



SAINT JOAN of ARC NEWS

The members of St. Joan of Arc Parish are disciples of Jesus Christ, who recognize God's love for the world & are empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel to all people through joyful worship, life-long education, compassionate service, responsible stewardship, & active community living.

~ Mission Statement - Pentecost 1998 ~

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5th SUNDAY OF EASTER

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit." - Jn 15:1-2

PARISH CENTER
22412 Overlake
Saint Clair Shores, MI 48080
Phone: 586-777-3670
Fax: 586-774-5528
Website: www.sjascscs.org
E-mail: sjainfo@sjascscs.org

SCHOOL
22415 Overlake
Saint Clair Shores, MI 48080
Phone: 586-775-8370
Fax: 586-447-3574
Website: www.stjoan.net
E-mail: info@stjoan.net

**FAITH AND FAMILY
FORMATION OFFICE**
22415 Overlake
Saint Clair Shores, MI 48080
Phone: 586-772-1282
Fax: 586-775-8374
E-mail: repopffice@sjascscs.org

Parish Directory / Liturgy Schedule

ST. JOAN OF ARC DIRECTORY

Parish Center

Phone: 586-777-3670
Fax: 586-774-5528

School

Phone: 586-775-8370
Fax: 586-447-3574

Faith Formation

Phone: 586-772-1282
Fax: 586-775-8374

Pastor

Msgr. G. Michael Bugarin
gmbugarin@sjascs.org

Business Manager

Dina Ciaffone
dciaffone@sjascs.org

Athletic Director

Charles Kaiser
ckaiser@stjoan.net

Associate Pastor

Fr. Andrew Dawson
adawson@sjascs.org

Principal

Kathy Kalich
kkalich@stjoan.net

Office of Faith & Family Formation

Kristine Stewart Hass
khass@sjascs.org

Non-Resident

Associate Pastors / Weekend Assistants:

Fr. Rich Bartoszek
Fr. James Grau

Assistant Principal

Mary Pat Brennan
mbrennan@stjoan.net

Exceptional Children

Mary Cal
mcal@sjascs.org

Permanent Deacons

Deacon Tom Strasz
tstrasz@sjascs.org

Music Director

Catherine Thomas
cthomas@sjascs.org

Youth Group

Linda Lietaert
llietaert@stjoan.net

Deacon Dom Pastore
dpastore@sjascs.org

Anthems Director

Eleonore Ellero-Groth
eleonoraellero@gmail.com



LITURGY SCHEDULE

Weekdays

Monday thru Friday: 7:00 am

Weekends

Saturday: 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm

Sunday: 8:00 am, 10:00 am
& 12:00 pm

Holy Day Masses

Vigil Mass: (evening prior) 7:00 pm
7:00 am, 12:00 pm, 7:00 pm

Reconciliation

Saturdays ~ 11:00am—12:00pm
in the Sister Carol Center (adjacent
to church)

Holy Hour

Thursdays in Church at 7:00 pm

Rosary

Monday - Friday after the 7a mass
outside by the Holy Trinity statue.

PARISH CENTER OFFICE HOURS

The Parish Center is open Monday—Thursday from
8:30am-5pm and Friday from 8:30-4pm.

MASKS ARE MANDATORY WITHOUT EXCEPTION

For mass intentions or any service we may be reached at 586-777-3670 during these hours.

For any urgent needs when we are not open, please call our
after-hours emergency number: 586-777-1342.

Baptisms: Please go to our website (stjoan.church) and fill out
the Baptism request form.

Marriages: Arrangements should be made at the Parish Center
at least six months prior to the desired date. Pre-marriage series
required.

Registration: It is very important that every family and inde-
pendent adult be registered in the Church in order to keep our
records and mailings current. Please contact the Parish Office to
register at your earliest opportunity.

RCIA: Please call the Parish Center (586-777-3670).

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A PARISHIONER?

If you would like to become a parishioner of St. Joan of Arc, at
this time please register at stjoan.church and we will contact you
by phone to get further information OR by calling us at 586-777-
3670 during office hours.

Live Streamed Broadcasts at St. Joan of Arc

Though we have returned to public masses we will
continue our Live Stream Broadcasts of all celebra-
tions.

- Weekdays - 7 am Mass - (Monday thru Friday)
- Saturdays - 4 pm and 6 pm Masses
- Sundays - 8 am, 10 am & 12 pm Masses
- Thursdays - 7 pm Holy Hour

Go to: livestream.stjoan.church to watch all live
streaming and to view archived celebrations.



