



HOLY FAMILY
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Small Christian Communities Gathering in Grace

*First Sunday of Advent
December 1, 2024*

through

*8th Sunday in Ordinary Time
March 2, 2025*

*“For where
two or three
have gathered
together
in my name,
I am there
in their midst”*

(Matthew 18:20)

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COVENANT PRAYER

*Loving God, we are thankful for this Small Christian Community, Gathered in Grace,
to hear your Word and share Your Good News
for the salvation of the world.*

*We believe Jesus is present and continues
to break open the Word and speak to our hearts
as once He did for His disciples.*

*Open our minds, our hearts and our lips
so that what we hear we will understand,
what we understand we will share.*

*Remind us of the needs of our community, our church
and our world as we strive to know your Word.*

*Give us the strength to be present to one another
and while in this community may we always
be respectful of each other and honor a spirit
of confidentiality and trust.*

*Temper our differences with love and understanding,
and call us all to mutual respect and compassion.*

*May this community and the covenant we share,
be a reflection of the covenant you made with our ancestors,
a bond that is only strengthened and deepened each time
we gather to know, love and serve You.*

*When our time of prayer and reflection is complete,
may your Spirit be with us as we,
together with our larger community of faith,
live the Word in our world.*

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen!

GRACE MOMENTS

Share your experience of one of the following Adventures in Grace spiritual exercises since you last met:

1. Grace is God's Presence and Gift of Self. When, where, and/or how did I experience Grace?
2. Baptism is being drenched in the mysterious Love of God. How did I experience myself as baptized?
3. What gift was I able to affirm, call forth, give thanks for?
4. How did I mediate the Grace of Mercy to someone or in some situation.
5. How was I fed/nourished spiritually?

LECTIO DIVINA (Sacred Reading)

Settle into silence for a moment. Remember that God is always present. Allow silence to take root for several long moments.

Someone volunteers to read the First Reading. Invite the group to open their hearts to the passage, be curious, and listen as if they are hearing it for the first time. Listen for a word, phrase, thought, or image that speaks to them today. The text is then read slowly and meditatively. After a moment of silence, continue with the discussion questions for the reading.

Repeat this format for the Second Reading.

Repeat this format for the Gospel, but after the reading and moment of silence, invite group members to speak their word, phrase, thought, or image aloud with no elaboration or discussion. They may also "pass." When all who wish to speak have done so, silently meditate on what has been shared for a few moments, then continue with the discussion questions for the Gospel.

At the end of the discussion, invite everyone to offer prayers of petition. Conclude with:

"For these prayers that we speak, and for those we hold in the silence of our hearts, we pray together in the words that Jesus taught us, 'Our Father, ...' Amen."

Small Christian Community Guide

The First Sunday in Advent through the Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

<p>1st Sunday of Advent 5 December 1, 2024</p> <p>2nd Sunday of Advent 7 December 8, 2024</p> <p>3rd Sunday of Advent 9 December 15, 2024</p> <p>4th Sunday of Advent 11 December 22, 2024</p> <p>Feast of the Holy Family 13 December 29, 2024</p> <p>The Epiphany of the Lord 15 January 5, 2025</p> <p>Baptism of the Lord 17 January 12, 2025</p>	<p>2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time 19 January 19, 2025</p> <p>3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time 21 January 26, 2025</p> <p>Presentation of the Lord 24 February 2, 2025</p> <p>5th Sunday in Ordinary Time 26 February 9, 2025</p> <p>6th Sunday in Ordinary Time 28 February 16, 2025</p> <p>7th Sunday in Ordinary Time 30 February 23, 2025</p> <p>8th Sunday in Ordinary Time 32 March 2, 2025</p>
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1st Sunday of Advent December 1, 2024

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 33:14-16

A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah.

The days are coming, says the LORD,
when I will fulfill the promise I made to the
house of Israel and Judah.
In those days, in that time,
 I will raise up for David a just shoot;
 he shall do what is right and just in the land.
In those days Judah shall be safe
and Jerusalem shall dwell secure;
this is what they shall call her:
 “The LORD our justice.”

