

# Saint Mary's Church

15164 Juniper Dr. Marne, MI 49435 / 616.677.3934 / [www.saintmarysmarne.org](http://www.saintmarysmarne.org)

September 10, 2023 ~ The 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time



## 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

Tuesday 2:00 PM—3:00 PM St Mary

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](mailto:frmhodges@grpriests.org)  
616.677.3934

*For emergency please call: 616.745.1409*

## Deacon:

Deacon Tom Roberts / [troberts@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:troberts@saintmarysmarne.org)  
616.677.3934

## Business Manager:

Todd Kline / [businessmanager@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:businessmanager@saintmarysmarne.org)

## Parish Secretary:

Cathie VanGessel / [secretary@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:secretary@saintmarysmarne.org)

## Director of Religious Education:

Rebecca Chicklon / [dre@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:dre@saintmarysmarne.org)  
616.677.5065

## Youth Minister

Rebecca Chicklon / [dre@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto: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](mailto:gkarr@saintmarysmarne.org)

## Music Director:

Dr. Bernie Stanko 616.490.3836 /  
[berniestanko@hotmail.com](mailto:berniestanko@hotmail.com)

## Pastoral Council:

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

## Finance Council:

Lisa Bradley, Jose Gomez, 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](mailto:bfa1414@yahoo.com)

## Our Cluster Parish:

St Michael's - 17150 - 88th Avenue  
Coopersville, MI 49404  
616.384.4026  
[www.saintmichaels.us](http://www.saintmichaels.us)

# Mass Intentions

## Saturday September 9

4:30PM † Karen Goodno by M/M Rob Rander ..... **MA**  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Mary

## Sunday September 10

8:30AM † Jamie Thomas by Mark & Val Patterson ..... **MI**  
 10:30AM † Pat O'Connor by M/M Jim Lothschutz ..... **MA**  
 4:30PM † Kay Hodges by Fr. Mike ..... **MI**  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Michael

## Monday September 11 No Mass

## Tuesday September 12

9:00AM † Evelyn May by M/M Duane Perrin..... **MA**  
 Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—3:00 PM - St. Mary

## Wednesday September 13

9:00AM † Mary Klein by Patrick & Krista Messock ..... **MI**  
 Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—3:00 PM - St. Michael

## Thursday September 14

9:00AM † L. Tackett by Parishioner ..... **MA**

## Friday September 15

9:00AM † SJ Hecksel by Ruth Hecksel ..... **MI**

## Saturday September 16

4:30PM † Ben Madison by M/M Rob Rander ..... **MA**  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Mary

## Sunday September 17

8:30AM † Roger Holmes by Frances Holmes ..... **MI**  
 10:30AM † Bette Lipski by Family..... **MA**  
 4:30PM † Merlin Steffes by Norm & Barb Rohen ..... **MI**  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Michael

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

If today you hear his voice,  
 harden not your hearts.

## Scripture Readings For the Week of September 10 2023

Sunday Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time  
 Ez 33:7-9; Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9; Rom 13:8-10; Mt 18:15-20

Monday Col 1:24-2:3; Ps 62:6-7, 9; Lk 6:6-11

Tuesday Memorial of the Holy Name of Mary  
 Col 2:6-15; Ps 145:1b-2, 8-9, 10-11; Lk 6:12-19

Wednesday Memorial of Saint John Chrysostom, Bishop and Doct  
 or of the Church  
 Col 3:1-11, Ps 145:2-3, 10-11, 12-13ab; Lk 6:20-26

Thursday Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross  
 Nm 21:4b-9; Ps 78:1bc-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38; Phil 2:6-11; Jn  
 3:13-17

Friday Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows  
 1 Tm 1:1-2, 12-14; Ps 16:1b-2a & 5, 7-8, 11; Jn 19:25-27 or Lk  
 2:33-35

Saturday Memorial of Saints Cornelius, Pope, and Cyprian, Bishop,  
 Martyrs  
 1 Tm 1:15-17; Ps 113:1b-2, 3-4, 5 & 6-7; Lk 6:43-49

Sunday Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
 Sir 27:30 – 28:7; Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12; Rom 14:7-9; Mt  
 18:21-35

