

**ST. MARY'S PARISH**  
**8 CHURCH ST.**  
**HOLLISTON, MA 01746**

*Summer Newsletter 2023*

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**AS THIS LAD'S SMILE**  
**SHOWS, OUR JUNE 24**  
**FAMILY BBQ WAS**  
**FUN FOR ALL AGES!**





# St. Mary's Parish Newsletter

Summer, 2023 ~ Volume 49, Number 6

St. Mary's Parish  
8 Church Street  
Holliston, MA 01746

Rectory: 429-4427

Religious Education Center: 429-6076

Music Program: 429-6076

Religious Education Email: [st.marysre1870@gmail.com](mailto:st.marysre1870@gmail.com)

Parish Email Address: [st.marys1870@gmail.com](mailto:st.marys1870@gmail.com)

Website: [www.stmarysholliston.com](http://www.stmarysholliston.com)

Mission: "To Know Christ and to Make Him Known!"

## BEST FAMILY BBQ EVER?

Many said so following this amazing June 24 night of food, friendship, live music, and celebration! What a joy to have Country Singer Shanna Jackman with us. Shanna sang her heart out, danced with the kids, and even let some of them sing along with her on her silver sequined microphone. Did you know that Shanna was Baptized right here in Holliston?!

Real saddles and rideable toy horses, courtesy of Linda and Devin Scruton, were a hit with the little ones, while bales of straw, antique soda bottles with carnations, and red and white checked country table runners completed the décor.

As always, St. Mary's Knights of Columbus served the delicious, fresh barbecued food – not an easy job with over 200 parishioners in attendance! Thank you also to the parish teens who ran the beverage bar, and to all who made this a night to remember! More BBQ Pics on the Newsletter Cover.







## FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS!

On June 10 & 17, thirty-one students made their First Holy Communion at St. Mary's. Holy Communion is the second of the three Catholic sacraments of initiation, the others being Baptism and Confirmation. After years of watching their mothers and fathers receive Holy Communion, these young people were finally able to take their place at God's table. Having been received into the Eucharistic Fellowship, these boys and girls will now be fortified by God's grace each week as they receive Jesus' Body and Blood – the spiritual food by which He strengthens His love and presence in our lives.

Wearing the parish's Our Mother of Perpetual Help vestment, Father Mark compared the two hands of the child Jesus shown clutching Mary - to the two sacraments of Confession and Communion. *"Keep Confession and Sunday Mass in your lives,"* said Father, *"and you will always be held close to your mother the Church – you will always be close to God."*

Because the First Communion took place on Saturdays, the children made their Second Holy Communion the very next day on Sunday, where they were called forward, presented with certificates and applauded by the whole St. Mary's Parish Family.

**WELCOME TO THE TABLE OF THE LORD!**





## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Recently I was hiking on a hot day and decided to wade in a stream to cool off a bit. A few feet in I turned and saw something that had not been visible from the trail – a massive spiderweb suspended over the water. I took this photo of it below.



For quite a few Sundays in a row the Mass Scriptures have spoken of seeing God in the wonder and beauty of His creation. Jesus has also been presenting us with parables drawn from nature – scattered seeds, the separation of the weeds from the wheat, and so on. I found myself wondering if spiderwebs appear in the Bible. It turns out they do, and always with reference to the fragility of a life without God.

*“Such is the destiny of all who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless. What they trust in is fragile; what they rely on is a spider’s web. They lean on the web, but it gives way; they cling to it, but it does not hold.” (Job 8:13-15)*

*“The wicked build houses as fragile as a spider’s web.” (Job 27:18)*

Honestly, I had hoped to find something more positive about these amazing constructions. But of course, as intricate and impressive as they can be, these webs are still vulnerable and easily undone. So are we, says Scripture, if we place our hope first in worldly goods instead of those things which are eternal – those things which are of God.

I hope you enjoy this last month of summer. And as you see the natural wonders around us, may they turn your thoughts to the One Who made them all. God bless you!



## THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY INTO HEAVEN ~

### A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION

Monday, August 14, 2023

6:30 PM Vigil Mass

Tuesday, August 15, 2023

9:00 AM Feast Day Mass

7:00 PM Feast Day Mass

The Assumption refers to the Blessed Virgin Mary being Assumed, body and soul, into heaven at the end of her earthly life. “Assumption” is different than “Ascension” because one is passive (i.e. one is Assumed) and the other is active (i.e. one Ascends). It is by the power of God that Mary was Assumed.

