



26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SEPTEMBER 28, 2025



Mission Statement

“Good Shepherd Parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love.”

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SERVED BY

Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor

Denise Perry Secretary

For more information on our parish please go to:

Goodshepherdnj.com

Or email us at

gsirvington@comcast.net

PASTOR’S REFLECTION ON 26TH SUN. IN O.T. SEPT 28, 2025.

You and I are like people in their dogmatic slumber, we enjoy our comfort zones and we don't care for any other person as long we have our comforts and things that make us feel happy always. You and I are engaged in a common struggle, a struggle against complacency. The struggle is between two spirits, one good; the other evil — spirits that roam about deep within us, below the level of our consciousness. One is the spirit of generosity and self-sacrifice; the other is the spirit of complacency and self-satisfaction and self-absorbed.

You and I share this common struggle against spiritual inertia and smugness in the loneliness of our hidden souls as we strive to have a modest share and portion of the goodness of God. It's never easy because the devils we fight against in our souls' jam and clog our efforts with the sticky, gooey substance of cotton-candy rationalizations. The devils that beset us are always hiding their vices under the appearances of things that seem attractive and tasteful, in many cases the feeling that we deserve the abundance that is ours. The devil always seeks to mire us down and lead us into the morass of comfortable complacency and to lull us into spiritual sleep, giving us a special narcotic, the drug called self-ism, in order to control our souls.

It is into this mired battleground that Jesus drops his bombshells and says: "If your foot is your undoing, then cut it off. If your hand is your difficulty, cut it off. If your eye is your downfall, then pluck it out."

I would like us to pay attention now to that word "rich", because Jesus is not talking just about a person's economic condition or financial net worth as such (although it may, at times, apply). There are those who believe that the material symbols of success they have in this world are the signs of God's favor. Some preachers even preach a message telling us that if you're "in the Lord" then all will go well for you, even in your checkbook.

We need to understand the word "rich" as it applies to what we rely upon. What do we trust in, and upon what (or whom) we place our faith? God or something else? In this regard we must always realize that that this world's symbols of success are not signs of salvation or of God's favor upon us. Too many have not yet arrived at the realization that they have come to be like the rich man in today's Gospel. He was self-satisfied, self-centered, none-caring and complacent because he enjoyed material success in this world's goods. Being so self-absorbed, he was unconcerned about others, unaware of the beggar at his front gate.

In today's gospel account Jesus once again gives sight to those who are blinded by self-satisfaction, asking us to take a good hard look at ourselves. Have we, He asks, been drugged with the narcotic of complacency and over confidence? What are we doing with the gifts He has placed on the banquet table of life? For the truth is that while faith and salvation are God's free gift to us, a gift which we cannot merit or earn on our own, it is also true that when it comes to virtues, we have to work on them. We can't just sit back and wait for God to give virtues to us. God gives us His gifts, what we do with them can become our virtues. We have the responsibility to develop them. Human decisions and struggle are involved. We are in a spiritual combat with Principalities and Powers who attempt to seduce us with spiritual complacency. We need to realize that we have a struggle on our hands. God has offered, we must respond.

Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm
Holy Day TBD.

Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am
Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm

National Holidays —9:00am
Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm

Mass Intentions For the week of Sept 27-Oct 4, 2025

Saturday 5:30pm For God's Guidance and Protection of the People of Good Shepherd Parish
Sept 27

Sunday 9:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Louis Herbert
Sept 28 11:00am For God's Blessing of the Duru Children

Monday 7:00am No Mass
Sept 29

Tuesday 7:00am No Mass
Sept 30

Wednesday 7:00am No Mass
Oct 01

Thursday 7:00am No Mass
Oct 02

Friday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Rene Victor
Oct 03

Saturday 8:30am For God's Guidance and Protection of Venus Matthews
Oct 04 5:30pm For God's and Protection of Sandi Mosley

Kindly keep our parishioner's family, with health and other challenges, in your prayers

Let us always remember in our prayers the sick members of our Parish

Paul Kocum	Sandi Mosley	Debbie Watson	Rihanna Scott	Venus Matthews
Curtis Richards	Carlos Quinones	John Valfour	Corizon Abuzied	Margarete Victor
Bob and Barbara Nezlick	Patrick Roylance	Graylan Banks	Aloysius Patrick Osuji	

* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

Hospital Privacy | Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/ pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call the I office at (973)375-8568

SAFE ENVIRONMENT CORNER

HOW TO REPORT ABUSE

The Archdiocese of Newark takes very seriously any and all allegations of sexual misconduct by members of the clergy, Religious and lay staff of the Archdiocese. We encourage anyone with knowledge of an act of sexual misconduct to inform us so that we may take appropriate action to protect others and provide support to victims of sexual abuse. Call the Coordinator for the Office of Accompaniment in the Archdiocesan Department for the Protection of the faithful at

201-407-3256

Local Safety Coordinator

Denise Perry at gsirvington@comcast.net

ANNUAL APPEAL ²⁰²⁵

The Annual Appeal is ongoing, your contributions to the appeal will help so many lives.



**ALTAR BREAD
AND
WINE
SEPTEMBER 28
THRU
OCTOBER 4, 2025
FROM
THE OGBO FAMILY**

Collection Report		Sept 21, 2025
Weekly Target		\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)		\$ 1,838.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ 4,662.00
Fiscal Year to Date		
Budget:		\$379,864.00
Actual:		\$ 20,024.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$359,840.00
Rolling 4 Week Averages		
Average Collection:		\$2,141.00
Average Surplus (Deficit)		\$4,359.00

Minister Assignments Sept 20—Sept 21, 2025

Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	Presiding
10/04 5:30pm	Doris Omoighe	Denise Perry Barbara Banks Nellie Bate	Fr. Val
10/05 9:00AM	Marylyn Amah	Augustine Boakye Stanislau's Egeolu- Obiemize Denise Perry	Fr. Val
10/06 11: 00am	TBD	Janet Drews Luer Drews Jacqueline Ozouh	Fr. Val

GSP EVENT CALENDER

Sunday Sept 28
Monday Sept 29
Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael (NO MASS)
Tuesday Sept 30
Saint Jerome (NO MASS)
Wednesday Oct 01
Saint Therese of the Child Jesus (NO MASS)
Thursday Oct 02
Holy Guardian Angels
Friday Oct 03
Saturday Oct 04
Saint Francis of Assisi

Good Shepherd Parish Information

RECTORY HOURS: Monday Thru Wednesday 10:00AM-2:00PM; Thursday / Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM

Parish Registration Forms can be found at the back of the church or call the rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION Saturday 4:45PM - 5:15PM

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM In order to have your child baptized at Good Shepherd, the parents must be registered and active members of our parish. Godparents or sponsors must meet qualifications as to have received both sacraments of Communion and Confirmation, attend Mass regularly and been a registered parishioner at a Catholic Church Baptisms will be held the third Sunday of the month. For more information please call the Rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY Couples who are planning a wedding should call the parish office to meet the priest, to choose the date of the wedding and before any other arrangements are made call (973)375-8568

PASTORAL OF THE SICK Notify a priest of all who are hospitalized, home-bound, or Emergencies call (973)375-8568

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS, RCIA. Adults interested in becoming members of the Catholic Church and Catholics in need of Sacraments, Confirmation or Eucharist; inquire at the Rectory. To register please call the rectory at (973-375-8568

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Sunday of October-April from 10:00-11:00 am in the Church building. For more information please call the Rectory at (973-375-8568. Children’s mass will be every second Sunday of the month, at the 11AM mass.

Immediately after his election as Pope, Jorge Bergoglio was reminded by one of his fellow South American cardinals, to remember the poor, which apparently prompted his choice of the name Francis, focusing on 13th century Francis of Assisi, who walked away from his material wealth and comfort to a new life of poverty and prayer, never to turn back. In the decade since becoming Pope, Francis has consistently emphasized the Gospel priority of what's often called the "*preferential option for the poor*".

Within the Catholic Church, he has been criticized for his broad-mindedness and lack of dogmatic approach, by those resistant to change and wanting to maintain the status quo, with the defense that this is orthodoxy and truth, the Church not needing to engage with the secular world, or even with other religions, within and without Christianity.

