

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we enter the month of September, we find ourselves beginning a season filled with opportunities for prayer, learning, service, and renewal. At the end of this month, the Polish National Catholic Church will gather in Manchester, New Hampshire, for the XXVII General Synod. I ask you to keep our Prime Bishop, bishops, clergy, lay delegates, and the entire Church in your prayers, that the Holy Spirit may guide our deliberations and strengthen us in our common mission of proclaiming Jesus Christ.



September also brings our celebration of the Solemnity of the Christian Family, a beautiful reminder that the family is a sacred place where faith is first learned, love is practiced, forgiveness is offered, and Christ is welcomed into our daily lives. May we pray especially for the families of All Saints and for families having trouble, separation, or sorrow.

Our School of Christian Living classes will also begin again. What a blessing it is to see our young people growing in their knowledge and love of Christ and His Church. Please encourage them, pray for them, and support those who generously teach and guide them.

With schools beginning another academic year, let us remember all students, teachers, administrators, faculty, and staff. May God grant them wisdom, patience, safety, curiosity, and joy in learning.

September is the month of beginnings. May we begin it together with Christ at the center, prayer in our hearts, and great hope for what God will accomplish among us.

God bless you and your families,

Father Jim

Music at the Gazebo — A Wonderful Summer Evening!



Our first Music at the Gazebo concert, held on Friday, July 31, was a wonderful evening of music, fellowship, and community at All Saints Parish. Our parish grounds came alive as parishioners, families, friends, neighbors, and visitors gathered around the gazebo with their lawn chairs to enjoy a beautiful summer evening together. It was wonderful to see familiar faces as well as new



ones joining us for this special event.

The evening was about much more than music. It was an opportunity to relax, laugh, meet new people, and simply enjoy being together. Events such as this remind us that parish life extends beyond Sunday morning. All Saints is a community of faith, but it is also a family where friendships are formed, neighbors are welcomed, and everyone can find a place to belong.

A special thank-you goes to everyone who helped make the evening possible—from those who planned and prepared the event to those who helped set up, welcomed our guests, and stayed afterward to lend a hand. We are also grateful to everyone who attended and helped create such a warm and enjoyable atmosphere. Your presence made the evening a success.

The July 31 concert demonstrated exactly what we hoped Music at the Gazebo could become: a relaxed, family-friendly gathering where faith, friends, and community come together.

And this is only the beginning! We look forward to offering more Music at the Gazebo events and other opportunities for fellowship in the future. Watch the bulletin, newsletter, and parish announcements for upcoming dates and activities. When the next event is announced, bring your lawn chair, invite your family, call a friend, and perhaps bring along someone who has never visited All Saints before.

Thank you to everyone who helped us fill the lawn with music, friendship, laughter, and community. We look forward to many more wonderful evenings together at All Saints!

A Young Servant at the Altar



On July 5, I had the special joy of having my grandson, Roland, assist at the altar during Holy Mass while he was visiting. It was particularly meaningful because Roland had received his First Holy Communion only a few weeks earlier in June. To see him now serving at the altar and taking another step in the practice of his Catholic faith was certainly a proud moment for his grandfather!

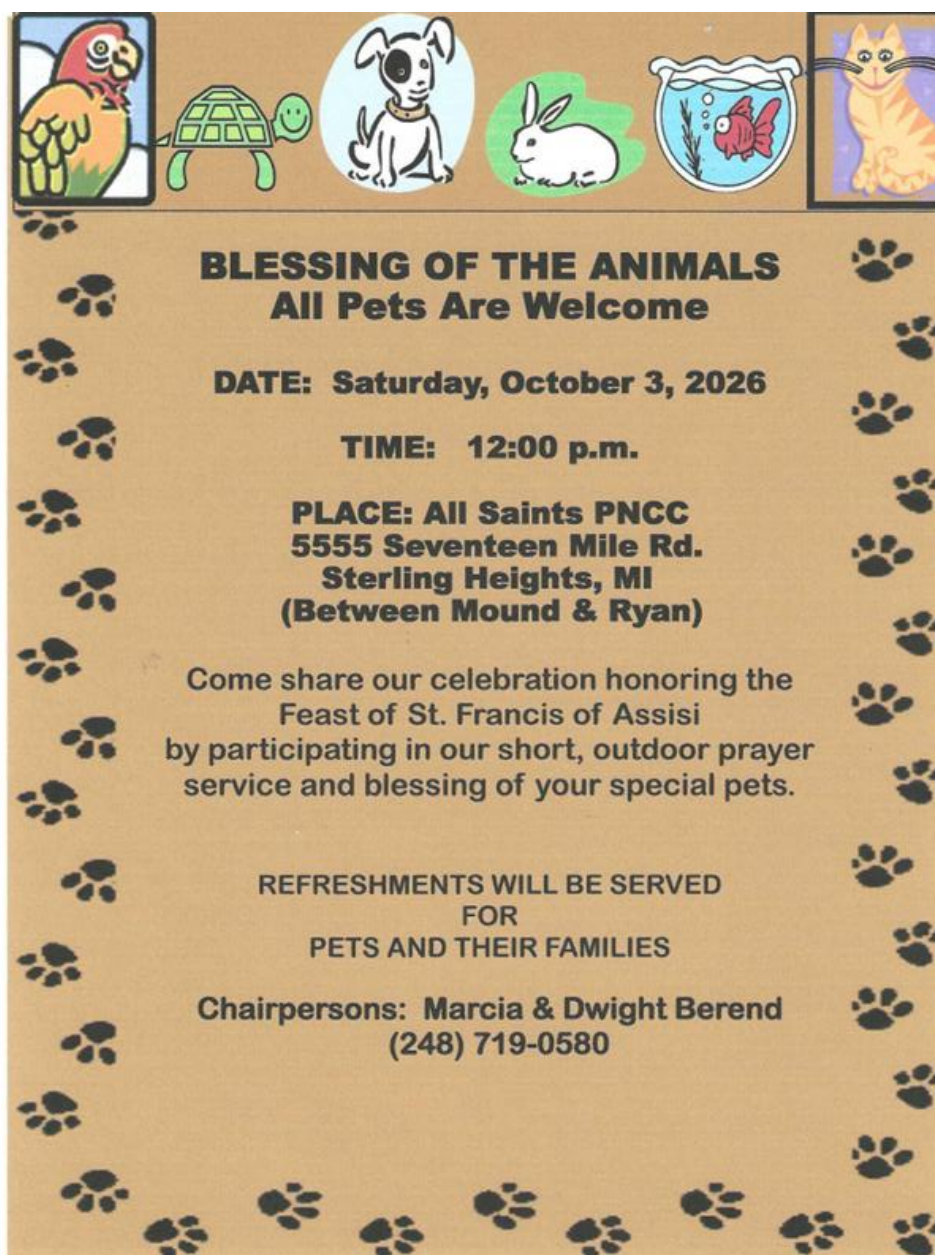
I want to thank everyone at All Saints for the wonderful hospitality, encouragement, and kindness you showed Roland during his visit. From the warm greetings before Mass to the words of encouragement afterward, you helped him feel that he was not simply visiting Grandpa's parish but was welcomed as part of our parish family.

These seemingly small moments are among the beautiful fruits of parish life. When children and young people experience a Church that welcomes them, encourages

their participation, and gives them opportunities to serve, we help plant seeds of faith that can remain with them throughout their lives.

That is one of the many things that makes All Saints such a special place. Thank you for welcoming Roland and helping make his visit and his opportunity to serve at the altar—a wonderful memory for both of us.

Blessing of the Animals: Celebrating God's Creatures



Each year, Christians throughout the world celebrate the tradition of the Blessing of the Animals in connection with the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. It is a joyful occasion that reminds us that God's love and creative care extend throughout all creation.

St. Francis of Assisi, who lived in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is remembered for his extraordinary love of God, his care for the poor, and his deep appreciation for the natural world.

Francis saw creation as a gift from God and recognized animals as fellow creatures

sharing in the goodness of the Creator. Stories from his life describe his gentleness toward animals and his famous preaching to the birds. His example continues to remind Christians that caring for creation is part of living faithfully before God.

The Blessing of the Animals is much more than a celebration of our pets. It is an opportunity to thank God for the companionship, joy, comfort, and even laughter that animals bring into our lives. Anyone who has ever been greeted enthusiastically by a dog, comforted by a cat, entertained by a bird, or simply enjoyed watching animals in nature understands something of this special gift.

Holy Scripture tells us, “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Psalm 24:1). When we bring our pets to be blessed, we acknowledge that they, too, belong to God’s wonderful creation and have been entrusted to our care.

The blessing also reminds us of our responsibility. Animals depend upon us for food, shelter, protection, kindness, and compassionate care. Following the example of St. Francis, we are called to treat all God’s creatures with respect and gratitude.

Whether your companion has fur, feathers, fins, or scales, the Blessing of the Animals is a wonderful opportunity to gather as families, celebrate the beauty of God’s creation, and give thanks for the animals that have found a special place in our homes—and in our hearts.