Microphone Police: Okay, I admit it. I can be obnoxious about audio and microphone issues. I'm forever on the patrol to correct a wayward

microphone sitting on a celebrant's head that isn't picking him up correctly or making sure the audio levels are just right inside Church and now online. It's even more complex now that we have to pay attention to the sound inside the Church AND what is outputted to our livestream congregation. Even though technology issues often become the cause for me going to confession because I lose my patience rather quickly with this stuff (ask any staff member or my family, and they will tell you to stay clear of me when I'm having a bad tech day), I enjoy it and the challenges it all brings.

Recently, we had audio and video issues in Church and online. It wouldn't be a St. Joan experience if we didn't have multiple problems happening simultaneously. The video issues started with a flaky camera. The camera was having problems focusing. I tried calibrating it numerous times, but it wouldn't behave. So I called Rob from RMW Productions (who handles all of our audio and video systems and support) and asked that it be sent out for repair. We replaced it with a new camera that would have eventually gone in the Emmaus Hall (I figured we could put the repaired camera there instead). Rob and sons came and swapped out the camera and copied all the settings to the new one. Copying the settings was essential because the church audio travels through our primary camera to our video mixer and then to the livestream feed. The video image was superb, but I forgot to test the audio feed. Sure enough, the next day we had multiple calls that the audio feed was quieter than usual and that people had to pump up the volume on their phones or TVs to the max. So, I made some additional tweaks to the livestream audio feed to correct the problem.

Then, at last week's holy hour, we had some audio issues in Church that required some tweaks for the Church feed (as opposed to the livestream feed ... see how complicated this can get). You may see me messing around with an iPad during Mass sometimes. It's not that I'm texting, but instead controlling the audio and

video systems from "Control Central." After the tweaks were made and the sound was perfect for that Holy Hour, I inadvertently saved the settings on our master audio scene (the settings are saved as "scenes"). With a simple push of a button by saving that setting on our master scene, I created a ton of new headaches and havoc. This would now require me to make sound tweaks at all of our masses because I wiped out the perfect and master scene. UGH!

Conscious that I messed up the settings and would be hearing about it from multiple sources, I had my iPad in hand the following morning for the 7 AM mass. With my iPad in hand, I could make tweaks throughout Mass as needed. From the get-go, the audio was low in Church. I made a tweak right away and brought up the volume. I eventually sounded fine, but then our Deacon ... and let's just say for the sake of this story his name rhymes with Tom ... was super quiet. The fact he was super quiet boggled my mind. As he was speaking his brief part at the Penitential Rite at the start of Mass, I had my hands on the iPad trying to figure out what and how I messed up his settings too. No matter what I did to the settings, I couldn't get any volume when he spoke. I was really frustrated. As I could sense my frustration boiling, I knew I had to drop it because I was the celebrant and needed to turn my attention back to Mass. I was waiting for the texts to arrive about the volume issues (my mom is our main livestream analyst as she lets me know when we are having issues as they happen so I can correct them), but nothing came, so I thought all was okay.

Mass continued as usual, and I convinced myself I would deal with the audio issues later that day. However, I was still super confused why I couldn't get any volume on the Deacon's microphone. I gave the final blessing, and Deacon Dom spoke his dismissal part. Again, he couldn't be heard in Church. My frustration instantly returned because the lack of sound reminded me that my simple push of a button messed up the master scene on the audio system. As we left the altar, I glanced over to the Deacon's face to see if his microphone was maybe out of place. It wasn't on his one side, so I waited until we rounded the corner to see if his microphone was on the other side of his face. It wasn't there either! WAIT. A. MINUTE! This wasn't a technology problem after all. He just

didn't have his microphone! UGH. I guess we were talking so much in the sacristy before Mass that he forgot to put his microphone on while we were vesting. He figured his daily Mass parts were minimal enough that my microphone or another microphone would pick him up if he spoke loud enough. I couldn't figure out why he was shouting! At least this time, it wasn't a St. Joan tech issue. But then again, the Lord only knows how many other problems I created that morning by pressing all kinds of buttons on that iPad in an attempt to make it work and sound perfect. Thankfully, my iPad didn't cave or crack during Mass under the pressure of my frustrated fingers pushing very hard on the volume control sliders to get some volume. Oh, the behind the scenes life of a Pastor!

