



SCIOTO CATHOLIC

Holy Redeemer, St. Mary, St. Monica, & St. Peter
Four Parishes, One Family

PRIESTS

Fr. Joseph Yokum, Pastor

Fr. Christopher Tuttle, Parochial Vicar

DEACONS

Rev. Mr. Terry Acox

Rev. Mr. Jim Sturgeon

Rev. Mr. Chris Varacalli

WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday:

4:00pm at St. Monica (Odd Months), at St. Peter (Even Months)

5:30pm at St. Mary (Odd Months), at Holy Redeemer (Even Months)

Sunday:

7:30am at Holy Redeemer

9:00am at St. Peter

10:30am at St. Mary

12:00pm at St. Monica

7:00pm at Holy Redeemer on First Sunday of the Month (Spanish Mass)

WEEKDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Monday: 12:00pm at St. Mary

Tuesday: 6:30am at Holy Redeemer, 12:00pm at St. Peter

Wednesday: 10:00am at Holy Redeemer (School Year), 12:00pm at St. Peter,

1:00pm at Hill View Retirement Community

Thursday: 12:00pm at St. Monica

Friday: 12:00pm at St. Mary, 6:00pm at St. Monica

Saturday: 8:30am at Holy Redeemer

CONFESSION

Monday: 12:30pm at St. Mary

Tuesday: 7:00am at Holy Redeemer, 12:30pm at St. Peter

Wednesday: 12:30pm at St. Peter, 1:30pm at Hill View Retirement Community

Thursday: 12:30pm at St. Monica

Friday: 12:30pm at St. Mary, 5:00pm at St. Monica

Saturday: 3:00pm (Odd months at St. Monica, Even months at St. Peter)

4:30pm (Odd months at St. Mary, Even months at Holy Redeemer)

ADORATION

Friday:

12:30-3:00pm at St. Mary

5:00-6:00pm at St. Monica



STAY CONNECTED

www.sciotocatholic.org

 Scioto Catholic

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 @sciotocatholic

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To Receive Text Reminders and
Information About Upcoming Events,
Text sciotocatholic to 84576

SCIOTO CATHOLIC OFFICE

514 Market Street, Portsmouth, Ohio 45662 / (740) 354-4551 / office@sciotocatholic.org

Sacramental Emergency Line ONLY: (740) 981-9555

6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME FEBRUARY 16TH 2020

This Week / Formation & Events

Sunday // February 16

8:45-10:00 PSR for St. Mary & Holy Redeemer AC
10:15-11:30 am PSR for St. Peter & St. Monica SP Hall

Monday// February 17

5:30 pm Roman's Bible Study AC Sm Rm
6:30 pm Consoling the Heart of Jesus SMC

Tuesday//February 18

10:00 am Bible study SP
12:30 pm Confessions SP
6:30 pm RCIA SP Hall
7:00 pm Women's Chorus HR

Wednesday// February 19

9:30 am Bible Study AC Sm Rm
1:30 pm Confessions HV
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal SP

Thursday // February 20

12:30 pm Confessions STMO
1:00 pm Catholic Ladies of Columbia Burg Ponderosa
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal SM

Friday// February 21

9:00 am Ladies Quilt Group AC Sm Rm
12:30 pm Confessions SM
1:00-1:30pm Adoration SM
1:20 pm Benediction SM

Saturday// February 22

3:00 pm Confessions SP
4:30 pm Confessions HR
7:00 pm Junior High Youth Group HR AC

Sunday // February 23

8:45-10:00 PSR for St. Mary & Holy Redeemer AC
10:15-11:30 am PSR for St. Peter & St. Monica SP Hall
5:30 pm-8:30 pm Mardi Gras Party SP Hall

Masses and Intentions

Monday February 17

12:00 NO MASS SM

Tuesday February 18

6:30 NO MASS HR
12:00 † Rosemary & Bob Montavon (*Ruth Boll*) SP

Wednesday February 19

10:00 † Betty Fitzer (*Sue & Steve*) HR
12:00 NO MASS SP
1:00 † Ruth Hughes (*Sharon Bender*) HV