September Birthdays		October Birthdays	
5	Father Jim	1	Olivia Kotelnicki
7	Raeed Kena	8	John Kotelnicki
	Elaine Ploskonka	14	Vevean Hababa
12	Andrzej Zaczek	16	Mark Cooper
19	Linda Alsakaat	27	Yullia
	Cindy Hill	30	Pat Rabaut-Konrad
21	Carol Szydlowski	October Anniversaries	
	Jennifer Kotelnicki	4	Jennifer/Jeff Kotelnicki
29	Jennifer Tennant	20	Linda Alaskaat/Thabit Dauo
September Anniversaries		30	Marcia/Dwight Berend
19	Carol/Mike Szydlowski		
20	Andrea/John Pharris		

LECTOR SCHEDULE

Proclaiming the Word of God

September 6, 2026 – January 3, 2027

“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it!”
— Luke 11:28

Date	Lector	Date	Lector
SEPTEMBER		November 8	Mike
September 6	Gloria	November 15	Youth
September 13	Mike	November 22	Gloria
September 20	Youth	November 29	Dima
September 27	Jennifer	DECEMBER	
OCTOBER		December 6	Sarah
October 4	Sarah	December 13	Jennifer
October 11	Mike	December 20	Youth
October 18	Youth	December 24	Mike — Midnight Mass
October 25	Jennifer	December 25	Gloria
NOVEMBER		December 27	Dima
November 1	Sarah	JANUARY	
		January 3	Sarah

Friends of Sunday School – FOSS

By Gloria Bawol

September seems to motivate many, not just back to school parents. It always seems to be a time of renewal and change as we look forward to the leaves turning red, orange and yellow. Our FOSS group looks forward to the renewal of our Sunday School program for 2026/27. Religious Education for our youth is crucial. They need to grow in faith, but they also need to understand what they believe. We try to accomplish this through our weekly classes. The first day of Sunday School

is Sunday, September 13th. Plan to attend the Church Picnic that day and share an ice cream sundae with us for dessert.

First Reconciliation and First Communion classes are for children that will be age 8 by 5/30/27. Contact Father Jim if your child is eligible. He will teach the classes.

Confirmation Classes will be taught this year. If your child has not been confirmed and will be age 13 by June 2027, please contact Father Jim if you desire to have your child confirmed. He will teach these classes. Our first class for those currently enrolled is September 15th.

Sunday School is for children and youth age 5-18. Class is from 11:15 – 11:45 each Sunday after Mass. Sunday School and Sacramental classes are **FREE!** Please fill out a registration form located in the church hall or print a copy from this newsletter.

Faith for the Real World is the theme for this year's curriculum. Our Sunday School students will be using Sunday School Lessons for Catholic Teens by Lelia Clement, a Scripture-based program designed to help young people ages 13–19 discover how our Catholic faith speaks directly to the joys, questions, pressures, and decisions they face every day.

The lessons move beyond simply learning facts about the Bible. Students will explore Sacred Scripture, Catholic teaching, the Sacraments, prayer, and the lives of biblical figures while asking an important question: "What does this mean for my life today?"

Throughout the year, our young people will discuss topics that are very much part of their world. They will explore finding their identity and self-worth in Christ rather than in popularity, grades, or social media; dealing with stress, insecurity, and difficult emotions; making good choices when faced with peer pressure; building healthy friendships and relationships; and learning the importance of forgiveness.

Other lessons will address temptation, prayer, discovering God's purpose for our lives, and having the courage to live our faith openly. Through Scripture,

discussion, reflection, and interactive activities, students will be encouraged not only to know what the Church teaches, but to understand why it matters.

Our goal is simple: to help our young people develop a faith that belongs to them: a faith they understand, practice, question, deepen, and carry into everyday life.

Please keep our students and Sunday School teachers in your prayers as we begin this new year of learning and growing together,

Thank you to our teachers this year: Linda A., Gloria B., Mary C., Father Jim P, and Emily R. We are excited to have Emily as one of our teachers on the schedule this year.

Our Back-to-School collection will be different this year. We will give to needy children supported by the organization “Kids in Distress” (KIDS). They need mainly personal hygiene products (but no toothpaste as they have an abundance). Listed below are some examples for your shopping list. *When you give to the poor, it is like lending to the Lord, and the Lord will pay you back.* Proverbs 16:17

- Children’s cleaning products like shampoo, conditioner and lotion
- Mouthwash, deodorant and bar soap
- Feminine care products

Put your donations in the vestibule throughout September. We cannot do this without you. God bless you for your generosity. Thank you, Marianne Markiewicz, for delivering these much-needed supplies.

The next FOSS meeting will be Tuesday, December 1, 2026, at 7:30 PM. You are all welcome to join us for the meeting on ZOOM. You do not have to have children in the Sunday School program to participate in our group. Just let us know so we can send you the ZOOM link.

May you all be motivated, regenerated and energized this fall season and beyond. Learning should never end. Giving with a pure heart should be forever. Thank you all for your generosity.

May we all pray for the youth of the Polish National Catholic Church: our Lord and Savior loved all, but especially the children. Bless and guide all our youth, they will always remain faithful to the teachings of Christ and His Holy Church.

Deconstructed Stuffed Peppers

Servings: 12

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 10–15 minutes

Total Time: 15–20 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 4 bell peppers, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 30 ounces tomato sauce
- 2 tablespoons Italian seasoning
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- 2 cups cooked rice
- 2 tablespoons oil, for sautéing
- Fresh basil, for topping

Instructions



1. Warm approximately 2 tablespoons of oil in a large skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the chopped bell peppers and onion and sauté until they begin to soften and the onion becomes translucent.
2. Add ground beef to the skillet. Break the beef apart with a spoon or spatula and cook until completely browned. Drain excess grease if necessary.
3. Reduce the heat to medium-low. Stir in the tomato sauce, Italian seasoning, salt, black pepper, and cooked rice. Mix thoroughly so that the beef, vegetables, rice, and sauce are evenly combined.
4. Allow the mixture to simmer for approximately 5–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until everything is heated through and the flavors have blended.
5. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary.
6. Remove from the heat and serve immediately. Garnish each serving with fresh basil.

EVERY PARISHIONER HAS A STORY: OUR YOUTH WANT TO HEAR YOURS!

During our first School of Christian Living class, the young people of All Saints will begin a very special project—and everyone in the parish gets to be part of it!

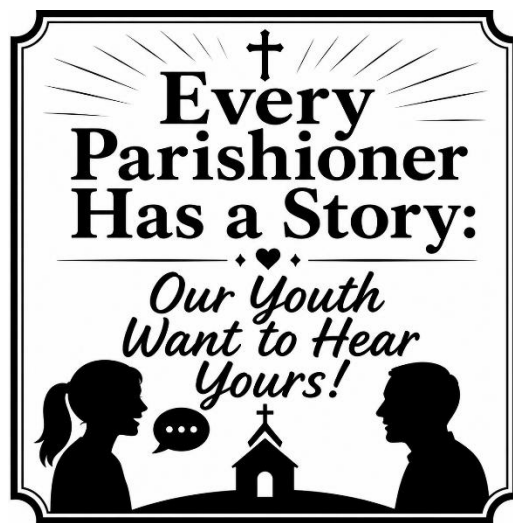
Our youth will become Parish Ambassadors as they learn the importance of listening, communicating, and discovering the faith stories of the people around them. During Coffee Hour, they will interview parishioners about their experiences at All Saints: What brought you here? Why do you stay? What is your favorite memory? How has All Saints strengthened your faith? What has God done in your life through this parish?

So, here is your advance warning: you may be interviewed!

The conversations will be brief, about five to ten minutes and, with permission, recorded so these wonderful stories can become part of the living history of All Saints.

This lesson is about much more than teaching our youth interviewing skills. It is about bringing generations together. Our young people will practice Christian hospitality and learn that faith is passed from one generation to another through relationships, experiences, and stories. And perhaps all of us will learn something along the way.

The Church is more than a building. The Church is people and every parishioner has a story worth hearing!



CALLING ALL GAMERS... AND FUTURE GAMERS!



COULD ALL SAINTS PARISH BECOME HOME TO ONE OF THE FIRST TEAMS IN THE PNCC DIGITAL DISCIPLES E-SPORTS LEAGUE?

Do you enjoy video games? Have you ever wanted to be part of a team? Maybe you've never played competitively but would like to learn.

We're exploring the creation of an All Saints Parish E-Sports Team to compete online with teams from other parishes throughout the Polish National Catholic Church.

This exciting new ministry would use gaming as a way to build friendships, encourage teamwork, develop leadership, and strengthen our faith in a safe, Christian environment.

POTENTIAL GAMES MAY INCLUDE:



ROCKET
LEAGUE



MARIO
KART



MINECRAFT



NINTENDO
SWITCH
SPORTS



EA SPORTS
FC



MLB
THE SHOW



FALL
GUYS



& OTHER
FAMILY-FRIENDLY
GAMES

FAITH.
FELLOWSHIP.
TEAMWORK.
VICTORY.
THROUGH CHRIST.

THIS ISN'T JUST FOR YOUTH!

Parents, young adults, college students, adults, and experienced gamers are all invited to help shape this new ministry.

