

A NOTE FROM FATHER RANDY

Week 5: Encountering Christ in Prayer

One of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves each day is time with God in prayer. Before we can serve Christ, we must first encounter Him. Every genuine relationship with Jesus begins in prayer. The length of time matters less than the faithfulness of showing up.

Come to prayer when you feel inspired by the Holy Spirit. Come even when you do not. Come when your heart is full of gratitude, and come when it is burdened with worries. Come even if you have no words to say or find it difficult to pray. Sometimes, simply placing yourself in the Lord's presence is itself a beautiful prayer. Your faithful presence before God allows Him to speak to your heart.

In the Gospel for the Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Matthew 14:13–21), Jesus feeds the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. Before breaking the bread, He first looks up to heaven and blesses it. Even amid the demands of the crowds and the needs of the people, Jesus remains rooted in His communion with the Father. Throughout the Gospels, we repeatedly see Him withdrawing to quiet places to pray. His public ministry flowed from His private relationship with God.

Saint Mary Magdalene teaches us the same lesson. On Easter morning, she remained near the tomb because her heart longed for Jesus. She did not walk away in disappointment. She stayed. Her perseverance was rewarded when the risen Lord called her by name. That personal encounter transformed her from a grieving disciple into the first witness of the Resurrection. Her mission began because she first remained close to Christ.

The same is true for us. Prayer is not simply reciting words or fulfilling an obligation. It is spending time with the One who knows us, loves us, and calls each of us by name. In prayer, Jesus nourishes our hearts, strengthens our faith, and guides our decisions. We gradually discover that our deepest hunger is not for success, possessions, or recognition, but for the living presence of God.

A parish is strengthened not merely by its programs and activities, but by becoming a community of prayer. Families that pray together grow stronger in love. Ministries that pray together bear lasting fruit. Disciples who pray become joyful witnesses of Christ.

This week, set aside a few extra minutes each day to be with the Lord—whether alone, as a couple, or as a family. Visit the Blessed Sacrament if you are able. Open the Scriptures. Sit quietly in His presence. From that encounter in prayer, may we, like Saint Mary Magdalene, go forth to build His Church with faith, hope, and love.

FR

[Giving Portal](#)

On the Horizon

Saturday
10:30am- Confessions

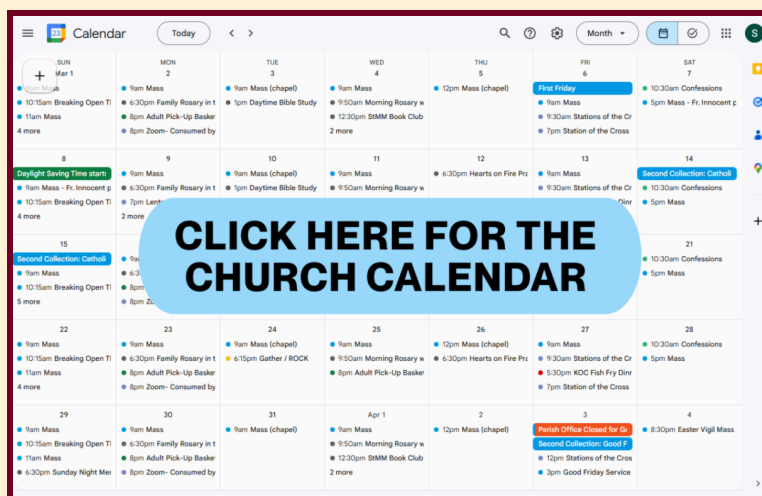
Music for the weekend Masses*
Gathering: Table of Plenty



5:00pm- Mass
Sunday
 9:00am- Mass
 11:00am- Mass

Click [HERE](#) to livestream
 our **9am Sunday Mass** and
 our **Mon/Wed/Fri weekday Masses**.

Sponsorial Psalm: 145 The Hand of the
 Lord Feeds Us
Preparation: Goodness of God
Communion 1: Come to the Water
Communion 2: Gratitude
Communion 3: Panis Angelicus
Sending Forth: Praise You Anywhere



**CLICK HERE FOR THE
 CHURCH CALENDAR**

See the latest
 happenings and
 events at St. Mary
 Magdalene on our
 online Google
 Calendar, where you
 can click on any
 event to find more
 detailed
 information.

Helpful Information

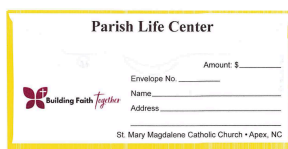


Phishing Scam Alert

Please be aware of fraudulent emails and text messages claiming to be from **Fr. Randy** or **Fr. Francis**. Do **not** reply, click links, purchase gift cards, send money, or provide personal information.

If you receive a suspicious message, please delete it and contact the parish office to verify any request.

Thank you for helping keep our parish community safe.



Are you making a payment toward the Parish Life Center?

