

Saint Mary's Church

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

January 21, 2024 ~ The 3rd 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:

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 / frmhodges@grpriests.org
616.677.3934

For emergency please call: 616.745.1409

Deacon:

Deacon Tom Roberts / troberts@saintmarysmarne.org
616.677.3934

Business Manager:

Todd Kline / businessmanager@saintmarysmarne.org

Parish Secretary:

Cathie VanGessel / secretary@saintmarysmarne.org

Director of Religious Education:

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 January 20

4:30PM † Dr. James Stewart by Knight of Columbus #11581 ... **MA**

Sunday January 21

8:30AM † Janine VanderKlok by M/M Kurt Bouchard **MI**
 10:30AM † Floyd Bradley by Lisa Bradley **MA**
 4:30PM † Edna Schumaker by Mike & Terrie Kluting **MI**
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St. Michael

Monday January 22 No Mass

Tuesday January 23

9:00AM Our Parish Family **MA**
 Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—3:00 PM - St. Mary

Wednesday January 24

9:00AM † Sherm Hecksel by Phil & Dorothy Brown **MI**
 Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—3:00 PM - St. Michael

Thursday January 25

9:00AM † Betty Oziemkiewicz by M/M Robert Rogers.....**MA**

Friday January 26

9:00AM † Winnie Spencer by Joe Hitchings **MI**

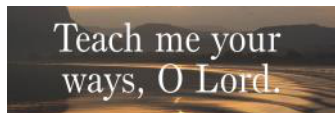
Saturday January 27

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

Sunday January 28

8:30AM † Richard Barkel by Curt & Sue DeVos **MI**
 10:30AM † Mike Magnotta by Knights of Columbus #11581..... **MA**
 4:30PM † Winnie Spencer by Curt & Joan Kutchin **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 January 21, 2024

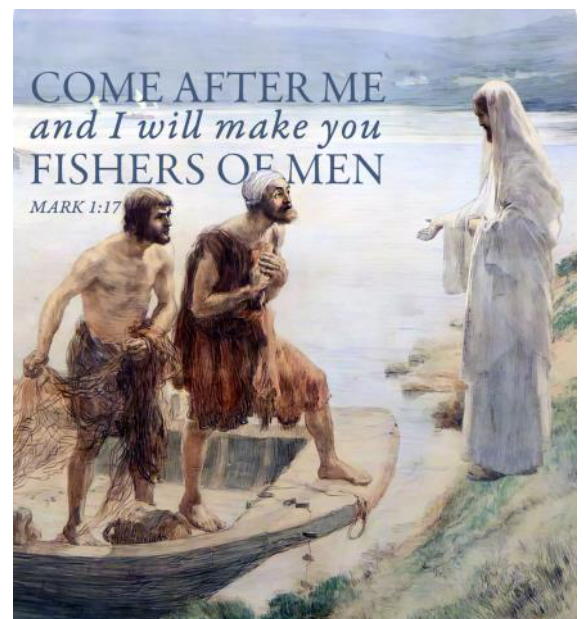
Sunday	Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Jon 3:1-5, 10; Ps 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9; 1 Cor 7:29-31; Mk 1:14-20
Monday	Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children 2 Sm 5:1-7, 10; Ps 89:20, 21-22, 25-26; Mk 3:22-30
Tuesday	Memorial of Saint Vincent, Deacon and Martyr and Saint Marianne Cope, Virgin 2 Sm 6:12b-15, 17-19; Ps 24:7, 8, 9, 10; Mk 3:31-35
Wednesday the Church	Memorial of Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor of the Church 2 Sm 7:4-17; Ps 89:4-5, 27-28, 29-30; Mk 4:1-20
Thursday	Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, Apostle Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22; Ps 117:1bc, 2; Mk 16:15-18
Friday	Memorial of Saints Timothy and Titus, Bishops 2 Tm 1:1-8 or Ti 1:1-5; Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 7-8a, 10; Mk 4:26-34
Saturday	Memorial of Saint Angela Merici, Virgin 2 Sm 12:1-7a, 10-17; Ps 51:12-13, 14-15, 16-17; Mk 4:35-41
Sunday	Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Dt 18:15-20; Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9; 1 Cor 7:32-35; Mk 1:21-28

