

# Saint Mary's Church

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

September 24, 2023 ~ The 25th 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 23

4:30PM † Rick Lothschutz by M/M Duane Perrin..... **MA**  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Mary

## Sunday September 24

8:30AM † Mary Klein by Char Kluting ..... **MI**  
 10:30AM † Betty Oziemkiewicz by Joe Kline ..... **MA**  
 4:30PM † Edna Schumaker by Mike & Terri Kluting ..... **MI**  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Michael

**Monday September 25** No Mass, No Adoration, No Confessions

**Tuesday September 26** No Mass, No Adoration, No Confessions

**Wednesday September 27** No Mass, No Adoration, No Confessions

**Thursday September 28** No Mass, No Adoration, No Confessions  
 6:30PM *Pray for Our Priests Rosary & Silent Prayer*..... **MA**

**Friday September 29** No Mass, No Adoration, No Confessions

## Saturday September 30

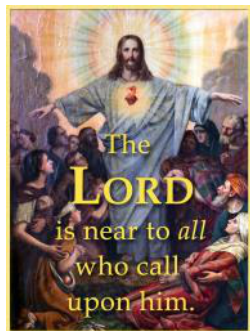
4:30PM † Sandy Klein by The Knights of Columbus #11581 ..... **MA**  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Mary

## Sunday October 1

8:30AM † Mary Klein by Char Kluting ..... **MI**  
 10:30AM † Rick Lothschutz by M/M Jim May ..... **MA**  
 4:30PM † Edna Schumaker by Mike & Terri Kluting ..... **MI**  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Michael

**MA**=St. Mary

**MI**=St. Michael's



## Scripture Readings For the Week of September 24, 2023

**Sunday** Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
 Is 55:6-9; Ps 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18; Phil 1:20c-24, 27a; Mt 20:1-16a

**Monday** Ezr 1:1-6; Ps 126:1b-2ab, 2cd-3, 4-5, 6; Lk 8:16-18

**Tuesday** Memorial of Saints Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs  
 Ezr 6:7-8, 12b, 14-20; Ps 122:1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5; Lk 8:19-21

**Wednesday** Memorial of Saint Vincent de Paul, Priest  
 Ezr 9:5-9; Tobit 13:2, 3-4a, 4befgh, 7-8; Lk 9:1-6

**Thursday** Memorial of Saint Wenclaus, Martyr and Saint Lawrence Ruiz, and Companions, Martyrs  
 Hg 1:1-8; Ps 149:1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a & 9b; Lk 9:7-9

**Friday** Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, Archangels  
 Dn 7:9-10, 13-14 or Rv 12:7-12ab; Ps 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 4-5; Jn 1:47-51

**Saturday** Memorial of Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church  
 Zec 2:5-9, 14-15a; Jeremiah 31:10, 11-12ab, 13; Lk 9:43b-45

**Sunday** Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
 Ez 18:25-28; Ps 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9; Phil 2:1-11 or Phil 2:1-5; Mt 21:28-32

## St. Michael's Liturgical Ministers

	Oct 1 / 8:30 AM	Oct 1 / 4:30 PM
Altar Servers	Adalyn Taylor Melena Lindberg Kenzie Harker	Madelyn Jonaitis Molly Jonaitis
Eucharistic Ministers	Sharon Carlson Andrew Bonter Kenny Harker Denise Nelson Peter Nielsen Paul Schmidt NEED ONE	Greg Helsen Ken Schwallier
Lector	Jeff Johnson	Joe LeMieux
Sacristan	Chris Albrecht	Karen Helsen
Ushers	Ed Irwin Curt DeVos Joe Meerman Mary Bueche	Greg Helsen Bob Jonaitis
Music	Craig Bleckley	Craig Bleckley

## St. Mary's Liturgical Ministers

	September 30 - 4:30PM	October 1 - 10:30AM
Sacristan	Vito Dolci	Gary Karr
Altar Servers	MaKaelyn Britt Kassidy Britt	Lauren LeMieux Ty Ricord
Precious Body	Julie Lothschutz Mary Kirkwood Angie Hanks	Jim Looks Marian Looks Geary Farrell
Precious Blood	Sara Patterson Butch Schoenborn Rose Mary Schoenborn Kay Willcome	Christina Withers Becky Warners Margie Jirous Janette Ney
Hospitality	Need Four	Nettie Leale Rick Leale Jeanne Leale Rick Leale
Lector	Doug Frantz	Rita Carmody
Music	Bernie Stanko	Bernie Stanko

**25<sup>th</sup> Sunday**  
**in Ordinary Time**

"Am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous? Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."  
 Matthew 20:15-16

## Cluster News and Community News and Events

### Venerate the Relic of St. Jude at its ONLY Grand Rapids Stop - October 9

The arm of St. Jude the Apostle is currently on pilgrimage around the United States – the first time it has left Italy. The faithful of the Diocese of Grand Rapids will have an opportunity to venerate and pray with the relic at its West Michigan stop:

Oct. 9 - Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Grand Rapids, Veneration Begins: 1 p.m. / Mass in honor of Saint Jude: 7 p.m. / Veneration Ends: 10 p.m.

