

# Saint Mary's Church

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

February 11, 2024 ~ The 6th 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 / [frmhodes@grpriests.org](mailto:frmhodes@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:

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

## Music Director:

Dr. Bernie Stanko 616.490.3836 /  
[berniestanko@hotmail.com](mailto: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](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 February 10

4:30PM † Arlyn Madura by Paul Madura.....MA  
Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Mary

## Sunday February 11

8:30AM † Karen Lynn Albrecht by Chris Albrecht .....MI  
10:30AM † Winnie Spencer by M/M Mike Homrich .....MA  
4:30PM † Marvin Sauger by Bob & Marcy Fortin .....MI  
Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Michael

## Monday February 12 No Mass

## Tuesday February 13

9:00AM † Fr. James Bozung by Knights of Columbus #11581....MA  
Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm  
Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—3:00 PM - St. Mary

## Wednesday February 14—Ash Wednesday

9:00AM Our Parish Family .....MI  
Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm  
Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—3:00 PM - St. Michael  
6:00 PM Our Parish Family .....MA

## Thursday February 15

9:00AM † Betty Oziemkiewicz by Rachel Bowens.....MA

## Friday February 16

9:00AM Thomas Knauf by Terri Schoenborn.....MI

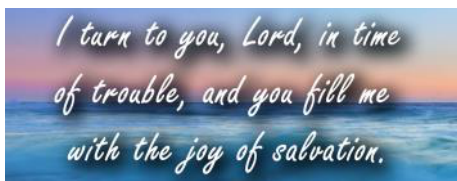
## Saturday February 17

4:30PM † D. James Stewart by M/M Rob Rander.....MA  
Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:30 PM—4:15 PM - St Mary

## Sunday February 18

8:30AM † Paula Raczkiewicz-Kelly by Pam Raczkiewicz .....MI  
10:30AM † Rhonda Grabinski by Joe Grabinski .....MA  
4:30PM Our Parish Family .....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 February 11, 2024

### Sunday

#### Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lv 13:1-2; 44-46; Ps 32:1-2, 5, 11; 1 Cor 10:31—11:1; Mk 1:40-45

### Monday

Jas 1:1-11; Ps 119:67, 68, 71, 72, 75, 76; Mk 8:11-13

### Tuesday

Jas 1:12-18; Ps 94:12-13a, 14-15, 18-19; Mk 8:14-21

### Wednesday

#### Ash Wednesday

Jl 2:12-18; Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14 and 17; 2 Cor 5:20—6:2; Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

### Thursday

Dt 30:15-20; Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6; Lk 9:22-25

### Friday

Is 58:1-9a; Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 18-19; Mt 9:14-15

### Saturday

#### Memorial of the Seven Founders of the Order of Servites, Religious

Is 58:9b-14; Ps 86:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; Lk 5:27-32

### Sunday

#### First Sunday of Lent

Gn 9:8-15; Ps 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9; 1 Pt 3:18-22, Mt 4:4b; Mk 1:12-15

## St. Michael's Liturgical Ministers

	Feb 18 / 8:30 AM	Feb 18 / 4:30 PM
Altar Servers	Bryson Lindberg Melena Lindberg Kenzie Harker	NEED TWO
Eucharistic Ministers	Sharon Carlson Joe Hitchings Rosemary Weigel Zack Nelson Peter Nielsen Jennie Taylor NEED ONE	NEED TWO
Lector	Joe Meerman	Mark Phillips
Sacristan	Chris Albrecht	NEED ONE
Ushers	Ray Maka Calvin Lindberg Dave Tronovich Deb Tronovich	NEED TWO
Music	Craig Bleckley	Craig Bleckley

## St. Mary's Liturgical Ministers

	February 17 - 4:30PM	February 18- 10:30AM
Sacristan	Need One	Gary Karr
Altar Servers	Need Two	Ty Ricord Lauren LeMieux
Precious Body	Deacon Tom Mary Kirkwood Need One	Janette Ney Christina Withers Paul Madura
Precious Blood	Kathy Gomez Geary Farrell Vito Dolci	Jim Fritz Becky Warners Margie Jirous Need One
Hospitality	Need Four	Jim Looks Marian Looks Leonard Horter Anthony Leale
Lector	Jose Gomez	John Klein
Music	Bernie Stanko	Bernie Stanko

## Ash Wednesday ~ February 14, 2024

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. This 40-day period is meant to mark Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness. Where he fasted and where the Devil tempted him. In this period of lent believers are expected to set aside a time each year for similar fasting. Consequently followed by a celebration of Christ's death and Resurrection.