Festival/Raffle 2021 Update: Thanks to all who turned in their raffle tickets already. The response thus far has been great. Please remember that you have until 1 PM on Sunday, May 9, to qualify for the early bird drawing. Two lucky winners who have their 100% tickets in by Sunday, May 9, will each win \$1,500! We will draw the lucky winners on Monday, May 10.

As I announced at all the masses last weekend, Father Rich set a lofty goal for us to accomplish. He explained at the end of the 4 PM Mass that given all the financial challenges our parish has experienced because of the pandemic, we should set out sights to do better than last year. Then he said, let's make our goal \$200,000 this year! And so it is ... our goal for 2021 is \$200,00. I think this goal is doable.

One of our seniors and lectors, Bill Taylor, sent me this email: "After reflecting on the challenge to hit a goal of \$200K for raffle sales Dot and I came to this conclusion: we'll double what we sold/purchased last year. Further, we offer this challenge for you to make to individuals or the parish: If everyone who is able doubled their sales, we would very likely exceed the \$200K goal. You may use our commitment as an example of seniors supporting SJA." THANKS for the example and challenge!

Enjoy the week. Know of my prayers.

In Christ,

gmb
gmb@sjascs.org

St. Joan^{of} Arc

Online Giving



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Online Giving account
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Download the Online Giving app
today at OLGApp.com

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Payments

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stjoan.church
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REGISTER THE APP WITH OUR ORGANIZATION ID#

4719



Reporting Sexual Abuse

The Archdiocese of Detroit encourages individuals to report clergy sexual abuse of minors and others – no matter when the abuse occurred. Individuals may contact local law enforcement authorities and/or they may report to the Archdiocese of Detroit by calling the Victim Assistance Coordinator at 866-343-8055 or by emailing vac@aod.org.

In addition, the Michigan Attorney General's Office can be contacted at its toll-free reporting hotline at 844-324-3374 (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or by email at aginvestigations@michigan.gov.

More information about the Archdiocese's efforts to address abuse may be found at protect.aod.org.

SJA Is Asking For Your SMILE!

Make all your Amazon purchases through Amazon Smile!

You can use your current Amazon account and search for St. Joan of Arc. Visit smile.amazon.com there are no additional fees and .5% of all sales will be donated back to our parish/school.



Can Tab Recycling

We are back to recycling can tabs. All proceeds will benefit the Ronald McDonald House Charities.

How you can help: Spread the word! Let your family, friends, co-workers, and classmates know that their small pop tabs, food can tabs all can make a big difference for Ronald McDonald House Charities.

Donations can be dropped off in the buckets at church, brought to the Parish Center, or pick-up may be arranged by calling:

Frank Poeschel at #586-776-8746.



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8th Grade Can and Bottle Drive

The Class of 2022 is now responsible for the can and bottle drive.

This is an important fundraiser that helps defray the cost of their events and Washington trip in 2022.

Bring your returnables in bags to the Parish Center - West SIDE DOOR - (near Father Andrew's House) please. There is a large plastic bin with a lid that they can be placed in..

Or you can arrange a pick-up by calling or texting Matt at 313-683-1972.

Thank you for your support.

The Class of 2022 ~



*Spend an hour
with me.*

-Jesus

HOLY HOURS

*7-8 pm, Thursdays
in the Church*

**and streaming live online at
stjoan.church and on
Facebook @sjascs**

First and third
Thursdays include
Praise and Worship
music, second and
fourth are silent.

Weekly Calendar of Events

Monday, May 3rd

7:00 am Morning Mass - Live Streamed

Tuesday, May 4th

7:00 am Morning Mass - Live Streamed

8:30 am School Mass (5th –8th Gds) Live Streamed

5:00 pm First Communion Mass - Live Streamed

Wednesday, May 5th

7:00 am Morning Mass - Live Streamed

8:30 am School Mass (1st –4th Gds) Live Streamed

Thursday, May 6th

7:00 am Morning Mass - Live Streamed

7:00 pm Holy Hour - Live Streamed

Friday, May 7th

7:00 am Morning Mass - Live Streamed

10:00 am Funeral Mass for Laura Fortier - Live Streamed

Saturday, May 8th

10:00 am Funeral Mass for Elena Roose - Live Streamed

11:00 am Reconciliation

1:00 pm Cooper/Brantigan Wedding-Live Streamed

4:00 pm Mass - Live Streamed

6:00 pm Mass - Live Streamed

Sunday, May 9th **Mother's Day**

8:00 am Sunday Mass - Live Streamed

10:00 am Sunday Mass - Live Streamed

12:00 pm Sunday Mass - Live Streamed

Words on the Word

May 2, 2021 – Tending the Garden

For home gardeners with a green thumb, this is, to be sure, one of the very best times of the year.

