

Saint Mary's Church

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

November 5, 2023 ~ The 31st 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 3:30PM -4:15PM 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 / frmhodes@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:

dre@saintmarysmarne.org

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

Adult Bible Study: 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, Vito Dolci, Geary Farrell,
Doug Frantz, Becky Warners,

Finance Council:

Lisa Bradley, Jose Gomez, Scott Lampe,
Mel Northup, Brent Patterson

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 November 4

4:30PM † Jeff LeMieux by M/M Larry Antcliff **MA**
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Mary

Sunday November 5

8:30AM † Jamie Thomas by Mark & Val Patterson..... **MI**
 10:30AM † Anthony Karr by M/M Gary Karr **MA**
 4:30PM † Art Klein Sr. by Gary Klein & Family **MI**
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Michael

Monday November 6 No Mass

Tuesday November 7

9:00AM † Sandy Klein by M/M John Riordan..... **MA**
 Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—3:00 PM - St. Mary

Wednesday November 8

9:00AM † Jamie Thomas by Carol Perea **MI**
 Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—3:00 PM - St. Michael

Thursday November 9

9:00AM † Betty Oziemkiewicz by Marcy Goosen **MA**

Friday November 10

9:00AM † Mary Klein by Patrick & Krista Messock **MI**

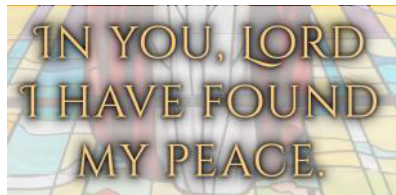
Saturday November 11

4:30PM † Janet Felker by M/M Dave Hastings **MA**
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Mary

Sunday November 12

8:30AM † Arden Bouchard by Kurt & Margaret Bouchard **MI**
 10:30AM † Monica Zahm by M.N Joe Lothschutz **MA**
 4:30PM † Merlin Steffes by M/M Joe Schweitzer **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 November 5, 2023

Sunday Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time
 Mal 1:14b-2:2b, 8-10; Ps 131:1, 2, 3; 1 Thes 2:7b-9, 13; Mt 23:1-12

Monday Rom 11:29-36; Ps 69:30-31, 33-34, 36; Lk 14:12-14

Tuesday Rom 12:5-16ab; Ps 131:1bcd, 2, 3; Lk 14:15-24

Wednesday Rom 13:8-10; Ps 112:1b-2, 4-5, 9; Lk 14:25-33

Thursday Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome
 Ez 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9; 1 Cor 3:9c-11, 16-17; Jn 2:13-22

Friday Memorial of Saint Leo the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church
 Rom 15:14-21; Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4; Lk 16:1-8

Saturday Memorial of Saint Martin of Tours, Bishop
 Rom 16:3-9, 16, 22-27; Ps 145:2-3, 4-5, 10-11; Lk 16:9-15

Sunday Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
 Wis 6:12-16; Ps 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; 1 Thes 4:13-18 or 1 Thes 4:13-14; Mt 25:1-13

St. Michael's Liturgical Ministers

	Nov 12 / 8:30 AM	Nov 12 / 4:30 PM
Altar Servers	Bryson Lindberg Melena Lindberg Kenzie Harker	NEED TWO
Eucharistic Ministers	Deacon Tom Sharon Carlson Chris Albrecht Kenny Harker Cindy Lindberg Denise Nelson Paul Schmidt	Deacon Tom Ken Schwallier
Lector	Jeff Johnson	Mark Phillips
Sacristan	Jane Vitunskas	Jane Vitunskas
Ushers	Ray Maka Jim Ponshair Dave Tronovich Deb Tronovich	NEED TWO
Music	Craig Bleckley	Craig Bleckley

St. Mary's Liturgical Ministers

	November 11 - 4:30PM	November 12 - 10:30AM
Sacristan	Vito Dolci	Gary Karr
Altar Servers	McKaelyn Britt Kassidy Britt	Noah Davis Calvin Davis
Precious Body	Deacon Tom Keith Anderson Paul Madura	Deacon Tom Bruce Kamp Christina Withers
Precious Blood	Julie Lothschutz Mary Kirkwood Need One	Jim Looks Marian Looks Becky Warners Margie Jirous
Hospitality	Jeff Schneider Need Three	Rick Leale Jeanne Leale Leonard Horter Need One
Lector	Doug Frantz	Geary Farrell
Music	Bernie Stanko	Bernie Stanko

Veteran's Day Prayer

Father, bless our veterans and all who serve our nation defending our freedom.

