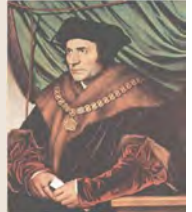




# SAINT THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH

51 MARKETPLACE IRVINE, CA 92602 · 949-551-8601 · WWW.STMIRVINE.ORG



Saint Thomas More Welcomes All

*Welcoming all, we, the Spirit-filled parish of St. Thomas More, value our Roman Catholic faith by celebrating the sacraments, breaking open the Scriptures, and joyfully offering ourselves in service to others. Under the inspiration of our patron saint, we seek to build a caring community that embraces the values he modeled of friendship, integrity and courageous love of God.*

**Pastor**

Parochial Vicar  
Pastor Emeritus  
Parochial Vicar Emeritus  
Weekend Assistants

Deacons

**Rev. Eugene J. Lee**

Rev. Kiet Ta  
Rev. John E. Janze  
Rev. William Krekelberg  
Rev. Joseph Horn, O Praem  
Rev. Joseph Justice

Deacon Tony & Mrs. Mary Patronite  
Deacon Tin & Mrs. UyenLan Nguyen  
Deacon Leonard & Mrs. Nancy Sun

**Office Information:**

Office: 949-551-8601  
After hours emergency: 949-228-2127  
Fax: 949-551-5879  
Religious Education: 949-551-8029  
Youth Ministry: 949-551-8602

**Office Hours:**

Monday-Friday: 8:30am-5:00pm  
Saturday: 9:00am-2:00pm



## TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



*Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.*

James 5:4

September

26

2021



### TODAY'S READINGS

**First Reading** — Moses said, “Would that all the people of the LORD were prophets!” (Numbers 11:25-29).

**Psalm** — The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart (Psalm 19).

**Second Reading** — Come now, you rich. The wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud (James 5:1-6).

**Gospel** — Whoever is not against us is for us (Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48). The English translation of the Psalm Responses from the Lectionary for Mass © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

### MASS INTENTIONS



Monday 9/27	8:00am	Jonah Peter Hoots
Tuesday 9/28	8:00am	Jimmy Cusimano and Family
Wednesday 9/29	8:00am	†Rosaria Alessi
Thursday 9/30	8:00am	Brian Hughes
Friday 10/1	8:00am	Julissa Huerta
Saturday 10/2	8:00am	
		†Souls in Purgatory
		Baby Johanna Harris
		†Jimmy Caruthers
		†Alodia Bartolome
		Doug & Barbara Catiller
		Ken & Linda Hughes
		Nick & Tiffany Gonzales
		†Ana Nga Phan
		†Teresita Lim
		†John Bernal
		†Ricardo Aquino Platero
Saturday 10/2	4:00pm	†Thi Nga Nguyen
	6:00pm	Pro Populo
Sunday 10/3	8:00am	
		†Anna Savina
		Teresa Tran
		†Kathie Benoe
		†Omar Chavez
		†Brandt J. Ventimiglia
		†Orlando Stanziani
	10:00am	†Alodia Bartolome
	5:00pm	†Mike Joseph



Please join us for the installation of  
**Rev. Eugene J. Lee**  
 as Pastor of  
 St. Thomas More Catholic Church

**October 3, 2021**

**5:00 pm Mass**

*Bishop Kevin Vann presiding*

*Reception on patio to follow*

CELEBRATE WITH US

## FEAST OF SAINT LORENZO RUIZ

Traditional Filipino Music Snacks Provided | Tuesday September 28 7PM Mass

Presented by:  
 St Thomas More Filipino Ministry

**Daily Mass:**  
**Monday – Saturday: 8:00 AM**

**Vigil Mass Times**  
 4:00 PM Vietnamese/English  
 6:00 PM English

**Sunday Mass Times**  
 8:00 AM English  
 10:00 AM English  
 12:00 PM Spanish/English  
 5:00 PM English

**Morning Prayer:** Wed & Fri 7:30am to 7:50am  
**Adoration:** Every Friday 6:00pm to 7:00pm  
**Saturday Confessions:** 1:00pm to 3:00pm

**Mass will be available online for the sick and homebound on Sundays at 10:00am and Monday-Saturday at 8:00am**

**For spiritual advisement, please contact the priest to schedule an appointment.**

Dear Brothers and Sisters of St. Thomas More Parish,

**Today's theme on the readings: PROCLAIM THE WONDER OF GOD**

The gift of the Spirit is given freely, not according to human expectations, but according to the generosity of God. Joshua wants Moses to stop Eldad and Medad from prophesying in the camp, when they were not with the others as the spirit was bestowed on them. Moses, so close to God's mind in the matter, wishes everyone could possess the spirit of God and proclaim it to the nations. Psalm 19 celebrates the perfection of God's law, and how it brings joy and delight. It is better than the finest gold or the sweetest honey. Moreover, God gives the wisdom of the prophets to everyone, especially the simple and lowly ones, even to children. It is the "little ones" who proclaim the wonder of God to all.

