



5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

FEBURARY 8, 2026



YOU ARE THE
light of the world

MATTHEW 5:14



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

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Pastor's reflection on the 5th Sunday in Ord. Time [A] Feb. 8, 2026.

We have come to another section of last week's Sunday Gospel. The sentences that we hear in the gospel of today immediately follow the Beatitudes. It is still part of the Sermon on the Mount. Now, Jesus says, "You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the World" (Mt 5:13-14). Maintaining the same tone of the Beatitude (Blessed are you...), the opening line of today's gospel is a promise and an invitation: You *are* the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world, and you *be* the salt of the earth and light of the world. What does that mean? As a Christian and a Catholic what does that mean to you?

Let's begin with the easier or lesser part – at least in meaning if not in practice: You are the light of the world. It is clear even in the statement of Jesus. "A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in people's sight, so that, seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven." As community of the New Israel, we are blessed and invited to be visible signs of the glory of God. The believing community, by its own life, invites the world to be part of the Kingdom of God. How would this be realized in our discipleship and witnessing to the Gospel? By being the salt of the earth!

When speak of the salt. Salt reminds us of taste and food. In the Scriptures, the reference to salt is often associated with food shared in a special context: the covenantal meal! We know that a covenant between two parties was usually sealed with a meal shared together; and other times, salt was simply exchanged between the covenantal parties. And this exchange of salt was a reminder of that covenantal meal. Therefore, salt was also used in temple offering (Ezra 6:9), including burnt offering (Eze 43:24), because the sacrifice that people offered (often in the form of food) was a reminder to the people of Israel of the covenant with the Lord God.

This is the practice that the book of Leviticus (2:13) prescribes, "You will put salt in every cereal offering that you offer, and you will not fail to put *the salt of the covenant of your God* on your cereal offering; to every offering you will add an offering of salt to your God." For the people of Israel, the use of salt together with the food in sacrifice was an invitation to build an intimate relationship with the Lord God.

Therefore, the words of Jesus, to us today, could have two levels of meaning. You are the salt of the earth – the blessing: we are that covenantal sacrifice. There is no need for an external sacrifice. A community that has fully accepted the reign of God is the salt of the earth. It is also an invitation: You be the salt of the earth. That invitation of Jesus could simply mean that we are called to be faithful to the covenant with the Lord God; to be in an intimate relationship with God.

Taken together, then, we are called to be light of the world by being the salt of the earth. We are called to radiate an invitation to the world to be part of the reign of God, by being faithful to our own intimacy with God and our relationship with one another and how we associate and treat each other.

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 Feb 7—Feb 14, 2026

Saturday 5:30pm For God's Guidance and Protection of Gregory Fitzgerald
Feb 07

Sunday 9:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Tristen Brevik
Feb 08 11:00am For God's Guidance and Protection of Fr. Valentine Ugwuanya

Monday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Margaret and Elizabeth Cassata
Feb 09

Tuesday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Mary Ann Pecorelli
Feb 10

Wednesday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Elaine Hubbert
Feb 11

Thursday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Carmen Desruisseaux
Feb 12

Friday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Anna Hinton
Feb 13

Saturday 8:30am For God's Guidance and Protection of Emily Chapman
Feb 14 5:30pm For the Repose of the Soul of Mary Ann Pecorelli

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

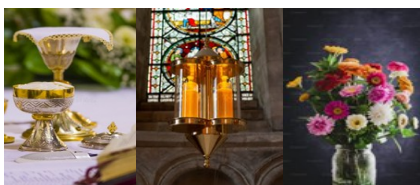
| | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Paul Kocum | Sandi Mosley | Debbie Watson | Rihanna Scott | Venus Matthews |
| Curtis Richards | Carlos Quinones | John Valfour | Corizon Abuzied | Margarete Victor |
| Bob and Barbara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

* 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

We will be getting new Missal/Hymnal books on the week of November 30th First Week of Advent)
Please, take this opportunity to honor a loved one (living or deceased) or commemorate a special event, like the birth of a child, anniversary, etc., by sponsoring a Missal book for just \$20.00

Please Contact Fr. Valentine or call the office, if you are interested in requesting mass intentions, intentions of a Sanctuary Lamp, Chapel Lamp, Altar Bread, Sacramental wine or Altar Flowers.



Ministries: If you're interested in ministries of service either as a Lector or Eucharistic Minister, please call the rectory at 975-375-8568 or fill out the Information below and place in the collection basket.

Name : _____

Telephone #: _____

Lector _____ Eucharistic Minister _____

ANNIVERSARY LITURGY FOR COUPLES:

Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 3 p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark.