For those who bravely gave their lives, grant them eternal rest.
 For those who are serving, give them courage.
 For those who served, we offer our gratitude.
 We ask this through Christ Our Lord.
 Amen.



Cluster News and Community News and Events

National Vocation Awareness Week

National Vocation Awareness Week will be celebrated in our country **Nov. 5-11, 2023**. Our Diocese is blessed with 20 seminarians. Please ask our Lord to continue to send more dedicated, holy priests, deacons, and consecrated men and women to serve the Diocese of Grand Rapids. May they be inspired by Jesus Christ, supported by our faith community, and respond generously to God's gift of vocation. May God continue to inspire more to answer the call. For additional information, visit grdiocese.org.

Exploring Priesthood?

Experience life as a seminarian at Saint John Vianney College Seminary. **November 16-18, 2023**

The Diocese of Grand Rapids and Saint John Vianney College Seminary will be offering young men that are juniors in high school up to age 24 an opportunity to take a closer look at the priesthood by experiencing a few days in the life of a seminarian on the campus Saint John Vianney College Seminary at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN with Vocation Director Fr. Stephen Durkee. Transportation, accommodations, and meals will be provided at no cost. To register contact Pattie Reynolds at preynolds@grdiocese.org or call 616-288-0910.

Prayer for Vocations

God our Father, we thank you for calling men and women to serve in your Son's Kingdom as priests, deacons, and consecrated persons. Send your Holy Spirit to help others to respond generously and courageously to your call. May our community of faith support vocations of sacrificial love in our youth and young adults. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

More info on Vocations: <https://grvocations.org/>

Please Pray for our Engaged Couples

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



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>

Fr. Mike's Musings

"My child, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for trials" (Sirach 2:1) Trials certainly can take many forms. They may present themselves as a financial crisis, a reorganization of the Mass schedule, or by changing flowers without consulting the parish decorator(s). No matter how a crisis may present itself, there is no doubt that our patience and charity will be challenged. But the challenge itself is not the difficult part, the difficult thing is to keep Christ at the center of our dealings without becoming agitated.

Many times the peace I need comes from my lifelong passion for books and reading. In high school we were assigned several novels to read which I still have a hard time picking-up and reading—some authors, despite their "greatness", just aren't that great. One of these is Herman Melville, the author of "Moby Dick". I'm not a fan of this work but there was an important lesson from it that has been a help to me when navigating the waters of temperament in ministry. I remind myself how anger and a fixation on a singular matter (hunting the great, white whale) ultimately led to the mental and physical destruction of the novel's antagonist Captain Ahab,

When I first drew that conclusion nearly forty years ago it hit me like a ton of bricks and made me reflect upon my own obsessions and anger. It certainly gave me pause and the opportunity to endure with joy and prayer the difficult moments of life.

To be honest, criticism and dealing with complaints is generally the least satisfying aspect of priestly ministry. It is like facing a firing squad without the blindfold. A priest friend recently recommended that parishes set-out "Suggestion Boxes" in the entryways of churches. Another mutual priest friend responded: "No, I can only handle one grenade at a time, John."

We often pour so much of ourselves into our ministry that it is very hard to not take things personally. The same can be said for the laity in the Church. Many take their careers and responsibilities so seriously that they become a part of their being, so much so that any comment or critique on those matters can be perceived as a personal attack on them

However, the Lord offers us a wonderful example through His own life of how to not succumb to our passions. We must be prepared to encounter opposition in our roles as servant leaders or responsible workers and family providers. Maintaining our personal peace of mind is paramount, especially when we would like to offer a piece of our mind. We must truly be willing to be soldiers for the Lord, keeping in mind always that we are indeed in a war for our hearts and souls, even if we do not qualify for combat pay. Christ will see us through our troubles, but only if we place our trust in Him, work to keep our cool, and not allow our personal passions to destroy us—body, mind, and soul.