But for those who do not – and for those who depend on agriculture to make a living – the numerous variables beyond their control can be daunting.

A recent story in *The Detroit News* described the challenges being faced right now by the domestic apple industry -- problems with the balance of international trade made worse by tariffs; problems with declining levels of demand here in the U.S., and the associated lowering of prices.

And on it goes.

These are the same types of challenges faced in many industries, but for those unfamiliar with high-stakes agriculture, it may be surprising to learn of the complexities.

It may serve as a good reminder then, that whether our business is growing apples, selling Apples, or helping customers compare apples to apples, we are best serving God when we keep him at the center of it all.

“I am the vine, you are the branches,” Jesus tells his disciples in today’s gospel passage from St. John. “Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.”

And how do we remain in him?

Simply by living according to his truth, loving God above all things and tending to the garden he puts in our care; the garden of family, of friends, of co-workers, customers, and others – those who we may know and those we do not – who need to see and experience our witness through our daily actions.

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you,” the gospel passage concludes. “By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”



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Mass Intentions / Weekly Readings

Mass Intentions

Monday May 3, 2021 Saints Philip and James, Apostles (Red)

7:00 a.m. Bertha Conde and John Richardson

Tuesday May 4, 2021 Easter Weekday (White)

7:00 a.m. Joan Armenta and the Family and Friends of the Calisi Family who passed away in the month of May

Wednesday May 5, 2021 Easter Weekday (White)

7:00 a.m. Sr. Margaret Moran, OP and Mary T. Hobig

Thursday May 6, 2021 Easter Weekday (White)

7:00 a.m. Raymond Brazier

Friday May 7, 2021 Easter Weekday (White)

7:00 a.m. Dennis Fleming and Deacon Bob Ovies

Saturday May 8, 2021 Easter Weekday (White)

4:00 p.m. Evalene Elliott, Josephine Lucchese, Sophie Rupinski, Alice Czekaj, Sourava Nehro-Moses, Theresa Bellomo, Bonnie Batche, John Burasinski, Barbara DelGrosso, Lawrence Olivieri, Barbara Conte (Sister of Tom Van Tiem), Josie Danckaert, Special Intentions for the Thomas Family, the J. Champine family and Maxine Uniewski

6:00 p.m. A Special Intention for Dennis Dinser

Sunday May 9, 2021 Sixth Sunday of Easter (White)

8:00 a.m. For the Intentions of St. Joan of Arc Parishioners

10:00 a.m. Elena Roose

12:00 p.m. Antonietta Mazzella, Bianca Calisi, Geraldine Rogier, Helen Jara, Charlotte McQuillan, Juliette Zaranek, C. Pat Walters, Florence Semany, the deceased members of the Giroux and Carroll Families, Angela Maria DiBerardino, Josephine DiCristofaro, Maria Cimini, Virginia Prill, Marguerite Joseph, Rebeca Sandoval, Mary Ann Fannon, Ramsay Scrivo, JoEllen Danckaert, Marilynn Safron, Special Intentions for Margie Sandoval and Dolores Acosta

Weekly Readings

Monday, May 3

1 Corinthians 15:1-8
John 14:6-14

Tuesday, May 4

Acts 14:19-28
John 14:27-31a

Wednesday, May 5

Acts 15:1-6
John 15:1-8

Thursday, May 6

Acts 15:7-21
John 13:15:9-11

Friday, May 7

Acts 15:22-31
John 15:12-17

Saturday, May 8

Acts 16:1-10
John 15:18-21

Sunday, May 9

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48
1 John 4:7-10
John 15:9-17



I Am The Resurrection & The Life

“Heavenly Father, welcome home those who you have called from this world and grant peace and consolation to their families.”

Ed Collins

Anne Peltz

Ursula Corrado

Glen E. Kucway (brother of Virg Stolarski and Doug Kucway)

Mary Anna Sheldon



“I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year: Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown. and he replied: Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way.”

Minnie Louise Haskins

Light of the Spirit Prayer Group
2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at

St Basil the Great
Community Room
22851 Lexington Avenue
Eastpointe, MI 48021

We pray the Rosary @ 6:30 pm, followed by a meeting at 7pm.



We hope that you can join us!

