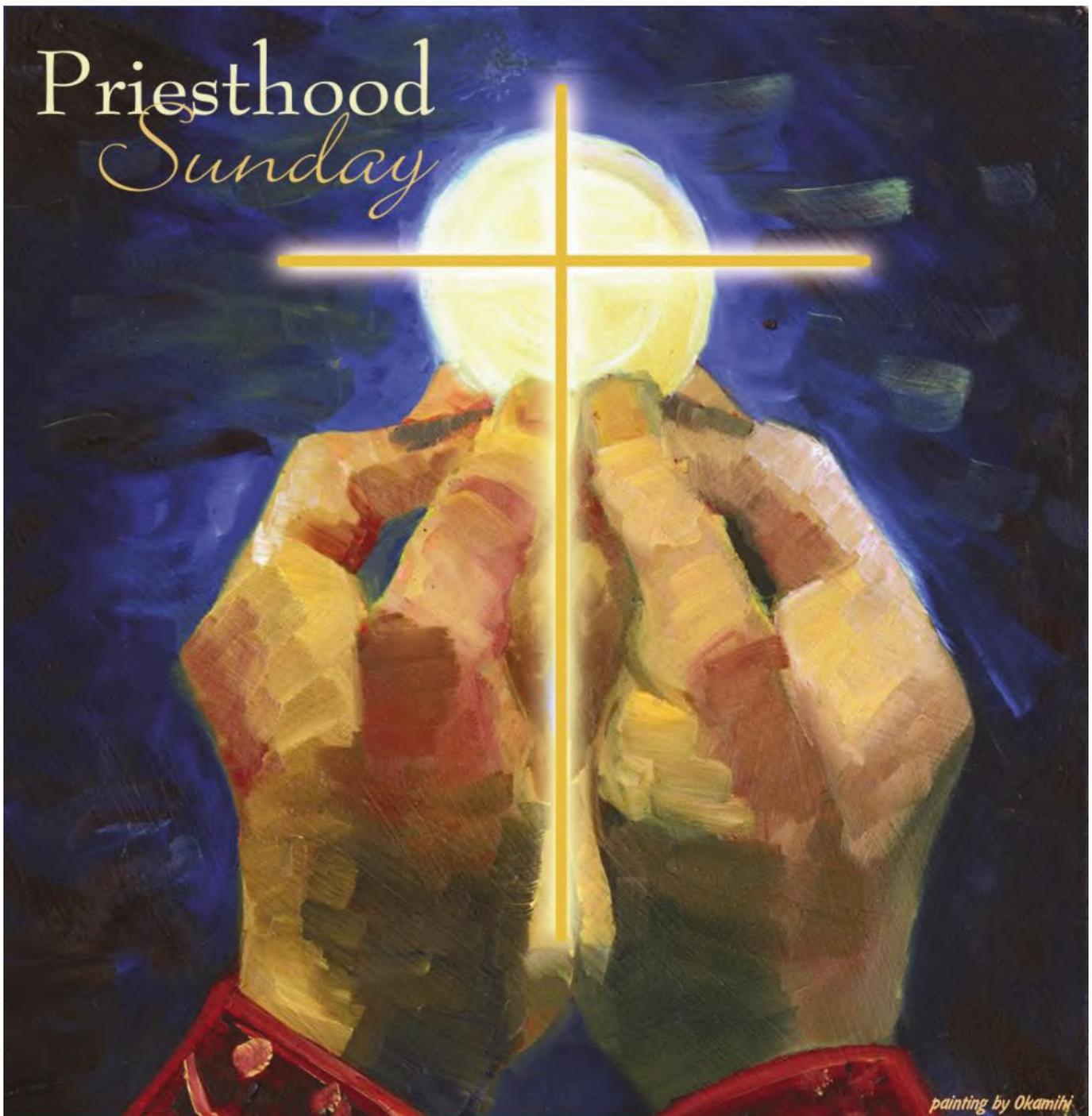


St. Thomas Aquinas Church

5376 State Street • Saginaw, MI 48603
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Priesthood
Sunday

painting by Okamihj

How can I repay the Lord for all the good done for me?
I will raise the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.
Lord, I am your servant.