To see the full pilgrimage schedule, including a handful of stops in the Diocese of Lansing:

<https://apostleoftheimpossible.com/tour-schedule/>

### Michigan Catholic Women's Conference

Oct. 21, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. - Lansing Center

Women from across Michigan are invited to come together to focus on their faith and experience the fellowship of sisterhood in Christ Jesus. Be encouraged and inspired to ignite your spirit and grow in faith with inspirational Catholic speakers, praise and worship music, and the celebration of Mass with the bishops of Michigan. Tickets: \$72.50; seniors (62+) and students, \$65. Learn more and reserve your tickets at [michiganwc.org](http://michiganwc.org). **Bus transportation is available from Grand Rapids and Spring Lake.** Cost is \$15 (in addition to your conference ticket). Reserve your seat at [rebrand.ly/mwc23bus](http://rebrand.ly/mwc23bus)

### 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.

**Made for More**

with Christopher West and Mike Mangione is Oct. 17. Tickets are available on line and you may contact Rebecca to purchase them as well.

Questions or comments

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



### Fr. Mike's Musings



A common question that pastors or funeral planners are asked when dealing with family members of deceased parishioners or who are preparing for their own passing is: "Should Catholics be buried in a Catholic Cemetery?" While there is no mandate, it is highly recommended. It is a natural choice for those who share the same faith in life to continue that sense of community in death. When it comes to the issue of death, the sensibilities and needs of Catholics are unique and call for certain practices in the handling and care of the remains of the deceased. Therefore, in the blessed grounds of a Catholic cemetery, there are safeguards – mandated by the Church's Canon Law – which guarantee permanence, reverence, and respect for the remains of the deceased. But, again, it is not a requirement. My gravesite in Carson City is in the city cemetery next to my parents and grandparents, not across the road in Maryknoll Cemetery where one would naturally expect a priest to be interred.

Another question about Catholic burial practices is: "Who may be buried in a Catholic cemetery?" For this question there are set rules and requirements.

Non-Catholic spouses or relatives of Catholics who purchase the right of burial in a Catholic cemetery can be buried there. Catholic cemeteries have a long tradition of dedicated service to the Catholic community including non-Catholic's spouses, children, parents and other relatives.

Are people of all nationalities welcome? Of course. Remember that the very definition of 'Catholic' is 'Universal', meaning everyone regardless of ethnicity or language. Unfortunately, in the past human prejudices have dictated how a cemetery was laid-out regarding these differences.

To use Maryknoll Cemetery in my hometown as an example, there is a small area in the Northeast section of the grounds that was once dedicated solely to the burial of Hispanics. Even today it is called "Mexican Corner". The rest of the grounds were for the use of Anglos and Irish parishioners of St. Mary's (although there is a very small grouping on the North side comprised of Polish families).

Can someone who committed suicide be buried in a Catholic cemetery? Yes. It is recognized that those who die from the act of suicide deserve understanding and compassion. The deceased may have been suffering from a serious psychological issue or overwhelming fear and confusion. Therefore, the Church offers funeral and burial rites for those who have died as a result of suicide.

Fortunately, the "bad old days" of denying proper burial to suicides, divorced persons, and unbaptized children are long-gone and the idea has, hopefully, forever been chucked into the trash bin of history.

A tradition in the history of cemeteries that has faded in practice is the setting aside a portion of the grounds for the establishing of a "Potter's Field". This section would have been dedicated to the interment of indigent or unknown persons who could not have otherwise been able to purchase a gravesite of their own.

This practice has its roots in Scripture as detailed in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 27 verses 3-8. The purchase of the potter's field for the burial of foreigners by the Temple authorities with Judas' returned monies is seen as his repentance for the betrayal of Christ, and therefore is an act of reconciliation. The continued practice in the early Church is keeping with the sacramental nature of caring for the dead as well as seeing to the charitable care of our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

If there was such a practice at St. Mary in Marne (St. Michael's cemetery is too recent) please inform the parish office. This ground is unconsecrated as it was also the place where unbaptized children were buried. It is my practice, and that of many other priests, to consecrate the ground and to include those buried there in our prayers. It is a part of our charitable concern for our deceased brothers and sisters, and for those children who never had a chance to enjoy a full life on earth.