Thursday February 20

12:00 † Judy Scherer (Cecilia Morris) STMO

Friday February 21

12:00 † Guy & Martha Parks (*Sandra Ferrer*) SM
6:00 NO MASS STMO

Saturday February 22

8:30 † George Clayton (*Callista & Bob McHenry*) HR
4:00 † Missa Pro Populo SP
5:30 † Scott Warren (*Kathy Moore*) HR

Sunday February 23

7:30 Mary & Steve Herrmann (*Herrmann's*) HR
9:00 † Fred & Gertrude Creed (*Suzy Bowen Family*) SP
10:30 † Mark Fleming (*The Beaumonts*) SM
12:00 † Judy Scherer (Margaret Mohr) STMO

Sacramental Information

Baptism: Three months prior to birth, pick up a Baptism Information and Form Packet from either parish office. Parents must attend a Baptism Preparation Class. Email Megan Baum at megan@sciotocatholic.org or call her at 740-354-4551 to set up a time that works for you. Schedule with Pastor.

Marriage: Contact the Pastor by calling the parish office or emailing fatherjoe@sciotocatholic.org at least 1 year prior to desired wedding date to begin preparations. Visit www.sciotocatholic.org for information on all requirements.

Anointing & Visitation of the Sick: Our local hospitals do not inform us if you have been hospitalized. If you would like a priest to visit you (when you are in the hospital, nursing home, or homebound) or for Holy Communion to be brought to you, please contact the parish office.

Funeral: Contact the pastor through the parish office to plan the funeral Mass. It is possible to make pre-arranged Mass plans with the pastor before death. The Parish Music Director is responsible for coordinating the music for all funerals.



SCIOTO CATHOLIC

Legend

HR = Holy Redeemer

SM = St. Mary of the Annunciation

STMO = St. Monica

SP = St. Peter In Chains

HV = Hillview

AC Lg Rm = Holy Redeemer Activity Center

AC Sm Rm = Holy Redeemer Activity Center

SMC = St. Mary Center

NDE = Notre Dame Elementary

NDHS = Notre Dame High School

NDCC = Notre Dame Community Center

SFC = St. Francis Catholic Outreach Center

SCIOTO CATHOLIC INFORMATION

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Finance Manager, Carolyn Paul 740-354-4551
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St. Peter/St Monica Bookkeeper, Cecilia Morris, cecilia@sciotocatholic.org

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theresa@sciotocatholic.org

Consortium Director of Sacred Music Jordan Werring,
jordan@sciotocatholic.org

Director of Community Life, Mary Anne Hughes 740-821-6550
hughes1984@yahoo.com

Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor, Chris Ponzio
chris@sciotocatholic.org

Custodial Staff: Ruth Marasek, St. Mary
Brenda Skaggs, St. Peter, Angie Ogg, Holy Redeemer,
Pam Higgins, Holy Redeemer Rectory & St. Monica

SCIOTO CATHOLIC PRAYER REQUESTS

Gus Saltsman, Matt Sullivan, Debbie Sullivan, Barb Sowards, Jill Pick, Sue Huff, Baby Kate Amy Schackart, Sue Phillips, Christine Tylka, Norma Bendinelli, Emma McCaul, Ron Miller, Margaret Mohr, Dottie Cochran, Mary Ann Hill, Louis Kielmar, Justin Cantrell, Mary Massie, George Lawson, Gabe McCarty, Helen Rawlins, Michael Lawson, Janis Bouts, Ron & Mary Nelson, Roger Otworth, Steve Workman, Jill Clark-Wills, Mary Kisor, Keith Shonkwiler, Debbie Estep, The Carver Family, Charles & Mary Blevins, Phillip Otworth, Bessie Otworth, Tim Lang, Thomas Lynch, Joseph & Lillian Shaw, Michael Miller, Ryan, Robert Riordan, Cody Pollards, Julie Schmidt Barnicle, Patty Lawson, MariGrace Smith, Beatrix Sanford, Ruth Vetter, Helen Stanley, William Questel, Deborah Hughes, Jeffrey & Donna Gill, Stella Cua, Patricia Klaiber, Paul Rennick, Lou Ann Castle,, Eric Fitzer, Ricky Lawson, Pat McClurg. Cathy Meyers, Ed Mantell, Mandy Weaver, Dr. George White, Baby Holden, Karen Reinhardt, Rosella Simmons, Mark Allard, Josie Bihl, Jack B. Jones, Dave Hartlage, Jeni Cassidy, Logan Pelletrino, Scott Voorhees, Norma Patrick, Michelle Bertot, Betty Burton, Katie Schwab, Nancy Webb, The Simon Family, Jon Daniels, Brody Blevins, Ava Messenger, Melissa Deprema, Sue & Ted Tackett, Robert Nelson, Theresa Stocker, Alice Cole, Alice Scherer, Arlene Shuster, Dr. Jeremiah Martin, John Stuart, Jimmy Walburn, Betsy Bradley, Beth Fitch, Dan Schmidt, Andrea Burger, Heather Euton, Kathy Rush, Susie Perkins, Judy Rowson, Greg Porter.