Father Rick's Reflections . . .

"But he's not one of us!" This is the cry of the disciples, but it is the cry that can be raised in many contexts – from bullying on the school playground to that in much more serious social, political, and religious arenas. What about these cryers today – migrants will take our jobs, asylum seekers will threaten our security, community housing in our street for people with disabilities will lower our property values, ecumenism and contact with other religions will dilute our faith. Often the people who hold these views consider that they have a monopoly on wisdom and insight.

In our gospel today, we hear this same exclusion spoken from the midst of the Twelve. John is their spokesman, informing Jesus that a man who *"does not follow us"* is *"driving out demons in your name."* The real issue from John's point of view is that this man is *"not following the Twelve!"* They tried to stop him, apparently unsuccessfully, since they make an implicit appeal to Jesus to do something about it. Jesus responds to John's indignation by telling him that they should see such a person not as a competitor but as a companion along the way, even if he is not physically traveling with the Twelve, because *"whoever is not against us is for us."* Work for the kingdom is not to be the jealously guarded preserve only of the disciples who are physically accompanying him.

Jesus expands on what being *"with"* him means. In a land where the availability of water can mean the difference between life and death, offering someone a cup of water symbolizes the simple, but generous hospitality that should characterize Christian disciples, for doing this to another is doing it to Christ. Those who are aiming to be *"the biggest and the best,"* even religiously, can too easily overlook or disparage the service of the *"little ones"* of great faith – the behind-the-scenes workers in a parish; those who seem to have the gift of spontaneously positive response to everyday relationships and crises; the people who welcome demands on their

time without fuss and with unfailing generosity. *"Little ones"* may also refer to those who are young in faith, new members of the Christian community. As a parish, how hospitable have we continued to be toward those who were baptized at Easter, or have we forgotten them and the drama of the Great Night? How inclusive are our attitudes to people who are entering from surprising – and even from what some *"established"* Christians might consider unwelcome and scandalous – quarters or lifestyles?

Strong feelings evoke strong language, and the Marcan Jesus uses vivid images to heighten the impact of his words about the sin and scandal of those who are a stumbling block to the faith of others. Rather than concentrate on criticizing those who we consider *"outsiders,"* disciples need to be self-critical. The harsh words about self-mutilation are to be taken figuratively, not literally. It would be better, says Jesus, to go through life physically handicapped than to give scandal by our sinfulness and so become spiritually maimed and unfit for the kingdom of God. The final image of *"Gehenna"* (or "hell") refers to what was a valley just outside the city of Jerusalem and once the site of Canaanite human sacrifice. The Israelites had converted this into a garbage dump where the stench of burning refuse became a constant reminder of corruption and a symbol of punishment. The alternative is the life of the new heavens and the new earth, the memory from the prophet Isaiah probably lies behind this verse. We prayed in our Psalm today, it is only trusting in God's guidance as do the simple, those who are wise enough to know their own frailty, can live wisely, truthfully, and reverently.

Every year since Bishop Gruss has been our bishop, the priests of the Diocese of Saginaw gather with him for some time of intellectual enrichment and recreation. This year, we will gather at Shanty Creek Resort from Sunday through Wednesday, September 29. Our presenters will be from the Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI) to help us unpack the surveys that were completed by parishioners and priests last year. Please keep us in your prayers. Because Fr Kevin and I will be up north, there will be no morning Masses on Tuesday and Wednesday. Also, if there is an emergency, please contact the parish

office. There are some of our senior priests that are covering for emergencies.

As we continue to move out of COVID, we are beginning to restore some of our previous practices. Starting this Friday, October 1, we will have the Church open on weekdays from 8:00 am until about 3:00 pm for people to make a visit and pray before the Blessed Sacrament. If you want to experience Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, I encourage you to visit the Cathedral on Thursdays. They have Exposition from 9:00 am until 8:00 pm. We found it challenging to get 20-30 people who would commit to be scheduled on Wednesdays here, so we have decided to just have the church open during the weekdays.

