



# ST MARK PARISH

602 Military Road, Rothschild, Wisconsin

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

**April 21, 2024**

## Liturgical Schedule

### **Monday, April 22**

*Saint Adalbert of Prague*

NO Mass at St. Therese or St. Mark

### **Tuesday, April 23**

*Saint George, Martyr*

Sacrament of Reconciliation, 7:40 am

Mass at St. Therese, 8:00 am

### **Wednesday, April 24**

*Saint Fidelis of Sigmaringen, Priest and Martyr*

Sacrament of Reconciliation, 7:40 am

Mass at St. Therese, 8:00 am

### **Thursday, April 25**

*Saint Mark, Evangelist*

Sacrament of Reconciliation, 7:40 am

Mass, 8:10 am

### **Friday, April 26**

*Saint Pedro de San Jose Betancur*

Sacrament of Reconciliation, 7:40 am

Mass, 8:10 am

### **Saturday, April 27**

*Fifth Sunday of Easter*

Sacrament of Reconciliation, 3:30 pm

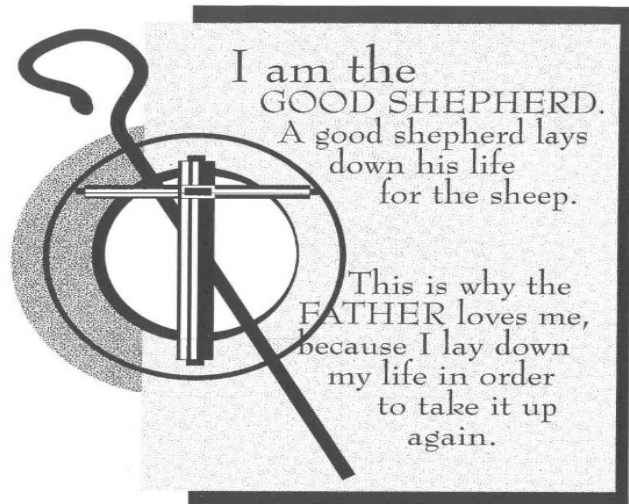
Mass, 4:30 pm +Special Intention

### **Sunday, April 28**

*Fifth Sunday of Easter*

Mass, 8:00 am +John Pflieger

Mass, 10:00 am +Parish Family Members



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**SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM** - Contact the Parish Offices for baptism dates and to register for preparation sessions.

**SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING** - Celebrated in the Spring and Fall or in the home and hospital.

**RCIA** - A catechetical process to assist adults interested in becoming Catholic. Contact the Parish Offices.

**MARRIAGE** - Couples planning to marry are to notify the Parish Offices one year prior to the desired wedding date.

**FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH** with the parish, Contact the Parish Offices and ask for Father Albert.

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT** Friday 9:00 am to noon followed by the Divine Mercy Chaplet

**Pastor:** Rev. Joseph Albert Saleth

josephalbert@rediffmail.com

Cell: 1-715-897-3570

**Associate Pastor:** Rev. Eric J. Mashak

emashak@newmancatholicschools.com

**Deacon:** Patrick McKeough

**Email:** [secretary@smproths.org](mailto:secretary@smproths.org)

**Parish Phone:** 715-359-5206

**School Phone:** 715-359-9662

**Parish Office Hours:** Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Friday 9:00 am to Noon

### **Parish Staff:**

Director of Religious Education: Mary Hart

Pastoral Musician: Mary Martin

Primary Accompanist: Mikki Fronek

Bookkeeper: Les Huebner

Secretary to the Parish: Lynette LaQua

Pastoral Care to the Homebound: Susan Soriano

## **FROM FATHER ALBERT**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is also known as Good Shepherd Sunday. On this day, the Church invites us to reflect on the beautiful image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, who cares for his flock with tender love and sacrifice.

As Pope John Paul II reminds us, this image of the Good Shepherd has deep roots in the Old Testament, where the prophets like Ezekiel spoke of God as the shepherd who gathers his scattered sheep, feeds them, and protects them. This prophetic vision finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who declares, "I am the good shepherd".

The image of the Good Shepherd reveals the heart of God - a God who loves passionately, pursues relentlessly, and cares deeply for each and every person. As Pope John Paul II says, this is the "mystery of God's love for his sheep - his infinite, unchanging love."

