

Saint Mary's Church

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

December 17, 2023~ Third Sunday of Advent

**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:

Tuesdays: 2:00PM to 3:00PM ~ St. Mary
Wednesdays 2:00PM to 3:00PM ~ St. Michael
Thursdays: 2:00PM to 3:00PM ~ St. Mary
Fridays: 12:00PM to 1:00PM St. Michael
Saturdays: 3:30PM to 4:15PM ~ St. Mary
Sundays 3:30PM to 4:15PM ~ 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 December 16 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

4:30PM Our Parish Family **MA**
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St. Mary

Sunday December 17 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

8:30AM † John VanDenBrink by The Merlin Steffes Family **MI**
 10:30AM † Betty Ozeimkiewicz by M/M Joe Pulte **MA**
 4:30PM † Carl Goosen by Marcy Goosen **MI**
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St. Michael

Monday December 18 No Mass

Tuesday December 19

9:00AM † Mary Bradley by Lisa Bradley **MA**
 Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—3:00 PM - St. Mary

Wednesday December 20

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

Thursday December 21

9:00AM † Pat O'Connor by John O'Connor **MA**
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—3:00 PM - St. Mary

Friday December 22

9:00AM † Merlin Steffes by Jim & Diane Schoenborn **MI**
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 12:00 PM—1:00 PM - St. Michael

Saturday December 23 - 4th Sunday of Advent

4:30PM † Gordon Powers by Family **MA**
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St. Mary

Sunday December 24 - 4th Sunday of Advent

8:30AM † Winnie Spencer by Curt & Sue DeVos **MI**
 10:30AM Deceased Members of Our Parish Family **MA**

Sunday December 24 - Christmas Eve

4:00PM Our Parish Family **MI**
 4:00PM Our Parish Family **MA**
 9:00PM Our Parish Family **MI**
 9:00PM Our Parish Family **MA**

Monday December 25 - Christmas Day-The Nativity of The Lord

8:30AM Our Parish Family **MI**
 10:30AM Our Parish Family **MA**

MA=St. Mary

MI=St. Michael's

Scripture Readings For the Week of December 17, 2023

Sunday Third Sunday of Advent

Is 61:1-2a, 10-11; Lk 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54; 1 Thes 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

Monday Jer 23:5-8; Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Mt 1:18-25

Tuesday Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a; Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17; Lk 1:5-25

Wednesday Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6; Lk 1:26-38

Thursday Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45

Friday 1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd; Lk 1:46-56

Saturday Mal 3:1-4, 23-24; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14; Lk 1:57-66

Sunday Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38

St. Michael's Liturgical Ministers

	Dec 24 / 8:30 AM	Dec 24 / 4:30 PM
Altar Servers	Bryson Lindberg Melena Lindberg	No Mass
Eucharistic Ministers	Jennie Taylor Denise Nelson Cindy Lindberg Paul Schmidt Zack Nelson Peter Nielsen NEED ONE	No Mass
Lector	Jeff Johnson	No Mass
Sacristan	Chris Albrecht	No Mass
Ushers	Mary Bueche Curt DeVos Calvin Lindberg Ed Irwin	No Mass
Music	Craig Bleckley	No Mass

St. Mary's Liturgical Ministers

	December 23 - 4:30PM	December 24 - 10:30AM
Sacristan	Vito Dolci	Gary Karr
Altar Servers	Isaac Patterson Lucas Patterson	Noah Davis Calvin Davis
Precious Body	Deacon Tom Lori Rander Rob Rander	Christina Withers Bruce Kamp Paul Madura
Precious Blood	Angie Hanks Mary Kirkwood Geary Farrell Sara Patterson	Becky Warners Margie Jirous Janette Ney Need One
Hospitality	Jeff Schneider Need Three	Anthony Leale Nettie Leale Leonard Horter Need One
Lector	Nicolette Looks	John Klein
Music	Bernie Stanko	Bernie Stanko

Liturgical Ministers are needed for all Christmas Masses. Sign up Sheets are Posted in the Narthex. We still have many open positions available.

