



TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 24, 2025



WELCOME TO HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Served by the Mercedarian Friars USA (www.orderofmercy.org)



PARISH OFFICE, 588 W. Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215

OpenMonday – Thursday: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Main No.....614-221-4323 Fax No: 614-221-9818

Web:.....www.holyfamilycolumbus.org

Email.....office@holyfamilycolumbus.org

Facebook.....Holy Family Catholic Church

Flocknote.....holyfamilycolumbus@flocknote.com

PERSONNEL STAFF

Father Michael J. Donovan, O. de M...Pastor

Father Daniel Bowen, O. de M.....Vocation Director

Brother Kevin Cush, O. de M.....Seminarian

Secretary.....Mary Gamble

Maintenance.....Tim Kearns

Music Director / Organist.....Shawn Kenney

O CIA (RCIA) Coordinator.....Linda Hamilton

Religious Education.....Sr. Bozena Tyborowska LSIC

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

Altar Servers – Br. Kevin Cush, O. de M., Director

Confraternity of Christian Mothers – Rita Martinez, President

Diocesan Center for the Guard of Honor

of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – Rebecca Rector, Zelatrix

Eucharistic Adoration – Sarah Hill, Coordinator

Holy Family Young Adults – Bear Bates, Coordinator

Hospitality – Kathy McKinniss & Linda Hamilton, Coordinators

Knights of Columbus – Br. Kevin Cush, O. de M., Grand Knight

Liturgical Ministry – Linda Hamilton, Coordinator

Mercedarian Lay Third Order – Fr. Michael J. Donovan, O. de M.,
Spiritual Director

Respect Life – Aurelio & Rosalinda Morales, Coordinators

Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Sr. Bozena Tyborowska, Dir.

SOUP KITCHEN – (backyard of Parish Center building)

Donations...Monday – Friday

9:00am – 12noon, preferred (back of building)

12noon – 3:00pm, optional (please call in advance)

Main No.....614-221-4323

Web.....www.hfsk.org

Email.....Dennis Shope, Director

soupkitchen@holyfamilycolumbus.org

maintenance@holyfamilycolumbus.org

BAPTISM

Call the Parish office to schedule a Baptism. Children over the age of 6 will require some special instruction.

MARRIAGE

Please call the Parish Office at least six months before the wedding.

Diocesan Pre-Cana and Natural Family Planning classes are required and six meetings with the priest.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE SICK

Call the Parish Office during general office hours. Otherwise, call Parish Office and select "Sacramental Emergency" option.

RECEPTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Those who desire Holy Communion at home should call the Parish Office.

MASS SCHEDULE

Weekdays: 12:15pm

Saturday: 9:00 a.m.

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m. 5:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.

Convent of St. Birgitta – 40 N. Grubb St., Columbus

Weekly: 7:00 a.m. Mon., Tues., Thurs. Friday

4:00 p.m. Wednesday

(Each day is open to the public)

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Weekdays: 11:30 a.m. – 12 Noon

Sunday: 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION SCHEDULE

Holy Family Church

Weekly: 1:00 p.m. Thursday – 12 Noon Friday

First Friday Adoration in Reparation to the

Sacred Heart – 8:00 p.m. – 8:45 a.m. First Saturday

Please contact Sarah Hill at 740-418-0517 or

thehills1936@gmail.com if you have interest in being scheduled weekly or monthly in either location

Convent of St. Birgitta (CSB)

40 N. Grubb St., Columbus

Weekly: 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Tuesday

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Mass Wednesday

4:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. following 4pm Mass

9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Friday

MOST HOLY ROSARY

Weekdays: 11:30 am (Tuesday is Respect Life Rosary)

Chaplet of Divine Mercy follows Rosary

Saturday: 8:30 a.m. before 9:00 a.m. Marian Mass

8:15 a.m. before 9:00 a.m. First Saturday Mass

Sunday: 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. & 4:30 p.m. (before Mass)

Please contact the Parish Office if you wish to be scheduled to lead before 9am Saturday or 9am; 5pm Sunday Mass.