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

**A reading from the first letter of Paul to the
Thessalonians.**

Brothers and sisters:
May the Lord make you increase and abound
in love for one another and for all,
just as we have for you,
so as to strengthen your hearts,
to be blameless in holiness before our God
and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus
with all his holy ones. Amen.
Finally, brothers and sisters,
we earnestly ask and exhort you in the Lord
Jesus that, as you received from us
how you should conduct yourselves to please
God and as you are conducting yourselves
you do so even more.
For you know what instructions we gave you
through the Lord Jesus.

GOSPEL

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus said to his disciples:

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.

“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap.

For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth.

Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- In the season of Advent, the Church begins the new liturgical year with hope for a better future. Jeremiah provides hope that God has the last word to a people who are living through traumatic experiences, pain and suffering. With that in mind, if you believe that God is the ultimate hope, how does that affect the way you deal with anxiety and suffering?
- Where do you see God’s presence in our turbulent world today?

SECOND READING

- Do you find it easy to convey your love for others during both peaceful and stressful times? Why or why not?
- How might we stand firm in our faith and maintain hope in Jesus in new and challenging situations?

GOSPEL

Every liturgical year begins and ends with a focus on the end of times. Jesus reassures us to “fear not.” All will know when the end is near for this will be a cosmic event. Our task is merely to be vigilant, remain awake, and be ready.

- As we begin our new liturgical year, how do we prepare ourselves to be ready without useless fear and anxiety?
- What does it mean to remain spiritually awake?
- What would it look like to be vigilant in prayer?

Second Sunday of Advent December 8, 2024

FIRST READING

Baruch 5:1-9

A reading from the Book of Baruch.

Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery; put on the splendor of glory from God forever: wrapped in the cloak of justice from God, bear on your head the mitre that displays the glory of the eternal name.
For God will show all the earth your splendor: you will be named by God forever the peace of justice, the glory of God's worship.

Up, Jerusalem! stand upon the heights;
look to the east and see your children gathered from the east and the west at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that they are remembered by God.
Led away on foot by their enemies they left you: but God will bring them back to you borne aloft in glory as on royal thrones.
For God has commanded that every lofty mountain be made low, and that the age-old depths and gorges be filled to level ground, that Israel may advance secure in the glory of God. The forests and every fragrant kind of tree have overshadowed Israel at God's command; for God is leading Israel in joy by the light of his glory, with his mercy and justice for company.

SECOND READING

Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Brothers and sisters:

I pray always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now.

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.

God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

GOSPEL

Luke 3:1-6

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah:

*A voice of one crying out in the desert:
 “Prepare the way of the Lord,
 make straight his paths.
 Every valley shall be filled
 and every mountain and hill shall be
 made low.
 The winding roads shall be made straight,
 and the rough ways made smooth,
 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”*

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

This “Poem of Consolation” calls the people of Israel, exiled in Babylon, to take courage and return to their benevolent God who will lead them home with mercy and justice.

- When have you been estranged from God?
- How did you make your way back home?

SECOND READING

While under house arrest, Paul offers a prayer of thanksgiving with the early Christian church in Philippi. In partnership, they join in prayer, love and spreading the good news of the gospel.

- How do you express your faith in community?
- How is your faith exemplified by good works and ethical conduct?

GOSPEL

John the Baptist emerged in the desert proclaiming a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. In doing so, God bypassed all the important leaders of the time.

- In our political and religious climate, how do we spiritually cleanse ourselves in preparation for the coming of the Messiah?
- Why do you think that God chose John the Baptist instead of someone in the religious or political establishments to deliver the baptism of repentance?

3rd Sunday of Advent December 15, 2024

FIRST READING

Zephaniah 3:14-18a

A reading from the Prophet Zephaniah.

Shout for joy, O daughter Zion!
 Sing joyfully, O Israel!
 Be glad and exult with all your heart,
 O daughter Jerusalem!
 The LORD has removed the judgment
 against you
 he has turned away your enemies;
 the King of Israel, the LORD, is in your
 midst,
 you have no further misfortune to fear.
 On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem:
 Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged!
 The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
 a mighty savior;
 he will rejoice over you with gladness,
 and renew you in his love,
 he will sing joyfully because of you,
 as one sings at festivals.