Third Sunday

Behold, I am sending
my messenger ahead of
you; he will prepare
your way before you.

Matthew 11:10



Cluster News and Community News and Events

Advent Confession Times

Individual Confession Times During Advent-

Come receive the healing power of God

- Tuesdays: 2:00PM to 3:00PM ~ St. Mary
- Wednesdays 2:00PM to 3:00PM ~ St. Michael
- Thursdays: 2:00PM to 3:00PM ~ St. Mary
- Fridays: 12:00PM to 1:00PM St. Michael
- Saturdays: 3:30PM to 4:15PM ~ St. Mary
- Sundays 3:30PM to 4:15PM ~ St. Michael



St Mary & St Michael Christmas Mass Schedule

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday, Dec 23

4:30PM ~ St. Mary - Fr. Mike Hodges

Sunday, Dec 24

8:30AM ~ St. Michael - Fr. Mike Hodges

10:30AM ~ St. Mary - Msgr. Louis Stasker

The Nativity of The Lord (Christmas Eve Vigil)

Sunday, Dec 24

4:00PM, 9:00PM ~ St. Mary - Msgr. Louis Stasker

4:00PM, 9:00PM ~ St. Michael - Fr. Mike Hodges

The Nativity of The Lord

Monday, Dec 25 Christmas Day

8:30AM ~ St. Michael - Fr. Mike Hodges

10:30AM ~ St. Mary - Msgr. Louis Stasker



Liturgical Ministers are needed for all Christmas Masses. Sign up Sheets are Posted in the Narthex. We still have many open positions available.

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.



Fr Mike's Musings



"I rejoice heartily in the Lord," the prophet Isaiah says in the First Reading. And why wouldn't he? He has glad tidings. The poor will be taken care of, the brokenhearted will be healed, the captives will be freed, and the prisoners will be released. Who wouldn't rejoice in these things? As the winter dark and cold encroach on our days, and as the birth of the baby Jesus draws near, we hear these beautiful words everywhere. But the problem is that, for so many people, this is a time of depression, not of joy.

Why? Because the poor are still poor; the people are still broken-hearted; and the captives and prisoners are only slowly released. In this country, the bank still forecloses on the house of a person who has lost their job; a friend still becomes treacherous; a spouse succumbs to alcoholism or infidelity. What has happened to the promise and the beautiful words? How is joy possible?

Our response can be found in Mary's words in the Magnificat prayer.

*"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."*

Does anyone think that she took these words back when she stood by the Cross as her son suffered torture and was crucified? How can Mary maintain the words of the Magnificat still at the sight of all of this personal tragedy? The answer is that the greatest love of the Lord was there. The words of joy that Mary spoke, before the Lord was born, are only truer in the suffering she bears at His death. His love doesn't take away her suffering at the Crucifixion. But her suffering is enveloped in great love, and so it is transfigured into joyful anticipation for what is to come.

Joy in the Lord is compatible with waiting for the final redemption from our sufferings and our sins because Christ is the promised messiah, Emmanuel—"God with us". Even now, since His love infuses all our sufferings, our souls can proclaim the greatness of the Lord, and our spirits can rejoice in God. The Lord transfigures the suffering of our lives through His love.

*They will come and sing praises on Mount Zion,
they will flood in to receive the good things of the Lord,
grain, and wine, and oil,
and the young of both herd and flock.
Their spirit will be like a richly watered garden,
and they will hunger no more.
The young girl will dance for joy,
young men and old men too.*

*"I will turn their weeping into gladness," says the Lord,
"I will comfort them and give them joy after sorrow.
I will overwhelm my priests with rich food,
and my good things will fill my people to overflowing."
(Jeremiah 31:12-14)*

Advent Family Prayer:

God of Love, Your son, Jesus, is your
greatest gift to us. He is a sign of your love.
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of
Advent, As we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.

