**January 1, 2023**

 Each year on January 1, we celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. It is very fitting that we celebrate Mary and ask her to accompany us as we embark on a new year. Mary accompanied Jesus on his journey here on earth. She accompanied the members of the Early Church. She accompanies us on our own journey of faith in the modern world.

In addition, each year of January 1, the Pope issues a prayer for peace. This tradition started with Pope Paul VI in 1968. This year’s theme centers upon all we have gone through as a society these past several years: “No one can be saved alone. Combatting Covid-19 together, embarking together on paths of peace.” Pope Francis uses a quote from 1 Thessalonians about how Paul urged the Thessalonians to remain steadfast, as Paul wrote: “Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.” Pope Francis writes: “when tragic events seem to overwhelm our lives, we are called to keep our hearts open to hope and to trust in God, who makes himself present, accompanies us with tenderness, sustains us in our weariness and, above all, guides our path.”

We pray for peace, unity, healing, and reconciliation in the New Year of 2023. We pray for an end to the anger, strife, impatience, and discord that has divided our society in recent years. We wish all of you and your families a blessed new year of 2023 as we continue to celebrate the season of Christmas.

Father Lincoln.

**January 8, 2023**

We come together this weekend as a community to celebrate the feast of the Epiphany, the visit of the Magi to the child Jesus. The feast of Epiphany is so rich in different messages and symbolism. The main message of the Magi is that the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is meant for all, not just a select few, not just for one specific culture or one particular group of people.

There is a lot of symbolism in the gifts that the Magi brought the Christ child. Their first gift was gold, the most precious of metals, reminding us that God has to be granted first place in our lives and that he is to be worshipped and valued. In the frankincense, they offered as their second gift, we can see it symbolizing our relationship with the Lord through prayer. Our prayers rise up to God like smoke from the incense. Just as incense must burn in order to yield its fragrance, so too, our prayers must burn in our hearts as we spend time with God through those prayers. That brings us to the third gift, myrrh, the ointment that would be lovingly used to prepare Jesus’ body for burial after he was taken down from the cross. Myrrh reminds us of the suffering and sacrifices we will have to make for our faith. May these gifts the Magi brought remind us of different aspects of our faith.

May we be willing to bring our own gifts in our own way to the Christ child, just as the Magi brought their gifts. Blessings to all of you as we continue our Christmas season and as we celebrate the Magi this weekend.

Father Lincoln.

**January 15, 2023**

We have completed our journey through the seasons of Advent and Christmas, returning to Ordinary Time in our liturgical calendar. However, this time, is not ordinary in the sense that it is mundane or without special significance. Ordinary Time refers to the way these weeks that make up the majority of the liturgical year are ordered or numbered.

Through these first weeks of Ordinary Time, we learn about the first days of Jesus public life, of Christ’s baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. With our Christmas season over, we know that we don’t have many weeks of Ordinary Time before we start the holy season of Lent. May we look forward to journeying together in faith, in deepening our understanding of God’s Word and the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

I look forward to getting to know the children, youth, and adults of our parish family. May the Lord bless us and guide us on our journey of faith. We are very blessed here at Holy Savior and Immaculate Conception with a great religious education program for children and youth and a wonderful adult religious education program as well. We want to encourage all of you to participate and to grow together in our faith. Have a blessed week everyone.

Father Lincoln.

**January 22, 2023**

Back on September 30, 2019, on the memorial of the great Scripture scholar St. Jerome, Pope Francis announced that each year on the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, we will celebrate the Sunday of the Word of God in our Church’s liturgical calendar. The Pope’s intention is that through this celebration, Catholics will grow in the study, learning, and love of Holy Scripture. I look at myself as a priest, at how the Word of God is at the center of my life in so many ways. In the homily that I present at the Mass, which I spend a considerable amount of time preparing, I as a priest am asked by the Church to reflect upon the Word of God that is proclaimed at Mass.

