



Ascension Catholic Church

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MASS SCHEDULE

ALL MASSES ARE IN THE CHURCH

Weekends

Saturday — Vigil 4:00 pm
 Sunday — 8:00 am, 10:00 am, &
 12:00 pm

Weekdays

Mon -Wed, Fri -Sat — 9:00 am

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

ALL CONFESSIONS ARE HEARD IN THE CHURCH

Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri — 8:40-9:00 am

Saturdays — 8:40-9:00 am; 3:00-3:30 pm

MASS INTENTIONS (SEPT. 27—OCT. 3)

Monday (9:00 am) Ashley Scrivener

Tuesday (9:00 am) Lina Martin

Wednesday (9:00 am) Sam Fatzinger

Friday (9:00 am) +Reynaldo Gonzales

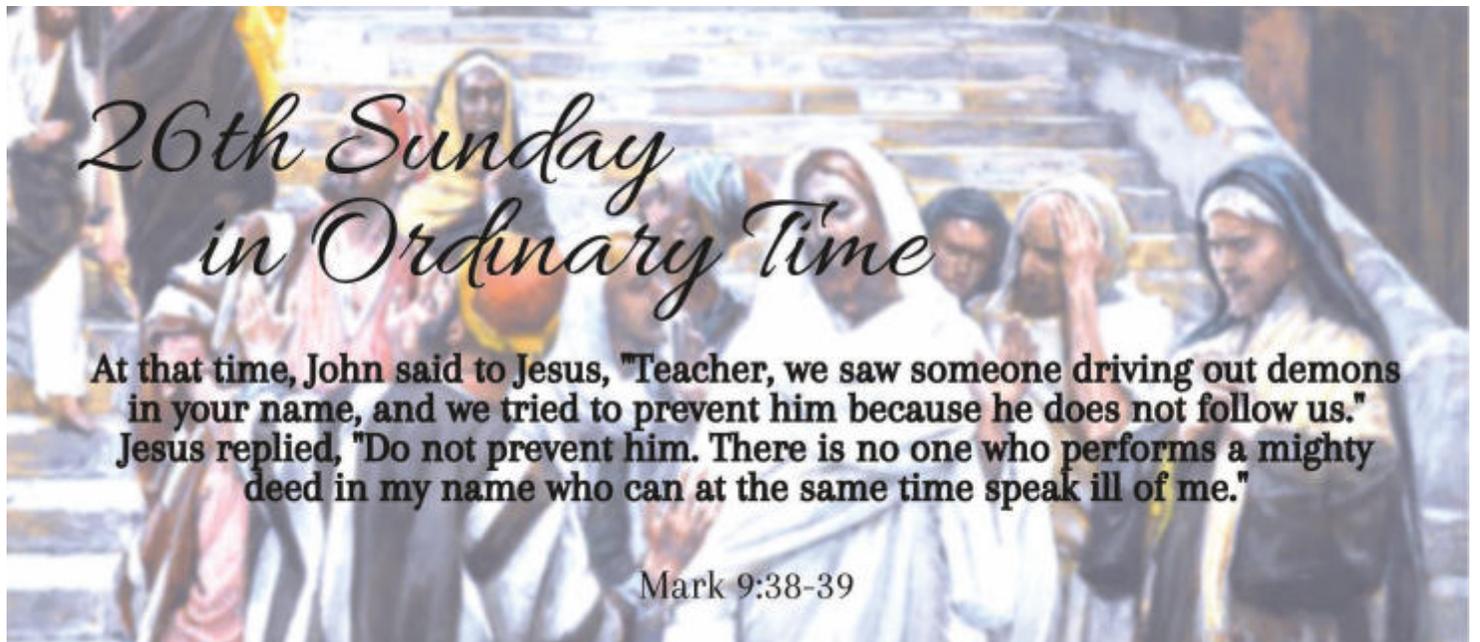
Saturday (9:00 am) +Ines Sarra

(4:00 pm) Special Intention

Sunday (8:00 am) Parishioners

(10:00 am) Special Intention

(12:00 pm) Sodality



26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

At that time, John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us." Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me."

Mark 9:38-39

Dear Parishioners,

—Greetings from Fr. Tim—

This week I might touch on all the readings on my homily, so here I will share some thoughts related to today's feast: St Matthew the Apostle (9/21/21).

