# *Saint Mary Roman Catholic Parish*

## 94 Walnut Road, Hamburg, Pennsylvania 19526

**610-562-7657 ~ WEBSITE: www.stmaryhamburg.org**

## *25th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME*

***September 20, 2026***

A Parish Blessed by
St. John Neumann

Founded 1854

***Rev. David J. Loeper, Pastor***
**daloeps@yahoo.com**
***Mr. Thomas B. Drogalis, Permanent Deacon***
***Mrs. Marie Dooley, Religious Education, Youth Ministry & Safe Environment Coordinator***
**stmarysformation@gmail.com**
***Mrs. Laura Ludovici, Parish Office***
**stmaryhamburg@aol.com**
***Mr. Robert Lesnefsky, Director of Music***
***Mrs. Marie Dinich, Financial Secretary***

***Weekly Office Hours:*** Monday through Friday, 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM
***Sunday Weekend Masses:*** Saturday Vigil, 4:00 PM; Sundays, 8:00 AM and 10:45 AM
***Daily Masses:*** Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, 9:00 AM; Tuesday, 7:00 PM
***Reconciliation:*** Saturdays, 3:15-3:45 PM; 15 minutes before Daily Masses; anytime by appointment

***St. Mary Parish warmly welcomes any guests or visitors who are joining us for Mass. If you are new to the area and looking for a parish home, we kindly invite you to join our parish. Please contact our Pastor or Parish Office for information on registration. If you are traveling through Berks County, we are happy to have you with us. Please know that you are always welcome and be assured of our prayers for your safe travels home.***

## *Parish Information*

***CONTACT INFORMATION***

Phone: 610.562.7657
Religious Education (off hours): 484.575.1222
Email: **Stmaryhamburg@aol.com**
Web**: www.stmaryhamburg.org** *(Bulletin can be found here!)*
Facebook:
**https://www.facebook.com/groups/St.MaryHamburg**

***OUR MISSION***

*To invoke the prayers and intercessions of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our patroness, as we seek to be drawn ever more deeply into the Paschal Mystery and the life of her Son, Jesus Christ. To provide the sacraments, liturgical services, pastoral guidance, and religious education for Catholic Christians in Northern Berks County. To provide opportunities to parishioners of all ages and abilities to share their time, talents, and treasure through religious and social programs. To support those in need through prayer, outreach, and good works. To manage the tangible assets of the parish with prudent administration through the cooperation of the pastor and the laity. To encourage participation in the inter-faith services and unite with all persons of good will in matters of faith and moral living. To be an asset to the Hamburg and Northern Berks Area and the Diocese of Allentown.*

***VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR***

The Diocese of Allentown provides assistance to anyone who, as a minor, was sexually abused by a priest, deacon, or employee/volunteer of the Diocese/Parish. Parents, guardians, children and survivors of sexual abuse are invited and encouraged to contact the Diocese of Allentown for more information about this program. The fullness of compassion should be extended to these victims of the Church.

*DIOCESAN VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR:*
Ms. Wendy S. Krisak, M.A., NCC, LPC
DIRECT TELEPHONE LINE: 800-791-9209
*DIOCESAN SECRETARY FOR YOUTH PROTECTION:*
Ms. Pamela Russo, MSW, MS
610-871-5200, ext. 2204 OR prusso@allentowndiocese.org
*CATHOLIC BISHOP ABUSE REPORTING SERVICE*
1-800-276-1562, **www.ReportBishopAbuse.org**
*PROTECTION OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE*
Diocesan Policies & Procedures: **www.allentowndiocese.org**

***ENVELOPE USE***

With quite a few active parishioners, use of collection envelopes is the only way we have of knowing your Mass attendance. If you are asked to be a sponsor for Baptism or Confirmation, you will need a Certificate of Eligibility signed by Father Loeper. These certificates require Father to attest that he has knowledge of your practice of your faith. So please use your envelopes! If a minimal contribution is a financial burden, please put the empty envelope in the collection basket. This indicates that you attended Mass that week. *Please note, all envelopes are recorded according to when they were received, not according to the date on the envelope!*

***SACRAMENT OF THE SICK***

You are encouraged to seek the Sacrament of the Sick if you are suffering from a serious illness or are going to be admitted to the hospital for surgery. Please contact Father Loeper or the Parish Office if you would like to be anointed.

***SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION***

is held weekly before 4:00PM Saturday Vigil Mass, from 3:15-3:45PM AND 15 minutes before daily weekday Masses. Also by appointment!

***BAPTISM:*** Administered Sundays at 12Noon. Call the pastor to arrange. Families must be registered and practicing for at least 3 months. Parents are to attend an informational session. Catholic sponsors (at least 16 years old) must practice the faith and need a letter of eligibility from the home parish.

***MARRIAGE:*** Contact the pastor *at least 6 months prior to the desired date.* Bride or groom must be registered and practicing the faith for at least 6 months.

***CARE OF THE SICK for Homebound:*** Please notify the office of aged, seriously ill or infirmed persons desiring Holy Communion and/or Anointing of the Sick at home.

***HOSPITALS & NURSING HOMES:*** When a family member is admitted, please notify the parish office.

***SPONSOR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION*** for Baptism or Confirmation will be issued only to practicing parishioners who are members for at least 3 months. See "Envelope Use" below.

***CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:*** Family Faith Formation (PreK through grade 8) scheduled Sunday mornings during the school year. Contact Mrs. Dooley or the parish office, or email **stmarysformation@gmail.com**

***CATHOLIC SCHOOLS:*** Depending on location, our parishioners might attend any number of Catholic elementary schools or Catholic high schools. Contact the pastor regarding the parish subsidy policy for students attending Catholic schools or for further information.

***OCIA:*** The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults is a program for those preparing for baptism, reception into the Catholic church, or for those Catholics who are lacking one of the Sacraments of Initiation or who wish to return to the Church after an absence or simply wish to learn more about the faith. The program runs from September until Easter.

***MEMBERSHIP & REGISTRATION:*** New members are to arrange to meet with the pastor. Membership involves a commitment to the life of the parish through regular participation spiritually and with one's time, talent, and treasure.

***FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER:*** If you are MOVING, PLEASE notify the parish office!

***BULLETIN DEADLINES:*** All announcements are to be submitted in writing or by email to **StMaryHamburg@aol.com** by ***the Sunday of the week prior to publication.***

***TECHNOLOGY NOTES:*** Follow our parish news and events on Facebook, on FlockNotes, or on our website.

***MEMORIAL FUND:*** Memorial gifts may be made to the parish in memory of deceased loved ones.

***WILLS & BEQUESTS:*** Consider designating your parish in your last will and testament or living trust so that the blessings the Lord has given you may continue to build His Kingdom.

***DIRECTORY of PARISH MINISTRIES & SERVICES***

**Altar Servers & Ministers of the Altar:** Fr. Loeper
**Bulletin (weekly):** Laura Ludovici, **stmaryhamburg@aol.com**
**Catholic Charities:** Reading or Kutztown: 610-376-7144
Pottsville: 570-628-0466
**Cemetery:** John Driscoll
**Children's Choir:** Keith Symons
**Christmas Bazaar:** Bonnie Katzaman
**Choir & Music Ministry:** Bob Lesnefsky
**Facilities Manager:** Mark Kopp
**Guitar Group:** Tony LaMastra
**Holy Name Society:** Mike Sauer
**NorthStar Women's Center (pro-life):** 610-321-7277
**Parish Council:** Fr. Loeper
**Parish Prayer List:** Gail Braun
**FFF/Religious Education & Youth Ministry:**
Marie Dooley (call 484-575-1222)
**Rental Information (Pavilion & Ave Maria Hall):** Parish Office
**SCRIP Website:** raiseright.com or call Office
**Ushers:** Ed Burns
**Taste & See (mercy meals):** Mary Alice Kuhns