We look at the crisis of faith that is present in the United States and in many parts of the world today. Many people used the pandemic as an excuse to walk away from the faith or to disengage from the Church. Perhaps getting back to the Word of God as a central part of our faith journey is one of the ways of reengaging people with our Catholic faith. Pope Francis has called all of us to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus, no matter where we are on our journey. Meeting Jesus in Sacred Scripture is an essential way we encounter him, for which there is no substitution. A good way to increase the role of the Word of God in our lives is to read Sacred Scripture on a daily basis. Many people have followed a popular podcast this past year that encourage them to read the Bible in a year. Attending some of the daily Masses or reading the Scripture readings for daily Mass is a great way to increase the place of the Word of God in our lives. Blessings to all of you as we celebrate the Sunday of the Word of God this weekend.

Father Lincoln.

**January 29, 2023**

 In the era in which the Beatitudes were written in Matthew’s Gospel, there was a lot of discrimination and oppression being experienced in the Early Church. In those days, the definition of a saint was someone who was martyred for the faith. Persecutions were common for those who followed Jesus in the centuries before Christianity became officially recognized as a lawful religion in the Roman Empire. Living out the Beatitude of being persecuted for the sake of righteousness was a big part of daily life for the early Christians.

Today, increasingly, Christians around the world are being persecuted for their faith. Here in modern America, opposing the death penalty and abortion, having a sacramental view of marriage between a man and a woman, and declaring human life as beginning at conception can bring about derision and persecution in our own lived reality.

Jesus gives us the courage to proclaim his Gospel and his values in our words and our actions. He calls us blessed when we have the conviction to proclaim to the world what we believe. In that way, we are blessed. In that way, we are lights in the world, in the way we dialogue with the world and give voice to the values of the Gospel. May all of you have the courage and strength to live out the values of the Gospel in your daily lives. Have a blessed week everyone.

Father Lincoln.

**February 5, 2023**

Today, on the 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time, a few weeks before we start Lent, we hear a part of the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel, as Jesus describes what we should strive toward in our life of discipleship: we are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. As Disciples of Christ, we are to bring flavor and light to the world around us. Jesus calls us to be a light in the darkness of our world. He calls us to change the flavor of our world, to bring a perspective of faith no matter where we are in our lives.

This Sunday, February 5, we mark the anniversary of the death of Father Pedro Arrupe, who had been the Superior General of the Jesuits for many years, from 1965 to 1983. He is considered the “second founder” of the Jesuits based on the huge impact he had on that religious order. This is a quote of his that really touched me: “In life, have but one desire, only one — to love Jesus Christ with all your soul. Let that be the one fixed idea of your entire existence.” In respect to today’s Gospel, I see that we can be a true light in the world only if we have a personal relationship with Jesus and only if our lives are centered in him. Then, and only then, can we pass the light on to others.

We will hear the Bishop’s audio message for the Catholic Service Appeal today. Through our contribution to the Catholic Service Appeal, we can be a light in the world. Have a blessed week everyone.

Father Lincoln.

**February 12, 2023**

Having gone on pilgrimage many times, especially to the Camino of Santiago in Spain, I love reading different books on pilgrimage. Reading a book entitled Pilgrimage: The Modern Seeker’s Guide, I came across this wonderful quote: ”We don't work the mystery of life; we let the Mystery work us." Yes, the mystery of God and the mystery of life are not things we can force in our lives, they are not things we can accomplish through our own efforts alone. They are not things we can completely control. The mystery of God is at work in us through the grace of God, but we cannot mandate it. Yes, we are called to be open to the mystery of God in our lives and we are called to respond to that mystery. But the mystery of God is not something we will completely understand. This is good to remember as we hear a very challenging Gospel message today that is a part of the Sermon on the Mount from the Gospel of Matthew.

Last week, we heard the Bishop’s appeal for the Catholic Service Appeal. This week we have the collection for the appeal. I know a lot of you have given through the appeal materials you received in the mail. We thank all of you for your generosity to the Diocese and to our parish. If you have not given to the Catholic Service Appeal yet, we ask you to pray and reflect about your contribution. Have a blessed week everyone.

Father Lincoln.