The image of the Good Shepherd has been a powerful and comforting symbol for the Church from the earliest times, and it continues to strike and move the hearts of believers and non-believers alike.

In Jesus, we see the perfect embodiment of the Good Shepherd. He knows each of his sheep by name and cares for them with a love that knows no bounds.

The Good Shepherd's love is universal, extending beyond the boundaries of any one-fold. As Pope John Paul II explains, Jesus says, "I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So, there shall be one flock, one shepherd." The sacrifice of the Cross is meant to gather all people into the one flock of God's family.

My friends, the Good Shepherd is the one who calls us to follow him. He invites us to trust in his care, to listen to his voice, and to allow him to lead us to the "green pastures" and "still waters" of his abundant life. In the Eucharist, the Risen Good Shepherd continues to nourish us with his own Body and Blood, strengthening us for the journey ahead.

The Good Shepherd defends and protects his flock, even at the risk of his own life. The mission of the Good Shepherd continues in the Church through the apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests.

Let us, then, rejoice in the love of our Good Shepherd, who knows us intimately and lays down his life for us. May we strive to be good sheep, following faithfully in his footsteps, and bringing others to join his flock. For in him alone do we find true life and salvation.

## **SACRED WORSHIP**

**Homebound Communion** –Susan Soriano

Homebound visits for the week of, April 21, Team B: Mary N., Margaret T., Cecilia W., Bill S., Rosie V.

**Mass changes for the week of April 21**

Monday, April 22—No Mass at St. Therese or St. Mark  
Tuesday, April 23— Mass at St. Therese only 8:00 am  
Wednesday, April 24—Mass at St. Therese only 8:00 am  
Thursday, April 25—Mass at St. Mark only 8:10 am  
Friday, April 26—Mass at St. Mark only 8:10 am

## **Liturgical Ministry**

**SignUpGenius is available on the St. Mark Website April 27 & 28, Fifth Sunday of Easter**

### **4:30 pm**

Servers: Marie A. and Volunteer  
Lectors: Denny B.  
Ministers of Hospitality: Don B.,  
Extraordinary Ministers: Dee V., Dennis B. (c), Al R. (c)

### **8:00 am**

Servers: Dennis P. and Volunteer  
Lectors: Christine L.  
Ministers of Hospitality: Jerold W., Larry S.  
Extraordinary Ministers: Ruth L., Bill S. (c), Betty K. (c)

### **10:00 am**

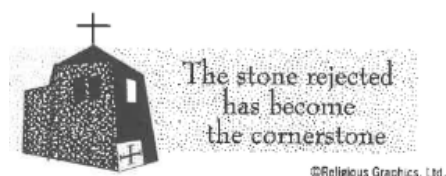
Servers: Damien P., Everett P.  
Lectors: Nicholas S.  
Ministers of Hospitality: Wayne S.  
Extraordinary Ministers: Pam Z., Lee R. (c), Terri R. (c)

**Pastoral Music** —Mary Martin

**Parish Choir** will rehearse on Thursday, May 9, at 6:00 pm in church. Choir will sing at the 10:00 Liturgy on May 19.

**Youth Choir** will rehearse on 9:30 a.m. on April 28 followed by Mass at 10:00 a.m. which will celebrate the Sacrament of First Eucharist. Students in grades 3-9 can join at any time - we would love to hear your voices! Mary Martin and Mikki Fronck.

**Handbell Choir.** Practice on Tuesday, April 30, at 3:45 p.m. and will play at 4:30 pm Liturgy on Saturday, May 18.



## **In the Liturgy of the Church** Helen Ackermann

With this Sunday's gospel we hear of the good shepherd. It is an image often depicted with Jesus carrying a lamb on his shoulders. We know this Jesus as the one who insists that his sheep will know him and that he will know his sheep. Jesus also indicates that he is concerned about those who are not of his fold. He wants to lay down his life for those as well. Jesus has come to bring salvation to all humanity.

In our relationship with Jesus as shepherd we come to know that we are to follow his way and hear his voice deep in our hearts. What might prevent us from doing that? If we search for an answer we might want to reread the second reading from the First Letter of John. Here we hear the words, "See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are." What might prevent us from hearing and understanding the good shepherd is our inability to truly believe we are beloved by God. When we focus only on our sinfulness, we cannot trust the love God has for us through his Son, Jesus Christ.

