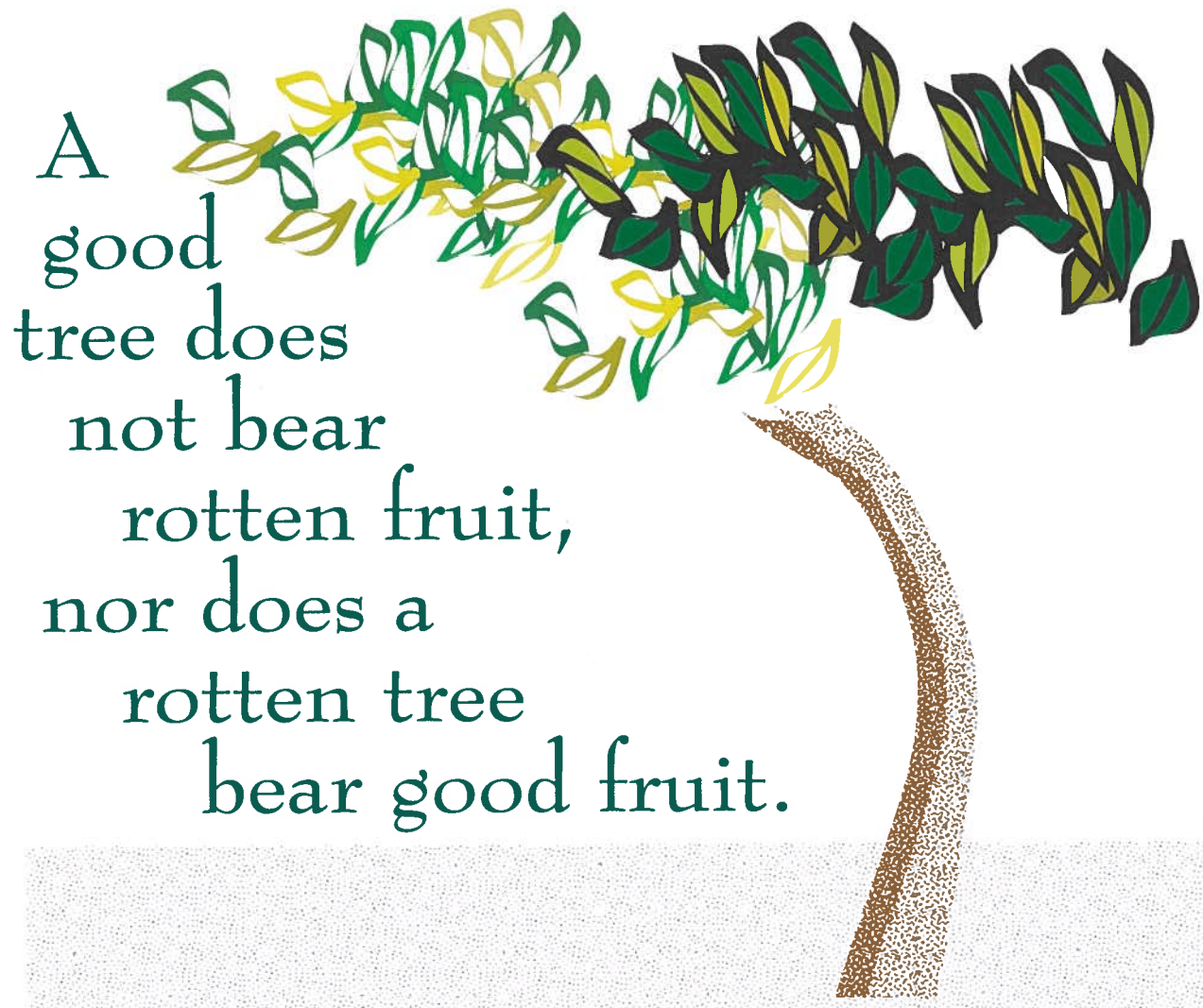


The Roman Catholic Parishes of
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher
St. James the Apostle, Irwin
Sacred Heart, Goodrich

EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

MARCH 1-2, 2025



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Weekend Masses:		Confessions:	
St. Margaret Mary	Sat. 5:00 pm Sun. 10:30 am	St. Margaret Mary	Sat. 4:15 pm
Sacred Heart	Sun. 7:30 am	Sacred Heart	Sun. 7:05-7:20 am
St. James	Sun 9:00 am	St. James	Sun 8:35-8:50 am

Church Mailing Address: 207 E. 5th Street Herscher, IL 60941 Phone: 815-426-2550

Quotable: We each have our faults and weaknesses, but we can ask the Holy Spirit and our guardian angel to guide us in everything we do, so that we can be humble and loving.