St. Michael's Liturgical Ministers

	Jan 28 / 8:30 AM	Jan 28 / 4:30 PM
Altar Servers	Bryson Lindberg Melena Lindberg Kenzie Harker	NEED TWO
Eucharistic Ministers	Jennifer DeMull Kenny Harker Debbie Veneklas Jeff Johnson Chris Albrecht Andrew Bonter NEED ONE	NEED TWO
Lector	Carl Pohlman	Carol Reens
Sacristan	Judy Driedger	NEED ONE
Ushers	Wade Lindberg Mary Bueche Curt DeVos Jim Ponschair	NEED TWO
Music	Greg Kelly	NEED ONE

St. Mary's Liturgical Ministers

	January 27 - 4:30PM	January 28- 10:30AM
Sacristan	Vito Dolci	Gary Karr
Altar Servers	MaKaelyn Britt Kassidy Britt	Noah Davis Calvin Davis
Precious Body	Deacon Tom Angie Hanks Paul Madura	Becky Warners Mergie Jirous Bruce Kamp
Precious Blood	Keith Anderson Breton Petrauskas Mary Kirkwood Need One	Janette Ney Christina Withers Need Two
Hospitality	Need Four	Leonard Horter Anthony Leale Nettie Leale Need One
Lector	Geary Farrell	John Klein
Music	Bernie Stanko	Bernie Stanko



Cluster News and Community News and Events

Mass for Life

Join Bishop Walkowiak for the Mass for Life

An opportunity to pray for unborn children and support moms in need.

When: Monday, Jan. 22, 2024, 7 p.m. Mass with Bishop Walkowiak to [pray for the legal protection of unborn children](#)

Where: [Cathedral of Saint Andrew](#), 301 Sheldon Blvd. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Bring a baby pantry donation: Attendees of the Mass are invited to bring a donation that will go to [baby pantries operated by CCWM](#) in Grand Rapids and Muskegon. (See this [Amazon wish list](#) for examples of needed items. Financial gifts also are welcome.)

Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion throughout the United States in its companion decisions *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*. Since that time, millions of children have lost their lives, and millions of women and families have been wounded by abortion. On June 24, 2022, the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision overturned *Roe v. Wade*, and we praise God for the great opportunity state and federal legislators now have to protect pre-born children. While God, in His mercy, ended the nearly fifty-year nationwide regime of abortion on demand, right now state and federal laws, in many instances, are still hostile to pre-born children. Great prayer and advocacy continue to be very needed.

All the faithful of the diocese are encouraged to observe Monday, Jan. 22, 2024 as a [Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children](#). Mass that evening will be celebrated at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew by Bishop David Walkowiak to reaffirm our commitment to the Gospel of life and to the protection of all human life from conception to natural death.

Fr Mike's Musings



As the disciples followed Jesus over the course of three years, they would learn much, so much that they could only learn it gradually. That is because following Jesus affects every corner and aspect of every day, not just an hour a week. The gradual learning by the disciples of what it meant to be a follower of Jesus is sometimes thought to be symbolized in the blind man being healed by Jesus. Just as the healing of that blind man took place in stages, the new spiritual vision which the disciples had to learn from Jesus also occurred in stages. They would be formed and changed by the word of God gradually over the next three years.

A very important new stage in their spiritual vision and being formed and changed by the word of God was when Jesus called twelve of His disciples to become Apostles. We see this in Mark (3:13-14), but it is clearest in Luke (6:13). Luke tells us that Jesus gathered all His disciples together and out these He chose twelve to be Apostles. What we have here is their first calling; later they will be called a second time to reaffirm becoming Apostles. The Lord invites everyone to follow Him by receiving the Sacrament of Baptism, and the Lord calls a small number to also be ordained priests by receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Everyone since baptism is invited by the Lord to be formed and changed by the word of God and some are called to do so in a particular way.

