

# St. Joseph Catholic Church

Harlowton, Montana

Missions:

Blessed Sacrament, Shawmut

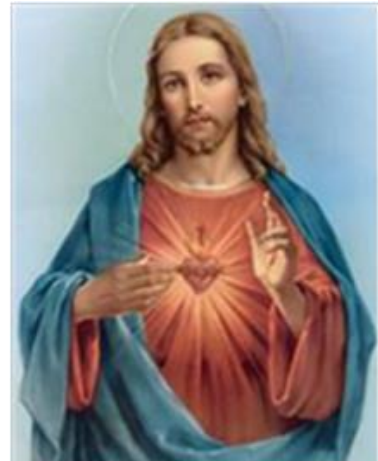
Immaculate Conception, Judith Gap

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## Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time August 25, 2024

*Many murmur, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" If we think of the Christian life without faith, and only from the perspective of our weaknesses and limitations, then we fail to see that Christ offers us "everlasting life." His grace makes it possible for us to love one another and to be "holy and without blemish." "Decide today whom you will serve" — the "Holy One of God" who gives us "Spirit and life." It is in serving the Lord that we "taste and see the goodness of the Lord."*

*We will serve the Lord, for he is our God.*

**First Reading: Joshua 24:1-2, 15-18** *1Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. 2And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Your fathers lived of old beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. 15And if you be unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.' 16Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; 17for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; 18and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land; therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God."*

**Psalms 34:2-3, 16-21 R: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

*1I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and be glad. 15The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous, and his ears toward their cry. 16The face of the LORD is against evildoers, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. 17When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. 18The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit. 19Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the LORD delivers him out of them all. 20He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.*

*This is a great mystery, regarding Christ and the Church.*

**Second Reading: Ephesians 5:21-32** *21Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. 23For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. 25Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, 30because we are members of his body. 31"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church;*

**Alleluia, Alleluia:** *Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life; you have the words of everlasting life. Alleluia, Alleluia*

To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

**Gospel: John 6:60-69** **60**Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" **61**But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? **62**Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before? **63**It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. **64**But there are some of you that do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. **65**And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father." **66**After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. **67**Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" **68**Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; **69**and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

**12:00 noon Sunday Mass at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Harlowton, MT.**

**Daily Mass on Thursdays at noon at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Harlowton, MT.**

**\*\*\*Confessions before Sunday Mass beginning at 11:30 am or by appointment. Please join us to pray the rosary for our nation and community 1/2 hour before Sunday Mass.**

**Sunday Mass at 9 am at St. Bartholomew, White Sulphur Springs & 4:30pm at Holy Cross, Townsend.**

**\*\*\*Eucharistic Adoration on Thursdays – join us anytime between 12:30–3:30 pm.**

**RE is on Thursdays. High school group is the same time & material as the Catholicism 101 series.**

### **Please pray for our seminarians:**

Riley Helgoe

Kaleb Mitchell

Jamie Severson

Matt Keck

Jake Smith

Deacon. Dillon Armstrong

Bret Rotz

Carter Anderson

James Semling

John Cooney

Anthony Olmes

Shae Bills

Carson Gorton

\*\*\*Mark Bruschwein is no longer with our diocese but will be continuing his studies in Spain.

## **Mark Your Calendars:**

**Reminder: The Bishops of Montana have asked us to abstain from meat or some other pleasure on Wednesdays until the end of election season as a way to reject CI-128. If you have any questions about this, please let me know.**

We will not have a potluck in August but restart in September on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month.

**Attention parents! The schedules for the RE year are available. RE will begin on Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup> with Mass at 8:30 and youth group at 9 am.**

Thank you to everyone who helped with the parish clean-up day.

## **Father Cody's Corner: Basics of Catholicism Part 54: Confirmation**

The last 1000 years has caused a great deal of confusion when developing an understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation. I want to spend this part of the series reflecting on these challenges. Prior to the Council of Trent in 1540-1560, the Sacrament of Confirmation was merely another Sacrament or a step in the process. Stories from the Middle Ages show these challenges. When parents heard that a bishop was passing through town, they would line up their kids along the road so that bishop could lay his hands upon them and give them the Sacrament of Confirmation. Although it was always understood to be a Sacrament, the rite associated with it was still in development. The Council of Trent radically revised the Sacrament of Confirmation. After the Protestant revolutionaries tried to discount and dismiss Confirmation as a Sacrament, the Church came back with a definitive ruling on this Sacrament. Not only did the Council of Trent reiterate the teaching that Confirmation is a Sacrament but greatly added to its theological understanding and gave it an official Rite in the Church. Those ideas were largely lost on the modern church. With the age of Confirmation throughout the west increased to high school age, many understood the Sacrament as a "completion of Catholic education" or "a graduation from Catholicism." These ideas pervaded the thoughts of modern Catholics. I hope you now understand why so many people left the Church following their graduation from high school.

