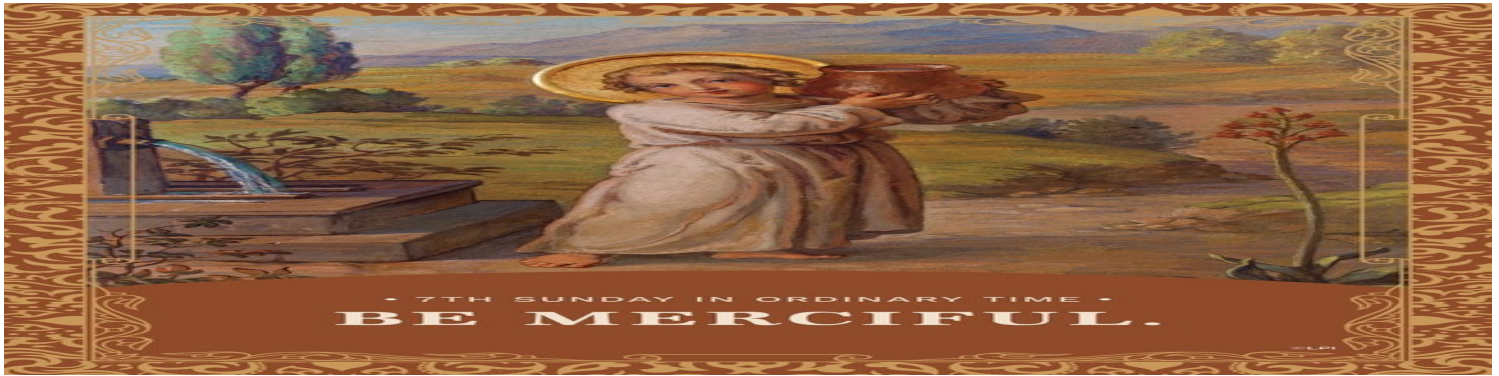


St. John the Baptist and Holy Trinity Parish

406 Court Street Syracuse, NY 13208

Office (315) 478-0916 Fax (315) 423-8096

February 23, 2025



From Fr. Brendan Foley

Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Plain in Luke's Gospel are incredibly difficult and important for our consideration. At a time when we find tensions heightened and society continually polarized, we should look with fresh eyes at Jesus' teaching here. *"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."* Often Jesus and the Gospel get summed up as something simple, watered down, "love" as something that is only soft and gentle. Here, however, Jesus' radicality of mercy is something clearly not as easily accomplished as we would like. We might think that we are following through and authentically living Gospel charity, but thinking about the many different relationships in our life, and the potential sources we have each week for frustration, bitterness, or discouragement—are we as united to the Gospel as we think we are?

We often have opportunities to extend this kind of love to others, and if you're like me, it's easy to not follow through. I think we are often more calculated in when or to whom we extend our mercy or forgiveness. If we follow the path of convenience when it comes to living this call, then the truth is we have room to grow, room for ongoing conversion. Jesus knew the rejection that would come, even from his own disciples, yet he still chose the merciful path of the cross. Jesus is challenging us to lean into his heart to learn how *he* loves, how to love even when it hurts, and even when we have little or no desire to. This is **only** possible with grace, and a good starting place in prayer (if we are struggling with this) is simply asking the Lord to plant within us the *desire* for this expansion of heart. It is the necessary starting point—not the actual action of the extending mercy or forgiveness, but simply starting with "Lord give me the desire to even want to be merciful or generous". We might see better progress if we can see the first step.

The reality of this teaching is that Jesus is asking our hearts to be reflective of the very nature of God—which is why this teaching is far more complex and difficult. It is *not* natural for us to want to be merciful or kind toward those with whom we have disagreements. It typically is *not* our inclination to be generous to those who we don't know. But Jesus is inviting us to a higher level of love an interior, detached freedom, which is why he boldly asks us: *Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.* Can you do it? A takeaway we might conclude is that even when we are simply striving to do this, albeit imperfectly, grace can break through and open us to deeper charity we didn't even know was possible for us. It might be helpful to see those around us as our context for holiness—all the people in our life who we regularly interact with are somehow calling forth virtue (patience, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, etc) from our hearts whether they are doing it intentionally *or not*. Our choice to stay close to the Holy Spirit to inform our words and actions in how we interact with others makes all the difference—and God delights in offering us his Spirit when we are bold to ask for it.