Amen -

Author Unknown



"Prepare the way of the Lord!"
(Isaiah 40:3)

Meal Train for Fr Mike

THANK YOU to everyone that has cooked a meal for Fr Mike. He has appreciated and has been enjoying his homecooked meals. Have you signed up yet? We are starting to book for the new year. 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>

December 17, 2023 ~ The Third Sunday of Advent

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

St Mary Religious Education

Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLW)

During 10:30AM Mass.

We will be on Christmas/New Year break.

CLW will resume on Jan. 7, 2024

Advent: we start preparing for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas and the return of Jesus at the second coming. We light a candle each week that represents the four weeks of Advent Season. Each candle has a specific meaning related to the birth of Christ. Today is known as Gaudete Sunday. As Christmas draws near, the church highlights the joy of the Savior's birth that is in our hearts. This Sunday we light the rose colored candle on the Advent Wreath.

Religious Education Classes

1st-7th Grade

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

8th Grade -Confirmation Classes

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

Will be on Christmas/New Years break.

Classes will resume on January 10.

This past week the Religious Education Catechist, students and their families celebrated the coming of Our Savior Jesus Christ with a short Christmas program and refreshments.

Thank you to everyone who so generously donated money, time and talents to help make this year's Christmas celebration such a success! Thank you, may God bless you and your family this Christmas season!

Questions or comments:

Please contact the Parish Office. 616.677.3934 or dre@saintmarysmarne.org



Knights of Columbus #11581 News

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A KNIGHT

We are Catholic men who lead, serve, protect and defend. We share a desire to be better husbands, fathers, sons, neighbors and role models and to put charity and community first.,

Why you should become a Knight?

If you're interested in helping those in need, serving your parish, growing in your faith or having exclusive access to top-rated insurance protection for your family, then the Knights of Columbus is the organization for you.

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 St Mary's Parish Hall.

Next Meeting - January 4 at 7PM at the Parish Hall.

SAVE THE DATE! Breakfast & Blood Drive - Feb 4, 2024

Register : https://donate.michigan.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/156075

Knight Person of the Month for December - Bruce Kamp

Knight Family of the Month for December - Deacon Tom & Cindy Roberts

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 our church community. Congratulations and Thank your for service and commitment to our Parish Family!



Giving Tree ~ Thank You

We would like to thank our fellow parishioners of St. Mary's for their generosity in providing gifts for the Christmas Giving Tree. We were able to provide sweat-shirts and socks or the residents of Ferguson Apartments,



The Giving Tree Committee:

Save the Date - Feb 10, 2024

The St Mary Valentine Dinner and Dance is back...

Watch the bulletin for more details and ticket information.

Valentine's Dinner
& Dance



Winter Weather Closings

When there is inclement weather and 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.

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: \$45,880.00 (89%)

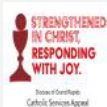
Balance: \$5,954.00

Participation: 120 of 292 Active Households (41%)

Totals as of November 7, 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 ASAP. card,



Giving Back to God ~ Time, Talent & Treasure

Attendance at Mass: Dec 9/10 4:30PM: <u>129</u> 10:30AM: <u>179</u>	Dec 9/10
Adult Contributions	\$5750.00
Children Contributions	\$20.00
Loose Contributions	\$137.00
Capital Improvement	\$230.00
Online Giving	
Retirement Fund for the Religious	\$838.00
Holy Day - Immaculate Conception	\$496.00
Total	\$7471.00
Weekly Offertory Needed for Budget	\$5461.84
Budget vs Actual to Date (since July 1)	\$617.46

Thank you for your continued support and generosity!

St. Mary's Sponsor of the Week

ARSULOWICZ BROTHERS MORTUARIES INC.

Family Owned & Operated ~ 616.458.1297

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR BULLETIN!

St. Michael's Parish News



Scrip News— Thank you to our 16 families who purchased Scrip this week. Our total profit was \$119.99.