Now to some of the liturgical ministries. We are going to be restoring our four stations for distribution of Communion at the weekend Masses in a couple of weeks. This means that we are going to need our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to step up to minister at each Mass. We will need three EMHCs for each Mass. Lectors, we will be adding a second lector at the Masses as well. Altar Servers, we are going to be scheduling training sessions soon so we can start that ministry as well. If any student is interested in being an altar server, 5th grade and older, please contact the parish office. Ushers, we are going to need more ushers, especially for the 11:00 am Mass. This ministry is open to our young people, 6th grade and older, both men and women. If you would like to be an usher, contact the parish office. In terms of our music ministry, we need to revisit the COVID protocols to see what is permitted.

After a week of monsoons, I hope that we get some nice fall weather for us to enjoy God's beauty around us. Again, keep us in prayer this week at our Assembly. Have a blessed week!

Fr. Rick



In Our Parish

Tuesday, September 28
NO MASS

Wednesday, September 29
MO MASS

Thursday, September 30
8:30 AM Mass w/ NCCE

Friday, October 1
8:30 AM First Friday Mass

Saturday, October 2
4:00 PM Mass

Sunday, October 3
8:30 AM Mass
11:00 AM Mass

Private Prayer Time

Beginning Friday, October 1, the church will be opened from 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM for individual prayers.



Sympathy

We ask for your prayers for the family and friends of **Richard Prezzato**. A committal service will take place on October 2 at St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Hemlock, Michigan.

May his family and friends experience God's consoling presence during this time of loss.

Mission Statement

We, the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Community, united by our love for God and one another, are called to evangelize through worship, service, life-long learning, promoting God's truth, peace and justice, and respecting all creation.



Scripture Readings

Readings for the Week of September 26, 2021

| | |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday | Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Nm 11:25-29; Ps 19:8, 10, 12-13, 14; Jas 5:1-6; Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48 |
| Monday | Memorial of Saint Vincent de Paul, Priest Zec 8:1-8; Ps 102:16-18, 19-21, 29 and 22-23; Lk 9:46-50 |
| Tuesday | Saint Wenceslaus, Martyr; Saint Lawrence Ruiz and Companions, Martyrs Zec 8:20-23; Ps 87:1b-3, 4-5, 6-7; Lk 9:51-56 |
| Wednesday | Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels Dn 7:9-10, 13-14 or Rv 12:7-12a; Ps 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 4-5; Jn 1:47-51 |
| Thursday | Memorial of Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church Neh 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12; Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11; Lk 10:1-12 |
| Friday | Memorial of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Virgin and Doctor of the Church Bar 1:15-22; Ps 79:1b-2, 3-5, 8, 9; Lk 10:13-16 |
| Saturday | Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels Bar 4:5-12, 27-29; Ps 69:33-35, 36-37; Mt 18:1-5, 10 |
| Sunday | Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Gn 2:18-24; Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6; Heb 2:9-11; Mk 10:2-16 or 10:2-12 |

Prayers

Please pray for all who have been commended to our prayer that they will respond to God's healing will, especially:

Aaron
Dennis
Larry S.
Jim & Pat D.
Ethan
Jack
T. Novak & Family
Erin
T.C.
M.H.
Chris Radke
Tyler Martin K.
John W.
Marian Moll
Valarie C.
Allan B.
Gary H.
Rick K.
Jason M.
Harold G.
Pat W.
Al V.
Jake R.
Carol Kirkconnell

And those who are homebound and in assisted/nursing facilities.

We are happy to list names of those who request prayers for one month. The list will be purged again on September 27. Please remember to contact the office 799-2460 ext. 1 when a loved one's name no longer needs inclusion on the prayer list.



Special News

What is the Prayer Line and how does it work?

Prayer Line is basically a calling tree. Calls for prayer intentions are received by the Parish Office during office business hours. Calls begin with the prayer requests and then are continued to all members. You may wish to be a Prayer Leader (team captains) who in turn calls a few Prayer Volunteers (team leaders) who may then call a few Prayer Warriors (volunteers). This process continues until all members of the Prayer Line are notified of the prayer requests. Should you wish to not make any calls a Prayer Warrior would be your best fit.

What is required of a Prayer Line member?

Prayer Line members are requested to remember in their daily prayers the persons or intentions they have been requested to pray for. It is not required that you say a rosary, do a novena, or other special prayers. Just remember in your normal prayers the intentions on the prayer line.