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time			March 8 –9 2025	
Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, March 8 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, March 9 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, March 9 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, March 9 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron Neitzke	Fr. Ron Neitzke	Fr. Ron Neitzke Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron Neitzke
Ushers	Todd Datweiller Bob Schultz Dan Hoffman Roger Jensen	David Kirkpatrick Daryl Ferris	Cathy Jensen Bob Buente Jeff Martin Arlen Hansen	Darren Lovell Sean Riordan Larry Wolles Kim Smicker
Lector	Dave Emling	Cindy Gagnon	Carrie Abrassart	Julie Splear
Eucharistic Minister				Susan Riordan
Servers				Sydney Weldon
Greeters			Greeter—Christine Forsythe R. Leader—Reatta Gohlke	Kim Smicker

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, March 2, (SMM)

8:00 am +Jerome Ruder (Mariann Lane)

Tuesday, March 4, (SH)

8:00 am +Janice Clark (Jerry & Terri Weakley)

Wednesday, March 5—Ash Wednesday

8:00 am (SJ) Rhonda Harris (Bruce & Cathy Jensen)

Noon (SH) +Jerry Whalen (Elaine Joyce & Family)

7:00 PM (SMM) +Marie Duval (Mary Ann Wagner)

Friday, March 7 (SMM)

8:00 am +JR Matern (Janet Andrzejewski)

Saturday, March 8, (SMM)

5:00 pm +Mark Gray (Pat Gray)

Sunday, March 9

7:30 am (SH) +Connie Dionne (Terri & Jerry Weakley)

+Paul Muhlstadt (Bill Warburton)

9:00am (SJ) +Karen Batdorf (The Hertz Family)

+Beth Hubert (Steve & Dena Coy)

10:30 am (SMM) All The Parish Family

A Look Ahead

Spring Forward Donut Breakfast—St James, Sunday
March 9th following the 9:00 Mass

Night in Italy—SMM April, 10th

Pastor— Fr. Ron Neitzke- 815-426-2550

Deacon – Ron Gagnon— rjgckg@aol.com
Home—815-933-4077

Parish Email – smm_sja_sh@yahoo.com

TriParish web page – www.triparishcatholics.org

Like us on Facebook triparishcatholic communities

Tri Parish Church office –Barb Riker 426-2550

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debjen04@gmail.com

Religious Education –

St. MM – Jill Fulton jfulton.stmm@gmail.com

Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015

St. James—Tanhya Osenga tosenga81@gmail.com

Parish Nurse – Jackie Eberle – 815-421-4048

Prayer Line—

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 Jdstreeffarms@aol.com

St. James— Mary Offerman—602-670-8888 (call or text)

Sacred Heart-Marilyn Pfeiffer 815-955-8246 (call or text)

Terri Weakley— 815-514-8171

Collections Weekend of Feb. 22-23, 2025

St. Margaret Mary—\$1,452

St. James—\$1,438

Sacred Heart—\$1,284

Thank you for your generosity!

Ash Wednesday Schedule: March 5th

8:00AM St. James

12:00PM Sacred Heart

7:00PM St. Margaret Mary

March 7th First Friday—Sacred Heart

March 7th Stations of the Cross—3:00 Sacred Heart

Wed. March 12th, 7PM Scriptural Stations of the Cross SJ

Friday, March 14th Stations of the Cross 3PM SJ

Wed. March 19th, Scriptural Stations of the Cross 7PM SMM

Friday, March 21st Stations of the Cross 3:00 SMM

*Please note, when Stations are held at SMM plan on being here 10-15 minutes early to avoid school traffic.