## Mass Intentions

**Saturday, September 19:** *25th Sunday in Ordinary Time*
4:00PM + Anne Bean

**Sunday, September 20:** *25th Sunday in Ordinary Time*
8:00AM ♥ Joanne & Tom Hojnowski Anniversary

**Sunday, September 20:** *25th Sunday in Ordinary Time*
10:45AM + Mary Jane Schaeffer

**Monday, September 21:** *St. Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist*
9:00AM ♥ Dorothy Lachina

**Tuesday, September 22:** *Weekday*
7:00PM + Patrick Driscoll

**Wednesday, September 23:** *St. Pius of Pietrelcina, Priest*
9:00AM + Nicholas & Helen Furnanage

**Thursday, September 24:** *Weekday*
9:00AM + Giuseppe Sottosanti

**Friday, September 25:** *Weekday*
9:00AM + Anne Glogovsky

**Saturday, September 26:** *26th Sunday in Ordinary Time*
4:00PM ♥ Jasmine Severino

**Sunday, September 27:** *26th Sunday in Ordinary Time*
8:00AM + Sarah Bellanca

**Sunday, September 27:** *26th Sunday in Ordinary Time*
10:45AM + John Schultz

**+ Deceased** **♥ Living**

## Readings for the Week

Monday Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13 / Psalms 19:2-3, 4-5 / Matthew 9:9-13
Tuesday Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13 / Psalms 119:1, 27, 30, 34, 35, 44 / Luke 8:19-21
Wednesday Proverbs 30:5-9 / Psalms 119:29, 72, 89, 101, 104, 163 / Luke 9:1-6
Thursday Ecclesiastes 1:2-11 / Psalms 90:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14 and 17bc / Luke 9:7-9
Friday Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 / Psalms 144:1b and 2abc, 3-4 / Luke 9:18-22
Saturday Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8 / Psalms 90:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14 and 17 / Luke 9:43b-45
Sunday Ezekiel 18:25-28 / Psalms 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 / Philippians 2:1-11 or Philippians 2:1-5 / Matthew 21:28-32

## Parish Calendar

***Sunday, September 20 ~ Sunday, September 27***

**Sunday:**
**Monday:**
**Tuesday:** **Adoration, 6PM**
**Wednesday:**
**Thursday:**
**Friday:**
**Saturday:**
**Sunday:** **PREP/Religious Ed, 9AM, AM Hall**

## Stewardship of God's Gifts

Received Sunday, September 6: $6,498
Received Sunday, September 13: $6,991
***Facilities Maintenance Fund***
Received Sunday, September 6 & Sunday, September 13: $2,633

Per usual, I prayed to the Holy Spirit on the bright June day for an introductory metaphor for today's Gospel. What He gave me will sound strange, but, of all things, He gave me to imagine "The Hope Diamond." In case you don't know it, you can actually see this large and storied gem at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., well-lit and behind thick safety glass. This last is just in case you were tempted.

Its story includes the fact that King Louis XIV of France once wore the large blue-tinted gem on a ribbon around his neck. Much later, an American heiress once had it set in a diamond necklace. You can have the fun of learning more.

For my purpose here, I want to make a comparison of this unique gem with the dazzling generosity of God. Perhaps that's why the Holy Spirit did what He did. This quality of God is beautiful beyond any description I might use for a gemstone. The jewel, after all, is just a creature. We are to focus on a beautiful aspect of our Creator.

The Scriptures tell us of the Lord's generosity in several ways, but today we can focus on how He instructed the Hebrew people to drop their prejudice and include the Gentile peoples in the embrace of the Covenant that He first made with them. His decision must have caught most Jews by surprise. We know that many of them contested it.

In today's "Parable of the Hired Workers," the workers represent such Jews when they ask, "Is it fair that the same wage we earned be given to latecomers?" You see, among other things, they had to learn that God's decisions, especially those made with generosity, surpass human ways of thinking. Just think about that in the context of Judgment Day. Wouldn't we all want God to be generous?

Meanwhile, it will be our personal generosity that is looked at on that awful Day as a major component of God's decision about our future. But even here and now, we have no reason to panic. We should, however, take a healthy Sunday pause to consider our current lifestyle from the perspective of generosity. Let the truth hurt if it does.