In reading a commentary on this week's readings from the booklet, *Give Us This Day*, I was struck with the comments by the author, Catherine de Hueck Doherty who says this, "The greatest tragedy of our world is that men and women do not know, really know that God loves them." Because of this, she indicates that people do not know how to love God back. Loving God through his son, Jesus Christ, means that we are to hear his voice and follow his way. Following his way means we are to love others as he loved them ready to give our very selves for others. My experience is that I have known many people who have difficulty knowing that God loves us unconditionally. I think we might all have doubts about this love. For this reason, we need to hear over and over again that we are loved. Even our sinfulness which is a condition of human life cannot separate us from the love of God. During this Easter Season, that love prompts us to say, Alleluia, Alleluia.

**We remember this week,** George, martyr, Adalbert, bishop and martyr (Tuesday) Fidelis of Sigmaringen, priest, martyr, (Wednesday) Mark, the Evangelist (Thursday)

### **St. Mark, evangelist (first century)**

On this day the 25<sup>th</sup> of April we celebrate St. Mark an evangelist and the one who is our patron as a parish. It is said that Mark was not an apostle. He was probably a member of one of the first Christian communities. His mother's house in Jerusalem is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as a center where Christians gathered. Mark was baptized by Peter. They moved to Rome where Mark acted as Peter's secretary. Mark also traveled with Paul. He wrote his account of the Gospel between AD 60 and 70. It is a simple and direct Gospel and was a source for

the other Gospels. He portrays the humanness of Jesus and indicates we should all go out and proclaim the good news to all.

## **CATHOLIC EDUCATION/FORMATION**

### **Religious Education** —Mary Hart

**Return Your Mission boxes** – Thank you for showing your concern for others by participating in the Mission Box Project. **It's not too late to help others** - please bring it on Wednesday, April 24.

### **This week in Religious Ed...**

**April 21:** 8:30 a.m. Confirmation Session 8; Candidates are expected to attend 10:00 Mass

**April 21:** 10:00 Sunday School – last session of the year!

**April 24:** 6:15 p.m. sessions Grades 1-9

### **Upcoming Youth Events:**

St. Mark parish is offering scholarships to families for summer camps. Below are a few Summer camp opportunities that families from our parish have attended and recommend. Weeks fill up fast, so check your schedules and register soon. Contact Mary Hart at maryhh@smproths.org or 715-359-5206 for information about summer camp scholarships!

\*Camp Tekakwitha located at W5248 LAKE DRIVE SHAWANO, WI 54166 run by the Diocese of Green Bay offers summer camp experiences for youth ages 6-14 and leadership camp experiences for youth ages 15-17. Check out their website <https://www.camptekakwitha.org/> for more information about what summer camp is all about and to register your child for a week that works with your schedule.

\*Camp Gray in Reedsburg WI run by the Diocese of Madison offers summer camp experiences for youth entering grades 2-5, grades 6-8 and grades 9-10. Check out their website <https://campgray.com> for more information and to register your child for the week that works best for your family.

\*Adventure Camp 2024 for Grades 6-12 run by the Diocese of La Crosse in Delta, WI. The cost of the camp is \$420 and \$50 for the bus. Check out this link for more information and to register <https://diolc.org/yva/youth-opportunities/adventure-camp/>



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## Newman Catholic Schools

**NCES: St. Mark**—Principal Shirley Heise

The number of days in the school year may be fewer, but the number of activities certainly increases. As always, we invite you to join us during our weekly Masses. Our students work hard on their readings and roles and we appreciate your support in sharing our Catholic faith. Circle May 2 on your calendars as we will honor our Mother Mary during May Crowning immediately following Mass.

We are so blessed to have faith-filled staff at NCES: St. Mark. These teachers (and they are all teachers regardless of their roles) go above and beyond in teaching the students not only academics, but the importance of serving others and being good people. The teachers at St. Mark are blessings to every child that enters our doors.

Next week our 4<sup>th</sup> Graders, along with the 4<sup>th</sup> graders from NCES: St. Anne's, will travel to Madison as part of the curriculum for Wisconsin Social Studies. The students will tour the capitol building, visit the Veterans' Museum, and stop in at the zoo. I know they will learn a great deal in addition to having fun.

