

MONDAY: Mark 6:56 It would have been truly awe-inspiring to witness Jesus healing the sick. The people who witnessed this clearly had never seen anything like it before. For those who were sick, or whose loved ones were sick, each healing would have had a powerful effect upon them and upon their whole family. Though Jesus' physical healings were unquestionably an act of charity given to those who were sick and to their families, they obviously weren't the most important thing Jesus did. And it's important for us to remind ourselves of that fact. Jesus' healings were primarily for the purpose of preparing the people to listen to His Word and to ultimately receive the spiritual healing of the forgiveness of their sins. In your own life, if you were seriously ill and were given the option to receive either a physical healing or to receive the spiritual healing of the forgiveness of your sins, which would you choose? Clearly, the spiritual healing of the forgiveness of your sins is of infinitely greater value. It will affect your soul for all eternity. The truth is that this far greater healing is available to us all, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In that Sacrament, we are invited to "touch the tassel on his cloak," so to speak, and be spiritually healed. For that reason, we should have a much deeper desire to seek out Jesus in the confessional than the people of Jesus' day had for physical healing. And yet, too often we ignore the priceless gift of God's mercy and healing offered so freely to us.

TUESDAY: Mark 7:6-8 It seems quite clear that Jesus' instant fame led these religious leaders to jealousy and envy, and they wanted to find fault with Him. As a result, they carefully observed Jesus and His disciples, and they noticed that Jesus' disciples were not following the traditions of the elders. So the leaders began questioning Jesus about this fact. Jesus' response was one of severe criticism of them. He quoted Isaiah the prophet who said, "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts." Jesus strongly criticized them because their hearts were lacking true worship. The various traditions of the elders were not necessarily bad, such as the careful ceremonial washing of one's hands before eating. But these traditions were empty if they were not motivated by a deep faith and love of God. The external following of human traditions was not truly an act of divine worship, and that's what Jesus wanted for them. He wanted their hearts to be set ablaze with a love of God and with true divine worship. What our Lord wants of each one of us is worship.

WEDNESDAY: Mark 7:14-15 What is within you? What is in your heart? Today's Gospel concludes with a list of vices that sadly come from within: "evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly." Of course, none of these vices are desirable when looked at objectively. They are all quite repulsive. And yet too often they are sins that people deal with on a regular basis to one extent or another. In this Gospel, by naming this long list of vices, Jesus does us an incredible act of mercy. He rattles us and calls us to step back and look at sin for what it is. Jesus also makes it clear that when you live one or more of these vices, you become defiled. You become greedy, a liar, cruel, a gossip, hateful, arrogant, etc. Objectively speaking, no one wants this.

THURSDAY: Mark 7:25-26 A parent's love is powerful. And the woman in this story clearly loves her daughter. It is that love that drives this mother to seek out Jesus in the hope that He will free her daughter from the demon who possessed her. Interestingly, this woman was not of the Jewish faith. She was a Gentile, a foreigner, but her faith was very real and very deep. When Jesus first encountered this woman, she begged Him to free her daughter from the demon. Jesus' response was at first surprising. He said to her, "Let the children be fed first. For it is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs." In other words, Jesus was saying that His mission was first to the people of Israel, the chosen people of the Jewish faith. They were the "children" of whom Jesus was speaking, and the Gentiles, such as this woman, were the ones referred to as "the dogs." Jesus spoke this way to this woman not out of rudeness but because He could see her deep faith, and He wanted to give her an opportunity to manifest that faith for all to see. And so she did. The woman responded to Jesus, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's scraps." Her words were not only exceptionally humble but were also based on deep faith and a deep love for her daughter. As a result, Jesus responds with generosity and immediately frees her daughter from the demon. In our own lives, it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking we deserve the mercy of God.