Whether you're interested in playing, coaching, organizing, streaming matches, or simply learning more, we'd love to hear from you.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

- PLAYERS
- TEAM CAPTAINS
- COACHES & MENTORS
- STREAMING & TECHNOLOGY VOLUNTEERS
- PARENTS AND PARISH SUPPORTERS

This is currently an exploration and planning phase. If there is enough interest, All Saints could become one of the founding parishes in a diocesan league beginning with a pilot season in 2027.



IF THIS SOUNDS EXCITING—OR IF YOU'RE SIMPLY CURIOUS—PLEASE SPEAK WITH **FATHER JIM** AFTER HOLY MASS OR CONTACT THE PARISH OFFICE.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



LET'S DISCOVER HOW FAITH,
FELLOWSHIP, AND FRIENDLY COMPETITION
CAN BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER
IN A WHOLE NEW WAY!





Help Lead the PNCC Digital Disciples E-Sports Ministry

All Saints is exploring an exciting new ministry: the PNCC Digital Disciples E-Sports League, and we are seeking individuals from throughout the Church who are interested in helping lead and develop this endeavor.

We are looking for potential board and leadership team members who understand gaming, e-sports, technology, youth ministry, communications, event planning, or simply have the enthusiasm and vision to help build something new. You do not need to be an expert gamer. We need people willing to bring ideas, energy, leadership, and commitment to the Church and its young people.

The possibilities extend far beyond an e-sports league. Digital Disciples could become a year-round ministry using gaming as a doorway to Christian fellowship, mentorship, leadership development, service, retreats, parish involvement, and greater participation in the life of the PNCC.

For earlier generations, bowling leagues, softball teams, youth conventions, and parish organizations created friendships that lasted a lifetime. Gaming may provide the same doorway for Generation Z and Generation Alpha.

Our vision is simple: Gaming becomes the common interest. Christ remains the center.

If you are part of the PNCC, interested in gaming or digital ministry, and willing to help lead this new endeavor, we want to hear from you! Email Father Jim!

Help us build the next generation of Digital Disciples.

Savonarola Theological Seminary and Institute

Launches

Continuing Education Courses for the Church

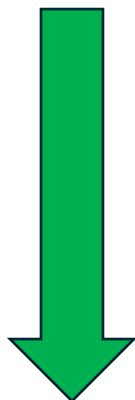
Grow in Knowledge. Deepen Your Faith. Strengthen Your Walk with Christ.

This fall marks an exciting new chapter for the Savonarola Theological Seminary and Institute with the launch of its first continuing education courses designed to make serious Catholic learning accessible to the wider Church.

The Institute recognizes that Christian formation does not end with Sunday School, Confirmation, seminary, or formal education. The call to know Christ more deeply and to understand the faith we profess continues throughout our lives. Through courses in Sacred Scripture, Church history, theology, liturgy, and Christian formation, the Institute seeks to provide opportunities for lifelong learning rooted in the Catholic faith and the tradition of the Polish National Catholic Church.

Who may enroll? Everyone who wants to learn. No previous college, seminary, or theological education is required. Courses are open to clergy and laity, parish leaders, teachers, students, and anyone interested in strengthening their knowledge of the faith. Whether you have studied theology for years or are considering your first Church course, you are welcome.

Courses are offered online, allowing participants to join from home. Classes generally meet weekly for one to two hours and include live instruction, discussion, guided readings, and opportunities for questions and reflection.



The March, September 2026

Fall 2026 Course Offerings

Course	Title	Dates	Time (EST)	Instructor
HIS005	<i>Constantine the Great: Empire, Church, and the Transformation of the Roman World</i>	Sept. 16– Oct. 21	6:00 p.m.	Deacon Mark Koscinski, PhD
BIB024	<i>The Epistle to the Hebrews: Christ Our High Priest and the Fulfillment of the Covenant</i>	Nov. 2– Nov. 23	7:00 p.m.	Rev. Jim Ploskonka, PhD
LIT001	<i>Praying Without Ceasing: The Liturgy of the Hours and the Sanctification of Time</i>	Oct. 6– Nov. 10	11:00 a.m.	Very Reverend John Kowalczyk
THL004	<i>The Nicene Creed Through the Eyes of the Polish National Catholic Church</i>	Oct. 8– Nov. 12	7:00 p.m.	Most Reverend Anthony Mikovsky

Registration Is Easy

Select the course or courses you wish to attend and send the following information by email to dr.ploskonka@Savonarola.net: your name, email address, telephone number, mailing address, parish/city/state, and the course number(s) for which you wish to register.

Following registration, participants will receive login information, course materials and reading requirements, weekly expectations, and additional information needed for their selected course.

This inaugural offering is only the beginning. The Savonarola Institute invites the entire Church to become a community of lifelong learners—opening Sacred Scripture, exploring the history and theology of our faith, asking meaningful questions, and growing together in our knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

Come and learn with us.



Father Jim and Deacon Joel Team up in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

By Deacon Joel Smith

Deacon Joel Smith spent the summer serving the faithful of St. Mary's Parish in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and St. Joseph's Mission in Beausejour. As the summer concludes, he returns to the Seminary to begin his fall studies and continue his preparation for ordained ministry in the Polish National Catholic Church.

During his time in Manitoba, Deacon Joel was joined by his mentor, Rev. Jim Ploskonka, who celebrated Holy Mass with the congregation of St. Mary's and spent time visiting with the faithful and are pictured here.



Reflecting upon his summer, Deacon Joel shared his gratitude for the experience:

“From the moment I arrived, I felt nothing but a warm welcome from the parishioners. The parish has been without a full-time pastor or administrator for three years and has relied upon visiting priests for the celebration of Holy Mass. To those priests who have served here, thank you, and may God bless you, your families, and your parishes.”

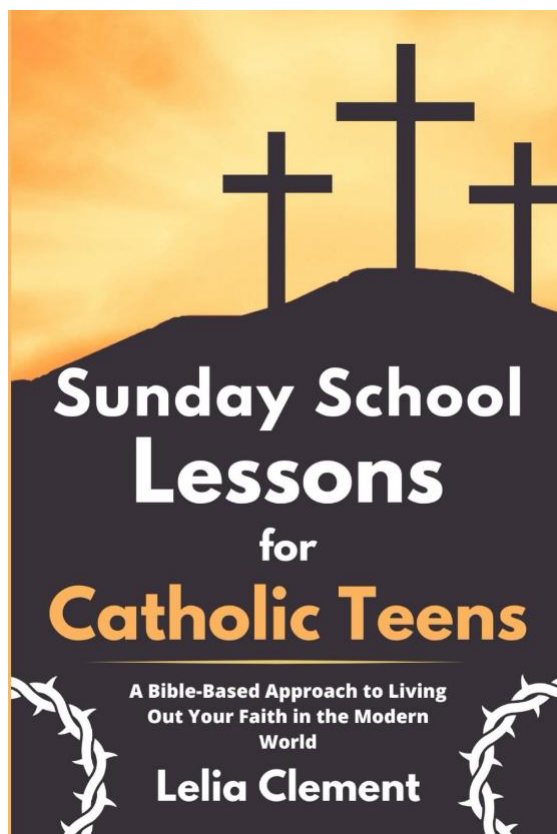
Deacon Joel was particularly moved by the faithfulness he witnessed throughout the summer.

“The congregation here in Manitoba has shown its faith and commitment to Christ and His Church through challenging times. The joy and love of our Lord are still very much present, and that was extremely encouraging to see.”

Sunday School 2026–2027: Faith for the Real World

This year, our Sunday School students will be using Sunday School Lessons for Catholic Teens by Lelia Clement, a Scripture-based program designed to help young people ages 13–19 discover how our Catholic faith speaks directly to the joys, questions, pressures, and decisions they face every day.

The lessons move beyond simply learning facts about the Bible. Students will explore Sacred Scripture, Catholic teaching, the Sacraments, prayer, and the lives of biblical figures while asking an important question: “What does this mean for my life today?”

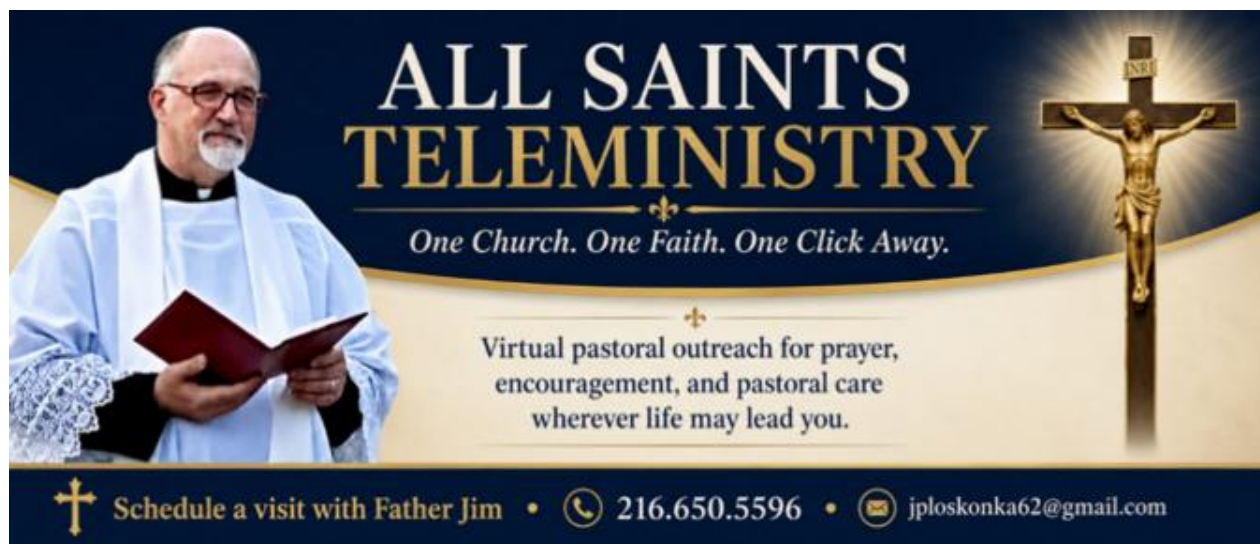


Throughout the year, our young people will discuss topics that are very much part of their world. They will explore finding their identity and self-worth in Christ rather than in popularity, grades, or social media; dealing with stress, insecurity, and difficult emotions; making good choices when faced with peer pressure; building healthy friendships and relationships; and learning the importance of forgiveness.

