



St. Mary's Parish



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Members of the St. Mary's Parish Family,

Today's story of the Canaanite woman challenges us to radically expand our circles of empathy. Jesus initially responds to her with the cultural boundaries of His time. But her persistence shatters those walls, revealing that God's grace and human dignity cannot be partitioned by tribe, status, or geopolitical borders.

In our world today, this Gospel demands that we confront systems that restrict human worth, marginalize the vulnerable, and treat entire populations as outsiders or "non-persons."

This call to radical inclusion and justice speaks urgently to the ongoing persecution, displacement, and violence faced by Palestinians living under occupation in the West Bank - which is where our Sister Parish is located.

Day after day, communities are now facing intensive military restrictions, land seizures, and a sharp escalation of settler violence that forces families from ancestral homes.

When fundamental rights, security, and basic survival are systematically denied based on identity and geography, the prophetic vision of Isaiah that God's house is meant to be a house of prayer and sanctuary for all peoples, is deeply violated.

The persistent cry of the Canaanite woman for her suffering daughter mirrors the cries of parents in the West Bank today, who navigate a daily reality of checkpoints, structural violence, and the constant threat of displacement.

As people of faith, reflecting on this Sunday's readings requires us to recognize that every human life possesses an inherent dignity that transcends political borders and ethnic divisions.

Living this Gospel means following Christ's example by refusing to accept the societal boundaries that render certain groups invisible, voiceless, or disposable. It means making a moral objection to oppression, forced displacement, and lawlessness. It means praying and working tirelessly for a true, equitable peace where justice prevails.

True faith cannot remain indifferent to human suffering. Just as Jesus ultimately listened and healed across dividing lines, we are called to break through our own comfort zones to stand in solidarity with the oppressed, insisting that every person has a place at the table of God's children.

Perhaps that is the deepest challenge of this Gospel. The Canaanite woman does not ask Jesus to solve a political problem. **She asks Him to see her daughter's suffering and to recognize her humanity.** Her faith refuses to accept exclusion as the final word. And Jesus' response ultimately reveals what the Kingdom of God looks like: a mercy too expansive to be contained by the boundaries human beings construct.

Our Sister Parish makes this suffering not merely something we read about in the news, but something that touches our own parish family. Their joys and fears, their hopes and struggles, are connected to ours. We are separated by geography, but not by the bonds of Christian fraternity.

So let us pray not simply for an end to violence, but for something deeper: a peace founded upon truth, justice, security, freedom, and human dignity. Let us pray for leaders who will have the courage to choose reconciliation over retaliation and justice over expediency.

Let us pray for families who have lost loved ones, homes, livelihoods, and hope. And let us pray especially for our brothers and sisters in our Sister Parish, Our Lady's in Beit Sahour, that they may know that they have not been forgotten.

The Canaanite woman would not walk away. She stood before Jesus and cried out for mercy until the walls between "us" and "them" could no longer stand.

May we have that same courage. **May we never become so accustomed to another person's suffering that we cease to hear their cry.** And may Christ give us the grace to become, in our own time and place, people who build bridges where others build walls, who defend dignity where others deny it, and who work patiently and prayerfully for the day when, in the words of Isaiah, God's house truly becomes "a house of prayer for all peoples."

With prayers for peace,

Rev. Mark J. Coiro





St. Mary's Parish



Mass Schedule:

Monday through Friday
9:00 AM

Saturday Vigils
5:00 PM
7:30 PM

Sunday
7:30 AM
9:30 AM Family Mass
(C.L.O.W. Sept. – May)
11:30 AM Sung Mass

Holy Days: Announced

Adoration Schedule:

First Fridays from
9:30 - 10:30 AM.

Our Mission:

"To know Christ and to make Him known."

8 Church St., Holliston, MA 01746

Website: www.stmarysholliston.com

Email Address: parish@stmarysholliston.org

Rectory Phone: (508) 429 - 4427

Religious Education Phone: (508) 429 - 6076

Dear Visitors: Welcome! We are delighted that you chose to worship with us this day. Please introduce yourself to the priest, and if you are interested in becoming a member of the parish then please register through our website or by calling the rectory. Please also be aware that for generations it has been the custom at St. Mary's to kneel together for a silent Hail Mary at the end of Mass. Please join in!

Confession: Saturdays
Noon to 12:45 PM.

Anointing of the Sick: Any time by appointment. Please call as soon as you are aware of a serious illness or upcoming surgery.