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Sincerely In Christ,  
Father Eugene

**Collections and Expenses**

9-13-2021 to 9-19-21

	Collection	E-Giving	Total
Sunday Collection	\$12,893	\$13,639	\$26,532
Believe & Grow	\$316	\$2,132	\$2,448
BGT- Phase 2	\$10,288	\$10,768	\$21,056
Building Fund	\$136	\$694	\$830
Other income	\$395	\$533	\$928

Regular Expenses	\$13,459
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We appreciate your continued financial support of the parish during these challenging times. If you would like to give, please click on the e-giving link in the top corner of the STM website to set up or update your e-giving. If you have questions, please call the office. All donations to the *Believe & Grow Together Campaign* will be used exclusively to pay for the construction costs to build the new Parish church. Moreover, Building Fund donations can be used to pay for the construction costs to build the new Parish church and for the maintenance and repairs of the existing Parish buildings and property. **Thank you for your generosity!**



**Welcome to God's Family**

Ava Rose Vieira



***READINGS FOR THE WEEK***

**Monday:** Zec 8:1-8; Ps 102:16-21, 29, 22-23; Lk 9:46-50  
**Tuesday:** Zec 8:20-23; Ps 87:1b-7; Lk 9:51-56  
**Wednesday:** Dn 7:9-10, 13-14 or Rv 12:7-12a; Ps 138:1-5; Jn 1:47-51  
**Thursday:** Neh 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12; Ps 19:8-11; Lk 10:1-12  
**Friday:** Bar 1:15-22; Ps 79:1b-5, 8-9; Lk 10:13-16  
**Saturday:** Bar 4:5-12, 27-29; Ps 69:33-37; Mt 18:1-5, 10  
**Sunday:** Gn 2:18-24; Ps 128:1-6; Heb 2:9-11; Mk 10:2-16 [2-12]