What are the advantages of the Prayer Line?

- 1) All members of the Prayer Line are remembering in their prayers the people for whom prayers were requested in less than 24 hours from the time the request was received by the parish office. This differs from requests placed in the parish bulletin.
- 2) The privacy of the person for whom prayers are requested is maintained. The parish office only forwards to the Prayer Leader the first name and or the last initial of the person for whom prayers were requested or the prayers requested for a special intention.
- 3) We only pray for a prayer request for 7 days. There may be a week or two where a name may be repeated. If continued prayers are required, a return phone call has to be made to the parish office.

Please become a member of the Prayer Line. There are many, many people in need of our prayers, and what better gift could one give than a petition to the Lord to help a family member, friend or neighbor with PRAYER. If you can share your daily prayers with our requests please call the Parish Office 799-2460 ext. 1.

In and Around Our Parish

Prayer and Support

Every two years, the priests of the Diocese of Saginaw gather with Bishop Gruss for some time of intellectual enrichment and recreation. This year, they will gather September 26-29, 2021, at Shanty Creek Resort in Bellaire, MI. Representatives from the Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI) will be our presenters. Please keep them in your prayers.

Contact Info Change

Please notify the Parish Office if you have made changes to your phone number by dropping the landline, updating to a cell phone, or a change of the phone number. Please call the Parish Office or office@stasaginaw.org. Your help is very much appreciated.

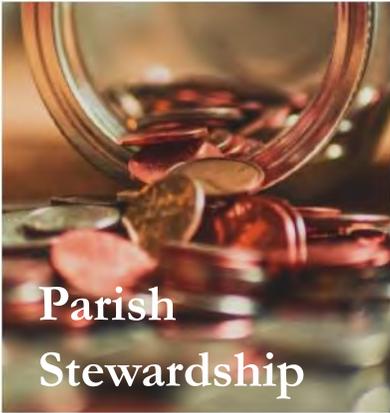
Children's Bulletins

Pick one up to share the Gospel with your children. Puzzles and games each week for ages 3-6 and 7-12. Bulletins are available in the narthex.

Food Program Outreach • East Side Soup Kitchen • October 2 & 3

The food collection for **October 2 & 3** will be for the **EAST SIDE SOUP KITCHEN**. Thank you for your continuing support. ESSK is in need of the following items: #10 cans of Corn, Green Beans, Carrots, and Peas, Peaches, Pears, and Fruit Cocktail; Applesauce, Pork & Beans; Juice/Kool-Aid Pouches, Small Bottled Water, Yams/Sweet Potatoes, Pudding & Fruit Cups any kind of Packaged Cookies and Cooking Spray.

Monetary donations can be sent directly to 940 E. Genesee, Saginaw, MI 48607, checks payable East Side Soup Kitchen.



St. James warns in today's second reading that those who hoard their wealth and live only for themselves will be condemned. But in the Gospel, Jesus assures us that all who give of themselves for His sake will be rewarded.

September 18 & 19, 2021

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Envelopes..... | \$8,744.00 |
| Loose..... | \$667.00 |
| Electronic (ACH)..... | \$5,638.00 |
| Total..... | \$15,049.00 |

Please remember St. Thomas Aquinas in your estate planning.

Sponsor of the Week

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To view the full ad see the back of the bulletin. Be sure to patronize all of our businesses as their generosity allows us to provide the bulletin to you at no cost to the Parish.

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Welcome to Our Parish

If you are a visitor to St. Thomas Aquinas, we want you to know how welcome you are. If you wish to become a member of our parish, please call the parish office.

Parishioner Info: If you are moving, changing phone numbers or need to update family status, kindly notify the parish office.