Cardinal Tobin, will be celebrating one mass for all married couples. Please use the QR Code to register.



| Collection Report | | Feb 1, 2026 |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Weekly Target | | \$6,500.00 |
| Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy) | | \$ No Data |
| Surplus (Deficit) | | \$ |
| Fiscal Year to Date | | |
| Budget: | | \$379,864.00 |
| Actual: | | \$ 60,253.00 |
| Surplus (Deficit) | | \$ |
| Rolling 4 Week Averages | | |
| Average Collection: | | \$ |
| Average Surplus (Deficit) | | \$ |

| Minister Assignments Feb 14– Feb 15 | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------|
| Saturday Sunday | Lectors | Eucharistic Ministers | Presiding |
| 2/14 5:30pm | Al Papp | Denise Perry Barbara Banks Nellie Bate | Fr. Val |
| 2/15 9:00AM | TBD | Augustine Boakye Stanislaus Egeolu- Obimezie Lorita Onyegbule | Fr. Val |
| 2/15 11: 00am | Dorothy Nwanonyiri | Jerome Hule Victoria Asoluka Bernadine Osuji | Fr. Val |

| GSP EVENT CALENDER | |
|--------------------|---|
| Sunday Feb 08 | |
| Monday Feb 09 | |
| Tuesday Feb 10 | Saint Scholastica |
| Wednesday Feb 11 | Our Lady of Lourdes |
| Thursday Feb 12 | |
| Friday Feb 13 | |
| Saturday Feb 14 | Sainta Cyril and Methodius Valentine's Day |

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.

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

"Our God is close and asks us to be close to each other"

Wednesday, 18 March 2020

Introduction

Today let us pray for the deceased, for those who have died because of the virus. In particular, I would like us to pray for the medical personnel who have died in these days. They have given their lives in service to the sick.

Homily

The theme of both of today's readings is the law (cf. *Dt* 4:1,5-9; *Mt* 5:17-19): the law that God gives to His people, the Law that the Lord wanted to give to us and that Jesus wished to bring to its ultimate perfection. But there is something that attracts attention: the *way* in which God gives the law. Moses says: "What great nation is there that has its gods so near as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call to him?" (*Dt* 4:7). The Lord gives the law to His people with an attitude of *closeness*. They are not the prescriptions of a governor, who may be far-off, or of a dictator... No. There is closeness. And we know through revelation that there is a paternal nearness of a father accompanying His people, giving them the gift of the law. A God who is near. Indeed, "What great nation is there that has its gods so near as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call to him?"

Our God is the God of closeness. He is a God who is near, who walks with His people. That image of the desert, in Exodus: the cloud and the column of fire to protect the people. He walks with His people. He is not a God who leaves the prescriptions of the law in writing and then goes His own way. He writes the prescriptions with His own hand on the rock. Then He gives them, hands them over to Moses. He doesn't give them and then go on His own way. He walks, He is close. "What great nation is there that has its gods so near?" It is closeness. Our God is a God of closeness.

And the first response of man, in the first pages of the Bible, consists of two attitudes of non-closeness. Our response is always to distance ourselves. We distance ourselves from God. He comes close to us and we pull away. Those first two pages. The first reaction of Adam with his wife is to hide. They hide themselves from God's closeness. They are ashamed, because they have sinned. Sin leads us to hide ourselves, to not want nearness. (cf. *Gn* 3:8-10). So many times, we adopt a theology thinking of a God who is a judge. And so I hide myself, I am afraid. The second human reaction before this proposal of God's closeness, is to kill. To kill one's brother. "I am not my brother's keeper" (cf. *Gn* 4:9).

Two types of reaction that inhibit every type of nearness. Man rejects God's nearness. He wants to be in control of relationships. And relationships always bring with them some type of vulnerability. God draws near making Himself weak. And the closer He comes, the weaker He seems to be. When He comes to live among us, He makes Himself man, one of us. He makes Himself weak. He bears that weakness even unto death, the cruelest death, the death at the hands of murderers, the death of the worst sinners. God humbles Himself when He draws near. He humbles Himself to be with us, to walk with us, to help us.

The "God who is near" speaks to us of humility. He is not a "great God", no. He is nearby. He is at home. We see this in Jesus, God made man, close to us even unto death. His disciples accompany Him, He teaches them, He lovingly corrects them... Let us think, for example, of Jesus' closeness to the anguished disciples of Emmaus: they were anguished, defeated, and He drew close to them slowly, to allow them to understand the message of life, of the resurrection (cf. *Lk* 24:13-32).

Our God is close and asks us to be close to each other, not to distance ourselves from one another. In this moment of crisis because of the pandemic we are experiencing, this nearness begs to be manifested more, to be seen more. Perhaps we cannot draw near physically to others because of the fear of contagion, but we can reawaken in ourselves a habit of drawing near to others through prayer, through help. There are many ways of drawing near. And why must be close to each other? Because our God is near. He wished to accompany us in life. He is the God of closeness. For this reason, we are not persons in isolation. We are near to each other, because the inheritance we have received from the Lord is closeness, that is, the gesture of closeness.

Let us ask the Lord for the grace of being near to each other; not to hide ourselves from each other, not to wash our hands of others' problems as Cain did, no. Closeness. Proximity. Nearness. Indeed, "What great nation is there that has its gods so near as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call to him?" (*Dt* 4:7)