Other lessons will address temptation, prayer, discovering God’s purpose for our lives, and having the courage to live our faith openly. Through Scripture, discussion, reflection, and interactive activities, students will be encouraged not only to know what the Church teaches, but to understand why it matters.

Our goal is simple: to help our young people develop a faith that belongs to them: a faith they understand, practice, question, deepen, and carry into everyday life.

Please keep our students and Sunday School teachers in your prayers as we begin this new year of learning and growing together in Christ



Finding a Home at All Saints

Sometimes people find a church because they are searching for one. Other times, God seems to lead them there through circumstances they never expected. When members of All Saints Parish were asked what this parish means to them, their stories were different, but a common theme quickly emerged: All Saints is a place where people have found a spiritual home.

For some, that discovery came after years of feeling disconnected from parish life. One person described attending very large churches and feeling like “just one of a huge crowd.” There was faith and worship, but something was missing—the personal connection of knowing the people around you and knowing that they knew you. An unexpected family circumstance eventually led this person to All Saints. More than two decades later, All Saints remains home because of the faith, kindness, compassion, and love found within the parish family.

Another parishioner described becoming discouraged and “spiritually adrift.” All Saints became a place to rediscover peace, hope, and a deeper relationship with Christ. What began as simply coming to church became something much greater: the renewal of faith and the realization that God was still working in that person’s life.

Others speak about the importance of simply being known. In a larger congregation, it can be easy to arrive, worship, leave, and never really become part of the community. At All Saints, people noticed when someone was there and noticed when they were missing. They were greeted by name, welcomed with open

arms, and discovered that their presence mattered. As one person beautifully expressed it, All Saints is a “small but mighty parish community,” where everyone’s gifts are needed.

For others, All Saints represents a return home. One lifelong member recalled turbulent and difficult years when the future of the parish itself seemed uncertain. Yet people remained, prayed, persevered, and trusted that the Holy Spirit had not abandoned them. Today, that perseverance has become renewed hope and excitement about what God is doing within the parish.

At the heart of these stories is something deeper than friendship alone. People speak about coming to Holy Mass, receiving Christ, experiencing forgiveness, finding peace in prayer, and receiving the grace and comfort of the Sacraments. One parishioner described Holy Mass simply as “the highpoint of my week.” Perhaps that is what All Saints means to so many.

It is a place where someone who felt lost can feel found. Where someone who felt anonymous can be known by name. Where someone who felt discouraged can discover hope. Where someone who wondered whether they were needed discovers that they are. And where people searching for something, more can encounter Christ through Word, Sacrament, worship, service, and one another.

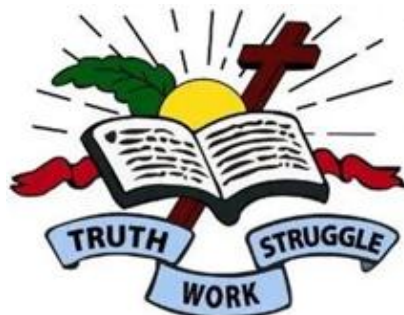
No parish is perfect, because no family is perfect. But these testimonies reveal something beautiful happening at All Saints: people are simply not attending a church.

They are finding a home.

The XXVII General Synod of the Polish National Catholic Church

September 28–30, 2026 • Manchester, New Hampshire

An important moment in the life of the National Catholic Church will take place



this September as bishops, clergy, and lay delegates from throughout the Church gather for the XXVII General Synod of the PNCC. Hosted by the Eastern Diocese, the Synod will convene in Manchester, New Hampshire, from September 28 through September 30, 2026.

The General Synod is the highest legislative and governing body of the Polish National Catholic Church. Convened every four years, it brings together clergy and laity to prayerfully deliberate and make decisions concerning the spiritual, doctrinal, administrative, and material life of our Church. It is one of the clearest expressions of a principle that has characterized the PNCC since its beginnings: bishops, clergy, and faithful share responsibility for the life and mission of the Church.

Membership in the General Synod includes the active bishops, members of the Supreme Council, the Vice-Rector of the Seminary, pastors and administrators of parishes, elected parish lay delegates, and representatives of designated Church societies and organizations. Deacons and reserve clergy are represented through elected delegates as provided by the Constitution. Together, these representatives gather not simply to conduct business, but to prayerfully discern the direction of the Church.

The authority entrusted to the General Synod is extensive. Among its responsibilities are the ratification of the religious teachings of the Church, enactment or repeal of laws governing Church discipline and administration, consideration of grievances and appeals, oversight of the spiritual and material affairs of the PNCC, and the selection of candidates for the episcopacy. Decisions properly enacted by the General Synod are binding upon the entire Church.

This year's Synod will be especially significant because the delegates will participate in the process of electing candidates for the episcopacy. Nine men were reported as having been nominated as candidates for bishop, with the appropriate

Church process for reviewing those nominations taking place in preparation for the Synod. A web-based voting system will be utilized during the election process, requiring delegates to have access to a smartphone or laptop. Reports and other Synod materials will also be distributed electronically, reflecting an increased use of technology in conducting the Church's work.

The Synod will begin in the most appropriate way possible—not with debate or parliamentary procedure, but with worship. The Opening Holy Mass will be celebrated at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Manchester, bringing the Synod delegates together around the altar before the formal sessions begin. Transportation will be provided from the hotel to the Cathedral because parking at the Cathedral is limited.

The working sessions of the XXVII General Synod will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel, 700 Elm Street, Manchester, New Hampshire. Delegates will gather there for several days of reports, discussion, deliberation, elections, and decisions affecting the future ministry of the PNCC.

As the XXVII General Synod approaches, the entire Church is encouraged to remember the Prime Bishop, bishops, clergy, lay delegates, candidates for the episcopacy, Synod leadership, and the members of the Eastern Diocese who are preparing to welcome the Church to Manchester.

Most importantly, let us pray that the Holy Spirit will guide every discussion and decision so that the work of the XXVII General Synod may strengthen the Polish National Catholic Church and assist us in faithfully proclaiming Jesus Christ and serving His people for generations to come.

SERMON: Ordinary 14 A

“Jesus Exclaimed!”



*Zechariah 9:9-10; Romans 8:9-11,13;
Matthew 11:25-30*

There are many moments in the Gospels when Jesus teaches quietly. At times He asks thought-provoking questions. At other moments He comforts, heals, or even weeps. Yet in this Sunday's Gospel we encounter something different. St. Matthew tells us that Jesus exclaimed!

That single word immediately captures our attention. These were not simply words spoken in passing; they were words overflowing from the very heart of Christ. He joyfully proclaimed, *"I give praise to You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth."* His gratitude and love for the Father could not be contained.

It is worth asking ourselves how often we begin our own day with an exclamation of praise. Often, our first words are about being late, searching for misplaced keys, or worrying about everything waiting for us. We become experts at exclaiming over inconveniences while forgetting to rejoice over God's blessings. Jesus reminds us that authentic Christian joy does not depend on perfect circumstances—it depends upon a living relationship with Him.

The prophet Zechariah beautifully prepares us for this lesson. He calls God's people to rejoice because their King is coming. Yet this King does not arrive on a magnificent warhorse surrounded by soldiers. Instead, He comes humbly, riding upon a donkey. God's Kingdom measures greatness very differently than the world does. The world prizes wealth, power, and influence. Christ reveals that true greatness is found in humility, service, and sacrificial love.

That same humble King continues to enter our lives today. He comes quietly through prayer. He enters wounded hearts through forgiveness. He nourishes us through the Holy Eucharist. He does not force His way into our lives but gently invites us to walk with Him.

Jesus also praises the Father because these divine mysteries are revealed to "little ones." He is not suggesting that intelligence is unimportant. Rather, He teaches that those who approach God with childlike humility, trust, and openness are often the ones who recognize His presence most clearly.

Children naturally ask questions. They trust. They believe. They marvel at the world around them. Adults, however, can become so busy explaining God that we forget simply to experience Him. Perhaps that is one reason Jesus welcomed children so warmly—they recognized God's presence with joyful simplicity.

