene 453.0157 or email: bfa1414@yahoo.com Please continue to pray for all of our sick, hospitalized & homebound parishioners and all of the personal intentions that St Mary's Parish parishioners hold close to their hearts.



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

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

St. Michael's Parish News



Scrip News— Scrip totals will be updated next week.

St. Michael's Preschool

Have you considered St. Michael's Preschool for your child or grandchild? If not, you should! Come see what a great experience St. Michael's Preschool can provide. Come meet our Director/Teacher, Cindy Lindberg! Preschool meets on MWF from 8:45—11:45 am (Mon. 8:45am-2:30pm for 4-year-olds). For more info, call the Parish Office at 616-384-4026.

Festival Planning Meeting — There will be an informational/planning meeting for 2023's Annual Festival, on Sunday, February 26, after 8:30 AM Mass, in the church. If you are interested in chairing an event this year, or adding input to the planning process, we would love to see you there! Please save the date for this year's festival: Sunday, August 27!



Knights of Columbus News

The Knights of Columbus welcome and value Catholic men seeking community and ways to put their faith into action. If you would like to join the Knights of Columbus, it is a very simple application process. You can go online to KofC.org/joinus and fill out the information requested, putting in our Council #9909 where asked. We will have Knights available in the back of church after both Masses on Sunday, February 12th, to assist you. Come and see us for more information!

St. Michael's Faith Formation

Children's Liturgy of the Word: this program is offered during Sunday morning Masses. Children 3-9 years old are welcome to join us each week as we pray, read and explore the Sunday Gospel from a child's viewpoint. We include the Gospel Acclamation so children understand the importance of preparing our mind and heart for the Gospel reading. In today's Gospel reading, Jesus tells us that before we come to the altar, we have to make peace with the other person who is angry with us. Being at peace with others helps us feel God's wholeness.

Elementary Faith Formation: This program is for students in grades 1-5. We meet on Wednesdays from 6:15- 7:30 pm. **There is no class on Wednesday, February 22, due to Ash Wednesday. There will be Mass at St. Michael's at 9 a.m. and St. Mary's at 7 p.m. I hope to see you at Mass.**

Middle School Faith Formation: Grades 6, 7 and 8 will meet on Sundays after the 8:30am Mass, from 9:45 to 11:15 in the Youth Room. The 8th Grade students will also receive Confirmation Preparation during that time.

St. Michael's Parish Family

Remembers in Their Prayers: Kevin Johnson, Anne Pols, Alexandria Gordon, George Langlois, Brooke Campbell, Linda Abel-Carroll, Jackie May, Marvin Hecksel, Carmen Dietrich, Dennis Goosen, Jean Mayse, Ken Heflin, Winnie Spencer, the victims of abortion, & the men and women in the military.

St. Michael's Sanctuary Lamp

for +Paula Raczkiewicz-Kelly
by Pam Raczkiewicz

Parish Prayer Line—

If you would like to request a prayer for our parish prayer line please contact Chris Albrecht at 616-403-7110. We are also looking for more parishioners to help with our prayer line phone chain. If you are willing to help call others with prayer requests that come into our prayer line, please contact Chris at the number listed above.



Eucharistic Adoration—



Adoration takes place every week, after the daily Mass, on Wednesdays. If you are interested and able, please contact the parish office to volunteer for a regular time. You may also come freely from 9:30 am—2 pm. Our most needed times are currently between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM. Thank you!

Schedule Change — The Parish Office will be closed this Tues., Feb. 14. It will re-open on Wed. morning, Feb. 15, at 9 AM. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.



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

What CAN go in the bins?

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

What CANNOT go in the bins?

Paperboard
(Grocery Item boxes)
Plastic
Metal
Trash
Glass
Cardboard

Giving Back to God

February 5, 2023

Adult Envelopes	\$4,522.00
Loose Cash	\$271.00
Children's Envelopes	\$25.25
Online Giving	\$985.00
Total	\$5,803.25
Building Fund	\$185.00
Financial Assistance	\$10.00

Thank you for your continued support!

February 12, 2023 ~ 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

Choices Beyond Choice

The most wonderful and yet the scariest thing about being human is our freedom of choice. Because we are free, we can love or hate, do good or evil, choose happiness or misery forever. Sirach says God has set before us “fire and water...life and death.” What we choose will be given us.

Sirach says something else very significant: “If you choose, you can keep the commandments.” God does not force anyone to sin. We can never say that we are so weak or wounded that we cannot love, that we cannot refuse to do evil.