Tire Tracks in the d'Arc



Roots and Shoots: I promised an update on my gardening exploits. Will I never learn? “Don’t plant vegetables until after the last chance of frost!” I

know that. And I knew that Easter week was not that time! But it was 70 degrees! I wanted to get a jump start on it. Maybe *this* would be the year the early Spring would surprise us all by actually staying....

Nope. Not this year. I knew it was risky, but I played the odds. At least it wasn’t ignorance. Imprudence...? Maybe. I prefer to think of it as over-optimistic hopefulness. Either way, it has led to me needing to baby my vegetable garden and its goofy three-legged raised planter box. It’s probably been saved by being raised off the ground. I have been watching the weather, watching the night-time temperatures, wrapping the box at night by varying and ever-improved means, and opening it up to the sunlight in the morning.



Well, praise God....“I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth. Therefore, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who causes the growth.” (1 Cor. 3:6-7)

By the grace of God, my seedings appear to have survived frost, snow, hurricanes, tornadoes.... I exaggerate. But, although I was out of town at the end of last week, the coldest of the weather was already behind us (we hope) and I came back anxious to check on my garden.

And lo and behold, poking out of the soil were these tiny shoots.



Only by the grace of God; sure I planted and watered, but it’s always a miracle to watch new growth in the Spring. It amazes me how these apparently dead-looking seeds somehow know when the time and conditions are just right to begin to turn into something that will produce a great fruit (or vegetable!).

And so it is in the spiritual life. As we hear in today’s Gospel of John, the branch that bears fruit is the one that the Lord tends to. We must labor to put in the necessary work to grow in virtue, but we must also accept that the Lord is the grower, and be willing to be pruned of anything that is holding us back and keeping us from producing good fruit in our lives. And that good fruit is ripe when it is seen in action, not just heard in our words and pious thoughts.

The Father will “prune” our fruitful branches so that we will bear even more fruit. The Greek word John uses, which is translated as “prune” literally means “to cleanse.” So for us, Jesus’ analogy takes on a deeper spiritual meaning in that the Father is waiting to cleanse his faithful disciples of anything impure in our lives. We may be aware of our short-comings, but we should not be discouraged by them if we are sincerely trying to ensure that Christ is the vine we draw strength from. “God is greater than our hearts,” St. Paul writes in the second reading and He understands the difficulties we encounter.

That process of cleansing will happen when we remain attached to the vine that is Jesus Christ. Jesus says it’s a matter of “remaining in Him.” He’s not asking us to for much. He’s not asking us to become great in the eyes of the world or even that the universal church will know our names. He’s not asking us to become St. Teresa of Calcutta or Pope St. John Paul II. He’s just asking us to “remain in Him” - to *be* with Him. He’s just asking that we choose to make Him our guiding light, and that we

view our actions in that light. What Jesus says is true; to let anything else be our guide is to allow ourselves to be led astray and away from the light of truth. And how do we know that we are staying in the truth? St. Paul says it’s a matter of keeping God’s commandments, which are summed-up simply in two: love God and an active love of each other. If we are honestly striving to keep these central in all our actions, we can be sure that we “remain in Him and He in us.” And then the consolation of the Holy Spirit will be visibly at work in our lives, as it was in the early church, reported in the Acts of the Apostles.

Time for a Coffee?: Other than my vegetables in the garden, I have one house plant. Well, I have a cactus too that someone gave me. I hope I don’t kill that, but it’s happened before. A friend has been cultivating a banana plant for me for a while, but right now my only house-plant is an Arabica coffee plant. I rarely drink coffee, and that’s fortunate. The plant is supposed to produce coffee beans after 5-6 years. I’ve kept it alive now for about 6 years (that alone is evidence that God is in control of our world). But despite my efforts, not a bean.... Not even the merest suggestion of it wanting to squeeze out a bean. But this plant and I have been through some trials together. 60% of its stalks died in seminary, oddly. I think it’s forgiven me for “The Great Drought” of August 2020, when I went on a fishing trip and forgot to ask anyone to water it. Its withered leaves have spung back green and fresh (except the 80% that fell off). So it’s spindly and tall, void of beans, but continues to slowly grow new leaves. I’m hopeful that I may have offered it a new lease of life by re-planting it in a bigger planter last week, with fresh potting soil. I’m now confident it will be easily mistaken for a Keurig machine within weeks! (Humor me please). What I’ll do with all that abundant supply of coffee, I’m not so sure. Maybe I’ll have to open my own coffee shop and become a priest barista. Either way, it shows me that there’s always hope, in spite of me. In spite of my decidedly un-green fingers, there is always hope for life, for fruitfulness. God is in charge. He is the vine grower. Jesus is the vine. We do what little we can and entrust the rest to Him. But always, always, remain in Him. By this we can bear much good fruit.