Wed. April 2nd 7PM Scriptural Stations of the Cross SJ

Friday, April 4th Stations of the Cross 3:00 SJ

Wed. April 9th, 7PM Scriptural Stations of the Cross SMM

Friday, April 11th Stations of the Cross 3:00 SMM

Parish News:

St. Margaret Mary— Please watch for details on Night In Italy 2025 being held on Thursday , April 10th. Sign up sheet for volunteers and food donations in back of the church.

St. James—Food pantry donations

Sacred Heart—Spring luncheon—April 24th

All Parishes—Ash Wednesday - March 5th see schedule.

First Friday at Sacred Heart

- ◆ Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.
- ◆ Call the parish office to request your statement of donations to the parish for 2024.
- ◆



But whatever you pray, go into your room and pray to your Father who is in secret. MATTHEW 6:6



Deacon Ron, Bishop Hicks, Cindy Gagnon, at the Jubilee for Deacons February 22, 2025

Obscure saint of the week:

Other obscure saint of the week: St. Albinus of Angers, bishop. Feast day March 1 st .Born to a noble family of Brittany, Albinus was a pious child who grew up to become a monk from his mid -20's into his 60's at Timcillac, which later renamed itself Saint Aubin's in his honor. He was the abbot for 25 years, beginning in 504. He then became the bishop of the diocese of Angers, France from c.529. His episcopacy was known for his charity to the poor, widows and orphans, for his ransoming of slaves from their owners, his personal holiness, and the miracles he worked. Custom of the day permitted consanguinity marriage. Albinus decried this as incest, and fought against it, making enemies in many powerful families who practiced it. He called councils at Orleans in 538 and 541, both of which condemned this and other morals offenses. Legend says that when he visited Etheria, a woman imprisoned by King Childebert for bad debts, the woman threw herself at Albinus' feet and pled for help. A guard made a move to strike her, but Albinus breathed in the man's face, and he fell dead. Etheria was soon released. Another time Albinus passed a prison tower in Angers and heard the cries and moans of badly treated prisoners. He pled with the local magistrate for their release but was refused. He returned to the tower and prayed in front of it; after several hours, a landslide brought down part of the tower, the prisoners escaped, followed Albinus to the church of Saint Maurichies, reformed their ways, and became model citizens and Christians.

The abbey of Saint Aubin in Angers was erected in his memory.

Kind Words

*Loving words will cost but little,
Journeying up the hill of life;
But they make the weak and weary
Stronger, braver, for the strife.
Do you count them only trifles
What to earth are sun and rain?
Never was a kind word wasted;
Never was one said in vain.*



Gospel Shorts

Making the News Good

Today's passage presents Jesus as a teacher instructing the first followers on the essentials of true discipleship. Luke places this particular passage immediately after the beatitudes (Sermon on the Plain) in order to address a particular problem in his community: The problem of certain Christians holding themselves up as the judge and jury over other members of the community.

Through his instruction and teaching Jesus reveals the hypocrisy and error that exists when we begin to focus our attention on the judgment of others. Such pre-occupations divert our focus from the real mission of Jesus Christ and distorts our view of God.

Reflection

Sticks and Stones...

A Holy Man seemed quite un-ruffled by the insults hurled at him by a visitor. When his followers later asked him what the secret of his serenity was, he said:

"Imagine what would happen if someone placed a gift before you and you did not pick it up. Or someone sent you a letter that you refused to open; you would be unaffected by its contents, would you not? Do this each time you are abused and you will not lose your serenity."

The Sunday gospel in everyday English

Jesus quoted a proverb: "Can a blind man guide a blind man?' Wouldn't they both end up in the ditch? An apprentice doesn't lecture the master. The point is to be careful whom you follow as your teacher. "It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this I-know-better-than-you mentality again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your own part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor. "You don't get wormy apples off a healthy tree, nor good apples off a diseased tree. The health of the apple tells the health of the tree. You must begin with your own life-giving lives. It's who you are, not what you say and do, that counts. Your true being brims over into true words and deeds (from Luke 6).