**February 19, 2023**

It is hard to believe that Ash Wednesday is this upcoming week. I always look forward to Ash Wednesday and the holy season of Lent, probably because it is a time of reflection, renewal, conversion and preparation in our lives, a time that we can use to evaluate our lives of faith and our relationship with God. This year our theme for Lent is going to be in the spirit of St Ignatius of Loyola, of seeking God in all things. Ignatius spirituality is grounded in the conviction that God is active in our world. We can discern God’s presence in the world, finding God in all things, reaching out to God’s presence in a diverse, grace-filled yet imperfect world. We reach out to God and seek him in all things, but then God reaches out to us as well in the midst of the reality of the world.

I want to encourage all of you to come to one of our Ash Wednesday Masses, which will be at 8:30 am and 6:00 pm at Holy Savior Clinton and noon at Immaculate Conception in Raymond. In addition, we will have the Stations of the Cross and Mass each Friday at 5:30 pm during Lent, followed by a meal in McGing Hall prepared by either the Knights of Columbus or some of the ladies of our parish. This is the first Lent I will be with all of you here at Holy Savior and Immaculate Conception. I am looking forward to our Lenten journey together. Blessings to all of you.

 Father Lincoln.

**February 26, 2023**

The Winnie the Pooh books were some of my favorite books to read as a small child. There is a lot of simple wisdom contained in those books. I still have the Winnie the Pooh books that I had as a child. I reread them during the pandemic. I really enjoyed that experience of looking back on those books that I enjoyed so much as a child. One quote from Winnie the Pooh states: “Sometimes, the smallest things can take up the most room in your heart,” which can be both good or bad, depending upon what that small thing is. A warm memory from our childhood can transform us in a good way, but a small resentment or a kernel of anger can be very detrimental to our humanity and our life of faith. Often we want to examine those big things that affect our lives. However, sometimes the small things that we hold in our hearts are the things that can have a huge impact on us.

As we begin our Lenten journey, we are called to examine our lives and to look at those ways we need conversion and renewal. The Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving help us in the process of examining our lives and converting our hearts. A lot of us Catholics look forward to the process of Lent each year. I hope you will join us here at Holy Savior for some of our Lenten disciplines this year, such as our book study on Thursday nights and adoration and the Stations of the Cross on Fridays. May we ask God’s blessing upon us during this holy season that we be transformed in good, positive ways.

Father Lincoln.

**March 5, 2023**

 We are now getting further into our Lenten journey as we commemorate the second Sunday of Lent this weekend. A lot of our families are going to be on spring break soon. With the pandemic keeping us from traveling a lot during the last couple of years, I know a lot of us are looking forward to some free time for some fun activities and to perhaps go out of town for a short while. We need those breaks to breathe new life into us. By taking time off from our daily routine, we can become invigorated and renewed. It can give us a fresh perspective.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus is transformed and transfigured right in front of his disciples. How they respond to the transformation they see in Jesus is up to them. Peter responds by wanting to go inside of himself rather than going out into the world, desiring to set up some tents for Jesus and the prophets Moses and Elijah who appeared with Jesus on that mountaintop. This might help us reflect upon how we want to respond to the transformation that is available to us during this holy Lenten season.

The Church invites us to enter into this Lenten season of renewal, conversion, preparation, and transformation, but it is up to us to respond and to engage in this holy season. Blessings to all of you during this holy season of Lent. I pray that this holy season be a productive and fruitful time for all of us. Blessings to all of you.

Father Lincoln.

**March 12, 2023**

In this weekend's Mass readings, we hear of the themes of repentance, conversion, and mercy as we reflect upon the woman at the well and the life-giving waters that Jesus offers to her. God wants all of us to repent, convert, and renew. There may be times in our lives when we get off track or when we move away from God. At different points on our journey, we may not feel like our faith is bearing much fruit. At different points, we may not feel that God is present with us. Yet, God is always there for us on our journey of faith even though we might not realize it.

I want to continue to encourage you to engage in our Lenten journey here at our parishes of Immaculate Conception and Holy Savior. We have Stations of the Cross, Mass, adoration, and a Lenten evening meal on Fridays at Holy Savior. We also have the Stations of the Cross at Immaculate Conception on Friday evenings as well.

Our Lenten reconciliation service will be coming up on Wednesday, March 22. We will have various priests from parishes in the area here to hear your confession on that evening. Also, we look forward to our commemoration of holy week and Easter, especially with the large group in our RCIA program entering the Church at the Easter Vigil Mass. Blessings to all of you as we continue our journey during the holy season of Lent.