To help keep everything organized and ensure your payments are properly credited, please use these designated envelopes when making your PLC contributions for the new building. Using these envelopes helps reduce confusion and allows us to process your gifts more efficiently. Envelopes are available in the narthex, at the parish office, or can be mailed to you upon request. **Thank you for your continued generosity and support!**



Would you like to set up an automatic bank draft to support St. Mary Magdalene? Directions can be found [HERE](#). **Thank you** for your generosity, which in turn helps St. Mary Magdalene continue serving and supporting **you** and our entire parish community.



Help bring beauty to our altar and church by **donating flowers** for weekend Masses. Flowers may be given in celebration of a special occasion or in honor or memory of a loved one. When flowers are donated, the donor's name and occasion are included in the weekly eNews.

Please [click here](#) to sign up. For questions, email floralministry@stmm.net.

StMM Ministry and Group Events

August



The St. Mary Magdalene Care for God's Planet Team invites all parishioners to join the diocesan faithful for this special Jubilee Mass honoring St. Francis of Assisi.

The Mass will be held at **Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral** on **Wednesday, August 5, at 6:30 PM**. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the life and legacy of St. Francis and gather in prayer with Catholics from throughout our diocese. Carpooling is encouraged as a simple way to care for God's creation by reducing our environmental impact.

After Mass, members of the **St. Mary Magdalene Care for God's Planet Team** will be outside in the circle near the statue of Jesus with **cookies** for St. Mary Magdalene parishioners.

We hope you'll stop by for a treat and some fellowship before heading home! For more information, email

StMMCareForGodsPlanet@gmail.com



StMM BSA Troop 316 is hosting a charity night at the local Culver's on Kelly Road on **Monday evening, August 10**. A portion of the evening's proceeds will benefit the troop and help support troop activities.

Parishioners, school families, and friends are warmly invited to come out and support Troop 316. Please show [this flyer](#) when placing your order so the troop receives credit for your purchase.

Troop 316 uses donations to help fund activities and buy supplies for events like summer camp (pictured here). The troop is always happy to welcome interested middle and high school students as guests Monday nights. More information and contacts are available at www.t316Apex.org.



Register now for the Faith Formation High School Beach Retreat. Only a few spots remain!

Faith Formation High School students are invited to join us for an unforgettable weekend at the beautiful Fort Caswell Coastal Retreat & Conference Center in Oak Island, NC!

The retreat will be held August 14 to 16, 2026. The cost is \$275, which includes chartered bus transportation from St. Mary Magdalene.

Register for the Oak Island Beach Retreat [HERE](#)

Registration Is Now Open for the Forward in Hope Wednesday Evening Session

If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, you do not have to walk the journey alone. Forward in Hope is a Christ-centered faith sharing group that provides a caring community through prayer, Scripture, faith sharing, and fellowship.

A Wednesday evening session is now being offered and will begin in August.

For more information, call the parish office at 919-657-4800 ext. 7280 or email stmmforwardinhope@stmm.net



StMM Ministry and Group News



The Walking With Purpose Bible study will be starting back up in September with both daytime and evening sessions.

The daytime session will be held on Tuesday mornings from 10:15 AM to 12:00 PM and the evening session on Monday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Space is limited.

For more information about Walking With Purpose, **come visit us in the narthex before or after all Masses this weekend, Saturday, August 1, and Sunday, August 2.**

Please contact Melissa Porter with questions at walkingwithpurpose@stmm.net.



Teen Volunteers Needed for Sunday Chrysalis Childcare

Chrysalis, StMM's marriage enrichment ministry, is seeking energetic teen volunteers to help in the childcare rooms during monthly meetings. This is a great opportunity to earn service hours while making a difference.

Sessions are held one Sunday a month from 2:30 to 4:00 PM in the StMM Meeting Rooms. Volunteers may help with one, two, or all nine sessions.

To volunteer, email Brandon and Sarah Bowser at stmmchrysalis@gmail.com or click [this link](#) to join the childcare team and email list. A sign-up form will be sent each month so you can RSVP. Thank you for supporting Chrysalis!



Parishioner Assistance Ministry

The Parishioner Assistance Ministry (PAM) is looking for caring volunteers, especially those with Level C certification, to help support fellow parishioners in practical ways. Volunteers are needed to provide rides to appointments, prepare and deliver meals, or shop for and deliver groceries. Other volunteer opportunities are also available.

To learn more or to get involved, email stmpam@stmm.me.

Prayer Ministry



The Prayer Ministry offers a meaningful way to care for others and strengthen our parish through prayer. Ministry members faithfully lift up the needs of individuals, families, and the wider community, offering spiritual support through compassionate and intentional prayer.

Those who feel called to support others through prayer are invited to join the ministry, and anyone in need of prayer is encouraged to submit a request.

