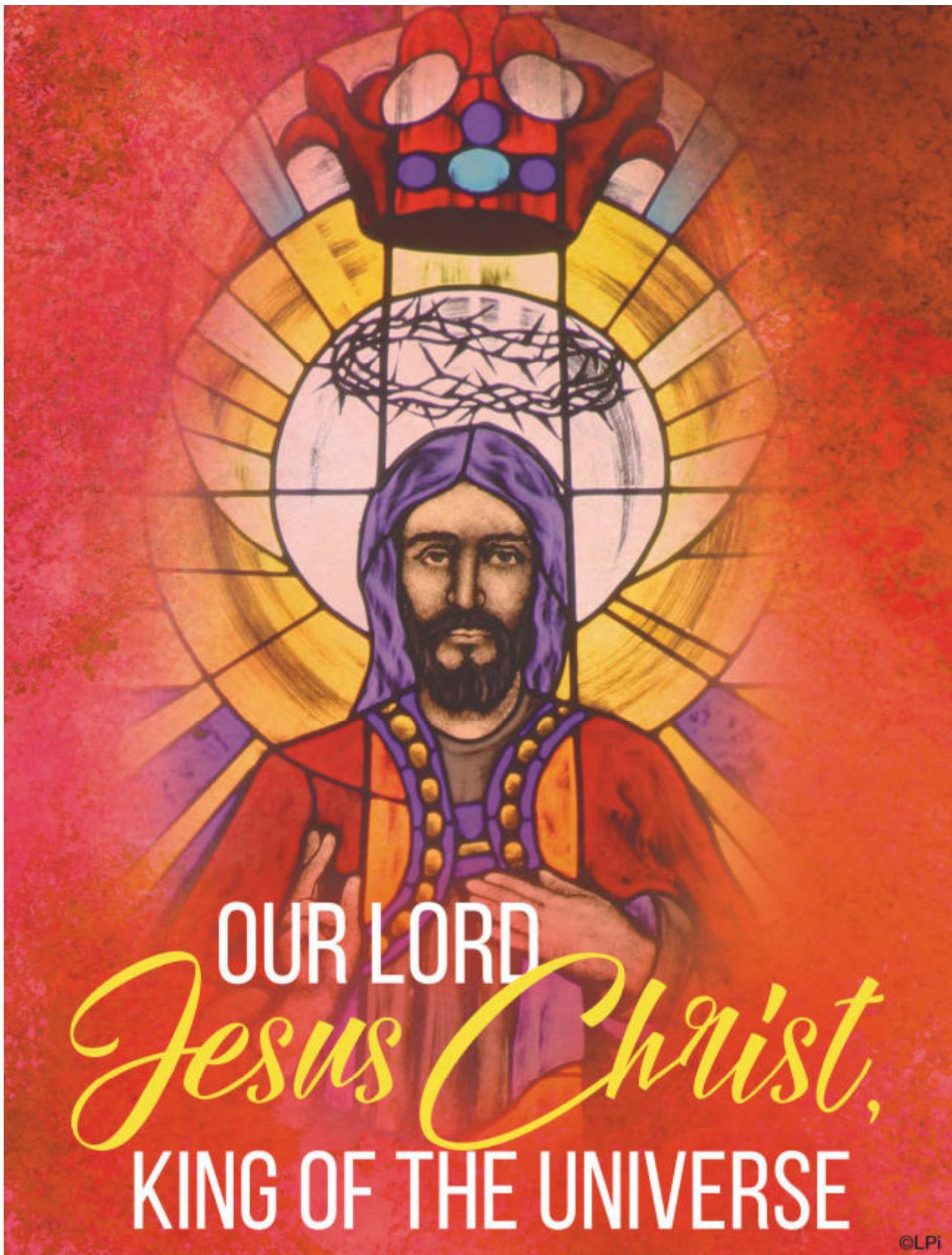
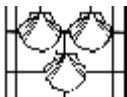