You are in my prayers this week.

Fr. Andrew adawson@sjascs.org

An Act of Spiritual Communion

It has long been a Catholic understanding that when circumstances prevent one from receiving Holy Communion, it is possible to make an Act of Spiritual Communion which is a source of grace.

Spiritual Communion means uniting one's self in prayer with Christ's sacrifice and worshipping him in his Body and Blood. The most common reason for making an Act of Spiritual Communion is when a person cannot attend Mass.

Acts of Spiritual Communion increase our desire to receive sacramental Communion and help us avoid the sins that would make us unable to receive Holy Communion worthily.

A Prayer for Spiritual Communion

*My Jesus, I believe that you are present
in the Most Holy Sacrament.*

I love you above all things and I desire to receive you in my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally,

Come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace you as if you were already there

And unite myself wholly to you.

Never permit me to be separated from you.

Amen.

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER – MAY 9 B

Reading 1 – Acts of the Apostles

When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and, falling at his feet, paid him homage. Peter, however, raised him up, saying, "Get up. I myself am also a human being."

Then Peter proceeded to speak and said, "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him."

While Peter was still speaking these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word. The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter responded, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have?" He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Responsorial Psalm 98

R. The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds; His right hand has won victory for him, his holy arm.

R. The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

The LORD has made his salvation known: in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice. He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness toward the house of Israel.

R. The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation by our God. Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands; break into song; sing praise.

R. The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

Reading 2– 1 John

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.

Alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia.

Whoever loves me will keep my word, says the Lord, and my Father will love him and we will come to him.
Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel – John

Jesus said to his disciples: "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another."

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

May 2, 2021

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:26-31 | 1 Jn 3:18-24 | Jn 15:1-8

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

Today's readings are at once challenging and reassuring. Challenging, because we are to remain in Christ, by "[keeping] his commandments and [doing] what pleases him"; and reassuring, because we know that the Holy Spirit is with us and we can "have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask." As Jesus says to us, "I am the vine, you are the branches ... without me you can do nothing." Through the Eucharist, the sacraments of the Church, Sacred Scripture, and in belonging to a faith community, God gives us many ways to grow closer to Jesus, and to direct our life toward him. In the pruning of sinful habits from our lives and building us up, through grace, to walk in the fear of the Lord, God transforms our hearts so that we remain in him, and he in us. And with the help of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to speak out boldly in the name of the Lord.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Just as the new life and growth of springtime is already very visible in many parts of the United States, today's first reading describes a kind of springtime in the Church. Even as Saul faced multiple death threats, he continued to boldly proclaim the Good News. "The church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers." Today, many Christians around the world face persecution for their beliefs or live in cities or countries where violence, poverty, or hunger threaten their lives. We, too, face challenges and hardships. Life is not easy! Let us find "consolation" in the Holy Spirit and build up the Church and one another through prayer, generosity, and friendship.

PRAY Consider spending an hour with Jesus in Eucharistic adoration. Find a small way to build up the Church beyond your family and parish by praying for Christians in other parts of the world.



Getty Images / iStockphoto

GOSPEL MEDITATION

ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

"Spiraling out of control," is a phrase that can easily describe the current display of human existence. In addition to the violence, unrest, uneasiness and turmoil that are common elements of our daily news, other essential pieces are misplaced or missing. Many lack an objective center around which to order and structure their lives or a clear set of definable goals or mores to act as guideposts and life directives. It appears that "feelings" have become a "new god" and traditional structures and ideals set aside. It is almost as if history only shows that we got this whole thing wrong and many are determined to finally set things right. The real truth, however, is that while wrongs and errors are certainly a part of our often-checkered past, it is hardly the case that all was wrong. It is not our task to rewrite the history of our lives, but to learn from mistakes that were made, and preserve the perennial wisdom at the root of our successes. Learning is an essential part of being human.

The question becomes, however, from whom do we learn? Some have such a hard time placing God in that position, but that is precisely where God needs to be. God is the Master Teacher from whom all of humanity learns and gets its cues. It is in and through this relationship with the Gardener of Life that we



are fashioned and pruned into the people we are intended to be and can be. It is only in God that we are able to find our best selves. Sadly, many think that religion too, as well as history in general, has also gotten all this wrong. Yet, our resurrection faith tells us differently. We are reminded, today especially, that we are meant to remain in Christ as Christ remains in us. We are also reminded that Jesus, the Incarnate God, is the vine upon which we grow, the branches that flow from the source of God's life.

