

St. John the Baptist and Holy Trinity Parish

406 Court Street Syracuse, NY 13208

Office (315) 478-0916 Fax (315) 423-8096

August 24, 2025



2nd Sunday
IN ORDINARY TIME

[Jesus] answered them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough." - Lk 13:24



From Fr. Brendan Foley

If Jesus' words in the Gospel today don't stir the desire to evaluate our own hearts and the state of our relationship with him and with his teachings, then we should probably go back and reread them! It's a bit of a wakeup call, and Jesus is certainly trying to prevent his followers from simply presuming the gift of salvation and eternal life, and from living while presuming that faith without our ongoing conversion of heart would still constitute faith at all. It's not enough to do the external practices, there needs to be a commitment at the level of the heart to be continually opened and transformed by grace, which is not always the most comfortable experience.

Often, our temptation is to conclude that because we do or have done 'x', 'y', or 'z' in our lives as disciples then can be assured of our entrance into heaven, but we must remember it is Jesus' Paschal Mystery (as a whole, Jesus' passion, death, resurrection, and ascension) that provides us the certain hope of eternal life, it's not anything we can merit on our own. Yes, of course, our actions and the externals of our faith are critically important, but they can't add up to a set goal that once we have reached we don't need to do anything more. That's unfortunately not how it works, and that's captured by Jesus' stern words today denying even knowing "those who ate and drank with [him in his] company"--this seems quite tough doesn't it? That's like us who join in worship at Mass each Sunday: *we eat and drink*, consuming his body and blood, in the company of the Lord—but we must challenge ourselves in reflection...does this participation in the life of Christ and in his Church produce the heart of a follower in me? What is my own level of commitment to imitating Jesus' Gospel?

It's a bit of a sobering thought for sure, but as you can see in the readings today, our lives of faith will inevitably entail a degree of struggle. It's important to note, however (and with a degree of consolation for us), that this struggle is not because Jesus wants us to suffer, but rather he desires us to be perfected, to be made holy, made to share his divine life, and to be able to love with the same radical love with which he has shown us through his Cross and Resurrection. By his own going to the Cross, we see plainly that God himself did not disdain this arduous road, but as we heard last Sunday (in Hebrews), Jesus was motivated by the joy that lay beyond the Cross, he was motivated by love of you and me! Jesus desires that you and I, in our mere humanity, could actually take on his divinity.

The invitation to reflection for us this Sunday is that we can't remain indifferent to deepening our relationship with Jesus, and he certainly wants us to know that he has no intention of abandoning us in our desire to strive after him. He offers us tangible encouragement in the life of the Sacraments, he provides us with the family of his body, the Church, and he continues to nourish us with his Word in Sacred Scripture. We have the compelling image in the letter to the Hebrews today, one that any parent would immediately understand: the struggle of nurturing the development of a child. *"God treats you as sons. For what "son" is there whom his father does not discipline? At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain, yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it."* In the moment, there is always a degree of difficulty teaching a child the importance of some lesson or behavior, but there is no question of the necessity of it for the child. Communicating with sincerity and even intensity at times is genuinely an act of love if it truly is leading the child to a way of life that will bring them freedom and virtue. We recall with genuine hope that Jesus himself is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*. May we have the grace to renew our commitment to the Lord confident that when we ask for the grace to increase our faith and trust, he will never fail us.

Pastor: Father Brendan Foley

Mass Schedule SJB/HT Sunday 9:00am

Reconciliation Thursday 4:00-5:00 pm

Office Hours SJB/HT

Monday-Thursday 9:00am-4:00pm Friday 9:00am 2:30pm

E-mail - nbergeson@syrдио.org

Web Site - www.stjohnthebaptist-holytrinity.com

Syr. Dio. Web-site - www.syracusedioecese.org

Secretary/Bulletin: Nancy Bergeson

In Residence: Fr. Paschal Anionye

Music Director/Organist: Mr. James Stanley

Buildings/Grounds: Robert Warren

Religious Education: Betty Warren

Sacristan/Grounds: Allan Chouinard

Altar Servers: Benjamin Chouinard

Alyssa Warren & Cecilia Judge



Lector - August 24th

9:00am SJB/HT: Ashley Crisafulli

Lector - August 31st

9:00a, SJB/HT: Chet Wisniewski

Eucharistic Ministry

Center

August 24

Cathy Horton

August 31

Dave William

Mary's Side

Larry Argiro

Karen Fekete

A Family Perspective

Family Life Education

The phrase in today's Gospel, "I don't know where you come from," is often used by parents about children and children about parents. Change is so rapid one generation has little in common with another. We depend on love, trust, and mutual respect to bridge this gap.



Pray For Vocations

The first reading from the prophet Isaiah says that God will take as priests and Levites people who were fugitives so His own glory may shine through them. Don't let past mistakes hinder you

from pursuing God's call. If you believe He is calling you to the priesthood, diaconate, or religious life, reach out to the Vocation Office via email: vocations@syrdio.org and follow us on Instagram [@vocationssyracuse](https://www.instagram.com/vocationssyracuse).

