



**13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**June 28, 2026**



# TAKE UP **YOUR CROSS**



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## 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

Christian Veliz Music Minister

For more information on our parish please go to:  
[Goodshepherdnj.com](http://Goodshepherdnj.com)  
 Or email us at  
[gsirvington@comcast.net](mailto:gsirvington@comcast.net)

## **PASTOR'S REFLECTION ON 13<sup>TH</sup> SUN. IN O.T. JUNE 28,'26**

Summertime is upon us, a time when our busy-ness is not so demanding. It's a time of recreation and a time during which we can be reflective. What about reading some good books, especially books and things to read that turn our thoughts toward God. What about some quiet time spent in reflection about God's presence in our lives?

Our lives are filled with "busy-ness"; there are so many things we need to do and so many things we consider to be important. But what about God? Where is He in our lives? What sort of attention do we give to God? We need to ask that question from time to time and today's readings challenge us to do just that not only today, or on Sundays, but each and every day of our lives. There are two big points to draw from today's readings; the first being the question of how important God is to us in our lives. The second has to do with God's messengers. God uses messengers, intermediaries, to relate to us. How important are they to us?

The readings in today's Mass are about what's first in our lives, or what should be first, namely our relationship with God. Our relationship with God is the most important relationship we can have in our lives. Our relationship with God is the most important thing we can lose in our lives. God offers Himself to us, we respond. If we don't respond, we're telling God that His offer has no value for us and that His offer doesn't mean anything to us. Whether or not our immortal souls live in eternal life in heaven depends on our relationship with God here on earth.

"Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me."

These words might sound strange but Jesus is not asking us not to love our parents or our children. Since the love for our family members is dear and important to us, Jesus is rather asking us to give him more of that love. In fact, to love him more than we love our family members. Our love for God and for the things of God should always come before the love for family and personal interests. He once told us: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22.37). This is what Jesus is saying when he tells us today that he who loves father or mother or children more than him is not worthy of him. When we love God first and above everything else, then we can know how to love our family and friends.

The love of God also involves welcoming and loving those who work for God and those who assist in the works of His Church. Jesus highlighted this in the Gospel: "Anyone who welcomes a prophet will have a prophet's reward; and anyone who welcomes a holy man will have a holy man's reward". The truth is that every love we give to God or done for the sake of God, comes back to us. Nothing given to God is ever forgotten. God remembers our love and sacrifices because he cannot afford to owe us. He pays back by rewarding us beyond measure. This is what we read about in the first Reading involving the Prophet Elisha and the woman at Shunem. On her own initiative, the woman decided to provide the needs of the prophet whenever he passed by their house. She even told her husband: "Look, I am sure the man who is constantly passing our way must be a holy man of God. Let us build him a small room on the roof". She saw Elisha as a holy man and thus offered him her hospitality. Because of her kindness to the holy man, she received a holy man's reward as Jesus told us in the Gospel. God rewarded her through the holy man, the prophet Elisha, by giving her a miracle of having a son at a time when her husband was too old. Every love and kindness done in the name of God is always rewarded. As we would say that, no good deed, goes unrewarded by God, but you will not know how and when God will reward you.

### **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 June 27, - July 4. 2026

Saturday	5:30PM	God's Blessings on the Birthday of Brenda Perry
June 27		
Sunday	9:00am	For4 God's Guidance and Protection of Louis Herbert
June 28	11:00am	For the Repose of the Soul of Cecilia Okolo
Monday	7:00am	For God's Blessing and Protection on the People of Good Shepherd Parish
June 29		
Tuesday	7:00am	For God's Strength and Guidance on Fr. Valentine Ugwuanya
June 30		
Wednesday	7:30am	For the Repose of the Soul of Annie Primerana
July 01		
Thursday	7:30am	For the Repose of the Soul of Debra Chapman
July 02		
Friday	7:30am	For God's Health and Protection of Louis Herbert
July 03		
Saturday	8:30am	For the People of Good Shepherd Parish
July 04	5:30pm	For the People of Good Shepherd Parish

*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 Nezlck	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

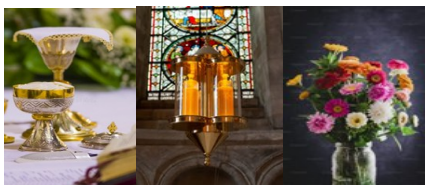
**Ministries:** If you're interested in ministries of service either as a Lector or Eucharistic Minister, please call the rectory at 975-375-8568 or fill out the Information below and place in the collection basket.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Lector \_\_\_\_\_ Eucharistic Minister \_\_\_\_\_