It is an honor for me to announce that two of our teachers received awards at the recent Diocesan In-service in La Crosse. On behalf of our school family, congratulations to Mrs. Sue Reiche—Diocesan Elementary Teacher of the Year and Mrs. Theresa Zieglmeier (Mrs. Z.)—Diocesan Support Staff of the Year. The students and staff celebrated Mrs. Reiche and Mrs. Zieglmeier with a presentation of the awards and gifts. We are so proud of these ladies and grateful that God has chosen St. Mark to be their school home.



*Until next time...God bless.*



What love the Father has bestowed  
on us that we may be called  
Children of God

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**hr@newmancatholicschools.com to learn more!**

## FAMILY LIFE

### ST. MARK PARISH LIFE SURVEY

St. Mark Parish Council, together with Father Albert and Father Eric, is inviting all adult parishioners, registered and non-registered, to complete a short Parish Life Survey. Copies are available in the church entrances and parish office. Completed surveys can be placed in the designated boxes at the church entrances, or in the parish office by **April 21**. If you prefer to complete the survey online, the link to the online version is <https://forms.gle/xvDwFyaGrGGkgW4Z7>. Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts and comments about your parish. Thank you.

## JUNE BUG '24

### Gift Cards for Prizes Needed!

We are asking for donations of \$5-\$10 gift cards to be used as Bingo prizes. Gift cards can be dropped off at the Parish Office or in the title basket (label envelope Bingo Prizes) by

| BINGO |    |      |    |    |
|-------|----|------|----|----|
| 7     | 26 | 40   | 58 | 73 |
| 14    | 22 | 34   | 55 | 68 |
| 4     | 24 | FREE | 46 | 72 |
| 9     | 20 | 36   | 52 | 74 |
| 6     | 28 | 35   | 49 | 64 |

**Your June Bug '24 Raffle Tickets** are available for pickup after Liturgies in the Church or during the week tickets are available in the Parish Office.

## LADIES COUNCIL OF ST. MARK PARISH

**Prayer Shawl Ministry.** Join us Thursdays from 12:30 to 2:00 pm in the Catechetical Resource Room. **Prayer Shawls are available in the Parish Office.** Donations of yarn (including partial skeins) are greatly appreciated!

## PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

### **Budget Committee**

**Your tithe is greatly appreciated!** If you are interested in the automatic withdrawal feature, contact the parish office for the form.

#### Operating Income

|                | 14 Apr.   | 1 Jul-14 Apr. | 2024    | Balance    |
|----------------|-----------|---------------|---------|------------|
| Adult          | 12,810.00 | 411,490.17    | 600,736 | 189,245.70 |
| Offering       | 289.00    | 15,575.17     | 23,264  | 7,689.19   |
| Debt Reduction | 90.00     | 6,066.00      |         |            |
| Totals         | 13,189.00 | 433,131.34    |         |            |

#### Other Income/Transfers

|                   |       |          |  |
|-------------------|-------|----------|--|
| Circle of Joy     |       | 1,245.00 |  |
| Votive Candles    | 60.00 | 905.83   |  |
| Bequest/Memorials |       | 3,523.00 |  |
| Student Lenten    |       |          |  |

#### Adult Tithe Summary

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Tithe Budgeted Per Week | 11,552.61  |
| Received this Week      | 12,810.00  |
|                         | 1,257.39   |
| Received Weeks 1- 26    | 411,490.17 |
| Budgeted Weeks YTD      | 485,209.62 |
| Budget                  | -73,719.45 |

|                 | Apr. 13, 4:30 pm | Apr. 14, 8: 00 am | Apr. 14, 10:00 am |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Mass Attendance |                  | 102               | 91                |

### Inspired by the Spirit Campaign

|                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| Goal:            | \$735,000.00 |
| Amount Received: | \$441,470.38 |

### 2023 Annual Appeal

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| Goal:            | \$89,265.00 |
| Amount Received: | \$32,130.00 |

## PARISH OFFICE

Joint Parish Council meeting at St. Mark on Thursday, April 25, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the school library.

## FAITH ENRICHMENT

**St. Anthony Spirituality Center, Marathon,** for information about retreats and events visit <https://sarcenter.com/retreats-and-events/>. Register by calling 715-443-2236 or email [info@sarcenter.com](mailto:info@sarcenter.com).