Over my long wait for the necessary surgery to finally happen and relieve me of chronic pain, I was the recipient of so much generosity that I will never forget it, especially the prayers. (Many of you readers and hearers did this, I know.)

So be generous, my friends, and stay that way. A generous God is watching us. Bid Him to smile in appreciation of your diamond-like generosity and the gift of hope it brings.

Here's a closing thought: *"He who gives only when he is asked has waited too long."* — E. C. McKenzie

*Rev. Leonard N. Peterson*

***POPE LEO'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR THE MONTH: Let us pray for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it.***

**HOLY NAME CORNER: "IRON SHARPENS IRON"**
MEETINGS every third Wednesday of the month!

**EUCHARISTIC ADORATION:** A holy hour takes place in the chapel every Tuesday evening from 6PM to 7PM. Mass is then offered at 7PM. This is a simple holy hour (no Benediction).

***QUILT NEWS:*** St. Mary's Quilting Bee is happy to announce the start of our 2026 quilt raffle. We extend our sincere thanks to Phyllis Yoder for donating this quilt from her collection. Tickets are $1.00 each or 6 for $5.00 and are available on the table in front of the quilt display in the side lobby. We also extend our appreciation to Gregory J. Rautzhan Insurance Agency for his generous donation to sponsor the printing of the quilt tickets. The winner will be drawn at our annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, November 21. Thanks!

**FAITH NIGHTS AT THE HAMBURG STRAND THEATER:** All films start at 7PM and are shown on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Admission is $10 which includes popcorn and soda. Tickets sold at the door only! The next film shown will be *"Beautiful Mind"* on October 13. *See flyer on lobby kiosk!*

**PRAYER LIST:** Let's pray for those in our parish & family community who are sick, recently deceased, or otherwise in need of prayer: TODD GLADFELTER, SHERRY LUDOVICI, CEREGHINI FAMILY, DAVID BACHMAN, TERRY DUNBAR, BETTY & MATTHEW SHAABER, FRICK FAMILY, DIANE OLEXSON, MARCUS KRAMER, JOSHUA & LORI KIDWELL, BOB PALKO, LEO SAUPPEE, BOB & KATHLEEN LLEWELLYN, MELISSA ENGLEMAN, KRISTIN YATES, RUTH KREMSER, JENNA PIASKOWSKI, DOROTHY MUZOPAPPA, THOMAS HOJNOWSKI, SR., THOMAS HOJNOWSKI, JR., JENNIFER MILLER, CLAIRE CRANDALL, CATHY & STACEY MONTES, LORI ODENATH, SALVATORE SANGUINITO, MICHELLE ANTALOSKY, MAHALA WACHTER, CHARLES SNYDER, ALEX VAUPEL, CAROLYN BONKOSKI, CAIT DRISCOLL, GARRITH DONLEY. Due to privacy laws, the actual person or an immediate family member needs to give us permission for inclusion & remain on the list for 3 mos. ***Please let us know when your loved one is better.***

***Our Church is meant to be a place of prayer and recollection. Please refrain from conversation while you are inside the church worship space. Thank you for respecting God's house!***

***RESPECT LIFE CORNER:*** *"Abortion is profoundly antiwomen. Three quarters of its victims are women: half of the babies and all of the mothers."* –St. Teresa of Calcutta

**Liturgy Schedule: Weekend of Sept. 26 & 27**
**4:00PM**
**Lector: A Miller; EMs: K Kurtz, D Sauer, VOLUNTEER**
**8:00AM**
**Lector: E Johnson; EMs: B Malloy, G Wertz, J Gricoski**
**10:45AM**
**Lector: W Atkinson; EMs: C Weyer, M Muller**

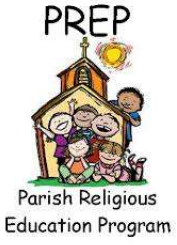
**DEAR PARISHIONERS:**
This is an important time of year to think about OCIA: the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. OCIA welcomes adults into full communion with the Catholic Church or helps them complete their Christian initiation. It is for several categories of people:

1. People who have never been baptized and feel called to enter the Catholic Church.
2. Christians baptized into other traditions (Lutheran, Presbyterian, Evangelical, etc.) who wish to enter full communion with the Catholic Church.
3. Those who were baptized Catholic, but for one reason or another, were not brought up in the faith.
4. Catholics who were brought up in the faith but for one reason or another did not receive all of the Sacraments of Initiation, such as Confirmation.

