

# St. Mary St. Michael

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616.677.3934 • [www.saintmarysmarne.org](http://www.saintmarysmarne.org)

17150 88th Ave., Coopersville, MI 49404  
616.384.4026 • [www.saintmichaels.us](http://www.saintmichaels.us)



*Pastor: Rev. Michael Hodges*

[frmhodes@grpriests.org](mailto:frmhodes@grpriests.org) • For emergencies please call: 616.745.1409

### Saint Mary Parish Staff

**St. Mary Parish Office Hours**  
**Monday** .....9:00AM - 4:30PM  
**Tuesday** .....9:00AM - 4:30PM  
**Wednesday** 9:00AM - 11:30AM  
**Thursday** .... 9:00AM to 4:30PM  
**Friday** ..... Closed

**Deacon**  
Tom Roberts  
[troberts@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:troberts@saintmarysmarne.org)

**Business Manager**  
Todd Kline  
[businessmanager@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:businessmanager@saintmarysmarne.org)

**Parish Secretary**  
Cathie VanGessel  
[secretary@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:secretary@saintmarysmarne.org)

**Director of Faith Formation**  
Debbie Veneklase  
[dre@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:dre@saintmarysmarne.org)

**Director of O.C.I.A**  
**Adult Bible Study**  
Jill Brown

**Maintenance**  
Jim Looks

**Custodian**  
Marian Looks

**Liturgical Minister**  
Gary Karr  
[gkarr@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:gkarr@saintmarysmarne.org)

**Music Director**  
Dr. Bernie Stanko  
616.490.3836  
[berniestanko@hotmail.com](mailto:berniestanko@hotmail.com)

**St Mary Prayer Line**  
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)

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**Tuesday** ..... 9:00AM - 4:00PM  
**Wednesday**... 9:00AM - 4:00PM  
**Thursday**..... Closed  
**Friday**..... 9:00AM to 4:00PM

**Deacon**  
Tom Roberts  
[troberts@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:troberts@saintmarysmarne.org)

**Business Manager**  
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[bsmgr@saintmichaels.us](mailto:bsmgr@saintmichaels.us)

**Parish Secretary**  
Beki Rotman  
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**Director of Faith Formation**  
Debbie Veneklase  
[childrensministry@saintmichaels.us](mailto:childrensministry@saintmichaels.us)

**Director of O.C.I.A**  
Cliff Kozminski  
616.437.5318

**Maintenance**  
David Goosen

**Custodian**  
Carol Reens

**Liturgical Minister**  
Kevin Kilpatrick  
[liturgy@saintmichaels.us](mailto:liturgy@saintmichaels.us)

**Scrip Coordinator**  
Brenda Kilpatrick  
616.837.6363

**St Michael Prayer Line**  
Chris Albrecht  
616-403-7110  
Judy Driedger  
616-899-2470

### Weekend Mass Schedule

**Saturday** ..... 4:00PM • St Michael  
**Sunday** ..... 8:30AM • St Michael  
**Sunday** ..... 10:30AM • St Mary

### Weekday Mass Schedule

**Tuesday** ..... 12:00PM • St Mary  
*Adoration begins after Mass until 3:30PM*  
**Wednesday** ..... 12:00PM • St Michael  
*Adoration begins after Mass until 3:30PM*  
**Thursday** ..... 12:00PM • St Mary  
**Friday** ..... 12:00PM • St Michael

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

**Tuesday and Thursday** ..... 12:30PM to 1:30PM • St. Mary  
**Wednesday and Friday** ..... 12:30PM to 1:30PM • St. Michael  
**Saturday** ..... 3:00PM to 3:45PM • St. Michael

# Mass Schedule & Intentions

## Saturday July 26

4:00PM † Richard & Marie Barkel by Ray & Kathy Maka.....MI  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:00 PM—3:45 PM - St Michael

## Sunday July 27

8:30AM † Paula Racziewicz-Kelly by Pam Racziewicz.....MI  
 10:30AM † Chuck Klein by M/M Larry Antcliff.....MA