As evidenced by the writings of many early Church fathers, Christians have believed for more than a millennium that the Blessed Virgin was Assumed into heaven. According to St. John of Damascus, the Roman emperor Marcian requested the body of Mary, Mother of God at the Council of Chalcedon, in 451.

St. Juvenal, who was Bishop of Jerusalem wrote the emperor that *“Mary died in the presence of all the Apostles, but that her tomb, when opened upon the request of St. Thomas, was found empty; wherefrom the Apostles concluded that the body was taken up to heaven.”*

This belief was held throughout the centuries, then in 1950, Pope Pius XII issued *Munificentissimus Deus*, which officially defined the Dogma of the Assumption. This means that the Church officially recognizes this belief as a true and necessary part of our Catholic beliefs about Mary.

For Catholics, all beliefs about Mary illuminate our most treasured beliefs about her Son. The Assumption illustrates to us the truth about Christ’s promise of eternal life and the resurrection of the faithful.





## Seven Altar Servers Promoted!

At the 9:30 AM Mass on Sunday, June 18, seven St. Mary's youths were promoted to the rank of Senior Altar Server. Each was presented with a new, blessed gold cross which they will now wear whenever they minister. Senior Altar Servers are high schoolers who commit to continue serving until graduation and take on responsibilities that include assisting at the most complex liturgies of the Church Year and mentoring the younger servers. They undergo more advanced training and pass a test before being promoted.

Congratulations to Anthony Bonarrigo, Brian Bernier, Luke Burgett, Madeline Pierce, Susannah Butler, William MacLeod, and Benjamin Kaufman!



## 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Altar Server Appreciation Trip to 6 Flags!

Thirty-one of our fifty-five St. Mary's Altar Servers took part in this exciting summer trip. As a thank you for their generous and faithful ministry, they spent a whole day enjoying rollercoasters and rides of every variety. Then it was time for the Water Park and cooling off in the Lazy River Rapids, Tornado Funnel, and various waterslides. It was a blast!







# St. Mary's Religious Education

"The Lord Jesus invites men and women, in a special way, to follow Him, as teacher and formers of disciples" (GDC 231). Please consider our Teacher and Monitor needs below:

**CLASSES BEGIN THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2023.**

**MAY WE GROW IN OUR LOVE OF THE LORD!**

**Class code: A=Alt. weeks M=Monthly**

GRADES	DAY AND TIME	TEACHERS	MONITORS
<b>SUNDAY</b>			
PRE-K.	9:15 to 10:30 AM	3 Teens M	1
Kind.	9:15 to 10:30 AM	6 M	Filled
GR-1A	8:10 to 9:20 AM	6 A	Filled
GR-2A	8:10 to 9:20 AM	2 A	Filled
GR-2A	10:45 AM to Noon	3 A	1
GR-3A	7:55 AM & 10:45 AM	2 / 3 A	Filled
GR-4A	10:45AM-12:15 PM	3 A	1
GR-5A	10:45AM-12:15 PM	3 A	1
GR-6A	4:00 to 5:30 PM	4 A	1
GR-7A	5:00 to 6:30 PM	3 A	1
<b>MONDAY</b>			
GR-8B	6:00 to 7:30 PM	4 A	1
<b>TUESDAY</b>			
GR-3C	4:00 to 5:30 PM	3 A	Filled
GR-4C	4:00 to 5:30 PM	4 A	Filled
GR-5C	4:00 to 5:30 PM	3 A	Filled

**Monitors are required for classes to begin in the fall.**

GRADES	DAY AND TIME	TEACHERS	MONITORS
<b>TUESDAY</b>			
GR-6C	4:00 to 5:30 PM	4 A	Filled
GR-9C	6:30 to 8:30 PM	2 A	1
GR-10C	6:30 to 8:30 PM	2 A	1
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>			
GR-2D	4:15 to 5:30 PM	2 Teams A	Filled
GR-3D	4:00 to 5:30 PM	2 A	Filled
GR-7D	6:00 to 7:30 PM	3 A	Filled
GR-8D	6:00 to 7:30 PM	4 A	1
<b>THURSDAY</b>			
GR-4E	4:00 to 5:30 PM	4 A	1
GR-5E	4:00 to 5:30 PM	4 A	1
GR-9E	6:30 to 8:30 PM	4 A	1
GR-10E	6:30 to 8:30 PM	4 A	1

