

Today we move ahead in our reading of Matthew’s Gospel. Last week we read about [Jesus walking on the water](#) and the disciples’ confession of faith that Jesus is the Son of God. If we were reading Matthew’s entire Gospel, we would have read about Jesus’ debate with the Pharisees about Jewish purity laws. Jesus argues that it is not what goes into us that makes us unclean; he is referring to the strict Jewish dietary rules. Instead our words and our actions—what comes out of us—make us unclean because they emerge from a heart that is unclean. Knowing about Jesus’ debate with the Pharisees helps us to understand today’s Gospel. In fact the story heightens the surprise and shock we feel as we hear Jesus’ exchange with the Canaanite woman. The woman, who is not Jewish, approaches Jesus, requesting that he heal her demon-possessed daughter. At first Jesus ignores her; he says nothing. The disciples ask Jesus to send her away, and Jesus agrees, remarking that he was sent to minister to the Jews alone. The woman persists, paying homage to Jesus, and yet Jesus denies her request again. He even insults her, using a Jewish word of derision for Gentiles, “dog.” But the woman cleverly turns Jesus’ insult into an affirmation of faith. Only then does Jesus grant her request and heal her daughter. Jesus’ unresponsiveness to this woman may strike us as uncharacteristic or shocking. Yet in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus’ ministry is directed primarily to the people of Israel. At only a very few points, such as the one found in today’s Gospel, do we find Jesus anticipating the later Christian ministry to the rest of the world. Behind Matthew’s text we can hear this early Christian community’s struggle to understand how God’s selection of Israel is consistent with two events: Israel’s rejection of Jesus and the Gentiles’ acceptance of Jesus. Just as Jesus was surprised by the faith expressed by the Canaanite woman, so too the first Christians were surprised that the Gentiles would receive the salvation God offered through Christ. In today’s second reading from Paul’s letter to the Romans, we hear the apostle Paul considering this same concern. The faith that the Canaanite woman expresses is an affirmation of and confidence in God’s abundant mercy. Yes, salvation comes through Israel, but it overflows for the benefit of all. --Loyola Press



EVENING OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER
Please join us in the Church on Monday, August 17th, at 6:30 p.m. in praying the rosary and exposition of the BLESSED SACRAMENT. Confession will be available.



St. Alphonsus Parish is beginning work on an updated parish directory. The last directory was completed in 2014. If you would like to serve on the committee, please contact Sheila Kowalewski at 228-217-6349 or by email at sheila.kowalewski@gmaio.com.



The Lord Is My Help needs volunteers to pack take-out lunches from 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. and/or to serve lunch from 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. (no cooking involved) the week of August 31st – September 4th. If you are able to volunteer your time on any of these days at either/both times, please call Jamie Lloyd at 713-818-6071. Any help would be greatly appreciated.



The Flowers on the Altar are in Memory of Deceased Altar Society Members

WEEKLY OFFERING
Sunday Collection.....\$10,850.09
Weekly Online Collection.....\$ 4,612.71
May God Bless You for your generous and faithful support

MASSSES FOR THE WEEK

MONDAY	AUGUST 17
Ezekiel 24:15-23; Matthew 19:16-22	
6:30 a.m.	Ms. Mollie Davidson
8:15 a.m.	Mr. Tom Hanes
TUESDAY	AUGUST 18
Ezekiel 28:1-10; Matthew 19:23-30	
6:30 a.m.	Ms. Annette Lawrence
8:15 a.m.	Mr. Rick Antonelli
WEDNESDAY	AUGUST 19
Ezekiel 34:1-11; Matthew 20:1-16	
6:30 a.m.	Int. Ike Kincke Family
8:15 a.m.	Int. Sr. Eileen Brosnahan
THURSDAY	AUGUST 20
Ezekiel 36:23-28; Matthew 22:1-14	
6:30 a.m.	Ms. Anne Morgan Touns
8:15 a.m.	Int. Mr. Ken Schwartz
FRIDAY	AUGUST 21
Ezekiel 37:1-14; Matthew 22:34-40	
6:30 a.m.	Ms. Marge Bailey
8:15 a.m.	Mr. Jeremy Forehand
SATURDAY	AUGUST 22
Ezekiel 43:1-7ab; Matthew 23-1-12	
8:15 a.m.	Mr. Anthony Belson
4:00 p.m.	Int. Ms. Stacey Goff
	Mr. Charles Goff
	Mr. Rodney Goff
SUNDAY	AUGUST 23
Isaiah 22:19-23; Romans 11:33-36; Matthew 16:13-20	
7:30 a.m.	Mr. Bryan Moe
9:00 a.m.	Ms. Bridget Shepherd
11:30 a.m.	Congregation
5:30 p.m.	Ms. Julia Mejia