SECOND READING

Philippians 4:4-7

**A reading from the letter of Paul to the
 Philippians.**

Brothers and sisters:
 Rejoice in the Lord always.
 I shall say it again: rejoice!
 Your kindness should be known to all.
 The Lord is near.
 Have no anxiety at all, but in everything,
 by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,
 make your requests known to God.
 Then the peace of God that surpasses all
 understanding will guard your hearts and
 minds in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL

Luke 3:10-18

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

The crowds asked John the Baptist,
“What should we do?”

He said to them in reply,
“Whoever has two cloaks should share with
the person who has none. And whoever has
food should do likewise.”

Even tax collectors came to be baptized and
they said to him,
“Teacher, what should we do?”

He answered them,
“Stop collecting more than what is
prescribed.”

Soldiers also asked him,
“And what is it that we should do?”

He told them,
“Do not practice extortion,
do not falsely accuse anyone,
and be satisfied with your wages.”

Now the people were filled with expectation,
and all were asking in their hearts whether
John might be the Christ.

John answered them all, saying,
“I am baptizing you with water, but one
mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to
loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will
baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his
threshing floor and to gather the wheat into
his barn, but the chaff he will burn with
unquenchable fire.”

Exhorting them in many other ways,
he preached good news to the people.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- On Gaudete (rejoice) Sunday, we are reminded to rejoice in all circumstances, acknowledging what God has done for us. When was there a time or situation that you felt encircled in the overwhelming joyousness of God’s love?
- In the remaining days of Advent, how do you open yourself to allow Christ, our deepest joy, to encounter us?

SECOND READING

Paul warns us that the toxicity of anxiety can diminish joy and he provides us with an antidote. Prayers of thanksgiving directed toward God empowers us with the peace of God and aligns our mind and heart with Christ.

- How and when do you incorporate thanksgiving as part of your prayer routine?
- Do you find it easy to give thanksgiving in good times as well as in bad times?

GOSPEL

- How do you maintain hopeful expectations during life’s uncertainties and difficulties?
- If you truly believe God seeks to encounter each of us, even the least of us, how does this affect your attitude towards others: those who appear different from us? Immigrants? LGBTQ? Do you cast shade or joy?

4th Sunday of Advent December 22, 2024

FIRST READING

Micah 5:1-4a

A reading from the Prophet Micah.

Thus says the LORD:

You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah
too small to be among the clans of
Judah, from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel;
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient times.

Therefore the Lord will give them up, until
the time when she who is to give birth has
borne, and the rest of his kindred shall return
to the children of Israel.

He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock
by the strength of the LORD,
in the majestic name of the LORD, his
God;

and they shall remain, for now his
greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth;
he shall be peace.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:5-10

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Brothers and sisters:

When Christ came into the world, he said:
“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but a body you prepared for me; in
holocausts and sin offerings you took no
delight. Then I said, ‘As is written of me in
the scroll, behold, I come to do your will, O
God.’”

First he says, “Sacrifices and offerings,
holocausts and sin offerings, you neither
desired nor delighted in.”

These are offered according to the law.
Then he says, “Behold, I come to do your
will.”

He takes away the first to establish the
second. By this “will,” we have been
consecrated through the offering of the body
of Jesus Christ once for all.

GOSPEL

Luke 1:39-45

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.

Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

Themes of hope, expectation and joy have been building throughout Advent as we prepare to welcome the birth of our savior. In this reading from the Prophet Micah, we are assured that a savior will arise from the house of David in an "insignificant town" of Bethlehem. Not only will the Messiah bring peace, He shall be *peace*.

- How do you keep God as the focus during the very busy and commercialized Christmas season?
- How do you extend the peace that He brings into the New Year?

SECOND READING

- How do your actions and prayers reflect your belief that your sins will be forgiven through Christ?

GOSPEL

Just as God prepared a body for Christ, as described in the second reading from Hebrews, Mary's body has been prepared by God for our salvation. We pray to Mary for "us sinners."