REGULAR DEVOTIONS



Each Tuesday following the 12:15 p.m. Mass there are Devotions to **St. Anthony of Padua**.



Each Saturday Novena Prayers to **Our Lady of Mercy** following 9:00 a.m. Mass.



On First Wednesday of each month a 7:00 p.m. Mass is offered in honor of **Good Saint Joseph**.



On First Friday of each month following the 12:15 & 7:00 p.m. Masses there is **Act of Consecration of the Human Race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus**.

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August 24, 2025

MASS INTENTIONS AUGUST 24—AUGUST 31, 2025

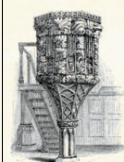
Sun August 24	TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
9:00 AM *	Virginia and Bob McPhail, by Tom Fries
11:00 AM	Dr. Scott M. Reineck and Family
5:00 PM	Repose of the Soul of Richard Crumley by Mary Gamble
8:00 PM	People of the Parish
Mon August 25	Saint Louis, Saint Joseph Calasanz, Priest
7:00 AM	CSB—Special Intention
12:15 PM	Repose of the Soul of Wayne Wright by Sondra Wright
Tues August 26	
7:00 AM	CSB—Rosalinda Morales by Aurelio Morales
12:15 PM	Natalie and Family, by Kathy McKinniss
Wed August 27	Saint Monica
12:15 PM	Andrea Tschirner, by ARD
4:00 PM	CSB—Anthony and Erika Buehner and All Their Wedding Guests, by Dale Buehner
Thurs August 28	Saint Augustine, Bishop and Doctor
7:00 AM	CSB—Father Zachery Feldker by Kathy McKinniss
12:15 PM	Rose Ann Holocher and Adele Renouf-Davis, by ARD
Fri August 29	The Passion of Saint John the Baptist
7:00 AM	CSB—Angelique Bowman by Chloe Bowman
12:15 PM	James and Juanita Lisska by Bill & Theresa Warren
Sat August 30	
9:00 AM	Reverend Joseph David Rowling by Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Sun August 31	TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
9:00 AM *	People of the Parish
11:00 AM	Josephine Simon by Beth Ann & Dominic Prunte
5:00 PM	Repose of the Soul of Deputy Daniel Sherrer by Kathy McKinniss
8:00 PM	Father Samuel Severance by Mary Gamble

* Incense will be used at this Mass

PRAYERS FOR THOSE WHO SERVE OUR COUNTRY

Airman William Harding Marable, US Air Force
 Airman Lucas JY Tortora, US Air Force
 Col. Timothy W. Grady, US Air National Guard
 PFC Logan Christ, US Army Active Duty
 1st Lt. John M. Kennedy, US Army Active Duty
 1st Lt. Michael V. Dickerson, US Army National Guard
 2nd Lt. Nicholas C. Kennedy, US Army National Guard
 SPC Brian A. Marsh, US Army National Guard
 SPC Trinity P. Roach, US Army National Guard
 SPC Zach Sowers, US Army National Guard
 Active Duty Trey Warner, US Army National Guard
 Lt. Col. Stephen Hueckel, US Army Reserves
 SPC Liam A. Smith, US Army Reserves
 SNBM Joseph Flynn, US Coast Guard
 Capt. Michael "Mich" Rector, US Marine Corps.
 LCpl. Brendan Thomas, US Marine Corps.
 Lt. Michael Bellavia, US Navy
 Lt. Rockford Bowman, US Navy
 SCPO Zachery Cook, US Navy
 Lt. Andrea Rae Kaltenbach, US Navy
 Active Duty Dan Severance, US Navy

LECTOR SCHEDULE



August 24	9:00 am	Brandan Litman
	11:00 am	Aurelio Morales
	5:00 pm	Brian Bishop
August 31	9:00 am	Susan Lau
	11:00 am	Kendy Troiano
	5:00 pm	Rebecca Rector

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES—God is generous to us, please consider being generous to God by giving your Sunday offering through our online giving. You can scan the QR code to go to our online giving page at our website: www.holyfamilycolumbus.org.



