



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

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. Austin Ochu

201-567-0450 Ext. 225

Perpetual Mass Association

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

S.M.A. Vocation Office

Fr Dermot Roache, SMA

Director

201-567-0450 Ext. 253

S.M.A. Museum

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

Contact Fr. James McConnell

201-567-0450 Ext. 242

Sunday Collection: \$852

Thank you for your support.

Please remember to support
 your local parishes.

Administration:

Fr Ranees A. Rayappan, SMA

Provincial Superior

Fr Austin Ochu, SMA

House Superior

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Masses for the week of AUGUST 25, 2024 – AUGUST 31, 2024

Date	Time	Intention	Requested by:
Sun.-Sat.	8:00	Liv. & Dec. Benefactors of the SMA	
Sun. Aug. 25	10:00	Sung Whan Choi (Living)	Juliana & Joseph Family
	12:00	The protection of babies in the womb and their families	D’Souza Family
Mon. Aug. 26	9:30	Concepcion Santos+	Josie Martinez
	11:45	Ian Co+ and Gilberto Guinto+	
Tue. Aug. 27	9:30	Annie Hamill+	Daughter
	11:45	Jesus Alberto Tatis+	Josie Martinez
Wed. Aug. 28	9:30	John Tolentino (Liv.)	Erly Cortez
	11:45	Javier Castro Velez+	Martha Paladino
Thurs. Aug 29	9:30	Maria R. Valdes+	Friend
	11:45	William Cole Hackman (Liv.)	Joseph & Noreen
Fri. Aug. 30	9:30	Josefa Kruk+	Josie Martinez
	11:45	Ann Peltier+ (10 yr), Joseph Kurpiel Jr.+	Michelle Supper
Sat. Aug. 31	9:30	Florentino Ramirez+	Mr. & Mrs. Dominic Porto
	11:45	Mary Spratt (Healing-Cancer)	Family

Today’s Readings:

First Reading: Joshua 24:1-2. 15-18 – *The people chose to serve the Lord and recognised all that God had done for them.*

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:21-32 – *Christ is the head of the Church and each of us are faithful members of the one body.*

Gospel: John 6:60-69 – *Jesus’ teachings can be difficult to accept. Do we, like St Peter, recognise him as the Holy One of God?*



“The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life.”

Illustration

Most of us are familiar with the story of The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien. It is a fantasy tale about the great struggle between good and evil and the roles that different nations and characters play within this battle. In the early stages of the story the Fellowship of the Ring is first formed to carry out the task of destroying the One Ring to prevent it from being used for evil purposes. This is an extremely dangerous task, bordering on foolhardy, but the first to offer his support is Aragorn, the rightful king of Gondor. He says to Frodo, the diminutive hobbit tasked with carrying the ring: “If by my life or death I can protect you, I will. You have my sword.” This starts a chain reaction of each member of the Fellowship stepping forward to pledge themselves to the cause of making sure that Frodo reaches Mordor to destroy the ring. It is Aragorn’s pledge to abide by the fellowship and carry out the task that sets in motion the great adventure that follows.

Gospel Teaching

We see a parallel of this pledge in today’s Gospel. Jesus’ teachings are hard and many of the disciples were not able to accept them. So, they left Jesus and returned to their former lives. The way of the cross and the narrow road were too difficult. But Peter, like Aragorn, is willing to accept the challenge and even more importantly, he is ready to accept the truth. The Twelve realised how difficult it was but were compelled to stay. Just like the Fellowship of the Ring knew that their mission was fraught with danger but were compelled to confront evil and do what was right. Peter says, “To whom shall we go?”, because once we have the truth in our grasp how can we turn to anything else?

The twelve tribes of Israel came to the same conclusion back in Joshua’s time. When he bluntly asks them to decide there and then if they are going to continue to serve the Lord, we see that they were not willing to abandon themselves to the ways of their surrounding culture. They chose to stay the course, to serve the Lord, and not forget what God had done for them. In the same way, the twelve apostles chose faithfulness and service in their time.

Application

So, what does all this mean for us today? Well, each of us is confronted with a choice. Do we choose to follow God, or are we led along by the culture of our time and place? Do we accept the hard teachings of Jesus, or do we take the easier road and walk away? Do we choose truth and goodness, or do we allow our hearts to succumb to the evil and darkness of this world? And we do not merely make this choice once in our lives. We make this choice day by day and moment by moment.

We might respond by saying that Joshua is not standing in front of us now asking us to decide. But the call to serve the Lord is present in every generation. The Israelites were living in a foreign land with strange customs and competing gods. Is our culture and technology not similar in offering us counter-Christian views and constant distractions? It is up to each of us to make the active decision to put down our smartphone or turn off our television and direct our minds to God. This may be just a simple prayer, or some time contemplating nature or attending Mass, but let us not take these things for granted but strive to choose God every day.

Or we might also respond by saying that Jesus was talking to his disciples two thousand years ago, not directly to us today. But did Jesus not say that whatever you do for the least of these you do for me? By choosing to help the person in need we are choosing to follow the Master. This is not always easy or convenient, but it is the way of accompanying Jesus. Through our daily acts of love and kindness we are again choosing to serve the Lord. And to whom else would we go? Once we recognise Jesus as “the Holy One of God” we are united in our quest. And just like the Fellowship of the Ring, we remain steadfast in our service of the Lord and each other.