



Society of African Missions

“The Mission”

23 Bliss Avenue
Tenafly, NJ 07670
Phone: 201-567-0450
Visit our website
www.smafathers.org

Mass Schedule

Sundays

10:00 am; 12 noon

Weekdays & Holy Days

9:30 am & 11:45 am

Christmas & New Year’s Day

10:00 am; 12 noon

Confessions Saturdays:

After 11:45am Mass.

Or by appointment.

Contact Fr. James McConnell

201-567-0450 Ext. 242

Bereavement & Visit to the Sick

Contact Fr. James McConnell

201-567-0450 Ext. 242

Perpetual Mass Association

Office open Monday-Friday
from 9:30am to 3:00pm

S.M.A. Vocation Office

Fr Dermot Roache, SMA

Director

201-256-0450 Ext. 253

S.M.A. Museum

Open Monday-Sunday from
9:00am –5:00pm

Sunday Collection: \$1,015

Thank you for your support.

Please remember to support

your local parishes.



Administration:

Fr Ranees A. Rayappan,
Provincial Superior

Fr James McConnell,
House Superior

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Masses for the week of NOVEMBER 5, 2023 – NOVEMBER 11, 2023

Date	Time	Intention	Requested by:
Sun.-Sat.	8:00	Liv. & Dec. Benefactors of the SMA	
Sun. Nov. 5	10:00	Ryszard Kawalek+	Richard & Lydia
	12:00	Special Intention Victoria Ann Costa	Victoria Costa
Mon. Nov. 6	9:30	Thomas and Jessica Lee Family (Liv.)	Juliana and Joseph Family
	11:45	John & Edythe Sheehy+	
Tue. Nov. 7	9:30	Michael R. Desrochers+	
	11:45	Gerardina Sozio+ (Birthday Intention)	Susan Iacullo
Wed. Nov. 8	9:30	Cezar & Martina Francisco (Anniv. Living)	Cezar & Martina Francisco
	11:45	Virginia & Braulio Monroy+	Richard & Lydia
Thurs. Nov. 9	9:30	Flora Cortes (Healing - Living)	Fides Miel
	11:45	Nam Yae Cho Marianna+	Anna Lee
Fri. Nov. 10	9:30	Joaquin Miguel Achevida+	Cely Rosal
	11:45	Mercedes Cantor Navarrete+	Friend
Sat. Nov. 11	9:30	Clifford Tavares+	Breda Walsh
	11:45	Karen Camporeale+	Michelle Sullivan

Today’s Readings:

First Reading Malachi 1:14 – 2:2. 8-10

Religious leaders are warned that they have caused many to “stray” and “stumble” because of their teaching and actions.

Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9. 13

God’s message is a “living power” among communities of Christians.

Gospel Matthew 23:1-12

The failures of the scribes and Pharisees are identified, and Jesus suggests that his followers seek a path of humility and service.

Next Saturday!

HOLY HOUR - November 11, 2023 at 8:00pm

“The greatest among you must be your servant.”

Illustration

It was the mid 1960s, and a young woman waited nervously at Archbishop’s House, Westminster, to meet with Cardinal John Heenan. Edwina Gateley had recently returned to Britain from teaching in Uganda and felt a calling to start a volunteer missionary group that would send other lay people overseas to work as missionaries. At that time it was only religious congregations that did this. When she was called in she felt a little intimidated, but she shared her idea. The cardinal listened with interest but was cautious. He warned her gently that she had no authority to start a new movement for laity in the Church, and she left feeling dejected. At that time passive obedience and reception of the sacraments were accepted by most lay people as what being part of the Church was all about.

Edwina returned to Africa, but the dream would not die. Within a few years she was back in London, and the Missionaries of Africa provided accommodation for training courses to start in 1969. The Volunteer Missionary Movement, or VMM, was founded. The cardinal did eventually bless the work and the VMM emerged as a vibrant new church movement. More than 2,500 lay volunteers since then have been on cross-cultural mission in Africa, Latin America and Asia, supporting poor communities and sharing their skills. “We who have received the love of Christ through the Spirit cannot contain it,” Edwina wrote, “it must reach out to others, spilling out and touching the world in which we live.”

Gospel Teaching

Today’s Gospel tells us that authorities – including religious authorities – must be respected but also challenged when their practice is out of line with their teaching. Jesus particularly warns religious leaders that being conscientious and meticulous about trivial things may prevent them from allowing God’s love to flow out of their lives in gracious acts and deeds, and hinder them from recognising that everyone has a valuable contribution to make to their communities. Yet the failure of others is not what is most important. Jesus is concerned that his disciples look at themselves and ask about their own failures. He holds up the scribes and Pharisees as a kind of mirror in which they may see their own weaknesses. The kingdom that Jesus announces points them to something greater than themselves, and greater than structures that have been built by humans. The kingdom refers to the rule of God in hearts and relationships. Equality and loving relationships characterise the new age that Jesus has initiated among us.

Jesus points out that all people are called to be listeners to God’s message. That listening is something that we are to do together, regardless of status. The way of living offered by Jesus has nothing to do with arrogance and power. Rather, it is about partnership, servanthood and humility.

Application

So there’s a warning here to beware of hierarchies of power which can hamper work to bring about God’s kingdom. And it isn’t just addressed to those at the top. Some people prefer only to follow orders, waiting for instructions rather than taking responsibility. When this happens in church structures and communities, the individuals and churches may be less likely to fulfil their God-given potential. Humility is important too. It helps us to be aware of God at all times, in all places, at the centre of all things. It is so easy in our society to make ourselves gods of the tiny kingdoms we occupy and to be enamoured of fancy titles. We climb very small ladders and then assume that we have risen to the heights of our humanity. Those whose lives are lived without listening to their hearts and consciences, and those who make gods out of themselves, their work, their status, their money, never find the God of the universe, who waits quietly within for us to exhaust our compulsive race to nowhere.

Jesus teaches us that serving others and the wider world is the highest vocation, and humility is the greatest virtue. When we listen to God, we are all equal – everybody has the gift of the Holy Spirit, and all are able to tune into that Spirit. When we are bruised, when our fire sputters out, when our lives are battered by situations of oppression and exclusion, we can, in the words of Edwina Gateley, be inspired by the Spirit of God to “reach out to others... touching the world in which we live”.