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen

Nobody knows my sorrow

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen

Glory, Hallelujah

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen

Nobody knows but Jesus

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen

Glory, Hallelujah

(African-American spiritual, 1867)

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

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 for more information or to reserve your spot.

SAVE THE DATE!

MICHIGAN MARCH FOR LIFE



November 5, 2023 ~ The 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

St. Mary's Parish News

St Mary Religious Education

Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLW) During 10:30AM Mass.

All children pre-school through 2nd grade are encouraged to join Miss Carmody for an age-appropriate experience of sacred scripture. Children are dismissed after the opening prayer and gather in the community room to hear the readings and reflect on the Gospel. Children return to Mass during the offering.



Religious Education Classes

1st-7th Grade

Wednesdays at Hall / 6:15- 7:30pm

8th Grade -Confirmation Classes

Wednesdays at Hall / 6:15- 7:30pm

Thank you to all the families, students and catechist who attended and helped out liturgically at last Wednesday's Mass. It's always a blessing to see our students participating during these celebrations.

Thank you
MAY GOD BLESS YOU

Schedule

All Dates / Times are subject to change.

Please watch for updates from your catechist.

Nov 8 - Rel Ed Classes

Nov. 12- Children's Liturgy of the Word -CLW

Nov. 15 - Rel Ed Classes

Nov. 19 - Children's Liturgy of the Word -CLW

Nov. 22- No Rel Ed Classes, Happy Thanksgiving!

Questions or comments:

Please contact the Parish Office. 616.677.3934
dre@saintmarysmae.org

Save the Dates

Nov 22	Thanksgiving Eve Mass, Grocery Collection 6PM St Mary
Dec 3	Advent by Candlelight - 6:30pm St Mary Parish Hall
Dec 7 & 14	This Is My Body: A Call to Eucharistic Revival 7-8:30pm St Mary Community Room
Dec 14	Adoration Holy Hour 6PM St Mary

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: \$45,730.00 (89%)

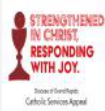
Balance: \$6,104.00

Participation: 120 of 292 Active Households (41%)

Totals as of October 15, 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

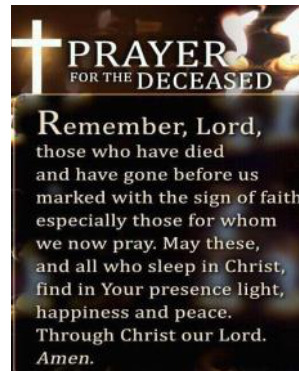


Funeral Luncheon Committee Meeting

Please join us on **Nov 8 at 11:00am** in the Community Room for a Funeral Luncheon Committee Meeting. Whether you can volunteer for serving, provide a dish for funeral luncheons, or want to help with the call tree, any and all help is greatly appreciated. Call Kelly Spence at (616) 250-1203 with any questions.

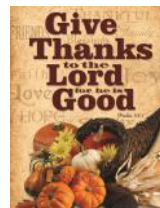
In Memory of our Loved Ones

During the month of November we take the time to remember our deceased loved ones. The book of the dead will be on display in the church. Please write the names of your deceased loved ones in it. Everyone is also invited to bring in a **framed picture** of your deceased loved ones to be on display in church through out the month of November. We ask that you put your loved ones name and your contact information on the back of the frame. Please drop off pictures to the parish office or leave in the designated area in the Narthex.



Thanksgiving Eve Mass ~ November 22 at 7PM

Fr Mike will be celebrating Mass and The Knights of Columbus will be collecting much needed items for our annual Grocery Collection. We will also watch a short slideshow from the past year's activities here at St. Mary's Parish. You are encouraged to bring: canned meats, paper products, persona; hygiene items, laundry soap, etc. Baby food and baby necessities are also in need! Grocery Bags will be collected during the offertory. Groceries will be distributed to local families in need by Coopersville Cares. THANK YOU!