Father Lincoln.

**March 19, 2023**

Today, we celebrate Laetare Sunday, a point of joy on our Lenten journey, characterize by the distinctive rose liturgical color, of which Uno the Lost Sheep even has a rose colored blanket today. We look forward to the joy of the Easter week when we will celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. I thought about the prayer of St Richard of Chichester in connection to the healing of the blind man in today’s Gospel: “Our Lord Jesus, Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother, may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day.” St. Richard, the Bishop of Chichester, England, prayed those words to Jesus way back in the 13th century. The feast day of St Richard of Chichester takes place on April 3, so at the beginning of Holy Week this year. St Richard parish here in Jackson has St Richard of Chichester as its patron saint. I love the message of this short prayer because seeing, knowing, and loving God more clearly is at the heart of the Gospel message today. The message of this prayer is at the heart of our Lenten journey as well. Blessings to all of you - have a wonderful week.

Father Lincoln.

**March 26, 2023**

We have had a very meaningful Lenten season this year at our parishes of Holy Savior and Immaculate Conception. It has been wonderful having good attendance at both our weekend and daily Masses. We have had Stations of the Cross each week on Fridays during Lent at both parishes, with great attendance. We had a great turnout at Friday evening Lenten meals. We are thankful for the Knights of Columbus and the ladies of the parish and their dedication to serving our parish at the Lenten meals. We are excited to have a large RCIA group this year preparing for entry into the Church on Easter weekend.

These past three weekends, we have heard Gospel readings of Jesus interacting with different individuals in the reality of their lives: of Jesus meeting the woman at the well, of Jesus healing a man who had been blind from birth, and of Jesus being notified by Mary and Martha at the death of his dear friend Lazarus. All of us need healing, wholeness, and forgiveness in our lives in one way or another. God’s grace is there for us in a special way during Lent, to operate in our lives, to invite us to renewal and conversion.

In Lent, the sacraments of Eucharist and reconciliation are there for us to help us in this journey of new life and conversion. Last week, I journeyed with Bishop Kopacz to Greenwood, Madison, and Tupelo in order to meet with the priests in Lenten days of reflection for the clergy. It is wonderful for us to get together as brother priests in our Diocese and to reflect together on the meaning of this holy season. Blessings to all of you as we continue our Lenten journey, as we near our commemoration of Holy Week and the resurrection of the Lord on Easter weekend.

Father Lincoln.

**April 2, 2023**

Today is Palm Sunday, our entrance into Holy Week, a very special week for us as Catholics that is really at the heart of what we believe. For the past 5 weeks, since we started the holy days of Lent on Ash Wednesday, we have been starting our Masses in silence, as we got down on knees to begin our Eucharistic celebration together as a community of faith. From that moment of silence at the beginning of the Mass, we can tell that these days of Lent for us as Catholics are so different than the rest of the year.

This week is a very special week for us in our Catholic faith. While our secular world has all kinds of other events going on, while schools schedule sporting events and proms and other social activities, while we have work and so many other scheduled events pulling at our attention and our time, it is important for us to make time to journey with Jesus this week, to have the events of his passion, death, and resurrection really penetrate our hearts and make a difference in our lives.

 I hope that you all will join us for our liturgies this upcoming Holy Week, especially the Triduum of liturgies on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil. With the pandemic having hampered our Holy Week celebrations for several years, this is a great opportunity for us as a community to celebrate the mysteries of our faith together. Please join us!

Father Lincoln

**April 9, 2023**

Easter has arrived! As Catholics, we look forward to our celebration of Easter. I always love our commemoration of Lent and our celebration of Holy Week and the Easter season each year. I think of Mary of Magdala in our Gospel today, of what she experienced on Easter morning as she goes to the tomb early in the morning before sunrise. She is astounded to find the stone moved from the entrance of the tomb, then finding the tomb empty. She wonders: What has happened to our Jesus? Has someone stolen his body? Even though she is confused, in an act of faith, Mary of Magdala tells some of the other disciples about what she witnessed. When the others see the empty tomb and the burial cloths scattered about, they are confused and perplexed as well. However, the beloved disciple starts to make sense of the situation. He is able to see and believe.