Pray for Our Parishioners and Friends: Beckett Bassenger, Betty Bodin, Michael Bosarge, Bryleigh Brochard, Roland Broussard, Roxie Buckles, Arlene Burns, Mildred “Tootsie” Caillavet, Benny Cantin, Marshall Car, Jennifer Catchot, Clifford Claverie, Scott Claverie, Breanne Dalton, Gina Dasher, Marjorie DuBois, Michelle Dyess, Rose Mary Eagan, Dawn Fountain, Nija Fountain, Barbara Fournier, Gordon Gaethe, Caroline Gautier, Ansley Gilich, Julian Galloway, Margie Gammon, Sandra Grantham, Richard Harrison, Trent Hartzog, James Hebert, Margaret Hebert, Olivia Hood, Mary Jo Hoogstra, Jeff Janus, Ashley Jensen, Fr. Jey Jordan, Lora Jordan, Otis Kaufman, Myra Kittle, Bill Kortman, Mary Krystosek, Daisie Laborde, Carol Latham, Nelda Latour, Judy and Randy Lesso, Mary Lewis, Gordon Mathieu, Shellie McDaniel, Mrs. McKinney Steve Merkel, Thelma Miller, Iva Misko, Edward Necaise, Donna and Edward Necaise Jr., Terèse Nicovich, Shirley and Travis Norman, Cody Parker, Scott Parker, Kathy Pasquini, Janice Pepper, The Petitjean Family, Jean Petricca, MaraLou Guice Richards, Charles Wesley Ryan, Jr., Margaret Rucinski, Julia Sarpy, Courtney Severino, Glenn Sigumjak, Myrt Talbott, Brittany and John Thornton, Sarah Galle Traylor, Rose M. Vail, Margaret Misko VanLoon, Ashley Vickers and Glenn Williams, Sr. and all our Homebound Parishioners.



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CONSTRUCTION UPDATE
The next phase of our Capital Campaign project has begun. This phase includes construction of the new entrance cover and enclosure of the breezeway between the church and school. The main front entrance and the side entrance by the school will be closed during construction. You will need to use the two side entrance doors near the altar.



The IMMACULATE Heart of Mary
The month of August is dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. What better way to honor Our Lady this month than to visit her Son in the adoration chapel. Mary was the first adorer of Jesus. Let us follow her example and adore Jesus, the One who sacrificed everything to save us!



If you currently have a designated Adoration hour on the We Adore Him website and have not been going for three months or more, your name will be removed from the schedule. If you need to try a new hour, please visit stalphonsus.weadorehim.com to view the schedule and choose a new hour.



The Catholic Diocese of Biloxi will host upcoming information sessions for the diaconate class of 2032. These sessions offer men and their wives an opportunity to learn more about the diaconate, the formation process, and service to the Church in this ministry. Sessions will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon at St. Thomas Parish in Hattiesburg on August 22nd, St. Mary Parish in Gautier on September 12th, and St. Thomas Parish in Long Beach on September 26th.



Serving at the altar is an honor and an important service to our parish. Youth who have received First Communion are eligible to serve. Hands-on-training for new and returning servers will be held in the Church from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. with specific training on these parts of the Mass. Please call the office at 228-875-5419 to register for each training session. Monday, September 14: Reception of Gifts and Setting of the Altar Monday, October 12: Holy Communion and Purification of Vessels Monday, November 9: Benediction After Mass and Clearing of Vessels