## Monday July 28 No Mass

## Tuesday July 29

12:00PM † Matt Potts by Knights of Columbus #11581.....MA  
 Adoration begins after Mass until 3:30pm  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 12:30-1:30PM - St. Mary

## Wednesday July 30

12:00PM † Becky Schmidt by Larry & Diane VanDussen .....MI  
 Adoration begins after Mass until 3:30pm  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 12:30-1:30PM - St. Michael

## Thursday July 31

12:00M † Jim Potts by the Kutchin Family.....MA  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 12:30-1:30PM - St. Mary

## Friday August 1

12:00PM † Jamie Wright by Joe Hitchings .....MI  
 Adoration begins after Mass until 3:30pm  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 12:30-1:30PM - St. Michael

## Saturday August 2

4:00PM † S.J. Hecksel by Ray & Kathy Maka.....MI  
 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:00 PM—3:45 PM - St Michael

## Sunday August 3

8:30AM † Sherry Maslowski by Jeff & Denise Parish.....MI  
 10:30AM † Steven Frantz by M/M Gary Karr.....MA

MA=St. Mary MI=St. Michael's



### Scripture Readings for the Week of July 27, 2025

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Sunday    | Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time<br>Gn 18:20-32; Ps 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-7, 7-8; Col 2:12-14; Lk 11:1-13   |
| Monday    | Ex 32:15-24, 30-34; Ps 106:19-20, 21-22, 23; Mt 13:31-35   |
| Tuesday   | Memorial of Saints Martha, Mary and Lazarus<br>Ex 33:7-11; 34:5b-9, 28; Ps 103:6-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13; Jn 11:19-27 or Lk 10:38-42              |
| Wednesday | Ex 34:29-35; Ps 99:5, 6, 7, 9; Mt 13:44-46   |
| Thursday  | Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Priest<br>Ex 40:16-21, 34-38; Ps 84:3, 4, 5-6a and 8a, 11; Mt 13:47-53                                   |
| Friday    | Memorial of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, Bishop and Doctor of the Church<br>Lv 23:1, 4-11, 15-16, 27, 34b-37; Ps 81:3-4, 5-6, 10-11ab; Mt 13:54-58 |
| Saturday  | Lv 25: 1, 8-17; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 7-8; Mt 14:1-12  |
| Sunday    | Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time<br>Eccl 1:2; 2:21-23; Ps 90:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14 and 17; Col 3:1-5, 9-11; Lk 12:13-21                        |

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## St. Michael's Liturgical Ministers

|                       | Aug 2—4:00PM             | Aug 3 —8:30AM   |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Altar Servers         | Dylan Ranney<br>NEED ONE | Aiden Rogers<br>Melena Lindberg   |
| Eucharistic Ministers | NEED TWO                 | Sharon Carlson<br>Amber Nelson<br>Mary Guilbault<br>Jennifer DeMull<br>Joe Hitchings<br>Greg Helsen<br>NEED ONE |
| Lector                | Mark Phillips            | Rob Guilbault   |
| Sacristan             | Jane Vitunskas           | Jane Vitunskas  |
| Ushers                | Ray Maka<br>NEED ONE     | Calvin Lindberg<br>Jim Ponshair<br>Peter Nielsen<br>NEED ONE  |
| Music                 | Craig Bleckley           | Craig Bleckley  |

## St. Mary's Liturgical Ministers

|                | August 3 —10:30AM  |
|----------------|--|
| Sacristan      | Need one   |
| Altar Servers  | Sela Ricord<br>Ty Ricord<br>Sadie Earle                          |
| Precious Body  | Deacon Tom<br>Mary Kirkwood<br>Margie Jirous                     |
| Precious Blood | June Stevenson<br>Becky Warners<br>Christina Withers<br>Need One |
| Hospitality    | Need   |
| Lector         | Geary Farrell  |
| Music          | Bernie Stanko  |

### Pray for Vocations

O God,

hear our prayer  
and let our cry come to You.  
Bless the Diocese of Grand Rapids  
with many vocations to the  
priesthood, diaconate,  
and religious life.

