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# Blessed Sacrament

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[www.blessedsacramentchapel.org](http://www.blessedsacramentchapel.org) or email at [pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org](mailto:pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org)

**Mission Statement:**  
*Established in the Spirit of Jesus Christ with an Afro-centric focus, Blessed Sacrament Chapel is committed to spreading the "Word" through fellowship and good works.*

**Sunday Mass: 10:00AM**

**St. Stephen Cathedral Parish Office:** 270-683-6525

**Pastor:** Father John Thomas  
[jthomas@sscobo.org](mailto:jthomas@sscobo.org)  
**Parochial Vicar:** Father Shibu Cheriankunnel  
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**Parish Life Coordinator:** Sr Jeannette Fennewald,  
SSND [pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org](mailto:pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org)

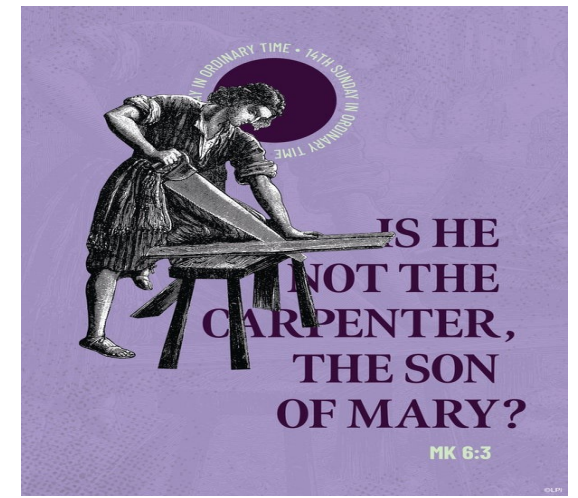


**Sunday's Readings**

**First Reading:**  
 But you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD! Whether they heed or resist — for they are a rebellious house — they shall know that a prophet has been among them. (Ez 2:4-5)  
**Psalm:**  
 Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy. (Ps 123)  
**Second Reading:**  
 I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. (2 Cor 12:9)  
**Gospel:**  
 "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house." (Mk 6:4)  
 Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

**July 7, 2024 14th Sunday Ordinary Time**

**I am content with weaknesses and hardships for the sake of Christ (2 Cor. 12:7)**



.My Dear Parishioners:

The six lines of Mark's gospel that we just listened to don't give much of an impression of the general context in which this disagreement takes place. The context was that from the beginning of his ministry Jesus encountered opposition to his preaching and his activity. The main cause of the opposition was the claim Jesus was making, both implicitly by his activities and explicitly by the words of his preaching, to be representing God, to be speaking and acting on God's behalf - in other words to be following in the tradition of the prophets. It was in reviving and re-stating the priorities and the areas of concern of the prophets - their "agenda" as we would say now - that Jesus ran into trouble with the religious authorities.

So, what is the prophetic agenda? What were the priorities and concerns that the prophets continually raised and spoke out against? Putting it briefly, there were two main items on the prophetic agenda, and those were, in biblical language, righteousness and justice. The prophets were the upholders of the Covenant established between God and the Chosen People, and it was their vocation to constantly draw attention to, and summon the people to return to, the terms of the Covenant. In practice this meant that they often found themselves reproaching the people with betraying the Covenant or neglecting their side of the Covenant relationship.

One side of this was their concern about righteousness or holiness or faithfulness to God. The Hebrew People were set apart from the other pagan nations around them by their worship of the one God. That's what the first of the Ten Commandments was about. But the prophets often found the people engaging in idolatry - in other words, worshipping other Gods, taking on the beliefs of the pagan religions and copying their religious ceremonies and sacrifices. Their reaction to that was to call for a return to the heart of their own faith - a return to loyalty and faithfulness to God. When they were faced with cultural influences from outside Israel, or perhaps changed economic circumstances, like an increase in material prosperity within the country, the prophets didn't agitate to re-interpret or modernize the faith, or introduce innovations to adapt to the new situation. In those circumstances the prophets re-stated the beliefs and the practices of their traditional faith even more vigorously. They were very fierce in denouncing anything they thought contained the danger of detracting from God's complete sovereignty over Israel, or anything that downgraded God or corrupted the Covenant faith.