**Please Teach!** The children of St. Mary's are counting on YOU.

St. Mary's 2023 Vacation Bible School was a truly "Stellar" experience, as 158 children and leaders learned to shine Jesus' light in every circumstance. A detailed article with many photos will follow in the first Fall Newsletter, but for now a huge thank you to everyone who made these five days so memorable and full of the Lord's Grace. May we all strive to "Shine Jesus' Light!"



# Knights of Columbus

St. Mary's Council #14224 June, 2023

*"In Service to One, In Service to All."*



**COUNCIL HOLDS SECOND ANNUAL "SWING FOR CHARITY" GOLF TOURNAMENT:** On June 9, over 80 golfers teed up in the Second Annual "Swing for Charity" golf tournament. Mother Nature gave the golfers a sunny morning and held off showering until after the luncheon was finished. Twenty-two sponsors and various raffles enabled the Council to raise \$13,000 for the Holliston Pantry Shelf. Knight Anthony Polise was the chairman.

**SILVER ROSE PRAYER SERVICE ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7:** Our Council will again sponsor the Silver Rose Prayer Service in the church at 7:00 PM. The Silver Rose honors our Lady of Guadalupe and the sanctity of human life. Save the date. All of St. Mary's Parish and guests are invited to attend and participate in the service.

**WATCH FOR THE RAFFLE DRAWING AND ROAD RALLY TO BE HELD ON OCTOBER 15.** All are invited.

**FIFTEENTH ANNUAL CHARITY RAFFLE:** The Council Knights have raffle tickets to sell for your lucky chance to win the \$1000 first prize while benefiting needy local charities. One ticket costs \$5 and a book of five tickets costs \$20. Knights will be selling raffle tickets on September 16 and 17 at the Stop & Shop in Milford and at Celebrate Holliston on September 23, or ask a Knight to purchase tickets or send a check payable to K of C Council #14224 to: Tom Anguish at 542 Winter Street, 01746. The Council's annual raffle has now donated over \$280,000 to disabled veteran's charities, local food pantries, the Holliston Senior Center, Autism research, and other very worthy non-profit organizations. Thanks for your past support and we pray you will participate this year.

**MEMBERSHIP DRIVE FOR 2023:** For membership information contact Grand Knight Albert Scaramella at 508-561-0584 OR [ajscaramella@comcast.net](mailto:ajscaramella@comcast.net) OR you can now join ON-LINE by going to the Supreme K of C website <https://www.kofc.org/secure/en/join/join-kofc.html>. Our Council respects members limited time but needs new members to share our faith journey as Catholic men.

**MONTHLY ROSARY:** The next Rosary will be Wednesday, September 20, in the church at 7:00 P.M. All are invited.

# women in WINGS God's spirit



## 2023 FALL PROGRAM PREVIEW

### *Prayer - A Conversation with God*

COMING THIS FALL IN FR. HALEY HALL & VIA ZOOM

*Women in God's Spirit (WINGS) is a faith enrichment group for women of all ages wherever they are on their spiritual journey.*

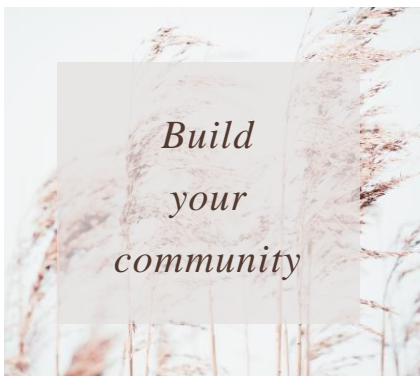
*Join us this fall as inspiring speakers help us enrich our prayer life and expand our knowledge of our faith while learning alongside a wonderful group of supportive women.*

***Need babysitting?** Childcare is offered at no cost for WINGS attendees!*

#### TOPICS

- *What is Prayer?*
- *Teach me to Pray?*
- *Learning to Pray from St. Ignatius of Loyola*
- *Praying in New Ways: Aided Prayer, Creative Prayer, Social Media*
- *Praying in Silence*
- *In the Darkest Times, Pray*

SCHEDULE & SPEAKER DETAILS TO FOLLOW...STAY TUNED!