It is significant to note that the belief in the resurrection of these first disciples does not stem from the actual appearance of the resurrected Jesus, but rather such belief developed from what was first reported to them, from the way they interpreted their experience of the empty tomb. I have enjoyed journeying through the Lenten season with all of you as we tried to seek God in all things. I have enjoyed praying the Stations of the Cross on Friday evenings and the Lenten meals we have had together as a parish faith community. We look forward to a joyful Easter season together as we journey toward the celebration of Pentecost. Jesus has risen from the dead! We celebrate his resurrection this Easter weekend.

**April 16, 2023**

On April 30, 2000, in front of more than 250,000 pilgrims, at the canonization of Sister Faustina Kowalska, Pope John Paul II declared that the second Sunday of the Easter season would be known as Divine Mercy Sunday. The Divine Mercy of Jesus has become one of the popular devotions amongst the Catholic faithful. God’s divine mercy has been a teaching of the Catholic Church long before the revelations of Sister Faustina in 1931.

The Catechism states that “the Gospel is the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's mercy to sinners". Divine Mercy is the Good News of the Gospel. Pope Benedict XVI reinforced this idea by stating that "Divine Mercy is not a secondary devotion, but an integral dimension of Christian faith and prayer.” God’s mercy meets us in the midst of our suffering and our brokenness. In his divine mercy, God's love meets us and helps us in this reality. God’s mercy is that for all of us, no matter how dark our reality might seem. Sister Faustina’s revelation states: “All grace flows from mercy, and the last hour abounds with mercy for us. Let no one doubt concerning the goodness of God; even if a person’s sins were as dark as night, God’s mercy is stronger than our misery. One thing alone is necessary; that the sinner set ajar the door of his heart, be it ever so little, to let in a ray of God’s merciful grace, and then God will do the rest.” May the message of Divine Mercy Sunday be an integral part of our faith. Blessings to all of you as we commemorate Divine Mercy Sunday this week in the midst of our joyful Easter season.

Father Lincoln.

**April 23, 2023**

Imagine that we are on the road to Emmaus with the two disciples. They are full of fear, confusion, and uncertainty as they tell stories about Jesus, even though their hopes ended with his violent death. Even though they have heard that he has been raised from the dead, they are trying to figure out what that means. Indeed, the disciples in the Early Church had a lot to figure out. This was a new reality that they did not yet understand. Cleopas and his friend felt comfortable talking to Jesus on their journey. Jesus brought understanding and encouragement to them as they walked and talked together. They were comforted by his presence, even though at the time, they did not realize it was Jesus himself.

Sometimes on our journey of faith, we feel comfortable and encouraged. Other times, we face changes on our journey of faith, or the world changes around us. We are confronted with a new reality that we cannot make sense of and that we cannot understand. I think that most of us had been chugging along on our journey of faith, having a routine and feeling a sense of comfort with our relationship with God prior to the pandemic. But, then, several years ago, when the pandemic hit, our whole reality changed, including our life of faith. But like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, God is there with us to help us make sense of things. When we are confronted with a changing reality, there are new opportunities, new blessings, and room for growth and development. Perhaps some of us are now realizing how much we have taken our faith for granted. Perhaps we are looking at new, creative ways in which we can live out our faith. Perhaps the new technologies we are using to keep in touch with our faith can serve us even now. Perhaps we now better appreciate the importance of community in our life of faith. God will help us make sense of things. Blessings to all of you.

Father Lincoln.

**April 30, 2023**

This is a busy Sunday for us, the fourth Sunday of the Easter season. Because of the Gospel reading in which Jesus states that he is the gate through which the sheep enter, this Sunday is known as Good Shepherd Sunday. Jesus as our Good Shepherd is such a beloved image for us. In addition, this is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, fulfilling the Lord's instruction to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest. We all have different vocations to which God calls us, but, particularly on this world day of prayer, we pray for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and consecrated religious life.