St. James the Greater

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe + November 22, 2020





Message from Fr. Tom

Wow, it's the week of Thanksgiving already. Every year the most common conversation includes "What are you doing for Thanksgiving?" This year, it takes on special meaning and a readiness to console others who tell us "Well, not a lot with COVID 'n all. I think we will be Zooming with family instead of getting together." I might be doing that as well, but my mom doesn't touch computers and so Zooming is not an option. I'm glad to say that both my brother in Madison and I think that it will be worth it to drive up to Wausau and stand outside my mom's first floor apartment where she has a little terrace so we can talk face to face. Mom of course thinks we shouldn't bother, but I know from experience that she will be glad we did. So, that's what I'm doing for Thanksgiving.

Oh, and I'll also be celebrating Eucharist here at St. James at 9 AM on Thanksgiving Day. This is the first time I've been here for this holiday, since I've gone to stay in Wausau on Wednesday evenings in the past, and our communal prayer at Thanksgiving has been an ecumenical service with our friends down the block at Good Shepherd Lutheran. I will miss that prayer experience, but am glad to celebrate a simple mass with whoever thinks they can come.

Did you know that "Eucharist" means "Thanksgiving?" I'm not a Greek scholar but that's what I'm told. From the little I know, "eu" means "good" and "charism" mean gift, so I guess it's in the ballpark of a reasonable translation. Knowing the connection between mass and thanksgiving can shape our attitude when we come to church (or celebrate mass on video at home). It shows us that our gathering is primarily a communal "Thank You" to God for all he did for us through Jesus Christ, who taught us wisdom for life, gave us an example of pure love for one another, and risked a painful death in order to show us Resurrection. That's a lot—thank you God!

We had our first weekend of selling crafts that I ordered from friends I met in Bethlehem last year. I think we brought in about \$1000, which is a good start. Most of the items come from the L'Arche Community where I volunteered my time weekly. It's located just down the hill to the west of the Church of the Nativity that marks the place of Jesus' birth. From where I lived, it was a brisk 50-minute walk. The goods made there—nativity sets, sheep with googly eyes, tree ornaments and more—are made from wool shorn off of Bethlehem sheep, descendants certainly of the ones who offered Jesus their warmth in his first days. Further, these crafts are made by people with intellectual disabilities who work alongside people without those disabilities in a very loving environment. I can't tell you how welcome they made me feel when I visited them. On my first visit, I wanted just to buy a few things, and the leader asked me if I wanted to join them for lunch and, afterward, if I wanted to stay and help them make their products. All I can say was that it was a deep blessing for me to be there.

I also ordered some things from a gift shop in Bethlehem whose owner, Majdi, used to invite me into his shop for Arabic coffee. Like the people at L'Arche, Majdi has very little income during these COVID times when no tourists or pilgrims come to Bethlehem. So, they were both delighted to send some of their goods over to us. And they're not so expensive like the olive wood carvings that we have hosted in the past. So, maybe you want to take a look.

Advent now is just around the corner, the beginning of a new Church year. Because of are unusual circumstances this year, we won't be using our beautiful musical setting for the Eucharistic Prayer, but hopefully we will work in the "Abba of Jesus" as a hymn to keep the tune alive in our community. With the beginning of a new year, I don't know if you're feeling like you can make a "new beginning" of sorts in your life, but I know this: Lots of people are hurting emotionally right now, financially, too, and in this time when so many are in a state of weakness, Jesus needs his People to be strong in him. So, if you feel capable of embracing this mission, now would be a good time to renew your commitment and ask the Lord for strength and guidance how he can best use you. Peace

Fr. Tom's Homily ,15 November 2020

Matthew 25:14-30

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Another harsh ending to a parable of Jesus. Grinding and gnashing of teeth, take away the little he has because he has been incompetent. Give to the one who has more. A Christian heart naturally recoils from this imagery and sympathizes with the poor fellow who is thrown out. Like the guest forced to come to the wedding feast but is thrown out for lack of proper dress, like the flighty virgins who run out to get more oil and find them some locked out and unknown to the master, the frightened servant evokes our sympathy.