Parish Staff

Pastor Fr. Richard Bokinskie
rickb@stasaginaw.org

Parochial Vicar Fr. Kevin Wojciechowski
kevinw@stasaginaw.org

Pastoral Associate Sr. Ann deGuise, OSF
annd@stasaginaw.org

Parish Secretary Dawn Drago
dawnd@stasaginaw.org

Bookkeeper Pat Messing
patm@stasaginaw.org

Director of Music Deborah Kraklow
debk@stasaginaw.org

Baptism & Funeral Coordinator & RCIA Director Karen Bartels
starcia@stasaginaw.org

Eucharistic Liturgies

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Saturday..... | 4:00 PM |
| Sunday..... | 9:30 AM |
| <i>(June • July • August)</i> | |
| Tuesday - Thursday..... | 8:30 AM |
| First Friday..... | 8:30 AM |
| <i>(In the event of a funeral on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or First Friday, morning Mass will be cancelled.)</i> | |

Sacrament of Reconciliation

2nd & 4th Saturday 9:00-10:00 AM
(Or by Appointment)

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.)

Anyone seeking information about the Catholic Faith should contact the parish office for more information. Sessions meet from September through Spring.

Baptisms

Baptisms will be scheduled after the required Baptism Preparation Class. Parents are required to be practicing Catholics and attending Mass regularly. Call the parish office to register.

Marriage

Individuals must be registered in the parish at least six months before scheduling a wedding. A wedding date can only be set after meeting with the parish priest.

Care of the Sick • Pastoral Visits

Please notify the parish office when seriously ill at home, in the hospital or a nursing/assisted facility. Also, if you or a loved one has had a hospital stay and are recovering at a rehab facility or moving into an assisted living facility and wish a pastoral visit.

Watch Mass On-line

<https://stasaginaw.org/live-streamed-recorded-masses>

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Readings for the Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time



First Reading: Numbers 11:25-29

The book of Numbers describes the wanderings of the Jewish people in the Sinai Desert. Earlier in the book, Moses had complained to God about the difficulties of governing so many people. In response, God had directed Moses to gather 70 elders around the meeting tent to receive a share in the administrative burdens. Today's passage picks it up from there.

Second Reading: James 5:1-6

Today we conclude our series of five readings from the letter of James. A major concern in this letter is social justice. Today, the author delivers a blistering attack, reminiscent of some of the Old Testament prophets.

Gospel Reflection: Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

Jesus is critical of several obstacles that limit the Spirit of God from working. His disciples try to stop someone outside of their company from invoking Jesus' name to cast out a demon. Jesus says do not stop him. Secondly, Jesus' command to receive the little ones (the insignificant members of the community) underlines the inclusive nature of the kingdom. Everybody belongs. And finally, though Jesus graphically uses the limbs of the physical body to emphasize his point, he advises us to "cut off" that which cuts us off from God.

For your reflection: How do I cooperate with the working of the Spirit of God? How might I be an obstacle?

Family Perspective-by Bud Ozar

The words in today's gospel, "Whoever gives a cup of water in the name of Christ will not lose their reward" hits us at home. As parents we gain our "reward" when we bring water to a frightened child in the middle of the night, or Kool Aid to parched five-year old, or hold ice chips to the fevered lips of a spouse. It is that simple and that sacred. In our homes we give until it hurts "in the name of Christ."

Stewardship Reflections

"Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward." Mark 9:41

We are made in God's image and likeness. We tend to forget this. When you look at others, do you see the face of Jesus in them? When others look at you, do they see the face of Jesus in you? When we realize that all lives matter to God, then gratitude and generosity become easier. Why? Because that's the way we are made! We are one Body of Christ; when one of us is hurting, all of us feel the pain.

Individual Rite of Penance

9:00 AM

Second and Forth Saturdays
of the month

**October 9 • Cancelled
October 23**

Following COVID-19 guidelines:
masks worn at all times and social
distancing.

A reconciliation room is setup in
the church narthex, with one priest
available to celebrate the
sacrament.

While waiting to celebrate the
sacrament, you may either wait in
your vehicles or stand outside
practicing social distancing.