Because we are a relatively small parish, OCIA can easily be adapted to each person's needs. If you or someone in your life falls into one of the above categories and has an interest in entering full communion with the Church or completing initiation into the Church, please speak with me. If there is someone in your life who you think is open to the Catholic faith, consider sharing this information with them. It is a good way to evangelize. Some people are simply waiting to be invited!

*--Father Dave*

**BVM PILGRIM STATUE:** September 19-September 26: OPEN; September 26-October 3: D Greim; October 3-October 10: K Charles. Please call the next host family on the schedule as a courtesy reminder.
**PILGRIM STATUE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN:** *There are weeks open. If you would like to sign up to have the statue in your home for a week, please call the parish office so that you can schedule a week from those available.*




***RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:*** **All families with children in Preschool through 8th grades are welcome to join us! If you are new to our program, feel free to get in touch with Marie Dooley to complete registration as a new family. Classes meet twice per month in the Ave Maria Hall.**

**ALTAR FLOWERS** *are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of MARY JANE SCHAEFFER by the Schaeffer and Reinhart Families*

# Our annual HARVEST FEST will take place on Friday, October 2 & Saturday, October 3!!!

**HARVEST FEST CORK PULL:** Donations of your favorite wine, spirits & beer are now being accepted for the cork pull. All donated items must be valued at *$15 or more* and may be dropped off during office hours or weekend Masses. Please consider donating! This has been a great addition to Harvest Fest!

**RAFFLE AUCTION:** Items can be dropped off to the Parish Office during the week or bring them with you to Mass on the weekend! Please make sure that items are attached together with your name, phone number, and value of the gift attached. Please contact Anita Homolo if you have any questions at **launc155@verizon.net**. New, unscratched lottery tickets are also needed!!!

***THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE ALREADY DONATED ITEMS!***

**BUCKET BRIGADE:** ***Buckets must be returned no later than TOMORROW, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21*** to the Parish Office. If you are returning bags as well as your bucket, everything must be attached together with your name, phone number and value of the gift. Please contact Anita Homolo if you have any questions at **launc155@verizon.net**

**SIGN UPS FOR WILLING WORKERS for Harvest Fest has many openings!** Check your calendar, sign up for a shift...and give us a hand! Many hands make light work!

**HARVEST FEST BOOSTER TICKET SALES** begin this weekend and will be sold both this weekend and next weekend! Tickets are $10 for $11 worth of tickets. See the volunteer at the Scrip Card table after Mass!

**Prayer & Devotional Apps...*good for personal study and to teach your family and children:***

~ ***HALLOW***—Guided prayer, meditation, rosary, novenas, sleep prayers and audio content from Catholic creators. ~ Laudate—One of the most popular free Catholic apps; daily readings, rosary, chaplets, prayers, and the Catechism.

~ ***iBREVIARY***—Full Liturgy of the Hours, daily Mass readings, and other official liturgical texts.

~ ***DIVINE OFFICE***—Audio and text versions of the Liturgy of the Hours.

~***MAGNIFICAT***—Daily Mass readings, reflections, morning/evening prayer, and saint stories.

***SCRIPTURE & STUDY APPS***: ~ Bible App (YouVersion Catholic plans)—Not Catholic specific, but includes Catholic translations and reading plans. ~ Catholic Study Bible App (Ignatius Press/Lighthouse)—RSV CE Bible with commentary and study tools. ~ Verbum—a powerful Catholic Bible study platform with integrated Church documents and theology resources.

