

Mass Intentions ~ September 30–October 6, 2019

Monday @ 7:30 am — Howard T. Brown (RIP)

Tuesday @ 7:30 am — People of the Parish

Wednesday @ 6:00 pm — Joan Millington (RIP)

Thursday @ 7:30 am — People of the Parish

*Friday @ 10:00 am — Healing Mass

Saturday @ 5:30 pm — Mildred Jordan (RIP)

Sunday @ 8:00 am — People of the Parish

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

New Prayer Requests

Special Intentions:

Marge Kovach

Peggy Burns

Maxine LaPlume

JW Searcy, father of Jimmy Searcy

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



Altar Flowers this week are donated by Donna Lee Reiss, in memory of John R. Reiss.

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 ~ upcoming events ~ save the dates ~

Friday, October 4th — Healing Mass & Brunch @ 10:00 am — All are welcome!

Saturday, October 5th — Armed Forces Support Ministry Rosary @ 4:45 pm in the Chapel. Join us to pray for our nation and all who serve in our U.S. Armed Forces.

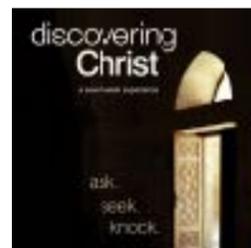
Wednesday, October 9th — St. Paul Parish Vigil @ 40 Days For Life in Jackson, 7am-7pm. Sign up to meet and pray for one hour at the Abortion Clinic with fellow parishioners. Contact Linda Granger @ 601-260-5326. To participate on other days, go to www.40daysforlife.com/Jackson-2 to sign up.



Baptism Preparation Class this Sunday morning @ 9:15 am in Room 110

2nd Annual Back to Religious Ed Family Fun Event This Sunday morning after 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!



Is it your turn to experience Discovering Christ Registration? Registration is open online —

Hundreds of St. Paul parishioners have experienced ChristLife. Here is your chance!

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. See **ChristLife** under the “Get Involved” and “Registration Forms” tabs.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Offeratory Collection for September 21/22: Regular collection \$11,543.00

Backpack Ministry \$225.00 Capital Campaign \$7201.00

Contact us: 601-992-9547 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 29, 2019 Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Matters Big and Small

Jesus provides us another extremely challenging parable about wealth in this Sunday's Gospel. We have to sit with it, read through it more than once, and ask the Lord what He is giving us in this parable to help us be better disciples. We can be puzzled by the state of the characters in this story, so it needs time and reflection.

Between last Sunday's teaching on *The Dishonest Steward* and this Sunday's teaching on *The Rich Man and Lazarus*, Saint Luke squeezes in some comments by Jesus on the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

“And He said to them: ‘You justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts; for what is of human esteem is an abomination in the sight of God.’” (Lk 16:15)

He is reminding them (and us) there is a real danger of falling slave to riches and serving our wealth rather than God. It is so easy to get wrapped up in making money, seeking money, spending money — that it can monopolize our lives. We are inundated with messages about it in the world. There are over 120 Scripture passages that mention money, wealth, debt, possessions, giving, and greed. These matters can cause much anxiety. Jesus knew this, so it was the topic of much of His teaching.

Luke closes out Chapter 16 with the parable of *The Rich Man and Lazarus*. The theme is role reversal, regarding the fate of the rich and the poor. We also see it in *The Sermon on the Plain* (Luke 6:20-25). Blessings shall come to the poor, but woe to the rich.

Luke 16:26 states: **“...between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.”**

What a proclamation! What a truth, even today! In the parable, this rich man allowed a chasm to exist at his very doorstep. He wasn't bothered by it because he was on the comfortable side — with his abundant wealth and safety. The rich man didn't open his eyes or his heart to Lazarus, who lived on the other, uncomfortable side — filled with pain and torment.

After he dies, the tables are turned on the rich man. Jesus reminds the Pharisees once again that their wealth and righteousness will not get them into Heaven. Those blessings bestowed on them are meant to be shared! Jesus wants the Pharisees, and us, to see *Him* lying at the doorstep. He wants us to see *Him* in those who are in pain and torment. Jesus suffered in pain and torment, and died a poor outcast, just like Lazarus.

The rich man knew Lazarus by name. He didn't abuse Lazarus....He just ignored him. After the rich man died and saw Lazarus with Abraham, then he acknowledged who Lazarus was. He finally humbled himself and asked the tiniest gesture of aide from Lazarus. What a difference it would have made if the rich man had given Lazarus a little water to drink, and a little care for his wounds when he passed the suffering man on his very own doorstep!