Give Your sons and daughters  
the confidence to  
accept Your call,  
and the love to follow always  
in the footsteps of  
Your beloved Son  
with courage and dedication  
to Your will.

Amen.

# Cluster News and Community News and Events

## Catholic Service Appeal - 2025

Thank you for your gifts to 2025 Catholic Services Appeal! Your generous support funds essential diocesan ministries that strengthen us in Christ. Every gift, regardless of the amount, is important in this effort. Our parish goal for 2025 is: Thank you for your stewardship!

### St Mary

CSA 2025 Pledge Goal: \$50,516.00  
 Total Pledges Made: \$46,855.00 (93%)  
 Balance: \$3,661.00  
 Participation: 96 of 260 Active - Households (37%)

### St Michael

CSA 2025 Pledge Goal: \$52,297.00  
 Total Pledges Made: \$ 33,160.00 (63%)  
 Balance: \$19,137.00  
 Participation: 82 of 255 - Active Households (32%)  
 Totals as of July 21, 2025

*Please keep in mind that any amount raised over our goal is returned 100% to the parish. Please continue to pray for the success of this important effort.*



## Fr Mike's Musings



As many are aware, I have been dealing with a relatively minor foot injury over the past few weeks. Despite careful treatment the wound is not healing as quickly as hoped. Being on my feet for long periods has put great pressure on the wound, not allowing for proper closure and healing. So, I have determined that a more direct method of treatment will be employed to prevent the possible onset of something more serious and debilitating.

On August 4<sup>th</sup> I will be fitted with a semi-permanent cast and a flexible aluminum brace. This treatment is designed to relieve excess pressure on the wound while allowing for weekly removal and replacement of the cast for debriding and medicating the wound itself. This system is anticipated to be in place over the course of four weeks, but no more than six if successful. This will encompass the whole month of August. The cast and brace frame on my right foot will prevent me from driving, and I will be reliant on volunteer drivers in both parishes for transportation to and from medical appointments and the weekend liturgies.

As a matter of course in keeping with medical directives to keep off my foot as much as possible and the inability to secure frequent transportation, I have decided to limit my activity for the month of August to presiding at the weekend liturgies at St. Michael and St. Mary. Weekday Masses will be replaced with 'Word and Communion' services conducted by Deacon Tom, who will also be servicing the Catholic communities at the nursing care facilities, in cooperation with Gary Karr, which are under our parishes pastoral care. Confessions at both parishes will be suspended at this time. For those who have requested intentions for loved ones during the week, these will still be honored and pronounced in the 'General Intercessions' during the 'Word and Communion' services. Because they will not be offered during the celebration of Mass, it does not diminish the intention at all as they are being pronounced to allow for the whole of the parish community to remember and offer prayers on behalf of the intended.

This situation is only temporary and is being done at this time to ensure that I can be up and moving at full capacity before the start of the school year and the beginnings of the fuller liturgical activities of the autumn and winter months. Volunteer drivers may still be needed for Saturday and Sunday. If you can and are willing to lend a hand (or in this case, a foot) please contact:

Cathie at St. Mary, Monday-Thursday 9:00-4:30 (11:30 Wednesday), 616-677-3934

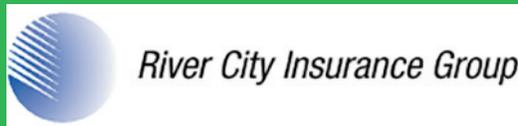
Beki at St. Michael, Monday-Wednesday & Friday 9:00-4:00, 616-384-4026

## Meal Train for Fr Mike

We have created a Meal Train to help Fr Mike while he is home recuperating. Visit this link <https://mealtrain.com/631558> or scan the QR Code: to get all of the details.

Please sign up: 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 rectory. Please have meal fully cooked in a microwaveable container.

