

Sacred Heart

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Corner of E. First Avenue
& Hamlet Street

Church Mailing Address:
168 E. Lincoln Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Parish Office
(614) 294-5319

Msgr. Frank Lane, Administrator

(Territorial Parish ~ Est. 1875)

MASSES:

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.; **Sunday:** 11:00 a.m.

WEEKDAYS & HOLY DAYS:

See Mass Schedule inside the Bulletin.

PARISH OFFICE/STAFF:

Administration is done through the office of Saint John the Baptist, 168 Lincoln Street. Requests for copies of sacramental records, scheduling of Masses and other sacramental celebrations, and non-emergency needs should be made during regular office hours or email info@sjbitaliana.org.

Please notify the Parish Office of any changes such as address or telephone number, etc., by calling during regular office Hours.

MUSIC MINISTRY:

Gina M. Bishop, Music Director
John C. Huffman, Organist

PARISH MEMBERSHIP:

We welcome you into our Parish Families.
Membership in the parish consists of two parts:

Registration: Please complete the parish registration and return to Parish Office.

OFFICE STAFF

Aggie Howard, Executive Assistant, ahoward@sjbitaliana.org
Victoria Scruggs, Secretary & Bulletin Editor, vgammell@sjbitaliana.org
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

RECONCILIATION:

Saturday: 3:30 p.m.; **Sunday:** 10:30 a.m.

BAPTISM:

Preparation is required for the reception of the sacrament.
Parents are encouraged to call the office
and set up an appointment before the birth of their child.

MATRIMONY:

Arrangements should be made at least six or more months in advance.
A marriage preparation program is required.

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK:

In cases of emergencies, please call anytime.
Please notify the Parish Office for Communion calls to the sick, shut-ins.

Due to privacy laws, if parishioners wish to be visited in the hospital,
they should contact the Parish Office directly
and give the information regarding the hospitalization.

If you are scheduled for surgeries or other medical procedures,
please contact the Parish Office in advance so that a priest can administer
Anointing of the Sick prior to the procedure.

BULLETIN DEADLINE:

Announcements must be submitted in writing by Tuesday at noon.

www.sacredheartchurchcolumbus.org

SACRED HEART

Dear Friends in Christ,
Volunteers needed for the Capital City Hospice

Capital City Hospice is recruiting volunteers to provide compassionate care and support to individuals and their families during their end-of-life journey. Hospice care is a deeply meaningful and impactful service that not only helps patients in their final days, but also offers solace and comfort to their loved ones.

Capital City Hospice believes that the members of our church could play a crucial role in this endeavor, sharing their time, empathy, and compassion to be effective in the lives of those in need. To further their mission, they have enhanced their hospice volunteer program and have prepared informational flyers to distribute in the community.

If you have any questions or require more details about their hospice volunteer program, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of them at CCH-VC@Addus.com or 614-441-9300. They will be more than happy to provide any additional information or meet with you to discuss this initiative further.

Many Blessings!
Msgr. Frank Lane

Mass Times: Mass times at Sacred Heart are Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. **Note: Sacred Heart Church will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. every Thursday during the Jubilee until the Feast of the Sacred Heart on June 27, 2025.** During that time, the **Blessed Sacrament** will be exposed for **Adoration**. There will be **Mass at 6:30 p.m.**, followed by **Confessions** and **Benediction** until 7:30 p.m.

St. John the Baptist Mass times are Mondays and Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m., and Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m., followed by RCIA at 7:00 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Parish Library on the second floor.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Saturday, January 20, 2024, 4:00 p.m.	Neil Sika
Sunday, January 21, 2024, 11:00 a.m.	Mary Rykowski
Saturday, January 27, 2024, 4:00 p.m.	Joe Stefanov
Sunday, January 28, 2024, 11:00 a.m.	Molly Borchers
Saturday, February 03, 2024, 4:00 p.m.	Neil Sika
Sunday, February 04, 2024, 11:00 a.m.	Laurie Jadwin
Saturday, February 10, 2024, 4:00 p.m.	Joe Stefanov
Sunday, February 11, 2024, 11:00 a.m.	Bob Longstreth

If you are unable to attend Mass, please contact Bob Longstreth. Thank you!