ST. PETER & ST. MONICA LITURGICAL SCHEDULE February 22nd February 23rd

ST. PETER Saturday, February 22nd- 4:00pm

Sacristan: Donna Gillispie
Lector: Kenneth Adams
Server: Khloe Adams
EM: Donna Gillispie, Gail Schmidt
Gift Bearer Gail Schmidt, Maryann Wakefield
Usher Gail Schmidt, Maryann Wakefield

ST PETER Sunday, February 23rd- 9:00am

Sacristan: Betty Fannin
Lector: Christopher Seidel, Wyatt Bates
Servers: Claire Kaltenbach, Noah McMackin, Jesse Skaggs
EM: Kaye Schwamberger, Carolyn Wilcox, Katherine Zamer
Gift Bearer Ruth Ann Logan, Maria Rowe
Usher Ruth Ann Logan, Maria Rowe
Rosary Leader Phyllis Seidel
Greeter Ruth Ann Logan, Maria Rowe

ST. MONICA Sunday, February 23rd- 12:00 pm

Sacristan: Marty Moore
Lectors: Rachele Strickland, Matthew Smith
Servers: Pete Newman, Levi Newman
EM: Glenna Todt, Margaret Lehman, Mary Daniels, Ethan Boerger
Gift Bearer Michelle Ashley family, Matthew Todt
Usher Dirk Hollar, Joe Mowery
Rosary leader Jerry Gulley
Greeter Tracy Stiles

HOLY REDEEMER & ST MARY LITURGICAL SCHEDULE February 22nd February 23rd

HOLY REDEEMER Saturday, February 22nd-5:30pm

Sacristan: Tracy Hughes
Lectors: Juli Ramey
Servers: Faith Harting, Tally Herrmann, Candice Mills
EM: Steve McCarthy (host), Tom Mantel (choir)
Mary Saltsman (Chalice 1), Janie Sand (chalice 2) Ralph Melcher (Chalice 3) Tracy Hughes (Chalice 4)

HOLY REDEEMER Sunday, February 23rd- 7:30am

Sacristan: Mo Coburn
Lector: Beth Haney
Servers: Sarah Cassidy, Bryce McGraw, Andy Pierron
EM: John Grimm (host), Kathy Grimm (choir) Mary Anne Hughes (chalice 1), Emma Lou Jenkins (chalice 2)
Counters: John Grimm, Kathy Grimm, Ann McCarthy

ST MARY Sunday, February 23rd- 10:30 am

Sacristan: Sharon Bender
Lectors: Rick Estep, Susan Frasher
Servers: Charlee Lansing, Ruth Marasek, Gwen Sparks
EM: Laura Estep (host) Shawna Queen (choir)
Ellis Holcomb (Chalice 1) Peggy Jensen (Chalice 2) Randy McGuire (Chalice 3) Michele Baker (Chalice 4)
Greeters: Amy McGuire, Luke McGuire, Joseph McGuire
Counters: Pat Donini, Chuck Hartard

SCIOTO CATHOLIC INFORMATION

**FOR AS IN ONE BODY WE HAVE MANY PARTS, AND ALL THE PARTS
DO NOT HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION, SO WE, THOUGH MANY, ARE
ONE BODY IN CHRIST AND INDIVIDUALLY PARTS OF ONE ANOTHER.**

Romans 12:4-5

Notre Dame High School
2220 Sunrise Ave.
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662
740-353-2354



Notre Dame Elementary
1401 Gallia St.
Portsmouth, OH 45662
740-353-2354

Notre Dame High School	October 2019
Operating Budgeted Expenses	\$290,474.50
Income	\$123,847.56
Actual Expenses	\$133,175.15