- As we reflect on Christ's coming this Christmas, take a moment to consider how God seeks to become incarnate through your own life and body. How has God worked through you this past year?
- Has there been a time in your life when you clearly consented to something that you know God was asking you to do? How difficult was it for you to say yes?

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph December 29, 2024

FIRST READING

1 Samuel 1:20-22,24-28

A reading from the First Book of Samuel.

In those days Hannah conceived, and at the end of her term bore a son whom she called Samuel, since she had asked the LORD for him.

The next time her husband Elkanah was going up with the rest of his household to offer the customary sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vows, Hannah did not go, explaining to her husband,

“Once the child is weaned,

I will take him to appear before the LORD and to remain there forever;

I will offer him as a perpetual nazirite.”

Once Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and presented him at the temple of the LORD in Shiloh.

After the boy’s father had sacrificed the young bull, Hannah, his mother, approached Eli and said:

“Pardon, my lord!

As you live, my lord,

I am the woman who stood near you here, praying to the LORD. I prayed for this child, and the LORD granted my request.

Now I, in turn, give him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he shall be dedicated to the LORD.”

Hannah left Samuel there.

SECOND READING

1 John 3:1-2, 21-24

A reading from the First Letter of John.

Beloved:

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God.

And so we are.

The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed.

We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

And his commandment is this:

we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us.

Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.

GOSPEL

Luke 2:41-52

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.

Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers.

When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety."

And he said to them,

"Why were you looking for me?

Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.

And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

Feast of the Holy Family • December 29, 2024

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

A pious woman, Hannah, prayed unceasingly for a male child, vowing to raise him as a Nazirite and dedicate him to the Lord's service. As with other great barren women in scripture, God answers her prayers, signaling the child is destined for greatness.

- Do you believe that no matter how big the ask, God answers prayers?
- What do you pray for unceasingly?

SECOND READING

The community of John maintains two fundamental commandments: to believe in the name of Jesus Christ and to love one another as Jesus has commanded.

- Our faith in Christ dictates our behavior, while our behavior supports our faith. What does this mean to you?

GOSPEL

- Mary remains mystified by Jesus' words and actions but she continued to ponder His words. How might we ponder His words over our remaining years so we may continue to grow in wisdom with grace?
- We raise our kids to "leave the nest" yet separation can be so difficult. How would you respond if your child found a path different from what you hoped for or expected? How would you feel if your child experienced a higher calling?

The Epiphany of the Lord January 5, 2025

FIRST READING

Isaiah 60:1-6

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the LORD shines, and over you appears his glory. Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance. Raise your eyes and look about; they all gather and come to you: your sons come from afar, and your daughters in the arms of their nurses.

Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you, the wealth of nations shall be brought to you. Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; all from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the LORD.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

A reading from the letter to the Ephesians.

Brothers and sisters:
You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for your benefit, namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation. It was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1-12

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.”

When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: *And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;*

since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star’s appearance.

He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child.

When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.”

After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother.

They prostrated themselves and did him homage.

Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

The Epiphany of the Lord • January 5, 2025

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

This section of Isaiah exuberantly praises God because all people have returned to their home and now live in harmony.

- What is one area of life where you feel we are divided?
- What do you think healing looks like?

SECOND READING

This reading continues the theme of unity among all people. The magi who brought the gifts to Jesus were not Jewish or Christian and yet our tradition holds them up as exemplary.

- Do you think it is valuable to understand other religious traditions? Why?

GOSPEL

This beautiful and familiar reading highlights the importance of hospitality. The hospitality of the Holy Family as they receive the foreign dignitaries into their home, and the hospitality of the Magi as they bring gifts and pay homage to Jesus.

- What is the importance of hospitality in your life?
- How can we all be more hospitable in welcoming people into our homes, churches and communities?

The Baptism of the Lord January 12, 2025

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Comfort, give comfort to my people,
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to
her that her service is at an end,

her guilt is expiated;

indeed, she has received from the hand of the
LORD double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

In the desert prepare the way of the LORD!

Make straight in the wasteland a
highway for our God! Every valley shall be
filled in, every mountain and hill shall be
made low;

the rugged land shall be made a plain,
the rough country, a broad valley.