We have had Uno the sheep with us in our church as a symbol of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. I got the idea for Uno from a parish I visited last summer in New Hampshire on a mission appeal for our Diocese. Many children and adults have loved Uno and all that he symbolizes. Every time we see Uno at Mass, may we be reminded of Jesus as our Good Shepherds who leads us and guides us through the ups and downs of life. As we wind down our religious education program for the year, I give thanks for all the men and women who have volunteered this year as catechists and teachers to teach and form our children, youth, and adults in the faith. We are very grateful for the contributions you make to our parish. Blessings to all of you. Father Lincoln.

**May 7, 2023**

With great joy, we celebrate the month of May, the month of Mary. In May, we celebrate the joyful season of spring, a time of gardens, flowers, and new birth. We celebrate the May crowing of Mary as the mother of our Lord, as our Mother, and as Queen of the Universe. We express our love and appreciation for Mary as she expresses her motherly love to us. We pray to Mary in a special way during the month of May.

This weekend is also an important time in the life our Parish as our children receive First Holy Communion. Our children have been preparing for this special moment all year. We celebrate with them and their families with great joy as they receive Jesus in this special way in the Eucharist.

We also celebrate with our graduates this weekend as we recognize their graduation from high school. We send out our prayers to our graduates in a special way this weekend, praying for their future endeavors in whatever path they choose in life, in whatever vocation to which God calls them. We pray for a good end to the school year for all of our students. Blessings to all of you as we continue our celebration of this joyful season of Easter. Father Lincoln.

**May 14, 2023**

We are continuing our journey through the Easter season this week. In two weeks, the Easter season will come to an end with our celebration of Pentecost. As we celebrated our graduates and first communion students at Holy Savior last weekend, and as we celebrate our mothers and grandmothers on Mother’s Day this weekend, we know that the end of the school year and the beginning of the summer vacation season is around the corner.

This weekend, in our prison ministry, we are welcoming Bishop Kopacz to celebrate Mass with us, his first time ever at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl. You can imagine that the inmates and I are very excited. Our readings today at Mass get us ready for Pentecost in two weeks as these readings speak about the Holy Spirit. The people of Samaria, new converts to the Way of Jesus, receive the Holy Spirit as hands are laid upon them by Peter and John. One of the inmates last week was asking me about the Holy Spirit, saying that the concept of the Holy Spirit was a bit difficult for him to understand. He said that as a boy, the Holy Spirit was referred to as the Holy Ghost. Perhaps the change in terminology in referring to the Holy Spirit helps us understand the Spirit of God in a clearer way. May the presence of the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit be with us as we continue our journey during the Easter season. Blessings to all of you this week. Father Lincoln.

**May 28, 2023**

We have completed our journey through the Easter season as we celebrate Pentecost this weekend. The Holy Spirit has been alive in our Diocese and in our parish in many unique ways during the Easter season this year. In addition to celebrating ordinations to the priesthood and the diaconate in the last couple of weekends, in our parish we have celebrated first communion, our high school graduates, and our new adult members entering the Church. This Sunday after the morning Mass, we celebrate the Holy Spirit and Pentecost in a special way at our Pentecost luncheon in our food and our fellowship. We are thankful to be able to gather this Sunday afternoon as a parish family. I will be in Rome that weekend with my classmates and professors from the Notre Dame liturgical leadership program, so I will miss being with all of you for our celebration of Pentecost, but my prayers will be with all of you.

In one of our readings today for Pentecost from St Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, he states that it is only through the Holy Spirit that we are able to say that Jesus is Lord. The Spirit unites all of us in the Body of Christ, no matter what our background, no matter from where we come. Our parishes of Holy Savior and Immaculate Conception reflect this spirit in different ways in our activities, in our diversity, in our warm welcome, and in the way we joyfully live out our Catholic faith as individuals and as a community guided by the Holy Spirit. Blessings to all of you this Pentecost weekend. Father Lincoln.