Who was he? As with most of the apostles, the Scriptures do not offer a lot of biographical information, but do highlight certain details: Matthew's authorship of the first of the four Gospels ("The Gospel According to Matthew"); his being named one of the twelve apostles (Mt 10:2-4; Mk 3:16-19; Lk 6:14-16; and Acts 1:13); his work at a "tax collector" (Mt 9:9 and 10:3); and the moment Christ first calls him as a disciple (Mt 9:9-13; compare Mk 2:14 and Lk 5:27, which have always led scholars to identify "Matthew" and "Levi" as the same person). While certainly these are not large amounts of information, they are enough to put together something of a portrait, knowing especially that Christ wouldn't have called Matthew or named him an apostle without good reason, and without filling Matthew with special gifts for his mission. Some scholars have even noticed that Matthew's Gospel contains more Greek phrases and words particular to the field of economics -- a fitting find given his identity as a tax collector (Nathan Eubank, *The Wages of Cross-Bearing and Debt of Sin: The Economy of Heaven in Matthew's Gospel*)!

In any case, I want to reflect on the moment of Christ's first call to Matthew, recounted in today's Gospel (Mt 9:9-13):

'As Jesus passed by, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" He heard this and said, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

In this passage, it is first noteworthy that Matthew is identified as "sitting at the customs post," that is, a "publican" or "tax collector." Such a job was publicly regarded as sinful, not only because tax collectors were often suspected of greedily keeping some tax money for themselves, but also because the taxes were ultimately collected for the Romans, foreign oppressors. In such a position, Matthew would've been seen as a traitor to own people.

The second thing to notice is Jesus' simple call -- "Follow me" -- and Matthew's immediate response -- "He got up and followed him." Matthew then brought his friends ("tax collectors and sinners") to his home to meet and talk with Jesus, apparently rejoicing that they had found the Messiah. Not only do these details speak to the power of Jesus' word and virtuous character, but also to the probability that grace was silently at work in Matthew, preparing him for this moment: perhaps he had long been searching for something more in life, something virtuous and free of the sinful position he and his fellow public sinners had fallen into. They seem to have been "on the lookout" for God, as Cardinal Newman once said, and found Him in Jesus Christ.

A third and final detail to notice is Jesus' subsequent exchange with the Pharisees. While these "Separated Ones" try to remain "pure" by keeping apart from anything deemed "impure," here, the irony is that public sinners have come closer to God by drawing near to Jesus Christ. Apparently Matthew and his friends have responded more humbly to Jesus' call for repentance and faith, humbly recognizing their own need for healing from the divine "physician" (cf. Mt 21:31). And so Jesus tells the Pharisees to "go and learn the meaning of the words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'" -- an allusion to Hosea 6:6, where God once called for hesed, "mercy," or "covenant love" from His people -- who had been hiding behind a mask of purely exterior piety consisting of routine sacrifices offered without interior conversion. Hesed, an integral love for God, instead fully obeys God, interiorly and exteriorly.

Continued at top of next page

As I read this episode I cannot help but think of my own call to be a priest, most explicitly when I was 18 years old, literally hearing the word "priest" when reading Scripture one night before bed -- Paul's call to offer our whole "self" to God in Romans 12:1-2. Since I was not wholly ready to respond at that time, it took many other moments in prayer, thought, and spiritual direction for me to come to the moral certitude necessary to believe that God was truly calling me to be a priest. I struggled greatly to believe this, in part because I simply desired so many other things: to marry, to work and study in Japan, to be a teacher, etc. And as best as I tried to "solve" the puzzle weighing different desires and signs, analyzing what seemed most probable, I was often only left in a fog, unable to see how the pieces fit.

Well part of what I had to learn along the way was the lesson that Matthew's Gospel highlights today: hesed. While Christ can and does call us to different states in life, at times speaking very clearly to follow Him in marriage, priesthood, religious life, or consecrated single life -- often, what He first asks and demands is a willingness to give ourselves totally to Him and accept whatever He might ask. This "covenant love" is found in a deep life of prayer, and reception of the sacraments, where we grow in the ability to trust God and die to our own preferences, giving Him the "rights" of our life without reserve. We must realize that with God this gift of self is justly asked, but it is also the best investment we can make: since God only wishes to give us "life in abundance" (Jn 10:10) and the "hundredfold" even along with the cross (Mt 19:27-29; Lk 9:23-25; Mt 16:25). Having come to believe these things, and abandoned to His will, will we then be ready to fully hear His will, and respond with complete commitment.

