


TO THE Heights

Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

Celebrating and Supporting the Catholic faith in our post-primary schools and amongst our young people.

 ascendwaterfordlismore.ym

 AscendWaterfordLismoreYM

 Ascend Youth Ministry



22ND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

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The Pharisees Question Jesus, James Tissot, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Year B

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 14 (15): 2-5

Second Reading:

James 1:17-18, 21-22, 27

Gospel:

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

"You put aside the commandment of God to cling to human traditions"

Game Changers

The Catholic Church's Liturgical Calendar is crammed full of inspirational saints, or as we like to call them, Game Changers!

Some weeks we'll focus in more detail on a particular saint who is an incredible role model for youth, but for now, check out the following feast-days!

If you missed our features on Fr Emil Kapaun and St Maximilian Kolbe you can find them on our [webpage](#)!

30 August

[St Margaret Clitherow](#)

31 August

[St Aidan](#)

3 September

[St Gregory the Great \(Pope\)](#)

4 September

[St Mac Nissi](#)



Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have a Bible? No worries, click the bible!



Or watch a short animation of today's Gospel.



1. In today's Gospel, why do you think the Pharisees and Scribes gathered around Jesus and his disciples? Was it to learn from Him?
2. Why does Jesus call them hypocrites?
3. What does Isaiah mean by honouring God only with lip-service, do you think?
4. What does Jesus mean when He says, "it is the things that come out of a man that make him unclean"?
5. Look up the meaning of AVARICE, MALICE, FOLLY.
6. What is Jesus trying to teach the Pharisees and scribes about real worship?



And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. - Micah 6:8 -

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

New academic year, new people, new challenges, new possibilities ... it's an exciting time, and a daunting one too.

It's also a good time to stop and reflect on what direction we want our lives to go in - to get our bearings. What do we want to bring with us into this new year, and what do we need to shed and leave behind? What habits are preventing us from being the best version of ourselves? What attitudes are pulling us down? Last week, we looked at who we spend our time with and how they influence us. This week, let's look inwards. In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks really bluntly about the things that make us "unclean" (and ultimately miserable); these things come from our own hearts. Are we guilty of any of these? Avarice, deceit, malice, envy, pride...the list goes on. All of these things block us from true happiness. They block us from recognising the beauty and dignity of those around us, and the dignity God wants each of us to personally embrace. They block us from becoming saints. Sainthood (aka complete happiness) is not just for those who perform great miracles or are martyrs. We're all called to a life of sanctity, to be lived out in our own circumstances.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE:

Spend some time working on a spiritual makeover/bootcamp: no spa treatments, no haircuts, no personal stylist: Just a Divine Friend who knows you better than you know yourself. Get to Confession if you can!



- Watch: [You can be a Saint, Here's How \(Fr Mike Schmitz\)](#)
- Use our attached handout to guide you!
- + Bonus Letter to Future Self!

TUNE OF THE WEEK

Make Me Over Natalie Grant



TEACHER'S CORNER

SYMBOLON:

The Catholic Faith Explained



Too often we try to live a faith we don't know or understand. Every Catholic deserves to know their story. Join us for Symbolon, a 10-week series that presents the BIG picture of our Catholic faith. Ages 18+.

- Wednesdays 8 - 9.15pm on Zoom.
- Begins September 15th
- To register [click here](#) or email events@waterfordlismore.ie or call 085 8623705

Young Person's Prayer



Lord, you offer me so much, and all I have to do is hear your voice and act on it. Help me to make a spiritual makeover this week; to root out anything that prevents me from becoming the best version of myself, a Game-Changer in this world. Take away my pride and help me to do right, to love justice and to walk humbly with You, my God! AMEN

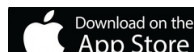
Gospel Reflection: HOLINESS OF HEART

In today's Gospel, we hear a heated exchange take place between Jesus and some Pharisees and scribes. The controversy is sparked by the "unwashed hands" of Jesus' disciples. The Pharisees are quick to accuse Jesus' disciples of religious laxity when they observe them eating with "unclean hands". The Pharisees had a very specific ritual that needed to be followed in order to make your hands clean before eating. They had to wash "from their arms to their elbows". The "tradition of the elders" refers to certain external religious practices and customs that were developed by the Pharisees and added the Law given to Moses by God. These traditions promoted by the elders are examples of merely human tradition. They were not revealed by God. They included many ritualistic practices concerning the washing of cups, pots and dishes, for example. The Pharisees had wrongly considered them equal to the revealed Law of God. Jesus responds criticising the Pharisees for making their own rules concerning ritual purity equal to the commandments of God's Law.