Spend time this week with this parable. Consider yourself a part of the story. Where would Jesus put you in this example of love of neighbor? Each morning pray, “Lord, open my eyes to see; open my heart to act.” Where is the chasm in my life? Who have I not seen? Who needs me to extend a loving hand in some small gesture of care and kindness?

How does it look to live as a Blessing?

As I read through **Step Two “Live As A Blessing”** in our Small Group Study Book, it occurred to me that being “poor in spirit” can, and should be, intentional. On page 29 of *Walking The Disciples Path*, Rooney says:

**“Kingdom success is about being 'poor in spirit.'
Blessing, that state of being dependent upon God's grace,
is something we can all attain, if we choose.”**

.....**About this pesky FREE WILL thing:**

God is permissive in the extreme. Personally, I think He invented free will so that we could *choose* to love Him. However, many times the natural unintended consequences of free will also suggest that we choose to rely on Him, that we intentionally choose to be “poor in spirit.” For me, achieving humility has historically been cyclic. I have a lifetime of stories that led to my coming to a space of trust, humility, and vulnerability.



 **My Way:**
(Most of us start here.)

I just can't believe how much God enjoys working through me! We're a great team, God and me. He continues to offer me the next opportunity for blessing and serving others. This path is obvious to me because I've been doing this for some time now. But, I find that *I choose* the task, the path, and the steps. I begin to notice that the plan seems to be complex, difficult to work out. Consensus just doesn't seem important. As I continue to move forward on my own power, things don't seem to be falling into place as planned. Unintended consequences are showing up, and we've only just begun! There is some disagreement among the brethren about my approach. I am trying to stay humble, but it's so much easier when people are more discerning, like me! Haha.

 **God's Way:**
(The ideal.)

I have, at times, chosen to wait on the Lord for absolute guidance. In those cases, *God reveals* the task, the path, and the steps along the path. In such instances, endeavor is always followed by success with very few, if any, unintended consequences. This choice to wait on the Lord is always preceded by a willing, open, and dependent spirit, aka, my being “poor in spirit.”

THE CYCLE (CONTINUED)



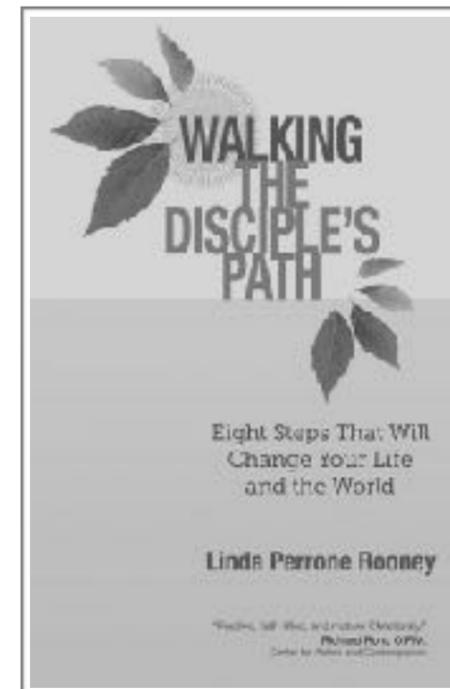
 **You And Me God, You And Me:**
(We all easily slip back into this space.)

Sometimes, having seen the success brought on by my association with God, **I choose** the next path. This time, I once again graciously allow God to order my steps. God does so. Of course for a Christian, anything in which God is involved works better than anything in which he's completely uninvolved, so there is again success. Maybe there are a few unintended consequences this time, possibly a few hurt feelings, or a bit of anger from others here and there. Of course, this is their problem. I pray for them. There I am, pulling back into *my way*. The truth is that somewhere between the end of *God's Way* and the beginning of *You And Me God, You And Me*, emptiness and true humility were replaced with “I sure am humble and proud of it.” It may seem as though I'm being glib. On point of fact, any attempt at Godly activity without God at the helm usually turns out to be pretty funny, if it's not catastrophic.

Cycle complete!

In my life, every valuable relationship, thought, or thing that I now have access to, came from God at a time when I was intentionally empty and open. None of these good things belong to me. I only have temporary access so that I can give them away - so that I can *live as a blessing*.

— Jim Suber



Step Two lessons to help us move forward on the disciple's path:

1. Depend on God's mercy.
2. Choose your role models carefully.
3. Live Simply.

Prayer for the Poor in Spirit:

Jesus, teach me to be poor in spirit.
Instruct me in the way of humility.
Set my heart on the right path, open and vulnerable, committed to You above all else. Give me the grace to learn from You who are meek and humble of heart and to recognize in Your grace-filled life the model for my own. Amen.