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. This is the Third Sunday of Advent. We also call this day Gaudete Sunday, which means "rejoice!"



Elementary Faith Formation: The elementary program is for students in grades 1-5. We meet on Wednesday from 6:15- 7:30 pm. **Elementary faith Formation is on Christmas break and will resume on January 10, 2024. Have a safe and blessed Christmas!**

Middle School Faith Formation: Grades 6, 7 and 8 will meet on Sundays after the 8:30 am Mass from 9:45 to 11:15 in the Youth Room. The 8th Grade students will also receive Confirmation Preparation. **Middle School Faith Formation will be on Christmas break and will resume on January 14, 2024 May you and your family experience the true meaning of Christmas and keep it with you throughout the New Year!**



The Giving Tree: Thank you to all of St. Michael's parishioners who so generously donate to our giving tree. Your help in supporting Coopersville Cares is greatly appreciated. May God bless you as you have blessed others. Merry Christmas!

For 2023 charitable deductions and tax credits, the IRS has ruled that charitable gifts are deductible only in the year the organization received the donation. To be considered a charitable donation for 2023, gifts must be dropped off at the parish office no later than Friday, December 29. Mailed contributions must have a Dec. 31, 2023 postmark.

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, the victims of abortion, & the men and women in the military.



St. Michael's Sanctuary Lamp

for Carl Goosen
by Marcy Goosen

Photo Directory — If you haven't already turned in your family photo for our directory, please do so ASAP. You may email a photo to: secretary@saintmichaels.us or call the office (616) 384.4026 to schedule a time to stop in and have a simple photo taken by Beki. It is not too late to take part, and we want all to be included!

Decorating for Christmas —

Due to Christmas Eve falling on the Fourth Sunday of Advent this year, we will be decorating the church for our Christmas Masses after the 8:30 AM Mass on Sunday, December 24. If you are able, please come to help out. There will be much to do in a short amount of time.



Giving Back to God

December 10, 2023

Adult Envelopes	\$3,707.00
Loose Cash	\$256.00
Children's Envelopes	\$13.00
Holy Day	\$822.00
Online Giving	\$1120.00
Total	\$5,918.00
Building Fund	\$75.00
Financial Assistance	\$10.00
CCHD	\$40.00
Christmas Memorial Flowers	\$430.00
Retirement for Religious	\$925.00

Thank you for your continued support!

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.



December 17, 2023 ~ Third Sunday of Advent

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

A New Way of Salvation: Blessed Are the Meek

John the Baptizer was not the threat—or the scandal—to people that Jesus was. He was finally killed by Herod for saying things Herod did not want to hear, but the people never turned against him as they turned against Jesus, shouting, “Crucify him!”

The reason is that John fit the pattern of what he was. He was a classic Old Testament prophet: an ascetic from the desert who denounced evil fearlessly. People knew how to relate to John. He met their expectations.

Jesus did not. As a Messiah, Jesus was a disappointment.

More than that: He was a disillusionment! When Pilate brought him out, bound, beaten and delivered over to his enemies, and said to the people, “Here is your king!” they shouted, “Take him away! Crucify him!” They had finally realized that Jesus was not going to use divine power to save them from their oppressors, or to establish peace, justice and prosperity on earth. That is when all their hope in him turned to disappointment, and their disappointment turned into rage, and they rejected him. And in them we rejected him too!

Another reason why John was acceptable is that John radiated power, and people are attracted to power. John’s power was not political or physical, it was all personal and spiritual, but it was power: the power of faith and of will that made him such a fearsome ascetic. In contrast to John’s, the life-style of Jesus seemed bland! (See Matthew 9:14 and 11:18-19).

Jesus taught with the power of certain knowledge (See Matthew 7:28-29), and he had power to heal and cast out demons. But this was not the power people expected demanded—of the Messiah. They wanted a king who could and would use force to save them from their enemies. This is what Jesus refused to do. That is why they crucified him.