### Meal Train for Fr Mike

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

### Wedding Anniversary Mass ~ Oct. 22 at 10AM 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 at the **10 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew** for this annual celebration. A simple reception will immediately follow. Please RSVP by calling your parish office.

**September 24, 2023 ~ The 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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



## St. Mary's Parish News

### Religious Education

**Religious Education** meets on Wednesdays, 6:15-7:30 p.m. and will begin September 27.



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

**The Made for More Event** with Christopher West and Mike Mangione is Oct. 17. Tickets are available on line and will be sold after Masses.

#### Questions or comments:

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

#### High School Youth Ministry

See Cluster Page for more information.

### RCIA-

#### Rite 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 is on Thursdays at 7pm. Anyone high school age or older is invited to join us. For further information please contact our Music Director Bernie Stanko at (616) 490-3836 and leave a message.

### 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**



### 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](mailto: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)



**Knight Person of the Month for September** - Bruce Kamp

**Knight Family of the Month for September** - Vito & Jeanne Dolci

The Knight Person / Family of the month is a way of recognizing someone who has gone above and beyond, or done something extra for the council or the church community. Congratulations and Thank You for your service and commitment to our Parish Family!



**Sobie Meats - Gift Card Raffle**- License #X08274

1st Place \$250.00 Gift Card

2nd Place \$150.00 Gift Card

3rd Place \$100.00 Gift Card

Tickets are \$10.00 for One Ticket or \$20.00 for Three Tickets-

Drawing will be November 2 - 8PM

*Special Thanks to Tim & Teresa Sobie for their help with this raffle!*



### Parish Directory

We are in the process of creating 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](mailto:secretary@saintmarysmarne.org) or call the Parish Office to set up a time to come in and have Cathie take your photo for you. Contact Cathie 616.677.3934 for more info.

### Pray for Our Priests ~ September 26- 6:30PM to 7:30PM

Every year the priests of our diocese attend a retreat together: fall convocation is an important time away from their parishes to build camaraderie, pray together, engage in continuing formation, and celebrate milestone anniversaries. While they're away, the faithful of our diocese are invited to gather in community to pray in a special way for our shepherds. It is a beautiful night around the diocese praying for our priests. A rosary will be led in participating churches at 6:30 p.m. followed by a time for silent prayer. Please pray fervently for our priests.

**St Mary-Marne will participate again this year. Geary F. will lead the rosary at 6:30PM.**

*Please Note: Due to the Convocation, there will be a change in the weekly Mass schedule.*

*Please see page one of the bulletin for the weekly schedule.*



### Giving Back to God

	September 16/17
Regular Contributions	\$2625.00
Capital Improvement	\$125.00
Online Contributions	\$1805.00
Children's Contributions	\$33.00
Total	\$4588.00

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

**St. Mary's Sponsor of the Week**  
**PUTT PUTTS BAR ~ The Fischer Family**

1616.774.9129 ~ 1148 W. Fulton

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR BULLETIN!**

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

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



## St. Michael's Faith Formation

It is time to register for Faith Formation. Attention families with children ages 3 through grades 8. Please register 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 1st or 7th graders:** 1st graders' Parents! Do you know of a child that is attending 1st 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 7th 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. In today's Gospel we learn that we should not feel jealous but be happy that God loves us all the same and he wants us all to be a part of his Kingdom. It does not matter if you've been working for God's Kingdom your whole life or if you have been doing so only a short time. In God's eyes we are all equal.

**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 started this past Wednesday, but it is not too late to join us.** Contact Debbie if you have any questions. (616) 384-4026.

**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 begin today.**

## St. Michael's Sanctuary Lamp

for +Pete & Marge Ferwerda  
by Pam Raczkiewicz



## 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.

## Ladies' Craft Night

Whether you enjoy scrapbooking, stamping, knitting, cutting labels, or just need a night out, come to the Family Center on Friday, September 29, from 6:30-11 PM. All are welcome, and there is no cost to attend.



## A Fun Night of Trivia



At St. Michael's, on Oct. 7, 7-9 PM. Teams of 8 or less, please bring a snack to share and your own drink. Signup in the glass hallway.