Notre Dame Elementary	October 2019
Operating Budgeted Expenses	\$261,454.25
Income	\$93,121.75
Actual Expenses	\$66,867.56

ST. PETER & ST. MONICA OFFERTORY

ST. PETER CONTRIBUTIONS February 2nd 2020

	February 2nd	Year to Date
Budgeted Expenses	\$3,676.52	\$113,972.12
Contributions	\$4,739.81	\$150,736.74
	\$1,063.29	\$36,764.62

ST. MONICA CONTRIBUTIONS February 2nd 2020

	February 2nd	Year to Date
Budgeted Expenses	\$1,875.00	\$58,125.00
Contributions	\$2,027.00	\$65,072.76
	\$152.00	\$6,947.76

ST. PETER/ST. MONICA MEETING SCHEDULE

Knights of Columbus:
2nd Tuesday of the month, 7 pm at St. Peter

Prayer Shawl:
Every 1st Tuesday of the month, St Peter at 2:00pm

HOLY REDEEMER & ST. MARY OFFERTORY Fiscal Year – July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020

HOLY REDEEMER CONTRIBUTIONS February 2nd 2020

	February 2nd	Year to Date
Budgeted Expenses	\$5,612.54	\$173,988.74
Contributions	\$4,650.50	\$166,185.36
	-\$962.04	-\$7,803.38

Building Fund \$155.00 Collection Information

Envelopes	59	\$3,777.50
EFT Payments (Monthly)		\$0
Other		\$873.00
Total (Thank You)		\$4,650.50
Average donation per Env. & EFT's		\$64.03

ST. MARY CONTRIBUTIONS February 2nd 2020

	February 2nd	Year to Date
Budgeted Expenses	\$6,238.31	\$193,387.61
Contributions	\$4,866.75	\$189,658.57
	-\$1,371.56	-\$3,729.04

Building Fund \$15.00 Collection Information

Envelopes	79	\$4,341.00
EFT Payments (Monthly)		\$0
Other		\$525.75
Total (Thank You)		\$4,866.75
Average donation per Env. & EFT's		\$54.95

ANNOUNCEMENTS



The Battle Over the Bride 2/22/20 No session

SPRING MINISTRY SCHEDULES: The new spring Ministry schedules will soon be prepared for April through June for all four Churches. This schedule will include **HOLY WEEK AND EASTER MASSES**. We no longer are doing sign-up sheets. Please let us know if you are unable to serve, or particular dates or times that you can't serve, or if you do not want to be included in Holy week and Easter Masses. If we don't hear from you it is possible you may be scheduled. Please call Rose at the office 740-354-4551 or email her at office@sciotocatholic.org by **March 9th** with that information.

GARAGE SALE: Spring cleaning is right around the corner, please start collecting your items for the St. Peter's Ladies Guild Garage Sale June 7th-12th. Thank you for always making this a huge success.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES STATUE: The sign-up sheet to host the Our Lady of Lourdes Statue for 2020 is in the back of St. Peter. Mar. 8th- Mar. 22nd it will be in the home of Terry & Monica Acox.

2020 IRISH FEST MARCH 14TH:

ITEMS NEEDED: The Irish Country Store is in need of homemade craft items & food items. Items may be dropped off at the Activity Center office from 9-12 Mon.-Fri.. Any questions call Mary Herrmann 740-354-4763.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: For set-up Friday morning 9:00 am and cleanup Saturday night. Volunteers needed for shifts in dining room, country store, Irish (Chinese) Auction and desserts. Questions call Kathy Grimm 740-935-5225.

DESSERT COOK-OFF: We are having an Irish dessert cook-off. To register call Pam Higgins at 740-464-6262 or Doris Robinson at 740-357-7047. Winner will receive a \$50.00 Walmart gift card.

ST FRANCIS OUTREACH COLLECTION: We will be taking up this collection for St Francis Outreach on the 4th Sunday of the month.

FORMED ORG CODE: 3Q9VR4

ASH WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH

10:00AM AT NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL
1:00PM AT HILLVIEW RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
7:00PM AT ST. MARY
7:00PM AT ST. PETER



From the Pastor's Desk

On the **Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time** we hear **Matthew's Gospel**. Jesus speaks to his followers about religious laws and also of our own relationships. Go to offer gifts to God at the altar, but first, Jesus says, "Leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

Saturday is the **Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter, Apostle**, with its own special readings.