***Rest in the Love of Christ***

Jim Botti  
Rosemary Mungia



***PLEASE PRAY FOR HEALING***



- |                          |                     |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Sally Acosta             | Alice Green         | Karen Norton              |
| Stacey Allen             | Tina Halberg        | Nam Van Nguyen            |
| Richy Altuna             | Baby Johanna Harris | Thuy-Lieu Nguyen          |
| Mike Anderson            | Mike Harvey         | Quy Nguyen                |
| Renee Andrade            | Shirley Hecker      | Kyle Osbourne             |
| Judy Anselmo             | John Heffernan      | Agnes Pamintuan           |
| Alicia Arrellano         | Robert Henry        | Benny Parades             |
| Sam Baniqued             | Annette Hills       | Regina Park               |
| Zicky Baniqued           | Margaret Hills      | Norma Jeanne Parrish      |
| Jesus Barragan           | Clara Honea         | Den Tony & Mary Patronite |
| Terry Beck               | Dominador Hontucan  | Gabby Paz                 |
| Gary Belz                | Sue House           | Charlie Perrea            |
| Blanca Bermudez          | Linda Hughes        | Ngocle Phung              |
| Maria Botello            | Angela Jack         | Jerry and Evie Pilkington |
| Michele Bradley          | Elsa Jatwani        | Zachary Quick             |
| Bill Burk                | Theresa Johnston    | Norma Quyang              |
| Mary & Joe Bush          | Sharon Jones        | Fr. Jim Reis              |
| Baby Zane Cabazon        | Doris Jordan        | Paula Reno                |
| Linda Carter             | Quinn Kelly         | Lorraine Reyes            |
| Ellen Chang              | Jim Kendall         | Ponciano Reyes            |
| Cyrus Charna             | Houman Khaghani     | Robert Arnold Rull        |
| Marietta Charbonneau     | Jett Knight         | Sheila Russo              |
| Hui-Mei Chen             | Ty Vivian Knisely   | Terry Rute                |
| Clara Connor             | Elizabeth Kulas     | Anita Ruwaldt             |
| Alexandra Conti          | Richard Kulas       | Debashish Sarkar          |
| Petra Cordova            | Deborah Kurilchyk   | Jackson & Gerri Scharff   |
| Francisco Cortez         | Larry Lathrum       | Stuart Schnieder          |
| Jim Danaher              | Glenn Leckie        | Michelle Suh              |
| Mark Daniel              | Todd Leeds          | Tara Summers              |
| Rick Denham              | Jack Light          | Liz Thomas                |
| Diana & Liberato DeVeyra | Minerva Lopez       | Gail Tierney              |
| Larry Doan               | Aida Lopez-Tan      | Xuan Tran                 |
| Chela Echenique          | Gloria MacCormack   | Denise Trujillo           |
| Linda Emanuel            | Myrna Malazarte     | Jack Troung               |
| Thomas Erhard            | Kristin Mann        | Kimberly Truong           |
| Richard Erhard           | Mercedes Mantilla   | Baby Catherine Tseng      |
| Jacob Espinoza           | Cherry Marinas      | David Valentine           |
| Guadalupe Figueroa       | Cavan McGaffney     | Daniel Villareal          |
| Lena Fisher              | Kathleen McKinley   | Jim Vessey                |
| Cynthia Fox              | Connie Mellott      | Hanh Vu                   |
| Howard Frankel, MD       | Durvalina Menezes   | Alicia Walters            |
| Ken Freund               | Stephanie Mispagel  | Shayne Walters            |
| John Frisch              | Elena Monico        | John Weber                |
| Claudia Fuentes          | Linda Moore         | Michele Willis            |
| Mike Garibay             | Agnes Motley        | Marcie Willson            |
| Lillian Gibson           | Marie Moya          | Mike Winchester           |
| Jose Gonzales, Jr.       | Susan Navarrete     | Jim Wood                  |
| Marisela Gonzalez        | Ramon Navarro, Jr.  | Linda Yipp                |
| Lois Gorman              | Exy Ner             |                           |
| Marnie Gray              | Benjamin Nicanor    |                           |

**Please call the office when it is time to remove a name.**

LIFE TEEN

Now

### Welcome To Our New Life Teen Core Members

Welcome to the newest Life Teen Core Members!

- Ricky Cruz
- Maddy Bass

LIFE TEEN

Thu 7:00 PM

### Life Teen Fall Kick Off

Life Teen's annual Fall kick off is Sunday, October 10th after the 5pm Mass. We can not wait to start this new year of Youth Ministry with our STM Family.

CONFIRMATION

WED 6:00 PM

### Confirmation Class Schedule

C1 Dates: Sept 29, Oct 13, Oct 27, Nov 10, Dec 1, & Dec 8

C2 Dates: Oct 6, Oct 20, Nov 3, Nov 17, Dec 1, & Dec 15

# R.E.P. CORNER



## BLESSING OF THE PETS

Please join our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade REP students in celebrating the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi on Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM in front of the statue of St. Francis.



*Don't forget to bring your pets on a leash or in a carrier!*



## GREAT START TO THE YEAR!!



We had an amazing start to our REP classes this past week! It was truly a blessing to see our students and their families in person!

Many thanks go to our fantastic volunteers! We have over 250 students currently enrolled! Registration is still open and will continue through October 1st. Please get your child registered right away! .



Since we have over 250 students, we still need some help at all grade levels.

For questions, or to volunteer in this rewarding ministry, please contact the REP office at (949) 551-8029.



## The Library Corner

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time



The St Thomas More Parish Library staff would like to wish all our parishioners a Happy 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time. The Parish Library will not be open today.

Monday, September 27, is the feast day of Saint Vincent de Paul. He is known as the apostle of charity and is the patron saint of charitable societies, such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The Parish Library has three versions of media to choose from to know more about this great saint. A children's book titled, 'Vincent de Paul, Saint of Charity', authored by Margaret Ann Hubbard. A movie titled, 'Monsieur Vincent, St. Vincent de Paul', authored by Maurice Cloche. And an adult book titled, 'Saint Vincent de Paul', authored by F.A. Forbes.



# October Month of the Rosary & Respect Life Month



zoom



Let's pray the rosary every night at  
8 pm on ZOOM!