QUESTIONS? WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



STMARYSWINGSSECRETARY  
@GMAIL.COM



STMARYSHOLLISTON.COM/WOMEN-  
IN-GODS-SPIRIT-W-I-N-G-S/



FACEBOOK.COM/  
WINGSHOLLISTON





# St. Mary's Parish Middle School Youth Group

Open to all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> Graders for Faith, Friendship, Service & Fun

**KENNEBEC RAFTING TRIP DAY ONE:** Sunday, June 25, found twenty-seven of our MSYG teens plus their parent leaders heading out for adventure at the crack of dawn. A six hour drive brought the group to the Pine Grove Lodge in Bingham, Maine for a picnic lunch. There were even puppies to meet and play with there! Then it was off to nearby Houston Brook Falls. Reached by a forest trail of about a half mile, these Falls are a beautiful experience of nature. Teens braved the cold water to fight their way under the surging main waterfall, then spent hours exploring the brook and smaller upper falls. Next it was off to the Crabapple Lodge in the Forks, Maine, where our group checked in to their overnight accommodations. Volleyball and a large (heated) outdoor pool filled the time until dinner, which included a special "Rafting Cake", made by Roche Brothers in Millis. The night concluded with Mass in the Lodge, celebrated by Fr. Mark with teens reading and altar serving.



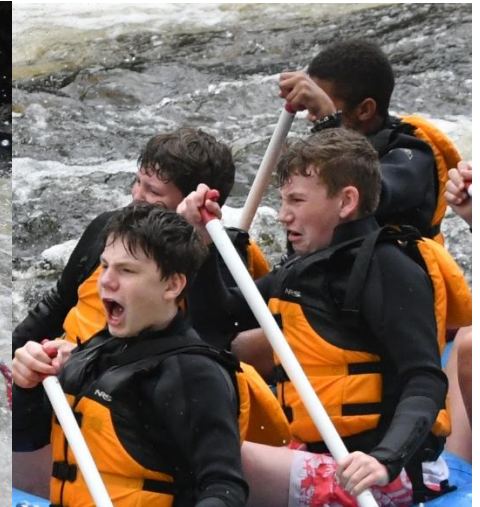




# St. Mary's Parish Middle School Youth Group

Open to all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> Graders for Faith, Friendship, Service & Fun

**KENNEBEC RAFTING TRIP DAY TWO:** The adventure continued on Monday, June 26, with a full day of Class III – V Whitewater Rafting on the Mighty Kennebec. St. Mary's filled four rafts, each accompanied by a professional rafting guide. Their skill was needed as we faced such epic rapids as Whitewash, Magic Falls and Big Momma & the Three Sisters. The group pulled out at Magic Falls for a quick snack, then engaged in massive water bucket fights during the final, quieter stretch. A delicious barbecue at Crabapple concluded the river trip, then it was time for the long drive back to Holliston. Thank you to all the Middle School Youth Group teens for their excellent behavior, and to all the adult leaders for volunteering their time!



*"Deep is calling on deep in the roar of mighty waters. Your torrents and all your waves swept over me." Psalm 42:7*







**Teens Gather In Faith  
St. Mary's Parish  
High School Youth Group**

My name is Owen Simpson, and for the second summer in a row I was blessed with the opportunity to help a community in need - this time in Wauchula, Florida. Wauchula is a low-income area that was vastly damaged by Hurricane Ian. The houses our mission team worked with ranged from needing a paint job, to having a missing roof, to being completely destroyed. It is safe to say that this Mission Trip did not disappoint anyone that went, and it was a unique experience for all.



The mission team this year consisted of fifty-three members, which was a large group compared to past years. Many of us were unfamiliar with each other, so the tradition of being assigned to a van group was a great way to interact with new people. Each van had five to six members and you spent the week traveling and working together at various job sites as a van group. The games we played throughout the week in our vans and the hard work put in at sites led to special bonds between us by the end of the week.

My van was given the task of painting the outside of a young lady's house that had been completely destroyed by the hurricane. This was not easy as the roof was slippery, making it very difficult to paint the top floors of the house. At our Mission Trip Blessing Mass at St. Mary's, we were each given a bracelet with a scripture verse to inspire us throughout the Mission week. My bracelet quoted Matthew 17:20, "*Faith can move mountains.*" Faith certainly helped us to complete this job!

