

Parish News

Here is your weekly update.

Due to the long Labor Day weekend there will be no registration this weekend. Families can still call to pre-register their children.

Mark you calendars for the annual Hope House dinner on Saturday Oct 5th. More information to follow.

Stewardship-

Operating expenses for the Parish on a weekly basis are \$6,200.00 Collection.
Stewardship for August 11 Ordinary \$6878.00 Online giving \$1589.96

Online Giving

Hope Appeal

. The Dioceses will announce the assessment for the Parish in September for 2025

Parish Giving-

The Parish is pleased to introduce "Enhancing Stewardship through Electronic Funds Transfer. It is convenient no more searching for a checkbook or Sunday morning stops at the ATM. To excess simply Log on the parish website www.sacredheart-saintmary.org and click on the Parish Giving Log and follow the easy registration instructions. It is Secure.

Events at other Parishes in our area

Please remember we are all a Catholic Community and need to support each other.

Mary, Mother of our Savior Parish invites all teens in the Greater Utica Area to join us for Youth Ministry Nights:

Who: Teens in grades 7 thru 12 from the Greater Utica Area

Where: Mary Mother Of Our Savior Parish, Seton Center, 2 Barton Ave, Utica (look for the welcome flag)

When: Monday evenings 6:30PM-8:00PM
(following the school calendar)

Youth Ministry Kickoff will take place on Monday, September 30th
www.motherofoursavior.org

What are Youth Ministry Nights?

Our Youth Ministry Nights (YMN) consist of games and snacks, followed by a short faith message. Then the teens form small groups to talk about that topic in a safe, honest, authentic way with their peers. This is a highlight of the night, to hear from peers about the faith, to share doubts and questions and to be lifted up and encouraged in their faith in God, all guided by an adult core team member. Then we go to the chapel for a short prayer service and end with an awesome dinner! We also make sure to include social nights once a month. Social Nights may include: Movie Nights, Camp Fires, Holiday Parties, Trips/Teen Outings like GetAir, Retreats, Service Opportunities and more...

For information please reach out to Brittany Wilcox: bwilcox@syrdio.org

Mary Mother Savior Parish

Save the Date-Annual Parish Bazaar
Labor Day Weekend
August 29th-30th

Historic Old St. John's -Utica

Annual Sister Mary Theresa Charity Bazaar
Saturday Sept 7th 12Pm-6pm
Sunday Sept 8th 10am-4pm
Ethnic Foods, Kids Games, Raffles, Crafts, Marketplace and more

St Anthony/St Agnes Church-Utica

Feast of Sts. Cosmas & Damian
Saturday Sept 28 -Mass @4:30pm in the Church
6pm @ outdoor shire & benedictions to follow 6pm Mass-LaBanda Rossa will perform @8pm
and Sunday Sept 29th -Mass @ 9:30 am -Outshire @ 11AM
Grand Procession will begin @ 12ms
Blessing of the Sick offered @ 1:30pm @ the outdoor Shrine
Foof, Beer & Wine, Pizza Fritta, Italian Novelties and Religious Articles Available.
Saturday 5-10pm, Sunday 8am-3pm

Food for thought





Please remember that your child faith formation does not end with a year's program. Share your faith with your children until the 2024-2025 year begins in September. Attending Mass is a wonderful way to continue your family faith journey.

Registration for the Faith Formation 2024-2025-the program which starts on September 22nd is a new revised program attached to the newsletter.

After the 4pm Mass and Sunday, 8am and 11am

Fee of \$25 for 1 child and \$45 per family

If you wish to pre-register your family for the program, please contact me directly

Our Parish follows the Diocese of Syracuse for the Sacrament of First Communion and Confirmation which is the same in all Parishes in the Utica area. The Sacrament of First Communion and Confirmation is a 2 year program in order to receive the sacraments. This is a requirement for both sacraments. If your child is making one of these 2 Sacraments and your child was not Baptised at the Parish, a copy of the Baptismal Certification is required

The 9th & 10th Grade-Confirmation will be a block program offered through the Greater Utica Area which starts in November. Unlike last year where registration was on 1 form for all Parishes, this year, students will be required to sign up for 9th & 10th Grade Confirmation in their Parish. Attached to this email is a Block Program and what Parishes will have the various blocks. Each student is required to choose 5 blocks. A description of each block is also attached.