Giving up our will to God's can be a painful endeavor. It is not easy to set our own desires and wants aside and allow God to step in and direct

and guide our growth. But this is the only way to prevent deadly weeds from overtaking us and bringing us to a place of self-destruction. God's commandments are the very guideposts and benchmarks we need, yet many seek to remove them from all public view because they appear to limit self-expression and suppress what is considered by many to be "human freedom." They are the only way we can find freedom, however. And, until we learn this fundamental lesson, we will continue to spiral out of control, never really knowing who we are, what our potential can be or how life really can be lived. We will not know peace.

"Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing." - Jn 15:4-5

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MAY 2, 2021

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BRANCHING OUT ISN'T ALWAYS WHAT IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE

"That's a really beautiful tree branch. Man, would you look at the bark on that thing? The others are real duds, but that low-hanging branch has really got it all together."

I've never heard anyone say this. Maybe I just need to hang out with more arborists, but I can't recall ever hearing someone admire the particular beauty of a single branch. When someone comments on a tree, it's usually the whole tree — perhaps a visual element of it, like the color of the leaves or its height. But people don't usually zero in on one branch.

Maybe that's because usually, if one branch is looking a little weak, chances are every other branch is, too.

The Bible tells us that when we bear fruit as good everyday stewards, it is for the Father's

glory. We are the branch on His magnificent tree. What we have is from Him, and what we do likewise points back to Him. We also tend to reflect how well the other branches around us are incorporating the nutrients coming their way. That's all fine and good in theory. In practice, it can be an arduous exercise in humility.

When I do something virtuous or charitable or kind, there is a part of me that wants to stand out for it. I think that's true for all of us. We've given of ourselves in some way or overcome some human temptation to accomplish a little bit of good in this world, and even though we know God sees us, we'd really love for everyone else to see it, too.

It's a struggle, for sure. But we need to remember that our fruit belongs to the whole tree.

—Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

IS GOSSIP A MORTAL SIN?

To really ask this question, we must consider the Eighth Commandment: "You shall not bear false witness."

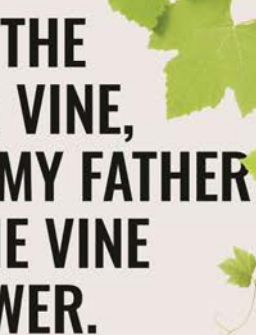
In its reflections on this commandment, The Catechism of the Catholic Church invites us to not only think about what bearing "false witness" means, but to also consider how we understand the truth and how we communicate more broadly. This is why so much of this section of the Catechism has to do with the gift of language. With this in mind, we will notice that the word "gossip" isn't used by the Catechism. Instead, we find the words "detraction" and "calumny," which are actually two forms that gossip can take, and both can be quite serious.

First, detraction is the of revealing "another's faults and failings to persons who did not know them," without morally valid reasons. Calumny, by extension, is saying something about another person that is untrue, and it is sinful because it "harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgements" (see no. 2477).

In all of our communication, we have to always recognize that we have a moral obligation to the

truth and to always work to protect the reputation and honor of our neighbors (see no. 2479).

Gossip can, in fact, prove to be a very serious sin. After all, the Catechism reminds us: "No one is bound to reveal the truth to someone who does not have the right to know it" (no. 2489). When we have gossiped, especially if we are aware we have damaged another person's good name or reputation, we want to make every effort to undo the damage we have done, including seeking the grace and forgiveness offered in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



**I AM THE
TRUE VINE,
AND MY FATHER
IS THE VINE
GROWER.**

John 15:1

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MAY 2, 2021

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Bringing Home the Word +

Fifth Sunday of Easter (B)
May 2, 2021

The Vine and the Branches Become One

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Jesus himself picked the image of the vine to describe the reality of our being united to him and the Father. And this was not lost on early Christians. One of the first images they used to mark their graves was the vine and the branches.

An amazing thing about a vine and its branches is that you can't tell the difference between them. Look at a grapevine and try to determine which is the branch and which is the vine or trunk. You can't, since it appears as one seamless reality. Jesus invites us to be so

close to him that we appear to be just like him—"other Christs," as our name Christian suggests!

Second, the sap that springs from the vine, runs through the branches, and matures in the fruit is all the same. The life in Jesus and the life in us as Christians are the same. He has given us the same Spirit that animated him, the Holy Spirit.