Jesus was rejected as Savior—and still is, although we

DECEMBER 17, 2023

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

are unwilling to recognize and acknowledge it—precisely because he would not use force, either human or divine, to impose the reign of God on earth as we would have him do: by stamping out crime and injustice. In our eyes, Jesus is a Savior who refuses to save us from anything, so what good is he?

We could, of course, accept Jesus as a purely spiritual Savior and say that redemption simply has nothing to do with civic life, economics, politics, or anything temporal or of this world; that the teachings of Jesus Christ can enlighten individuals in their private morality, but that he has nothing to say to nations or armies or multinational corporations.

If we do accept Jesus, however, as the one God sent to establish a kingdom, not of this world (see John 18:36) but in this world, “a kingdom of justice, love and peace” (Preface for the Feast of Christ the King), then we have to apply his teachings

to public life as well as to private, and say that he is truly our Savior, not only in religious matters (narrowly understood), but also in economic and political affairs. To accept this, we would have to accept a whole new concept of “salvation”—precisely that concept which Jesus’ own people (and we) refused to accept when the crowd began to shout, “Take him away! Crucify him!” This is the revolutionary concept of salvation without force, salvation through gentleness.

*John the Baptizer was a
classic prophet ...
Jesus was not*



Jesus taught in the Beatitudes that the meek shall inherit the earth (see Matthew 5:5). Strange statement! We know from history and contemporary observation that the meek are usually the first to be dispossessed! It is not the gentle who succeed in defending their territory against aggressors; it is those with weapons who are willing to use them—like us!

But if we accept Jesus as the Savior he actually is, we have to accept his teachings as the way to save all of human life, including business and politics. Can you do this?

REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

Third Week of Advent

Pray daily: Lord, I believe in you as the Way, the Truth and the Life. Your way is the only way that saves. Your truth is valid against all the assumptions of our culture, our world. You alone give life to the full. Help me to follow you without reserve.

Monday: Matthew 21:23-27. They discussed this among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" Do you believe that Jesus' teaching was truly from God? Could anyone ask you, "Then why don't you believe what he taught about gentleness?"

Tuesday: Matthew 21:28-32. Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you." Can you think of any group or category of people who seem to take the Gospel more seriously than you do? Why is this?

Wednesday: Luke 7:18-23. John's disciples came to ask Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Are you waiting for some extraordinary intervention of God to change our world? Or do you believe that we can change it—and you can begin now—by using Jesus' method of powerless love?

Thursday: Luke 7:24-30. "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ...Someone dressed in soft robes? ... A prophet?" What are you looking for in Jesus? In the Church? What do you really want?

Friday: John 5:33-36. "But I have a testimony greater than John's. The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me." What works of Jesus most effectively win you? What in other people most motivates you to change?

Saturday: Luke 1:57-66. "On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, 'No; he is to be called John.'" That name means "God is gracious," that is, a giver whose benevolent goodness shines out as beauty and attracts. Do you long for contact with Jesus who makes himself available as "God-with-us" and gives himself graciously to you in Eucharist?

LIVING THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

As Christian: Make a list of the forces or actions you most depend on for security or success. Law enforcement? Security systems? Insurance? Physical fitness? People's opinions of you? Each day this week look at your attitude toward one of them, comparing it with your attitude toward Christ

As Disciple: Each day this week take the attitude you are considering and try to remember or find something Jesus said (or did) in the Gospels which applies to it.

As Prophet: This week, each time you are treated unjustly or imposed upon, try responding with gentleness (of love, not passive aggression!) instead of with anger or a resort to power.

As Priest: This week, match every sign of respect you give to someone in power or authority with an explicit act that shows reverence for someone people consider less important than you.

As King: Notice how many signs, arrangements or policies where you live or shop or work express a reliance on power or intimidation. Suggest some concrete way to inject a note of gentleness into what is expressed.

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