St. Paul continues this encouraging message in his Letter to the Romans. He reminds us that we belong not merely to the flesh but to the Spirit. We are not defined by our failures, fears, or past mistakes. The very Holy Spirit who raised Jesus Christ from the dead now dwells within every believer.

What an extraordinary promise! If God could raise His Son from the tomb, then surely, He can strengthen weary hearts, heal broken relationships, restore hope, and guide us through uncertain times. Our circumstances may not change overnight, but God's presence changes how we live through them.

Jesus then offers one of the most comforting invitations found anywhere in Scripture: *"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."* Notice what He does not say. He does not tell us to come only after we have solved our problems or perfected our lives. He simply says, "Come."

Every person carries burdens that others may never see—grief, loneliness, anxiety, illness, family struggles, financial concerns, or regrets from years gone by. Jesus never dismisses these burdens. Instead, He invites us to place them into His loving hands.

He goes on to say, *"My yoke is easy, and my burden light."* A yoke may still represent work, but it also reminds us that we are not carrying life's load by ourselves. Christ walks beside us. He bears greater weight and strengthens us whenever we grow weary.

The Christian life is not free from burdens, but it is always filled with Christ. That reality changes everything.

May we learn once again to recognize God's presence in the ordinary moments of life—a beautiful sunrise, the laughter of a child, a shared meal, a kind word, an answered prayer, or even a difficult challenge that teaches patience and perseverance. Each of these becomes another opportunity to join Jesus in joyful praise.

May our lives become one joyful exclamation of thanksgiving to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.





SERMON: Ordinary 15A

“Hear Then the Parable!”

Isaiah 55:10-11; Romans 8:18-23; Matthew 13:1-23

There is something wonderfully familiar about this Sunday's Gospel. In fact, many of us heard these very same verses only a month ago during our celebration of the Solemnity of the Word of God. The Church, in her wisdom, places this Gospel before us again—not by accident, but with purpose.

Whenever the Lord repeats Himself, there is often something He still wants us to hear.

That is one of the remarkable qualities of Sacred Scripture. God's Word never grows old. It is living, active, and continually speaking to every generation. We may hear the same Gospel passage many times throughout our lives, yet each time the Holy Spirit reveals something new. Every proclamation of the Scriptures at Holy Mass is more than a reading from an ancient book; it is Christ Himself speaking to His people today.

Jesus begins with a simple invitation: "Hear then the parable." He is asking for much more than our attention. He invites us to listen with hearts that are open, minds that are willing to learn, and lives that are ready to be transformed.

St. Matthew paints a memorable scene. Such great crowds gathered around Jesus that He stepped into a boat and taught from the water while the people lined the shore. There were no microphones or amplifiers, no comfortable pews or climate-controlled buildings. Yet the people stayed because they recognized that the words of Jesus offered something the world could never provide—truth, hope, and eternal life.

Matthew also notes that Jesus spoke to them at length. He devoted Himself completely to proclaiming the Kingdom of God. To borrow a phrase from the world of sports, Jesus truly "left it all on the field." He held nothing back. He taught everyone who would listen—fishermen and farmers, children and elders, believers and doubters alike. Every person deserved the opportunity to hear the Good News of God's saving love.

That same mission continues today. Every Sunday Christ still gathers His people around His Word. He is still teaching. He is still inviting. He is still sowing the seeds of faith into human hearts.

The prophet Isaiah explains why this matters so deeply. Just as rain and snow water the earth and bring forth new life, God's Word never returns empty. It always accomplishes His purpose, even when we cannot immediately see the results.

That is reassuring, because spiritual growth is often quiet and gradual. A farmer does not expect a harvest the day after planting seed. Growth takes time, care, and patience. The same is true in our spiritual lives. Every Gospel proclaimed, every Psalm prayed, every lesson heard, and every Holy Mass attended becomes another seed planted by God. Little by little, those seeds begin to bear fruit.

Jesus explains that the seed itself is always good, and the sower is always generous. The only question is the condition of the soil. If we are honest, we have all been every type of soil at one time or another. Sometimes life's disappointments harden our hearts. At other times we receive God's Word with enthusiasm but struggle when challenges arise. Worries, distractions, and the demands of daily life can slowly crowd out our faith.

Yet the Good News is that God never stops cultivating our hearts. Prayer softens hardened ground. Confession removes the stones that weigh us down. The Holy Eucharist nourishes us with Christ Himself, strengthening our roots and helping us grow. Acts of charity become the visible fruit of a life transformed by God's grace.

Perhaps the most comforting lesson of this parable is that the sower never gives up. He scatters seed everywhere, trusting that hearts can change and lives can be renewed. That is the heart of our loving God. He never stops calling us back, never stops teaching, and never stops believing that His grace can accomplish great things within us.

As we continue our journey of faith, may we welcome God's Word with renewed openness and allow it to take deep root in our lives. Then, strengthened by His grace and nourished by the Holy Eucharist, may we bear abundant fruit for our families, our parish, and our community. May the words of our Lord continue to echo in our hearts, inviting us each day to do one thing that changes everything: ***Hear Then the Parable.***





SERMON: Ordinary 16A

“He Who Sows Good Seed Is the Son of Man.”

Wisdom 12:13,16-19; Romans 8:26-27; Matthew 13:24-43

Some passages of Sacred Scripture serve as keys. Once we understand them, they unlock everything that follows. In this Sunday's Gospel, that key is found in Jesus' own explanation of the parable: "He who sows good seed is the Son of Man."

Before we focus on the weeds, the harvest, or even ourselves, Jesus wants us to know something essential. The field belongs to Him. The seed belongs to Him. The harvest belongs to Him. Our journey of faith begins not with our efforts but with God's initiative. He is always the first to act, continually sowing grace, truth, and mercy into the world.

Our first reading, from the Book of Wisdom, beautifully prepares us for this Gospel. Written in Alexandria, Egypt, only a few decades before the birth of Christ, it was addressed to Jewish believers living in a culture that constantly tempted them to abandon their faith. Surrounded by Greek philosophy and worldly values, they needed encouragement to remain faithful to the God of Israel.

The inspired author reminds them—and us—that true wisdom is very different from worldly success. Human strength often seeks power, revenge, or domination. Divine strength reveals itself through patience, mercy, and love. God does not demonstrate His greatness by crushing His enemies but by giving sinners the opportunity to repent and return to Him.

That truth reaches its fullest expression in Jesus Christ. The Cross reveals that God's greatest victory came not through violence but through sacrificial love. The strongest person is often the one who forgives. The wisest is often the one who remains patient. The holiest is frequently the one who chooses kindness when anger seems much easier.

Jesus illustrates this beautifully in His parable of the wheat and the weeds. Every farmer listening would have understood the scene. Good seeds are carefully planted, but during the night an enemy secretly scatters weeds throughout the field. When both begin to grow, the servants naturally suggest removing the weeds immediately.

The farmer surprises them by saying, "No." Pulling up the weeds too soon might also destroy the wheat. Jesus is teaching something far greater than farming techniques. He is revealing the remarkable patience of God.

Many people wonder why God does not immediately eliminate evil or remove every hardship from the world. Today's readings remind us that God sees far beyond the present moment. He gives people time to change, grow, and respond freely to His grace.

Church history provides countless examples. St. Augustine spent years searching in all the wrong places before becoming one of Christianity's greatest theologians. St. Paul persecuted the Church before becoming its greatest missionary. St. Peter denied even knowing Christ before becoming the leader of the Apostles. Had anyone judged them too quickly, the abundant harvest God intended might never have been seen.

That perspective should also shape the way we view those around us. The family member who has drifted from the Church may still be hearing God's quiet invitation. The neighbor who seems indifferent may be searching for hope in ways we cannot see. Even those who challenge our patience may still grow under the gentle care of the Divine Gardener.

Perhaps the same is true of us. None of us is a finished masterpiece. Every day Christ continues His work within our hearts.

St. Paul reinforces this message in his Letter to the Romans by reminding us that "the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness." He does not say the Spirit helps only the strong. He comes precisely because we are weak. When we struggle to pray, when words fail us, and when life's burdens seem overwhelming, the Holy Spirit is already praying within us and leading us closer to the Father's heart.

This is the beautiful work of the Holy Trinity. The Father plants the seed. The Son cultivates the field. The Holy Spirit strengthens its growth. We are never left to journey alone.

As Catholics, we encounter this divine work continually. Every proclamation of Scripture plants another seed. Every worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist nourishes our souls. Every confession removes obstacles that hinder our growth. Every act of charity allows God's grace to bear fruit in the lives of others.

The world has no shortage of voices that criticize, condemn, or predict failure. What it desperately needs are disciples who believe that hearts can still change, lives can still be transformed, and God's harvest is still unfolding.

Our confidence does not rest in the condition of the field. It rests in the One who faithfully walks through it each day, sowing grace, mercy, truth, and life.



He Who Sows Good Seed Is the Son of Man.

SERMON: Ordinary 17A



“The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like.”

1 Kings 3:5, 7–12; Romans 8:28–30; Matthew 13:44–52

Not long before she entered eternal life, Sophie and I had one of those conversations that a pastor never forgets.

With remarkable honesty she asked, "Father, will there really be streets of gold? Pearly gates? Will there truly be no more pain? I'm

so tired. I just want to go. Will I see my family and friends again?" Perhaps you have wondered about those same things.