Jesus doesn't mince his words when he responds to the accusation of the Pharisees. He condemns the Pharisaic customs because they distract people from the more important principles of Mosaic Law. It is clear from Jesus' response that what matters more than anything is what is in our hearts. Jesus teaches that a person is not defiled by the food that enters his or her body, but rather by sin that emerges from his or her words and actions. The real issue for Jesus is holiness, which is not found in external acts alone. Holiness comes from within and is seen in the actions and attitudes that emerge from a person's life. Holiness is a matter of the heart.

Jesus' words should challenge us today too. In our desire to show that we are holy, we might also give too much credence to externals, following rules without thinking about the intention behind them. Jesus reminds us that we do not make ourselves holy by our actions. Rather, we become holy when we allow God into our heart to transform us. Our actions should be an expression of the conversion of our heart to God and to God's ways.

CHECK IT OUT: HALLOW APP



Hallow is a Catholic prayer app that offers audio guided meditation sessions to help us grow in our faith & spiritual lives and find peace in God. Explore over 500 different sessions on contemplative prayer, meditation, Catholic Bible readings, music, and more .e.g Daily prayers, Christian Meditation, Bible Sleep Stories, Rosary, Ignatian Examen, Lectio Divina, Taizé & Gregorian Chant, Community, Homilies & Guests, Praylists, Challenges, Litanies & Novenas and Minute Meditations. There really is something there for everyone!





A Saint? Who, me?

Don't live
someone else's
life!

HOW MANY SAINTS CAN YOU NAME IN ONE MINUTE?

HOME
2

GUEST
1

If working in pairs / a group, award yourself one point for every saint you name that they don't have on their list!



CAN YOU THINK OF ANY SAINT WHO HAS PERFORMED MIRACLES, OR HEROIC ACTS OF SACRIFICE?

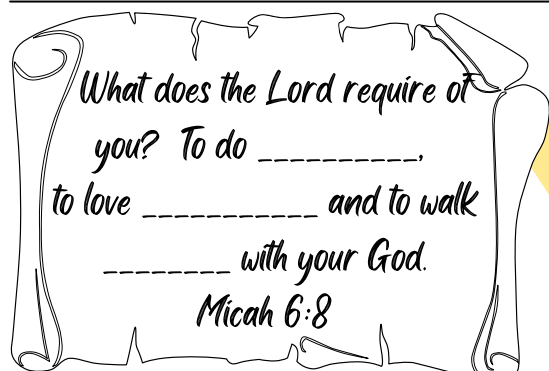


WHAT DO YOU THINK IS NECESSARY TO BECOME A SAINT? IS IT POSSIBLE IN TODAY'S WORLD? WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD IT MAKE ANYWAY? DISCUSS!

WATCH FR MIKE SCHMITZ' VIDEO: "YOU CAN BE A SAINT. HERE'S HOW" AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



When we compare our lives to the lives of great saints, what do we think disqualifies us from sainthood? What do saints do that we can't imagine ourselves doing?



WHEN WE'RE TEMPTED TO ASK WHAT GREAT HEROIC ACT OR SACRIFICE DO I HAVE TO MAKE TO BECOME A SAINT, WE CAN FIND OUR ANSWER IN MICAH 6:8 - FILL IN THE GAPS!

In simple terms, "a saint is someone who says YES to God, and never stops saying it." What do you think that means?



Becoming a saint involves following this advice:
 _____ what God wills, _____ God wills it,
 _____ God wills it.



" A SAINT? WHO, ME?"