Join Father Eugene Lee and Fr. Kiet Ta

GO TO OUR WEBSITE AT [STMIRVINE.ORG](http://STMIRVINE.ORG) AND CLICK ON THE  
"MONTH OF THE ROSARY" BUTTON!

## MISSION COOPERATIVE APPEAL



On October 9 and 10,  
2021 we will have Fr.

Rudy Alumam representing his home diocese of  
Navrongo-Bolgatanga in Ghana in this year's  
Missionary Cooperative Appeal.

Fr. Rudy will be sharing about the mission of the  
diocese to provide education for many children in  
underserved communities in northern Ghana.

Forty percent of schoolchildren in this area drop  
out before they complete grade 6 – this is well  
above the even sad national average of 28%. The  
evangelizing efforts of the diocese are aimed at not  
only retaining these students in school but to offer  
the children adequate and meaningful education to  
advance into high school and beyond.

Among the several efforts, the diocese is  
committed to providing lunch for the children while  
they are in school and having the needed learning  
and teaching resources for both teachers and  
students.

Your kindness is very much appreciated for the  
mission of Fr. Rudy's diocese. Thank you.

WHEN WOMEN PRAY

## 11TH ANNUAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

OCTOBER 16, 2021 | 8AM-1PM

ST THOMAS MORE PARISH  
IRVINE, CA



SARA VUOSO  
Featured Speaker

REGISTRATION IS  
NOW OPEN!

Join us for an inspiring morning  
of prayer, food, and fellowship!

Space is limited so register now at:  
<https://whenwomenpraystm.org/wwwp-2021>

## BLESSING OF PETS



All parishioners are invited  
to bring their pets for a blessing  
in honor of the  
Feast of St. Francis of Assisi on  
Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM.  
We will meet in front of the statue  
of St. Francis.

Please bring your pets on a leash  
or in a carrier. People without pets  
are welcome too!



## Join our Welcome Committee!

During the two years that we have not been able to have on site meetings, we have been contacting new parishioners on a monthly basis with emails of welcome and volunteering to answer any questions that they may have about our parish.

We are now ready to start having on site meetings, and we need new members of our ministry to help with these meetings. We need additional members for our telephone committee. You will be given the information you will need to do a follow up call as a reminder to our new parishioners and to verify if they will be attending the New Parishioners Meeting (NPM).

You will be called on twice a year to help with this activity.

If you are able to help us, please email Vince Salico at [njcawavin@yahoo.com](mailto:njcawavin@yahoo.com). Please include your name, telephone number and email address that you prefer us to use in contacting you. We look forward to working with you as a member of the NPM team!

## SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

**Sunday:** Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time; Priesthood Sunday

**Monday:** St. Vincent de Paul

**Tuesday:** St. Lawrence Ruiz and Companions; St. Wenceslaus

**Wednesday:** Ss. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael

**Thursday:** St. Jerome

**Friday:** St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus; First Friday

**Saturday:** The Holy Guardian Angels; First Saturday



## Ways to Give to STM:

- Secure e-giving on our website: [www.stmirvine.org](http://www.stmirvine.org)
- In basket at Mass 
- Mail your check or drop it off in our parish lobby
- Use your smartphone via GivePlus app (Vanco)
- Donate stock, life insurance or retirement plans
- Employer Matching Gifts
-  Amazon Smile will donate 0.5% of the eligible purchases to STM!

Thank you for your continued support!

## DMC:2021 EVANGELIZATION NOW!

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SPEAKERS:  
CHRIS STEFANICK  
LEYDEN ROVELO-KRULL  
SR. THERESA MARIE CHAU VIET NGUYEN, OP

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FREE EVENT | SAT. OCT 16, 2021  
8:30 AM-4:00 PM | [DMC2021.ORG](http://DMC2021.ORG)

saint snippets



God, grant us the grace to see things with the same eyes as you do.