View this bulletin online at [www.DiscoverMass.com](http://www.DiscoverMass.com)

## St. Michael's Liturgical Ministers

	Sep 17 / 8:30 AM	Sep 17 / 4:30 PM
Altar Servers	Adalyn Taylor Clare Taylor Kenzie Harker	Madelyn Jonaitis Molly Jonaitis
Eucharistic Ministers	Deacon Tom Sharon Carlson Paul Schmidt Denise Nelson Debbie Veneklase Cindy Lindberg Kenny Harker	Deacon Tom Ken Schwallier
Lector	Joe Meerman	NEED ONE
Sacristan	Jane Vitunskas	Jane Vitunskas
Ushers	Calvin Lindberg Ed Irwin Jim Ponshair Curt DeVos	Bob Jonaitis NEED ONE
Music	Craig Bleckley	Craig Bleckley

## St. Mary's Liturgical Ministers

	September 16 - 4:30PM	September 17 - 10:30AM
Sacristan	Vito Dolci	Gary Karr
Altar Servers	MaKaelyn Britt Kassidy Brtt	Noah Davis Calvin Davis
Precious Body	Deacon Tom Matt Karr Kay Willcome	Deacon Tom Bruce Kamp Need One
Precious Blood	Sara Patterson Angie Hanks Geary Farrell Deb Hapon	Christina Withers Becky Warners Margie Jirous Janette Ney
Hospitality	Jeff Schneider Need Three	Jim Looks Marian Looks Rick Leale Jeanne Leale
Lector	Need One	John Klein
Music	Bernie Stanko	Bernie Stanko



**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday**  
 in Ordinary Time

"Again, [amen,] I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father."

Matthew 18:19

© 2023

## Cluster News and Community News and Events

### Save the Date – Michigan March for Life

As we approach the first anniversary of the passage of Proposal 3 – we must continue to use our voices for the voiceless! Join others from across the State for the first-ever Michigan March for Life.

**Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023**

**Where:** The State Capitol, 100 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing

**Time:** Rally at 11 a.m.; March at Noon

**Register:** [mi.marchforlife.org](http://mi.marchforlife.org)

The diocese will be sponsoring two buses, one departing from Grand Rapids and one from Muskegon. The cost is \$20 per person. Email Jennifer Baxter, [jbaxter@grdiocese.org](mailto:jbaxter@grdiocese.org) for more information or to reserve your spot.

**SAVE THE DATE!**



### Wedding Anniversary Mass

Together with your families, the Church in the Diocese of Grand Rapids honors the faithful witness to your vocation of marriage and wishes to celebrate with you. Bishop Walkowiak is inviting **all couples celebrating milestone anniversaries** to join him on **Sunday, Oct. 22 at the 10 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew** (301 Sheldon Blvd., Grand Rapids) for this annual celebration. A simple reception will immediately follow. Please RSVP by calling your parish office.

### Please Pray for our Engaged Couples

**Marissa McDonald & Christopher Barczak**

.....October 7, 2023 (St Mary)

**Julia Delaney & Logan Brouwer**

.....April 13, 2024 (Cathedral of St Andrew)

**Rachel Berg & Joseph Elenbaas**

.....September 21, 2024 (St Mary)

Lord God, the source of all love, the wise plan of your providence has brought these young people together. As they prepare themselves for the sacrament of marriage and pray for your grace, grant that, strengthened by your blessing, they may grow in their respect for one another and cherish each other with a sincere love. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen



### Youth Ministry

#### Youth Ministry (6-12 Grade)

Youth Ministry will resume in the fall. Feel free to contact Rebecca for more details.

6th-12th grade youth are invited to help with the St. Mary Parish Picnic. If interested, please contact our Director of Youth Ministry, Rebecca Chicklon at the contact information listed below.

Questions or comments

Please contact Rebecca Chicklon at 616-677-5065 or [dre@saintmarys.marne.org](mailto:dre@saintmarys.marne.org)

### Fr. Mike's Musings



Matter that is on our minds is that of our passing from this world to the next—Death. Whether it inspires a sense of dread or is seen as a welcome beginning it is something that all of us will face at sometime in our existence. Our first encounter with death was usually with the passing of a friend or family member, but did the thought of our own mortality enter into our minds at that time? Probably not. These thoughts usually don't occur to us until much later in life. When they do crop-up we also tend to have ideas of how our "mortal coil" (bodies) will be dealt with. What will our funeral service be like? What will be the disposition of our remains entail? We will be looking at these questions from the Catholic perspective over the next few weeks.