**June 4, 2023**

As I reflect upon the solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity that we celebrate this weekend, I thought of our works of mercy here at our parish: our outreach to the Carmelite nuns, our work with Habitat for Humanity, our ministry to the inmates at the federal and state prisons, our visits to the nursing home, our ministry at the VA hospital, and our feeding of the hungry in Jackson. Everything we do should be rooted in our life in the Trinity: in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our faith has its foundations in the Trinity, as we are not just baptized in the name of Jesus, but rather in the name of the Trinity, as mandated by Jesus himself. We participate in the life of the Trinity as Disciples of Christ. Gregory of Nyssa (335-395), an Early Church Father who wrote a great deal about the Trinity, stated that “Holy Baptism imparts to us the grace of eternal life because of our faith in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

 As we remember that God is the most perfect expression of love, it makes sense that God is not solitary, but rather an eternal community of three persons who pour out themselves in love for one another. We are called to emulate the love of the Trinity in the way we live in discipleship. The spiritual and corporal works of mercy are some of the ways we can live out the love of the Most Holy Trinity in the reality of daily life. Blessings to all of you on this great solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity that we celebrate today in our Church’s liturgical year. Father Lincoln.

**June 11, 2023**

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.” (John 6:51) The US Conference of Bishops is promoting a movement of renewal in the Church that seeks to enkindle a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. This movement will promote healing, conversion, formation, and unification through an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist, which will propel us to evangel others through our renewed faith and relationship with Jesus. Our celebration of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and benediction is part of our parish’s efforts in this movement.

My different efforts to have a conversation about the significance of the Eucharist and to strengthen our sense of being a community of Eucharistic people in our parishes of Holy Savior and Immaculate Conception and in our prison ministry reflect the theme of this Eucharistic renewal movement. As we celebrate the solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ this weekend, we look forward to journeying through this Eucharist revival that will take place in the Church. May we all grow together in our understanding of the Eucharist as one of the central beliefs and practices of our faith. Have a blessed week everyone - Father Lincoln.

**June 18, 2023**

The term “ordinary time” does not mean mundane or nothing special. Ordinary time is named as such from the way we order the days in our liturgical year. As we journey through ordinary time now until the first Sunday of Advent in December, the liturgical color of green of Ordinary Time will be with us for a while. I remember when I first served as a priest here in the Diocese of Jackson starting in the summer of 2008, I remember how the summers actually had free time for us and time to slow down. However, doesn’t it seem like our lives in the modern world are getting busier and busier? It might seem hard to find time re-energize and re-charge. I hope that all of us find some time this summer to slow down, to reflect upon our lives, to feel God’s presence is some quiet reflective moments.

Having said that, we hear how Jesus has work for us to do in our lives, to engage as laborers for the harvest of the Lord. We are hoping to look for new ways in our parish, both to current parishioners, to parishioners who have pulled back from their faith, and to those outside of the Catholic faith. We also want to think about how we can reach out to others, especially the poor and the vulnerable. There are many ways for us to engage in reaching out to others, but the main thing is to reach out to others in real actions, not just talking about it. Blessings to all of you. Have a blessed week. Father Lincoln.

**June 25, 2023**

Jesus tells us today that we are to fear no one. He explains that what he tells us in the darkness we should speak in the light, and what we hear whispered we should proclaim on the mountaintops. Jesus wants us to be bold in the way we proclaim the kingdom of God. Our lives can sometimes be filled with fear and uncertainty. The world can be a scary place for us sometimes. But Jesus will be with us always. He will give us encouragement and hope.

On our trip to Rome with the Notre Dame program, our guide emphasized that in the midst of Rome being sacked twice by invading armies in the fifth century, some of the major basilicas were built and the Church was still in the process of building and expanding. In the midst of turmoil, violence, and destruction, the Church faces those fears and does not back down. In our lives of faith, we are not to be the disciples who have the flashiest ministries and who aim toward getting the most accolades and the greatest attention. We are to quietly and humbly proclaim the Gospel of the Lord. So many in our society want to attack others and tear them down. If we spent that same energy building up, what type of world would we have? Blessings to all of you. Have a blessed week. Father Lincoln.

**July 2, 2023**

Elisha grants a special blessing to the woman of Shunem for the great hospitality he gives her. To this day, I still remember the hospitality and welcome that I was offered as a missionary. When I would arrive in a village after a long journey, I would always have a place to rest and I would always have something to eat. Hospitality is an important trait for us to have as Disciples of Christ.