***SACRAMENTS & SPIRITUAL LIFE:*** Confession: A Roman Catholic App—Helps prepare for confession with custom examinations of conscience. ~Mass Times (by CatholicMassTime.org)—Helps locate nearby Mass, confession, and adoration times. ~Pray as you go—Jesuit audio reflections for daily prayer. Audio & Media~ EWTN App—Live TV/radio, prayers, and Catholic programming. - Relevant Radio—Catholic talk radio and prayer broadcasts. ~ Formed—Catholic streaming platform with movies, studies, and kids' content (our Parish has a subscription to this, available to all of us!)

***SAINTS, ROSARY AND DEVOTIONS:*** Rosary Pro—customizable rosary app with audio. ~Saint of the Day (Franciscan Media)—Daily saint biographies and reflections.

***CATHOLIC APPS FOR KIDS:*** Catholic Kids Media—short videos explaining the Sunday Gospel. ~Laudate for Kids—simplified prayers and devotions. ~Bible for Kids (Life.Church)—not Catholic specific but widely used for young children.

**CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**: Will take place on Saturday, November 21 from 8AM to 1PM! Mark your calendars now! Volunteers are needed...please contact Bonnie Katzaman at 610-562-4036 if interested in helping out!

**SUPPORT OUR CHURCH** by donating $5! You will receive a 25% OFF discount shopping pass for **Boscov's Friends Helping Friends** Sale on Wednesday, October 21 (8AM-11PM). Your donation also enables you to register to win a $100 Boscov's Gift Card. See the Scrip Card seller after Mass in the lobby or stop in the parish office during the week and purchase your shopping pass!

# FATHER, PLEASE TELL US: *PROPER SUNDAY DRESS CODE*
## *What Should Catholics Wear to Mass?*

***Dress in a way that shows you know where you are going and Whom you are going to meet!***

*"Our bodily demeanor, including gestures and clothing ought to convey respect, solemnity and joy." --CCC 1387*

***"Let all things be done decently and in order."*** *–1 Corinthians 14:40*

### *MASS IS NOT AN ORDINARY EVENT*

The Mass is a celebration of the Eucharist, the central act of Christian worship. Our clothing should reflect reverence, dignity and joy.

### *THE CHURCH DOES NOT REQUIRE EXPENSIVE CLOTHES*

There is no rule that you must wear designer or costly clothes. A poor person in clean and modest dressing can approach Mass with the same reverence as anyone else. Dignity is not measured by price.

### *WHAT MAKES CLOTHING APPROPRIATE?*

- MODESTY: Respects the dignity of the person
- DECENCY: Appropriate for a sacred gathering
- REVERENCE: Shows awareness that you are in God's house
- SUITABILITY: Fits the circumstance and environment

### *WHAT SHOULD WE AVOID?*

- Clothing that is deliberately revealing, provocative, distracting or inappropriate for the sacred setting.
- This applies to both men and women.
- Modesty is a virtue for everyone, not just for women.

### *CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS*

- The same principles apply, with patience and good judgment.
- Teach them, don't embarrass them.
- Help them understand that Mass is a time to worship God, not a fashion show.

### *WHAT IF SOMEONE CANNOT AFFORD "PROPER" CLOTHES?*

- No one should stay away from Mass because they cannot afford special clothes.
- If you have only simple clothing, a work uniform or are coming from a difficult situation, you are still welcome.
- God looks at your heart.

### *CULTURAL DIFFERENCES*

- Appropriate dress can look different across cultures.
- The Church does not prescribe one universal fashion style.
- The principles remain the same: modesty, dignity, reverence and suitability.

### *EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE ATTIRE:*

***FOR MEN:***
Shirt & trousers
Suit (optional)
Neat & modest attire
Clean & presentable
Traditional attired (appropriate & modest)

***FOR WOMEN:***
Modest dresses or skirts
Blouse & skirt/trousers
Neat & decent attire
Shoulders & knees reasonably covered
Traditional attire (appropriate & modest)

### *A FINAL REMINDER:*

*You do not need to impress* ***people.*** *You are coming to worship* ***God.*** *Come clean. Come modest. Come reverently. Come with a sincere heart!*