Today, then, let's ask for St. Matthew's prayers -- he who was among the first to learn this lessons. And above all let's ask for the prayers of Our Lady -- she who said, without reserve, "May it be done to me according to your will."

God bless,

Fr. Tim



Women's groups approaching quickly!



2nd and 4th Sunday evenings of the month at 7:30pm beginning tonight, 9/26 will be an **Endow study of the life and writings of St Teresa of Avila** led by Bethany Coleman and Lina Martin. Contact is admin@women-serving-women.com for more information or questions.

Fourth Wednesday evenings of the month beginning Michelmas (this Wednesday!) will be a study **Jesus, The Way, The Truth, The Life** from Ascension Press led by Andrea Johnson. An RSVP is requested by contacting andijog@gmail.com, or by text @301-580-3467 for more information or questions.

PRAYERS FOR OUR SICK

Francis Barnes, Mary Ann Boyer, Mary Burton, Laura Chesnick, Rosita Dietrich, Cynthia Graham, Cindie Harrison, Larry Hudson, James Kaufman Jr., Beverlee Lee, Robert Milburn, Ida Mullikin, Jean Mosby, Earl Perry, Norma Perry, Norma Raffaele, Geralyn Roberson, Mickey Ryan, Barbara Shipp, Doreen Darzinski, Bert Nemeth, Becky Goodman, and Shirley Mackessy.

Build you business and help us grow a vibrant faith community!

Alden Berry from LPi, our bulletin printer, has begun reaching out to secure new ads for our church. As a valuable member of the business community, we invite you to expand your reach and grow your business with a print ad in our parish bulletin. To act on this opportunity, contact Alden Berry by email at achambers-berry@4lpi.com.

Trip to the Holy Land this May

Fr. Jack Kennealy, Pastor of St. Matthias in Lanham, MD, is leading a tour to the Holy Land May 22-June 2, 2022. Major biblical sites including Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, Mt. Carmel, Mt. Tabor, the Sea of Galilee, Bethlehem, are included. The cost is \$4,280, which includes hotel, airfare, and all meals. It does not include gifts for purchase, tips of approximately \$180, and health/travel insurance of \$280-\$340. If there is a problem and Israel is in quarantine, then the date will be postponed until fall of 2022. For additional information, please e-mail kennealyj@adw.org.

Baby Bottle Campaign for the Gabriel Network

Gabriel Network is a faith based, non-profit organization that serves women facing crisis pregnancies throughout Maryland and DC. Their mission is to empower a committed network of Christian churches to “adopt” pregnant mothers and families in need by providing practical, emotional and spiritual support through pregnancy and beyond. It realizes this mission through three programs: a help line, church-based ministry, and housing ministry.

Ascension will be hosting a Baby Bottle Campaign for the Gabriel Network beginning the weekend of October 2/3. Baby Bottles will be handed out after all Masses. For those parishioners who wish to donate virtually, Gabriel Network has set up a virtual link. The link to donate is <http://justgiving.com/campaign/AscensionParish2021>. The money collected will help serve the mothers and families who call Gabriel Network for help. Thank you in advance for your continued generosity!

SPX Howl-o-ween Hustle 5K Run / Walk

St. Pius X Regional School is holding a 5K run/walk event this October. The event benefits the school: 100% of money raised helps with capital improvement projects, keeps tuition costs low, and provides students with fantastic learning opportunities!

RACE INFORMATION:

Date: Saturday, October 16, 2021

Day-of Registration: 8:00 am | *Race start:* 9:00 am

Location: St. Pius X Regional School

14710 Annapolis Rd. Bowie, MD 20715 | (301) 262-0203

ENTRY FEES:

Individual: \$35 | *Youth:* \$20 | *Families:* \$70 | *CYO or High School Teams:* \$125

Donations accepted

REGISTRATION:

<https://events.eventgroove.com/event/Howl-O-Ween-Hustle-5k-52033> or use the QR Code

****register by September 30 to guarantee a t-shirt**





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October 2, 2021 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

St. Mary of the Mills Catholic Church
114 St Marys Pl, Laurel, MD 20707

Registration fee: \$5.00

Register at:

eventbrite.com/e/the-journey-home-walking-with-families-at-the-end-of-life-tickets-167735063089



Deaf and Disabilities Ministry
The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

September 26, 2021 | 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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