Sacred Scripture certainly gives us beautiful images of heaven. In the Book of Revelation, Saint John describes the heavenly Jerusalem shining with the glory of God. Its walls are adorned with precious stones, its gates are fashioned from great pearls, and its streets are as pure as transparent gold. Jesus Himself comforts His disciples by saying, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places." We are promised a place where every tear is wiped away, where death is no more, and where God's people dwell forever in His presence.

What a beautiful promise.

Yet in the Gospel for this past Sunday, Jesus paints a different picture when He says, "The kingdom of heaven is like..."

Notice what He does not say. He does not compare the Kingdom to golden streets or jeweled walls. Instead, He speaks about ordinary things: a treasure hidden in a field, a merchant searching for fine pearls, and a fishing net cast into the sea.

Why? Because Jesus wants us to understand that while heaven is our eternal destination, the Kingdom of Heaven begins long before we arrive there. It begins whenever Christ reigns in a human heart.

The hidden treasure reminds us that God often works quietly. Many people spend years searching for happiness in success, possessions, recognition, or comfort, only to discover that what they were truly seeking was Jesus Christ. When they encounter Him, they realize they have found something infinitely more valuable than anything the world can offer.

Likewise, the merchant searching for pearls reminds us that many spend a lifetime seeking truth and meaning. Then, through God's grace, they discover Christ. Everything changes. Nothing compares to Him.

One detail is especially striking. Both the man who discovers the treasure and the merchant who finds the pearl are filled with joy. They gladly surrender everything because what they have found is worth infinitely more. That is the heart of authentic Christian living. We do not follow Christ simply because we are obligated to do so. We follow Him because we have discovered the greatest treasure imaginable.

The first reading reinforces this truth through the example of King Solomon. When God invited him to ask for anything, Solomon did not request wealth, power, or a long life. Instead, he prayed for an understanding heart filled with wisdom. God was pleased because Solomon recognized that God's wisdom is a treasure greater than earthly riches.

Saint Paul carries that same message even further. He reminds us that "all things work together for good for those who love God." He does not say that every circumstance is good. Illness, grief, loneliness, and suffering are real burdens. Yet God's providence is so powerful that He can bring hope, healing, and even new life from our deepest trials.

That promise offers comfort to every believer. Christ never guarantees that life will be easy, but He does promise that nothing—not suffering, not illness, not even death—can separate us from Him. Our true treasure is not something we possess; it is the Savior who walks beside us through every season of life and ultimately welcomes us into eternal glory.

Perhaps that is why Jesus began His teaching with hidden treasure rather than streets of gold. Before we ever walk upon heaven's streets, He wants us to discover

the One who makes heaven what it is. Wherever Jesus Christ is present, the Kingdom of Heaven has already begun.

May each of us continue asking ourselves a simple but life-changing question: What is my greatest treasure? May we answer with the wisdom of Solomon, the confidence of Saint Paul, and the joyful faith of those who found the treasure beyond all price—Jesus Christ, our Lord.



SERMON: Ordinary 18A



“Bring Them Here to Me.”

Isaiah 55:1–3; Romans 8:35, 37–39; Matthew 14:13–21

There are certain simple phrases that stay with us throughout our lives because they carry far more meaning than the words themselves. One of them is, “Bring it here.”

A child finds an injured bird, and a parent says, “Bring it here.” A favorite toy breaks, and someone says, “Bring it here; let’s see if we can fix it.” A scraped knee, a difficult homework problem, or something that simply seems too hard to handle alone can bring those reassuring words: “Bring it here.”

Behind those words is a beautiful promise: You do not have to handle this alone.

In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus offers that same reassurance. Thousands of people have followed Him into a deserted place. Evening approaches, and the disciples recognize a very practical problem: the people are hungry. Their solution seems perfectly reasonable—send everyone away so they can find food for themselves.

Jesus responds, “They need not go away.”

The disciples look at what they have available and see scarcity: five loaves and two fish. It is hardly enough for themselves, much less a crowd of thousands. Jesus, however, does not ask them to solve the impossible problem. He simply says:

“Bring them here to me.”

Those words contain a wonderful lesson for Christian life. God does not always ask us to have enough. He asks us to place what we have into His hands.

Throughout salvation history, God works through seemingly inadequate offerings. Moses has a shepherd's staff. David has a sling and five stones. Mary offers her faithful "Yes." Peter has a fishing boat. The disciples have five loaves and two fish. None seems extraordinary until it is placed at the service of God.

The feeding of the five thousand also points us toward the Eucharist. Significantly, it is the only miracle of Jesus, apart from the Resurrection, recorded in all four Gospels. Matthew tells us that Jesus takes the bread, looks toward heaven, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to His disciples. Those actions anticipate the Last Supper and remind us of what takes place whenever the Church gathers around the altar.

The miracle therefore concerns far more than physical hunger. It reveals Christ as the One who satisfies the deepest hunger of the human heart.

We sometimes look at ourselves much as the disciples looked at those five loaves and two fish. We think, "I do not have enough faith." "I do not have enough strength." "I do not have enough time." "I cannot make much difference." Perhaps we look at a struggling marriage, a family difficulty, financial worries, loneliness, illness, grief, or uncertainty about the future and wonder what we could possibly do.

Christ does not begin by asking whether we have enough. He asks us to bring Him what we have.

Bring Him your worries and fears. Bring Him your family and those you love. Bring Him your disappointments and unanswered questions. Bring Him your loneliness, your hopes, your gratitude, and your dreams. Bring Him your sins and failures. Bring Him even those parts of your life that you do not quite understand.

"Bring them here to me."

Isaiah expresses the same invitation: "All you who are thirsty, come to the water." God's grace cannot be purchased. His mercy is not reserved for those who believe they have earned it. His invitation is simply: Come.

The world often tells us that everything valuable must be earned. God tells us that grace is a gift. The world tells us that we must prove ourselves worthy. Christ says, "Come to me."

Saint Paul strengthens that promise in Romans when he asks what can separate us from the love of Christ. His answer is astonishing: neither hardship, distress,

persecution, danger, life, nor even death can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus.

That is why we can bring everything to Him. Christ is not overwhelmed by our problems. He is not frightened by our failures. He does not grow tired of our prayers. Nothing we carry is greater than His love.

Perhaps one of the greatest lessons of the feeding of the five thousand is that something small became abundant when placed into the hands of Christ.

That continues in the life of the Church. We bring ordinary bread and wine; Christ feeds us with His Body and Blood. We bring ordinary people with imperfect lives; Christ forms us into His Church. We bring our prayers; He gives grace. We bring weakness; He gives strength. We bring brokenness; He offers healing and reconciliation.

And perhaps there is another lesson for us as a parish. Christ can take the time, talents, prayers, generosity, and faith of ordinary people and accomplish something extraordinary. No act of kindness is too small. No prayer is insignificant. No offering of ourselves is wasted when it is placed into the hands of Christ.

Every Holy Mass becomes another opportunity to hear the words spoken on that hillside.

Whatever you are carrying this week, bring it to Christ. Whatever is weighing upon your heart, bring it to Christ. Whatever blessing fills you with gratitude, bring that too. Whatever seems too large for you to solve or too small for God to notice, place it into His hands.

We do not have to come before Christ with everything solved. Sometimes five loaves and two fish are enough with which to begin.

We simply need to trust Him when He says: "Bring them here to me."



SERMON: Ordinary 19A



“O You of Little Faith, Why Did You Doubt?”

1 Kings 19:9,11-13; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:22-33

There are certain questions Jesus asks in the Gospels that echo across every generation. They were not intended only for the Apostles who first heard them. They are questions Christ continues to place before His Church and before each of us.

Today’s Gospel contains one of them: “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

Notice that Jesus does not ask Peter, “Why did you sink?” He asks, “Why did you doubt?” There is an important difference. Peter did not begin to sink simply because the wind was strong or the waves were high. He began to sink when, for a moment, he trusted the power of the storm more than he trusted the Savior standing before him.

We know what that feels like.

Life has a way of surrounding us with storms: illness, family difficulties, financial uncertainty, the death of someone we love, loneliness, anxiety about the future, or concern for children and grandchildren. Sometimes we simply become exhausted by a world filled with conflict, uncertainty, and constant noise.

Then doubt begins whispering: Where is God? Does prayer really matter? Has God forgotten me? Does the Church still have something to offer? Is my faith strong enough? Those questions are not new.

In I Kings, the prophet Elijah experiences his own crisis. He had courageously confronted the prophets of Baal and witnessed God’s tremendous power. Yet soon afterward, Elijah is frightened, discouraged, and hiding in a cave.

He waits for God.

A powerful wind comes, but God is not in the wind. An earthquake follows, but God is not in the earthquake. Then comes fire, but God is not in the fire. Finally, Elijah encounters God in a quiet, gentle sound.

We sometimes expect God to answer our prayers with earthquakes and fire. Yet He frequently comes quietly: through Sacred Scripture, through prayer, through the Holy Eucharist, through the kindness of another person, or through an unexpected moment of peace when we suddenly realize, “God is still here.”

Sometimes we doubt because God does not act according to our timetable.
Sometimes we doubt because His voice is quieter than the voices surrounding us.

