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"I KNOW WHO YOU ARE—THE HOLY ONE OF GOD!"  
- MK 1:24

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4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

# SUNDAY'S READINGS

## FIRST READING:

I will raise up for them a prophet like you  
from among their kin,  
and will put my words into his mouth;  
he shall tell them all that I command him. (Dt 18)

## PSALM:

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts. (Ps 95)

## SECOND READING:

An unmarried woman or a virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord,  
so that she may be holy in both body and spirit. (1 Cor 7:34)

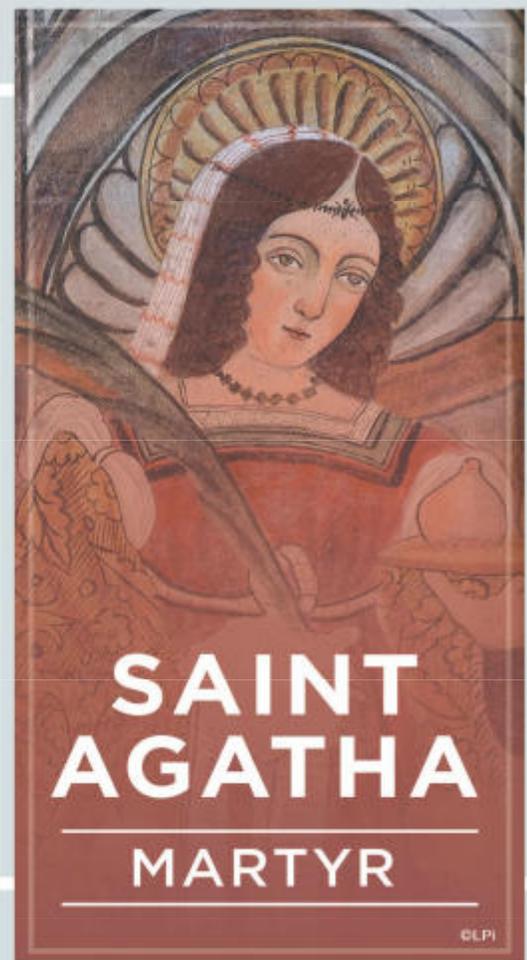
## GOSPEL:

The people were astonished at his teaching,  
for he taught them as one having authority and not  
as the scribes. (Mk 1:22)

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## OBSERVANCES FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 31, 2021

Sunday: 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time; Catholic Schools Week  
Tuesday: The Presentation of the Lord;  
World Day for Consecrated Life  
Wednesday: St. Blaise, Bishop and Martyr; St. Ansgar, Bishop  
Friday: St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr  
Saturday: St. Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs  
Next Sunday: 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time



## REFLECT

### FIRST READING

Moses taught the Israelites that God would send prophets to assist them in knowing His will. Why do you think people so often reject the prophetic message?

### SECOND READING

Paul speaks of the inevitability of anxiety in life. How does your faith assist you in handling what makes you anxious?

### GOSPEL READING

In the story of the healing of a demon-possessed man, Mark reports how the demons knew Jesus' true identity as "the Holy One of God." What does this reveal about the unseen order?

## EMBRACING CHANGE IN CHRIST

It's officially one month since we popped the champagne, toasted 2021 and wrote down a list of resolutions. This is usually the time when we start to take a good, hard look in the mirror to assess what we have done — or have not done — with the first month of this brand-new year.

New years can be scary, can't they? Full of promise, sure, but also full of room for failure. Full of space for our old baggage, old fears and the continuation of old mistakes.

The same can be said of Christ, and the new life he offers us, if we are brave enough to accept it. Opportunities like that can be intimidating. In that moment, we might find ourselves like the man with the unclean spirit crying out: "What

have you to do with me, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?"

Jesus is a comforter of the afflicted; he is a consoling figure, but he is also a challenging one. Sometimes we have grown attached to our afflictions. The idea of correcting bad habits or forming new ones is frankly terrifying to us. We have a voice deep inside who sees Christ and his invitation to repentance, and it cries out in fear: "I know who you are!"

When we live in the present, disavowing the baggage of the past or fear of the future, we submit ourselves to the promise of redemption. Let us be brave everyday stewards and invite Christ's healing power into our lives. We won't regret it — I'm sure the demoniac never did.

—Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

## I GET ANNOYED WITH MYSELF WHEN I AM DISTRACTED WHILE I PRAY. IS IT A SIN? HOW CAN I BE MORE ATTENTIVE?

The mind is a marvelous and complex thing, producing amazing thoughts, images, wisdom and inspiration. Yet at times it is like a two-year-old: it does not follow directions, does what it wants and loves to tell us "no!" This is probably the oldest and most common problem in the spiritual life—dealing with distraction. It comes in all forms: good intentions forgotten, wandering thoughts at Mass, daydreaming, etc. A little poem says it all: When the soul begins to pray, the brain always wants to play!

There are many ways to handle distractions. If we are distracted by thoughts about our families or friends, we should pray for them. If we lose our focus, we need just "re-collect" ourselves. If some worry or concern just won't leave our mind, then we deal with it and come back to prayer or make it part of our prayer. And when words just won't come, the only prayer we might offer is our presence, our suffering, and our desire to be close to the Lord. Most importantly, we need to be patient with ourselves. These things are not sinful, but reminders of our human frailty. Our weaknesses and good efforts are all acceptable to God, who reads the love in our hearts and the good intentions of our minds.



## LIVE THE LITURGY

INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

Most of us are not trail blazers. Throughout history though, there have been many folks who tirelessly and persistently pursued the promptings of their hearts without giving any care to what others thought or trends dictated. Jesus is one of them. St. Teresa of Calcutta and St. Francis of Assisi are examples of others. The rest of us are people who take a more measured look at things, want to test the waters, and take our time choosing what path or person to follow. We need credible witnesses of faith. We need the Moses people in our lives to show us by word and deed who God is and what integrity and a purpose-driven life looks like. They are the pointers to truth, who even though they struggle themselves, seem to embody an unspoken timeless wisdom that just sounds and feels right. Jesus taught with this same type of authority and caught the attention of the greatest of skeptics. They were astonished. Even though we need our human prophets we can also be somewhat prophetic ourselves by putting integrity and conviction behind our embrace of the Gospel. Perhaps much to our surprise, we all have the power to be a credible witness. Are you willing to give it a try?

WE MUST USE  
**MERCY**  
FOR THE PRESENT  
AND HAVE  
**HOPE**  
FOR THE FUTURE.

—ST. JOHN BOSCO

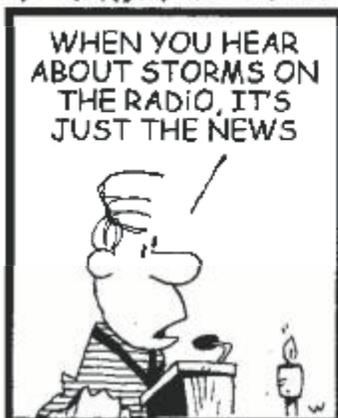
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### 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

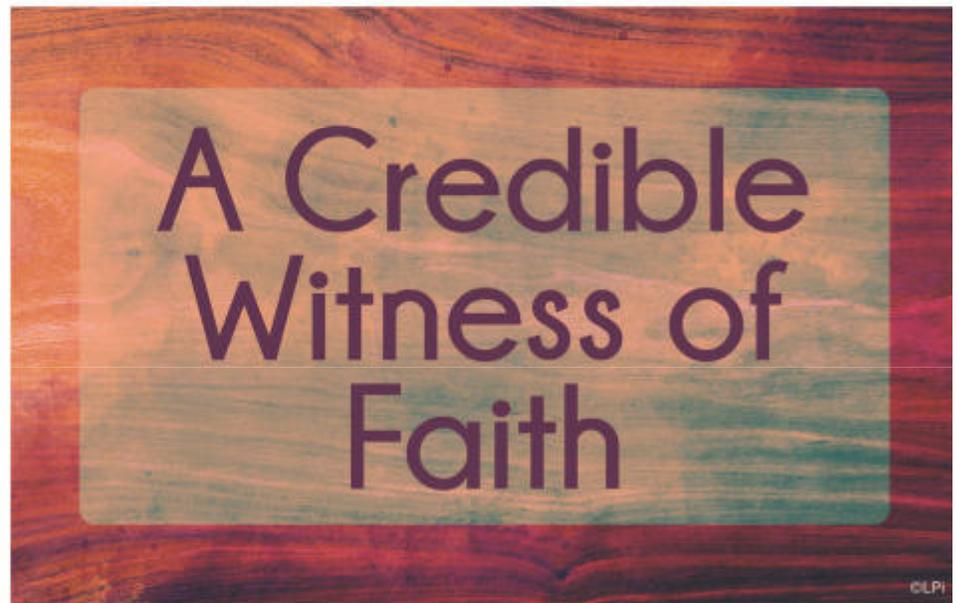


## GOSPEL MEDITATION

### ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

Most of us are quiet people who desire to live a good and holy life, promote the values and mission of the Gospel as best we can and desire to one day inherit the surprise of life eternal God promises to us. We are not trail blazers. We are simple people who want to do the simple things of life well. But there are others who left a more profound impact along the way of the paths they walked. Folks like Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Thomas Merton, Gandhi, St. Teresa of Calcutta, and many others left lasting impacts and legacies. Like Moses, they show us by word and deed who God is and what integrity and a purpose driven life look like. They show us how to be holy. We need Moses people like these to give us inspiration, hope and an example of holy living.