Not to be deterred, just last week, Francis attended a multi-faith gathering of 80 faith leaders, from 50 countries, titled "***Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions***", in Kazakhstan (1% of 19 million are Catholics!), where he encouraged peace and mutual understanding between diverse groups of believers, be they Christian or not, calling for harmony and peace, and denouncing the "*widespread injustice*" threatening what he identified as the "*integral development*" of the world. In simple terms, he spoke of the need for "*understanding, patience and dialogue with all*", repeating "***with all!***"

The negativists and reactionaries accuse him of relativism, critical of his open and inclusive approach, even speaking of "*a supermarket of religions*" where "*everyone is there and that you can choose what you want*"!! Nevertheless, there's no stopping Francis at 85, as he sums up: "*We also need others, all others, our Christian sisters and brothers of other confessions, those who hold other religious beliefs than our own, all men and women of good will... May we realize, in a spirit of humility, that only together, in dialogue and mutual acceptance, can we truly achieve something good for the benefit of all.*"

And now, this weekend, Francis is meeting in Assisi with around 1,000 young economic scholars and entrepreneurs for a summit titled "*The Economy of Francesco*", with the intention of providing proposals for reforming the global economic system, and getting the world to think differently about the economy, about which we hear so much. They are future leaders, being challenged to think about how to make a better world in the longer term.

Commentator Ross Gittins, an economist with a strong social conscience, from a Salvation Army background, often writes of the need to consider the human factor and mutual well-being, rather than defining the world in purely financial and statistical figures. Some countries now talk about including wellness factors, and not just GDP (gross domestic product) in measuring the wealth of a society.

The Kingdom of Bhutan (between India and China in the Eastern Himalayas, also 1% Catholic), the only carbon negative country in the world, was the first nation to test a Gross National Happiness Index in 2008, measuring factors including "*psychological health, living standards, community vitality as well as environmental and cultural resilience*" to help inform government policies for the overall good of the whole population.

In fact, did you know, 3 years ago, New Zealand introduced a "***Happiness Index***", described as a "*marker that focusses on the wellbeing of the citizens rather than an economic bottom line*"? It was to help government with budgets aimed at increasing the welfare of citizens instead of basing budgets solely on GDP, which is more a measure of health of economy rather than considering the overall human factor in society. It could be summed up as putting communities before economics. And, admittedly, this is hard to accurately measure, but then don't they say that economic predictions can be a bit like astrology, more wishful thinking than reality.

This all sounds like good sense to me, and seems to fit the theme of today's Gospel, where Jesus is challenging the wealthy, in particular the Pharisees, who were said to love their wealth with a passion, seeing it as God's reward for their virtuosity, which Jesus sees straight through, to their ongoing chagrin, highlighting their hypocrisy.

Today's Gospel is more straightforward than last week, as we see the rich man, Dives, failing to realize, until it is too late, that to "*eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die*", is not an appropriate philosophy or theology of life, for a genuine disciple of Jesus, whose teaching runs directly opposite to the so-called "*Prosperity Gospel*", where comfort and wealth are seen as God's reward, but with no regard for others, particularly the poor and afflicted.

There is a Christian moral responsibility for all to share resources, time and energy, with others in need. It's not just that Lazarus (meaning "***God is my help***") gets his reward in the end, but that he should have been given more respect, attention and care in the first place, given his handicaps in life. Nor is it sufficient for an attitude of rewards coming in the end. The necessity is here and now, to improve the situation of those in need of care in all aspects, physical, material and spiritual. Once again, too, further back, we have the minor, but first, prophet Amos, (ca750BC), trying to shake up the complacent wealthy from their ignorance or denial of their responsibilities to share their wealth. So this is an age old theme, which continues in our world today.

I conclude with a quote from Claude Mostowik MSC: "*Some years ago, Pope Francis said that 'comfortable living' could cause a 'gentrification of the heart' after having condemned the 'globalization of indifference' towards asylum seekers*", and others on the fringes of societies throughout the world.

How can we respond more effectively? For a start, we have our appeal for support for our Refugee and Asylum Seekers group in the parish this weekend. So, let's be generous in our response here, as we take the Gospel to heart and apply it.