Catholic Snacks, Get Fed

What is the difference between fasting and dieting? **The critical difference between fasting and dieting is intention.**

Both involve a limited intake of food, but they are utilized and implemented differently. Dieting is purely for the sake of physical health or even personal vanity, while fasting is a spiritual exercise.

What does this spiritual exercise do? A few of the main benefits of fasting: it tames our bodily appetites, which can be sources of temptation for us; detaches us from physical comforts, which can weaken us and impede growth in virtue; and aids us in personal self-mastery, so that we can resist sin and choose the Good even when it is difficult to do.

Fasting also purifies and liberates our prayer. The detachment it produces sharpens our focus on God and helps us to enter into prayer more freely. It quiets the demands of the body so that we can focus on God without hindrance.

In fact, fasting isn't just helpful to prayer: it must be joined to prayer. It's ineffective on its own.

As St. Peter Julian Eymard said:

"The two actions must be joined and never separated, filling our soul with love by prayer, and purifying ourselves exteriorly by mortification. It is easy to say, 'I love God,' but if this word is not followed by mortification, it is vain and unfounded. Self-love has quickly taken the place of the love of God." Fasting has physical benefits, as well, as the secular world has recently discovered. It goes to show that God takes care of all our needs, physical and spiritual—body and soul!

This ancient spiritual practice isn't optional. Fasting combined with prayer is a crucial part of our progress towards God. The Church actually prescribes two obligatory fast days a year: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. In addition to these days, we should

consider adding in a bit of extra fasting to our spiritual routines, according to our ability, health, and duties in life.

Quotes

The processes of growth are gradual, bearing fruit in a decade, not a day.

—John F. Kennedy

During this Jubilee year, we are invited to make a pilgrimage to Rome to visit holy sites, perform pious works, and seek opportunities for reconciliation, indulgences, and other ways to strengthen and revive our faith. If you plan to travel to Rome during this Jubilee year, please consult the *U.S. Visitors to the Vatican* website at www.pnac.org/visitorsoffice/about-the-visitors-office/, which provides information to help you plan your pilgrimage for a truly prayerful experience.

While the Pope is excited about visitors to Rome during this special year, he also understands that, realistically, most people are not able to travel to the city of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Therefore, he encourages us all to celebrate in our local churches and communities.

In solidarity with the universal Jubilee year, we will be offering the following Masses here in the Diocese of Joliet:

- **Jubilee Mass for Deacons:** February 22, 2025, 11:00 a.m., Cathedral
- **Jubilee Mass for Persons with Disabilities:** June 1, 2025, 12:30 p.m., Cathedral
- **Jubilee Mass for Priests:** September 16, 2025 (for priests only during Convocation)
- **Jubilee Mass for Grandparents:** October 4, 2025, 11:00 a.m., Cathedral
- **Jubilee Mass for Consecrated Life:** October 5, 2025, 10:00 a.m., Blanchette Catholic Center (Invitation Only)
- **Jubilee Mass for Catechists:** October 19, 2025, 2:00 p.m., Cathedral



March 30, 2025

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Jos 5:9a, 10-12 | 2 Cor 5:17-21 | Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

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

We await with anticipation holidays and holiday parties – but do we look forward to the day after? To the cleanup, the back-to-the-grind, the business-as-usual? Jesus' parable in today's Gospel recounts the lavish celebration of the father who rejoices at the homecoming of his wayward son. We rightly recognize in the father's mercy the abundant forgiveness of our heavenly Father. But have we ever considered what happened the next day? The son, accustomed to his independence and dissolute life, is once again in his father's house. He must live according to his father's rules and demonstrate the sincerity of his repentance by faithfully carrying out his duties. There is work to be done – crops to be harvested, perhaps. As the weeks and months pass without another fatted calf for feasting, the son might ask if his father's love has waned. And although we may sympathize with his unease, the certainty of his father's goodness must be, for the prodigal son and for us, the guarantee of his steadfast love.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

In our relationship with God, we will likely experience moments when our Father's love is keenly felt. Perhaps we will be overwhelmed with peace when we return to him in the sacrament of confession. Perhaps we will be struck by a verse of Scripture during a moment of prayer. But most of our days will look more like the prodigal son's "day after" than the festivities which marked his return. We know, however, that if the weeks that followed were comparatively boring, his father's love had lost none of its warmth or vitality. Similarly, in the days when God seems quiet, when our prayers seem to drift into space or our hearts are distracted with the concerns of everyday life, we must not despair of the Father's love. Nor can we suppose that our happiness can be found outside of his fold. We abide under the care of our Father who lovingly calls us to himself with every circumstance he places before us. To believe this, even when the festivities are over, is to live by faith.