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 17, 2023

Adult Envelopes	\$3,358.00
Loose Cash	\$158.00
Children's Envelopes	\$8.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,524.25</b>
Building Fund	\$25.00
Endowment Fund	\$30.00
<b>Thank you for your continued support!</b>	

**September 24, 2023 ~ The 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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## Every Moment Counts

Jesus tells of an owner who came into the marketplace at any and every hour of the day and found men standing around idle. Why were there no women? One answer is that in the structure of that society, women probably did not hire themselves out as day laborers the way men did. Women did work in the fields, but more in the context of working as a family.

Even though more and more women work outside the home and even though men are doing more work within households, women are still much more likely to perceive the deeper needs of family members and friends. They are taught to be more relationship-oriented and less likely to bury themselves in work to compensate for rough spots in relationships. If human society is to reach its potential, it can do so only by recognizing the gifts of all its members, including the ability to see which relationships are withering for lack of attention and support.

Isn't it true that women are almost always the first to think of calling someone who is sick? To remember anniversaries? Aren't women frequently the ones first involved—and who involve men—in issues that politicians tend to overlook.

Could we ask, just as speculation, without falling into simplistic stereotypes, whether men are more likely to identify their "work" as what they are paid to do? Are women more inclined to see building relationships among people and maintaining a pleasant and supportive environment—on the job and at home—as the constant, ongoing "work" of every human being?

SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 55:6-9; Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a;  
Matthew 20:1-16a

If these generalizations have any truth, God is more like a woman than a man. When Jesus was criticized for healing on the sabbath, he said: "My Father is still working, and I also am working!" (John 5:17). Jesus was at work twenty-four hours a day, every day, because his work was doing the will of the Father at every moment: loving people back to life at every moment, responding with redemptive, life giving love to each moment's need and opportunity.

And this is our work, whether we are at home or on the job, whether we are praying in church, watching TV or eating in a restaurant. Wherever we are and whatever we are doing, we are the Body of Christ; we are his embodied presence, consecrated and sent to continue his work in that place, at that time, under those particular circumstances, as prophets, priests and stewards of his kingship.

The focus Jesus had, which he invites us to adopt, is not on what we do but on what we are. We do not get our identity from what we do on the job; rather, what

*This is our work:  
to be the constant,  
prophetic expression  
of God's truth*





we do on the job or anywhere else should be the expression of what we are. Whatever Jesus did or said, at any moment of his life, he was revealing God. Everything we do and say, the way we dress, the expression on our face, our body language, the atmosphere of our homes, all this should reveal the presence of God in our hearts. This is our work: to be the constant, prophetic expression of God's truth; the constant expression, as priests, of God's healing, ministering love for others; the constant expression, as Christ's coworkers and stewards, of God's constant concern to reform and renew the structures of society. Our work, at every moment, is to extend the reign of God.

## REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

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### Twenty-Fifth Week of the Year

***Pray daily:** Father, guide us, as you guide creation, according to your law of constant love. May we love one another at every moment and grow to that perfection of love which you hold out to us as the goal of every Christian life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Monday:** Luke 8:16-18. "No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light." Is the light of truth and love within you visible at all times, in everything you do?

**Tuesday:** Luke 8:19-21. Jesus said to them in reply, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." Do you look upon the work of God as your family business?

**Wednesday:** Luke 9:1-6. Jesus summoned the apostles and gave them power over all demons and to cure diseases, sending them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Are you conscious of having power from God to proclaim divine truth and to heal woundedness? Do you use it constantly?

**Thursday:** Luke 9:7-9. Herod Antipas heard about all that was happening and he was greatly perplexed because some people were saying that John had been raised from the dead. What in your life and action makes it evident that Jesus is risen and living in you?

**Friday:** Luke 9:18-22. Jesus said, "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." Are you always aware that your real work in life is to be given and sacrificed for others?

**Saturday:** Luke 9:43-45. "And all were astounded at the greatness of God...[e]veryone was amazed at all he was doing." Are you aware in everything you do that the goodness and greatness of God should shine out in you?

## LIVING THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

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**As Christian:** Ask when in your day you are least aware of Christ's presence in you? Find some physical, visible way to remind yourself of him.

**As Disciple:** Think about the goal of being offered for others as Christ's Body in everything you do. Is this an example of how God's thoughts and ways are higher than our thoughts and ways?

**As Prophet:** Ask what truth or teaching of Jesus seems to be most ignored where you live. What can you do to bear witness to it?

**As Priest:** Do one thing this week which expresses your belief that power to bring healing to the woundedness of others is within you.

**As King:** Who in your acquaintance seems to be "standing around idle" without a sense of purpose? Who has a gift that is not being used? Think of a way that person's gift could be put to use and suggest it.

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