Jesus tells all these parables to shock us into evaluating our life and how we live. While there are lots of details in the story that might trouble us, again I think there's a main point that is essential not to miss, and here it is to not let fear dominate our life. The third man is afraid and so "digs a hole" to hide the talents rather than use them adventurously, courageously, spiritedly.

I had the pleasure of praying this parable with two groups this week. Mike drew out the lesson: *If you spend your whole life doing nothing, that's what you're going to get back: nothing.* Another said that the story made her sad because it showed her *the tragedy of not finding the courage to do your heart's longing.*

One troubling detail in the story is that the master is described as a harsh man, reaping what he does not sow. But upon closer examination, that evaluation comes from the third servant who buries the talent. And the response was "Well, if you see me that way, that could at least have deposited the money in a bank to gain interest." It makes me think that the core problem is how the man saw him master.

Is it like people who see God as primarily a judge, one who is hovering over us to punish us when we mess up? I really think we're not going to become fully alive in Christ if that's our image of God. Of course there are a whole lot of actions we should avoid, but doing them hurts us—we sow our own seeds of destruction when we sin. It's not God punishing us but the consequences of what we do that lead to our suffering. God is there to lift us through his mercy and encouragement. The man who buries his talent does not seem to realize this. In a phrase I heard recently and like to describe such ones, "He's not living at a very high level of discipleship." We live at a higher level of discipleship the more we trust the love and blessing of God and go forth to live courageously and generously.

A question that the Gospel story raises for me is if we are more afraid to fail than we are driven to succeed. I know I am that way often. Sometimes when I preach I might be more afraid of saying something wrong than excited about expressing something that could really make a difference for someone. When I was a high school basketball player. I was good but I wasn't great. What kept me from being great, mostly I think, was that I was too afraid of missing the shot or getting trapped if I drove into the lane than I was excited about the possibility of watching the beautiful arc of the ball swishing through the net, or doing something truly spectacular driving through the defense.

I've been watching these motivational exercise videos lately, and I am thoroughly enjoying them. The instructor tries to keep us motivated to do hard workouts and says all kinds of things, many of which I'm sure to quote in the weeks ahead. The one for today she spoke during the warmup. She said something like this. **"This is high intensity interval training. This will be difficult. But you know, I only train with extraordinary people, and today I'm training with you. So what does that make you?"** I know it's a little cheesy, but I play along, "**I'm an extraordinary person!**" And off we go on our difficult effort.

Can we see life like that? God saying to us that God has made us for extraordinary things because we are extraordinary creations? It's certainly better than digging a hole and burying our energy. **What can we do this week, an extraordinary thing, or maybe an ordinary thing but done with extraordinary love, for the glory of God?** Prayer at the end of the day will be richer, I can guarantee you. We might even hear the whisper from today's story: Well done, good and faithful servant.



COVID-19 Pandemic

American Red Cross Blood Program Partner

St. James Blood Drive!

St. James got an Outstanding Service Award from the Red Cross for our blood drives! Let's keep it up.

Blood Drive Dec. 14 from noon to 6. Sign ups are open. Go to RedCross.org or call Anne at the Parish Office.

Mass Intentions & Schedule

Weekday masses are at 9 AM.

WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY ARE SCHOOL MASSES ONLY.

Saturday 4:30 PM, Sunday 8:30 and 10:30 AM indoors, and NOON outdoors while we can. Masks & social distancing are required.

Sat.	Nov. 21	4:30 Steven R. Tomachek
Sun.	Nov. 22	8:30 People of St. James
		10:30 Leticia Gonzalez Newman
		Noon People of St. James (outdoor)
Tue.	Nov. 24	Lorraine, Adam, & Romelle Stuckert
Wed.	Nov. 25	Susann Rohrer
Thu.	Nov. 26	Tom Gabavics
Fri.	Nov. 27	Veronica Schober
Sat.	Nov. 28	4:30 Deceased Members of Berg/Flynn Families
Sun.	Nov. 29	8:00 Bill McSorley 10:00 People of St. James

Birthday!!