September 28

**St. Vincent de Paul**  
19th-century French priest who devoted his life to serving the poor with compassion and generosity

Copyright © 2018, Michael Thimons



## FEAST OF FAITH

### The Lord's Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer ends with the great "Amen," the acclamation of assent by the assembly. Then the Communion rite begins with the Lord's Prayer. We pray this prayer in many contexts, both inside and outside the Church's liturgy. Here, in the context of the Mass, the Lord's Prayer is profoundly eucharistic. When we ask for our "daily bread," we are asking for the gift of the Eucharist. When we ask God to forgive us as we forgive others, we are seeking forgiveness and purity of heart before we approach the altar to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood—"so that what is holy may, in fact, be given to those who are holy" (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 81). At Mass, a prayer for peace is inserted between the prayer and the doxology. In this prayer, called the embolism, the Church asks God for freedom—freedom from sin and all anxiety and distress. We are living in an in-between time; even as we rejoice in Christ's presence, we await his coming in joyful hope.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

## Defend Saint Serra - Oppose AB 338

Visit the home page of the STM website to read more about how to defend Saint Junípero Serra.

The St. Thomas More Society of Orange County has written an article and has provided sample wording for contacting the governor to veto AB 338. Our California Catholic heritage is under attack. Take action and contact our governor as soon as possible.

Please find a sample comment below that you can use when contacting the governor:

"I oppose Assembly Bill 338. AB 338 contains entirely unnecessary, unsupported legislative findings that defame Saint Junipero Serra. AB 338 is misleading, conclusory and sparse on facts. AB 338 relies on a single questionable source, and there has not been any meaningful discussion or analysis of Castillo's book, nor an opportunity to defend Serra of these alleged crimes. It is offensive to Catholics and their heritage and history in California, and contains a highly incomplete and inaccurate portrayal of a great man, who has been revered and honored for more than 2 centuries, including by the State Legislature. While I support the construction of a monument honoring the Native people of the Sacramento region, this can certainly be accomplished without including unnecessary legislative findings defaming Saint Serra. We urge you to veto AB 338, or at a minimum, to remove all legislative findings from the bill regarding Fr. Serra (findings (c) through (g))."

The STM website contains several links to view, including an article from Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of the Archdiocese of San Francisco published in the *Wall Street Journal* titled, "Don't Slander St. Junípero Serra: California lawmakers sully the good name of a Catholic saint." In addition, there is a link to an article on [Angelusnews.com](http://Angelusnews.com) and a video commentary by Bishop Robert Barron regarding this issue.



**Join Sacred Heart Kids' Club  
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**We need your help!**

The **Sacred Heart Sisters** invite you to help as a high school student, young adult or adult volunteer with the Sacred Heart Kids' Club, Thursdays from 3:15-4:45pm.

**Sign up now - registration is online.**

**[www.joyfulapostolate.org/registration](http://www.joyfulapostolate.org/registration)**

For more information: call 370-557-4538 or email [shkc.rc@gmail.com](mailto:shkc.rc@gmail.com)



2927 S. Greenville St.,  
Santa Ana, CA 92704

# ST. THOMAS MORE MINISTRIES

## Liturgy Support

Altar Servers	Tina Le	(7) 356-7607
Eucharist to the Homebound	Fran Necikowski	(7) 505-4816
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion	Jerry Donaldson	(9) 552-5485
Lectors	Tara Reynaud	(7) 925-9992
Music Director, Including Wedding Music	Keith Rattay	(9) 551-8601
Ushers	Steve Luchetta	(9) 733-1192

## Sacraments

Baptism Coordinator	Windy Lozano	(9) 551-8601
Confirmation	Abraham Villela	(9) 551-8602
First Communion	Barbara Catiller	(9) 551-8029
First Reconciliation	Barbara Catiller	(9) 551-8029
Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)	Michael Michalek	(9) 551-2304
Marriage Case Support	Michael Michalek	(9) 551-2304
	Mary Patronite	(9) 551-8601
Marriage Encounter	Jim & Cheryl Skudlarski	(9) 551-9156
Marriage In The Lord	Meredith & Keith Rattay	(9) 559-6464
Wedding Coordinator		

## Service

Bereavement	Rosie Muñoz	(9) 551-8601
Children's Homeless Lunch Ministry	Kim Le	(9) 551-8601
Chinese Community	Deacon Leonard Sun	(7) 932-1689
Corazon	Norma Jean Womack	(9) 559-5639
Filipino Community	Charlie Torres	(9) 551-8601
Grief Share Ministry	K.C. Riley	(7) 875-8126
Hispanic Ministry	Frank Ornelas (9) 857-9044	Patty Trujillo (7) 270-5073
Homeless Lunch Ministry	Margaret Cunningham	(7) 552-8711
Knights of Columbus Council #13111	Ed Francis	(858) 229-2490
Respect Life	Chris Gonzales	(9) 551-8601
STM Veterans	Sgt. Bob Kohler	(9) 552-1895
St. Vincent de Paul	Bill Chacon	(9) 331-1020
Vietnamese Ministry	Huan Le	(7) 261-9893
Young Ladies Institute	Mary O'Leary	(9) 305-6810