SERMON ON THE AMOUNT

Giving for August 11, 2025 to August 17, 2025

Offertory	
Collection	\$ 2,945
On-Line	5,144
Mail	+ 805
Total	\$ 8,894
Less: Assessment (10%)	- 889
Net	\$ 8,005
Soup Kitchen	\$24,804

Current Appeal Pledges	\$40,986
The Appeal Goal	\$82,347

God Reward your Generosity

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HOLY FAMILY KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS #13428

We continue to collect aluminum cans for our Seminarians. All proceeds will go to these young men of Christ. Please drop them off in the collection box at the Church and Parish Center entrance.

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, September 10, 2025 is the monthly meeting at 7:00pm in the Parish Center.

A reminder to pray, it does the heart good!



HOLY FAMILY RESPECT LIFE MINISTRY

Our Rosary For Life group meets each Tuesday 8:45—10:45am in front of the Planned Parenthood Abortion Clinic. There is an opportunity to carpool by meeting in the parking lot of Holy Family Church by 8:15am.

If you are not able to go to the clinic, join us as we pray the Rosary For Life each Tuesday at 11:25am before 12:15pm Mass.

Save the date

Please mark your calendar for our first annual Parish Picnic on **September 21, 2025**, following the 11:00am Mass. The Parish Picnic is sponsored by Respect Life Committee. Please call the office for more information.

HIS INCREDIBLE SENIORS EXERCISE PROGRAM

Our upcoming class is scheduled **1:30—2:30pm on Tuesday, August 26th** in the Parish Center.

HOLY FAMILY YOUNG ADULTS MINISTRY



HFYA (18—35) meets weekly, with a rotation of activities including prayer/spirituality, talk, adoration, and social nights. **Use this QR Code to connect with this group.**

Are you interested in becoming Catholic



or learning more about the Catholic Faith? Are you looking to complete the Sacraments of Confirmation and 1st Communion?

OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) will meet Tuesdays at 7:00 PM in the Parish Center beginning **September 16, 2025**.

If you are interested in attending the OCIA sessions, or for more information, please contact: Linda Hamilton, OCIA Coordinator at: linda.hamilton01@sbcglobal.net or 614-746-4407.



CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS & LADIES GUILD

Serving the Women of Holy Family Since 1887

The Divine Praises

Blessed be God.

Blessed be His Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

Blessed be His Sacred Heart.

Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of Mary most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in His angels and His saints.

(ref. *Christian Mothers Mother Love book. Reb. 2023, available through Christian Mothers*)

Mother Love Books can be purchased by contacting holyfamilyccm@gmail.com at our cost of \$20.00.

Thanks to the Christian Mothers who made baby blankets. This is an ongoing project if anyone is interested in helping.

The annual mum sale is in process. Thank you for your past support and for any who can support us in this year's sale. There are order forms in the vestibule, parish center and undercroft. **Deadline for orders is August 31.** Flower pick-up is scheduled **September 13th** from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Mums will also be available for sale on Sunday the 14th after 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Mass.

Italian Dinner Saturday, October 11th and Silent Auction. Mass at 4:00 p.m. followed by talk with Father Michael and dinner at 6:00 p.m. Carry out will be available. Father Michael has asked us to sponsor this event for the parish maintenance needs. We hope you can attend. **Tickets on Sale by Christian Mothers in the vestibule most Sundays after 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Mass, through the office, in the undercroft on Donut Sunday, scanning the QR code, or you may also contact us at holyfamilyccm@gmail.com.**

Our next Mass and St. Gerard blessing will be September 21st, following the 11:00 AM Mass for pregnant mothers and those hoping to conceive.

Our next meeting and breakfast-brunch potluck is September 20th after 9:00 a.m. Mass in the undercroft.