The resurrection of Jesus is the culminating truth of the Christian faith, preached as an essential part of the Paschal Mystery from the very beginnings of Christianity:

*"For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve (1 Corinthians 15:3-5)*

Through His death and resurrection, Christ freed us from sin and gave us access to a new life,

*"...so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).*

Furthermore, the Risen Christ is the principle and source of our future resurrection:

*"Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).*

It is true that Christ will raise us up on the last day; but it is also true that, in a certain way, we have already risen with Christ. In Baptism, actually, we are immersed in the death and resurrection of Christ and sacramentally assimilated to Him. United with Christ by Baptism, we already truly participate in the life of the Risen Christ.

Because of Christ, Christian death has a positive meaning. The Christian vision of death receives privileged expression in the liturgy of the Church. By death the soul is separated from the body, but in the resurrection, God will give incorruptible life to our body, transformed by reunion with our soul. In our own day also, the Church is called to proclaim her faith in the resurrection.

Following the most ancient Christian tradition, the Church insistently recommends that the bodies of the deceased be buried in cemeteries or other sacred places. In memory of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord, the mystery that illumines the Christian meaning of death, burial is above all the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body. By burying the bodies of the faithful, the Church confirms her faith in the resurrection of the body and intends to show the great dignity of the human body as an integral part of the human person whose body forms part of their identity. She cannot, therefore, condone attitudes or permit rites that involve erroneous ideas about death, such as considering death as the definitive annihilation of the person, or the moment of fusion with 'Mother Nature' or the universe, or as a stage in the cycle of regeneration, or as the definitive liberation from the "prison" of the body (Gnostic Heresy).

Burial in a cemetery or another sacred place adequately corresponds to the piety and respect owed to the bodies of the faithful departed who through Baptism have become temples of the Holy Spirit. Through the practice of burying the dead in cemeteries, in churches or their environs, Christian tradition has upheld the relationship between the living and the dead and has opposed any tendency to minimize, or relegate to the purely private sphere, the event of death and the meaning it has for Christians.

### Made for More with Christopher West

**Oct 17- 7-9:30PM -St Mary's - Spring Lake, MI**

Where do we come from and where are we going? These questions are DECISIVE for understanding what it means to be human and how to orient our lives and our actions toward authentic fulfillment. Join Christopher West and Mike Mangione as they creatively weave together dynamic presentations with live music, movie clips, YouTube videos, and sacred art for an evening of beauty and reflection on the meaning of life, love, and human destiny. You will come away with a faith-filled vision of hope that will instill in you the sheer wonder and joy of being alive.

Learn more: <https://www.stmarys.org/made-for-more.html>

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## St. Mary's Parish News

### St Mary's Parish FAMILY REUNION Mass & Picnic - Sept 10.

10:30AM Mass at the Cemetery Altar.  
Picnic will be at the Parish Hall at 12PM.  
**Food will be served from 12:30PM to 2:30PM**  
**ALL ARE WELCOME!**



### Religious Education

**Religious Education** meets on Wednesdays, 6:15-7:30 p.m. and will begin **September 27**. First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation Prep is offered through Religious Education.

**Children's Liturgy of the Word** meets during the 10:30 a.m. Mass and will resume in October

#### Questions or comments:

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

#### High School Youth Ministry

See Cluster Page for more information.

### Parish Directory

We are in the process of reating a NEW Parish Directory. We want YOU and your family to be included. Please email a photo you'd like included to: secretary@saintmarysmarne.org or call the Parish Office to set up a time to come in and have Cathie take your photo for you. This directory will be available online, only to parishioners with a pass-word. Hard copies will also be available for purchase. Contact Cathie 616.677.3934 for more info.