(Fr Mike does not use his oven) The container will be cleaned and returned to the church community room for you to pick up. Meals can be dropped off at the rectory on the covered front porch. There will be a tote to place the meal in. (if the 4-5PM drop off time does not work for you, please call the parish office to make other drop off arrangements that are more convenient for you. THANK YOU.

**Bulletin Sponsor of the Week**

## Women's Book Club- DATE CHANGE

All Ladies of St. Mary's Catholic Church - Marne and St. Michael's Church - Coopersville are welcome!

**TUESDAYS 10:00 AM in the St Mary Community Room.**

*It is not too late to join* For More Info please contact Mary Guilbault 810.397.4461

**July 27, 2025 ~ The 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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

# St. Mary's Parish News

## St Mary Faith Formation

**Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLW):**  
**Pre-School thru 2nd Grade During 10:30 AM Mass.**  
 CLW is on Summer break.

This is the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time. In Luke 11:1-13, Jesus' disciples ask him to teach them to pray, similar to how John the Baptist taught his disciples. Jesus provides a model prayer that begins with "Father," highlighting a personal relationship with God, and includes petitions for God's name to be hallowed, God's kingdom to come, daily bread, forgiveness, and deliverance from temptation. This is also known as the perfect prayer.

**1st-7th Grade Faith Formation Classes -**  
**Wednesdays at Hall / 6:00- 7:30pm**

**8th Grade - Confirmation Classes -**  
**Wednesdays at Hall / 6:00- 7:30pm**



Faith Formation classes will be on break until the fall. **Registration is now open for the 2025/2026 school year.** Forms are available online or in the Narthex. **Register ONLINE HERE:** <https://www.saintmarysmarne.org/religious-education-elementary>

Classes resume in September. We are working on class lists and ordering books and supplies. To help us get an accurate number of students, please take a minute and register your child(ren) today.

**For more information** or any questions on any of these programs Please contact Debbie Veneklas at [dre@saintmarysmarne.org](mailto:dre@saintmarysmarne.org) or 616.677.3934

## VBS News

We had a AWESOME week this year at VBS! The enthusiasm and faithful community of the kids and volunteers were great. This past week the students embarked on an exciting journey through the life of Christ. The children had a fun time learning and celebrating The Liturgical Seasons. This years VBS Chores For Change raised \$372.16 for Our Lady of Fatima Guild. The funds will go toward their annual school supply drive. Great job students! Thank you to all of our VBS'S who raised the money through chores. Thanks to all who helped set up and to the station leaders, crew leaders, kitchen crew, and the many behind-the-scenes volunteers who helped wherever they were needed throughout the week! A special Thank You to everyone who donated items to this program. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you!  
 Cindy Lindberg & Debbie Veneklas



## Knights of Columbus #11581 News

How to become a Knight: You can enroll in the Knights of Columbus immediately as an "Online Member" by scanning the QR Code. Once you complete and submit the form on that page a local council will contact you. For additional Information or to learn more about what the Knights do, Contact Grand Knight: Bruce Kamp [b.kamp@charter.net](mailto:b.kamp@charter.net) / Phone 616-780-4941



### Upcoming Blood Drive & Community Breakfast

**Pre-Register here:**

**Oct 12**

[https://donateblood.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/11598498](https://donateblood.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/11598498)



### Cor- Prayer, Formation & Fraternity for Men

is open to all men of our parish cluster, not just knights. If you have any questions, please reach out to Robert L at 616.292.5964

**Upcoming COR Dates: July 26, Aug 9, 23-7AM - Community Room**

**Knight Person of the Month- July: Carl Spence**

**Knight Family of the Month- July: The Todd Davis Family**

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!