That was one area of concern. But the second item on their agenda involved demanding that the people live the practical implications of the Covenant by fostering a climate of justice in their society. The prophets often used passionate and highly-colored language to paint a picture of a dishonest and decadent country, deceitful business practices, exploitation of workers, a small elite living in luxury and failing to look after the poor members of society. To them this was a country that had turned its back on God in order to worship wealth and prosperity instead. So this was the tradition that Jesus claims to be following in. But when he goes back to his hometown of Nazareth he finds that in spite of his activities and his powerful preaching, his old friends and family doesn't accept him in this role.

For them his identity is bound by his origins and his job and his family - isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joset, and so on, and there's the implication of a note of ridicule in their remarks. Jesus replies with an insult. His well-known statement about a prophet not being accepted in his own country, among his own relations, and in his own house tells us two things.

The first thing is the point Jesus himself is making: that the people who should perhaps be able to recognize him best, and realize most clearly what he's about, don't really know him at all, and haven't got the discernment to recognize a prophet when they see one. But the second thing is the way Jesus makes his point - with an insult, with a bit of invective or sarcasm sometimes takes his place.

This was the prophetic style, and for us, reading the gospel now, it's a reminder to get an accurate picture of the person of Christ - not someone who was always mellow and agreeable and congenial, but somebody who very often revealed God, and God's will, in an abrasive and rude and insulting way, if he thought his listeners were being especially obstinate and stupid.

In the Church now we always need to be prepared to listen to critics, outsiders, people who don't belong to the atmosphere of cozy mutual appreciation that often seems to be the hallmark of church life. We need to resist the temptation to ignore criticism on the pretext that it's exaggerated or too harsh or insulting.

Rejecting criticism because of the manner in which it's put is often a way of dismissing inconvenient truths. In the Church we should always be ready to accept that the abrasive critic might be the person who is being faithful to Jesus' own preaching, while the respectable insiders are the ones who are following in the footsteps of Christ's enemies.

So the lesson I would suggest we take from this Sunday's gospel is that we always need to be sensitive to both the content and the style of prophetic speaking-out. This short passage by St. Mark, with Christ definitely pressing his claim to be a prophetic spokesman for God, reminds us what the prophets' agenda consists of, and at the same time, it calls us back to a whole and accurate picture of the Savior we're meant to believe in, rather than the manageable, domesticated version that sometimes takes his place.

Blessings! Father John

.....  
: **PICNIC:** As most of you are aware, Blessed Sacrament Chapel's picnic is Saturday August 3. At  
: the follow-up parish meeting last year, it was decided to only have drive-through selling the bar-b-q ribs,  
: chicken, and pulled pork. (Will do pre-sales also.) We will need workers to split the chicken Friday after-  
: noon and to put rub on the meat. A decision was also made to split the time for the bar-b-q crew. Last  
: year the main crew was working for 24 hours. We will have 2 crews so look at your schedule and see if  
: .....

**Question:**

In Year B, we hear primarily from the Gospel of Mark. Since each Evangelist has a unique perspective, what are the key issues that Mark addresses in his Gospel?

**Answer:**

Gospels are a particular faith community's reflection on Jesus. Each Gospel's author reflected that community's faith in Jesus. Jesus' message is made relevant to the community's situation and context. Mark was the first Gospel to be written. When Matthew and Luke wrote theirs, they imitated and adapted Mark for their communities. Mark's Gospel seems to be addressed to a faith community undergoing turmoil, rejection, and persecution—forces that threaten to overwhelm them. This provides the context around which Mark fashions the story of Jesus. He presents Jesus as the One sent by God to confront the forces of evil. That is the good news of Jesus.

