

***From Father Kirby...***

**January 24, 2021**

Happy Sunday, Team Grace! Today, we continue our walk through Ordinary Time. This year, we hear principally from Saint Mark's Gospel. Today, Saint Mark tells us about the beginnings of the Lord's public ministry in Galilee. He calls out to his first disciples – as he calls out to each of us – “Come after me.” Will we accept again this invitation and follow the Lord Jesus in our own lives?

Today is also Word of God Sunday. The designation is given by the Church as a reminder to us of our responsibility to read, study, and pray the Bible.

Today, we continue our five-week homily series on the biblical notion of mercy and of our call to be a People of Mercy.

Some things happening around the parish:

This Sunday, at our 11:00 AM Mass, we'll offer a blessing to all our parishioners who are in the teaching profession. The blessing is given in honor of the eminent teacher, Saint Thomas Aquinas (whose feast day is January 28). *Thank you, Teachers!* You are loved and respected by many!

Some of you may have noticed that we've brought incense back to our 11:00 AM Mass. This was the custom before the pandemic. I'm happy to restore it to this Mass and see some small things returning to normal. The use of incense is an ancient biblical custom that symbolizes our call to self-abnegation. It also represents our prayers floating up to God.

This Monday, January 25, I begin teaching at Belmont Abbey College for the Spring semester. As some of you might recall, I periodically teach introductory theology courses to underclassmen. I've taken the last couple of semesters off. It'll be good to be back in the classroom.

With my teaching duties, Confessions will only be offered on some Monday evenings. Adoration will always happen, but please check the [Parish Calendar](#) on whether Confessions will be available. For example, Confessions will not be available this Monday.

This Tuesday, January 26, I'll be in Columbia with the Bishop for the quarterly meeting of the Presbyteral Council. Father Tim Gahan will be covering the daily Mass and Confessions that day. Please note: Confessions will start at 10:15 AM on

Tuesday (rather than 11:00 AM). This is an opportunity to go to Confession to a guest priest.

Our weekly Bible Study continues this Wednesday. This week we'll talk about the Call of Abraham in Genesis 12. As a reminder all previous lessons can be found on our [Grace Lily](#) page.

As a help to our spiritual lives, here are two digital retreat/conference opportunities:

From January 22–29, there is a [\*Living Pro-Life: A Virtual Program of Apologetics and Formation for the New Pro-Life Generation\*](#). The event is a wonderful opportunity to hear and learn some of the responses to the various false arguments of the culture of death. The event is free.

Also, there is the [\*Winter Conference of the Escriva Institute\*](#) on February 4-11. The conference this year is based on a homily by St. Josemaria Escriva (who's statue is in our parish church). The conference will emphasize the ways in which we can find God in the richness of ordinary life. The event is free.

If anyone is interested, my new book from Our Sunday Visitor, [\*Way of the Cross for Loved Ones Who Have Left the Faith\*](#), is available on Amazon. The devotional was written as a spiritual resource to help get loved ones back to the Faith.

As a reminder, please read and review our [Security/Safety Protocols for Parishioners](#) and [Church/Holy Communion Pandemic Protocols](#).

More updates next week! Oremus pro invicem (let's pray for one another)!