Welcome to Sacred Heart

Sacred Heart is a welcoming community, rooted in the traditions, teachings, and beauty of our **Catholic** faith. We recognize that every person is on his or her own journey of faith, and we seek to meet you where you are in your journey. At **Sacred Heart**, the beauty of the **Mass** is embraced, while maintaining a welcoming spirit for our **Italian Village** neighbors and greater **Columbus Community**.

To learn more about the Parish, please visit our website: www.Sacredheartchurchcolumbus.org
 Thank you for choosing Sacred Heart!

Confession Time for Saturdays will be from 3:00-3:45 p.m.
Confession Time for Sundays is a half-hour before Mass

If you are interested in becoming Catholic, receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, or Baptism, please contact Sacred Heart Office at 614-294-5319, for more information.

For Weddings and Funerals, please contact Aggie Howard at ahoward@sjbitaliana.org or call the office 614-294-5319.

MASSES AT SACRED HEART

Saturday 1/20	4:00 p.m.	+ Robert Thurn by The Thurn Family
Sunday 1/21	11:00 a.m.	+ Clara L.
Thursday 1/25	6:30 p.m.	+ Floyd Lane
Saturday 1/27	4:00 p.m.	Prayers for Joseph & Agnes MacKinnon by John MacKinnon
Sunday 1/28	11:00 a.m.	+ Dick L.
Thursday 2/1	6:30 p.m.	Living & Deceased Members of Sacred Heart

Please Sign Up for Adoration: In celebration of the Jubilee 350th year of the apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Sacred Heart Church will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. every Thursday until the Feast of the Sacred Heart on June 27, 2025. During that time, the **Blessed Sacrament** will be exposed for **Adoration**. There will be **Mass 6:30 p.m.**, followed by **Confessions** and **Benediction** until 7:30 p.m. There must be someone present throughout the entire day and help is greatly needed! Please, sign up for an hour or half-hour of **Adoration on Thursday**. There are sign-up sheets at both church entrances. **Your help is needed for this very important mission!** In these troubled times in our country, the Church, and the world, this is a wonderful opportunity for us to seek our own personal freedom from all darkness and to help to heal all in our world that is so broken.

WEEKLY STEWARDSHIP AT SACRED HEART

January 14, 2024

Number of Envelopes used Sunday – 13

In Env:	\$ 570.00
Loose:	\$ 841.00
Total	\$ 1,411.00
Less Diocesan 8% Assessment	\$ -(112.88)
	\$ 1,298.12

Community Outreach	\$ 50.00
Capital Repair	\$ 2.00
Total	\$ 52.00

?? ?? HOW IS SACRED HEART DOING? ?? ??

Budgeted Offertory for Fiscal Year (7/1/23-6/30/24)

	Budgeted	Actual	Difference (\$)
This Wk.:	\$ 2,800.00	\$ 1,411.00	-\$ 1,389.00
FYTD:	\$ 74,200.00	\$ 61,332.50	-(\$ 12,867.50)

December 2023

Income:	\$20,392.47
Expenses:	-\$16,440.37
Total	+\$ 3,952.10

DONATION QR CODE AND WEBSITE INFORMATION



Please help Sacred Heart maintain this beautiful 100-year-old building with a donation by using the QR code. Thank you!

SH Collection Counters for Monday, January 22, 2024

Donna Bowers and Rita Ward

SH Collection Counters for Monday, January 29, 2024

David and Gilda Cottrill

2023 Year-End Statements: Please pick up your statement, which is in a clear container in the back of the church. Thank you!