PRAY

With so many opportunities for gratification at our fingertips, it is easy to become restless and to seek happiness in distractions. This week, find an image of Jesus or a Scripture verse about God's love and keep it with you as you work, study, or carry out monotonous tasks. When you're tempted to leave your duties aside out of boredom, take a moment instead to praise and thank God for his love.

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Phil 2:15d, 16a

R/ Alleluia, alleluia.
Shine like lights in the world
as you hold on to the word of life.
R/ Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 6:39-45, L84C

Jesus told his disciples a parable,
"Can a blind person guide a
blind person?
Will not both fall into a pit?
No disciple is superior to the
teacher;
but when fully trained,
every disciple will be like his
teacher.
Why do you notice the splinter in
your brother's eye,
but do not perceive the wooden
beam in your own?
How can you say to your brother,
'Brother, let me remove that splinter
in your eye,'
when you do not even notice the
wooden beam in your own eye?
You hypocrite! Remove the wooden
beam from your eye first;
then you will see clearly
to remove the splinter in your
brother's eye.
"A good tree does not bear rotten fruit,
nor does a rotten tree bear good
fruit.
For every tree is known by its own
fruit.
For people do not pick figs from
thornbushes,
nor do they gather grapes from
brambles.
A good person out of the store of good-
ness in his heart produces good,
but an evil person out of a store of
evil produces evil;
for from the fullness of the heart the
mouth speaks."

Reflecting on the Gospel

The most moving homily I ever heard was at a Mass with young Catholics who had a variety of physical disabilities. It was given by a young woman with cerebral palsy. The message was straightforward and simple: "God loves you. God loves me. God loves everybody. We have to love everybody, too." Three times she repeated this message, as she turned to each side of the gathered assembly.

She beamed as she struggled to get out the words and looked earnestly at every person in the group to be sure they understood. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that she passionately believed this profound message and that her words came straight from her heart.

Both the first reading and the gospel today offer proverbs and admonitions, several of which center on how a person's speech reveals their inner nature. A bad tree does not bear good fruit, nor does a good tree yield bad produce. Only one with a good heart, centered on God, can speak as did the young preacher who so moved me.

The readings today prompt us to reflect on the care that is needed in speaking. In an age where public dis-

course, particularly during election season, often degenerates into name-calling, spinning false accusations, and impugning the character of others, a person of faith stands out by his or her refusal to speak ill of others. Moreover, the gospel warns that one who is blind to the goodness in others, and who speaks evil of them instead, reveals his or her own puny measure of openness to God's goodness. Those who see only their neighbors' tiny faults and rush to point those out expose the logjam that blocks their own hearts from receiving and giving God's unfathomable love. A starting point toward transformation of the heart that results in kind words can be vigilance over what one says, curbing the impulse to speak ill of another. That is only a beginning. The gospel envisions a point where the faithful disciple reaches maturity in cultivating inner goodness to such an extent that only good and kind speech would well up from within and pass through the lips.

The first reading notes that it is particularly in adversity that the inner disposition is revealed. "When a sieve is shaken, the husks appear." Anyone can speak well of others when all is going smoothly. But those who can resist returning insult for insult when others speak harshly or make false accusations show their inner mettle refined in tribulation. Like pottery that has passed through the fiery kiln, they emerge stronger, as their inner goodness is shaped to reflect all the more fully that of their Maker.

The power to be transformed in this way, as the second reading reminds us, comes from the One who has passed through the crucible of death, thus overcoming all sin and evil. "God loves you. God loves me. God loves everybody. We have to love everybody, too." This is a pretty good summary of all that Christ said and did. What more would one want to say?