This is why Jesus can guarantee that, if we remain in him by listening to his word and following his Spirit, we will definitely bear much fruit. His word and Spirit cannot remain sterile in us.

The most important result of being united to Jesus and bearing fruit is that not only will we be united to him in this life, but this friendship will last for all eternity. That's why early Christians put vines on their tombs. +

*Jesus guarantees that,
if we remain in him by
listening to his word
and following his Spirit,
we will bear much fruit.*

A Word from Pope Francis

Let us not forget that the Our Father is the prayer of the poor. Our asking for bread expresses our entrustment to God for our basic needs in life. Everything that Jesus taught us in this prayer expresses and brings together the cry of all who suffer from life's uncertainties.

—First World Day of the Poor,
November 19, 2017



Sunday Readings

Acts 9:26–31

The Church...was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers.

1 John 3:18–24

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

John 15:1–8

[Jesus said,] "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

ONE? TWO? REFLECTION

- Do I find ways to regularly read and hear the word of God?
- What symbols would sincerely represent the way I live my life?

Beyond Gun Control

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSSR

Michael couldn't wait to tell his second-grade friend what had happened to him. "A policeman pointed a gun at my head this morning!" Michael's friend was scared, so he told the teacher, who told the principal, who called Michael's parents. His parents explained that their home had



been raided at 6:00 AM by federal agents, guns drawn. One had pointed a gun at Michael. An uncle living with the family had been arrested and charged with illegal sale of semiautomatic weapons.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops called for gun control in their document *Community and Crime: A Statement of the Committee on Social Development and World Peace*. That document was followed by *Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*. It reiterated their support for legislative efforts to protect society from the violence associated with easy access to deadly weapons. Since then, the bishops affirmed their hope that any government action on gun-violence prevention would lead to greater respect for human life.

Like it or not, violence is part of our lives. Violent TV programs, video games, and movies are a source of entertainment

for many. War, insurrection, and mob scenes are reported on the news, in newspapers, and across the internet. Veterans are haunted daily by the trauma of battles fought decades ago, and thousands of soldiers continue to fight in conflicts around the world. Domestic violence is a reality for

many, and the tragedies of Littleton, Aurora, Columbine, Newtown, and Las Vegas have left an indelible mark on the American soul.

Even the Word of God is filled with violence—it can be found throughout the Hebrew and Christian Testaments. Prophets, priests, and kings are guilty of it; innocent and God-fearing men, women, and children are victims of it—and it's often attributed to God. Even our salvation was won through a horrific and violent act. We can't escape or explain violence away. It's a reality.

Our society encourages and celebrates overindulgence. People overeat, overspend, overwork, overachieve, overcommit, overdose, and overreact. It seems a bit like overkill to say this—but if you can name it, you can indulge in it.

Many turn to gun control as a remedy, and maybe there should be stricter government oversight of the availability and use of firearms. But a

deeper problem exists, one much greater than uncontrolled access to weapons. The inability to manage powerful emotions and urges—the absence of self-control—can have life-threatening and life-ending consequences. Self-discipline and self-restraint are more than indicators of healthy and mature growth and development; they are imperative to saving lives and building and maintaining true and lasting peace.

As a nation, we've got a gun to our head—it's time to get control of ourselves. +

Even the Word of God is filled with violence—it can be found throughout the Hebrew and Christian Testaments.



Risen Jesus, your abiding presence gives us hope. Help me to be a loving presence to others.

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 3–8

Monday, Sts. Philip and James:
1 Cor 15:1–8 / Jn 14:6–14

Tuesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 14:19–28 / Jn 14:27–31a

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 15:1–6 / Jn 15:1–8

Thursday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 15:7–21 / Jn 15:9–11

Friday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 15:22–31 / Jn 15:12–17

Saturday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 16:1–10 / Jn 15:18–21

Bringing Home
the Word 

May 2, 2021

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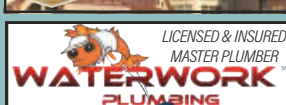
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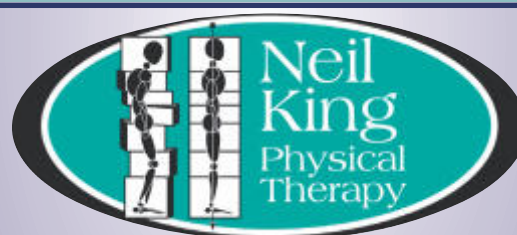
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