Holy Family Confraternity of Christian Mothers Officers

Rita Martinez, President / Sondra Wright, Vice-President
Anita Van Order, Treasurer / Kendy Troiano, Secretary
Father Michael J. Donovan, O. de M. Director



**KIDS
EAT
FREE!**
(AGES 0—10)

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St. Gianna Molla Play Group

For moms and children ages 3 and under (but children of all ages are welcome!). Meetups will be held the second and fourth Tuesday of every month at 9:30am. Contact **Rebekah Foley** (bekah.krull@gmail.com) or **Katie Foley** (katie.frego.95@gmail.com) with questions or in case of inclement weather.

8/26—Ballantrae Community Park Spray fountains (Opens at 10am)

9/9 —Three Creeks Metro Park Confluence Trails Area

9/23—Scioto Grove Metro Park Arrowhead Picnic Area

Join us for **Ora et Labora!** Every Second Saturday from September through November The Sisters of Children of Mary will be hosting a day of prayer and work on their land in Newark Ohio (8353 Pleasant Chapel Road). The day begins with Mass in their chapel at 8:30am. Work will be offered for Dads, Moms, Children and anyone who is willing to help us glorify God through service. Lunch will be provided at 12:00pm. The day ends after the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 3:00pm. **Please call to RSVP 740-323-1977.**

St. Michael Festival - Friday August 29th

7pm-11pm; Saturday / Sunday August 30th and 31st, 2025: 5pm-11pm Midway Games * Kiddie Land * Beer & Wine * Bake Sale * Silent Auction * Casino* Toddler zone * Inflatables * Slides * Face Painting * Photo Booth * Free Entertainment: Friday 8pm-11pm The Big Bad; Saturday 5pm-7pm Joint Rockers; 8pm-11pm Radio City; Sunday 6pm-7pm Apple Bottom Gang; 8pm-11pm The Wet Bandits **5750 N. High Street, Worthington, OH 43085.**

***"My God will fully supply
all my needs."*** (Philippians 4:19)

Holy Family Parish is privileged to announce
The Banns of Marriage for the following couple:

Justin Andrew Ogden

&

Hollie Christina Ruiz

Friday, August 29, 2025



Our Lady of Consolation

Carey, Ohio August 14, 2025

Comforter Sympathetic Tender Clement Maternal
Loving Helpful Intercessor Solace-giving
Hopeful Peaceful Strong Patient Faithful Trusting

Save the Date

Please mark your calendars for our first annual **Parish Picnic** on **September 21, 2025**, following the 11:00am Mass celebrated by Bishop Fernandes. The Parish Picnic is sponsored by the Respect Life Committee. The picnic is in celebration of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy whose feast is on September 24. The Parish Picnic is a wonderful way to build up our parish family. The Respect Life Committee is currently in the planning stages for the event. The committee is envisioning food, as well as games for the children. Following the Mass there will be a Procession in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Upon the completion of the Procession, the picnic will begin outdoors. If you would like to help in any way, please give Fr. Michael a call in the office. **Please scan the QR code to RSVP.**



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St. Edward Church (1868—)



Time to Explore



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Lectio Divina

SCRIPTURE READING + MEDITATION + PRAYER + CONTEMPLATION

“What page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life?” ~Saint Benedict, from the *Rule of Saint Benedict* (73:3)

The month of August is dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

“...being or doing good does not always receive a positive response. On the contrary, because its beauty at times annoys those who do not welcome it, one can end up encountering harsh opposition, even insolence and oppression. Acting in truth has its cost, because there are those in the world who choose lies, and the devil – who takes advantage of the situation – often seeks to block the actions of good people. Jesus, however, invites us with His help not to give in and conform ourselves to this mentality, but to continue to act for our good and the good of all, even those who make us suffer. He invites us not to respond to insolence with vengeance, but to remain faithful to the truth in love. The martyrs witnessed this by shedding their blood for their faith. We, too, can imitate their example even in different circumstances and ways.” +POPE LEO XIV, ANGELUS EXCERPT, 8-17-25