***Our Goal: It is not about fashion, but about faith, reverence, and love for God.***

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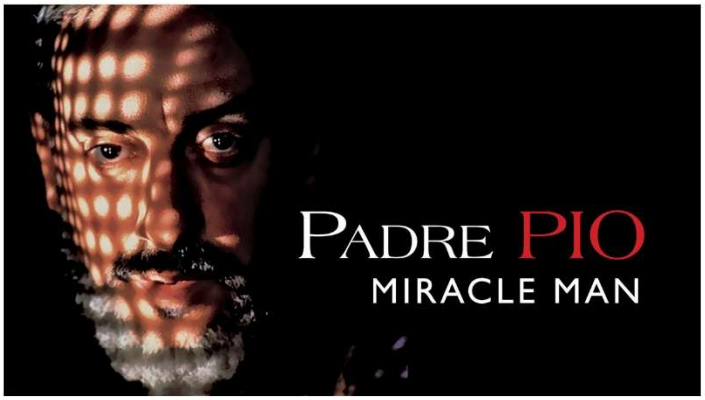


## Padre Pio: Miracle Man

This movie captures the Capuchin friar's intense faith, devotion, and deep spiritual concern for others, as well as his great compassion for the sick and suffering. It reveals the amazing details and events in Padre Pio's life as a boy and throughout his fifty years as a friar, dramatizing the frequent attacks from the devil, as well as the persecution he suffered at the hands of people, including those in the Church.

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An offering from the Augustine Institute

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## Bible Study: The Gospel of Matthew 1:1-25

Join Dr. Tim Gray and Dr. Michael Barber as they begin studying the Gospel of Matthew by introducing St. Matthew and looking at chapter 1 of this incredible gospel.

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An offering from the Augustine Institute

**September 20, 2026**

# Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Is 55:6-9 | Phil 1:20c-24, 27a | Mt 20:1-16a**

*Written by*
THE FAITHFUL DISCIPLE

### GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Writing to the Philippians while in prison, St. Paul feels complete peace about his fate. To stay on this earth means fruitful labor for him; to die means entering eternal life with God. Having lived apart from God in the past, he finds immense joy at being able to labor for the Lord, despite the suffering it entails. Upon first glance, the parable St. Matthew recounts in his Gospel offers a glimpse of God's generous mercy. But reading the parable alongside Paul's letter reveals another layer of meaning: Those who have more time to labor in the vineyard of the Lord are given a great gift – the chance to bear immense fruit. Our long hours laboring in the Lord's vineyard are not something we're meant to merely suffer through on our way to our eternal reward. Rather, they are an opportunity to be drawn into communion with the Lord. As with St. Paul, the joy that comes from realizing that we share in the very life and work of God is available to us now, not only in the life to come.

### GO EVANGELIZE

**PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT**

Each of the vocations to which God calls us requires sacrifice and includes challenges. Living in humble obedience to the will of God is not easy, but it is full of peace. To focus only on the eternal reward offered after death disregards the love, peace, and joy of the kingdom that we are gifted *now*. We are invited to be laborers in the vineyard, co-creators with the Master of the universe. As we creatively and compassionately allow God's love to flow through us, we infuse new life and love into the world around us. When we truly believe that a life lived in Christ is the most abundant life, we stop asking what is fair and we begin to eagerly invite others to join us in the vineyard. Doing the will of God in this life is a reward unto itself.

### STUDY

This week, return to the first reading from the prophet Isaiah. As you reflect on his call to "seek the Lord while he may be found," consider the gift of God's love and presence in your life right now. And as we labor in the vineyard, keeping our eyes on the ultimate reward of eternity with our Creator, may we also recognize the immense gift of knowing, loving, and serving God in this life.

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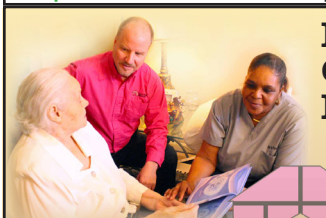
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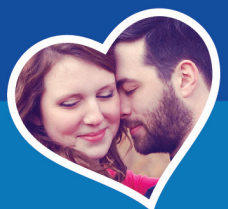
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