Jesus' struggle with the demonic forces leads to confrontation, rejection, outright opposition, and a conspiracy to do away with him. Realizing this, Jesus is not deterred. Rather Jesus calls for total faith in God who helps us to overcome the forces of evil. Suffering and even death seem to be the consequences of this struggle. Yet, that is not the end. The one who suffers for the sake of others, the suffering servant, will be the one through whom redemption and salvation will come to all. For Mark, this is what discipleship demands and what true faith in God can and will accomplish. See if you can detect these themes as you read Mark's Gospel. ©LPi

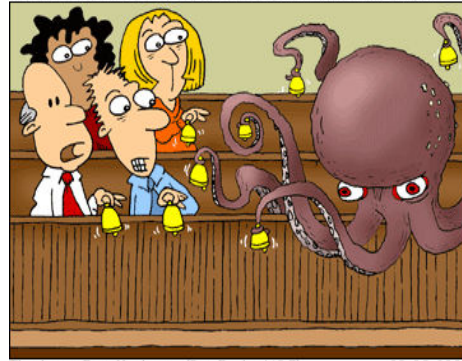


**JULY BIRTHDAYS**

- 3--Ray Higgs
- 8--Alexis Hatchett, Calvin McHenry
- 10--Chelis Carmona
- 12--Darlina Etienne
- 13--Francine Epison
- 15--Georgia Holland
- 17--Wayne Stephens
- 18--Lori Carman
- 21--Meredith Fain
- 22--Marcia Wilhite
- 24--Lori Robinson
- 27--Robert Hagan
- 29--Hugh Joseph Moorman
- 30--Yvonne Mundy



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Thanks to Pam Vashaw (See Psalm 148:7) 08-06-2001  
HE'S JOINING THE BELL CHOIR UNTIL WE SEE MORE VOLUNTEERS

**Mass Intentions**

- July 7--David "Smokey" Millay
- July 14--Harry Baumgarten
- July 21--William Tapp
- July 28--Freddy Payne

*Let us remember to pray for those who have recently died or those in the process of dying. Remember to pray for the souls in purgatory, especially for those who have no one to pray for them.*

**Our thoughts and prayers are with the sick: Natalie Clark, China Dulin, Rachel Mattingly, Larry Allen, Charlie Brown Sr, Ryan Moorman,, Steven Moorman, Philip Moorman, Jr., Ronnie Hollis, Chandra Hagan, Larry Clark, Ruth Coble, Jeeriah Cruite, Carol Hatchett, Jordan Gertisen, Pam Wilson, Shelby Webster, Andy Evans, Gary Moorman. If you know of anyone who is in need of prayer or visitation, please notify the office.**

**IMP—Kroger**

Thank you to everyone who has designated Blessed Sacrament as your community reward partner. We have 39 households that designate Blessed Sacrament as their community partner. Last check \$161.31. If you do not have a community reward partner, please designate Blessed Sacrament. Blessed Sacrament's # is WX799. Go to [krogercommunityrewards.com](http://krogercommunityrewards.com) to register. Thanks to each of you for your support.

**Coming Events**



- July 7--Parish Meeting
- July 13-14 Raffle Ticket sales---SSC
- August 3--Picnic --Drive through 12-2 pm
- August 25--BSC 75th anniversary celebration 4 pm Mass

**If you have not had an opportunity to be part of the chapel renovations, it is not too late. Thank you to all who have contributed.**



- June 30--\$1121.50
- Budget--\$1094
- MTD Collection--\$6,195.50
- MTD Budget--\$5,470
- YTD Collection--\$71,114.50
- YTD Budget--\$59,858

**May each give according to what the Lord has blessed us with.**

*Thanks to everyone who practices stewardship on a regular basis. An active parishioner attends Mass regularly and practices stewardship (time, talent, treasure).*