Recall some of the progressions in scripture over our last few Sundays. The prophet Isaiah, St. Paul, St. Peter—each of their call stories reflected an openness to purification and transformation by divine grace, in order to then be sent out on mission after having received divine assistance. Last Sunday, we were reminded of the blessedness that comes from finding ourselves poor for living detached from worldly perspectives because of how it opens us up to faith and the ability to receive everything we could possibly need from the Lord. If today we find ourselves pondering the difficulty of the words of Jesus' Sermon on the Plain, it might just be the Holy Spirit inviting us to ask for the grace we need to live more intentionally authentic Christian charity. We just might discover that when we choose to embody not our own kind of love but rather that of truly divine mercy, we are progressing in the path of holiness.

Mass Schedule SJB/HT

Sunday - 9:00 am

Reconciliation Thursday 4:00-5:00 pm

Office Hours SJB/HT

Monday-Thursday 9:00am-4:00pm Friday 9:00am 2:30pm

E-mail - nbergeson@syrдио.org

Web Site - www.stjohnthebaptist-holytrinity.com

Syr. Dio. Web-site - www.syracusedioecese.org

Pastor: Father Brendan Foley

Secretary/Bulletin: Nancy Bergeson

Senior Priest in Residence: Fr. Lester Smith

In Residence: Fr. Paschal Anionye

Music Director/Organist: Mr. James Stanley

Buildings/Grounds: Robert Warren

Religious Education: Betty Warren

Sacristan/Grounds: Allan Chouinard

Altar Server: Benjamin Chouinard



Lector - Sunday March 2

9:00am SJB/HT: Pat Minnoe

Eucharistic Ministry

Center

Feb. 23 Mary Anne Bergamo
 March 2 Cathy Horton
 March 9 Karen Fekete
 March 16 Mary Beth Cusano
 March 23 Mary Anne Bergamo
 March 30 Larry Argiro

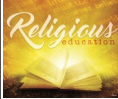
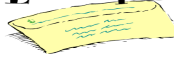
Mary's Side

Dave William
 Larry Argiro
 Alan Chouinard
 Betty Warren
 Dave William
 Cathy Horton

Sacrificial Giving

Week February 16th
 SJB/HT Collection: \$2,437.00

Offering Envelopes



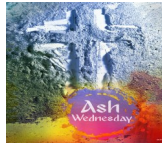
Religious Education Announcements

There are no Religious Ed classes this week, Feb. 23rd for Winter Recess. Classes will resume on March 2. Please pray for our students as they continue their education. Please especially pray for our 2 Confirmation II students who will be confirmed on April 5th.

Ash Wednesday and Stations Schedule

Ash Wednesday March 5th:

OLP/SP - 7:30am
 Assumption Church - 8:30am
 SJB/HT - 12:15pm
 The Franciscan Place - 12:15pm & 5:00pm
 St. Anthony Church - 6:00pm



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

SJB/HT - Friday's 4:00pm
 OLP/SP - Saturday's 3:15pm (before 4:00pm Mass)
 Assumption Church - Saturday's 3:15pm (before 4:00pm Mass)



A Family Perspective

Family Life Education

In studying the effects of religion upon family relationships, researchers inform us hostility and prayer can't coexist. You cannot be hostile toward someone for whom you are praying. Today's Gospel encourages us: "Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who treat you badly."

Pray For Vocations

"For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you." God is never outdone in generosity. If you feel called to give your entire life in the priesthood, diaconate or religious life, God will reward you abundantly beyond imagining for responding. Reach out to the Vocation Office via email: vocations@syrdio.org and follow us on Instagram [@vocationssyracuse](https://www.instagram.com/vocationssyracuse).