### Prayer for Ash Wednesday

Gracious God, today begins a period of inner reflection and examination. The days stretch before me and invite me inward to that silent, holy space that holds your Spirit. This special time beckons me to see my life through Christ's eyes and the truth and reality of your love incarnate. Give me the grace to enter the space of these days with anticipation of our meeting. And, when I open my soul to your presence, let your loving kindness flow over me and seep into the pockets of my heart. I ask this for the sake of your love. Amen

**Mass with Distribution of Ashes  
St Michael- 9AM ~ St Mary - 6PM**



## Office of The Bishop- Diocese of Grand Rapids



Lent 2024

Dear Friends in Christ,  
As we participate in the National Eucharistic Revival, we are called to intentionally reflect on how the Eucharist—the Bread of Life—compels us to share bread for life with all members of our human family. Through the Eucharist, Jesus calls us into relationship with Him to serve our brothers and sisters most in need. One longstanding program that can assist us in serving the members of our human family who face the challenges associated with hunger and poverty is the Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) Rice Bowl. This faith-in-action program helps us to more fully live out the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Your contribution to this important program makes a lasting impact. In addition to providing immediate physical nutrition to curb hunger, CRS Rice Bowl programs provide education about sustainable farming practices to ensure that people in more than 120 countries continue to thrive.

In addition to helping our brothers and sisters around the world, 25% of donations to CRS Rice Bowl each year stay in West Michigan to support hunger and poverty alleviation efforts. Your donations supported pantries including the Bread of Life Food Pantry and Grandmother's Cupboard Baby Pantry at St. Ann - St. Ignatius Parish in Baldwin, the Caritas Food Pantry through St. Mary Parish in Custer, which serves several counties, and the Mary's Heart Food Pantry run at St. Mary's of the Immaculate Conception in Muskegon. Thank you for your generosity in supporting these local efforts!

Please join me in giving alms to the CRS Rice Bowl program this year. Your support can change lives. To learn more, visit [crsricebowl.org](http://crsricebowl.org).

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak  
Bishop of Grand Rapids

## Saint Valentine's Day - February 14

The love of God reigns in the hearts of all saints, but there is one who has the joy of being the patron saint of lovers: St. Valentine. According to a tradition, St. Valentine risked his life to marry couples in a Christian way during the time of persecution. He finally gave his life in martyrdom, which is the ultimate manifestation of love. The love of this holy priest for Jesus Christ and for defending the Sacrament of Matrimony inspires us to raise human love to the heights of the divine love for which we were created. Christians should take advantage of this feast to recover the Christian meaning of love and marriage in the light of Christ.



### Prayer for St Valentine's Day

God of love, you give us St. Valentine as an example of love. As we gather to celebrate the feast of this loving and caring saint we ask you to bless our friendships. May the love and affection we share with each other, always come from a sense of care and respect. Amen

## Fr Mike's Musings



On occasion we hear statements suggesting that the New Testament overrules the Old Testament, that the Old Testament is out of date since Jesus, that the Old Testament is only concerned with waging battles, the Ten Commandments are no longer valid because they predate Christ. This sort of thinking is superficial, inane, and is usually just used to excuse other sinful behaviors and/or attitudes. Anyone who knows and prays the New Testament will also know the value of the Old Testament. If we run down the Old Testament that may be revealing our lack of knowledge and love of the New Testament also. You know from attending Mass that the First Reading during Mass, except during the seven weeks of Easter, is taken from the Old Testament. How does the reader finish the passage? By saying, "The Word of the Lord". The Old Testament is the Word of God just like the New Testament. God speaks to us also through the Old Testament. God's self-revelation in the Old Testament did not lose significance for us with the Incarnation. 2 Timothy 3:16 says "All Scripture is inspired by God". When that letter was written to Timothy what were the Scriptures? The books of the Old Testament! The Old Testament is inspired by God just as the New Testament is inspired by God. Because the Old Testament is inspired by God it is of value to us; we come to know God through the Old Testament just as much as through the New Testament.