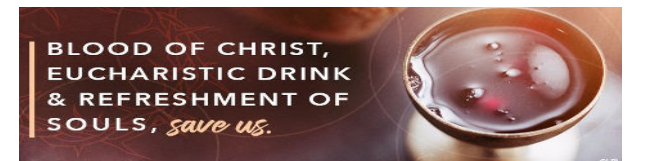
**GOSPEL MEDITATION**

Recently I watched a bunch of YouTube videos on how to optimize willpower in the face of weakness. The message was: do not accept your weakness. Crush it. Dominate it. In one video, however, at the end of a rant by a willpower coach, the muscular stoic admitted, "You'll never actually get what you want, no matter how hard you try." Amazingly, he admitted that willpower alone is not sufficient for us weak-willed humans.

What does God want us to do with our weaknesses, if crushing them with willpower won't work? For example, what should I do with my tendency to arrogance and self-isolation? Or my procrastination? Or my intellectual and physical limitations? Or my selfishness?

The counter-intuitive answer is clear in this week's words from St Paul, "**I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses in order that the power of Christ may dwell in me** (2 Cor. 12:9)." Boast of our weaknesses? Paul isn't promoting weak-mindedness or laziness. Rather, he perceives that Jesus loves us not despite our weaknesses but because of them. Boasting of our weakness means claiming human will is not all we have. It means turning to God whenever we feel weak, which—let's face it—is almost all the time. When we do, we learn to love our weaknesses, because it's there that we meet the strength of Christ. This week, I challenge us to find ways to boast not in willpower but in weakness.

— Father John Muir



**BLOOD OF CHRIST, EUCHARISTIC DRINK & REFRESHMENT OF SOULS, save us.**

## MINISTRY SCHEDULE

### Lectors

July 7: Barbara Bisel, Kathi Skidd  
July 14: Alexis Hatchett, Leland Herzog,  
July 21: Layson Brooks, Wayne Stephens

### Eucharistic Ministers

July 7: Katie Goins, Greg Gough, Vivian Higgs  
July 14: Barbara Bisel, Janet Clark, Misty Sanford  
July 21: Sarah Malone, Denise Richardson, Greg Richardson

### Collection & Gifts

July 7: Campbell Family  
July 14: Sondra Hibbs, Marcia Wilhite  
July 21: Kelly, Holly, Samuel Hollis

## THE BREAD OF LIFE

*It is comforting to think that we, with centuries of theological reflections and spiritual guidance to draw on, are probably still as much in the dark about the mystery of the Eucharist as were those who first heard Jesus identify himself as the Bread of Life. Pope Francis, in his customary simple language, makes clear what we do know: when we receive the Bread of Life at communion, we take on Jesus' divine life, his thoughts and actions, his behaviors and choices. This is a challenging undertaking, but Jesus tells us that we are up to the task. All we need to do is believe.*

## A Prophet and His Native Place

“A prophet is not without honor except in his native place.” It could be the slogan of high school reunions everywhere. I speak from experience — I didn’t go to my high school reunion, but I do live in the same area in which I grew up. Ghosts from the past lurk in every grocery aisle and gas station. Former classmates fill my prescriptions at the pharmacy. I am always sure to see an old teacher or two at the Fourth of July parade.

If my teenage self knew that this was her future, she would be horrified. She wanted to grow up and move away, not because she didn’t like living in this town, but because she wanted to reinvent herself. And you can’t reinvent yourself in your native place. In your hometown, you’ll always be exactly what you are — no more, no less.

The same was true for Jesus, who was probably the only person actually worthy of admiration at his high school reunion. When he returned to his native place, he was what he had always been — God and man, Messiah, miracle-worker. This is not something he *became*, it was always within him.

But the people of Nazareth cannot accept it. Why? Well, probably for the same reason that I wanted to reinvent myself when I was 16. We don’t often see anything worth venerating in the “right now” of our lives. We think happiness is a promotion or a pay bump away. We think we’ll finally be holy when we find the time to take that silent retreat. We think we will be beautiful when we lose ten pounds.