The first reading for the next two weeks is from **James**. It begins with instruction for living our lives in Christ. "Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?"

In **Mark's Gospel** the Pharisees are asking for a sign of Jesus' authenticity. Jesus warns his disciples not to be as unbelieving as the Pharisees in the face of the signs he has given them. Jesus heals a blind man at Bethsaida. When Jesus asks, "Who do you say I am?" Peter says he is the Messiah. Jesus tells them to tell this to no one, because this isn't the full answer. Jesus tells them about his passion and death and resurrection. Peter rebukes Jesus for talking like this. Jesus rebukes Peter and begins to heal his disciples' blindness by teaching them the meaning of their discipleship: they, too, must carry their cross. To prepare them for the scandal of the cross Jesus lets Peter, James and John see his glory.

This is a wonderful week to ask the question: "Who do you say I am?" This question can come to us this week in a variety of forms. We can hear him ask, "Who am I in your life? What do I mean to you? Do you believe in my love for you? Do you live as though you place all of your trust in me?" This kind of self-knowledge always takes grace, so we can ask each day this week to be more and more honest this week. We can ask to get beyond the denial out of which we sometimes operate. Each morning, when we get up, while washing up or dressing, and during several "background" times in our day - going to work, shopping, doing wash, walking to a meeting, feeding a baby - we can be in brief conversations with our Lord, always asking for graces.

"Help me to honestly know, Lord, what really is at the center of my life. What really motivates me? What do I turn to for energy, inspiration, approval, escape? How would the people who know me well answer these questions, Lord? Help me be honest this week." "Lord, I have just recognized how much possessions or honors really motivate me." "My Lord, I can see how fear, and avoiding pain have such power in my life." "Lord, I'm so impatient; it seems I have such a hard time simply carrying any cross."

It is quite likely that we might find it difficult to keep this kind of self examining focus during the week, or that we might so get into self recrimination and lose sight of God's love. It is a loved offered us right in that place of difficulty, a deep love that is ours, even when we can't recognize him or don't feel we are worthy to accept his love.

But he returns to us over and over, offering us his Spirit as a strength and love right here in our lives each day. When we feel weak we can remember that he comes to forgive us and heal us. All week, every night, let us give thanks and praise for his faithful love for us.

Have a Great Week!

Fr. Joe





CONSOLING THE HEART OF JESUS

Inspired by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola

This Consoling the Heart of Jesus Group Retreat continues where the 33 Days to Morning Glory Group Retreat left off: with the help of Mary, hearing the thirst of Jesus for our love and consoling Him with our love and trust. If you did not attend the 33 Days to Morning Glory Retreat, you can still join this one!

GROUP RETREAT: MONDAYS AT 6:30PM IN THE ST. MARY CENTER

February 3rd
February 10th
February 17th
February 24th
March 2nd

March 9th
March 16th
March 23rd
March 30th
April 6th

For more information, please call the parish office or email
Megan Baum at megan@sciotocatholic.org.



YOU'RE INVITED TO A CELEBRATION
FAMILY FUN NIGHT

Mardi Gras

ST. PETER IN CHAINS HALL
FEBRUARY 23RD @ 5:30PM



MARDI GRAS FOODS & DRINKS
GAMES~ ACTIVITIES~ MUSIC

ON THE WEEKEND BEFORE ASH WEDNESDAY
COME FEAST BEFORE WE FAST

FREE BUS RIDE



CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE IS SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 22ND - RIDE THE BUS FOR FREE!

This year's men's conference theme is "Building Virtue" and our speakers are Bishop Robert Brennan, 12th Bishop of the Diocese of Columbus, Jason Evert, Co-founder of the Global Ministry "Chastity Project" and Luke Fickell, Head Football Coach at the University of Cincinnati. A bus has been chartered and it will pickup riders at St. Mary Parish Portsmouth at 5:10 am, then pickup in Waverly (behind Burger King) at 5:50 am and final pickup in Chillicothe (last north exit on Rt 23 'park and ride') at 6:15 am.

For more details on the conference and to reserve a seat please call Tim Paul at 740.352.4017 or email tim@sciotocatholic.org with your name and the number of seats you need reserved.