### Save the Dates

Sep 26	Pray for Our Priests- Rosary 6:30-7:30PM
Sept 30 & Oct 1	Knights of Columbus Scrap Metal Drive Parish Hall Parking Lot
Oct 8	Knights of Columbus Council #11581 Breakfast & Blood Drive
Oct 24	Flute Recital - St Mary 7:30PM
Nov 3	Mass of Hope, Health & Healing St Mary 7:00PM
Nov 22	Thanksgiving Eve Mass, Grocery Collection
Nov 23	Thanksgiving Day Mass

### Catholic Service Appeal 2023

Thank you for your gifts to 2023 Catholic Services Appeal! Your generous support funds essential diocesan ministries that strengthen us in Christ.

**CSA 2023 Pledge Goal: \$51,834.00**

Total Pledges Made: \$45,230.00 (87%)

Balance: \$6,604.00

Participation: 119 of 292 Active Households (40%)

Totals as of August 29, 2023

**Thank you for your stewardship**

**Please Note, if we do not reach the parish goal set by the diocese, the shortage will need to come out of our church operating account. Please help us reach our goal and send in your pledge card this week! If you have returned your CSA pledge card, thank you! If you have not responded, please do so as soon as possible**



### Saint Mary Short Sleeve T-Shirt and Long Sleeve Crewneck Sweatshirt Sale!

#### Short Sleeve T-Shirts

**\$15.00** Youth - S-XL & Adult -S-XL

**\$18.00** 2XL, 3XL

#### Crewneck Sweatshirt

**\$25.00** Youth - S-XL & Adult - S-XL

**\$28.00** 2XL, 3XL

Samples & Order Forms available in the Narthex and Online.

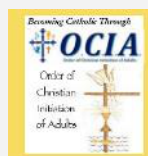
**Deadline to receive order and payment Sept.15.**



Share your FAITH & spread  
Our Church Mission!

### The OCIA- Order of Christian Initiation For Adults

is ready to begin weekly classes in preparation for receiving sacraments of initiation in the spring. Anybody (either baptized or unbaptized) who is interested in joining the Catholic Church should contact the parish office for more information, as should any person who was baptized Catholic but did not receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Please encourage anyone you know who may be interested.



### St Mary Adult Choir

Choir practice will begin on Thursday, September 7 at 7pm. Anyone high school age or older is invited to join us. If interested, please talk to Bernie after any Mass. For further information please contact our Music Director Bernie Stanko at (616) 490-3836 and leave a message. Or by email: berniestanko@hotmail.com



### Meal Train for Fr Mike

Have you signed up yet? It really is as easy as making an extra serving of whatever you are preparing your family for dinner. Put it in a microwavable container and drop it off at the Parish Office on your way to (or home) from work.. Or call the office to make special drop off arrangements. (Sign up online: or call the parish office)

<https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/8vv97n>

### Knights of Columbus #11581 News

To learn more about the Knights of Columbus' activities and what they do to support our parish community, the surrounding area and the world, please contact Grand Knight: Rob Rander at: roblander82@gmail.com or come to a General Membership Meeting. Meetings are held the 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00pm in Parish Hall.

**Next Meeting - October 5 at 7PM at the Parish Hall.**

**Scrap Metal Drive - September 30 & October 1**

**St. Mary's - Marne Hall Parking Lot - SELF SERVE**

**Community Breakfast and Blood Drive - October 8**

Register here::

[https://donate.michigan.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/149333](https://donate.michigan.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/149333)



### Giving Back to God

	September 2/3
Regular Contributions	\$4627.20
Capital Improvement	\$475.00
Online Contributions	\$1610.00
Children's Contributions	\$5.00
Total	\$6717.20

**Thank you for your continued support and generosity!**

### St. Mary's Sponsor of the Week

#### SOBIE MEATS

3450 Remembrance Rd NW ~ 616.4537201

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR BULLETIN!**

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

## St. Michael's Parish News



**Scrip News**— Thank you to our 11 families who purchased Scrip this week. Our total profit was \$122.57.

## St. Michael's Preschool

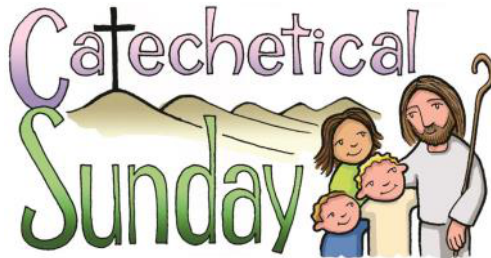
Have you considered St. Michael's Preschool for your child or grandchild? If not, you should! Come see what a great experience St. Michael's Preschool can provide. Come meet our Director/Teacher, Cindy Lindberg! Preschool meets on MWF from 8:45—11:45 am (Mon. 8:45am-2:30pm for 4-year-olds). For more info, call the Parish Office at 616-384-4026. Now enrolling for the 2023-24 school year!