Office Hours: Parish Office hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

RCIA: Classes are now being offered for both **Sacred Heart** and **St. John the Baptist** parishes on **Wednesday** evenings, right after the 6:00 p.m. Mass at **St. John**. **RCIA class** starts at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Library, located on the **second** floor. This class is required for anyone who wants to enter the **Catholic Church**, for those baptized **Catholic** but did not complete the Initiation **Sacraments**, as well as for those who simply desire to deepen their understanding of **Catholicism**. **Questions? Contact Sharon Curtin at 614-563-8405, or SCurtin@sjbitaliana.org.**

Part-time Facilities Manager Position: Looking for a part-time Facilities Manager for both **St. John the Baptist** and **Sacred Heart Churches**. Duties would be to maintain and oversee both churches. This would include ordinary maintenance, cleaning, dusting, mopping floors, changing light bulbs, minor plumbing and electrical work, removal of trash, and any other things that may need to be repaired or maintained. This would be approximately **25 hours a week**. If interested in the position, please contact the office for more information at **614-294-5319**. Thank you!

AROUND US

You are invited to pray for the Holy Father's Intentions for the Month of January 2024: *We pray that the Holy Spirit may help us to recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community and to discover the richness of different traditions and rituals in the Catholic Church.*

Respect For Life Mass: The Mass will be held at St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad Street, Columbus, on Monday, January 22, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. On this date of the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision, our Diocese will join all dioceses of the United States in observing a **Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children**. Principal celebrant and homilist is **Bishop Earl K. Fernandes**. All are invited. For more information, contact the Diocesan **Office for Social Concerns** at socmailbox@columbuscatholic.org or 614-241-2540.

Roe Remembrance at the Statehouse: This event will be on **Monday, January 22, 2024**, from Noon to 1:00 p.m. Greater Columbus Right to Life will sponsor the **Annual Roe Remembrance** at the Ohio Statehouse (West Lawn), following the 10:30 a.m. Respect Life Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral. For additional information, visit www.gctrl.org/roe.html.

St. Charles Spaghetti Dinner and Catholic Schools Week

Activities: St. Charles will host its Annual Spaghetti Dinner on **Sunday, February 4**, from 1:00-6:30 p.m., in the school's **Walter Student Commons**. Dinner will be prepared by the **Susi Family** and their staff from **Berwick Manor**. **Entertainment** will be provided by the **SC Concert & Jazz Band**, which will perform at **2:15 and 4:00 p.m.** Guests will enjoy a bountiful meal of spaghetti with meatball, salad, rolls, ice cream, and a beverage. **\$14.00 for adults; \$10.00 for Senior Citizens; \$7.00 for Children 4-12 (3 and under are free).** There is also a **\$55.00 Family rate** (dine-in, up to six immediate family members). Carry-out orders will be available.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR THE COLUMBUS CATHOLIC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, which will be held **Saturday, February 17, 2024**. Get registered TODAY at www.columbuscatholicwomen.com or scan the QR code.



The glove of St. Padre Pio will be displayed for veneration at the upcoming Columbus Catholic Women's Conference in February.

Today's Gospel: Today's Gospel is from the **Gospel of Mark 1:14-20**. **Jesus** came to announce to all men the good news of **God's** eternal plan for them. He spent His public life convincing the **Jews of Palestine** of the truth of this message, and He died on the cross because He claimed to be **God's** divine **Son**, who had come in human nature to raise all men to the standing and status of adopted sons of **God**. He conquered death and was raised from the grave to prove that we too, if we accept His divine **Gospel** and live by it, will be raised from the dead and reign with **Christ** in the **Kingdom of His Father** forever. This is the doctrine for which He gave His human life and which He gave to His **Apostles** to hand down to all future generations. This is the self-same doctrine preached by **Christ's Church** to all men today. It is the good news of **God's** limitless mercy and love. We **Christians** should be the happiest people on earth. We know why we are here. We know where we are going, and we know how to get there. There are trials and troubles which beset us on our journey, but we are not left to our own human resources. We have help from above to strengthen and comfort us on our journey. We have divine aids in the **Church** which **Christ** set us and we have the guarantee of our **Good Shepherd** that He will keep us in His fold or bring us back should we foolishly wander from it. (Jn. 10: 14; Lk. 1.5:4-7)

– Excerpted from *The Sunday Readings* by Fr. Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M.



Prayer: *Almighty ever-living God, direct our actions according to Your good pleasure, that in the name of Your beloved Son, we may abound in good works. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen*

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)

The month of January is dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus.