Columbus, Ohio will host 3,500 men at the **2020 Men Of God Conference** to hear from some of the most dynamic speakers around the country, and immerse themselves in a life-changing day of fellowship and faith.

JOIN US FOR BUILDING VIRTUE.



**BISHOP
ROBERT BRENNAN**

The 12th Bishop of the Diocese of Columbus

"We stand on the shoulders of the people who built this up for us. And now it's our turn as the new generation."



JASON EVERT

Co-Founder of the Global Ministry, "Chastity Project"

"The closer you get to God, the more you become yourself."



LUKE FICKELL

Head Football Coach at University of Cincinnati

"Well, it was God's plan ...and it works!"

ALSO FEATURING:

ADORATION

RECONCILIATION

BREAKFAST & LUNCH

FAITH ORGANIZATIONS

HOLY MASS

ONLINE REGISTRATION & PAYMENT:

www.CatholicMensMinistry.com

FEBRUARY 22, 2020
SATURDAY + 8:00AM - 3:00PM

**COLUMBUS EXPO CENTER
KASICH HALL**

**CATHOLIC
MEN
OF
GOD
2020 CONFERENCE
BUILDING
VIRTUE**



**THE 23RD ANNUAL
COLUMBUS CATHOLIC
MEN'S CONFERENCE**



THE VIGIL PROJECT

MISSION
CONCERT
NIGHT

LENT 2020

LIVE MUSIC. AUTHENTIC PRAYER. DYNAMIC SPEAKING.



SATURDAY MARCH 7, 2020
7:00 - 8:30 PM | DOORS OPEN: 6:30 PM

SCIOTO CATHOLIC CONSORTIUM
ST. MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION
514 MARKET ST. PORTSMOUTH, OHIO 45662

JOIN US FOR THE EVENING! VIGIL MASS AT 4PM AT HOLY REDEEMER (1325 GALLIA ST.). DINNER AT ST. MARY CENTER AT 5:30PM, FOLLOWED BY THE CONCERT AT 7PM AT ST. MARYS.



THEVIGILPROJECT.COM

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)

"What does it avail in the end to be loved, honored, and praised by man? Does it bring true happiness? Why do you not think more earnestly on your salvation? Will you defer it to future years? Who knows whether you will live so long that you can make up for what you now neglect? Human life is short and uncertain. Is it not better, without delay, to begin what we ought to do?" ~SAINT PETER DAMIAN

**Monday, February 17 ~ Sixth Week in Ordinary Time
Seven Founders of the Order of Servites**

Holy Gospel: Mark 8:11-13 The Pharisees came forward and began to argue with Jesus, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. He sighed from the depth of his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Amen, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." Then he left them, got into the boat again, and went off to the other shore.

Meditation: The people of Jesus' time expected that the coming of the Messiah would be accompanied by extraordinary signs and wonders. The religious leaders tested Jesus to see if he had a genuine sign from heaven to back his Messianic claims. False messiahs in the past had made extraordinary claims to attract their followers, such as claiming that they could cleave the Jordan River in two or cause the walls of Jerusalem to fall. Jesus knew the hearts of those who came to test him. They were more interested in seeing signs and supernatural phenomena than they were in hearing the word of God. Simeon had prophesied at Jesus' birth that he was "destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that inner thoughts of many will be revealed" (ref. Luke 2:34-35). Jesus gave them no sign except himself and the ultimate proof of his divinity when he rose from the dead.

Prayer: Impart to us, O Lord, in kindness the filial devotion with which the holy brothers venerated so devoutly the Mother of God and led your people to yourself. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Never forget that the Lord reveals himself and makes his presence known to us in many ways – in his word and in the "breaking of the bread" in the Eucharist, in his church – the body of Christ, in his creation, and even in the everyday circumstances of our lives. If we seek the Lord, we will surely find him. And we can be confident that he will give us whatever we need to understand and carry out his will. Most of all, the Lord assures us of his daily presence and the promise that he will never leave us. Saint Theresa of Avila's prayer book contained a bookmark in which she wrote: "Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you; All things pass: God never changes. Patience achieves all it strives for. Whoever has God lacks nothing, God alone suffices." Think about that for a moment, then ask yourself: Is God enough for you?