Then the glory of the LORD shall be
revealed, and all people shall see it together;

for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Go up on to a high mountain,

Zion, herald of glad tidings;
cry out at the top of your voice,

Jerusalem, herald of good news!

Fear not to cry out

and say to the cities of Judah:

Here is your God!

Here comes with power

the Lord GOD,

who rules by a strong arm;

here is his reward with him,

his recompense before him.

Like a shepherd he feeds his flock;

in his arms he gathers the lambs,
carrying them in his bosom,

and leading the ewes with care.

SECOND READING

Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7

A reading from the Letter to Titus.

Beloved:

The grace of God has appeared, saving all
and training us to reject godless ways and worldly
desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly
in this age, as we await the blessed hope,
the appearance of the glory of our great God
and savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to
deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for
himself a people as his own, eager to do what is
good.

When the kindness and generous love of God our
savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds
we had done but because of his mercy, He saved us
through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy
Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through
Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified
by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal
life.

GOSPEL

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- This is one of the most reassuring passages in all the books of the prophets. It reminds us that God will never leave us and will never break God’s promises to us. Take a moment to reflect on this. How does it make you feel?

SECOND READING

- This reading from Titus states that God’s grace comes to us not because of anything we have done, but “because of his mercy.” How does it feel to do some act of mercy without any expectation of a thank you or reciprocation? Does this make you feel closer to God?

GOSPEL

All three gospels contain the scene of Jesus’ baptism, but Luke has slight difference, the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus not during his baptism, but afterward when he is praying.

- What is the role of prayer in your life?
- How have you felt touched by the Holy Spirit during a quiet moment with God?

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time January 19, 2025

FIRST READING

Isaiah 62:1-5

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

For Zion's sake I will not be silent,
for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,
until her vindication shines forth like the
dawn and her victory like a burning torch.

Nations shall behold your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
you shall be called by a new name
pronounced by the mouth of the LORD.
You shall be a glorious crown in the hand
of the LORD, a royal diadem held by
your God.
No more shall people call you "Forsaken,"
or your land "Desolate,"
but you shall be called "My Delight,"
and your land "Espoused."
For the LORD delights in you
and makes your land his spouse.
As a young man marries a virgin,
your Builder shall marry you;
and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride
so shall your God rejoice in you.

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

**A reading from the first letter of Paul to the
Corinthians.**

Brothers and sisters:
There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the
same Spirit;
there are different forms of service but the same
Lord;
there are different workings but the same God
who produces all of them in everyone.
To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit
is given for some benefit.
To one is given through the Spirit the expression
of wisdom;
to another, the expression of knowledge according
to the
same Spirit;
to another, faith by the same Spirit;
to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit;
to another, mighty deeds;
to another, prophecy;
to another, discernment of spirits;
to another, varieties of tongues;
to another, interpretation of tongues.
But one and the same Spirit produces all of these,
distributing them individually to each person as he
wishes.

GOSPEL

John 2:1-11

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding.

When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.”

And Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.”

His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.”

Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons.

Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim.

Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.”

So they took it.

And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from — although the servers who had drawn the water knew —, the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.”

Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

This reading from Isaiah talks about the connection between God and Israel as a marriage covenant. This is a common theme in prophetic literature meant to highlight the eternal and unshakeable love between God and humanity.

- When has there been a time in your life when an important relationship sustained you through a difficult time or helped you celebrate a time of joy? How did that affect your relationship with others and God?

SECOND READING

The second reading is sometimes read during the Sacrament of Confirmation because it emphasizes the gifts of the Holy Spirit. As members of the Body of Christ, we all have gifts and talents to contribute.

- What gifts and talents are you most proud of?
- How do you feel your gifts and talents contribute to the common good of your community?

GOSPEL

This is the first of Jesus’ “signs” in John’s gospel. There are many ways to interpret this story, but one of the central elements is the dialogue between Jesus and his mother. Her declaration, “Do whatever he tells you,” is echoed throughout the gospel as some who follow Jesus do what he tells them and others do not.

- Has there been a time when you have followed the prompting of the Holy Spirit? Where did it lead?