We do not need to do what they did or even mirror their relationship with God. Each one of us is God's special creation, with a purpose and soul known only to us. We need to learn how to open up and bring, without compromise, our soul-ness to life. We know when someone is authentic and centered because they always point to truth, even though they struggle and sin themselves, and they embody an unspoken timeless wisdom that



just sounds and feels right. Jesus taught with this same type of authority and it astonished many who listened. We do not need to move mountains, advance a cause, write books or become notable. All we have to do is become credible witnesses of the faith we profess. Moses people can teach us how to do this.

St. Oscar Romero was an amazing man and a Moses figure for sure. He saw God in the burning bush and brought the flame of Gospel faith to the poorest of the poor, challenging the evils of the society in which he lived. He was tireless and persistent. He must have gotten very close to

the problem because it cost him his life. He suspected it would. St. Romero said, "When we leave Mass, we ought to go out the way Moses descended Mt Sinai: with his face shining, with his heart brave and strong to face the world's difficulties." We can learn from this wisdom. If we allow the power of the Mass to truly transform us, we will leave that holy encounter changed. Our face will shine, and we will have courage. We can then bring what we have received to life's challenges. That sounds doable, doesn't it? Because of the example of our simple holiness, people will be amazed.

*All were amazed and asked one another, "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him." His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee. - Mk 1:27-28*

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## 3 EASY STEPS

### TO KEEPING YOURSELF & OTHERS HEALTHY!

We are cautioned to be especially careful during the Coronavirus outbreak. Here are some simple ways to keep sickness away.



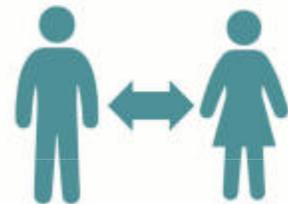
#### WASH YOUR HANDS

Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and water. If you can't wash your hands, use hand sanitizer frequently.



#### DON'T TOUCH YOUR FACE

Especially around the eyes, nose and mouth. If you must sneeze, use a tissue or your arm.



#### KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Practice social distancing during this epidemic and stay away from large groups. Instead, call, email or check up on family and friends using social media.



# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

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# Kids Corner

READ THE  
GOSPEL &  
COLOR



Grass stains. Tomato sauce. Brightly colored fruit drinks. When these nasty stains stick to your clothes, it is tough to get them out. Regular soap won't work. You need something stronger. Jesus is really strong, too. In today's Gospel, a nasty evil spirit screamed when it saw Jesus. Jesus was so powerful, he cleaned that evil spirit right out.

## PRAYER

God, you are much stronger than evil. Nothing is too hard for you to clean.

## MISSION FOR THE WEEK

Make a new label for your family's stain pretreatment bottle. Trace around the bottle, write Mark 1:21-28 in big letters, and decorate your label with a picture of Jesus. Tape your new label to the bottle so you and your parents remember how strong Jesus is.



*Invest just five minutes a day,  
and your faith will deepen and  
grow a day at a time.*

### **Monday, Feb 01, 2021**

Each day of Catholic Schools Week is the celebration of a component of Catholic education. Today we look at the experience of community. Through the relationships and interactions of service activities in the community and class trips to other environs, students get to practice the values they learn in their Catholic education and experience what it feels like to be making the world a better place. Plus they get a chance to observe others in community service and come to appreciate how they can continue caring for others their entire lives. Today, be an example of service to others.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 11:32-40; Mark 5:1-20*

### **Tuesday, Feb 02, 2021**

#### **Feast of The Presentation of The Lord**

Mary and Joseph bring their beloved firstborn to the temple at the appointed time, so Jesus can enter into the covenant with Yahweh that Jews have revered since Abraham. Not unlike infant Baptism today, it was—among other things—a powerful ritual of belonging that put the child on the right path to growing in faith. As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week—with the focus today being squarely on “the student”—may we never forget or neglect the promise of every young soul, so receptive to our efforts to plant the seeds of faith.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Malachi 3:1-4; Hebrews 2:14-18;  
Luke 2:22-40*