## Parish

Believe and Grow Together Campaign	Lisa VanDorpe	(7) 357-3080
Bulletin Editor	Lisa Bergler	(9) 551-8601
Building Committee	Keith Rattay	(9) 551-8601
Deacons	Tony Patronite, Tin Nguyen & Leonard Sun	(9) 551-8601
Parish Business Manager	Stephanie Miller	(9) 551-8601
Parish Office Manager	Lisa Bergler	(9) 551-8601
Welcoming Committee	Vince Salico	(7) 389-7726

## Spiritual Development

Adult Faith Formation / Bible Study	Barbara Catiller	(9) 551-8029
Life Teen – High School & Young Adults	Abraham Villela	(9) 551-8602
Religious Education	Barbara Catiller	(9) 551-8029
Christ Renews His Parish	Tony Patronite	(9) 307-6215
Cursillo and When Women Pray	Susan Navarrete	(9) 551-8601
Legion of Mary	Linda Hughes	(9) 559-1124
Library	Sam & Diana Adams	(7) 321-2405
Spanish Bible Study	Teresa LeMire	(7) 832-1770

**If you are feeling called to serve in one or more of our ministries, please send an email with your contact information to: [serve@stmirvine.org](mailto:serve@stmirvine.org)**

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September 26, 2021

**Twenty-sixth**  
Sunday in Ordinary Time

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**Any who give you a cup of water to drink  
because you belong to Christ,  
amen, I say to you, will surely not lose their reward.**

Mark 9:41

### THE FREEDOM OF GOD

Today's readings remind us that God is free: God acts as God wills regardless of what human beings might expect. In the reading from Numbers, God's spirit enters two men, Eldad and Medad, even though they had not been with the others who had received the spirit of God. And in Mark's Gospel, Jesus endorses an unknown exorcist, who did God's work in the name of Jesus but was not officially sanctioned by the disciples. That God's spirit is shared widely does not threaten Moses or Jesus. They celebrate the notion that God's spirit blows where it wills. Moses was shaping the people of Israel, and Jesus similarly was shaping the community of disciples, to encounter a radically free God who doesn't fit their preconceptions. This encounter, when received with humility, widens their vision and deepens their faith. God continues to shape the Church similarly today, to open us up to God's freedom.

### LOOK WITHIN

A wrestling match of sorts takes place in this section of Mark's Gospel. Jesus tries mightily to describe what it will mean to be his followers, and the disciples try mightily to avoid the subject. They point to an outsider, and the dangers he poses. Jesus turns the tables and asks his disciples to look within themselves: how are they a danger to Jesus and his work? Jesus uses graphic language, invoking self-amputation, to underscore his point.

Sometimes our most difficult obstacles lie deep within. Like our hands and feet, some attitudes and habits are deeply a part of us, and their removal would be traumatic for us. Yet we know that some beliefs (such as idolatries based on race, wealth, or gender) or behaviors (such as addictions) seriously harm ourselves and many others. We need a prayerful, non-neurotic watchfulness about our inner life. When necessary, we need a fierce resistance to anything that places us or others in danger.

### UNITY IN CHRIST

Jesus, in today's Gospel from Mark, says "whoever is not against us is for us." Mark was speaking to his own Christian community. From its beginnings, there were tensions in the Church about who speaks for Jesus. Jesus himself always called for unity of heart and a diversity of expression as a sign of the truth of the Gospel. It is no secret that in Christian history and continuing today, divisions have seriously damaged the message and cause of Christ.

In our own time and place, cultural and political divisions have reduced our ability to solve problems and to live together in a just and peaceful society. Perhaps this is a time for Christians to step up, to remember that our unity in Christ is far deeper than the differences that we perceive. We are called to reach out and listen to each other, to honor each other as members of the Body of Christ. Christians can lead the way, and show everyone watching how it's done.

### TODAY'S READINGS

Numbers 11:25–29  
Psalm 19:8, 10, 12–13, 14  
James 5:1–6  
Mark 9:38–43, 45, 47–48