To understand Jesus who was a Jew, and Paul who was a Jew, we also need to understand their Jewish past and their Scriptures. What Bible did Jesus read? What Bible did Paul read? When Jesus read the Bible in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-20) obviously He could not read from Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts or Paul or any other New Testament writing since they were not yet written. What we call the Old Testament was not the Old Testament for Jesus, for Jesus it was the Bible. In those Scriptures Jesus found sustenance for His mission, ministry and prayer. We have your favorite passages in the Bible through which God speaks personally to us. Jesus would also have had His favorite passages, most likely from the prefiguring Book of Isaiah. To know Jesus better we should be reading the Old Testament since that was His Bible.

What was Jesus' prayerbook? It was the Book of the Psalms. In the Psalms Jesus would have found His own thoughts and emotions reflected, from joy to fear, from despair to thanksgiving, and would probably have known most of them by heart and could resort to a Psalm to suit His needs in prayer at any particular time. For example on the cross Jesus prayed, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34) which is a quotation from Psalm 22:1 and Jesus also prayed, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46) which comes from Psalm 31:5. Knowing that the Old Testament was the source for much of Jesus' prayer, should lead us to want to discover the riches of those Scriptures which nourished Him spiritually.

As we are on the cusp of entering into the Lenten and Eastern seasons it would be of tremendous value to acquaint ourselves with the Old Testament. These seasons are directly linked with the events detailed in these books. Through familiarizing ourselves with these books we become even more familiar with the whys and the wherefores of the liturgical seasons and practices of the Church.

These bulletin articles will also center our historical and religious heritage detailed in the Bible of Jesus and the Apostles. Why this testament is of value in our current age and why, more than ever, we should be attentive to what it contains.

## 40 Days for Life ~ March 8, 2024

### Would you be willing to pray for one hour?

40 Days for Life is a unique pro-life effort that consists of 40 days of prayer, fasting and peaceful vigil in front of abortion clinics. This will be the 29th campaign in Grand Rapids, and it will take place in front of Planned Parenthood- 425 Cherry Street SE Grand Rapids. This facility provides the abortion pill and refers for abortions. Dozens of area churches have adopted a day of prayer.

### Our parish family has chosen Friday, March 8, 2024

We will need 2 prayer volunteers from 7 am till 7 pm throughout the day. This is a powerful and proven effective way to close abortion centers and show the Mother's that we are praying and thinking about them and their babies. Please consider a hour of your time~ If you are unable to attend that day you may go to the clinic and pray any time! Thank you for your commitment to LIFE! God bless!  
[www.40daysforlife.com/GrandRapids](http://www.40daysforlife.com/GrandRapids)





## St. Mary's Parish News

### St Mary Religious Education

#### Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLW )

During 10:30AM Mass.

Today is the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time. In today's Gospel passage, we hear another story of Jesus healing a man with leprosy. Like the leper in today's Gospel, let us have total faith in Jesus' healing power knowing he can also make us clean! This Wednesday marks the start of Lent with Ash Wednesday.

#### Religious Education Classes

1st-7th Grade

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

**Ash Wednesday Mass** at St. Mary's is at 6:00pm on February 14.

**Students are to be dropped off and picked up at the church.** Families are asked to join us for Mass. Pews will be reserved for each class.

**This week only class time will be from 6:00pm - 7:00pm.**



#### 8th Grade -Confirmation Classes

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

Confirmation students have a retreat with their Sponsors today. Sunday, February 11 from 9am-3pm. Please Keep all of Confirmation students in your prayers as they continue to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

#### Questions or comments:

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

### Stations of the Cross Fridays at 7PM During Lent

Feb 16- Led by Bible Study (in Chapel)

Feb 23 - LIVE Stations Led by Religious Education Classes

Mar 1 - Led by Our Lady of Fatima Guild

Mar 8 - Led by Gary Karr

Mar 15 -Led by Pastoral Council

Mar 22 - Led by Knights of Columbus Councils #11581 & #9909 at the Outdoor Meditation Path

**We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by Your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**



### 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%)

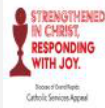
**Balance: \$5,354.00**

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.**



### Knights of Columbus #11581 News

**Knight Person of the Month for February** - Mike Magnotta

**Knight Family of the Month for February-** Carl & Kelly Spence

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!