### **Wednesday, Feb 03, 2021**

Catholic schools have made a unique contribution to the nation, and today we can recognize and celebrate that contribution. At their very best, Catholic schools train students to grow both as members of the Catholic church and as productive citizens of the nation. By “rendering to Caesar and to God,” Catholic schools in the United States have managed to achieve that rare combination in world history, the development of a relatively harmonious church-state relationship that has endured for centuries. the NCEA website for suggestions on how to celebrate the nation during Catholic Schools Week.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15; Mark 6:1-6*

### **Thursday, Feb 04, 2021**

Catholic schools prepare students to discover their vocation, so they can grow to use their gifts in service of church and world. Over the years, our notion of “vocation” has broadened significantly. A word that once designated those who take religious vows or are ordained into ministry is now used more broadly. No one defined vocation better than essayist and theologian Carl Frederick Buechner: “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” Are the two aligned in your life? And if not, how can you bring them into alignment?

*TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24; Mark 6:7-13*

### **Friday, Feb 05, 2021**

Where would any of us be without our teachers? They did everything from helping us with our “three R’s” to opening our minds to new ways of seeing the world. The really great teachers taught us how to learn for ourselves and thus set us up for a lifetime of discovery and fulfillment. When was the last time you thanked a teacher? Today is the day Catholic Schools Week pays special attention to the faculty, staff, and volunteers that make it possible for these great schools to function. See NCEA website for suggestions on how to give thanks and recognition.

*TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 13:1-8; Mark 6:14-29*

### **Saturday, Feb 06, 2021**

We close Catholic Schools Week by recognizing the central role in Catholic education played by the family. The Second Vatican Council called the family “the domestic church” because it is in the home that faith is first formed and nurtured. Whether you live alone or with others, your home can be a sacred space of prayer and spirituality. Creating sacred space in your home includes prayer and scripture readings at meal times and before bed; praying the Rosary; placing a crucifix in a prominent place; and family traditions based on the liturgical seasons. for ways to recognize the family’s role in Catholic education and also to make your home a domestic church. Have at it!

*TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21; Mark 6:30-34*

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Scripture citations from the NAB Rev. Ed.

# February

febrero

## Mass Intentions

**Weekend of January 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>**  
4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

✘ Judy Dingeldine  
For the People of St Stevens

✘ David Brizek

**Monday February 1<sup>st</sup>**  
Perpetual

**Tuesday February 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
✘ Marie Tu Thi Dang

**Wednesday February 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
✘ Thomas Smedley

**Thursday February 4<sup>th</sup>**  
✘ Phyllis Sadler

**Friday February 5<sup>th</sup>**  
✘ Ella & Emmett Smith

**Weekend of February 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>**  
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

✘ Leighton Nickerson  
For the People of St Stevens

✘ Quinn & Hass Family

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# St. Steven's Roman Catholic Church

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in celebration of the Glory of God*

January 31, 2021

Dear Parishioners,

I am saddened that Fr. Enoch Tanyi Okpa, V.C. (Via Christi Society) our Parochial Vicar, has been called home to Nigeria in West Africa to a new assignment by his Superior. This all happened within this past week, and we are still adjusting to the news. At this time and given our current pandemic situation, there will be no replacement for Fr. Enoch until possibly the fall.

We are grateful for his smiles, homilies, and prayers. He provided us with wonderful ministry and has been a great addition to the priests of our diocese. He will be deeply missed. Thank you, Father Enoch, for your service among us.

The knowledge that you shared with us and the learning you bought cannot be compared with anything. You have been a true and amazing priest to us. Thank you so much for everything. Your home community is going to gain a truly wonderful person. May all God's blessings be with you.

I would encourage you to send a note of thanks to Fr. Enoch. One of my favorite things to receive from people is a letter. Not a card with a few words. Those are nice too, but I love receiving a letter or a card with a substantial message in it. It is very powerful to hear somebody describe exactly how the things I said or did was so fruitful for them. It is a reminder that Jesus is a lot bigger than each of us and he can do great things with the little we each have to offer. Letters can be sent to the parish office (the address is printed at the bottom of this letterhead), where we will collect and forward them to Fr. Enoch when we learn of his new address.

We must remember that God has a plan for each of us, and to quote one of Fr. Enoch's favorite mantra's: God is good! All the time! All the time, God is good!

Let us pray for one another to Be Healthy, Be Smart, and Be Holy!



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