“Faithfully attend to your obligations, but know that you have no greater obligation than that of your salvation and of the saving progress of your soul on the way to true devotion.” +SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

Monday, January 22 ~ Third Week in Ordinary Time
Day of Penance and Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children

Holy Gospel: Matthew 18:1-5, 10, 12-14 At that time the disciples approached Jesus and said, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a child over, placed it in their midst, and said, “Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me. “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father. What is your opinion? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go in search of the stray? And if he finds it, amen, I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not stray. In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost.

Meditation on this special day of prayer: Love is not merely a feeling, but is rather the desire for the best possible good for those whom we love. Through our natural intelligence and through Divine Revelation we become aware of the value of this most basic of all gifts which is life. Mere reason leads us to comprehend that it is better to be alive than never have had been in existence. The knowledge of the value of life that comes through revelation leads us to understand better this gift and to appreciate it: as a result, we worship and love more and more the Giver of this gift. This love is what moves us to protect the life of the unborn or any who might be unjustly treated. We are also led to protect women that might feel tempted or forced to commit abortion, as we know the devastating consequences that abortion will have in their lives. Last but not least we have to love, even if most of them seem to be utterly unlovable, the many perpetrators of abortion: medical personnel, and pro-abortion activists and politicians. We have to do everything that we can to convince them of their errors so that they repent and change their ways, both for their own benefit and for the benefit of society.

Prayer: God our Creator, we give thanks to you, who alone have the power to impart the breath of life as you form each of us in our mother's womb; grant, we pray, that we, whom you have made stewards of creation, may remain faithful to this sacred trust and constant in safeguarding the dignity of every human life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation on this special day of prayer: All human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. Using a traditional scholastic term, we can state that He is the exemplary cause of every human being, in other words, He is the model on which all human beings are created. He looked upon himself and wished that other beings would share in His own happiness. So if we reflect upon ourselves, we can begin to understand our participation in the greatness of our Creator. This participation on His greatness leads us to comprehend that He has brought us out of nothing with a purpose, because knowing His intelligence and His loving nature it is clear that all His actions are always guided by a magnificent purpose. The first intention for which He has created us is that we should enjoy for an eternity His loving company in Heaven. All human persons are called to this eternal and loving company, no one is excluded, save those who, through their own actions, exclude themselves. This manner of creation brings us to understand the unique essential dignity of every human being. A dignity that is not lost for any deprivation of the many external perfections that we might expect to find in a human person. A person might be born with a

disability, or may suffer disability through injury or disease, but these deprivations do not affect his basic dignity. A Christian also has the hope that one day when the doors of Paradise will be opened for those children, all their human imperfections will be healed and they will enjoy forever the beatific vision that we all long for.

Tuesday, January 23 ~ Third Week in Ordinary Time
Saint Vincent of Saragossa, Deacon and Martyr

Holy Gospel: Mark 3:31-35 The mother of Jesus and his brothers arrived at the house. Standing outside, they sent word to Jesus and called him. A crowd seated around him told him, "Your mother and your brothers and your sisters are outside asking for you." But he said to them in reply, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

Meditation: Jesus is God's love incarnate – God's love made visible in human flesh (1 John 4:9-10). That is why Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep and the shepherd who seeks out the sheep who have strayed and lost their way. God is like the father who yearns for his prodigal son to return home and then throws a great party for his son when he has a change of heart and comes back (Luke 15:11-32). Jesus offered up his life on the cross for our sake, so that we could be forgiven and restored to unity and friendship with God. It is through Jesus that we become the adopted children of God – his own sons and daughters. That is why Jesus told his disciples that they would have many new friends and family relationships in his kingdom. Whoever does the will of God is a friend of God and a member of his family – his sons and daughters who have been ransomed by the precious blood of Christ.