It is precisely because of the importance of the word of God to help us become who we are meant to be that Pope Francis has asked that the word of God be honored in a special way on the third Sunday in Ordinary Time every year. It would be good to think about the location of the Bible in our homes and if it has sufficient prominence. This also reminds us to begin again to read the Bible frequently if we have been neglecting to do so. A good place to begin would be with any one of the four Gospels.

It saddens me to see that the word of God is misused by a number misguided people to support conspiracy theories or specific social agendas. We cannot take one line of Sacred Scripture and make it say what we want. We cannot force a meaning onto Sacred Scripture. Instead, we have to allow the word of God to form and change us just as it had to form and change Jesus' disciples.

Our Catholic way of understanding Sacred Scripture is to figure out what the sacred writer intended, not what we want Scripture to say. We arrive at that by looking at a line of Scripture in its context, not in isolation on its own. There are three basic rules for understanding Sacred Scripture: context, context, and context. To understand a line of Sacred Scripture, we read it in the context of its paragraph, we read it in the context of its chapter, and we read it in the context of its book. By doing that and paying attention to what the author intended, we will avoid misusing a line of Sacred Scripture for conspiracy theories/agendas. We cannot force a meaning onto Sacred Scripture, it is Sacred Scripture that should, and can, form and change us.

Exploring Priesthood Discernment Meetings

Discernment is a time of obtaining spiritual guidance and understanding. If you are considering the priesthood, the Diocese of Grand Rapids invites you to meet with other young men (ages 16+) to gather and discern God's will for your life. Meetings will take place from 12:30-1:30 p.m. at St. Stephen Parish, East Grand Rapids and are offered on the following Sundays in 2024: **Jan. 28, Feb. 18, March 10, and April 21**. Just show up or email Pattie Reynolds, preynolds@grdiocese.org, to RSVP. Questions? Contact Father Stephen Durkee, director of priestly vocations, sdurkee@grdiocese.org.

Soup's On For All! - January 29th | 6:30 p.m. The B.O.B.

Don't miss out on delicious soups from local restaurants, live entertainment, home-made desserts and one fun night! All proceeds benefit Gods' Kitchen food programs. These programs gave out more than 70,000 free meals last year alone. Tickets are \$50 presale and \$60 at the door. Visit ccwestmi.org/soupson or contact Karol Maurer at kmaurer@ccwestmi.org or 616.356.6207

Meal Train for Fr Mike

Scheduling now for 2024! 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>

Coopersville Cares Winter Benefit Sale

The sale will be **Tuesday, Feb. 6, 8 am-6 pm** at the Community Building, 182 East street, Coopersville. All proceeds will go to Coopersville Cares.

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



January 21, 2024 ~ The Third 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.

- Today is the third Sunday in Ordinary Time. Jesus invites us to be "fishers of men". The work of bringing people into God's net of Christ's love. We are asked to follow Jesus and to act as he did toward the poor and sick and hungry.



Religious Education Classes

1st-7th Grade

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

- Wednesday, January 24th the second graders will be making their First Reconciliation. Please pray that these children will open their hearts to the love and mercy that God shows us through this sacrament

8th Grade -Confirmation Classes

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

- Confirmation students have a retreat on Sunday, February 11 from 9am-3pm.

Questions or comments:

Please contact the Parish Office. 616.677.3934 or dre@saintmarys.marne.org

Mass of Hope, Health & Healing

Healing Mass with The Sacrament of the Sick.

February 2 at 7PM at St Mary.

All are welcome.

Please come and receive the healing power of God.
"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" Matthew 11:28



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. **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 - February 1 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 January - Matt Karr

Knight Family of the Month for January - Dave & Vicki Benedetti

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 you for service and commitment to our Parish Family!



2023 Church Contributions

2023 Contribution Statements will be available in the Narthex no later than January 28. Please pick up after Mass or during parish open office hours. If you would like yours mailed or emailed, please call the parish office. Thank You. **Please Note: In an effort to save money on postage we will only mail statements if requested.**



Warming Drive

Our Lady of Fatima Guild will be having a warming drive during the month of January. Warm Hats, socks, gloves/mittens, scarves and GENTLY used coats will be collected. A collection box will be in the Narthex. Thank you



Save the Date - Feb 10, 2024

The St Mary & St Michael Valentine Dinner and Dance is Back. Mass. (must be 21 to attend) See Bulletin Insert for More Info.