The Nazarenes lived with God right under their noses, and they didn’t realize it. So, when he came in all his greatness, the dissonance was too much to bear, and they rejected him. They didn’t want that God — the one they had dismissed or overlooked or ignored. They wanted a different one. A shinier one. One that didn’t look like the “right now” of their lives. But that’s where God is, folks. He’s in the right now, and nowhere else. He’s waiting there for you, with all the happiness, holiness, and beauty your life needs.

*Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house.” — Mark 6:4*

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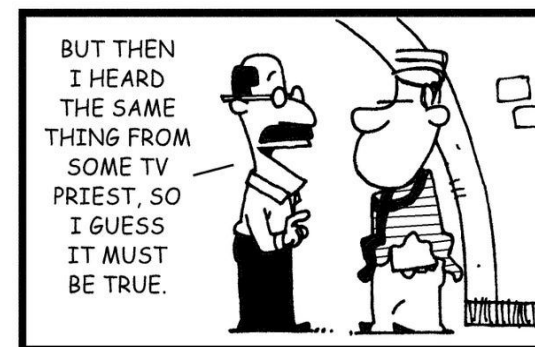
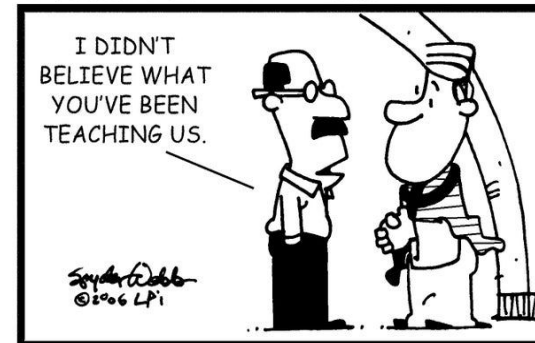
## Readings for the Week

Monday: Hos 2:16, 17-18, 21-22/  
Ps 145:2-9/Mt 9:18-26  
Tuesday: Hos 8:4-7, 11-13/Ps  
115:3-10/Mt 9:32-38  
Wednesday: Hos 10:1-3, 7-8, 12/Ps  
105:2-7/Mt 10:1-7  
Thursday: Hos 11:1-4, 8-9/Ps 80:2- 3, 15  
-16/Mt 10:7-15  
Friday: Hos 14:2-10/Ps 51:3-4, 8  
-9, 12-14, Mt 10:16-23  
Saturday: Is 6:1-8/Ps 93:1-2, 5/Mt  
10:24-33

## Observances for the week of July 7,, 2024

Tuesday: St. Augustine Zhao Rong, Priest, Companions, Martyrs  
Thursday: St. Benedict, Abbot  
Saturday: St. Henry

## 14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



## OBSTACLES

The prophet Ezekiel, Saint Paul and the Lord Jesus share something in common in today’s scripture readings. They all experience obstacles to their ministry. Ezekiel is summoned to prophesy to the Israelites, who are “hard of face and obstinate of heart” (Ez. 2:4). Saint Paul recounts how he has been given a “thorn in the flesh” (2Cor. 12:7). The Lord Jesus is unable to perform many signs in his native place. The Gospel tells us that “he was amazed at their lack of faith” (Mark 6:6). We too sometimes encounter obstacles as we travel along the journey of faith. So often we experience weakness on this journey. Let the words of the Lord to Saint Paul encourage us today: “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness” 2 Cor 12:9))

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## FOR EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Word Made Flesh. You are the Bread of Life. Stir in my heart and mind the redeeming truth of your miraculous, life-giving Love found in the Real Presence in the Eucharist. Awaken in me knowledge of the power of your Precious blood, shed for me. Renew me, Lord, with the fire of the Holy Spirit that inspired your Apostles and the early Church to live wholly for you. Help me to enter deeply into this moment of Eucharistic revival within the United States by first being revived by your love for me in the Eucharist at Mass. Help us to know the joy, wonder, and hope of heaven that is found in receiving you in Holy Communion, where you are truly present, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. Amen.