Here are the parent meeting dates that we invite only 9 and 10 th grade teens and parents to attend. They MUST attend one meeting that is convenient for them in order to hear the block explanation and register for which classes they want. This is 9&10 only

Sunday Sept 15 at Seton Center at Lourdes Campus at 6pm

- Monday Sept 16 at St. John the Evangelist, New Hartford at 6:30
- Sunday Sept 22 at St. Patrick/St. Anthony Chadwick's at 12:15pm
 - Sunday Sept 22 at St. Mary's Clinton at 6pm
 - Sunday Sept 29 at Mt. Carmel at 6pm

The Faith Formation Program is in need of a teacher for 1st Grade as well as 7&8 Grade.. If you wish to help share your faith with the children of the Parish,. Anyone who will help will require Virtus training. If interested please contact me.



Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday @3:15PM prior to Mass

Saturday Vigil Mass: 4PM

Sunday: 8am and 11am

Weekdays 12:15 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Friday.

There will no Mass on Thursday

Let's remember that as Catholics, the importance of attending Sunday Mass. At Mass we stand at mystically at the foot of the cross and witness for ourselves the same self-sacrifice of Jesus, in an unbloody manner. Mass is a celebration of this sacrifice. It is the active participation of all that come together in the place of worship.

1st Reading: JOS 24:1-2A, 15-17,18B

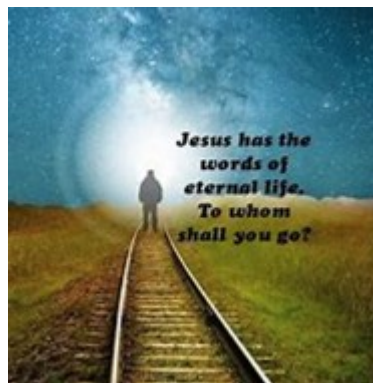
Responsorial Psalms: Ps 34:2-3, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21

2nd Reading: Eph 5:21-32 or 5-2a, 25-32

Gospel: Jn 6:60-69

While these are wonderful reflections, please remember that they are not to be a substitute for the wonderful sermons of Father or Deacon Kirk at Mass.

As always, I try to find wonderful reflections for this week's Gospel reading. I let the Holy Spirit guide me.



This week I found 2 wonderful reflections. 1 is short while the 2nd is powerful

A reading from the gospel according to John 6:60-69

60 After hearing it, many of his followers said, 'This is intolerable language. How could anyone accept it?'

61 Jesus was aware that his followers were complaining about it and said, 'Does this disturb you?'

62 What if you should see the Son of man ascend to where he was before?

63 'It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh has nothing to offer. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.'

64 'But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the outset who did not believe and who was to betray him.

65 He went on, 'This is why I told you that no one could come to me except by the gift of the Father.'

66 After this, many of his disciples went away and accompanied him no more.

67 Then Jesus said to the Twelve, 'What about you, do you want to go away too?'

68 Simon Peter answered, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the message of eternal life,

69 and we believe; we have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.'

Reflection: To Whom Shall we go?

Good News: Jesus has the message of eternal life.

In many gospel passages, we read about the crowd following Jesus but in the last remaining verses of John chapter 6, we read that many people walked away because they found Jesus' teaching about the "Bread of Life" intolerable and unacceptable. Some of them went on to plot His death.

This is what happens if people do not have faith. We need faith to understand and accept the message of salvation. Thanks be to God, Peter and the other apostles stood by Jesus. It is

because they believed in Him even if they only have little understanding of what their master was teaching about.

2nd Reflection

Jesus Is Difficult

Is the easy path or the difficult better? That's really impossible to make a blanket statement on, right? Those of you who know me well might know that one of the pastimes I enjoy is video games. There's a continual conversation around video games about whether you should be playing them in an "easy" mode or a "very difficult" mode. Easy sometimes is dismissed as avoiding a challenge, while people that use an easy mode want to relax with a game and not be frustrated by it. It really depends on who you are and what you're looking for from that past time—a challenge or a diversion.