Baptism: The 2nd & 4th Sunday of each month. To register for Baptism Preparation, call 429-4427. Welcome to Christ!

Marriage: Please call at least 6 months in advance of your desired wedding date. Congratulations!

PARISH STAFF:

Rev. Mark J. Coiro, Pastor
The Xaverian Fathers, Weekend Assistance
Deacon John D. Barry, Permanent Deacon
Deacon Ronald A. Dowding, Permanent Deacon
Deacon Martin Breinlinger, Senior Deacon
Mrs. Fran Crespi, D.R.E., Grades K-7
Mrs. Lisa Dufault, High School Youth Minister
Ms. Abigail Kelley-Lanser, Organist, Director of Music
Mrs. Mary Beth Harris, Parish Secretary
Mrs. Jennifer Burgett, Religious Education Secretary
Ms. Mary Sanning, Business Manager
Mrs. Najat Whalen, Sacristan
Mr. Billy Hanson, Parish Facilities
R & R Landscaping, Cemetery Care

TODAY'S BULLETIN COVER:

Jean-François de Troy (1679 - 1752). The painting illustrates Matthew 15:21-28, the encounter between Jesus and the Canaanite woman. De Troy places the woman prominently in the foreground, while Jesus and the disciples form a dramatic group behind her. The woman's gestures toward the dog refer directly to her response to Jesus about the dogs receiving the crumbs from their master's table. The painting visually emphasizes the tension between exclusion and inclusion: several disciples appear skeptical or disapproving, while Jesus' gesture and the woman's persistent faith move the scene toward recognition and mercy.

MASS INTENTIONS:

Saturday	August 15
5:00	Gabriel Parmese, 11 th Anv.
7:30	Susan Pratt
Sunday	August 16
7:30	People of St. Mary's
9:30	Richard Chase, 33 rd Anv.
11:30	Teresita De Guzman, 14 th Anv.
Monday	August 17
9:00	Jerry Deise
Tuesday	August 18
9:00	Michele Scotto
Wednesday	August 19
9:00	Paul T. Shea
Thursday	August 20
9:00	Lois Hosmer
Friday	August 21
9:00	Franco DiCenso
Saturday	August 22
5:00	Amy Tibbert
7:30	William and Edith Lovett
Sunday	August 23
7:30	People of St. Mary's
9:30	Ronaldo De Guzman, 13 th Anv.
11:30	Brian Cosgrove

**Religious Education Registration
Ends TOMORROW, 8/17/26.**

FOR OUR PARISH

LAST WEEKEND'S PARISH OFFERTORY:

Automatic Giving: \$ 2,760.00
 WeShare: \$ 6,786.33
 Envelopes: \$ 6,820.00
 Total Offertory: \$ 16,366.33

Thank you for making up any missed weekly parish support. The fiscal health of your parish depends on it. Kindly consider switching to WeShare or Automatic Giving. See:

<https://stmarysholliston.com/how-to-give/>.

FOR THOSE IN NEED

HOLLISTON PANTRY SHELF: Food items needed at the Pantry: canned decaf coffee (11 oz), and liquid dish soap. Donations may be dropped off in the tan bin by the main parking lot doors right here at St. Mary's.

THE ROSE FOR LIFE: The Rose this week is sponsored by the Parmese Family in memory of Gabriel Parmese. Please join them in prayer for an unborn child. Call Mary Beth at 508-429-4427 to become part of this beautiful affirmation of life.

RESPECT LIFE: This past week, Massachusetts enacted a significant change to its abortion law, removing the previous legal limits on abortions later in pregnancy. The Catholic bishops of Massachusetts have described the elimination of legal restraints on late-term abortion as a "*radical measure which is gravely immoral*," while at the same time calling Catholics to accompany women and families facing difficult and heartbreaking pregnancies. For Catholics, this is not simply a political question; it is a profoundly human and moral question about whose life our society is willing to protect.

This Sunday's Gospel of the Canaanite woman gives us a striking image for how we should respond. She comes to Jesus not primarily to advocate for herself, but to advocate for her daughter. Her child is suffering, and her daughter cannot make the journey, cannot speak for herself, and cannot plead her own case. So her mother does it for her. She cries out, persists when Jesus initially seems to remain silent, and refuses to walk away. Her love for her child makes her courageous and persistent. In that sense, the Canaanite woman becomes a powerful image of what it means to speak on behalf of a child who is in danger and has no voice.