Tuesday, February 18 ~ Sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Holy Gospel: Mark 8:14-21 The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. Jesus enjoined them, "Watch out, guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." They concluded among themselves that it was because they had no bread. When he became aware of this he said to them, "Why do you conclude that it is because you have no bread? Do you not yet understand or comprehend? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes and not see, ears and not hear? And do you not remember, when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many wicker baskets full of fragments you picked up?" They answered him, "Twelve." "When I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many full baskets of fragments did you pick up?" They answered him, "Seven." He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

Meditation: The apostles set off in their boat across the Sea of Galilee only to discover that they forgot to bring enough food for their journey. What were they to do miles away from land and any place where they could buy food and supplies? They were anxious of course, and this was right after Jesus had performed the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes where the disciples fed more than four thousand people (ref. Mark 8:1-9). Jesus knew the trouble in his disciples' hearts even before they could speak. Jesus dealt with their anxiety by first warning them to not fear what can harm the body rather than what can destroy the very heart and soul of their being.

Prayer: O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: One might wonder why Jesus told his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod? To the Jewish person leaven was a sign of evil. It was a piece of dough left-over from a previous baking. In due course it fermented and this fermented dough became leaven. Fermentation was associated with decomposing rot. Jesus warned his disciples to avoid the evil influence of the Pharisees and of Herod who sought their own counsels rather than the will of God. As the apostles continued to worry about their lack of bread, Jesus reminded them of his miraculous provision of bread in the feeding of the four thousand. He then upbraided them for their lack of trust in God. "Do you still not understand?" It's easy to get preoccupied with the problems and needs of the present moment and to forget

the most important reality of all – God's abiding presence with us and his abundant provision for our lives as well. Thus when you pray, do you pray with joyful confidence, "Father, give us this day our daily bread?"

Wednesday, February 19 ~ Sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Holy Gospel: Mark 8:22-26 When Jesus and his disciples arrived at Bethsaida, people brought to him a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. Putting spittle on his eyes he laid his hands on the man and asked, "Do you see anything?" Looking up the man replied, "I see people looking like trees and walking." Then he laid hands on the man's eyes a second time and he saw clearly; his sight was restored and he could see everything distinctly. Then he sent him home and said, "Do not even go into the village."

Meditation: There is one thing worse than physical blindness – and that is blindness of the heart and soul. A blind man is led to Jesus by some of his friends. Without their help he could not have found the one who could restore his sight. Jesus understood the fears and hopes of this blind man who begged him to touch him. The blind in a special way perceive the power of touch. Jesus shows consideration in bringing this man to a place away from the skeptics and gawkers. His sight is restored in stages as he responds to Jesus' healing touch. Mark records this remarkable miracle in three short phrases: He looked intently and was restored, and saw everything clearly. Jesus sent him home with a warning to avoid the company of those who live in spiritual darkness.

Prayer: O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Might there be a blind spot or two in your life that clouds or blocks your vision of God and his kingdom? If so, you need to work on those blind spots on by one and allow the Lord to touch you with his grace and power that you may walk in the light of his redeeming truth and love. Saint Jerome wrote about the spiritual significance of this healing for us, which we would all do well to think about: "Christ laid his hands upon his eyes that he might see all things clearly, so through visible things he might understand things invisible, which the eye has not seen, that after the film of sin is removed, he might clearly behold the state of his soul with the eye of a clean heart."

Thursday, February 20 ~ Sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Holy Gospel: Mark 8:27-33 Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Christ." Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him. He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

Meditation: At an opportune time Jesus tests his disciples with a simple, yet crucial question: Who do men say that I am and who do you say that I am? He was widely recognized in Israel as a mighty man of God, even being compared with the greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist, Elijah, and Jeremiah. Peter, always quick to respond, professes that Jesus is truly the Christ. No mortal being could have revealed this to Peter; but only God. Through faith Peter grasped who Jesus truly was. He was the first apostle to recognize Jesus as the Anointed One (Messiah and Christ). Christ is the Greek word for the Hebrew word Messiah, which means Anointed One. Peter's faith, however was sorely tested when Jesus explained that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and die in order that God's work of redemption may be accomplished. How startled the disciples were when they heard these words! How different are God's thoughts and ways from our thoughts and ways! Through humiliation, suffering, and death on the cross Jesus broke the powers of sin and death and won for us our salvation.