Monday, August 25 ~ Twenty-First Week in Ordinary Time

Optional Memorials: Saint Louis of France, King; Saint Joseph Calasanz, Priest

Holy Gospel: Matthew 23:13-22 Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You lock the Kingdom of heaven before men. You do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow entrance to those trying to enter. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You traverse sea and land to make one convert, and when that happens you make him a child of Gehenna twice as much as yourselves. Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If one swears by the temple, it means nothing, but if one swears by the gold of the temple, one is obligated.’ Blind fools, which is greater, the gold, or the temple that made the gold sacred? And you say, ‘If one swears by the altar, it means nothing, but if one swears by the gift on the altar, one is obligated.’ You blind ones, which is greater, the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? One who swears by the altar swears by it and all that is upon it; one who swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it; one who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who is seated on it.”

Meditation: Jesus was angry with the religious leaders because they failed to listen to God's word and they misled the people they were supposed to teach and lead in the ways of God. Jesus gave a series of examples to show how misguided they were. In their zeal to win converts, they required unnecessary and burdensome rules which obscured the more important matters of religion, such as love of God and love of neighbor. They were leading people to “Pharisaism” rather than to God. They failed as religious leaders to teach others the way of God's kingdom because they failed to listen to and to understand the intention of God's word. Through their own pride and prejudice they blindly shut the door of their own hearts and minds to God's understanding of his kingdom.

Prayer: O God, who brought Saint Louis from the cares of earthly rule to the glory of a heavenly realm, grant, we pray, through his intercession, that, by fulfilling our duties on earth, we may seek out your eternal Kingdom. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer: O God, who adorned the Priest Saint Joseph Calasanz with such charity and patience that he labored tirelessly to educate children and endow them with every virtue, grant, we pray, that we, who venerate him as a teacher of wisdom, may constantly imitate him, for he was a co-worker of your truth. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever Amen.

Contemplation: How can we shut the door of God's kingdom in our lives? By closing our ears to Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelations 17:14; 19:16), who speaks words of life and love, truth and freedom, hope and pardon. The Lord Jesus wants to dwell with us and to bring us his kingdom. He



opens the way for each of us to "ascend to heaven" and to bring "heaven to earth" in the daily circumstances of our lives. God's kingdom is present in all who seek him and who do his will. Do you pray as Jesus taught, "May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10)?

Tuesday, August 26 ~ Twenty-First Week in Ordinary Time

Holy Gospel: Matthew 23:23-26 Jesus said: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You pay tithes of mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier things of the law: judgment and mercy and fidelity. But these you should have done, without neglecting the others. Blind guides, who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel! "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You cleanse the outside of cup and dish, but inside they are full of plunder and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may be clean."

Meditation: Jesus used the example of tithing to show how far the scribes and Pharisees had missed the mark. God had commanded a tithe of the first fruits of one's labor as an expression of thanksgiving and honor for his providential care for his people (ref. Deuteronomy 14:22; Leviticus 27:30). The scribes, however, went to extreme lengths to tithe on insignificant things (such as tiny plants) with great mathematical accuracy. They were very attentive to minute matters of little importance, but they neglected to care for the needy and the weak. Jesus admonished them because their hearts were not right. They were filled with pride and contempt for others. They put unnecessary burdens on others while neglecting to show charity, especially to the weak and the poor. They meticulously went through the correct motions of conventional religion while forgetting the realities.

Prayer: O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: In light of today's gospel, do you allow any blindspots to blur your vision of God's kingdom and his ways? Jesus went to the heart of the matter when he called the religious leaders of his day blind Pharisees and hypocrites! The word "hypocrite" means "actor" — someone who puts on a show or a "game face" usually to draw attention to themselves, or a "public face" to appear one way on public, but in reality act very different "behind the scenes." Jesus chastised them for neglecting the more important matters of religion, such as justice and the love of God and love of neighbor. Might we be guilty at times for falling into the same mindset? We need to remember that God places in every heart a desire and intimate yearning to personally know the One who created us in love for love. Saint Augustine, who found God only after many years of "acting" and wandering in disbelief and spiritual darkness, exclaimed in his book *Confessions*: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." May we learn to rest in the arms of the Lord, and to have genuine minds and hearts rooted in Christ.