Prayer: Almighty ever-living God, mercifully pour out your Spirit upon us, so that our hearts may possess the strong love by which the Martyr Saint Vincent triumphed over all bodily torments. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: One of the early martyrs of the Church, Lucian of Antioch, once said: "a Christian's only relatives are the saints" – namely those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and adopted as sons and daughters of God. Those who have been baptized into Jesus Christ and who live as his disciples enter into a new family, a family of "saints" here on earth and in heaven. Jesus changes the order of relationships and shows that true kinship is not just a matter of flesh and blood. Our adoption as sons and daughters of God transforms all of our relationships and requires a new order of loyalty to God first and to his kingdom of righteousness and peace. Do you want to grow in love and friendship? Allow God's Holy Spirit to transform your heart, mind, and will to enable you to love freely and generously as he loves.

Wednesday, January 24 ~ Third Week in Ordinary Time
Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor of the Church
Patron Saint of the Diocese of Columbus

Holy Gospel: Mark 4:1-20 On another occasion, Jesus began to teach by the sea. A very large crowd gathered around him so that he got into a boat on the sea and sat down. And the whole crowd was beside the sea on land. And he taught them at length in parables, and in the course of his instruction he said to them, "Hear this! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep. And when the sun rose, it was scorched and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it and it produced no grain. And some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit. It came up and grew and yielded thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold." He added, "Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear." And when he was alone, those present along with the Twelve questioned him about the parables. He answered them, "The mystery of the Kingdom of God has been granted to you. But to those outside everything comes in parables, so that they may look and see but not perceive, and hear and listen but not understand, in order that they may not be converted and be forgiven." Jesus said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand any of the parables? The sower sows the word. These are the ones on the path where the word is sown. As soon as they hear, Satan comes at once and takes away the word sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground who, when they hear the word, receive it at once with joy. But they have no roots; they last only for a time. Then when tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Those sown among thorns are another sort. They are the people who hear the word, but worldly

anxiety, the lure of riches, and the craving for other things intrude and choke the word, and it bears no fruit. But those sown on rich soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."

Meditation: Jesus' parable of the sower is aimed at the hearers of his word. There are different ways of accepting God's word and they produce different kinds of fruit accordingly. There is the prejudiced hearer who has a shut mind. Such a person is unteachable and blind to what he or she doesn't want to hear. Then there is the shallow hearer. He or she fails to think things out or think them through; they lack depth. They may initially respond with an emotional reaction; but when it wears off their mind wanders to something else. Another type of hearer is the person who has many interests or cares, but who lacks the ability to hear or comprehend what is truly important. Such a person is too busy to pray or too preoccupied to study and meditate on God's word. Then there is the one whose mind is open. Such a person is at all times willing to listen and to learn. He or she is never too proud or too busy to learn. They listen in order to understand. God gives grace to those who hunger for his word that they may understand his will and have the strength to live according to it. Do you hunger for God's word?

Prayer: O God, who for the salvation of souls willed that the Bishop Saint Francis de Sales become all things to all, graciously grant that, following his example, we may always display the gentleness of your charity in the service of our neighbor. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: This is the great commission which the risen Christ gives to the whole church. All believers have been given a share in this task – to be heralds of the good news and ambassadors for Jesus Christ, the only savior of the world. We have not been left alone in this task, for the risen Lord works in and through us by the power of his Holy Spirit. Today we witness a new Pentecost as the Lord pours out his Holy Spirit upon his people to renew and strengthen the body of Christ and to equip it for effective ministry and mission world-wide. Do you witness to others the joy of the gospel and the hope of the resurrection?

About Saint Francis de Sales: Francis was born on August 21, 1567, and ordained to the priesthood in 1593. From 1594 to 1598 he labored at the difficult and dangerous task of preaching to the Protestants of Chablais and effected the return of some 70,000 souls to the Catholic faith. In 1602 he became bishop of Genf. His zeal for souls is attested in 21,000 extant letters and 4,000 sermons which exemplify how he applied St. Paul's words: "I have become all things to all men." You may epitomize his character in two words: (1) kindness and (2) loveliness — virtues that were the secret of his success. His writings reflect his kindheartedness and sweet disposition. Most widely known is the saint's *Introduction to the Devout Life*, which, with the *Imitation of Christ*, is rightly considered the finest outline of Christian perfection. Francis' *Introduction* proves to the world that true piety makes persons amiable, lovable and happy. In recognition of the *Introduction* and his other writings Francis was declared a doctor of the Church.