In the end, the bright blue finish made the house stand out in a neighborhood that was plagued by damage. The most rewarding part was seeing the owner's reaction to the work we had done. She was so appreciative and thankful for our efforts in allowing her life to take steps toward normalcy. Learning about the difficulty that the people in this community have faced was a powerful moment and made me truly grateful to live in Holliston.



A noteworthy part of the trip for everyone was beginning each morning with Mass and going to Confession once. This was a great way for everyone to strengthen their faith, reflect on how they can improve themselves, and learn lessons that they would carry for the rest of the day. We would also talk about in whom or where we saw Jesus in our mission team, which would always bring smiles to those that were mentioned.

Overall, the mission trip was a powerful experience. I recommend anyone that is considering the trip to go next year. The feeling of helping those afflicted by a natural disaster while building your faith with peers is very memorable. The new relationships created is also a true benefit of attending.







## Troop 14 Holliston

Boy Scouts of America  
St. Mary's Parish \* Summer, 2023

Meetings: Monday Nights 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Contact: Chris Baribeau, Scoutmaster  
508-579-4357

Email: [Troop14Holliston@yahoo.com](mailto:Troop14Holliston@yahoo.com)

If interested in joining Troop 14, contact the Scoutmaster. It is an ideal organization for boys in sixth grade or above.

The Troop meets weekly during the school-year, Mondays from 7 - 8:30 PM in the Lower Church.

### DRESSING OF THE GRAVES/MEMORIAL DAY PARADE:

In May, Troop 14 participated in the Dressing of the Graves in preparation for Memorial Day with other Scout Troops from Holliston. Scouts were helpful and reverent as they replaced the old flags on the various veteran graves. The event concluded with a moving retirement of the old flags in conjunction with members of the local Holliston VFW Post.



### HIGH ADVENTURE TRAINING HIKE:

Nine Scouts and four Leaders are preparing for a week of hiking and canoeing in the Adirondack Mountains for the summer High Adventure trip in August. The first preparation hike occurred June 3 in the White Mountains on the 4,683 foot Mt. Carrigain. To simulate the challenges they will face on the August trip, Scouts had full thirty-five pound packs with only essential items, and slept in hammocks, not tents, to reduce their overall pack weight.



### TREE TOP ADVENTURES AND BLUE HILLS

**CAMPOUT:** Scouts not attending the High Adventure hike spent the day at Tree Top Adventures in Canton, MA where they enjoyed a fun adventure in the trees climbing high ropes and the obstacle course while zip lining through the forest. The day of climbing was followed by an overnight campout down the road at the New England Base Camp in Milton. This was the first Troop 14 overnight for many of our new Scouts, and they were able to camp and hike in the Blue Hills.

**CAPE COD CAMP AND BIKE TRIP:** June activities continued with camping and biking in Nickerson State Park on Cape Cod. Scouts left on Friday evening and set up camp upon arrival at the park. On Saturday, the Scouts completed a 25-mile bike ride with a smaller group of Scouts who were working on the cycling merit badge completing a 50-mile ride. Scouts concluded the campout on Sunday with a pancake breakfast. The Scouts preparing for the August High Adventure trip were able to practice their canoeing skills on the Bass River in Yarmouth.

**COURT OF HONOR AND END OF YEAR BARBEQUE:** On June 12, Troop 14 celebrated a year of hard work and achievements at the Court of Honor, followed by our end of year barbeque. Many Scouts were recognized for their merit badge achievements and rank progression. A special gift of an 1870 copyrighted bible was presented to Father Mark to commemorate his support of the Troop over his tenure at St. Mary's. 1870 is the year St. Mary's was established.

**TROOP MINI GOLF:** Troop 14 Scouts enjoyed a round of mini golf and ice cream at Putts & More in Ashland on June 19 to finish out the official Scout year.