Saint Paul describes another struggle in Romans. His heart aches because many of his own people have not accepted Christ. Yet Paul does not abandon them. He continues to love, pray, hope, and trust.

Many families understand that pain. We may have children who no longer attend church, grandchildren who have not been baptized, or friends who once practiced their faith but gradually drifted away. Some have been hurt. Some became disappointed with people in the Church. Others became busy, and faith slowly moved to the edges of their lives.

Our response cannot simply be anger or judgment. Christ calls us to truth, certainly, but truth accompanied by compassion, patience, prayer, and unwavering love.

Behind unbelief there is sometimes pain. Behind skepticism there can be disappointment. Behind a person who says, “I don’t believe anymore,” may be someone who once prayed desperately and wondered why heaven seemed silent.

That is what makes today’s Gospel so beautiful.

When Peter begins sinking, Jesus does not lecture him while he is drowning. Matthew tells us, “Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him.”

Immediately! The hand of Christ is quicker than Peter’s fear.

Jesus does not wait until Peter has stronger faith. He does not tell him to solve his doubts before He will rescue him. He reaches out because saving is what Christ does.

That same hand remains extended today—to the exhausted, the grieving, the lonely, the person who has stopped praying, the person who has not entered a church for years, and the person wondering whether God could possibly forgive what has happened in the past.

Faith has never meant that storms will disappear. Faith means believing that Christ remains with us in the storm. Faith means trusting that His hand is stronger than the waves.

Our world desperately needs Christians whose lives quietly proclaim that hope is stronger than fear. People notice how we endure difficulties, whether we forgive, whether we pray, how we treat others, and whether our Christianity extends beyond Sunday morning.

Sometimes the most powerful sermon we preach is simply the peaceful confidence with which we walk through our own storms.

There are people around us drowning—not in water, but in discouragement, loneliness, grief, fear, and doubt. Christ may choose to reach them through our kindness, invitation, listening ear, encouragement, prayer, or faithful example.

So let us be patient with those who doubt. Let us invite rather than condemn. Let us pray rather than criticize. Let us love rather than argue. And let us never give up on someone simply because the journey back to Christ is taking longer than we hoped.

And when our own faith trembles, let us remember Peter. The waves may be high. The wind may be strong. We may even begin to sink. But the saving hand of Christ is already reaching toward us. All we need to do is take hold of it.



SERMON: Ordinary 20A



“Great is Your Faith!”

*Isaiah 56:1, 6–7; Romans 11:13–15, 29–32;
Matthew 15:21–28*

Imagine a mother sitting beside her daughter in a hospital room late at night. She has been there before—many times. Her daughter has been struggling for months. There have been doctors, appointments, tests, referrals, waiting lists, telephone calls, insurance questions, and more waiting. Again, the mother has heard, “There

is nothing more we can do right now.” “You will have to wait.” “Someone will call you.” “We simply do not know.” But she keeps asking. She calls another doctor. She asks another question. She sits beside another hospital bed. She refuses to give up because this is her daughter.

Finally, exhausted and frightened, she walks into the hospital chapel. There is no carefully composed prayer and no eloquent theological language. She simply kneels and says three words: “Lord, help me.” Those three words bring us directly into Matthew’s Gospel.

A Canaanite woman comes to Jesus because her daughter is suffering. She cries out, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David.” She believes Jesus can help her child. And initially, Jesus is silent. Perhaps we know something about that silence. We prayed for a diagnosis to be different. We prayed for a marriage to survive. We prayed for a child who wandered away. We prayed for someone who we love to return to the Church. We prayed beside a hospital bed or stood beside a grave. We prayed with everything within us—and heaven seemed silent.

The Canaanite woman knows that experience, but she refuses to leave. The disciples become frustrated and want Jesus to send her away. Instead, she comes closer, kneels before Him, and reduces everything in her heart to those same three words: “Lord, help me.” There is tremendous faith contained in that little prayer.

Faith does not mean always having the answers. Faith does not require pretending that everything is fine when our hearts are breaking. Faith does not mean we never become frightened, frustrated, or confused. Sometimes great faith is simply refusing to walk away from Jesus.

The exchange that follows is challenging. Jesus speaks of the children’s food not being thrown to the dogs. Yet the woman responds from within His own image: “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” She is essentially saying, “Lord, give me only a crumb. A crumb of Your mercy is enough.”

And Jesus responds with extraordinary words: “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” Think about that for a moment. Jesus says, “Great is your faith!” not to Peter or one of the Twelve, but to a Canaanite woman—someone many would have regarded as an outsider.

That connects beautifully with Isaiah’s vision that God’s house “shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” God’s mercy reaches beyond the boundaries

human beings construct. Saint Paul proclaims something similar when he reminds us that “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” and directs our attention toward the tremendous mercy of God.

That message should challenge every Christian community. The person who has been away from Church for twenty years may be closer to coming home than we realize. The young person questioning everything may still be searching for Christ. Someone whose life has become complicated may quietly be praying, “Lord, help me.” A visitor sitting alone in the last pew may have needed every ounce of courage simply to walk through the church doors.

When they come, what will they encounter? Will they encounter the disciples saying, “Send her away,” or will they encounter the welcoming mercy of Jesus Christ?

Our parish must always strive to be a place where people can encounter Christ—a place where the searching can ask questions, where the wounded can find compassion, where the lonely can find community, where sinners can discover forgiveness, and where those who have been away can come home. We should never underestimate what a greeting, a handshake, an invitation to coffee, a listening ear, or a simple word of encouragement can mean to someone who is struggling.

And there will be times when we ourselves are the ones searching. When you do not understand, pray, “Lord, help me.” When someone you love is suffering, pray, “Lord, help me.” When your family is struggling, when you are frightened about tomorrow, or when God seems silent, continue to pray, “Lord, help me.”

Keep coming to Christ. Keep praying. Keep trusting. Keep bringing your children and grandchildren before Him. Keep praying for the person who has wandered away. Never decide that someone is beyond the reach of God’s mercy. God has not finished working simply because we cannot yet see what He is doing.

And when you see someone else struggling to reach Jesus, make room for them. Encourage them. Listen to them. Walk beside them. Help them discover that there is a place for them within God’s family. Perhaps great faith is not faith that has never struggled. Perhaps great faith is faith that has struggled, waited, cried, questioned, and endured—and still returns to Jesus saying, “Lord, help me.”

May we persevere in that faith until we, too, hear the beautiful words of Christ: “Great is your faith!”



SERMON: Ordinary 21A

“But who do you say that I am?”

1 Kings 19:9,11-13; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:22-33



There are some questions that are easy to answer. Where are you from? What do you do? What would you like for dinner? Although, depending upon the family, that last question can become a major theological controversy! There are other questions, however, that reach much deeper. Do you love me? Do you trust me? Will you forgive me? Will you stay with me? And then there is the question Jesus asks His disciples in today's Gospel: “But who do you say that I am?”

Jesus first asks His disciples what other people are saying about Him. They have plenty of answers. Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. Apparently, people had opinions about Jesus even before social media! But Jesus is not conducting an opinion poll. He turns the question directly toward His disciples: “But who do you say that I am?” Peter responds with one of the great professions of faith in Sacred Scripture: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

We know Peter's answer. We have heard it many times. We profess it in our faith, sing about it in our hymns, hear it proclaimed in the Word of God, and teach it to our children. Yet Jesus is asking something deeper than whether we know the correct theological answer. He is asking each of us personally: Who am I to you?

That question becomes very different when life becomes difficult. Who do we say Jesus is when we sit beside the hospital bed of someone we love? Who is He when the doctor gives us news we never wanted to hear? Who is He when someone we love dies, when a marriage or family is struggling, when we have prayed repeatedly and heaven seems silent, or when we look at the world and wonder what has happened to kindness, decency, faith, and hope?

It is relatively easy to say, “Jesus is Lord,” when everything is going well. Faith becomes much more personal when we can whisper those same words through our tears: “You are the Messiah. You are the Son of the living God. And even now, Lord, I will trust You.”

Isaiah speaks to people who desperately needed that kind of hope. He promises that the humble will once again “obtain fresh joy in the Lord.” What wonderful words: fresh joy. Sometimes our joy becomes tired. We still believe. We still pray. We still come to church. Yet life wears us down. We carry disappointments. We worry about our children and grandchildren. We remember people who once sat beside us in the pews. We wonder what tomorrow will bring. Yet God reminds us that He can give us fresh joy—not because every difficulty suddenly disappears, but because Christ is still Christ, God remains faithful, and we never walk alone.

Saint Paul takes this one step further when he tells us, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.” Christianity is not simply knowing who Jesus is. Christianity means allowing who Jesus is to change who we are.

If Jesus truly is the Messiah, then we cannot spend our lives holding grudges. If Jesus truly is Lord, then even the person who irritates us is someone Christ commands us to love. If Jesus conquered death, then death cannot have the final word. If Jesus has forgiven us, then perhaps we should become more generous in forgiving others. Sometimes that “other person” may be sitting in the same pew, at the same dinner table, or looking back at us from the mirror.

Our answer to Jesus’ question must therefore become more than words. It must become a way of life.