Jean Fandel will celebrate 80 years Nov 25, 2020 with a birthday card party!

She was active at St James before moving to The Classic in 2016.

Join us in sending her birthday greetings, we'd like to see if she can receive 80 cards.

Send to :

Jean Fandel Room #39, The Classic at Hillcrest Greens, 2455 Sawgrass Place, Altoona WI 54720

Parish Events

Thanksgiving Mass at 9:00 AM on Nov. 26.

Due to Covid we will not have a communal reconciliation service this Advent.

Parish Survey

We sent out an email with an electronic survey asking questions about parish life and Christmas.

If you didn't get the email, you can go to this link:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G59M5GT>

Or call Christine at 715-579-1523, or email her at christine@stjameseauclaire.org and she will get it to you.

We are hoping to close this survey in a week or so. And we're hoping for every member to respond!!

Thanks for responding.

Sermon on the Amount

November 8, 2020

Reminder that CPL reminders will be sent out late for the month of November.

Sunday Adult Envelopes (101)	\$10,740.00
2019 same week (201)	\$9,921.00
Students	\$2.00
Plate	\$37.00
Total	\$10,779.00

Year to date Adult Env./CPL Income through Oct. 31, 2020:

Actual (July 1-Oct. 31)	\$198,086.00
Budgeted (July 1-Oct. 31)	\$198,086.00

Long term maintenance & facilities improvement fund and Past*Present*Future Campaign income for Nov. 8 was \$1,350.00 for a total since July 1, 2020 of \$25,491.76.

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Jacky Miller	Pastoral Minister	jacchuck@yahoo.com
Anne Henriksen	Office Manager	stjameseac@aol.com
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St. James School Phone: 715-830-2277

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Shanna Donkers, Administrative Assistant,	sdonkers@regiscatholicschools.com
Linda Schultz, Commission Rep.-RCS,	linda1735@gmail.com
Bulletin deadlines:	end of day Mondays.



Shirley and Sharon selling sheep, at the Holy Land Christmas sale! (say the part before the comma ten times fast....)

Christmas Sale in Gathering Space

Christmas Items from L'Arche in Bethlehem, some of which are made from wool. Also ceramic and olive wood items from a shop in Bethlehem.

Sales staff will be available after weekend Masses from November 14 to December 20 or until we sell out.

Sales items will also be available in Parish Office during the week from November 12 to December 21



Fr. Tom literally leaning on Jesus as he works on his homily.

Scandinavian Bake Sale

Because of Covid, PCCW members have not been able to hold their wonderful fundraising bake sale we normally hold at Christmas time. Instead members are going to hold a virtual bake sale of Scandinavian treats, with a limited selection available for pre-order. We will be taking orders for rosettes, krumkake, sandbakkel, and pizzelles. Prices are \$11 a dozen or \$1 for individual cookies.



All orders must be placed by Sunday, November 29. Pick up day is Sunday, December 6, under the canopy by the Gathering Space between 11 and 2.

The dozen can be a mixture of the 4 choices or just one kind. We will package in dozens unless other instructions are given. We can also make gift packages.

Order forms are available online, at the parish office, and in the back of church. Payment should be made at the time of ordering. Make checks out to St. James PCCW. Orders can be returned to the parish office. Any questions, please call Connie Bushman, co-chair of the bake sale. 715.429.0703



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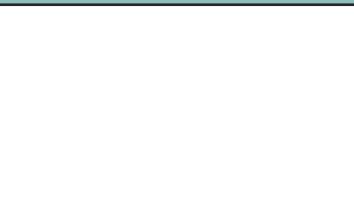
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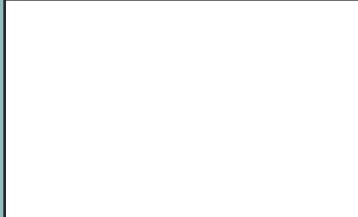
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