A new revival in the understanding and teaching of the theology of the Sacrament of Confirmation is underway in the US. Many people who have begun to venture into its theology and meaning are trying to rebuild catechetical programs to better express the

beauty and value of this Sacrament. Some bishops in the United States are lowering the age of Confirmation to remove the connection between graduation and Confirmation. This idea is called the “Restored Order.” Namely, that the original order of the Sacraments of Initiation were Baptism, Confirmation, and then Eucharist. I will cover more on this order once I have explained the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Not only does the lowering of the age of Confirmation help divorce the Sacrament from graduation but it also allows youth to take a more active approach in the church and gives them graces to persevere through some of the more challenging developmental parts of their lives.

This new revival in the Sacrament of Confirmation should affect all of us not just the ones preparing to receive the Sacrament. The Sacrament of Confirmation is not just a step in our journey but an event that changes the character of who we are and what we are meant to do. Everyone needs to spend some time reflecting on the mystery of the Sacrament and its power in our life, which I will cover soon, so that we can recapture its power, value, and purpose in our lives. ~ Fr. Cody

## **[A Choice to Make: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)**

Listen Here: <https://stpaulcenter.com/studies-tools/sunday-bible-reflections/>

Readings: [Joshua 24:1-2, 15-18](#); [Psalm 34:2-3, 16-23](#); [Ephesians 5:21-32](#); [John 6:60-69](#)

This Sunday’s Mass readings conclude a four-week meditation on the Eucharist.

The Twelve Apostles in today’s Gospel are asked to make a choice—either to believe and accept the New Covenant He offers in His Body and Blood or return to their former ways of life.

Their choice is prefigured by the decision Joshua asks the Twelve Tribes to make in today’s First Reading.

Joshua gathers them at Shechem—where God first appeared to their father Abraham promising to make his descendants a great nation in a new land (see [Genesis 12:1-9](#)). And he issues a blunt challenge: either renew their covenant with God or serve the alien gods of the surrounding nations.

We too are being asked today to decide whom we will serve. For four weeks we have been presented in the liturgy with the mystery of the Eucharist—a daily miracle far greater than those performed by God in bringing the Israelites out of the land of Egypt.

He has promised us a new homeland and eternal life, offering us bread from heaven to strengthen us on our journey. He has told us that unless we eat His Flesh and drink His Blood we will have no life in us.

It is a hard saying, as many murmur in today’s Gospel. Yet He has given us the words of eternal life.

We must believe, as Peter says today, that He is the Holy One of God, who handed Himself over for us, who gave His flesh for the life of the world.

As we hear in today’s Epistle, Jesus did this that we might be sanctified, made holy, through the water and word of Baptism by which we enter into His new covenant. Through the Eucharist, He nourishes and cherishes us, making us His own flesh and blood, as husband and wife become one flesh.

Let us renew our covenant today, approaching the altar with confidence that, as we sing in today’s Psalm, the Lord will redeem the lives of His servants. ~ Dr. Scott Hahn

### **Suggested Prayer of the Faithful** *(Each local community should compose its own Universal Prayer but may find inspiration in the texts proposed here.)* **page 357 August Magnificat**

***The Lord is eager to listen to our cry. Entrusting all our cares to him, we voice our prayers to the Father:***

*That the Church will constantly give unfailing witness to Jesus Christ, guiding her members safely to eternal salvation.*

*That the life of every human person, from conception to natural death, will be enshrined and protected in our laws.*

*For an increase of vocations to the priesthood and to consecrated life.*

*For all students and educators: that the new school year will be one of joy and growth in the knowledge and love of God.*

*That our parish may rededicate itself to evangelization and works of true justice.*

*For the grace to remain wholehearted disciples of our Savior and faithful members of the Church.*

***Loving Father, help us to face the challenges of daily life with confidence in your love and protection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.***