Prayer: O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: The same question that Jesus posed to his disciples he asks each of us: "Who do **YOU** say that I am?" Who is Jesus for **YOU**? This is a simple, yet crucial question for each one of us, and our response has implications not only on how we live our earthly lives, but our opportunity to have a seat for all eternity at the heavenly banquet. In a time where many don't think about the consequences of their actions, and where many don't want to take responsibility for their actions, we need to take a step or two back and think about how each of us will answer this question – "Who do **YOU** say that I am?" Let's make certain that our response is not simply lip service, as actions speak louder than words. As St. James reminds us: "Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves" (James 1:27). In other words, do not let Christ's teachings go in one ear and out the other. Let his word take root in your mind and your heart, put Christ's teachings into action in your daily lives. In doing so, your response to who Jesus is for you become clear by your every thought, work, and most importantly your actions. Remember, talk is cheap – actions speak louder than words.

Friday, February 21 ~ Sixth Week in Ordinary Time **Saint Peter Damian, Bishop and Doctor of the Church; Church Reformer**

Holy Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1 Jesus summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life? Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." He also said to them, "Amen, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they

see that the Kingdom of God has come in power.

Meditation: Jesus poses some probing questions to challenge our assumptions about what is most profitable and worthwhile. In every decision of life we are making ourselves a certain kind of person. The kind of person we are, our character, determines to a large extent the kind of future we will face and live. It is possible that some can gain all the things they set their heart on, only to wake up suddenly and discover that they missed the most important things of all. Of what value are material things if they don't help you gain what truly lasts in eternity. Neither money nor possessions can buy heaven, mend a broken heart, or cheer a lonely person. Jesus asks the question: What will a person give in exchange for his life? Everything we have is an out-right gift from God. We owe him everything, including our very lives.

Prayer: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we may so follow the teaching and example of the Bishop Saint Peter Damian, that, putting nothing before Christ and always ardent in the service of your Church, we may be led to the joys of eternal light. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: It is possible to give God our money, but not ourselves. It is possible to give him lip service, but not our hearts. A true disciple gladly gives up all that he or she has in exchange for an unending life of joy and happiness with God. God gives without measure. The joy he offers no sadness or loss can diminish. The cross of Christ leads to victory and freedom from sin and death. What is the cross which Jesus Christ commands me to take up each day? When my will crosses with his will, then his will must be done. Are you ready to *lose all* for Jesus Christ in order to *gain all* with Jesus Christ?

**Saturday, February 22 ~ Sixth Week in Ordinary Time
Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter**

Holy Gospel: Matthew: 13:16-19 When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Meditation: Jesus tests his disciples with a basic, yet crucial question: "Who do men say that I am" followed by "who do you say that I am?" Jesus was widely recognized in Israel as a mighty man of God, even being compared with the greatest of the prophets -- John the Baptist, Elijah, and Jeremiah. Peter, always quick to respond, exclaimed that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. No mortal being could have revealed this to Peter; but only God. Jesus then confers on Peter authority to govern the church that Jesus would build, a church that no powers would overcome. Jesus plays on Peter's name which is the same word for "rock" in both Aramaic and Greek. To call someone a "rock" is one of the greatest of compliments. The ancient rabbis had a saying that when God saw Abraham, he exclaimed: "I have discovered a rock to found the world upon". Through Abraham God established a nation for himself. Through faith Peter grasped who Jesus truly was. He was the first apostle to recognize Jesus as the Anointed One (Messiah and Christ) and the only begotten Son of God. The Lord Jesus tests each of us personally with the same question: "Who do you say that I am?"

Prayer: All-powerful Father, You have built Your Church on the rock of Saint Peter's confession of faith. May nothing divide or weaken our unity in faith and love. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Jesus Christ also asked each one of us: "Who do you say that I am?" Obviously your personal response has great ramifications. A wonderful response to come not only from your lips, but from deep from within your heart would be: "Lord Jesus, I profess and believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. You are my Lord and my Savior. Make my faith strong and help me to live in the victory of the cross by rejecting sin and by accepting your will." Your response to Jesus' question requires sincere thought and discernment. But more importantly it requires action in how we think, speak, and live out our daily lives. Does your life reflect that of a disciple of Christ? If not, why not?

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