

Mass Intentions ~ October 28-November 3, 2019

Monday @ 7:30 am — Risa White (RIP)

Tuesday @ 7:30 am — Maxine Miller (Sp Int)

Wednesday @ 6:00 pm — Jeff Baker (RIP)

*Thursday @ 6:00 pm — All Saints Day Vigil Mass

**Friday @ 10:00 am — All Saints Day / Healing Mass

Saturday @ 5:30 pm — Joan Millington (RIP)

Sunday @ 8:00 am — Robert Ini (RIP)

Sunday @ 10:30 am — Greg Begonia (RIP)

Contact the Church office to schedule Mass intentions
and to add names to our prayer list.

New Prayer Requests

Special Intentions:

Carrie Deupree, daughter of Christine & Kenny Weikum

Marge Daly

Christine Weikum

Brad Thomas

Ian Ladner

John Lindsey Sr, uncle of Melinda Cannon

Repose of the Soul:

Risa White

Jorden Morris, friend of Monica Walton

Nghia Quoc Hoang, father of Toan Hoang

*Altar Flowers this week are donated by Marilyn Baker, in memory of Nolen Hughes.
Blessed Mother Flowers are donated by Marilyn Baker, in memory of Jeff Baker.*

Sacrament of Reconciliation — Saturday @ 4:30-5:00 pm (or by appointment — call the Church office)
Adoration this week: Monday — Thursday, 8 am - 12noon; Friday, 8 - 10 am

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ EVENTS ~ INFORMATION

Second Collections: **October 26/27th — Habitat for Humanity** (Our parish has pledged \$3,000 to the Catholic Build)
November 2/3rd — Diocesan Missions The Diocese of Jackson has 17 missions, church communities which are not financially self-sustaining. This collection stays in the diocese.

Solemnity of All Saints Holy Day Mass Schedule: **Thursday, October 31st Vigil @ 6:00 pm;**
Friday, November 1st All Saints / Healing Mass / Brunch @ 10:00 am

Give us Generous Hearts — A Time of Spiritual Reflection with Carla Nicks — Saturday, November 2nd, 9 am-12 pm
Women's Guild sponsored retreat for all women in the parish. Registration begins at 8:30 am. Light lunch will be provided.
Contact wgstpaul@gmail.com for more information.

N2R (Night 2 Remember) - Big Deal Youth Lock-in — Friday, November 8th- Sign up at Youth Group on Wed. night!

Prison Ministry Training, November 15th & 16th — here at St. Paul Parish. MARC, Mississippi Association for Returning Citizens, helps returning citizens break the cycles of incarceration and poverty through accountability, building resources, and learning opportunities. Participants will receive comprehensive training to help these citizens in their transition. Training is free and includes lunch. Register by November 11th by calling Marvin Edwards 601-594-8254 or Sister Madeline 213-215-6103.

Now hiring — our St. Paul Early Learning Center is looking for a high school junior/senior who loves playing and caring for infants to work in the Nursery on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays, 3:00-6:00. Call Jennifer or Darlene at 601-992-2876.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Offertory Collection for October 19/20:

Regular collection \$20,686.00

Capital Campaign \$8,912.00

World Missions Second Collection \$1,811.00



**You are invited
to Alpha
for a time of
great food,
even better
conversation
and talks that
make you think.**

Office Hours: Tues-Fri, 8am-4pm PH: 601-992-9547 www.saintpaulcatholicchurch.com



Our mission is to invite everyone into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

October 27, 2019
Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Merciful God, Merciful Sinner

This week, Saint Luke leads us straight into the next essential step of our Journey with Jesus — dependence on God. Last week, Luke reminded us of the need to pray, pray, and pray some more. Now, Jesus tells another Parable, unique to Luke's Gospel, that His Disciples (and us) might be alert to depending on ourselves to get to the Kingdom. Luke emphasizes that our prayers, even the most persistent prayers, and good works will not get us there. Jesus Christ vindicated us that we will be saved. He is The Way, and we must not lose sight of this great Truth by becoming self confident.

The Parable features two good men, the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, who were productive members of society known by many. Both went to the Temple that day to pray. Both addressed God as almighty, all-knowing. But, their prayers took very different routes.

It looks as though the Pharisee was there to praise himself for all the good he had done, and all the bad temptations he had resisted. He went upfront before the Lord and everyone that they might see him praying. He began with a prayer of thanksgiving, "O God I thank you" but, he immediately proceeded to list his good qualities and name all who are more sinful than him. While fasting and paying tithes were good faith practices, the Pharisee did them to show his righteousness over others. He literally boasted that he was better than "the rest of humanity," placing himself at the highest human position. He looked around the Temple, saw the Tax Collector, and thanked God he was better than that man, too. His "prayer" was merely boasting of himself, and denigrating others. He justified himself based on his goodness — on being better than the others.

In contrast, the Tax Collector kept himself at a distance, and placed himself in a posture of humility. He began his prayer with the words, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." He beat his breast as a sign of his repentance. He was there to have a conversation with God expressing sorrow for his sins, and to seek His mercy. He recognized his need for God, and knew that God freely offers forgiveness and redemption. It cannot be earned.

It is easy to look around and say to myself, thank You God that I am not like him or her! I am a sinner, but at least I'm not like them! Their sins are worse than mine, so I'm doing OK. We can be shocked by the behaviors in this Parable, and easily slip into the thought, "Thank You God that I am not like the Pharisee!" But, I need to step back and see the Pharisee in me. Try reading Luke 18:9-14 again, and place yourself in the shoes of the Pharisee. Picture the person you might label as a bigger sinner than yourself. It is uncomfortable to clothe ourselves as the Pharisee. But, we begin to see that if I focus too much on a self-inventory of my good deeds, I may begin to take inventory of others' bad deeds. That kind of comparison doesn't leave room for me to show mercy to my brothers and sisters. It fills me up with my righteousness, and doesn't leave much room for God.