## FROM THE DIOCESE

### **Why does Jesus give us Living Bread**

Jesus loves us more than anyone, and He wants to dwell within us. Through Baptism, we become children of God. As part of His Family, Jesus wants to guide us on the right path – to live a life with joy and peace under His protection. He knows we need His help to follow Him. Jesus gives us the Holy Eucharist - His Body and His Blood - to strengthen us to follow His Way.

- Let's pray this right now and every day this week: In your own words thank God for the gift of your Baptism in which you became a child of God and are privileged to receive Jesus in Holy Communion.
- This week, read how Jesus says that He is the Living Bread in John 6:51.

### **“Six Tips for Talking to ‘Pro-Choice People’ (What We’ve Learned from Talking to More than 5000)” | April 27 | St. James Parish, La Crosse**

Come to a pro-life breakfast and talk featuring Emily Geiger, Director of Education & Outreach for the Equal Rights Institute (ERI). Emily is the former Co-President of *Oles for Life* at St. Olaf College, where she worked to transform campus culture using ERI's apologetics to foster respectful and productive dialogues about abortion. A sought-after speaker, Emily frequently gives talks on college and high school campuses and for churches and conferences. She has also been interviewed on MSNBC, BBC Newsday, EWTN, Focus on the Family, Relevant Radio, and Christianity Today. To learn more and to register, visit [diolc.org/respect-life](http://diolc.org/respect-life) or scan the QR code to the right.



**DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING INSTANCES OF CHILD ABUSE**  
The Diocese of La Crosse, through its policies and procedures, seeks to provide a prompt, appropriate and compassionate response to reporters of sexual abuse of a child by any diocesan agent (bishop, priest, deacon, employee, religious, vendor or volunteer). Anyone wishing to make a report of an allegation of sexual abuse should send that report to Mrs. Teresa Brown, Complaint Intake Agent, at the Diocese of La Crosse, P.O. Box 4004, La Crosse, WI 54602-4004. Alternatively, you can contact Mrs. Brown at 608.791.0179 or [intakeagent@diolc.org](mailto:intakeagent@diolc.org). The reporting form is available through the Diocese of La Crosse Office of Safe Environment or on the diocesan website at: [diolc.org/safe-environment/reporting](http://diolc.org/safe-environment/reporting). Individuals are also encouraged to take their reports directly to civil authorities. Copies of the diocesan policy are available through your local Parish and on the diocesan website. If you have any questions about the Diocese of La Crosse and the implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, contact Teresa Brown, Diocese of La Crosse, at 608.791.2679 or [tbrown@diolc.org](mailto:tbrown@diolc.org).

## IN THE AREA

### Better Your Balance, Prevent Falls and Stay Independent.

Join the **Stepping On** program! Hear from guest experts on topics such as: Strength and balance exercises, medication and their fall risk, vision, in-home and community safety and much more.

**Thursdays, April 18- May 30 from 1:00 PM -3:00 PM**

Location: The Landing, 707 N 3rd Street, Wausau

To Register: Call The Landing: 715-841-1855

\*Non-members are welcome!

**Tuesdays, April 30- June 11 from 9:30 AM -11:30 AM**

Location: SAFER Fire Dept, 224225 Hummingbird Road, Rib Mtn. To Register: Call the ADRC-CW: 888-486-9545 Cost: FREE- Contributions are appreciated, but not required. Pre-registration is required.

### Knights of Columbus

Fellow parishioners, there are four main cornerstones of the Knights of Columbus. They are Charity, Fraternity, Unity, and Patriotism. Let's focus on Charity and what our Council/Assembly does in our local community. Support our parish priests, issue fire checks to help residents through home fire disasters, assisted with funding for an ultrasound machine for Wausau's Hope Life Center, help children in the Hospital through the "CHRISTMAS IN JULY" Charity, financially help our local seminarians, help KofC brothers/families with financial burdens, support the DC Everest Special Olympics through our annual tootsie roll event, fund miscellaneous needs of St Marks, St Therese, and St Agnes parishes, food pantry support, and programs offered at the St Anthony Spiritual Center. These are a few examples of what the Knights are committed to, to meet the needs of our own community. Next week we will cover examples of the second cornerstone Unity. God Bless!


**REMINDER:** On Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup> the Knights of Columbus will be serving at all masses with Fr. Albert. During these masses we will be presenting the overall mission of the Knights.

