

## **Make Holiness the Primary Goal of Your Life.**

For the past several years, our parish has given each adult a book for Christmas. This year, our priest gave us a book by Matthew Kelly titled, *The Forgotten Way, The St. James Master Plan*. It is based on eleven words from the *Book of James*: “Someone who does not trip up in speech has reached perfection.” (James 3:2)

The first chapter in his book is titled, “Beware: Proceed with Caution.” Of course that piqued my interest right away. The promise of this book was amazingly simple: You can transform your life by changing the way you speak. I believe this to be true. Your tongue, that small little organ in your body has the power to build up your relationships, or to destroy relationships.

For example, I remember my 86-year-old mother telling me, with tears in her eyes, how her parents had travelled to Missouri so she could meet her cousins and grandmother Taylor. She had several girl cousins, and the grandmother had lined them up and looked each one up and down, then said to my mother, “you are such an ugly child”. Those words had stayed with her for 76 years and haunted her. I told my mom how much I loved her and that she wasn’t ugly, she was a beautiful woman. I am sure that did not erase 76 years of her own grandmother saying such a mean thing.

James is saying that governing your speech is a path to heaven. *The Forgotten Way* is a simple way to stay in tune with God’s will for your life. It’s a way to align yourself with truth and remain grounded in the enduring moral principles. It is a way to sainthood.

He talks about James the Greater, who wrote this passage and since reading this book, I have taken a 30-day challenge to do three things daily:

1. Read the St. James Master Plan (James 3:2b-28) each morning and each evening“
2. Count the number of times I trip up in speech each day and record that number.
3. Journal about the ways I notice my inner and outer life changing.

At the end of my 30 days, I am hoping that my virtue of Patience has increased and is spilling over into other virtues. I pray I am closer to God and taking tiny steps towards sainthood. I want to encourage you to read this book and reflect on making holiness the goal for 2026. Let’s work together in the coming months to walk that path together. Our journey can start by attending the Winter Symposium on January 30<sup>th</sup> at the Our Lady of Good Counsel Retreat House. Please register soon.

May God Bless you in 2026,

Val Able, LDCCW President-Elect