Save the Date - Advent by Candlelight

(formerly Christmas by Candlelight) will be held on

Sunday, December 3, at 6:30 p.m.

Ladies of the community and their Middle School or older daughters are invited to come and start the Advent season with a beautiful candlelit evening. Music of the season be provided by Mary Skusa. Tickets will be on sale the middle of November. If you are interested in decorating a table, please e-mail or call Lori Rander, lrander81@gmail.com or 616-215-6524.



Giving Back to God ~ Time, Talent & Treasure

Attendance at Mass: Oct 28/29	4:30PM: <u>84</u>	10:30AM: <u>147</u>	Oct 28/29
Adult Contributions			\$4943.25
Children Contributions			\$20.00
Loose Contributions			\$93.00
Capital Improvement			\$150.00
Online Giving			\$785.00
Total			\$5991.25
Weekly Offertory Needed for Budget			\$5,430.00
Budget vs Actual to Date (since July 1)			+1329.38

Thank you for your continued support and generosity!

St. Mary's Sponsor of the Week

RIVER CITY INSURANCE GROUP

616.677.3136 ~ 14637 16th Ave. Marne

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 5 families who purchased Scrip this week. Our total profit was \$59.25.

CSA 2023 — Thank you for your gifts to 2023 Catholic Services Appeal! Your generous support funds essential diocesan ministries that strengthen us in Christ. Our parish goal for 2023 is \$59,280.00 and 100% participation, which means every parishioner should return their pledge card. To date, we have pledged \$43,685 (or 73.69%) toward our goal. Please continue to pray for the success of this important effort.

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. For more info, call the Parish Office at 616-384-4026.



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

St. Michael's Faith Formation

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 this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus defines who is a great person: someone who serves others and who puts others first and is thinking, "what can I do to help someone?"



Elementary Faith Formation: The elementary program is for students in grades 1-5. We meet on Wednesday from 6:15- 7:30 pm.

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. Please keep our Confirmation Candidates in your prayers as they continue to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. **St. Michael's Confirmation Mass is at The Cathedral of St. Andrew on Sunday, April 28, 2023 at 3:00 pm.**



St. Michael's Sanctuary Lamp

for Veterans & Servicemembers
by Jane Vitunskas

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 Heflin, Payton Patterson, Winnie Spencer, the victims of abortion, & the men and women in the military.

Coffee and Donut Servers Needed!

Please sign up in the family center. Contact the parish office with ?'s or to volunteer to be scheduled on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. There are complete instructions posted in the kitchen if you are a new server.



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.

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. Please email or have your photo taken by December 1, if possible. *Hard copies of the directory will eventually be available for purchase.*



Giving Back to God

October 29, 2023

Adult Envelopes	\$5,155.00
Loose Cash	\$147.00
Children's Envelopes	\$38.25
Holy Day	\$25.00
Total	\$5,365.25
World Mission Sunday	\$206.00

Thank you for your continued support!

November 6, 2023 ~ The 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Jesus on Discipleship

One key to understanding Jesus in the Gospels is to realize that he teaches through examples, usually leaving us to figure out the general principle behind his examples.

One advantage to this method is that there is less danger anyone will turn a specific example into a rule; Jesus worked hard to keep his religion from being turned into a set of laws. Instead of presenting rules, he gives concrete examples of how we should act and lets us figure out the general principles behind them.

Another advantage is that this method forces us to think. If Jesus had laid down rules, we might just keep them without thinking about them. But if we have only a few examples of how we might act in particular circumstances, then we have to figure out for ourselves the guiding principle behind them. When we do this, we are beginning to think like Jesus.