FRIDAY: Mark 7:37 This line is the conclusion to the story of Jesus healing a deaf man who also had a speech impediment. The man was brought to Jesus, Jesus took him off by himself, cried out "*Ephphatha!*" (that is, "Be opened!"), and the man was cured. And though this was an incredible gift to this man and an act of great mercy toward him, it also reveals that God wants to use us to draw others to Himself. On a natural level, we all lack the ability to hear the voice of God when He speaks. We need the gift of grace for this. As a result, on a natural level, we are also incapable of speaking the many truths that God wants us to speak. This story teaches us that God also desires to heal our ears so as to hear His gentle voice and to loosen our tongues so that we can become His mouthpiece. But this story is not only about God speaking to each one of us; it also reveals our duty to bring others to Christ who do not know Him. The friends of this man brought him to Jesus. And Jesus took the man off by himself. This gives us insight into how we help others to come to know our Lord's voice.

SATURDAY: Mark 8:2-3 Jesus' primary mission was a spiritual one. He came to set us free from the effects of sin so that we could enter the glories of Heaven for all eternity. His life, death and resurrection destroyed death itself and opened the way for all who turn to Him to be saved. But Jesus' love for the people was so complete that He was also attentive to their physical needs. One lesson we can learn from this story is that of our priorities in life. Oftentimes, we may tend to have our priorities reversed. Of course, taking care of the necessities of life is important. We need food, shelter, clothing and the like. We need to care for our families and provide for their basic needs. In this Gospel, the people who were with Jesus chose to put their faith first. They chose to remain with Jesus despite the fact that they did not have food to eat. Perhaps some people had left a day or two earlier, deciding that the necessity of food took precedence. But those who may have done this missed out on the incredible gift of this miracle in which the entire crowd was fed to the point of being completely satisfied.

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THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME FEBRUARY 5, 2023

Our mission is to form Christian Communities that will glorify God by our loving and serving one another, and to extend our love, support, and compassion to the needy.

**Most Rev. Jacques Fabre-Juene
Bishop of Charleston**

**Rev. Jesuprathap Narichetti
(Father JP)
Pastor**

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(843) 731-1162**

MASS SCHEDULE

**Sunday 8am & 9:30am
Wednesday 9:00am
Friday* 9:00am
*Adoration following Mass
on the 1st Friday**

RECONCILIATION

**Sunday 7:15-8am
Wed/Fri 8:30-9am**

**Diocesan Office of Protective Services
(843) 261-0430**

**Diocese Victim Assistance Ministries
(843) 856-0748**

PARISH NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

WELCOME: We welcome all our visitors to St. Mary's! We trust you will find us a welcoming and spiritual community as you join us in celebrating the Mass today. Coffee is available in the Parish Center after Mass. We look forward to getting to know you!

There will be no 9:00 AM Mass this Wednesday.

MASS INTENTION: Mass today is being celebrated for the repose of the soul of Florence Neary.

BAKE SALE: Bake sale will be held **NEXT SUNDAY** following both Masses. Please bring your bake goods to the Parish Center before Mass.

OYSTER ROAST: TODAY! We will set up around 2PM, with oysters ready by 3PM on the church grounds. This is an annual event which Katie and Matt Wolfe generously provide, prepare and serve oysters. Please bring a crock pot of food or a dish to share large enough to feed your family. Iced tea and lemonade will be provided. We welcome volunteers in the set up and clean up. We look forward to meeting our newest parishioners.

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK: Please not meeting has changed to **Thursday, February 9 at 6PM there will be a meeting of the Liturgy Committee.** All who attended in November are encouraged to attend. If you are serving in any capacity that assists in the presentation of the Mass (i.e., usher, flowers, sacristy, lector, etc.) please try to attend. We will be discussing preparations for Lent, Easter and the next six-month period of Ordinary Time. We will be organizing a contact sheet to assist in contacting those responsible for each function in the Church.

PARISH COUNCIL: The meeting will be held **Monday, February 13th at 6:30 pm** in the Parish Center, all parishioners are invited to attend.