For more information, to join the ministry, or to submit a prayer request, please email stmmprayerteam@stmm.me.



Apex-Cary Fall Soccer 2026- Register [HERE](#)

Grades: Coed, Pre-K (3-year-olds) through 8th grade. **Dates:** August to October. **Cost:** Pre-K - \$65; K - 1st grade - \$70; 2nd - 8th grade - \$85. **Note:** Pre-K players have a combined practice/game on Saturdays. Kindergarteners thru 8th graders have one weekday practice per week and weekend games.

Apex Fall Baseball 2026- Register [HERE](#)

Grades: Coed, Pre-K (4-year-olds) through 4th grade. **Dates:** September to October. **Cost:** Pre-K/K- \$65; 1st thru 4th grade - \$70 **Note:** PreK thru Kindergarten plays T-Ball; 1st - 4th grade play machine pitch. Pre-K and Kindergarten players have a combined practice/game on Saturdays. 1st - 4th grade have one weekday practice per week and games on Saturdays. 3rd/4th grade may be combined into one team that

will practice and scrimmage together.

Meetings, Events, & Information

Please click on the link for more details.

CHURCH

- Deacon Rick offers an Adult Faith Refresher & Confirmation Prep series. Please click here for more information.
- Please prayerfully consider making a pledge or donation to our Parish Life Center campaign, enabling us to build a lasting space for our parish family. Campaign and donation information can be found [HERE](#).
- Breaking Open The Word is a new weekly Gospel discussion group that is held after the 9am Sunday Mass.
- Are you gluten-free due to a medical condition and need a low-gluten Communion Host? Click here to learn how to receive low-gluten Communion at StMM.
- The 2025 StMM Annual Stewardship Report and the 2025-2026 Nine Month Report are available on our website.

SCHOOL

- StMM is hiring an Assistant Principal for our vibrant PK3-Grade 8 parish school.

GROUPS & MINISTRIES

- Hearts on Fire, a charismatic prayer group with Deacon Dev,
- Prayers & Squares Prayer Quilt Ministry

meets in the Chapel at 6:30pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month.

- The St. Andrew chapter of St. Vincent de Paul is accepting vehicle, boat, and RV donations, whether they are running or not.
- First Friday Eucharistic Adoration is a great way to spend meaningful time with our Lord. Adorers are needed, especially from 5 to 6pm, so please consider signing up. Email Anita at alanitabecker@aol.com.
- Lily of the Valley Catholic Ministry is hosting a retreat on August 28-29, designed to help women encounter Christ in the midst of their lives.
- Save the date! Mother Teresa Catholic Church is holding a craft fair on Saturday, October 17. Interested artists and vendors can apply now for a table.
- Registration is now open for the next Magnificat Meal on September 12 featuring guest speaker, Veronica Clark.
- Traveling St. John Vianney Ministry. Sign up to pray for our priests.
- Project Rachel Support Group: hope and healing after an abortion.
- Join Bishop Luis Zarama on a Catholic pilgrimage to Hungary and Poland, October 4-14, 2027, and journey together through lands rich in faith and history.
- The Annual Diocesan African Heritage Mass and Celebration will be held on Sunday, August 23, at 4:30pm at Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral.
- JobWorks Career Ministry presents *The Job Market is Tough, But Your Role Still Exists* at the next meeting on Thursday, August 13. All are welcome.
- The Catholic Conference Center is hosting a Labor Day weekend retreat lasting two nights called *Finding God in a New Season of Life*.

Faith Formation

[Our NEW 2026-2027 Faith Formation Calendar is available HERE.](#)



Register for Faith Formation on our website [HERE.](#)



Questions about Faith Formation:

Gather (K to 4th grade)- contact Suzanne Will at will@stmm.net or 919-657-4800 x7280

The ROCK (5th & 6th grade)- contact Sarah St. Aubin at st.aubin@stmm.me or 919-657-4800 x7307

EDGE (7th & 8th grade)- contact Sarah St. Aubin at st.aubin@stmm.me or 919-657-4800 x7307

Apostello and the Way (9th to 12th grade)- contact Niki Furnier at nfurnier@stmm.net or 919-657-4800 x7309

Photos



Following Daily Mass on Wednesday, July 29, parishioners gathered to celebrate Fr. Randy's 22nd Ordination Anniversary with donuts, coffee, and fellowship. Fr. Randy also received an olive wood crucifix from Bethlehem Olive Wood as a special anniversary gift. Thank you, Fr. Randy, for your faithful priesthood, and may God continue to bless you for many years to come.



Many thanks to Fran and everyone in the Catholic Senior Organization for all of their hard work organizing and hosting the wonderful celebration in honor of Fr. Randy's Ordination Anniversary.



Who knew Fr. Randy was such a great bowler? He enjoyed spending time with the Catholic Senior Organization last Monday, and this photo captures the moment after he rolled a strike!



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