Sometimes the difficult way for anything in life seems foolish outside of maybe seeking out a sense of accomplishment. Why walk to visit someone in Reno, NV when you could drive or take other transportation? Why make your own paper out of the dead tree in your yard when you could buy a pack at the store? Something being difficult doesn't necessarily make it the better or wiser choice.

But sometimes, it is. Sometimes taking the easy road is just avoiding the difficult necessities.

If you've ever devolved a conversation into small talk when you really needed to discuss something difficult with someone else, you've felt this. If you've known you needed to go to the doctor to get something checked out and you've avoided it because you didn't want to know the truth of what was going on, you've felt this. If you've tried to lose weight or just clean up your diet, but the chips or the fast food were just *right there*, you've felt this.

We talked last week about how Jesus is necessary for us. We cannot remove our sin. We cannot set things right with God. We need Jesus' life, death, and resurrection to accomplish and prove that our sins are forgiven. He has to be the one to fix the mess of our sin and solve the problem of hell. Jesus made it clear to the people that they needed him. They needed the spiritual blessings he alone provides. Jesus had said in our Gospel last week, a few verses before this week's Gospel: **"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.... Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves."** (John 6:51, 53).

Jesus wasn't couching this in easy to understand terms, but he was making the people face a difficult problem. They wanted Jesus to be an easy Savior, one who would save them from hunger, a bread king who would keep them full and satisfied in this life. But that was not why Jesus came. He came to do something more, to do something far better. He came to give *eternal* life. He came to give his life for the sins of the world. He came to rescue all people from hell.

But that's difficult to hear, right? It's difficult for a couple of reasons. First of all, it means that Jesus isn't as concerned about our immediate-term desires as our eternal-term needs. And

for us who so often have blinders on and can only think about the here-and-now, that is not what we want. It would be easier if Jesus was just making every bad thing in our life good, changing every trouble into joy, and making it so we didn't have a care in the world. But that's not what Jesus promises, is it? He promises to work good from bad, but he doesn't promise an absence of bad. In fact, he promises just the opposite. He says life in this sinful world is going to be difficult. But, while we struggle here, we should pick up those difficulties, those crosses, and follow him.

Jesus' insistence on something bigger and greater than tending to earthly needs is difficult for another reason: it forces us to acknowledge things about ourselves that we don't want to acknowledge. None of us likes to admit that we have spiritual needs. I don't want to think about the fact that I've sinned against God. I don't want to think about the fact that the wrong things I've done and the good things I've left undone have earned me hell for eternity. But the necessity of Jesus' work for me doesn't let me avoid that. Following Jesus means facing head-on that I've ruined everything with my sin and am hopeless and powerless on my own.

So, Jesus is difficult. Being around him and associated with him means this is not the easy path. So how do we treat that difficulty then? Are we avoiding it or embracing it?

In our Gospel this morning, we have two different approaches to this difficulty. **When they heard it, many of his disciples** [that is, those following Jesus but not part of the twelve] **said, "This is a hard teaching! Who can listen to it?" ... After this, many of his disciples turned back and were not walking with him anymore.** That's one approach, right? We just leave Jesus behind and say, "I'm taking the easy road. This isn't worth the trouble." We can abandon Jesus altogether or leave him at the periphery of our lives without taking him seriously. We can become Christians in name only, in a family or social sense. Or, we could stop pretending and just abandon the Christian faith altogether. Either way, it probably makes things easier now, right? If we don't have to think about sin and hell, if we don't have to come to grips with our own failures to live up to God's standards, if we can just focus on what we want to do and when and how we want to do it, that makes things easier, at least in the short term.

But what does it do for the long-term, the eternal-term? If we just abandon Jesus wholesale or don't really care what he says about sin, death, and hell and our spiritual needs, we find ourselves trading eternal security for temporary ease, and that's not a good trade at all. Jesus said clearly to those mulling over deserting him, **"The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh does not help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."** In other words, "You might not like it, but you *need* what I am giving you. It may not be easy, but it's absolutely necessary for your eternal security. The things of this life pass away and end up being meaningless. What I do for you and give to you lasts forever."