**CAMP SQUANTO IN PLYMOUTH:** Troop 14 continued Summer Camp tradition with an impressive showing of 36 Scouts attending Camp Squanto in the Myles Standish State Forest. Scouts arrived on Sunday for the weeklong stay and participated in many camp activities which included morning and evening Colors Ceremonies, merit badge activities, swimming, sailing and kayaking, and evening Cracker Barrels at the Troop campfires. Cracker Barrels included dutch oven cobbblers, s'mores, cheese, crackers, and plenty of sweets. This was the largest number of Scouts ever for a Troop 14 Scout Camp attendance and it showed in the week's accomplishments. Troop 14 Scouts completed 117 merit badges, four Scouts and one leader earned the 1-mile swim patch, a camp site inspection award for camp site cleanliness, a 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the scavenger hunt and 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Apache relay, a Troop 14 specialty that involves many camp activities at which our Scouts excelled!





# Cross Walk

By Cathy Stenquist

Lately my granddaughters have discovered a song by Raffi called “Banana Phone” which loops endlessly on road trips. I must say it is quite catchy



and they giggle watching Grammy trying to join in a silly sing-along. It’s a hoot!

Music has a way of inspiring, healing and celebrating. This summer, music may play a big part in your relaxation; whether it’s your

favorite Daily Mix keeping you company while tending the BBQ, or as a backdrop to roasting marshmallows and playing Scrabble at the lake.

This morning, some upbeat make-you-want-to-dance Christian music began streaming on my

## Look Up Child

By Lauren Daigle

*Where are You now  
When darkness seems to win?  
Where are You now  
When the world is crumbling?*

*Oh I, I-I-I, I hear You say  
I hear You say  
Look up child, ayy  
Look up child, ayy*

*You're not threatened by the war  
You're not shaken by the storm  
I know You're in control  
Even in our suffering  
Even when it can't be seen  
I know You're in control*

Spotify. That’s right, Christian Music. If you haven’t taken the time to discover contemporary Christian music, summer might just be the time to get know some of these great artists with wonderful messages set to upbeat foot-stomping melodies. These songs and many more can be found on your favorite streaming site or in videos on YouTube.

One of my favorite artists, Lauren Daigle, a former American Idol contestant with a great voice, conveys hope and God’s love without being didactic in her song “Look Up Child.” Check out the lyrics. I bet you will not be able to resist dancing to its catchy reggae beat.

## God of the Hills and Valleys

By Tauren Wells

*On the mountains, I will bow my life  
To the One who set me there  
In the valley, I will lift my eyes to  
the One who sees me there  
When I'm standing on the mountain,  
I didn't get there on my own  
When I'm walking through the valley  
I know I am not alone*

*You're God of the hills and valleys  
Hills and valleys  
God of the hills and valleys  
And I am not alone*

My sister introduced me to Tauren Wells on her last visit. I love to turn his music on full blast and sing it loudly while doing housework. It never fails to lift



**“He who sings, prays twice.”**

-St. Augustine-



me up and remind me that God is with me in both the hills and valleys of life. In his column in the "Southern Nebraska Register," Bishop Conley explains:

"In this quote, St. Augustine, the holy Bishop of Hippo meant that singing adds to our praise and worship of God—that our voices are gifts, with which we can make music to the Lord. Sung prayer expresses the joy of the heart, the happiness resulting from one who has encountered Jesus Christ and experienced his love. Sung prayer reminds us of the choirs of heaven, with whom we are called to praise God eternally in heaven."

**I Can Only Imagine**  
by Mercy Me

*I can only imagine  
What it will be like  
When I walk by Your side  
I can only imagine  
What my eyes would see  
When Your face is before me  
I can only imagine  
Yeah*

*Surrounded by Your glory  
What will my heart feel?  
Will I dance for You Jesus  
Or in awe of You be still?  
Will I stand in Your presence  
Or to my knees, will I fall?  
Will I sing hallelujah?  
Will I be able to speak at all?  
I can only imagine  
I can only imagine*

I can't forget to mention one song you may already be familiar with. "I Can Only Imagine" by Mercy Me, is about meeting our redeemer in heaven. This true story of forgiveness and how this magnificent song came to be, was made into a movie that I highly recommend for the PG-13 + age group. It always makes me cry when I hear it.

These songs/ lyrics are just a sampling of some of the great Christian music out there. Of course, traditional and contemporary versions of some of

your favorite hymns are great to enjoy as well. Vacation is about taking us away to a more peaceful and joy filled place. Music can help us do this.