Sept. 26, 2021

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Nm 11:25-29 | Jas 5:1-6 | Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

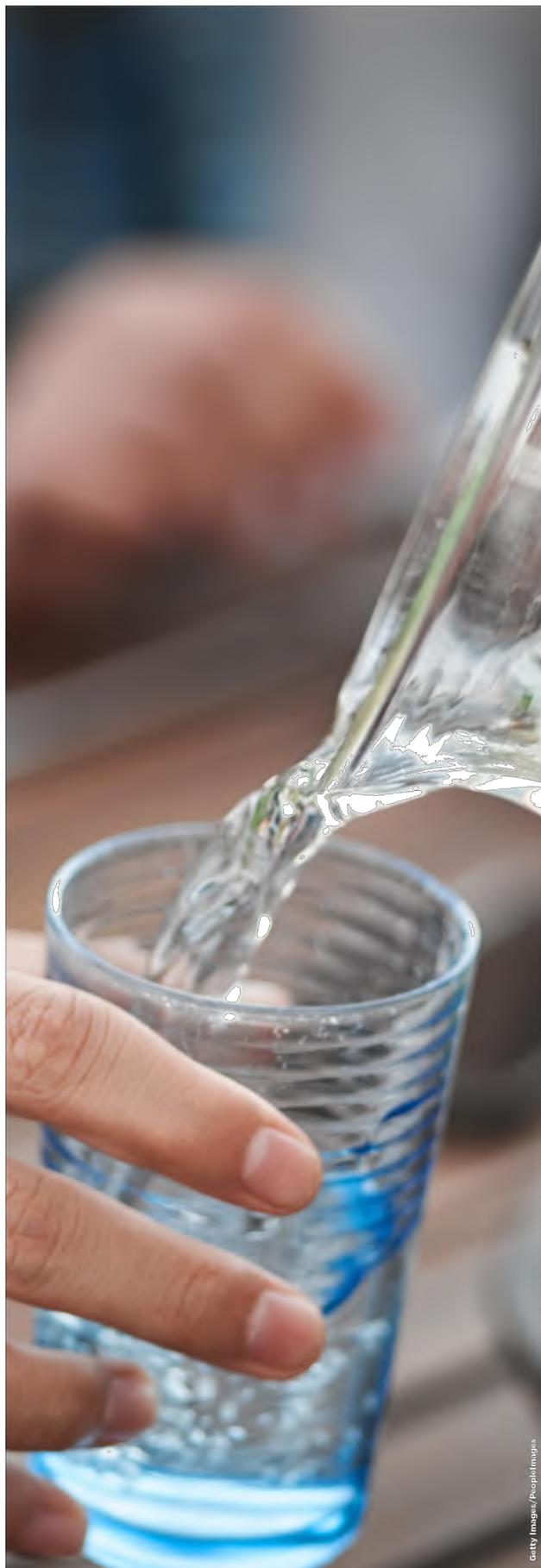
Today's graphic Gospel passage always sounds a bit jarring: "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off." Upon first reading that passage, our response might be, "What?" But upon further reflection, it strikes me that Jesus is challenging us to attend to what *causes* us to sin: the vices we have acquired, the temptations we do not ignore, the sinful thoughts and behaviors we entertain or in which we engage. It is also important to identify where we might be culpable in leading *others* astray. In all of this, Jesus is asking us to be honest with ourselves and to take the necessary steps to "cut" out of our lives the things that lead us away from the Lord, allowing us to move toward him. Lest we get discouraged, we need only remember that we are not alone: We belong to Christ whose word is truth, whose precepts "give joy to the heart," and who tells us "whoever is not against us is for us." Like Moses in the first reading, we can ask that the Spirit descend upon us and give us strength.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Amazing feats we see on TV or read in the news can't help but capture our imagination. Our rich Catholic faith can be a little like that: just take a look at the lives of the saints. That's why I find the other passage in today's Gospel so encouraging. Jesus reminds us that even the smallest things we do matter — actions to help others grow in their faith: "Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward." As the Lord's spirit moves us to be a prophet to others — that is, to perform deeds in his name (mighty or not-so-mighty) — we have the ability to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ in very real and concrete ways. As St. Teresa of Avila said: "Accustom yourself continually to make many acts of love, for they enkindle and melt the soul."

ACTIONS Prepare for the sacrament of reconciliation by asking Jesus to help you identify what causes you to sin or drives a wedge between you and others or between you and God. Then participate in this beautiful sacrament and pray for the grace to make changes.



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 L&D Leo Eigner Family
 Bob & Vi Bloniarczyk
 Garske & Riha Families
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