In his very first statement after being elected to the papacy, Pope Francis addressed the world with these words, "I am a sinner." Just last month, Francis met with Jesuits in Mozambique and said, "My election as pope did not convert me suddenly, so as to make me less sinful than before. I am and I remain a sinner. That's why I confess every two weeks." He does not place himself above the rest of humanity like the Pharisee. He humbly relies on God and continually seeks His mercy.

**May we humble ourselves to begin every Mass, and every prayer, with this simple plea —
"O God, have mercy on me for I am a sinner."
May I be a merciful sinner.**

See The Good - Step Six

“I’d rather be dead than red on the head!” I absolutely hated my hair as a child. It was the source of many jokes by other kids on the playground. It was the source of almost every nickname I had growing up. It was the source of many sleepless nights praying to wake up with blonde hair. Maybe you’re wondering what this has to do with Step Six in our Small Group study book, *Walking the Disciple’s Path*. I think everyone, to one degree or another, has been on the receiving end of being judged. Maybe it’s playground bullying because your hair is fire engine red, maybe it’s because your skin is brown, maybe it’s because you wear a crucifix, maybe it’s because you’re stuck in the cycle of poverty and your clothes have holes in them, or maybe it is because you have made some pretty big mistakes that are hard to cover up.

Despite being immediately judged based on the color of my hair, I learned that I, myself, had to surrender that net of “preconceived notions.”

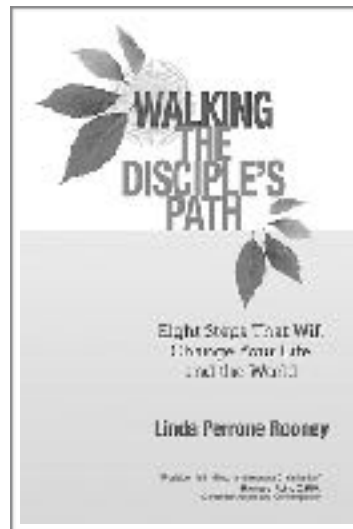
Not terribly long ago, if I was to see someone on the street corner needing a “handout” one of my first thoughts would be “I bet they are going to buy alcohol” or “get a job.” It was an immediate judgment based on little more than my inability to see others as a child of God; an inability to see the person standing there holding a sign as someone who is fearfully and wonderfully made. How often do we view other people through this worldly, cynical lens...a lens created by our culture or upbringing?

Working in the Church office has given me an opportunity to meet many people who need help. Nearly every week, people call the office, or just walk in off the street, who are in need of assistance. Sometimes they need food, sometimes they need gas, sometimes they need a place to stay for a night or two...and, yes, sometimes they have “hit” five churches in the Reservoir Area in a two-week period. It can be a struggle not to jump to conclusions, not to judge them for the car they drove up in, or the clothes they are wearing. I can easily fall into that “get a job” mindset if MY heart hasn’t been checked.

In our Study Book Linda Rooney writes,

“The transition from making judgments based on our own histories to making judgments based on the teachings of our faith and our personal relationship with Christ isn’t easy.” (pg 101)

Ms. Rooney could not be any more correct! It is not easy. But God wants me to see others as He sees them...*as He sees me*. Wait...what??? Me??? I thought we were talking about THEM! “But for the grace of God, there go I!” As I wrote in the beginning of this little essay, to one degree or another at some time in our lives, someone has probably judged us as unworthy; someone has judged us by human standards and not through a “God lens” -- someone has made a decision about our character based on our economic circumstances or skin color or religion, or maybe someone has decided that we do not deserve assistance or forgiveness because we got ourselves into a sticky situation.



I have been the kid teased at school. I have been the young unwed mother. I have been divorced. I have not had enough money to put gas in my car. Yes, “there go I.” Every person is made in the image and likeness of God. Every person. I am called to love...first and foremost. I am called to meet people where they are, and show them a “Gospel Love” as Rooney calls it.

“What if the measurement of your worth was your existence, not your color, religion, or wealth?...And what if you were able to see Jesus in the people at whom you looked? What if you were able to find some good in those in whom you see the most egregious flaws? What if each of us who bow our heads at the name of Jesus looked for the good and judged based on God’s compassionate love?” (page 108-109)

I have been privileged to be a part of the pilot 11-week evangelization program titled “Alpha” which will be offered here at St. Paul in January, 2020. This program is geared toward people who have fallen away from the Church, or who have never had a relationship with Christ. It’s for people who may have felt judged by the Church, by other Christians, or who felt like they didn’t belong. It’s for people who have felt they were unworthy of the love of God or other people because they have made big mistakes and terrible choices. Alpha is an opportunity to see people through that “God lens,” and to invite them into a conversation based on the love of Christ. It is the perfect opportunity to put this Book Study - and particularly this Step Six - into practice. I hope that you will watch for more information to come on this opportunity to act on what this Book Study, what ChristLife, and what Divine Renovation have been teaching us to do...to see the good in others and to share the love of Christ.

Alpha

Alpha #TryAlpha

Rooney writes, ***“The good is all around us. It is our sight that fails.”*** (pg 98)

My prayer is that our sight does not fail us, friends. Thank you for walking the disciple’s path with me! (By the way, there are MUCH worse things in life than being a redhead.)

— Kelly McBride

Alpha is a chance to explore life and the Christian faith in a friendly, open and informal environment.

We will share a great meal and conversation with others who are exploring life and faith; no strings attached.

If you come, we won’t call you after, write, or ask you to pick up the check — the ball is completely in your court.

What do you have to lose?

Alpha