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time January 26, 2025

FIRST READING

Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10

A reading from the Book of Nehemiah.

Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, which consisted of men, women, and those children old enough to understand. Standing at one end of the open place that was before the Water Gate, he read out of the book from daybreak till midday, in the presence of the men, the women, and those children old enough to understand; and all the people listened attentively to the book of the law.

Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that had been made for the occasion.

He opened the scroll so that all the people might see it — for he was standing higher up than any of the people —;

and, as he opened it, all the people rose.

Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people, their hands raised high, answered, "Amen, amen!"

Then they bowed down and prostrated themselves before the LORD, their faces to the ground.

Ezra read plainly from the book of the law of God, interpreting it so that all could understand what was read.

Then Nehemiah, that is, His Excellency, and Ezra the priest-scribe and the Levites who were instructing the people said to all the people:

"Today is holy to the LORD your God.

Do not be sad, and do not weep" —

for all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the law.

He said further: "Go, eat rich foods and drink sweet drinks, and allot portions to those who had nothing prepared;

for today is holy to our LORD.

Do not be saddened this day, for rejoicing in the LORD must be your strength!"

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 12:12-30

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters:

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body, "

it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say,

"Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body.

If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be?

If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended.

If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," nor again the head to the feet, "I do not need you."

Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety,

whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part

is honored, all the parts share its joy. Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it. Some people God has designated in the church to be, first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then, mighty deeds; then gifts of healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work mighty deeds? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

GOSPEL

Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all.

He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day.

He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

This section of Nehemiah contains the first public reading of the Torah after the community returned from the exile. It is a time of rejoicing and gratitude for a community restored to their homeland and Temple. Ezra interprets the law for the community in a new way.

- When do you think it is important to keep traditions?
- What are some of the traditions that you follow?
- When is it important to reinterpret them considering new norms and values?

SECOND READING

- How can we as a church community welcome everyone into the Body of Christ?
- Is there any person or group we need to include more?

GOSPEL

Luke shows Jesus as an interpreter of the law like Ezra from the passage in Nehemiah. Here as Jesus reads from the scroll, he invites the community to not only pray for social change, but to also act on the principles of justice.

- Where do you feel called to put prayer and faith into action in your own life?
- How does the passage from Isaiah inspire you?

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord February 2, 2025

FIRST READING

Malachi 3:1-4

A reading from the Prophet Malachi.

Thus says the Lord GOD:

Lo, I am sending my messenger
to prepare the way before me;
And suddenly there will come to the
temple

the LORD whom you seek,
And the messenger of the covenant whom
you desire.

Yes, he is coming, says the LORD of
hosts.

But who will endure the day of his
coming?

And who can stand when he appears?
For he is like the refiner's fire,
or like the fuller's lye.

He will sit refining and purifying silver,
and he will purify the sons of Levi,
Refining them like gold or like silver
that they may offer due sacrifice to the
LORD.

Then the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem
will please the LORD,
as in the days of old, as in years gone
by.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 2:14-18

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

Since the children share in blood and flesh,
Jesus likewise shared in them, that through death
he might destroy the one who has the power of
death, that is, the Devil, and free those who
through fear of death had been subject to slavery
all their life.

Surely he did not help angels but rather the
descendants of Abraham;
therefore, he had to become like his brothers and
sisters in every way, that he might be a merciful
and faithful high priest before God to expiate the
sins of the people.

Because he himself was tested through what he
suffered, he is able to help those who are being
tested.

GOSPEL

Luke 2:22-40

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

When the days were completed for their
purification according to the law of Moses,
Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem
to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in
the law of the Lord,

*Every male that opens the womb shall be
consecrated to the Lord,*
and to offer the sacrifice of
a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,
in accordance with the dictate in the law of the
Lord.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name
was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout,
awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy
Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him
by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death
before he had seen the Christ of the Lord.

He came in the Spirit into the temple;
and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to
perform the custom of the law in regard to him,

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying:

“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.”

The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted -and you yourself a sword will pierce- so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.

She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer.