MARK 7:1-8,14-15,21-23

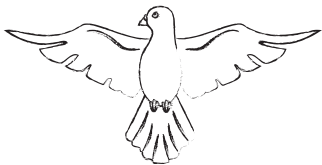
Now Read Mark 7:14-15, 21-23



Jesus was challenged by the Scribes and the Pharisees in this passage because some of His disciples did not perform the Jewish ritual required to clean their hands to the elbow before eating. The Pharisees were more concerned about the superficial appearance of being religious, rather than actually striving for personal holiness and true obedience to God's will. Jesus often challenged them about this. He challenges us too.

We each have a choice to make: we can ignore what God calls us to in His Commandments, and the decisions we know He wants us to make, or we can really look into our hearts and see what needs to be rooted out to make room for Him there. Jesus is pretty blunt about those habits / sins in Mark 7:21-23 that are damaging to our souls, and those around us.

Fr Mike explains our two choices like this: We can say "here's why I'm the exception to that commandment" or we can say, “



REMEMBER: DO GOD'S WILL, AS HE WILLS IT, BECAUSE HE WILLS IT, WITH THE POWER HE PROVIDES FOR YOU TO ACCOMPLISH IT!



- Maybe this week you are being called to a spiritual makeover or bootcamp, no spa treatment, or haircuts, no personal stylist - just you, some time in silence to reflect, and a Divine Friend who knows your heart even better than you do. Jesus knows your motivations for all your actions, He knows your fears, your desires, your dreams. He knows you want to be the best version of yourself, but can struggle with achieving that. He knows why you do the things you do.... and He loves you, in spite of your weaknesses and failures.
- Let Him guide you this week as you reflect on any areas of your life that need to change. It might be a little uncomfortable, but a little pruning is necessary for plants to grow and thrive too.
- If possible, go to receive the Sacrament of Confession too, and leave all those things with the Lord, and make a fresh start, with His grace to support you!



Lord, you offer me so much, and all I have to do is hear your voice and act on it. Help me to make a spiritual makeover this week: to root out anything that prevents me from becoming the best version of myself, a Game-Changer in this world. Take away my pride and help me to do right, to love justice and to walk humbly with You, my God! AMEN



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON WHAT'S INSIDE YOUR HEART THIS WEEK



- [Make me Over \(Natalie Grant\)](#)
- [Refiner's Heart \(Vineyard Worship\)](#)
- [Give me Faith \(Elevation Worship\)](#)
- [From the Inside Out \(Hillsong\)](#)
- [The Real Me \(Natalie Grant\)](#)
- [I Shall Not Want \(Audrey Assad\)](#)
- [The Unmaking \(Nicole Nordeman\)](#)
- [The Change in Me \(Casting Crowns\)](#)

Click the links for the YouTube videos to listen to some suggestions!



AT THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ACADEMIC YEAR, WRITE A LETTER TO YOURSELF. YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHOW THIS TO ANYONE ELSE.
SEAL IT IN AN ENVELOPE, PUT IT SOMEWHERE SAFE AND DON'T OPEN IT UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR!



Letter to my Future Self

Date: _____

Dear Future Me,

It's hard to believe that when I read this again I'll be just a few days away from finishing this academic year! Well done me! I've made it this far!

My best memory of this summer is _____

My favourite song at the moment is _____

The last movie I saw was _____

My favourite saying / phrase right now is _____

If I had to evacuate my home because of a natural disaster, the three things I would take with me are _____

My best friends right now are _____

The subject / challenge I think I will like the most this year is _____
because _____

The person who knows me best right now is _____

The person (or people) in my year I'd really like to get to know better this year is (are) _____

The three most important people in my life right now are _____

What I think I will enjoy most about this year is _____

What advice have people given me about this coming year? _____

For Christmas I hope I get _____

Letter to my Future Self

As I'm writing this letter, I'm feeling a bit _____
because _____

What scares / worries me most about this year is _____

I wish when people looked at me, they could see (or know) _____

If I could change / improve one thing about myself this year it would be _____

One thing I would do if I wasn't so afraid would be _____

One person I need to forgive is _____

One person I should really tell that I love them is _____

The people that make me feel good about myself are _____

One thing that I'm too hard on myself about is _____

One thing I do that holds me back from being the best version of myself is _____

I want to be remembered for _____

More than anything, by the time I read this letter again I hope that _____

Enjoy your summer!

Kind regards,

Me!