Pray For Us: Trina Aquino Haj, Hazel Basilio, Chester Broton, Jr., Betty Butler, Allison Condon Chappell, Jack Cooper, Cherry Constable, Patrick Coryell, Maryanne Cortez, J. Gould, Jacob Matthew Dupree, Frances Enos, Ken Fleming,

Elizabeth Good, Hugh Gorman, Sally Gorman, Krist Groover, Buddy Green, Petrina Jacques, Henry Kerr, Mary & Rod Jaros, Eileen Killenberger, Yvonne Livingston, Gus Long, John Lucas, Susan Mance Kelly Meyer, Ann Mitchum, Jane Morley, Suzy Patterson, Nirmala Mary Narichetti, John North, Sarah Proulx, Elizabeth Smith, Landon Smith, Bill Smyer, Diane Stokes, Eloise Stroud, Larry Walker, Ellie Wilson, Mary Wilson, Mike Winn, Edward Wolf, Jose Yabut, and All Parishioners of our parish family.

TOGETHER IN HOLINESS: Come celebrate your marriage with a special Bilingual Anniversary Conference. The conference will be held on **February 11 at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 11am-6pm, at 5 St. Teresa Drive in Charleston,** there will be a dynamic presentation, Mass, childcare (2-12yrs), Eucharistic Adoration and Reconciliation. We are asking that all who plan to attend please register so that we can have an accurate count for refreshments and have your information if you desire a certificate. Registration link: bit.ly/anniversaries2023 (English y Espanol). For more information, please contact Natalie Burt, nburt@charlestandioocese.org or 803-899-4946. Registration cost is \$64 a couple or \$40 per individual.

Record of Faithfulness

January 29, 2023

ENVELOPES	AMT	SECOND COLLECTION	AMT
PARISHIONERS	\$7050	PARISH CHARITY	\$698
LOOSE	\$ 62		
VOTIVE			
SUB TOTAL	\$7050	SUB TOTAL	\$698
TOTAL	\$7810		

8am	31	9:30am	51	Total	82
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GOSPEL REFLECTION

We've all experienced a time when the lights went out and we were in darkness. In this case, if you were to light a candle and place it in the center of the room, its light would make quite a difference. One candle in a darkened room transforms that room, making it a more comfortable dwelling place.

Using that image, consider the first line in Jesus' metaphor above. "You are the light of the world." Try to see yourself as that single candle in the darkness. That is your mission. Just as a single candle can give light to an entire room, so you are capable of being a source of light for many others.

One of the primary missions we have all received in life is to allow the light of God's grace to "shine before others." The result of fulfilling this mission is that others will see our good deeds that were inspired by God, and they will, in turn, glorify the Father in Heaven. Thus, your mission of radiating the light of Christ for others results in God being praised and glorified.

This full statement of Jesus is especially helpful to consider when we struggle with pride. Pride is a way of pointing to ourselves. It's an act of selfishness by which we place ourselves in the spotlight as a way of trying to become the object of others' praise. But what Jesus tells us is that when we properly fulfill our role of being the light of the world, when we radiate the Light of Christ, others will be inspired not to praise us but rather to glorify God as He acts through us. This is quite a difference.

With that being said, the beautiful thing about God being glorified is that God often wants us to share in that glory. That means that if you were to do an act of charity for another, and they were deeply grateful to you and thanked you, their "thank you" is an act of glorifying God when it is understood that you acted out of a love of God. God is praised when we, His children, give and receive love and honor between each other on account of our faith.

Reflect, today, upon two things. First, think about those upon whom God has called you to shine His light. Who is it in your life who needs an act of love, charity, mercy, forgiveness or compassion? Commit yourself to becoming God's light for them in their darkness. Second, think about those who have shone the Light of Christ upon you. When this has happened, how did you respond? Hopefully your response was one of a gratitude that not only returns love to the other but also glorifies God through your gratitude. Be the light of the world to a world in need and seek out that light as it shines brightly through others. This is the only way to step out of the darkness that constantly tries to pervade us.