

## Mass Intentions ~ September 23-29, 2019

Monday @ 7:30 am — John Reiss (RIP)

Tuesday @ 7:30 am — Ashley Grana (RIP)

Wednesday @ 6:00 pm — Linda Ratliff (RIP)

Thursday @ 7:30 am — Mike Moeller (RIP)

Friday @ 7:30 am — Joan Millington (RIP)

Saturday @ 5:30 pm — Marie Lodes (RIP)

Sunday @ 8:00 am — People of the Parish

Sunday @ 10:30 am — Tommy Mitchell (RIP)

## New Prayer Requests

### **Special Intentions:**

Teresa Spain

Robbie Oliveri

Anna Pauli

Lynn Segars, friend of Donna Reiss

Joseph Tibenski, friend of Colleen Welch

(see our website and the prayer board for the complete prayer list)



Blessed Mother Flowers this week are donated by Tim & Margaret Corbitt, in honor of Our Lady of Sorrows.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation** — Saturday @ 4:30-5:00 pm (or by appointment — call the Church office)

**Adoration this week:** Monday — Friday, 8 am - 12noon

## announcements ~ upcoming events ~ save the dates ~

**New Small Group Study begins this week!** Everyone who is unable to join a group is invited to pick up a copy of the book, *Walking the Disciple's Path* at the information table. We hope all will follow the study, as the material will be reflected in the Bulletin and in Father Gerry's homilies.

**Discovering Christ Registration is open online** — Ever wonder what is the meaning of life? Do you have questions about God — Father, Son, Holy Spirit? This **7-Session Series** will be held on Tuesday nights, beginning October 22nd. We will gather to share a delicious meal, listen to a dynamic video presentation, and explore answers to some of the most important questions you have about God. Come and discover Jesus personally, experience the love of God the Father, and be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Hundreds of St. Paul parishioners have experienced ChristLife. Is it your turn? Here is your chance! Registration and information are on our website. See **ChristLife** under the "Get Involved" and "Registration Forms" tabs.

**Monday, September 23rd — The Women's Guild** will be hosting two events; at 11:00 am, we will have a Meet and Greet Welcome luncheon. Lunch will be provided. At 7:00 pm, we will be hosting Christmas in September. Bring your favorite holiday sweet or appetizer to share, and bring your recipe to swap and share. Both events will be in the Family Life Center. All women, 18 and older are invited! Our **Charity Box** for these events will be for St. Michael's Church in Forest. Please consider donating Walmart gift cards or a monetary donation to help the families affected by recent ICE raids.

**September 25 ~ November 3 — 40 Days for Life Jackson** join the worldwide movement through prayer and fasting, peaceful vigils and community outreach. Learn more at <https://www.40daysforlife.com/Jackson-2>

**Sunday, September 29th — Baptism class @ 9:15 am** in Room 110 of the Family Life Center — All parents wishing to have a child baptized in the next few months must attend this class.

**Sunday, September 29th — 2nd Annual Back to Religious Ed Family Fun Event** to be held immediately following 10:30 Mass. Join us in the back parking lot for food, fun, and fellowship. Children bring a change of clothes to enjoy the fun & games!

**Thursday, October 3rd — St. Richard Special Kids Golf Tournament** at Deerfield Golf Club. Sponsorships, golf teams, and donation opportunities are available. Mother's Day Weekend in Florida Raffle. Visit [www.saintrichard.com](http://www.saintrichard.com) for more info.

**Saturday, October 19th — Walk For Life** to benefit Pro-Life Mississippi. Check in @ 8:00 am at St. Richard Catholic Church. Registration information at [www.ProLifeMississippi.org](http://www.ProLifeMississippi.org)

### FINANCIAL REPORT

**Offertory Collection for September 14/15: Regular collection \$22,448.63**

**Extension Society \$599.00 Capital Campaign \$4,179.33**

**Contact us: 601-992-9547 [www.saintpaulcatholicchurch.com](http://www.saintpaulcatholicchurch.com)**

**Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 8:00 am-4:00 pm**



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

## September 22, 2019 Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Unpacking the Parable

We are in the midst of some extraordinary parables, and the Lectionary is not skipping any passages this week. We move straight into Chapter 16 of Luke, digging into the very challenging *Parable of the Dishonest Steward* and the *Application of the Parable*.