Thursday, January 25 ~ Third Week in Ordinary Time Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, Apostle

Holy Gospel: Mark 16:15-18 Jesus appeared to the Eleven and said to them: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Meditation: Jesus' departure and ascension into heaven was both an end and a beginning for his disciples. While it was the end of Jesus' physical presence with his beloved disciples, it marked the beginning of Jesus' presence with them in a new way. Jesus promised that he would be with them always to the end of time. Now as the glorified and risen Lord and Savior, ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven, Jesus promised to send them the Holy Spirit who would anoint them with power on the Feast of Pentecost, just as Jesus was anointed for his ministry at the River Jordan. When the Lord Jesus departed physically from the apostles, they were not left in sorrow or grief. Instead, they were filled with joy and with great anticipation for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' last words to his apostles point to his saving mission and to their mission to be witnesses of his saving death and his glorious resurrection and to proclaim the good news of salvation to the entire world. Their task is to proclaim the good news of salvation, not only to the people of Israel, but to all the nations. God's love and gift of salvation is not just for a few, or for a nation, but it is for the whole world – for all who will accept it. The gospel is the power

of God, the power to forgive sins, to heal, to deliver from evil and oppression, and to restore life. Do you believe in the power of the gospel?

Prayer: O God, who taught the whole world through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Paul, draw us, we pray, nearer to you through the example of him whose conversion we celebrate today, and so make us witnesses to your truth in the world. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: This is the great commission which the risen Christ gives to the whole church. All believers have been given a share in this task – to be heralds of the good news and ambassadors for Jesus Christ, the only savior of the world. We have not been left alone in this task, for the risen Lord works in and through us by the power of his Holy Spirit. Today we witness a new Pentecost as the Lord pours out his Holy Spirit upon his people to renew and strengthen the body of Christ and to equip it for effective ministry and mission world-wide. Do you witness to others the joy of the gospel and the hope of the resurrection?

About Saint Paul: St. Paul, originally named Saul, a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, was born at Tarsus, the capitol of Cilicia. He was a Roman citizen. He was brought up as a strict Jew, and later became a violent persecutor of the Christians. While on his way to Damascus to make new arrests of Christians, he was suddenly converted by a miraculous apparition of Our Lord. From a fierce persecutor he became the great Apostle of the Gentiles. He made three missionary journeys which brought him to the great centers of Asia Minor and southern Europe, and made many converts. Fourteen of his Epistles are found in the New Testament. He was beheaded in Rome in the year 66 A.D.; his body is kept in the Basilica of St. Paul near the Ostian Way.

Friday, January 26 ~ Third Week in Ordinary Time **Saints Timothy and Titus, Bishops**

Holy Gospel: Mark 4:26-34 Jesus said to the crowds: "This is how it is with the Kingdom of God; it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land and would sleep and rise night and day and the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how. Of its own accord the land yields fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once, for the harvest has come." He said, "To what shall we compare the Kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it? It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade." With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it. Without parables he did not speak to them, but to his own disciples he explained everything in private.

Meditation: What can mustard seeds teach us about the kingdom of God? The tiny mustard seed literally grew to be a tree which attracted numerous birds because they loved the little black mustard seed it produced. God's kingdom works in a similar fashion. It starts from the smallest beginnings in the hearts of men and women who are receptive to God's word. And it works unseen and causes a transformation from within. Just as a seed has no power to change itself until it is planted in the ground, so we cannot change our lives to be like God until God gives us the power of his Holy Spirit.

Prayer: O God, who adorned Saints Timothy and Titus with apostolic virtues, grant through the intercession of them both, that, living justly and devoutly in this present age, we may merit to reach our heavenly homeland. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: The Lord of the Universe is always ready to transform us by the power of his Spirit. Are you ready to let God change you by his grace and power? The kingdom of God produces a transformation in those who receive the new life which Jesus Christ offers. When we yield to Jesus Christ, our lives are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. Paul the Apostle says, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Do you believe in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit?

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops;
prayers are from *The Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing, 2011;
information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of the Catholic Culture web site.

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