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: \$46,480.00 (90%)

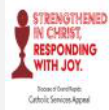
Balance: \$5,354.00

Participation: 122 of 292 Active Households (42%)

Totals as of January 4, 2024

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.



Giving Back to God ~ Time, Talent & Treasure

Attendance at Mass:				Jan 13/14
Jan 13	4:30PM:	106	Jan 14	10:30AM: 52
Adult Contributions				\$2472.00
Children Contributions				\$12.00
Loose Contributions				\$102.00
Capital Improvement				
Online Giving				\$145.00
Total				\$2731.00
Weekly Offertory Needed for Budget				n/a
Budget vs Actual to Date (since July 1)				n/a

Thank you for your continued support and generosity!

St. Mary's Sponsor of the Week

THE STONE ZONE

616.677.3112 ~ 14100 Ironwood Dr. Marne

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

St. Michael's Parish News



Scrip News— Thank you to our 11 families who purchased Scrip this week. Our total profit was \$84.81.

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 \$44,875 (or 75.70%) toward our goal. We still have \$14,405.00 to go to reach this goal. If you haven't already contributed, please consider doing so soon. Any remaining balance at the end of the campaign will come out of our general operating funds. Please continue to pray for the success of this important effort.

St. Michael's Parish Family

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

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!

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 today's Gospel, Jesus asked two brothers, Simon and Andrew to leave all they have and to follow him. Living and witnessing to the Gospel is a choice that demands nothing less than total conversion. If Jesus happened to walk in this room right now and asked you to drop everything and follow him, what would you do?



Elementary Faith Formation: The elementary program is for students in grades 1-5. We meet on Wednesday from 6:15- 7:30 pm. **Families are asked to join us on Wednesday, January 31st for Eucharist Adoration at 6:15 pm in the church. Adoration will last about 30 minutes then students will go to class.**

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. Class resumes today.



St. Michael's Sanctuary Lamp

for special intentions of St. Michael's Parishioners

Knights of Columbus News

Please pray for our seminarians and consider sending them a note of encouragement.



Mr. Casey Kreiner (first phase of formation the "Spirituality Year".)
Mundelein Seminary
750 N. Wabash Ave.
Chicago, IL 60611

Mr. Charlie Leidel (First-Year Theologian.)
Mundelein Seminary
1000 E Maple Ave.
Mundelein, IL 60060

Mr. Greg Wasinski (second year at St. John Vianney College Seminary at the University of St. Thomas.)
University of St. Thomas
2115 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105

Giving Back to God

January 14, 2024

Adult Envelopes	\$2,305.00
Loose Cash	\$60.00
Children's Envelopes	\$3.50
Holy Day	\$40.00
Total	\$2,408.50
Building Fund	\$110.00
Financial Assistance	\$20.00

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.



January 21, 2024 ~ The Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

A Community Focus

There is a contrast between the “call to repentance” (to a change of mind, heart, direction) in Jonah and in the Gospel. The reason Jonah gives is, “Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” In other words, “Something bad is about to happen—change direction or else!” In the Gospel, however, the reason Jesus preaches is, “This is the time of fulfillment. The reign of God is at hand!” Jesus is saying, “Something great is happening! Change direction or lose out!”

This pinpoints as well as anything the change that has taken place in Church preaching since Vatican II. The emphasis used to be on keeping the law of God out of fear: “Do what God says or else!” The focus of morality was on those things which were considered “mortal sin”—that is, acts so evil in themselves that to do them was to condemn oneself to everlasting punishment in hell—forever and ever.

In some ways, this approach seemed to work. Perhaps, though, it really did not, but one had the impression in those days that anybody who went to church was pretty concerned about “mortal sin.” People fell into a lot of things which were preached as mortal sin, but they worried about it. And they tried to get to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and back into God’s good graces as soon as they could. The “or else” of everlasting hell was something to take seriously. It still is!