**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, or Altar Flowers.**



# ANNUAL <sup>2026</sup> APPEAL

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



## No. 3 POPE LEO ON MANIFICA HUMANITAS INTRODUCTION

### Building for the common good

11. Building a city founded on the common good implies, first and foremost, building on a firm relationship with God. It means recognizing that the truth of his love calls us to life “in all its fullness” (*Jn* 10:10) and communion with him. Like Saint Augustine, we too can say, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” [8] Indeed, God has inscribed in our hearts a desire for happiness that embraces all the dimensions of life. The Church, in dialogue with the men and women of our time, recognizes the urgent need to safeguard and guide this aspiration toward its deepest truth.

12. Secondly, building for the common good means accepting the limits and weakness of humanity without considering them an error to be corrected. Today, the human desire for fullness of life is at risk of being misled by deceitful goals, such as the prospect of a technology that promises to free us from all weakness, and models of wellbeing that leave behind entire populations. All too often, we place our hope in unlimited “upgrades,” in forms of progress that exacerbate inequalities, and in immediate solutions incapable of healing people’s wounds. As a result, while some pursue the illusion of unlimited self-assertion, many are deprived of basic necessities. The Church reminds us, with a firm yet humble voice, that true fulfilment is not achieved by eliminating weakness but through harmonious growth. It is found where freedom and responsibility are intertwined with mutual care and true solidarity, and where progress is measured by the dignity of each person and the good of all peoples.

13. Thirdly, building a world in which everyone can flourish requires shared responsibility and courage. No one can single-handedly bear the weight of the challenges the world is facing, just as no one is so weak that they cannot play their part, for “power is made perfect in weakness” (*2 Cor* 12:9). All are given their own section of the wall: scientists and researchers, entrepreneurs and workers, educators and legislators, civil society, popular movements and faith communities. This is the logic of subsidiarity, which values the cooperation between generations, peoples, disciplines and cultures as the best way for fostering stability, prosperity and peace. We should not be intimidated by tensions or differences because they can become creative forces when guided by shared responsibility.

14. Finally, building for the common good requires an evangelical language. We must avoid humiliating or antagonistic words, opting rather for a clarity that sheds light and a frankness that unlocks new possibilities. We cannot condone naïve enthusiasms, nor fuel unfounded fears. Instead, let us establish standards for discernment — the dignity of the human person, the universal destination of goods, the preferential option for the poor, care for our common home and peace — and let us translate these standards into practices such as responsible planning, the assessment of human and social impact, the inclusion of the most vulnerable, the promotion of digital literacy and guiding research and industry toward justice and peace.

#### Remaining human

15. In the recent Ordinary Jubilee Year of 2025, we walked as pilgrims of hope and were blessed with many graces. Strengthened by these gifts, we can move forward with confidence to face the arduous tasks and demanding challenges that lie ahead. In the era of artificial intelligence, when human dignity is threatened by new forms of dehumanization, ours is the pressing duty to remain profoundly human. We must lovingly safeguard the grandeur of humanity bestowed upon us and revealed in its fullness in Christ, the splendor of which no machine can ever replace. True progress always stems from a heart open to others, an intelligence willing to listen and a will that seeks what unites rather than what separates.

16. I address this heartfelt appeal to all the Catholic faithful, to all Christians and to all men and women of goodwill. Let us not be afraid to get our hands dirty on the “construction site” of our time. Like Nehemiah, let us pray, plan wisely and work perseveringly, placing God at the forefront of our actions and the human person at the center of our choices. Thus, the “rejected stones” — the poor, the sick, the migrants and the least among us — will become the cornerstone, and a solid, welcoming common home will emerge on the earth, where love and faithfulness will finally meet, and righteousness and peace will embrace (cf. *Ps* 85:10). This is the blessing we implore from God; and the task that stands before us is that of being builders of communion, rather than architects of Babel. We are to be servants of the coming Kingdom, instead of lords of towers destined for ruin. With the heart of a shepherd and a father, I ask everyone to abandon the construction of yet another Tower of Babel and to join forces in building up the common good, so that humanity will never lose its beauty, and the world once again will come to recognize the human heart as the place where God desires to dwell.