## St. Michael's Faith Formation

**Catechetical Sunday** is September 17. The blessing of Catechists will be at the 8:30 AM Mass.

It is time to register for Faith Formation. Attention families with children ages 3 through grades 8. Please registered your child for Faith Formation. You can find registration forms on the parish website and forms are also located in the church narthex. Contact Debbie if you have any questions (616)384-4026. **Attention parents of First or seventh graders:** First graders' Parents! Do you know of a child that is attending first grade at a public school this fall? Please have their families contact the Parish Office now so that we can be sure to sign them up for Wednesday night classes. If a child is anticipating receiving their First Holy Communion and First Reconciliation, they will have to complete one year of Catechism class prior to preparing for these sacraments in second grade. Do you have a 7th grader or know one? Confirmation preparation begins in the 7th grade. If you know a student in seventh grade this fall, please spread the word to their parents now. They can still attend Faith Formation class.



**Children's Liturgy of the Word:** program is offered on Sunday during 8:30 Mass. 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. CLW **will start on 9/24.**

**Elementary Faith Formation:** The elementary program is for students in grades 1-5. We meet on Wednesday from 6:15- 7:30 pm. Registration forms are in the back of church and on the parish website. **Classes start on 9/20.**  
**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. Classes **will begin on 9/24.**

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## St. Michael's Sanctuary Lamp

for +Merlin & Angela Steffes  
by the Steffes Family

## St. Michael's Parish Family

**Remembers in Their Prayers:** Kevin Johnson, Anne Pols, Alexandria Gordon, George Langlois, Brooke Campbell, Linda Abel-Carroll, Jackie May, Brad Boerma, Dennis Goosen, Jean Mayse, Ken Hefflin, Payton Patterson, Winnie Spencer, the victims of abortion, & the men and women in the military.

**Finance Council** — The Finance Council has an opening that needs to be filled. If you are interested in this position, please contact the Business Manager, Cindy Lindberg, at (616) 384-4026 or bsmgr@saintmichaels.us. You may contact Cindy or Fr. Mike if you have any questions or would like to discuss the opening.

**Parish Directory** — We will be updating our parish directory this year, and we want you to be included! This will be done in-house, by a parishioner at St. Mary's. Please email a photo you'd like included to secretary@saintmichaels.us or call the Parish Office to set up a time to come in and have Beki take your photo for you. This directory will be available online, only to parishioners with a password. Hard copies will also be available for purchase.



Preliminary numbers show this year's festival was a huge success! Thank you again for all the hours of volunteer work that went into this event! Thank you to Cindy and Jennifer Lindberg, our co-chairs, for ALL their efforts. Please watch upcoming bulletins for the breakdown of all the financials.

## Giving Back to God

September 3, 2023

Adult Envelopes	\$3,731.00
Loose Cash	\$173.00
Children's Envelopes	\$6.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,910.25</b>
Building Fund	\$215.00
Endowment Fund	\$50.00

*Thank you for your continued support!*

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## Speaking the Truth in Love

According to Saint Paul, the only thing we owe to anyone is love. This is a rule of life which frees us from false demands, and thereby asks more of us than any person could through social pressure. To let ourselves be dominated, manipulated or intimidated by others is the easy way out, even when we tell ourselves that we are acting out of love. Love never acts through or responds to an abusive use of force, whether physical or emotional.

Love must be based on truth because in God (therefore in reality) love, truth and goodness are all one; reality follows the same rule. That is why God tells us through Ezekiel that love requires us to tell people when they are doing wrong. But we constantly give ourselves excuses not to do this.