What has changed? What has not changed? We still believe that anyone who commits “mortal sin” is choosing to do something so seriously incompatible with being Christ’s Body on earth, so contrary to the way of life he taught and to the divine life we are called to live, that the choice to commit “mortal sin” is in fact a decision to give up the life of grace, to give up

JANUARY 21, 2024

3RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31;
Mark 1:14-20

union with Christ, to stop trying to live as a child of God, a temple of the Holy Spirit, a coworker with Jesus in the mission of redeeming the world. And to give up union with Christ on this earth is to give up everlasting union with him in heaven. It is to trade heaven for hell. That teaching has not changed.

What has changed? For one thing, the Church recognizes that theologians were too quick to agree on what actions were serious

enough to be “mortal sin.” To miss Mass one Sunday would send you to hell as surely as committing murder would. And since missing Mass was a more common temptation than murder, priests preached on it more. The result was that Catholics were more concerned about missing Mass than they were, for example, about whom they killed in war. By declaring so many things “mortal sin,” teachers made us less able to recognize real evil when we saw it.

Also, by focusing our attention on avoiding hell (the “bad news”) preachers turned our attention away from the Good News of the fulfillment offered by Jesus Christ. We were so intent on not doing what was “mortal” (deadly) that we hardly thought about what was life-giving. Catholics saw more value in “being

*Jesus offers everyone
“life to the full”*



there” at Mass—even distractedly, inertly, without entering into the celebration—than in reading Scripture attentively at home (not that this should be considered an either-or option, of course). It was more important not to eat meat on Friday than it was to receive the Bread of Life in Communion on any other day of the week. We were like people so concerned about not getting sick that we did not take care of our health!

The focus of preaching today is more often now on the positive invitation to follow the teaching of Jesus into the fullness of life. Jesus offers everyone “life to the full” on this earth as well as in heaven. But we cannot enter into the fullness of life by avoiding sin; we have to positively learn from Jesus Christ and live his teachings “to the full.” His words are the words of life, but only if we live them. That is why the focus today is on what we should do in order to grow in the life of grace rather than on what we should avoid just to “preserve” it.

REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

Third Week of the Year

***Pray daily:** Lord Jesus, you came that we might “have life, and have it to the full.” Let this desire of yours fill my heart. Fill me with desire to open myself to your life and to share it with others.*

Monday: Mark 3:22-30. “And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.” In how many ways are you helped by your relationship (koinonia) with others in the parish? How do you help others?

Tuesday: Mark 3:31-35. Jesus said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” What kind of relationship do you want to have with Jesus? Servant? Follower? Friend? Family? Spouse? What are you willing to do to enter into a deeper, more intimate relationship with him?

Wednesday: Mark 4:1-20. Jesus said, “Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a

hundredfold.” Why do seeds grow best in a garden? What makes a parish “rich soil” for God’s word to grow? Is this true for me? Could it be more so?

Thursday: Mark 16:15-18 He said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved.” Do you really believe that you can help give people life for all eternity by sharing with them what you know of the Gospel?

Friday: Mark 4:26-34. The Kingdom of God “which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.” What draws people to the Church? To the parish? How do you?

Saturday: Mark 4:35-41. “Jesus was in the stern, asleep ... They woke him and said to him, ‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?’” Do you, as Christ’s Body on earth, seem to be “asleep” to others’ needs? Do you care that they are “perishing”?

LIVING THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

As Christian: For one week write down each night how your faith has enriched your life that day.

As Disciple: Each morning asks how the day’s reading (on this page) shows you a way to grow in love for God and others.

As Prophet: Identify one thing that would change in your life if you asked, not just what is right or wrong, but what bears witness to the teachings of Jesus.

As Priest: Think of one way of ministering to others which also causes you to grow in faith, in hope, or in love.

As King: In one activity of your day consciously change your focus: assume responsibility, not just for being moral and ethical, but for extending the reign of Christ. Afterwards, ask how this has affected your relationship with Jesus and with others.

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