But, as a truck going seventy miles an hour downhill cannot be stopped immediately, habit or passion may make us, for all practical purposes, unable at a particular moment to avoid something we have set ourselves up to do. We can even be programmed because of abuses we have suffered to react to certain situations without thinking, without free choice. Fear can make us react automatically. This is not choosing evil and sin but rather suffering the effects of evil and sin.

What we can do, however, and must do to accept our humanity, is work toward freeing ourselves from the habits, conditioning and knee-jerk reactions which cause us to act in evil, self-destructive ways. There are, for example, Twelve Step Programs for addiction to alcohol, drugs and sex—and for woundedness caused by someone else’s abuse of these. We must take care not to let our feelings of fear or anger become so strong that they overwhelm us. We are responsible for doing everything we can to become free, to avoid letting ourselves get to the point where

FEBRUARY 12, 2023
6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Sirach 15:15-20; I Corinthians 2:6-10;
Matthew 5:17-37

we lose control.

Jesus, however, calls us to act in ways that are beyond human freedom, ways made possible for us only by God’s grace. In the Sermon on the Mount, he changes the commandments from laws of good human behavior into laws for acting on God’s level. It is no longer enough not to kill; we must love one another as God loves us. It is no longer enough to avoid adultery; we must see each other as God sees us: as the Body of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit. It is no longer enough not to lie; we must be as honest with each other as God is with us, realizing that our words, like God’s words, are sacred because we are sacred.

Just as human choices depend on human understanding, divine choices depend on divine understanding. We humans choose freely only when we choose on the basis of what

we understand—normally, on the basis of reason. But when we have become divine by grace, by sharing in the life of God, we understand not by human reason

*The same gift of grace
which enables us to see
by the power of God’s
light allows us to
choose through the
power of God’s love.*



alone but by the light of faith. A fully alive faith shares in God's own act of knowing; we can have such knowledge only by sharing in God's own life by grace. The same gift of grace which enables us to see by the power of God's light allows us to choose through the power of God's love. In this way the gift of grace, sharing in the divine life of God, empowers us to live on the level of God. Acting on God's level is the morality taught by Jesus, beginning with the Sermon on the Mount.

Saint Paul presumes all this when he speaks of the "wisdom" he expects to find only in the spiritually mature. The ideals, the values, the attitudes which Paul preaches as the teaching of Jesus are simply beyond the range of natural understanding. The "wisdom of this world" regards them as plain foolishness, absurd. And that gives us a new choice: to follow the wisdom of the world or the wisdom of the cross, darkness or light, death or life. What we choose will be given us.

REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

Sixth Week of the Year

***Pray daily:** Lord, you came to give us life, life to the full. Inspire and strengthen us to take responsibility for the choices that give shape to our souls. Direct us by your love in all that we choose to be and to do. Amen.*

Monday: Mark 8:11-13. Jesus sighed from the depth of his spirit and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation." What greater sign can there be of God's grace to you than your choices?

Tuesday: Mark 8:14-21. Jesus said, "Watch out-beware of the yeast of the Pharisees..." Clinging to legalism as the Pharisees did is a way of escaping the responsibility of choices by blindly obeying the letter of the law. Do you do this at times?

Wednesday: Mark 8:22-26. Jesus laid his hands on the blind man and asked, "Can you see anything?" The man replied, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." When Jesus laid hands on the man's eyes

again, the man saw clearly. What kind of encounter with Christ will help you see clearly when you make choices? How do you seek this encounter?

Thursday: Mark 8:27-33. Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" After they offered various answers, he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" How have you personally chosen to interact with Jesus? Who, what is he for you?

Friday: Mark 8:34-9:1. Jesus called the crowd and his disciples and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." The key question is, do you really want to follow Jesus? How closely? How much is it worth to you?

Saturday: Mark 9:2-13. Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here." Have you ever explicitly said to yourself, "It is good that I am in the Church!"? Can you say it now?

LIVING THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

As Christian: Describe in one sentence why you choose to follow Jesus.

As Disciple: Write down what helps people recognize that you are not a believer in name only but rather are a disciple, a student, of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

As Prophet: Each day this week make one choice which is based not just on the Ten Commandments, on what is right or wrong, but on some more generous and demanding ideal taught by Jesus.

As Priest: Perform some daily act of kindness for someone else, a conscious act of expressing the healing, helping love of Jesus who is within you, acting through you.

As King: Reconsider some rule or policy you obey but do not feel comfortable about. Accept responsibility for deciding whether this rule or policy reflects the highest ideals of Jesus. Discuss the situation with someone you consider wise.

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