The best way to misunderstand this gospel passage is to see it as a set of rules: "Christians should not use the titles *rabbi*, *teacher* or *father*—or sit in the front seats in church or the head table at banquets." Indeed, there are people who actually do this: Every Catholic priest in the Bible Belt has met some fundamentalist who very deliberately calls him "Mister" because "The Bible says not to call any man father." They usually are not consistent, since they use the title for their own fathers—whom Jesus was actually talking about since there were no Catholic priests around in his day, and no one called priests "Father" until about nine hundred years later. These same fundamentalists call their ministers "Doctor"—another word for "teacher"—and rarely have a problem about sitting at the head table during an awards banquet. But they still claim a gospel rule as the reason for not giving this particular title to priests.

*The disciples of Jesus
must focus on his heart.*

NOVEMBER 5, 2023

31ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Malachi 1:14b-2:2, 8-10; 1 Thessalonians
2:7b-9, 13; Matthew 23:1-12

It makes no difference whether a priest is called "Father" or not. But to see this gospel passage as a set of rules keeps the fundamentalists and everyone else from understanding Jesus' teaching here. He obviously meant, "Don't think that what the word *father* means to you—with all the obedience, reverence and loyalty it involves—applies only to your biological father. Your Father is God; God's will comes even before the desires of your own parents."

How many people would not think of becoming Catholics—even if they were drawn to it—because they "just couldn't do that" to their parents? How many

Catholics have refused to think about a vocation to priesthood or religious life because their parents were opposed? And, most frequently of all, how many Christians, of all religions, have accepted and gone along with the

standards of this world in their social life, choices of career or life-style because they just could not break with the values and life-style of their parents? These are the ones who are calling a human being "father" in exactly the way that Jesus rejects.

The underlying lesson of this passage is that, according to Jesus, discipleship means more than obeying a set of rules. We are not disciples of Jesus Christ



unless we ponder his words, reflect on the example of his life, think about the examples he gives of ways that we should act, unless we try to arrive at the general principles, attitudes and values behind everything Jesus said and did. An authentic disciple of Jesus Christ must be a thinker—not necessarily an intellectual, but a thinker: someone who ponders what Jesus taught.

The alternative to studying and pondering the teaching of Jesus is to accept him, not as the Light of the world, our constant model and lifelong Teacher, but as the designer of another system of rules and practices to live by, called “the Christian religion.” But then, once we have learned the system, we do not need the Teacher anymore. Those who focus on the system and follow it are disciples of the Pharisees. The disciples of Jesus must focus on his heart.

REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

Thirty-First Week of the Year

***Pray daily:** Lord, in giving us God as our Father, you taught us not to love our fathers and mothers less, but to love them for what they are: our guides to learning how to love as sons and daughters of God. Help me to model for everyone the same love for God and for others that you modeled for us. Amen.*

Monday: Luke 14:12-14. Jesus said, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends...or your relatives or rich neighbors.... [I]nvite the poor.” Do you use your love for friends and family as a guide to the love you should have for all?

Tuesday: Luke 14:15-24. Jesus said, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many.... But they all alike began to make excuses.” Is God inviting you to more than you are accepting? What is your excuse?

Wednesday: Luke 14:25-33. “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple.” Does Jesus mean these words literally? What does he mean? How does it apply to you?

Thursday: Luke 15:1-10. The Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” What kind of social distinctions did Jesus respect? Whom would you not invite to your table? Whom do you invite?

Friday: Luke 16:1-8. “[T]he children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.” Are there any principles of good business that you could profitably apply to the way you live out your religion? What do you do to make your business work? Would that help make your religion work?

Saturday: Luke 16:9-15. “No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” How many of your choices are influenced by the desire to make money? How many are influenced by the desire to help people? Do you experience any conflict between these in your work?

LIVING THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

As Christian: Put the numeral 1 somewhere where you will see it all day. Use it to remind you to serve God first in everything you do.

As Disciple: Figure out how much time during each day or week you are receiving input which reinforces the attitudes and values of our society. How much of the time are you hearing or being reminded of the attitudes and values Jesus taught?

As Prophet: Break free of the pattern our culture imposes on your life; change something in your daily schedule to allow time for reflection and prayer over the words of Jesus.

As Priest: Each day choose one person you deal with and ask, “How would I act if this person were my brother or sister?”

As King: Deliberately spend some of your money this week to help make this a better world to live in.

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