The Catholic Diocese of Biloxi is seeking a Director of Finance to lead and oversee financial operations across the Diocese, including the Chancery, Catholic Charities, and related ministries. This key leadership role serves as the primary financial advisor to the Bishop, ensuring sound financial planning, strong internal controls, and faithful stewardship of Church resources. The Director works closely with clergy and diocesan leadership to promote transparency, accountability, and alignment with the mission of fostering Discipleship in Christ. Candidates should have a bachelor’s degree (advanced degree preferred), 7–10 years of financial management experience—ideally in a nonprofit setting—and a commitment to Catholic values. CPA certification is preferred. For full details and/or to apply, please visit: <https://www.biloxidiocese.org/director-finance>



Our Parish App is one great way to help make the liturgical season more present in your daily life. Helpful reflections will aid you in reflecting on the Mass readings each day. Also – under FORMED, you will be able to stream hundreds of hours of inspiring movies and video series, read bestselling Catholic eBooks, and listen to audio presentations from the Church’s’ most compelling speakers and is available from virtually any device...anytime, anywhere. **Don’t have the App or FORMED yet?** If you have either an iPhone or Android smart phone you can download the App by texting App to phone number 55321, or by visiting myparishapp.com. To gain access to FORMED – go to the website at www.formed.org and enter our Parish Code f1f5a9 (case sensitive) on the homepage, create an account with your username/email and password.



A lovely flower arrangement on the altar area of the church is a beautiful way to honor a deceased loved one or to celebrate a special occasion. If you would like to donate for a specific weekend, please call the Rectory at 228-875-5419. Donation amount is \$50.00.



Our Elementary Youth Faith Formation ministry program (Grades K–5) offers children a safe, welcoming place to build a strong foundation in the Catholic faith, ask questions, learn to pray, and grow in a personal relationship with Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Show your children the importance of God in our lives by registering them for St. Alphonsus Elementary Faith Formation. **Registration is being held now through August 31st. Classes begin Sunday, September 13th and meet from 10:15–11:15 a.m. Forms are available online at osstalphonsus.org under Faith Formation–Registration and at each church entrance. Volunteers are needed to help teach our Catholic faith. To volunteer or ask questions, please contact Jane Sema at 228-217-1392 or jsema@osstalphonsus.org.**



Are you curious about the Catholic Faith or thinking about becoming a Catholic? OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) is a welcoming opportunity to learn, ask questions, study, and grow alongside others. Whether you’re exploring the Church for the first time or a Catholic who was never confirmed, you are welcome to join us! **Classes start Wednesday, August 19th. Contact Jammie at 228-806–2641 for more information.**



Attention youth in grades 6–12, including Confirmation candidates: An informational and signup meeting will be held Wednesday, September 9th at 6:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. All youth and parents are asked to attend. Dinner will be provided. As Catholics, we are called not only to follow the five precepts of the Church, but to go beyond them. Volunteering is one way to answer Christ’s call to love and serve as disciples of the faith. Youth ministry offers a meaningful opportunity to do this and we urgently need volunteers, including a lead volunteer for LifeTeen as well as others to assist. If interested, please contact the office during regular business hours at 228-875-5419.



The 9:00 a.m. choir is seeking new members to join the voices in the loft. If you have considered joining—or feel unsure—please visit us one Sunday. All voice types are welcome: from sopranos to basses. We rehearse every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. to prepare for the following Sunday Mass.



PILGRIM VIRGIN STATUE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA
Our Lady is asking you individually or with your family or ministry to pray the Rosary together for peace, healing, hope, conversion, penance and prayer. The sign-up sheet is in the front of the Church. You will be notified when it is your turn to take the Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima home for one week. The statue will be transferred to you after the 9:00 a.m. Mass on Sunday. Instructions and an explanation on how to pray the Rosary will be provided with the statue. Our Lady said: “Pray the Rosary every day in order to obtain peace for the world.”



St. Vincent de Paul Scholarships
Thank you to our parishioners for your continued generosity. Your support enables our St. Vincent de Paul conference to serve those in need and fund our annual needs-based scholarships. This year, four \$1,500 scholarships were awarded:

- The Jerry Bourgeois St. Patrick High School scholarship was awarded to a deserving student to help with tuition.
- The Bob Mayer scholarship was awarded to two St. Alphonsus School students.
- A fourth scholarship was awarded to an Ocean Springs High School student who will attend Southwest Community College as a freshman.

The conference is grateful for the ongoing support of St. Alphonsus parishioners.