**St. Mark Chapter of Catholic Financial Life** is hosting a fund raising event (Community Monday) at Milwaukee Burger Company on Monday April 29<sup>th</sup> from 4-8PM. 10% of all sales will benefit local charities. Help us build a better community in God's name.

**St. Vincent de Paul** is seeking volunteers for assistance with various tasks in our Thrift Store. We could use help with receiving donations and with placing merchandise on display on our sales floor. Hours are available between 9 am and 7 pm Monday thru Friday and from 9 am to 4 pm on Saturdays. If interested, please complete an application by visiting our website at SVdPWausau and select the Volunteer option under the Ways to Help tab. Thank you and God Bless.



Wausau lyric choir  
**Harmonies of Her Voice**  
Celebrating Women Composers  
April 20, 2024 @ 7:30 pm  
April 21, 2024 @ 3:00 pm  
**Wausau East High School**  
2607 N. 18th St, Wausau, WI  
**Sponsors**  
Victor and Helen Geisel Foundation  
Raymond and Marie Goldbach Foundation  
Tony and Jenny Sweeney Family Fund  
InterCity State Bank  
Service Master Commercial Cleaning Services  
Clements Insurance  
Directed by: Carla Dul  
Accompanied by: Ann Applegate



**"Walk to Mary"**  
Join us on Saturday, May 4th

The Walk to Mary has become a pilgrimage like no other in the world. We start with St Joseph (at the National Shrine of St Joseph) and walk to Mary (at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion) to get to Jesus. Our annual pilgrimage has impacted lives and filled hearts with many blessings from the Holy Family.

The 22 mile walk spiritually prepares us for our destination, America's only Church-approved Marian apparition site, where in 1859, the Blessed Mother appeared to Adele Brise on the site of the **National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion** in Champion, Wisconsin.

**Schedule:**  
4:30 am Bus Leaves St Matthew South Parking Lot  
5:15 pm Holy Mass  
9:00 pm Arrive back in Wausau at St Matthew Parish

**Cost:** Adult \$25 • Student \$10 • Children under 4 Free  
• Walk with the Children \$25 for entire family

Every pilgrim has to register to participate & pay the above cost at:  
[www.walktomary.com](http://www.walktomary.com)

Cost to ride on the bus is \$20. For information & to reserve your bus seat, send an email to: [st.matthewwalktomary@gmail.com](mailto:st.matthewwalktomary@gmail.com)

## **SCRIPTURE TEXTS - April 28, 2024**

### **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

Opening Prayer: Lord God, help me to so firmly attached to your son, Jesus Christ. He is the vine and we are the branches. When our life flows from him we will find ourselves better able to bear much fruit. This fruit will bring others to believe in Jesus Christ, he who is lord forever and ever. Amen.

#### **ACTS 9:26-31**

When Saul arrived in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. Then Barnabas took charge of him and brought him to the apostles, and he reported to them how he had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. He moved about freely with them in Jerusalem, and spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord. He also spoke and debated with the Hellenists, but they tried to kill him. And when the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him on his way to Tarsus.

The church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers.

#### **PSALM 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32**

R. (26a) **I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

I will fulfill my vows before those who fear the LORD.

The lowly shall eat their fill;

they who seek the LORD shall praise him:

"May your hearts live forever!"

R. **I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

All the ends of the earth

shall remember and turn to the LORD;

all the families of the nations

shall bow down before him.

R. **I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

To him alone shall bow down

all who sleep in the earth;

before him shall bend

all who go down into the dust.

R. **I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

And to him my soul shall live;

my descendants shall serve him.

Let the coming generation be told of the LORD

that they may proclaim to a people yet to be born

the justice he has shown.

R. **I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.**

#### **1 JOHN 3:18-24**

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.

#### **JOHN 15:1-8**

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

#### **Reflection Questions:**

1. Are things in your life that need pruning so that you can produce more fruit?
2. Are there times in your life that you realize needed pruning? How do you respond to the need to be pruned?
3. Does your prayer life enable you to discover those attitudes and ideas that need to be pruned?
4. Why is your relationship with God through Jesus so important if you are to bear good fruit?

Concluding Prayer: Lord God, I know that your Son Jesus Christ is the vine and we are the branches. Enable me to be pruned so that I can bear much fruit in his name, he who is Lord forever and ever. Amen

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