How I wish I could have sound on during your reading of this Cross Walk! I hope you will grab your blue tooth speaker and blast some of these loud and clear. Nothing like the combination of nature, good company, delicious food and music that fills your soul.

Have a wonderful summer everyone. I'll be back in October with some more conversations with parishioners about their faith. Many thanks to all the inspiring people who joined me on a walk this year.

Here's one more song for the road.

**This Is Our God**  
by Phil Wickham

*Remember those walls that we called  
sin and shame?  
They were like prisons that we  
couldn't escape  
But He came, and He died,  
and He rose*

*Those walls are rubble now  
Remember those giants we called  
death and grave?  
They were like mountains that stood  
in our way  
But He came, and He died, and He  
rose  
Those giants are dead now*

*This is our God  
This is who He is, He loves us  
This is our God  
This is what He does, He saves us  
He bore the cross, beat the grave  
Let Heaven and Earth proclaim  
This is our God, King Jesus*



# ADULT FAITH RESOURCES

## SUMMER 2023

# got faith?

**SUNDAY READINGS:** This month and next we continue our observance of the Season of Ordinary Time. Through Jesus' sayings and parables, the gospel readings, as they usually do during this season, remind us of the ways in which we are to live our lives as Jesus' followers. For instance, on August 13, we are made aware of our need to trust Jesus, as we hear the story of Peter's failed attempt to walk on water. On August 20, Jesus' healing of the daughter of the non-Jewish woman, tells us that Jesus' message of love and compassion is meant for all people...and we are to live in a similar manner. On September 10, we hear Jesus' familiar words "where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" and we are invited to experience God's presence in our everyday lives. And on September 17, Jesus' parable of the servants with debts to pay challenges us to forgive as we have been forgiven. The readings from the Old Testament (the first readings and the responsorial psalms), augment the message of the gospel readings. And, except for the last Sunday in September, the second readings continue to be from Paul's letter to the Romans, a letter written to encourage its hearers, as well as us, to hold fast to faith in Jesus who is our salvation. As always, you can prepare for the Sunday readings at <https://liturgy.slu.edu/>.



**Pope Francis' Message "...see in the migrant not simply a brother or sister in difficulty, but Christ himself, who knocks at our door."**

**"JUST" WONDERING:** Sunday, September 24, is known as the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. The 2023 theme for this day, chosen by Pope Francis, is "feel free whether to migrate or to stay". The Vatican Office of Integral Human Development has a website offering information and resources to assist in the observance of this day:

<https://bit.ly/VaticanWDM>. This website notes that "The Church has been celebrating the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR) since 1914. It is always an occasion to express concern for different vulnerable people on the move; to pray for them as they face many challenges; and to increase awareness

about the opportunities that migration offers." Pope Francis' message on this World Day of Migrants and Refugees can be found at <https://bit.ly/WDMPPopeFrancis>.

**EUCCHARISTIC REVIVAL:** The United States Bishops have designated this year as a year of parish revival in the national movement to "restore understanding and devotion to this great mystery [the Eucharist] here in the United States by helping us renew our worship of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist" (Revival website: <https://www.eucharisticrevival.org/>). During this coming year, all of us are called to have a personal encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist and perhaps to invite another individual to do so as well. You will find resources to assist you in your preparations for this encounter at <https://bit.ly/ERres>.

**SEASON OF CREATION:** The season of creation is an annual ecumenical celebration of "prayer and action to protect our common home" (Season of Creation Celebration Guide, <https://bit.ly/guidesoc>, p.3). The Season of Creation, whose 2023 theme is "Let Justice and Peace Flow, runs from September 1 to October 4, the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi. You can learn more about the Season at its website, <https://seasonofcreation.org/>.

**ETHICS:** A Google search for the meaning of the word *ethics* yields the following definition, which is provided by Oxford Languages, the world's largest dictionary publisher: "moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity." Santa Clara University, a Jesuit university, is home to the Markula Center for Applied Ethics. You can go to the Center's website (<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/>) and find "Ethics Spotlights" on current issues such as generative artificial intelligence, guns, and COVID vaccines. The Center has also developed a framework for ethical decision-making; you can find this framework on the center's website. There is a section on Religious and Catholic Ethics as well; this section includes a weekly faith formation guide based on the Sunday readings. Explore! - Leo Racine