### **Intercessions** *pages 360-361 August Magnificat*

***Beloved by God, members of Christ, we dare to pray:***

***R/ Hear us, O Lord!***

*For all married couples:*

*– make them strong witnesses of your love for your people. R/*

*For all who do not know your love for them:*

*– let them see you in the love of others. R/*

*For all whom you have nourished with the Body and Blood of Christ:*

*– let them live the love they have received from you. R/*

***Personal intentions***

***Our Father....***

***God of love, you sent us your only Son as the gift of life. Reawaken in us the gifts of faith, hope, and love, that we may bear faithful witness to the truth of the Gospel and the power of your Word, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.***



FOUNDATION  
for the Diocese of Helena

Since the Foundation's  
*Faith-in-Action* Grant Program  
began in 2007,

ST. JOSEPH PARISH  
has received a total of

**\$6,574.65**

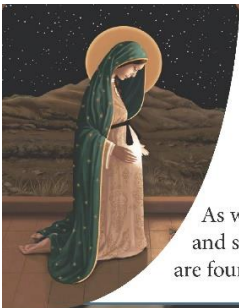
including . . .

**\$2,000 awarded in August**

to host a free showing of *The Chosen* at the local  
theatre and provide a dinner at the church  
for the Harlowton community.

The Foundation gave  
**32 grants**  
for a total of  
**\$86,950**  
in this grant cycle.

YOUR support of the  
Foundation makes this  
possible. Help build your  
favorite parish or ministry  
endowment with an  
online gift at  
**fdoh.org**.



# Montana Catholics For Life

## For Babies For Mothers For Families

As we continue to answer our Montana Bishops' call to defend life and reject the radical abortion initiative CI-128, please watch and share the videos below. May they bless us and all who watch them as we promote the beauty and sanctity of life. Both videos are found at the web address and QR code below.



### **Into Life Series: *Rejoicing in Her: Our Disposition of Heart***

The Sisters of Life delve into the profound responsibility of supporting someone during vulnerable moments, emphasizing how such moments are gifts of trust that require gentleness and humility. They introduce three key dispositions—prayer, leisure, and delight—that guide us in offering genuine love and respect, highlighting the power of delight in nurturing deep connections and sustaining hope. The Sisters remind us that every person is worthy of time, attention, and unwavering support. By reflecting God's love rather than trying to "fix" others, we can help them recognize their own worth and great dignity.



### **Faithful Citizenship Series: *Catholics & Politics***

Matt Brower delves into how laws and social structures must uphold the dignity of every person. He lays out key elements of Catholic social teaching; the dignity of the human person, subsidiarity, the common good, and solidarity. Rather than lofty theories—these principles offer a moral compass for Catholic participation in civic life. For those committed to fostering a just and moral society, this video is essential. It will help align voting choices with our values and dedication to human dignity.

Find these, and more life-affirming resources at [montanacc.org/montana-bishops-defend-life](http://montanacc.org/montana-bishops-defend-life), or by scanning the QR code.



**Here is the link for ALL 12 videos of the "Into Life Series":**

[https://intoliferies.com/watch/2-seeing-reality-the-contemplative-outlook/?fbclid=IwY2xjawETAi5leHRuA2FibQlxMAABHTmo32sbmLfPxVQqRElc1ajCqhsAKwMur93T1Z9F0SQHSioxgnCb4j2Qw\\_aem\\_NdmCXXmWK11YjahnT4UovA](https://intoliferies.com/watch/2-seeing-reality-the-contemplative-outlook/?fbclid=IwY2xjawETAi5leHRuA2FibQlxMAABHTmo32sbmLfPxVQqRElc1ajCqhsAKwMur93T1Z9F0SQHSioxgnCb4j2Qw_aem_NdmCXXmWK11YjahnT4UovA)

**Here's the link for ALL 8 of the Faithful Citizenship videos:** [https://montanacc.org/category/faithful-citizenship-series/?fbclid=IwY2xjawETA0teHRuA2FibQlxMAABHUkzvnVlb6GurJtksH7PiUuEh7ae2OF7qxRUc5LCJJBi-XDNz40NaDob3Q\\_aem\\_vx19GR8LrvHOJR8m-vNNmQ](https://montanacc.org/category/faithful-citizenship-series/?fbclid=IwY2xjawETA0teHRuA2FibQlxMAABHUkzvnVlb6GurJtksH7PiUuEh7ae2OF7qxRUc5LCJJBi-XDNz40NaDob3Q_aem_vx19GR8LrvHOJR8m-vNNmQ)