Reflect: Readings and Gospel

Gospel Question: Jesus presents his followers with some very challenging morals: love your enemy, do not retaliate, and always be willing to forgive. Does this high moral standard seem possible for you personally?

1st Reading Question: King David exercised great restraint in sparing the life of Saul. Can you think of a time when you had to take the high road with a friend or co-worker?

2nd Reading Question: Paul speaks of present-day believers as one day bearing the image of Christ (the "heavenly one"). How often do you think about your future life in heaven? ©LPi

The Mass Book is now open through July 31st.

9:00am Mass Intentions for SJB/HT

Sunday February 23, 2025 - Frances Aiello - The Family
 Steve P. Taddeo - The Family
 Ellen Therese Reid - Mary Reid
 Sunday March 2, 2025 - Theresa Greenfield - The Family
 Patricia & Raymond Chouinard - The Chouinard Family

Recognize God In Your Ordinary Moments



By Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Mini Reflection: It saddens me that Christians have somehow gained this reputation as a people who judge, who condemn. Today's Gospel is an invitation for us to consider how we engage with people who disagree with us — or maybe even actively dislike us.

Judgment and Love

"Oh, well. I'm going to hell anyway, right?"

I have a few family members and friends who are not practicing Catholics who say this to me from time to time. It's always spoken in a teasing manner, with a wink and a shoulder shrug, usually to explain away some sort of minor misbehavior they feel guilty about.

It saddens me that Christians have somehow gained this reputation as a people who judge, who condemn. I think in part it stems from a misunderstanding on the part of unchurched people (and lots of churched ones, too) regarding what constitutes "judging." It is absolutely not "judging" someone to disagree with a personal decision, whatever that decision may be, or to decline from participating in that decision. We all have functioning consciences; we are all supposed to discern the moral goodness of any action before we take it.

But it is judging someone if we allow their decisions to impact how we treat them.

Today's Gospel is an invitation for us to consider how we engage with people who disagree with us — or maybe even actively dislike us. Much is said these days of the "culture wars." I certainly don't disagree that it can often feel like you're fighting a war when you're trying to live as the Church teaches. The forces against you often seem overwhelming and nefarious. And guess what? They are.

But we need to remember who the enemy really is. The enemy is not other children of God, even if they are children of God who are actively promoting ideas that are wrong. Perhaps these people are misguided and mistaken. Perhaps they are misled by the devil. Have we not all been misled by him at some point?

We must interact lovingly with people who think differently and live differently from us. The Christian life absolutely demands it. ©LPi



Distribution Of Ashes/Communion For Homebound

Please contact the office if you are homebound and would like to receive ashes and communion on Ash Wednesday March 5th. Only by contacting the office will someone be able to visit you.



Coffee And Cookie/Doughnut

Before you commit to giving up sweets for Lent we will offer after the 9:00am Mass on Sunday March 2nd coffee and cookies/doughnuts in the back of the church, Park Street vestibule.

Fish Dinners Are Back

We are pleased to announce our famous Lenten Fish Dinners are returning this year. Dinners will be held in conjunction with the Pastime Club, 1314 North Salina Street on Ash Wednesday March 5th, and on the Fridays of Lent Starting on March 7th. Dinners will be \$15.00 each with offerings of our famous baked fish, NEW fried fish and other dinner choices. The Bar will be available for guests 21+, outside alcohol is not allowed. We are very excited about our dinners returning and in working with the Pastime Club in this venture. Dinners will be from 4:30pm-7:30pm. We hope to see you there!!



Entrance: Enter on the Pastime Drive entrance, in the rear of the building.

paFISHioner Sponsor 2025

With the exciting return of our fish dinners we are bringing back our "paFISHioner" sponsor as well. Sponsorship is \$25.00, or other amount, and a paFISHioner sponsor sheet will be on the tables at the Pastime Club. Please either mail a check and the filled our form below to SJB/HT 406 Court Street Syr. NY 13208, or drop an envelope in the collection basket marked to Nancy's attention. Please do not put it in your regular collection envelope. Sponsorship will be accepted from now until the end of the dinners.