Our Church Staff prayed Luke 16:8-9 in *Lectio Divina* this week: **“For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.”**

The *Lectio* process means praying the same passage four times in a span of about 20 minutes. The four steps include:

- 1] *Lectio* (reading & listening for a word or phrase that grabs your attention)
- 2] *Meditatio* (reflecting & meditating that word or phrase the Lord is drawing you to)
- 3] *Oratio* (responding to God on what He is teaching you in this moment)
- 4] *Contemplatio* (resting in His presence & contemplating what He is leading You to)

Reading the above selection from Luke, you might feel like you just do not understand it at all. Many staff members honestly admitted they just did not get it. Some felt bothered by it, feeling conflicted or pulled in two directions. Questions that arose were: Why would the Lord tell us to make friends with dishonest wealth? Does He literally mean that children of this world are more prudent than the children of light? Who are the children? Why would Jesus say these things? — We had a very rich discussion!

Do a quick internet search of “Reflection on the Parable of the Dishonest Steward” and you will get over 500,000 responses in half a second, literally. There is much material and reflection published by scholars, ministers, religious leaders, and everyday Christians regarding this very parable because it is so challenging. Some of the descriptors of this parable include, “most problematic” “perplexing” “the strangest of strange” “difficult to interpret” “one of the more peculiar” — challenging! Some may say troubling! The conclusions of its meaning are all over the place, there really is not much consensus as to what Jesus’ overall teaching is here. How do you read it?

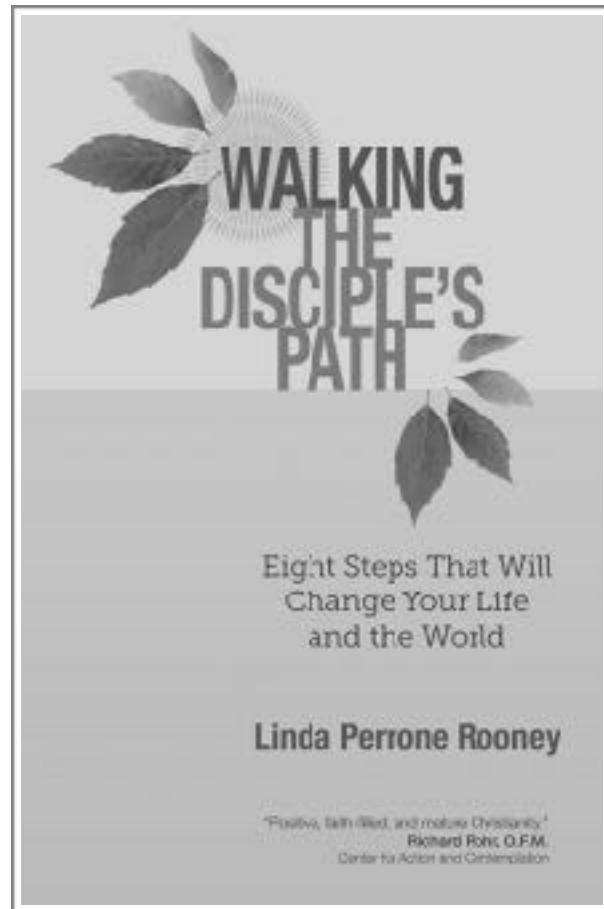
As we have stated along our journey with Luke, the teachings of Jesus are difficult, challenging, and uncomfortable. Following Jesus can be much the same. He did not promise a rose path to easy street. His promise is much greater than the smallness we can imagine.

This portion of *The Journey to Jerusalem* is like trying to stroll through a thicket. We can't rush through. It requires slowing down, and being intentional and aware. Sit with His Word in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Open your heart and mind. Turn it over in your mind. Unpack it piece-by-piece, asking the Lord to teach you and guide you through it.

*What is He giving YOU in this parable that may help you be a better disciple?*

## Small Group Study Book

Everyone who is unable to join a group is invited to pick up a copy of the book, *Walking the Disciple's Path* at the information table. We hope all will follow the study, as the material will be reflected in Father Gerry's homilies and in the Bulletin. The book is divided into "Steps" rather than the traditional "Chapters" — one section or chapter for each Step. Rooney's writing is very engaging. At the end of each Step there is a section of: Questions for Reflection, Journaling, and Discussion; a space to Journal Your Thoughts on the focus of that Step; guidance for A Ritual to integrate the Step into your life as a Disciple of Jesus Christ; and a Prayer.