## Funeral Luncheon Ministry

Sadly, after 2 years of passionately leading up the funeral luncheons, Kelly Spence has given us notice that she will be stepping down from that role. Kelly and her crew of volunteers not only prepared and served a wonderful lunch, but they also provided much needed love, support and empathy to the grieving families. We have greatly appreciated her dedication to providing luncheons to our parish families in their times of need. With that being said, and after some brainstorming with Fr Mike, We will be making a few changes to the Funeral Luncheon Ministry.. We invite you to attend an informal meeting to discuss our ideas for the future of this ministry. We would love to hear your feedback.. Please join us: Tuesday. July 29 at 11AM.. (stay for 12PM Mass after the meeting if you are able)

## School Supply Drive

Our Lady of Fatima Guild is hosting their annual school supply drive. Donations of backpacks, lunch boxes, pencils, notebooks, markers, and other school supplies would be appreciated. *Donations will be collected July 20 through Aug 10.* There will be a box in the Narthex to place your donations.



## Save the Date Parish Picnic - September 7

**Volunteer - Informational Meeting**  
**August 19 - 6 PM**  
 Church Community Room



## Giving Back to God

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>Mass: Attendance 7/20- 10:30AM:</b> | <b>139</b>       |
| Adult Contributions                    | \$2871.15        |
| Children Contributions                 | \$3.49           |
| Loose Contributions                    | \$170.00         |
| Capital Improvement                    | \$10.00          |
| Online Giving                          | \$1345.00        |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>\$4399.64</b> |
| Weekly Offertory Needed for Budget     | \$5417.89        |
| Offertory-YTD Budget vs YTD-Actual     | +\$2138.39       |

**Thank you** for your continued support and generosity! To donate now, open your phone camera, scan the QR code and follow instructions.



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

## St. Michael's Parish News

**Scrip News**— Thank you to the 7 families who purchased Scrip this week. Our total profit was \$51.04. Fr. Mike has requested a new line item for Scrip. You can now have your profit go toward the purchase of new hymnals.



### 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, Marvin Hecksel, Payton Patterson, Pat Harlett, the victims of abortion, & the men and women in the military.

## St. Michael's Faith Formation

**Faith Formation Registration** school year 2025-2026: Attention families with children ages 3 through grades 12. You can find registration forms on the parish website and forms are also located in the church narthex.



### Children's Liturgy of the Word:

We are currently on Summer Break. We will see you in September. This Sunday's Gospel, focuses on Jesus teaching his disciples how to pray, emphasizing the importance of persistence and trust in God's provision and goodness. The passage includes the Lord's Prayer (a shorter version than in Matthew), a parable about asking for bread at midnight, and Jesus' assurance that God, as a loving Father, will give good gifts, especially the Holy Spirit, to those who ask.

**Elementary Faith Formation:** The elementary program is for students in grades 1-5. We meet on Wednesday from 6:00- 7:30 pm. Class will resume on September 18.

**Middle School Faith Formation:** Grades 6, 7 and 8 meet on Sundays from 9:45-11:15am. The 8th Grade students will also receive Confirmation Preparation. Our programs are on Summer break. Class will resume on Sept. 28.

## St. Michael's Catholic Church

### 2025 Vacation Bible School

Date: Monday, July 28 – Thursday, July 31

Time: 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.



### 2025 Vacation Bible School: Explore mountains of fun!

This year we will guide children through an engaging journey of faith, focusing on the theme of friendship with God amidst the beauty of Alaska's wilderness.

It's hard to find your way in a world gone wild. But we have Jesus—our "True North!" Together, let's give kids a rock-solid foundation and point them to Jesus - their unmovable, unshakable friend forever!

Registration forms are in the narthex and on parish website. Many volunteers are needed! This is a great way to help our parish and get involved. If interested, please contact Debbie Veneklas with any questions. (616) 384-4026.



## St. Michael's Sanctuary Lamp

for +Kathie Poelma  
by the Poelma Family

## Festival News

**Come one, come all!** Our Parish Festival is August 24, 2025! We will have a large raffle, chicken dinner, country store, mini-affle, kids' tent, grocery wheel . . . something for all ages! We will need many volunteers to help out. Look for sign-up sheets in the glass hallway!!