Form

Donor: _____

Sponsorship amount: _____

In Memory/Honor of: _____

"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." — Lk 6:35-36

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

Contribution Statements

If you require a SJB/HT Contribution Statement of your church donations for 2024 taxes, please contact the rectory during office hours, 315-478-0916, email at nbergeson@syrdio.org or fill in the slip below and send to SJB/HT 406 Court St. Syr. NY 13208, or, save a stamp and put your request in a plain envelope and put it into the collection basket attention "Nancy".

PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR REQUEST INTO YOUR CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES.

Name: _____

Address: _____

C/S/Z: _____ Envelope Number: _____

Mass Schedule OLP/SP 315-422-7163

Saturday Vigil - 4:00pm Vietnamese Mass 6:00pm

Sunday - 7:30am, 11:30am

9:30am Vietnamese

Monday - Thursday 9:00am in the Chapel

Reconciliation Wednesday 4:00-5:00pm

Call the Rectory to arrange for marriages, arrangements made six months prior to date. Contact our organist directly. Information will be provided. Call the rectory for baptisms and hospital/home visits.

Devotions, Explained - Fasting

Mini Explanation: Fasting was practiced by righteous men and women of the Old Testament and later by Christ himself. It remains an important part of the Christian devotional life today, being most strongly associated with the penitential season of Lent.



Fasting, Explained: The practice of fasting predates Christianity. The Old Testament is full of examples of righteous men and women mortifying their flesh for the purpose of making atonement or simply to grow closer to God. Jesus himself fasted for forty days and forty nights in preparation for the beginning of his public ministry, and we see his disciples following his example in the Acts of the Apostles.

Fasting continues to be an important part of Christian devotional life today. Many people feel the practice of fasting enhances their prayer and helps them fulfill St. Paul's advice to "put to death the deeds of the body" (Romans 8:13) to grow in the Spirit. Most Catholics will associate fasting with the liturgical season of Lent, which begins and ends with obligatory fasting for all members of the Latin Catholic Church between ages 18 and 59. ©LPi



Bishop Grimes Auction

Each year, we hold the Bishop Grimes Auction as a way to provide additional scholarship and tuition aid to Bishop Grimes Jr./Sr. High School deserving, talented students in need. This year's Auction is March 1st, 2025!

Your support is vital to the school and its sustainability. Please join us in participating in this year's auction. We encourage you to Bid High & Bid Often!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact **Gracie Thorpe, Director of Development & Alumni Relations, at 315 - 314 - 7157 x 4 or gracethorpe@syrdioocese.org.**

We are still accepting donations & sponsors. If you are interested in making a donation or becoming a sponsor, respond to this email!

7TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



Remember: Mike Affleck, Shawn Babcock, Nancy Bailey, B.J. Bubniak Family, Arlene Bukowski, Ashley Caiello, Robert Capria, Catherine Cushman, Linda Deapo, Theresa Domathowski, Hank Donohue, Ginny & Erin Donovan, Jenny Emmi, Jon English, Tenley Farrow, Marilyn Ferretti, Ellen Gangemi, Gladys Graham, Robert Greenwood, Joseph Guinto, Jeanne Hammond, Mary Isgar, Carla Johnson, Tony Lauretti, Shirley Kerr, Emma Lane, Kay Ledermann, Jackie Limeri, Luciano & Maria Luisi, Judy & Skip Marioritti, Michael & Darlene Morga, Diane Moro, Peggy Palerino, The Pavia Children, Antoinette Perotta, Faith Setzer, Marion Sherwood, Esther Sindoni, John Sobon, Patricia Soule, Timothy K. Suppes, Patrick St. Thomas IV, Barbara Traino, Gerry Vaccaro, Shelly Visco, Matthew Watkins, Fred Wheeler and Maureen White. **We also remember in our prayers our Service Men and Women & our Health Care Workers. Due to HIPAA laws, hospitals are not allowed to give names of patients. Please notify the parish office if you have a loved one in the hospital, a nursing home or is homebound and would like a visit.**