Reflect: Readings and Gospel

1st Reading Question: Isaiah reveals to us God's plan to gather and unite all His people and witness His glory in the age to come. What are you hoping for in the future?



2nd Reading Question: The author of Hebrews offers words of encouragement for community members struggling and discouraged in their faith. Is there a friend or co-worker you could look to support this week?

Gospel Question: Jesus speaks to the crowds of the dire consequences of rejecting his call to salvation. What could be some effective ways to bring others to faith in Jesus? ©LPi



Order of Christian Initiation of Adults Becoming Catholic, or coming to Full Communion--

Do you know someone who is desiring to respond to the presence of God in life, who has an openness and curiosity of heart to know Jesus and his Church? If you or someone you know is interested in Baptism as an adult, please reach out to Fr. Foley (easiest way is via email bfoley@syrdio.org) or call the office. He would love to meet with you and simply converse with you to accompany you along this journey of faith. Entering the Catholic Church as an adult involves one's free response to relationship with the Lord, and while this certainly involves formation and learning and engaging questions, it's not class, nor is one 'locked' into a timeline of how that happens and when. If you were baptized Catholic and have sacraments of initiation still to receive, please reach out! If you are married civilly but not married in the Church, please reach out! If you were baptized outside of the Catholic Church and would like to become Catholic, please reach out! Remember that the Sacraments of the Church were initiated by Christ to offer us the **ordinary** means of grace that we need for our lives and our journey to heaven. If the Lord is nudging your heart to any of these things, or if you have questions, Fr. Foley wants to connect.



Office/Vacation Hours

Due to vacation the SJB/HT office will be open Monday-Friday August 25th-29th from 9:00am-2:00pm. We will be closed on Monday Sept. 1st due to the Labor Day Holiday.

SJB/HT New Website

We have a newly designed website available for your viewing. Please visit

www.stjohnthebaptist-holytrinity.com.

We would love to hear what you think of the new site and any suggestions and ideas to include.



9:00am Mass Intentions for SJB/HT

Sunday August 24, 2025 - Antonio McLaughlin - Mother

Mae Gmyr - Janet & Pam Gmyr

Jeanne Contrastano - sister, Gloria

Donald Bill - Mr. & Mrs. Robert Palucci & Family

Sunday August 31, 2025 - David McLaughlin - Mother

Norm Jaquin - Loretta, Mary Anne, Loraine & Alberta



Sacrificial Giving

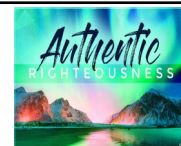
Week August 17th

SJB/HT Collection:\$3,041.00

Recognize God In Your

Ordinary Moments

By Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman
Heaven and Regina George



There are certain phrases that serve as a kind of shibboleth for millennials, a dog whistle that only ears formed between 1981 and 1996 can discern. "You can't sit with us!" is one of those phrases.

It's from the movie *Mean Girls*, (which, I hear from my younger family members, has now become cool with the kids again, so maybe my point about it being niche is incorrect). The character Regina George, merciless ruler of the cool kids, is rejected from the ultra-exclusive lunch table she herself formed when her minions, tired of her cruelty, serve her the most devastating words a teenager can hear in public: "You can't sit with us."

So passes earthly glory, as they say.

At first blush, this Gospel gives "Mean Girls" vibes. We have an image of the unlucky masses clamoring for entry into the kingdom of heaven as God locks the door against them, saying, "I do not know where you are from."

Very "you-can't-sit-with-us."

But we need to remember that the people pounding on the door of heaven in today's Gospel aren't people who wanted a seat at God's lunch table — at least, not until it was the only lunch table left, because they had Regina George'd their way out of all the other ones.

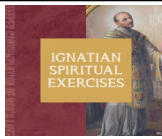
Jesus' whole thing was that you *can* sit with us, whoever you are, wherever you're from and whatever you've done. But there are a lot of lunch tables in the world, and not everyone wants to be at one with rules like "repent" and "be good to that person you really don't like." It's not always an easy table to sit at, especially when there are so many other options.

We have to choose heaven before heaven becomes our only choice. ©LPi

Devotions Explained

Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, Explained!

The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises are prayers and meditations developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus (commonly referred to as the Jesuits).



St. Ignatius of Loyola (1492-1556) was born to a noble Basque family. In his youth, he spent time at the Royal Court of Castile and fought in the Spanish army. He experienced a profound religious conversion during a long period of convalescence following a battle injury. Living in a cave outside of Manresa, he began to keep the journal that became the basis of the famous Spiritual Exercises.