#### 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: [robrander82@gmail.com](mailto:robrander82@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 - March 7 at 7PM at the Parish Hall.**

**SAVE THE DATE! Blood Drive & Donuts - June 2, 2024**

#### CALLING ALL ADULT MALE PARISHIONERS:

The **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS** would like to have you as a member of their council. Do you think you're too busy to join?

Your time commitments includes church activities that you may already be supporting, such as Choir, Hospitality ministry, Eucharistic ministry, etc.

Just keep doing the things you are already doing, nothing more.

**Being a Knight should compliment your life, not complicate it.**

Get involved only when you have time. If you are bust, that's OK.

**Just being a member is helpful and shows your support.**

Ask a Knight to sign up or do it online at [KofC.org](http://KofC.org) / [RobRander82@gmail.com](mailto:RobRander82@gmail.com) / 616.283.7483



## Giving Back to God ~ Time, Talent & Treasure

Attendance at Mass:		Feb 3/4
Feb 3 4:30PM:	107	Feb 4 10:30AM: 158
Adult Contributions		\$4975.00
Children Contributions		\$113.00
Loose Contributions		\$139.00
Capital Improvement		\$735.00
Online Giving		\$2775.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$8737.00</b>
Weekly Offertory Needed for Budget		\$5121.77
Budget vs Actual to Date (since July 1)		+\$7879.87

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

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

**GEORGE HOFACKER**

Lawn & Garden Equipment ~ 616.784.2998 ~ 3633 4 Mile NW

**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 numbers will be updated next week.

**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](mailto: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. This Wednesday Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. We receive ashes on our fore heads in the sign of a cross to remind us of our own mortality and to remind us of our own sins. The season of Lent is the time of preparation for Holy Week, leading up to Easter. The liturgical color for Lent is violet.



**Elementary Faith Formation:** The elementary program is for students in grades 1-5. We meet on Wednesday from 6:15- 7:30 pm. There will be **no Elementary Faith Formation on February 14<sup>th</sup> due to Ash Wednesday**. Mass times will be 9am at St. Michael's and 6pm at St. Mary's. I hope to see you at Mass.

**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.

## St. Michael's Sanctuary Lamp

for special intentions of St. Michael's Parishioners



### 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.



## Knights of Columbus News

We are in the middle of our membership drive. St. Michael Knights of Columbus would like to invite all Catholic men of the parish to join our council. All of our activities are to bring us together to experience "Faith & Family First". There are also insurance and financial opportunities to benefit your family and protect our Catholic faith. Please scan the QR code and join us today.



## Giving Back to God

February 4, 2024

Adult Envelopes	\$9,936.00
Loose Cash	\$233.00
Children's Envelopes	\$18.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,187.00</b>
Building Fund	\$120.00
Financial Assistance	\$10.00

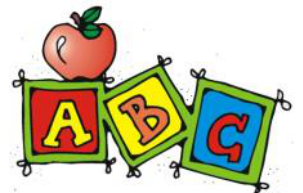
*Thank you for your continued support!*

## 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.



**February 11, 2024 ~ The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

## A Healing Community

There is a thought-provoking contrast between the laws for dealing with leprosy in Leviticus and Mark's story of Jesus healing a leper. Before Jesus, the Jewish priests did not cure leprosy; they just declared officially that it was or was not present. Secondly, the leper had to live outside the camp, apart from the community, until healed (this was not the Hansen's disease we call leprosy, but a less serious skin disorder).

When the leper came to Jesus, he was cured. And then it was Jesus who had to stay out of town! He could not "enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places."