The Gospel therefore asks us a challenging question: Who will speak for those who cannot speak for themselves? The unborn child cannot stand before a legislature, cannot appeal to a physician, and cannot tell the world, "*I am here, and my life matters!*" Someone must advocate for that child, just as Jesus always stood up for the weak, the vulnerable, and the disenfranchised. Nor does Catholic advocacy stop with the unborn child. We must also assist the mother - especially the woman who is frightened, vulnerable, poor, or facing a devastating pregnancy diagnosis. She, too, must never be abandoned. See <https://pregnancyhelpboston.org/>.

The Christian response is not to choose between mother and child, but to insist that both deserve our compassion, our protection, and our love. The Canaanite woman teaches us that when someone is vulnerable, we do not become silent or turn away because the situation is difficult. We speak. We plead. We persevere. And we trust in the mercy of Christ. In a culture where the unborn child has no voice, the Gospel calls us to become that voice - and to do so with the same fierce, persistent love with which the Canaanite woman advocated for her daughter. Learn more at:

<https://worcesterdiocese.org/news/bishops-statement-on-late-term-abortion-bill>.

FOR OUR YOUTH



We have made both registration and payment of tuition wholly electronic. Just click the photo above or use the QR Code to get started.

The full class schedule was mailed out and may also be viewed by clicking [HERE](#). As always, class day choices are first come, first served.



Class registration ends TOMORROW, Monday, August 17, 2026 - please do not delay.

If you have any difficulties or questions, please contact Jennifer at 508-429-6076 or at religiousec@stmarysholliston.org. God bless you!

FOR OUR YOUTH



This year's trip is tomorrow, Monday, August 17.

Departure: Please be at the Parish Center at 8 AM for 8:15 AM Departure.

Return: Around 6:30 - 7:00 PM. We will call when 20 minutes out.

Please be sure to bring the following:

A swimsuit (under clothes or use the changing rooms there) for the 6 Flags water park, towel, dry clothes for the ride home and a plastic bag for your wet swimsuit, waterproof sun block, any prescription medications, EpiPens, inhalers, etc.



STMARYS_TGIF

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP!



We had such a wonderful evening on Tuesday,

reuniting with van groups and spending time watching our 2026 Mission Trip Video. The Google Album was emailed out to all Mission Trip participants on Friday, August 14. Check out our Instagram to see photos and videos from the Mission Trip. Just scan the QR Code above!

Be on the lookout for our 2026 - 2027 TGIF Meeting Schedule which will be released soon. In the meantime, for more information about TGIF High School Youth Group, contact Lisa at tgif@stmarysholliston.org.



These teens attended the Mission Trip all 4 years of high school along with these chaperones.

FOR OUR YOUTH

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP:

This Friday, August 21 -
Grade 6 Deerfield River Rafting!



- 7:30 AM Departure by bus from the Parish Center, (donuts & juice boxes provided), but suggest a hearty breakfast beforehand also. Be here by 7:15 AM please!
- 2.5 hour drive to Charlemont, MA.
- 10:15 Crabapple Whitewater Orientation, lifejacket and helmet fitting, safety lecture and paddling instruction. Bus ride to Fife Brook dam.
- Raft 5 miles in Class II whitewater, Zoar Gap Rapid Class III.
- Continue 4 miles in Class II whitewater, take out and ride back to Crab Apple, hearty lunch (included). Slide presentation of trip.
- 2 - 2:30 PM Depart CrabApple.
- Return to St. Mary's around 4:30 - 5:00 PM. Return time is affected by weather, amount of water released on the river that day, and traffic. We will call when 20 minutes out.

FINAL PACKING LIST

Any prescription medications / inhalers / Epipens, etc. you may need. Waterproof sun-block and strong insect repellent. A large towel, clothing including a swimsuit. *(You will be provided a full upper body lifejacket. Most people just use this with their swimsuit, but if you want to wear a shirt for rafting in addition to a swimsuit, the shirt must be 100% synthetic i.e. polypropylene, polyester, mesh material, etc. Cotton or cotton blend shirts will not be allowed on the river - they hold water and you'd freeze).* Girls - wear a **1 piece** bathing suit - bikinis will not hold up to waves, being pulled back onto rafts, etc.

An empty trash bag for wet bathing suits, towels, etc.

Teva style waterproof sandals or boat shoes or old sneakers. No bare-feet rafting.

Dry clothes and footwear for the drive home.