Wednesday, August 27 ~ Twenty-First Week in Ordinary Time **Memorial: Saint Monica**

Holy Gospel: Matthew 23:27-32 Jesus said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of filth. Even so, on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the memorials of the righteous, and you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have joined them in shedding the prophets' blood.' Thus you bear witness against yourselves that you are the children of those who murdered the prophets; now fill up what your ancestors measured out!"

Meditation: Jesus used strong language to warn the religious leaders about the vanity of appearance and pretense. In Palestine tombs were often placed by the sides of roads. They were painted white which made them glisten in the midday sun, especially around the time of the great feasts, so that people would not accidentally touch them and incur ritual impurity. Jesus warns that what truly corrupts a person is not ritual impurity but the impurity of sinful attitudes — such as pride, greed, sloth, envy, hatred, gluttony, and lust — which lead to sinful behavior. The scribes and Pharisees were intensely religious in their outward observances, but their outward show didn't match the inner reality of the state of their hearts. They not only neglected the poor and the weak, but they were intolerant towards anyone who challenged their idea of religion. That is why so many of the prophets in past ages — who warned about tolerating evil desires

and unjust behavior towards one neighbor – were persecuted and even killed by their own rulers and people.

Prayer: O God, who console the sorrowful and who mercifully accepted the motherly tears of Saint Monica for the conversion of her son Augustine, grant us, through the intercession of them both, that we may bitterly regret our sins and find the grace of your pardon. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Jesus chastised the religious leaders for being double-minded and for demanding from others standards which they refused to satisfy. They professed admiration for the prophets by building their tombs while at the same time they opposed the prophets' message and closed their ears to the word of God. They shut themselves to heaven and they hindered others from understanding God's word. They rejected Jesus as their Messiah because their hearts were blinded and hardened to the voice of God. Only the humble of heart can receive from God true wisdom and understanding, pardon and healing. The Holy Spirit is ever ready to renew our minds and hearts and to teach us God's way of love and holiness. Ask the Holy Spirit to purify your heart and mind and to fill you with the wisdom and understanding of God's word.

Thursday, August 28 ~ Twenty-First Week in Ordinary Time

Memorial: Saint Augustine, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Holy Gospel: Matthew 24:42-51 Jesus said to his disciples: "Stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come. "Who, then, is the faithful and prudent servant, whom the master has put in charge of his household to distribute to them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master on his arrival finds doing so. Amen, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property. But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is long delayed,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eat and drink with drunkards, the servant's master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour and will punish him severely and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth."

Meditation: Jesus ends his teaching on watchfulness and vigilance with a parable that contains an element of surprise – the master suddenly returns home unexpectedly, probably from a long journey. He rewards the dutiful servant for his faithfulness to his master. He has performed his service with diligence and has done all that the master required of him. The master punishes the other servant who behaved wickedly. This servant was not only irresponsible, he was frequently absent from work and spent his master's money by throwing endless parties with his friends. The wicked servant also abused his fellow workers with physical force and violence, probably to make them do the work he was supposed to do for his master. The master not only throws him out of his house, he fires him from his job! He also throws him into the worst possible place – a prison of no return where there is nothing but torment and misery. Should we be surprised to see the master acting with such swift judgment? After all he is only giving back what they have given to him. The master rewards the faithful servant with honor, promotion, and friendship, and he punishes the unfaithful servant – who stole from his master and used his position to abuse others – by removing him from his position of trust with the master and by throwing him into prison for robbing the master and mistreating his fellow servants.

Prayer: Renew in your Church, we pray, O Lord, that spirit with which you endowed your Bishop Saint Augustine that, filled with the same spirit, we may thirst for you, the sole fount of true wisdom, and seek you, the author of heavenly love. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Jesus calls us to be vigilant in watching for his return and to be ready to meet him when he calls us to himself. The Lord gives us his Holy Spirit so that we may have the wisdom, help, and strength we need to turn away from sin to embrace God's way of love, justice, and holiness. The Lord's warning of judgment causes dismay for those who are unprepared, but it brings joyful hope to those who eagerly wait for his return in glory. God's judgment is good news for those who are ready to meet him. Their reward is God himself, the source of all truth, beauty, goodness, love and everlasting life.