Before Jesus the community of the people of God had to protect itself by excluding the sick and the sinful. The full power to heal was not present, and so the infection of both sin and disease had to be kept out of the body of the community. Those who committed serious sins, such as murder, adultery, blasphemy, or even obdurate disobedience to parents, were to be expelled or killed: "Thus shall you purge the evil from your midst." But Jesus reversed this policy. When he purified the temple "the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them." He described his Kingdom by telling of a king who sent servants out into the streets to gather all they found, bad and good alike. Jesus sends his disciples to bring all the infection in the world into his Church so that he might heal all. His presence makes the community strong enough, not only to fight off, but to heal all infection (see Deuteronomy 21:21; Matthew 21:14; 22:10).

The Church fights infection and heals by treating her members with "word and sacrament." The reason Jesus had to stay out in the desert after he healed people was that he did not want to be identified as a Messiah who

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6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46;  
I Corinthians 10:31—11:1; Mark 1:40-45

healed physical afflictions by working miracles. He came for a greater healing: to overcome the woundedness of sin by sharing with us his own divine life (grace). His ministry was first to teach and proclaim the Good News. He also cured; but when he did and so many people flocked to him for healing that he could not teach or preach any more, he left that town, saying "Let us go on to neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do" (see Mark 1:38).

The power to heal exists still in Christ's Church; but that power works through the preaching and teaching of the Church, and through the sacraments. The power to heal physical sickness is ordinarily exercised through the Sacrament of Anointing (within which the word of God is also proclaimed). But the sure and certain effect of this sacrament is peace, comfort and strength to the soul: God always offers this through the sacrament, al-

though he does not always give healing to the body.

The healing of sin, however, and of all the woundedness caused by sin—not just by our own, but by all the sinfulness of the world: the distorted attitudes and

*It is through and within  
the community of  
the Church, that we  
experience the full healing  
power of Jesus*





values, the false priorities programmed into us, the fears that hold us back from doing good, and the seductions which entice us to do evil—the power to heal us of this infection is always present and available in the Church. It is the power offered to us in “word and sacrament.” If we want to be healed, we need large, repeated doses of God’s word and God’s sacraments: Mass, Communion, Reconciliation, and a conscious use of the gifts given to us through Baptism and Confirmation and through Matrimony or Holy Orders.

Any encounter with Jesus acting through his words, his sacraments, or through any member of his body, should be healing. But it is through and within the healing community of the Church, when we pray and study and respond to God’s word together, that we experience the full healing power of Jesus.

## REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

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### Sixth Week of the Year

*Pray daily: Lord, wherever you are there is healing. Make me conscious that you are always present for me to answer my needs and in me to respond to the needs of others.*

**Monday:** Mark 8:11-13. “Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit and said, ‘Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation.’” How can you, through love expressed, be a sign of Jesus’ healing power?

**Tuesday:** Mark 8:14-21. “Jesus said, ‘Watch out—beware of the yeast of the Pharisees...’ The disciples concluded among themselves that Jesus said this because they had no bread.” On a daily basis, are you more concerned about physical details or about your attitudes?

**Ash Wednesday:** Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18. Jesus said, “Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.” What personal, private acts of devotion tell you that religion is very personal to you and not just something you were “brought up in”?

**Thursday after Ash Wednesday:** Luke 9:22-25. “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” How much of a cross is it to make time for daily Mass or prayer? How might this save you from greater crosses?

**Friday after Ash Wednesday:** Matthew 9:14-15. Jesus said, “The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.” What does fasting express for you? What does it make you aware of?

**Saturday after Ash Wednesday:** Luke 5:27-32. Jesus said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.” What is healthy in your spiritual life? Where is growth needed? Have you experienced Jesus inviting you to more?

## LIVING THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

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**As Christian:** Describe in one sentence why you choose to follow Jesus.

**As Disciple:** Write down what helps people recognize that you are not a believer in name only but rather are a disciple, a student, of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

**As Prophet:** Each day this week make one choice which is based not just on the Ten Commandments, on what is right or wrong, but on some more generous and demanding ideal taught by Jesus.

**As Priest:** Perform some daily act of kindness for someone else, a conscious act of expressing the healing, helping love of Jesus who is within you, acting through you.


**As King:** Reconsider some rule or policy you obey but do not feel comfortable about. Accept responsibility for deciding whether this rule or policy reflects the highest ideals of Jesus. Discuss the situation with someone you consider wise.

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