**Large Raffle:** Raffle tickets will be available after Masses. We are asking that each family try to sell at least 2 packets. If you would like to buy some from the people handing them out, you may.

**Mini Raffle:** You may bring donated items into the office during regular hours. Think of how you can donate— a service (babysitting, baked goods once a month, etc), experiences (zoo, museums, etc), crafts that you have made, etc. If you would like to donate money for the committee to purchase items, please do so by August 17.

**Kitchen:** In need of donations — 2 large decaf canisters of coffee; 2 large regular canisters of coffee; 1 jug of bleach; 1 large bottle of dish soap.

**Country Store:** The following is meant to be suggestions only: any and all baked goods, canned preserves, pickles, fruits, homemade jewelry, wood work, books, produce and herbs from your garden, honey, homemade soap. If you aren't sure it is appropriate for the Country Store, please call Mary Turbessi 231-865-3468 or Cindy Lindberg.

**Beverage/Snack Tent:** Please call or text Kelli Ferguson at (616) 437-5194 to donate pop, water, chips or money to purchase these items.

**Pie Collections:** We will take a special collection for pies on August 3 and August 10. Please contact our co-chairs, Cindy Lindberg (616) 822-1213 or Cindy Bleckley (616) 460-2004 with any questions.

\*\*\*Save your paper and plastic grocery bags. Please place them in the container in the glass hallway.

The next festival meeting will be August 5, 2025 at 6:00 in the family center, for all chairpeople and anyone wanting to attend.

## Giving Back to God

July 19/20 2025

|                                       |                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Mass: Attendance</b> 7/19– 4:00PM: | 88                |
| <b>Mass: Attendance</b> 7/20 8:30AM:  | 127               |
| Adult Envelopes                       | \$6,636.00        |
| Loose Cash                            | \$234.00          |
| Children's Envelopes                  | \$27.50           |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>\$6,897.50</b> |
| Building Fund                         | \$30.00           |
| Weekly Offertory Needed for Budget    | \$5,153.06        |
| Offertory-YTD Budget vs YTD Actual    | +\$5,075.00       |

Thank you for your continued support!

July 27, 2025 ~ The 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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# Baptism Makes Us Co-Workers with Christ

The Jews were remarkable memorizers. If the words of the Our Father are different in Matthew (6:9-13) and Luke (11:2-4), it is not by mistake. It means that when Jesus was asked to “teach us to pray” he did not intend to give us the “right words” to say to God. Nor did he teach a method of prayer, such as meditation. What Jesus taught was the foundation of all prayer, the one thing that makes us able to grow in prayer: he taught us a set of priorities.

The secret of Jesus’ own prayer was not in the words he said or the method he used. It was in the priorities of his heart. The Our Father reveals to us the priorities of Jesus’ own heart, and he tells us, “If you want to pray like me, desire like me. Let my priorities be your own.” What priorities does the Our Father reveal?

The very first desire Jesus expresses in this prayer was the burning desire of his life: the desire that the Father be known and loved, appreciated and enjoyed for what he really is. This is what Jesus lived and breathed for; it was the reason he came to earth. “Hallowed be thy name.”

His second all-consuming desire was “Your kingdom come!” he wanted to see all of creation brought into harmony with God’s will and so into harmony with itself (see Ephesians 1:9-10).

Father Raymond Brown explains the whole Our Father as a prayer for the coming of the Kingdom, a looking forward with desire to the final accomplishment of everything Christ came to do. (He says that “daily bread” is better translated as “bread of tomorrow,” meaning the bread of the heavenly banquet; reference and explanation are given in my book, *Make Me a Sabbath of Your Heart*, p. 109.)

Do you want to know how far you have grown into identification with Christ? Into conformity with his heart? Ask yourself if now, at this stage in your life, you can say that the one thing you want more than anything else—for yourself, for your family, for the world—is just that everyone should know and love God (hallowed be...) and that his kingdom, his life-giving rule, should be established over every area and activity of human life,

JULY 27, 2025

17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Genesis 18:20-32; Colossians 2:12-14;  
Luke 11:1-13

including your own (thy kingdom...thy will...).

