16\textsuperscript{TH} SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

When Jesus disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. Mark 6:34
Friends,

I have had the privilege of celebrating many wonderful weddings throughout my years as a priest. It is not only an exciting day for the couples, but it is also fulfilling to witness how happy the parents of the bride and groom are because their sons or daughters have chosen to be married in the Catholic Church. Up until recently, it was understood and expected that this was the natural progression following baptism, First Communion, and confirmation. However, I can’t tell you how often I have conversations with parents who are disappointed because their adult children have decided to celebrate their marriages apart from the Church. I know how heartbreaking this is for many of these parents who dreamed of witnessing their children’s vows in the parish church where they have centered their spiritual lives for years and – in many cases – for generations.

We realize that many younger people who were raised Catholic have a very different understanding of religion and the role it will play in their lives. There are many reasons for this. As many of our younger people have grown up, the Church has played a lesser role in their lives, and they don’t have the same emotional, physical, or spiritual relationship with the institution that we identify with so strongly. I believe this is true of all organized religions. When I tell you that the average parish in the Archdiocese that once had 60-70 weddings a year may now have 5-10, I am not exaggerating. There are a few exceptions. Personally, I feel very badly about this because it’s such an honor for me and the Catholic Church to be invited to celebrate the gift of married love with faith-filled families.

As we know, God is beyond organized religion, and so God is very capable of blessing a marriage apart from a church ceremony. So, even though a couple’s wedding may not be recognized by the Catholic Church, it may be recognized in God’s eyes. Today, if two baptized Christians (including at least one Catholic) want their marriage recognized by the Catholic Church, it must take place at a church. However, if a Catholic is marrying a Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, Humanist, or another non-baptized person, the ceremony may take place outside of the church building and the Church will recognize the marriage as long as a priest presides and dispensation has been requested and granted. It is as true a sacrament as it would be if it took place in the church. In some cases, the priest does not even have to be present. That is possible because the Church recognizes that some people of other faiths may be offended by symbols at the church. In addition, through the years, I have officiated many weddings as well for the people originally married outside the Church by a justice of the peace, or a family member or friend who become licensed for the day. These couples may decide one day to have their marriage blessed or recognized by the Church. This can be done very simply. It takes place in a church and is similar to the renewal of vows, usually with a small group of family or friends present. Also, no matter what the marital status is, couples are always welcome to have their children baptized in the Catholic Church.

How blessed are we as a Church to welcome and support any family who chooses to celebrate intimate moments with us. What a wonderful opportunity to experience God’s presence together. The sacraments are sacred to us.

Enjoy life!

Fr. Ron Coyne
GENTLY USED SECOND HAND ITEMS

A parishioner has volunteered to collect gently used second hand items and sell them at his flea market with all proceeds going to our parishes. This gentleman has a history of success in this area and has done this type of ongoing fundraiser for other organizations and churches in the past. If you are interested in getting rid of some old furniture or other items, please consider reaching out to Jim to arrange for pick up. Call 979-360-8796. Please no broken or damaged items.
**METHUEN CATHOLIC**
THE PARISHES OF ST. LUCY & ST. MONICA

**FAITH FORMATION**
SACRAMENT PREPARATION

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

**DEVOTIONS SCHEDULE**

**Tuesday evenings 6-6:30pm**
Rosary Prayer Group for Priests
Gethsemane Chapel - all are welcome to attend

**Wednesday mornings 9:30-11am (ZOOM)**
Contact Bonnie Doherty at bonnieocds@gmail.com

**EUCHARISTIC ADORATION**
Wednesdays - to resume in September

**Thursday evenings 6-6:30pm (ZOOM)**
Rosary for world peace & individual intentions.
Contact Bonnie Doherty at bonnieocds@gmail.com

**EUCHARISTIC ADORATION**
Saturdays 9am-12pm Gethsemane Chapel

Visit methuencatholic.org to register
Classes for Kindergarten through High School meet Sunday mornings
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Saints Joachim and Anne

Not mentioned in the Bible, Joachim and Anne are first named as the parents of Mary in the apocryphal Protoevangelium of James, which may date from the second century. In this story, they are old and childless, like the Old Testament Hannah, mother of Samuel, when angels deliver the news that Anne will conceive a child. Anne was an especially popular saint in medieval England, and her feast was celebrated in the West by 1350; Joachim’s feast was authorized or suppressed by various popes, but was joined with Anne’s in 1969. They are the patrons of married couples; Anne is also the patron of childless women, expectant mothers, and miners.

“Mary grew up in the home of Joachim and Anne; she was surrounded by their love and faith; in their home she learned to listen to the Lord and to follow his will. Saints Joachim and Anne were part of a long chain of people who had transmitted their faith and love for God, expressed in the warmth and love of family life, down to Mary, who received the Son of God in her womb and who gave him to the world, to us. How precious is the family as the privileged place for transmitting the faith!”