Linda Perrone Rooney is a pastoral theologian, hospital chaplain, clinical pastoral education supervisor, pastoral counselor, and spiritual director. She is also a well-known teacher and retreat leader, having offered and taught retreats across the country. Rooney is an expert in the formation of lay ecclesial ministers and permanent deacons as well as adult spiritual development. She is the founding director of the Center for Healing and Spirituality in Winter Haven, Florida—a "place of the heart" that works to bring about an integration of body, mind, and spirit through teaching, counseling, and spiritual engagement. Rooney is the author of several books and two video-based adult formation programs: *Called and Gifted* and the parish-based training series *Ministry to the Sick and Elderly*.

## Every Invitation Deserves a Response!

So says Linda Perrone Rooney on page 14 of her book, *Walking the Disciple's Path*, our chosen study for the Fall session of the St. Paul Small Group faith-sharing experience which begins this week. While we might generally agree with such an observation — that every invitation deserves a response — there is one large invitation in the lives of all beings that may not receive a response..... namely, the invitation from Him, the invitation to be a follower of Jesus. This may be the most difficult invitation for each one of us to hear in the midst of the myriad voices that vie for attention in our daily living. It requires stillness, quiet, and great attentiveness to really hear His voice in my everyday surroundings ..... and it is the work of a lifetime to recognize His voice in my consciousness.

As I said two weeks ago in the Homily, it took the disciples most of a lifetime to understand and hear Jesus clearly. They had understood so little as they travelled around with Him on a daily basis. It was only after His Resurrection and Ascension to the Father that the Apostles became true disciples.

**Jesus' invitation is The Invitation** that Linda Rooney deals with in our study book. The book's sub-title is: *"Eight Steps That Will Change Your Life and the World."* Rooney shares her personal experience of responding to this invitation. She uses *The Call of The First Disciples of Jesus*, found in Saint Matthew's Gospel, (Matthew 4:18-22) as a basis for her own story, and invitation for each of us to connect our life with Him. She observes,

**"We don't have to be famous, rich, educated, influential, or blessed with special talents in order to become a member of Christ's inner circle of companions; all are welcome and all are called. We simply have to 'show up,' to be aware and alert to Christ's presence asking us to follow." (p.15)**

Rooney uses the call of the first disciples as a very powerful image for us to see our own call. She relays the rich and simple setting of their call, and suggests we, too, can hear that same invitation if we are willing to provide the space and opportunity. In **Step One**, she uses Jesus' invitation to the disciples to leave behind their nets as a metaphor for us to **'Surrender Our Nets'** and accept His invitation.

What are some of the things, some of the attachments, some of the behaviors and practices, that we hold onto that keep us from accepting His invitation to follow? Rooney suggests that one or more of these "issues" may be the very medium through which He is calling us, but we are not aware because we are 'stuck' in a space or place.....maybe a family relationship, a work environment, or a values issue. She writes, **"Our work, our families, and our values are not trivial appendages to some greater call. They are the sacred environments in which we are meant to meet Christ and to learn the purpose of our lives."** (p.5) What a nice thought ..... In my current situations, how may the Lord be speaking to me? In a difficult relationship with a family member, colleague, or friend, it can be hard (sometimes very hard) for me to lean into what the Lord may be guiding me to do. Am I genuinely open to exploring that relationship with Him, as was the case in that wonderful story from John of *The Samaritan Woman at the Well?* (John 4:4-42)

What may He be inviting me to do in this current dilemma? Can I bring it to Him and trust Him to guide me through this experience? Maybe there is a solution that I have been unwilling to look at or examine. Am I open to solutions other than my own trusted determination? It is in such powerful instances that He can speak most clearly to me, if I am willing to let Him. He is not going to force anything on me ..... it is just a gentle invitation. I may not be ready to hear the invitation right now for a variety of reasons. I may be closed to the invitation, I may be too hurt, too angry, too resentful, or I may just be stuck in a space where I can't extend the necessary forgiveness to bring about a resolution (like the second son in *The Story of the Prodigal Son* in Luke 15:11-32).

Rooney allows for such a situation: **"If we can't quite manage to surrender our old used nets today — if our hearts are too hard or filled up to hear his voice right now or we just can't seem to see 'how' we will do what our hearts inspire — we must hang on, because perhaps tomorrow, or the next day, or next year we will be ready."** (p.17)

**He is always ready**, and when we are ready, then and only then, can we really respond to His invitation! It is, after all, the most critical invitation we will ever receive. — Fr. Gerry Hurley