Friday, August 29 ~ Twenty-First Week in Ordinary Time

Passion of John the Baptist

Holy Gospel: Mark 6:17-29 Herod was the one who had John the Baptist arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, whom he had married. John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Herodias harbored a grudge against him and wanted to kill



him but was unable to do so. Herod feared John, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man, and kept him in custody. When he heard him speak he was very much perplexed, yet he liked to listen to him. She had an opportunity one day when Herod, on his birthday, gave a banquet for his courtiers, his military officers, and the leading men of Galilee. Herodias' own daughter came in and performed a dance that delighted Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask of me whatever you wish and I will grant it to you." He even swore many things to her, "I will grant you whatever you ask of me, even to half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the Baptist." The girl hurried back to the king's presence and made her request, "I want you to give me at once on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was deeply distressed, but because of his oaths and the guests he did not wish to break his word to her. So he promptly dispatched an executioner with orders to bring back his head. He went off and beheaded him in the prison. He brought in the head on a platter and gave it to the girl. The girl in turn gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

Meditation: Are you prepared to be a witness, and if necessary, a martyr for Jesus Christ? John the Baptist bridged the Old and New Testaments. He is the last of the Old Testament prophets who pointed the way to the Messiah. He is the first of the New Testament witnesses and martyrs. Jesus equated the coming of his kingdom with violence. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force (Matthew 11:12). John suffered violence for announcing that the kingdom of God was near. He was thrown into prison and then beheaded. Why did Herod put John to death when he knew him to be a righteous and holy man? Herod was a weak ruler. He could take a strong stand on the wrong things when he knew the right. Such a stand, however, was a sign of weakness and cowardice. Unfortunately for Herod, he could not rid himself of sin by ridding himself of the man who confronted him with his sin.

Prayer: O God, who willed that Saint John the Baptist should go ahead of your Son both in his birth and in his death, grant that, as he died a Martyr for truth and justice, we, too, may fight hard for the confession of what you teach. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Since John's martyrdom to the present times the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence and persecution at the hands of violent people. The blood of Christian martyrs throughout the ages bear witness to this fact. Their testimony to the truth of the gospel and their willingness to suffer and die for their faith prove victory rather than defeat for the kingdom of God. Through Christ's victory on the cross they obtain the glorious crown of victory and everlasting life with Jesus Christ. What gives us the power, boldness, and courage to witness to Jesus Christ and to the truth of the gospel? The Holy Spirit fills us with courage, love, and boldness to make Jesus Christ known and loved. We do not need to fear those who oppose the timeless truths of the gospel, because the love of Jesus Christ is stronger than fear and death itself. His love conquers all – even our fears and timidity in the face of opposition and persecution. We can trust in his grace and help at all times.

About Saint John the Baptist: There is no doubt that blessed John suffered imprisonment and chains as a witness to our Redeemer, whose forerunner he was, and gave his life for him. His persecutor had demanded not that he should deny Christ, but only that he should keep silent about the truth. Nevertheless, he died for Christ. Does Christ not say: "I am the truth"? Therefore, because John shed his blood for the truth, he surely died for Christ. Through his birth, preaching and baptizing, he bore witness to the coming birth, preaching and baptism of Christ, and by his own suffering he showed that Christ also would suffer. Such was the quality and strength of the man who accepted the end of this present life by shedding his blood after the long imprisonment. He preached the freedom of heavenly peace, yet was thrown into irons by ungodly men. He was locked away in the darkness of prison, though he came bearing witness to the Light of life and deserved to be called a bright and shining lamp by that Light itself, which is Christ. To endure temporal agonies for the sake of the truth was not a heavy burden for such men as John; rather it was easily borne and even desirable, for he knew eternal joy would be his reward.

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops;
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