—Pope Francis, Angelus, July 26, 2013
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Fr. Michael Harvey Parochial Vicar
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Deacon John Pierce Senior Deacon
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Donna Henderson Principal
Ann Marie Collins Administrative Assistant
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BAPTIZMS
2nd Sunday of the month, 2:00pm at St. Monica’s | 3rd Sunday of the month, 2:00pm at St. Lucy’s
Please call the Parish Offices at least 2 months in advance to schedule.

MARRIAGES
Please call the Parish Offices at least six months prior to the proposed wedding date and before booking a reception hall.

MASS SCHEDULE
SAT 4 pm (VIGIL) both parishes
SUN 9 am & 12 pm St. Monica
10:30 am St. Lucy
MON/TUES/THURS/FRI 9 am St. Lucy
SATURDAY 9 am St. Monica

CONFESSIONS
SAT 3:30-4:30pm at both parishes

BULLETIN DEADLINE
Mondays @ 10 am. Please email all bulletin notices to parishoffice.stlm@gmail.com.

Yes, I CAN... We are in need of Spaghetti Sauce, Canned Beans, Canned Fruit, Peanut Butter, Jelly, Boxed Spaghetti, Mac & Cheese, Canned Pasta, Pancake Mix, Syrup, and Soups. Donations can be dropped off anytime at the entrances to St. Lucy Church and the side door of Gethsemane Chapel at St. Monica Church.

Weekly Offertory needed to sustain parish operations: St. Monica - $10,000 | St. Lucy - $6,000
Thank you for your continued generous contribution to the mission of our parishes.
ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Psalm 54 (53): 6, 8

See, I have God for my help. The Lord sustains my soul.
I will sacrifice to you with willing heart, and praise your name, Ó Lord, for it is good.

ENTRANCE HYMN

We Gather Together

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 23: 1-6

Woe to the shepherds who mislead and scatter the flock of my pasture, says the LORD. Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, against the shepherds who shepherd my people: You have scattered my sheep and driven them away. You have not cared for them, but I will take care to punish your evil deeds. I myself will gather the remnant of my flock from all the lands to which I have driven them and bring them back to their meadow; there they shall increase and multiply. I will appoint shepherds for them who will shepherd them so that they need no longer fear and tremble; and none shall be missing, says the LORD.

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up a righteous shoot to David; as king he shall reign and govern wisely, he shall do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, Israel shall dwell in security. This is the name they give him: “The LORD our justice.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 23: 1-3, 3-4, 5, 6

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose; beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.
He guides me in right paths for his name’s sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil;
for you are at my side with your rod and your staff that give me courage.
You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come.
SECOND READING

Ephesians 2: 13-18

Brothers and sisters: In Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh, abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it. He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord;
I know them, and they follow me.

GOSPEL

Mark 6: 30-34

The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them.

When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

CREED

Refer to Pew Card

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Psalm 111 (110): 4-5

The Lord, the gracious, the merciful, has made a memorial of his wonders;
he gives food to those who fear him.

PRAYER TO ST. MICHAEL

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.
SONGS & READINGS

COMMUNION HYMN

Gift of Finest Wheat

Refrain
You satisfy the hungry heart With gift of finest wheat, Come
give to us, O saving Lord, The bread of life to eat.

Verses
1. As when the sheep herd calls his sheep, They know and heed his voice; So
2. lips we sing to you Our praise and gratitude, That
3. cup we bless and share The blood of Christ out-poured? Do
4. of your presence, Lord, No mortal tongue can tell: Who
5. self to us, O Lord; Then selfless let us be, To
to Refrain

1. when you call your family, Lord, We follow and rejoice.
2. you should count us worthy, Lord, To share this heav'ly food.
3. not one cup, one loaf, declare Our oneness in the Lord?
4. all the world cannot contain Comes in our hearts to dwell.
5. serve each other in your name In truth and charity.

RECESSIONAL HYMN

At the Lamb’s High Feast

1. At the Lamb’s high feast we sing Praise to our vic-
2. Where the Paschal blood is poured, Death’s dark angel
gained
3. Eas-ter tri-umph, Easter joy, Sin a lone can

1. to-rious King, He has washed us in the tide
2. sheathes his sword; Israel’s hosts triumphant go
3. this destroy; From sin’s pow’r do thou set free

1. flowing from his open side; Praise we him, whose
2. through the wave that drowns the foe. Praise we Christ, whose
3. Souls new-born, O Lord, in thee. Hymns of glory,

1. love divine Gives his sacred Blood for wine, Gives his
2. blood was shed, Paschal vic-tim, Paschal bread; With sin-
3. songs of praise, Father, unto thee we raise: Ris-en

1. Body for the feast, Christ the vic-tim, Christ the priest.
2. cer-i-ty and love Eat we man-na from above.
3. Lord, all praise to thee With the Spir-it ev-er be.

JUL 21, 2024

Please pray for Gaetano Bruno & Alfons Wojtas whose funerals we recently offered. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.
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