And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child

to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

FIRST READING

This passage from Malachi appears at the beginning of the gospel of Mark to show that the prophets predicted Jesus’ coming. The prediction in Malachi talks about a messenger of judgement, but one who is inviting people to a time of atonement. Consider Jesus’ first words in Mark 1:15, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe (meaning turn around and trust in the original Greek) in the gospel.”

- When you hear Jesus’ words, how do they make you feel? What do you feel called to do?

SECOND READING

- What pulls your focus away from your relationship with God?
- What can you do to reprioritize God right now?

GOSPEL

Jesus’ family presents him in the Temple for purification and circumcision in accordance with the laws and customs of Judaism. There they encounter Simeon and Anna, two righteous members of the community who bless Jesus. In addition to the description of her piety, Anna is called a prophet, implying that Anna receives, trusts, and speaks the word of God.

- Who have been important exemplars and models in your faith journey? What have they taught you?

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time February 9, 2025

FIRST READING

Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

In the year King Uzziah died,
I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty
throne, with the train of his garment filling
the temple. Seraphim were stationed above.

They cried one to the other,
"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts!
All the earth is filled with his glory!"
At the sound of that cry, the frame of the
door shook and the house was filled with
smoke.

Then I said, "Woe is me, I am doomed!
For I am a man of unclean lips, living among
a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have
seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"
Then one of the seraphim flew to me,
holding an ember that he had taken with
tongs from the altar.

He touched my mouth with it, and said,
"See, now that this has touched your lips,
your wickedness is removed, your sin
purged."

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
"Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?"
"Here I am," I said; "send me!"

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

**A reading from the first letter of Paul to the
Corinthians.**

I am reminding you, brothers and sisters,
of the gospel I preached to you, which you
indeed received and in which you also stand.
Through it you are also being saved,
if you hold fast to the word I preached to
you, unless you believed in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance
what I also received:

that Christ died for our sins
in accordance with the Scriptures;
that he was buried;
that he was raised on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
that he appeared to Cephas, then to the
Twelve.

After that, Christ appeared to more
than five hundred brothers at once,
most of whom are still living,
though some have fallen asleep.

After that he appeared to James,
then to all the apostles.

Last of all, as to one born abnormally,
he appeared to me.

For I am the least of the apostles,
not fit to be called an apostle,
because I persecuted the church of God.
But by the grace of God I am what I am,
and his grace to me has not been ineffective.
Indeed, I have toiled harder than all of them;
not I, however, but the grace of God that is
with me.

Therefore, whether it be I or they,
so we preach and so you believed.

GOSPEL

Luke 5:1-11

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore.

Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets."

When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them.

They came and filled both boats so that the boats were in danger of sinking.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man."

For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- Isaiah felt that he was doomed being a man of unclean lips. Have you ever felt that you were unworthy of God’s love?
- How have your views of your worthiness changed over time?

SECOND READING

- In the reading, Paul refers to the grace of God. How would you define grace?
- How do you experience grace in your life?

GOSPEL

- This week’s readings are “call” stories of Isaiah, Paul, Peter, and the apostles. When do you feel that you have been called to do God’s work? What did it look like?
- When have you put your faith in God that resulted in an outcome that was better than you expected?

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time February 16, 2025

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 17:5-8

A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah.

Thus says the LORD:

Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in flesh, whose heart turns away from the LORD.

He is like a barren bush in the desert that enjoys no change of season, but stands in a lava waste, a salt and empty earth.

Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose hope is the LORD.

He is like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream: it fears not the heat when it comes; its leaves stay green; in the year of drought it shows no distress, but still bears fruit.

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 15:12,16-20

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters:

If Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead?

If the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins.

Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all.

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

GOSPEL

Luke 6:17, 20-26

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus came down with the Twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground with a great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,
for the kingdom of God is yours.
Blessed are you who are now hungry,
for you will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who are now weeping,
for you will laugh.
Blessed are you when people hate you,
and when they exclude and insult you
and denounce your name as evil
on account of the Son of Man.

Rejoice and leap for joy on that day!

Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.
For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.
Woe to you who are filled now,
for you will be hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will grieve and weep.
Woe to you when all speak well of you,
for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- Jeremiah uses imagery of abundance and drought to describe two life paths. In what ways do our lives reflect both drought and nourishment?
- In what ways do our lives reflect both drought and nourishment?
- Trust is critical in our society and government. How do you balance your Christian values in a world that is less than trustworthy?