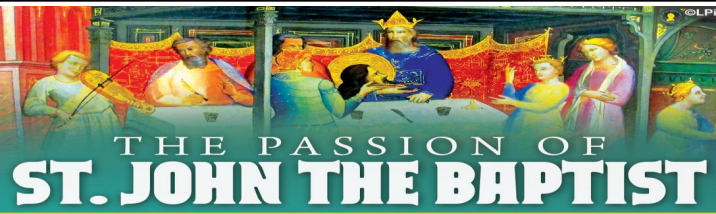
The Spiritual Exercises are meant to accompany souls on a journey toward deeper contemplation of God's love and a more meaningful understanding of his call to discipleship in the life of each person. Divided into four stages, or "weeks," the exercises focus on the interior movements of the heart to unveil the will of God. ©LPi



Retirement Fund For Religious

Heartfelt gratitude for your generosity!
"Thank you very much for your donations, always," says Sister Olivia Bellegante, 93,

a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in St. Louis, Missouri, Your gift directly impacts thousands of senior religious providing the support they need in their later year. Learn more at retiredreligious.org.



Friday August 29th

The Church celebrates the passion of St. John the Baptist who died approximately A.D. 30. We know from the Bible that he was the cousin of Jesus, the son of St. Elizabeth, and also the nephew of our Lady. King Herod knew that John was a holy man, and he liked to hear John's words, although he didn't take them to heart. He knew that he had to get control of him because of the crowds he was starting to build. He was afraid to kill him, so instead he had him imprisoned.

According to the Gospels, Herod had imprisoned John because he spoke out about Herod divorcing his wife, and unlawfully taking the wife of his brother. On Herod's birthday, his new wife's daughter danced before the king and his guests. Her dancing pleased Herod so much that in his drunkenness he promised to give her anything she desired, up to half of his kingdom. When the daughter asked her mother what she should ask for, she was told to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod was appalled by the request but reluctantly agreed and had John the Baptist executed in prison. St. John the Baptist was beheaded, and his head was placed on a platter and given to Herod's daughter.

Herod also feared that St. John's influence and power over the people might cause a rebellion. Over time, Herod had suffered military disaster at the hands of Aretas his father-in-law, and many believed it was God's punishment for his unrighteous behavior, and for taking the life of John the Baptist.

PUZZLE

Find and circle these words from today's Gospel:

JESUS
TAUGHT
SAVED

NARROW
LOCKS
KNOCK

DOOR
FEAST
KINGDOM

J U E S W A O N I H W
A K N O C K Y S O J E
R I U A L F E A S T M
H N E T N A U V G A H
T G P L A I T E H U T
W D O O R N S D A G N
I O V L R A L G E H S
S M E N O S O K D T H
H L O R W D C A R O E
N Y A F G O K I N G T
O B J E S U S E S A V

MISSION

Pray to God with your family, and ask God to change your hearts so that you love him more than anything else.



Prayer – For Everyday And Everybody Prayer for Holiness

Good Shepherd, Guide me through the narrow gate. Remove from me anything that distracts me from You, Your love, Your invitation, Your mission. Keep me close to You, familiar at every step. Amen. ©LPi



Parishioners, please look through this list for any names that should be removed. Also, if you have a loved one to request for prayers call the office to have their name added.

Remember: Mike Affleck, Shawn Babcock, Nancy Bailey, Jack Brien, B.J. Bubniak Family, Arlene Bukowski, Ashley Caiello, Robert Capria, Catherine Cushman, Linda Deapo, Theresa Domathowski, Hank Donohue, Ginny & Erin Donovan, Jenny Emmi, Tenley Farrow, Marilyn Ferretti, Ellen Gangemi, Gladys Graham, Robert Greenwood, Joseph Guinto, Jeanne Hammond, Mary Isgar, Carla Johnson, Tony Lauretti, Shirley Kerr, Emma Lane, Kay Ledermann, Jackie Limeri, Luciano Luisi, Judy & Skip Marioritti, Michael & Darlene Morga, Diane Moro, Peggy Palerino, The Pavia Children, Antoinette Perotta, Faith Setzer, Marion Sherwood, Esther Sindoni, John Sobon, Patricia Soule, Timothy K. Suppes, Patrick St. Thomas IV, Barbara Traino, Gerry Vaccaro, Shelly Visco, Matthew Watkins, and Fred Wheeler. **We also remember in our prayers our Service Men and Women & our Health Care Workers. Due to HIPAA laws, hospitals are not allowed to give names of patients. Please notify the parish office if you have a loved one in the hospital, a nursing home or is homebound and would like a visit.**

Mass Schedule OLP/SP 315-422-7163

Saturday Vigil - 4:00pm Vietnamese Mass 6:00pm
Sunday - 7:30am, 11:30am
9:30am Vietnamese
Monday - Thursday 9:00am in the Chapel
Reconciliation Wednesday 4:00-5:00pm

Call the Rectory to arrange for marriages, arrangements made six months prior to date. Contact our organist directly. Information will be provided. Call the rectory for baptisms and hospital/home visits.