So the crowd's reaction *en masse* was not really commendable. What's the other option? We see it in Peter, being a spokesman for the twelve. When Jesus asked them, **"You do not want to leave too, do you?"** Peter's response is clear and to the point, **"Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."**

Peter and the rest of that core of disciples had made the choice to go with the more difficult path, to stick with Jesus no matter what the crowds were doing. Now, we know they were not perfect. As John makes clear in our reading here, among the twelve was Judas who would betray Jesus. We know Peter himself failed spectacularly in a time of trial and difficulty when he denied even knowing Jesus while Jesus was on trial before the Jewish leaders.

What does that tell us? Following Jesus is difficult. It's a struggle. You and I? We will fail to do it at times. But that failure doesn't mean it's not worth it nor that we've ruined anything. Because Jesus solves even that failure in what he provides. When we've been tempted to and have followed an easier path rather than following Jesus, Jesus forgives that. When we've stumbled in our dedication to Jesus and not lived our lives the way that we should to thank him for what he's done for us, Jesus forgives that. When we've let sin or anything else become more important to us than what God does for us in Jesus' life and death in our place, Jesus forgives that. Difficult as it is to follow Jesus, his forgiveness restores us at every single misstep and failure. Following Jesus is difficult, but it is not something we do alone.

So, my brothers and sisters, knowing how difficult it is to walk this path, are rocks and encouragements for each other. Is there a church member you've not seen since the pandemic started either because they have stayed away or you have? Call them! Email them! Be a support to them because you know how difficult this path is and how easy it is to give up on it in the best of times. And our current circumstances perhaps make it even more likely that we will move on from Jesus and seek out something different and easier.

Continue to encourage one another as we walk this path together, because there really is nowhere else for us to go. Jesus alone has **the words of eternal life**. May those words that speak of his work in our place be our prime focus and delight now and forever. Amen.

This week's Saints of the week:

The saints are models of human excellence, perfected by the life of Christ and the communication of his Spirit. They demonstrate in their lives how to really live and how to really die. They consistently point to the horizon of love which leads to the fulfillment of all human desire: eternal communion with the Holy Trinity.

August 27th Memorial of St Monica; August 28th Memorial of St Augustine, Bishop and Doctor of the Church; August 29th Memorial of Passion of St. John the Baptist,



While there is no faith formation until September. Below are reflections for the children until they return to the program in fall.

Theme

Following Jesus

Object

None is needed. (You could play "Follow the Leader")

Scripture

"You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." John 6:67-68 (NIV)

When I was a child, "Follow the Leader" was one of my favorite games. Have you ever played "Follow the Leader?" Of course you have! "Follow the Leader" is a game that is played and enjoyed by children all over the world.

The rules are very simple. First, you choose a leader. Then you follow him wherever he goes and do whatever he does. You stomp through puddles, climb over fences, or swing from a tree -- all to stay in the game because nobody wants to be a quitter.

"Follow the Leader" is a great game, but in our daily lives we play follow the leader too. In school, in Church, in sports, in any activity in which we may participate, there are always leaders. Every day we choose which leader we will follow.

Get all the materials for this sermon (free today)

One day Jesus was teaching in the synagogue and he said to the people, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. He who feeds on this bread will live forever." That was a difficult teaching for some to understand. When they heard it, they said, "This is hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Some of them quit following Jesus after that day.

Jesus knew that many people were grumbling and complaining, so he turned to the twelve whom he had chosen to be his disciples and said, "You don't want to leave too, do you?"

As usual, it was Peter who spoke up. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." The disciples had answered the call to follow Jesus. They were not about to turn back now.

There is a song that some of you may know called "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." It goes like this:

I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus.
I have decided to follow Jesus;
No turning back, no turning back.

Have you decided to follow Jesus? It may not always be easy, but once you have decided to follow him, there is no turning back.

Dear Jesus, you have called us to follow you. May we answer, "Yes, Lord, I'll follow you -- no turning back, no turning back." Amen.

Weekly Prayer



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