SECOND READING

- How do you respond to people who don't believe in resurrection or life after death?

GOSPEL

Luke's gospel reading reverses the logical world order, stating that for those that succeed in this world, their success will disappear in the next. For those who suffer and face hardships in this world, their suffering and hardships will disappear in the next. Given that:

- How do you handle success in this life along with the hope of reaching the Kingdom of Heaven?
- Do you feel that it is necessary to suffer in this world to find a life in Christ? How does suffering bring you closer to God?
- How does a life rooted in Christ orient your daily thoughts, decisions, and actions?

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time February 23, 2025

FIRST READING

1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

A reading from the First Book of Samuel.

In those days, Saul went down to the desert of Ziph with three thousand picked men of Israel, to search for David in the desert of Ziph. So David and Abishai went among Saul's soldiers by night and found Saul lying asleep within the barricade, with his spear thrust into the ground at his head and Abner and his men sleeping around him.

Abishai whispered to David:

"God has delivered your enemy into your grasp this day. Let me nail him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I will not need a second thrust!"

But David said to Abishai, "Do not harm him, for who can lay hands on the LORD's anointed and remain unpunished?"

So David took the spear and the water jug from their place at Saul's head, and they got away without anyone's seeing or knowing or awakening. All remained asleep, because the LORD had put them into a deep slumber.

Going across to an opposite slope, David stood on a remote hilltop at a great distance from Abner, son of Ner, and the troops. He said: "Here is the king's spear. Let an attendant come over to get it. The LORD will reward each man for his justice and faithfulness. Today, though the LORD delivered you into my grasp, I would not harm the LORD's anointed."

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 15:45-49

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters:

It is written, *The first man, Adam, became a living being*, the last Adam a life-giving spirit. But the spiritual was not first; rather the natural and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven.

As was the earthly one, so also are the earthly, and as is the heavenly one, so also are the heavenly.

Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one.

GOSPEL

Luke 6:27-38

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus said to his disciples:

“To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back.

Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners love those who love them.

And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners do the same.

If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged.

Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Give, and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap.

For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- David moves to take revenge on Saul and decides to back away from it. Was there a time in your life when you wanted to lash out or take revenge on someone but decided not to? What made you change your mind?

SECOND READING

- Paul described the earthly body and the spiritual body, with the spiritual body being raised to eternal life. Describe what eternal life looks like to you.

GOSPEL

- Luke’s reading to the disciples instructs us to treat others like God does, with radical, impractical love and mercy, expecting nothing in return. What are examples of people doing so in today’s world?
- Do you find it challenging to treat others this way? Why?

8th Sunday in Ordinary Time March 2, 2025

FIRST READING

Sirach 27:4-7

A reading from the Book of Sirach.

When a sieve is shaken, the husks appear;
so do one's faults when one speaks.
As the test of what the potter molds is in the
furnace, so in tribulation is the test of the just.
The fruit of a tree shows the care it has had;
so too does one's speech disclose the bent of
one's mind.
Praise no one before he speaks,
for it is then that people are tested.

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

**A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the
Corinthians.**

Brothers and sisters:
When this which is corruptible clothes itself
with incorruptibility and this which is mortal
clothes itself with immortality, then the word
that is written shall come about:

Death is swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?

The sting of death is sin,
and the power of sin is the law.
But thanks be to God who gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters,
be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the
work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord
your labor is not in vain.

GOSPEL

Luke 6:39-45

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

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 goodness 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.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- Give an example from today’s world of how someone’s speech reveals their character, both positively and negatively.
- Have you ever had someone misjudge you based on something you said, or how you said it? What would you have said differently?

SECOND READING

- How do you remain steadfast and devoted to the work of the Lord?

GOSPEL

- How does upbringing affect the way people view and conduct themselves in the world?
- Do you believe that environment drives the goodness or evil in someone’s heart, or can someone be born that way?
- Who has the biggest influence on the way you view and conduct yourself in the world?