WE WELCOME ALL FAMILIES TO REGISTER THEIR CHILDREN ONLINE FOR OUR 2026-2027 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES BY AUGUST 17! Go to <https://stmarysholliston.com/>. Check our class offerings, days, and times. Register and pay by locking in placement and your choice of classes now.

WE MISS YOU! If your child has missed time in Religious Education, we encourage you to register them right away using our online form at stmarysholliston.com. Please contact us if your child needs to be prepared to receive the Sacraments of Baptism or First Communion at 508-429-6076 or religiouslyddre@stmarysholliston.org. It is never too late to prepare your child for a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ and we will love to see them in our program.



OUR YOUNG CHILDREN AND YOUTH NEED TO LEARN ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD! In a world so full of noise, our young children need space for quiet time to hear God's voice! God whispers and we listen. There are

so many noisy distractions with digital devices, TV, and internet attractions that take up hours of precious time that can never be recovered. How can one pray and talk with God in such a noisy space? We need to help our children and youth recognize God's presence in their lives so that the Good News of Christ's teaching will help them build a personal relationship with the Master Himself. Christ commanded that we go out and bring the Gospel message to the world. We will help the young know that through the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, He generously provides the graces we need to live with hope, peace, joy, and His love for them. Please consider being a witness for Christ and share your love for God with our youth. Classes start in October and training will be available in September for new and returning teachers. Just register **Online. See the table in the upper right for scheduled days and times for classes. Please complete the Volunteer Application and the Teacher/Monitor Session Selection at:**

<https://stmarysholliston.com/religious-education/religious-education-volunteer-registration/>.

BISHOP FULTON SHEEN: "Why did our Blessed Lord use bread and wine as the elements for His memorial? First of all, because no two substances in nature better symbolize unity than bread and wine. As bread is made from a multiplicity of grains and wheat and wine from the multiplicity of grapes, so the many who believe are one in Christ."

TEACHERS AND MONITORS WILL BE NEEDED FOR GRADE LEVELS 1 - 8: Prayerfully consider teaching or volunteering as a Monitor.

GRADE	SUNDAY CLASSES	WEEKDAY CLASSES
	Alternate Sundays	Alternate weeks
CGS* Weekly	Sun., 8:00 to 9:15 AM OR 10:45 AM to 12 Noon	
GR-1	Sun., 8:10 to 9:25 AM	
GR-2	Sun., 8:10 to 9:25 AM OR 10:45 AM to 12 Noon	Wed., 4:15 to 5:30 PM
GR-3	Sun., 7:55 to 9:25 AM OR 10:45 AM to 12:15 PM	Wed., 4:00 to 5:30 PM
GR-4	Sun., 10:45 AM to 12:15 PM	Tue., 4:00 to 5:30 PM
GR-5	Sun., 10:45 AM to 12:15 PM	Tue., 4:00 to 5:30 PM
GR-6	Sun., 4:00 to 5:30 PM	Tue., 4:00 to 5:30 PM
GR-7	Grades 7 and 8 meet on the same alternate weeks.	Tue., OR Wed., 7:00 to 8:30 PM
GR-8		Mon. OR Thur., 7:00 to 8:30 PM



WE NEED (CGS) VOLUNTEER ASSISTANTS TO BE TRAINED:

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a unique Montessori Program that uses a child-centered approach to Christian formation. CGS is not the standard classroom model but a "WAY" and method to emphasize the religious potential of children while fostering their personal encounter with God. Sacred Scripture, Liturgy, prayer, and practical life activities are presented where the child can contemplate and build a relationship with Jesus.

CGS Assistants do not teach, they observe the children's activities, behaviors, and responses and are available if a child needs help. **We are eager to recruit two adults and three high school students (grades 9 - 12)** to be trained. Consider taking this wonderful journey observing how children's hearts, and yours, will be forever transformed. As with all volunteers, CGS Assistants over the age of eighteen (18) years are required to complete a CORI form and Protecting God's Children Training. Meeting with the DRE is required if you are a new volunteer. If you have any questions, please contact 508-429-6076 or religiouslyddre@stmarysholliston.org. You can also register online by completing the **Volunteer Application and the Teacher/Monitor Session Selection at:** <https://stmarysholliston.com/religious-education/religious-education-volunteer-registration/>. *CGS Sunday classes meet weekly except for holiday weekends and run from 8:00 to 9:15 AM and 10:45 AM to Noon starting Sunday, October 18, 2026.