Every time we gather for Holy Mass, we proclaim again who Jesus is. We listen as Christ continues His prophetic ministry through the proclaimed and heard Word of God. Then we approach the altar where ordinary gifts of bread and wine become for us the Body and Blood of Christ. The One whom Peter calls “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” gives Himself to His people. The Jesus who asks, “Who do you say that I am?” does not remain distant after we answer. He comes to us, feeds us, strengthens us, and then sends us into the world.

Perhaps, then, the real examination begins when Mass ends.

What will our lives say about who Jesus is when someone needs patience? What will they say when someone needs forgiveness? What will they say when a neighbor is lonely, a family member is struggling, or someone has almost given up on God? Perhaps our kindness will become the reason another person looks toward Christ again.

There are people around us who may never open a Bible or read a book of theology. Some may not yet walk through the doors of a church. But they will read us. Through our lives, let them discover that Jesus Christ is alive. Let them see compassion, encounter mercy, recognize hope, and discover a Church where there is room for the weary, searching, wounded, doubtful, and sinner.

Jesus still stands before His Church and before each one of us asking, “But who do you say that I am?”

May we answer with Peter, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God”—and may we give that answer not only with our lips, but in the way we love, the way we forgive, the way we serve, the way we hope, and ultimately, in the way we live.



SERMON: Ordinary 22A

“Get Behind Me, Satan!”



Jeremiah 20:7–9; Romans 12:1–2; Matthew 16:21–27

There are some words of Jesus that comfort us immediately: “Come to me.” “Peace be with you.” “Do not be afraid.” “I am with you always.” And then there are words like those we hear in today’s Gospel: “Get behind me, Satan!” They are startling words, especially because Jesus speaks them to Peter—the same Peter who had just confessed, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus begins explaining to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed, and on the third day be raised. Peter cannot accept it. He takes Jesus aside and essentially says, “Lord, this cannot happen to You.” Peter probably believes he is protecting Jesus. Yet Jesus recognizes something much more dangerous: a temptation to turn away from the path the Father has placed before Him. His response is immediate: “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me.”

There is an important image in those words: “Get behind me.” Satan always wants to get in front of us. He wants to determine where we are going. He places temptation before our eyes, discouragement before our hearts, anger within our relationships, and doubt within our faith. His goal is to have us following him rather than following Christ. Jesus, however, belongs in front. He is the One we are called to follow.

Temptation does not always arrive, looking obviously evil. Sometimes it sounds remarkably reasonable. It may appear as convenience: “You are too busy to pray today.” Sometimes it comes as resentment: “After what that person did, you have every right to remain angry.” Sometimes it sounds like discouragement: “Nothing will ever change, so why bother?” At other times it comes as pride: “I know what is best,” or fear: “If I truly follow Christ, it may cost me too much.” Sometimes temptation simply whispers, “Just this once.”

Peter’s problem was not that he rejected Jesus. Peter wanted Jesus—but without the Cross. Yet Jesus makes clear that Christianity does not work that way. “If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” Notice those final words: “Follow me.” Christ must remain in front.

That sounds relatively simple on Sunday morning. It becomes more difficult on Monday afternoon when someone irritates us, when we receive bad news, when an old temptation returns, when prayer seems empty, when someone hurts us, or when doing what is right costs us something. Those are the moments when we must have the courage to say, “Get behind me, Satan.”

When we are tempted to gossip, when anger tells us not to forgive, when pride prevents us from saying, “I was wrong,” or when discouragement tells us to stop praying because God seems silent, we need to remember who belongs in front. When the world tells us that faith is outdated or Christ’s teachings are inconvenient, we must decide again whom we are following.

Saint Paul tells us how this transformation takes place: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.” Christianity cannot simply be one part of our lives among many others. Christ must transform the way we think, speak, choose, forgive, serve, and love.

Jeremiah understood the struggle. He became discouraged by the cost of proclaiming God’s Word and considered remaining silent. Yet he discovered that the Word of God was like “a burning fire” within him. Something inside Jeremiah was stronger than the discouragement surrounding him. We need that same fire because there will always be something attempting to move ahead of Christ in our lives—our possessions, schedules, ambitions, anger, politics, fears, desires, and even our own carefully constructed plans.

Every so often, therefore, we should ask ourselves a very simple question: Who is leading me right now? Is it Christ or my fear? Christ or my anger? Christ or my pride? Christ or my desires? Christ or the voice of the world?

This does not mean Christians will never experience temptation. Even Jesus was tempted. The danger begins when we invite temptation inside, give it a comfortable chair, pour it a cup of coffee, and begin negotiating with it! Sometimes the holiest response we can make is simply, “No. Get behind me. You are not leading me. Jesus Christ is leading me.”

Then we keep walking. We keep praying. We keep receiving the Sacraments. We keep coming to The Liturgy. We keep forgiving, serving, carrying the Cross, and keeping our eyes fixed upon Jesus.

Temptation will come. Discouragement will come. Anger and doubt will sometimes come. When they do, remember who belongs in front.

“Get behind me, Satan.”



And then follow Christ.



MARIANNE CARR

JANUARY 5, 1939 - JULY 31, 2026

Today we come together as a family, as friends, and as people of faith to remember Marianne, to give thanks for her 87 years of life, and above all, to pray for her and commend her once again to the mercy and love of Almighty God.

I did not have the privilege of knowing Marianne personally. Therefore, I cannot tell you my memories of her. Those memories belong to you. But in learning about her life, one thing becomes unmistakably clear: Marianne’s greatest treasure was her family.

She raised five children, and from those five children came ten grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and a great-great-grandchild. That is quite a family tree. But a family is more than names and numbers. It is Saturday mornings at the bowling alley. It is softball games, neighbors on the porch, Pinochle, Bingo, family gatherings, Texas Hold’em around the table, laughter, disagreements, celebrations, ordinary days, and all those little moments that do not seem particularly important when they happen—but years later become some of our greatest treasures.

That is why the words of Paul are so appropriate today: “No one lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself.... whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s”

Marianne did not live only for herself. Much of her life was invested in other people, especially her children and the generations that followed them. And although she has now been gone for some time, what she gave to you did not disappear when she died.

You carry it with you.

Perhaps you hear something she would have said. Perhaps someone tells a story and suddenly everyone laughs because you can picture exactly how Marianne would have reacted. Perhaps at a family gathering you notice the place where she would have been sitting.

Grief changes with time, but love does not simply disappear.

Our first reading from Daniel speaks directly to our Christian hope: “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake” Christianity does not tell us merely to remember those who have died. It gives us something greater than memory. It gives us the promise of resurrection.

Marianne has passed through that valley. And our faith tells us that she did not pass through it alone. The Good Shepherd who accompanied her throughout her earthly life remained with her as she crossed from this life into eternity.

There is something especially meaningful in knowing that when Marianne’s earthly life came to its conclusion, her children were with her. The woman who had spent so many years caring for her family was herself surrounded by that family. The mother who had gathered children around her table had her children gathered around her at the end.

There is something sacred in that.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells His disciples, “You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come” Those words are not intended to make us afraid of death. They are intended to teach us how to live.

Be ready. Love while you have the opportunity. Forgive while there is time. Say what needs to be said. Do not postpone kindness. Do not allow small

disagreements to become great divisions. Treasure the people God has placed around you.

And for this family, perhaps that is one of the greatest ways you can honor Marianne. Keep gathering around the table. Keep telling the stories. Keep playing the games. Keep laughing. Keep welcoming the next generation. Teach the children and grandchildren about the people who came before them. And when Marianne's name comes up, do not be afraid to smile.

May Marianne rest in the peace of Christ. May the Lord comfort the family she loved so deeply.

And may we hold firmly to the promise of our faith that one day, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the family gathered here on earth may be gathered again in the eternal home of our Father.



SEPTEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6 Ordinary 23 Holy Mass at 10:00 am	7 Labor Day	8	9	10 Ambassadors Meeting via Zoom at 7:00 pm	11	12 Private Confessions noon Altar Servers Meeting at 11:00 am
13 Solemnity of Brotherly Love at 10:00 am Sunday School	14	15 Confirmation Class at 7:00 pm	16	17	18 Music at the Gazebo at 7:00 pm	19 Seniorate Meeting 10:00 am Temperance, Michigan
20 Ordinary 25 Holy Mass at 10:00 am Sunday School	21	22 Confirmation Class at 7:00 pm	23	24 Ambassadors Meeting via Zoom at 7:00 pm	25	26 YOUTH NIGHT
27	28 XXVII General Synod	29 XXVII General Synod	30 XXVII General Synod	1	2	3 Altar Servers Meeting at 11:00 am

OCTOBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	1	2	3 Blessing of Animals at noon
4 Ordinary 27 Holy Mass at 10:00 am Sunday School	5	6 Confirmation Class at 7:00 pm	7	8	9	10 Private Confessions at noon
11 Solemnity of the Christian Family at 10:00 am	12 <i>Columbus Day</i>	13 Confirmation Class at 7:00 pm	14	15	16	17
18 Ordinary 29 Holy Mass at 10:00 am Sunday School Heritage Sunday	19	20 Confirmation Class at 7:00 pm	21	22	23	24 Youth Night
25	26	27 Confirmation Class at 7:00 pm	28	29	30	31