Do you long for complete, irreversible union with Jesus Christ (Give us...bread)? For total reconciliation with him and with anyone else from whom you are in the slightest way estranged (forgive us...)? Is the one thing you want to avoid more than anything else separation from God through sin (and lead us not...)?

If you can identify with these desires, you are experiencing the growth that has taken place in you since your Baptism—and it is a growth into your Baptism. It is growth into that identification with Jesus Christ that was given to you in Baptism. What Baptism gives is new life (and our identification with Jesus is a sharing in his life). Therefore, like birth, Baptism is not an end but a beginning. It gives life and launches us into growth toward the fullness of life. Baptism makes us one with Jesus and launches us toward perfect union of mind and will and heart with him. The Our Father expresses what this perfect union is. When our hearts are in perfect conformity with the priority of desires expressed in this prayer, we will be able to pray like Jesus because we will be in perfect conformity with his heart.

To live our Baptism, then, is to grow into perfect conformity with the desires of Jesus Christ. And his desires are expressed in a prayer for the perfect accomplishment of his mission. We grow into our Baptism as we grow into total identification with the mission of Jesus Christ on earth. Our life is mission. His mission is our life. To be Jesus is to be Church. To be Church is to be sent. Baptism is a sending.



## REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

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### Seventeenth Week of the Year

*Pray daily: Lord Jesus, you came to earth burning with desire. You longed to bring to the world the knowledge of your Father, and to bring to your Father the love of the whole human race. Make me one with you in heart and mind and mission. Amen.*

**Monday:** Matthew 13:31-35: Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened." What effect do you have on those around you? Are you like yeast? Do you cause the ideals of all to rise?

**Tuesday:** Matthew 13:35-43: "He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil." What kind of seeds do you sow in the hearts of all those you live and work with? Do you see bad seed being sown? Do you try to counteract it?

**Wednesday:** Matthew 13:44-46: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." How much do you appreciate the gift of grace, of sharing in the divine life of God? Is it a constant joy to you? Are you always trying to share it with others?

**Thursday:** Matthew 13:47-53: "Every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old." How much of your Christian inheritance are you able to share with others? How much of the classic writings of the saints and doctors of the Church have you read? How familiar are you with the Vatican II documents and the great encyclicals of recent popes?

**Friday:** Matthew 13:54-58: Jesus came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, "Where did this man get

this wisdom and these deeds of power?" What do you teach those you live and work with? Would any be astounded to know you are familiar with the Bible? Or that you are a Christian? What reveals your devotion to God?

**Saturday:** Matthew 14:1-12: Herod had arrested John and put him in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, for John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." Have you ever aroused hostility in anyone because of your efforts to extend the reign of God over every area of human life in which you are involved? Was it because you did not use the respectful, peaceful means of Jesus, or just because someone resented being faced with truth and goodness?

## LIVING THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

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**As Christian:** Each day this week pray the Our Father slowly, thinking of yourself as praying with the voice of Christ and asking how close you come to feeling about each petition as he does.

**As Disciple:** Read Vatican II's document on the Church ("Lumen Gentium"), chapter 4, on the spirituality and mission of the laity. Or read the treatment of the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2759 ff.

**As Prophet:** Each day when you dress, put on something, or put something in your pocket or purse which is one of the "tools of your trade" as a Christian. Take something that tells you that you are sent out by Jesus to do a job.

**As Priest:** During the eucharistic celebration, consciously unite yourself with the desires of Christ and the Church expressed in all the Mass prayers. Do it with the specific intention of growing into total conformity with the mind and heart of Christ.

**As King:** Wherever you are, ask yourself whether the reality of the Father is being respected and appreciated, whether the reign of Christ is being advanced, whether God's will is being done. Work toward whatever changes are called for.

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