How many people tell their pastor if they think he is doing something wrong? How many priests write their bishops every time they think he is taking a wrong direction? How many bishops are honest with the pope? Ezekiel would say to us, "If you told your pastor, your bishop or the pope what you think about his decisions, and if he pays no attention to you, God will not hold you responsible. But if you see mistakes they are making and say nothing, you will be held responsible for all the damage that is done to your parish, to your diocese, to the Church." The same principle holds with family and friends, business associates and politicians. We are not responsible for what another person does, but we are responsible for lovingly telling others the truth as we see it. And if we do not speak out when we should, we, too, are responsible for all the evil that is done.

Jesus adds something to this principle. "When you tell others what you think they are doing wrong," he says, "do not go in with power. Go in defenseless, vul-

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*There is no human power  
greater than truth spoken in love*

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Ezekiel 33:7-9; Romans 13:8-10;  
Matthew 18:15-20

nerable." The process he teaches for resolving differences is the exact opposite of what we usually do.

Usually, when we disagree with what someone is doing, we first talk about it to others. We criticize; we complain; in effect, we gather a lynch mob. We try to make sure that if it ever comes to a confrontation, we have a lot of support at our backs. Then we try to get others to talk to the person or we appeal to higher authorities, saying, "Don't use my name!"

Jesus tells us that our first step should be to go to the person, one on one, and say what we think. This way we have no power; we are vulnerable. This makes

us more likely to question rather than to accuse, to speak softly instead of yelling, to seek agreement rather than capitulation. This procedure is less threatening and more effective. But we find it a scary thing to do, espe-

cially if the person we are talking to seems to have more power than we do: power to take action against us, to make us look stupid with quick words, to make us look bad by pointing out our own faults.

There is no human power greater than truth spoken in love, but this power does not protect us from retaliation. It is the only power Jesus chose to use to





save the world; when Pilate asked, “Are you a king?”, Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to *testify to the truth*. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice” (John 18:37). Then Pilate ordered Jesus to be crucified.

Jesus does not promise we will not suffer for speaking the truth. But he says, “If you seek to save your life on this earth, you will lose it. How do you profit if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul, your self, your person?” We are not on earth to save our lives—or our jobs or our relationships with others if we have to suppress the truth to keep them—but rather to “testify to the truth.” The identity we are creating for ourselves, the person we will be for all eternity, is determined by that.

## REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

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### Twenty-Third Week of the Year

***Pray daily:** God our Father, you redeem us and make us your children in Christ. Look upon us and give us true freedom. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Monday:** Luke 6:6-11. Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?” Are you afraid to ask challenging questions in response to false values or promises?

**Tuesday:** Luke 6:12-19. Jesus spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose the Twelve, whom he also named apostles. Were you chosen and sent to spread the truth, the words of Jesus, just as explicitly as the apostles were? When? How do you do it?

**Wednesday:** Luke 6:20-26. “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.” How often does fear of public opinion keep you from expressing what you know is true?

**Thursday:** Luke 6:27-38. Jesus said, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.” If you hear something bad about someone, can you avoid judging unless you go to the person as a friend to get the other side of the story?

**Friday:** Luke 6:39-42. Jesus said, “Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?” How often does talking honestly to others about faults you think you see in them lead you to discover things in your own attitudes that need correcting? Is this good for you? Does it help you appreciate others more?

**Saturday:** Luke 6:43-49. Jesus said, “[F]or it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.” If you are afraid to say to others what you really believe and think, are you really in touch with your own self? How can fear of losing relationships with others cause you to lose relationship with your own self?

## LIVING THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

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**As Christian:** Ask what you fear more than losing your relationship with Jesus. How can you act against this fear?

**As Disciple:** The first time this week you find yourself feeling critical of someone, try to find where in the Gospel Jesus says something about what that person is doing.

**As Prophet:** Think back on what you said or did when you felt critical. Is there a better way you could have handled it or can handle it the next time?

**As Priest:** Ask how, without giving offense, you can communicate to a person toward whom you felt critical the attitude of Jesus you found in the Gospel. Do it in a loving, nurturing way.

**As King:** Ask what three things you would like your pastor or bishop to do for the Church. Tell him this by word or letter. Or do this with someone at work or in government—or simply with a friend who could be making a greater impact on the world.

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