 As we journey through these summer months, in our parish, we are starting the process of re-imagining our ministry and our lives as Catholics on the parish and Diocesan level. As a part of the synodal process, our Diocese has heard the need of the people for us to offer a lifelong faith learning process; to reach out to our youth, our young adults, and our families; to evangelize the community and to those who have fallen away from the faith; and to reach out to others in works of mercy. You are going to hear more about the re-imagining process this year, just as you will hear more about the Eucharistic renewal that is going on in our Diocese and throughout the country. Blessings to all of you - have a blessed week. Father Lincoln

**July 9, 2023**

We hear a Gospel reading today that is one that I often proclaim as a priest, since it is the main Gospel for the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, a sacrament of healing and wholeness that we have in our Catholic faith. Jesus proclaims to us: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.” There are different times in our lives when we will feel burdened by what is going on in our personal life or by what is going on around us.

Sometimes what we see in the world can seem very unjust. Sometimes the harshness of life can seem unbearable. Sometimes our reality has changed so much that nothing makes sense anymore. Our faith is there to speak to us in our reality, in the midst of all that we are going through in our lives. I love this following quote from St. Augustine of Canterbury, who lived in the 6th century: “God of life, there are days when the burdens we carry chafe our shoulders and wear us down; when the road seems dreary and endless, the skies gray and threatening; when our lives have no music in them and our hearts are lonely, and our souls have lost their courage. Flood the path with light, we beseech you; turn our eyes to where the skies are full of promise.” Blessings to all of you this week - Father Lincoln.

**July 16, 2023**

I think that the parable of the sower of the seeds is so relevant to us today as we undertake a Eucharistic renewal in our country, as we are in the process of reimagining our ministry in our parishes in the Diocese of Jackson, and as we try to move forward in the process of evangelization in our parishes and in our Diocese. We can sow the seeds of the Gospel in different ways. Based upon the reality of the world that we are faced with today, we are called to be very creative and persistent in the way we sow the seeds of the Gospel in our words and our actions.

In a recent meeting with organizing committee for the national Eucharistic Congress in the United States, Pope Francis asserted that the Eucharist is God’s response to the deepest hunger of the human heart, our hunger for authentic life, that the Eucharistic Christ comes to us in our midst to console us, to nourish us, and to sustain us on our journey. Pope Francis said that it is his hope that this Eucharistic renewal in the United States will inspire Catholics to rediscover the sense of wonder and awe of Christ’s great gift to us in the Eucharist. In the different activities, liturgies, and devotions we hope to undertake this year, we want to foster within all of us a deeper faith and a deeper desire to share that faith with others. Have a blessed week everyone - Father Lincoln.

**July 23, 2023**

When Pope Francis chose the date of a Sunday liturgy to commemorate grandparents and the elders of our community, he chose the date closest to the feast day of St Anne and St Joachim, the parents of the blessed Virgin Mary, which is celebrated on July 26 each year. Pope

Francis wanted to celebrate the link between the generations, the wisdom that is passed down from one generation to the next. Pope Francis, from the country of Argentina, learned from his parents who immigrated from Italy to Argentina in 1929 in the midst of the political turmoil that gripped Italy and many other countries in Europe right before WWII.

Like weeds sown in a field, like weeds that need to be distinguished from a valuable crop, we need to distinguish the wisdom that is passed down by our elders from the false teachings that can lead us astray. We honor the elders of our community and our families this weekend. We give thanks for the wisdom they have passed down to us and the ways they have nurtured us. Blessings to all of you this weekend - Father Lincoln.

**July 30, 2023**

We can treasure different things in life. We can treasure something for the sentimental value it has for us, perhaps because it was passed down to us by our parents or grandparents. We can treasure something because it is worth a lot of money. We can treasure something because it brings back a lot of memories of a person or a place. God’s kingdom is a place where God’s peace reigns, a place of healing, wholeness, and justice. God’s kingdom is to be treasured like a buried treasure or like a valuable pearl. Each person in the Gospel today chooses that treasure above everything else. Upon finding that treasure, the person feels an incredible joy that is unlike anything else.

Back in the end of May, we celebrated the feast day of St Philip Neri, a Catholic priest who lived back in the 16th century who is a patron saint of joy. Philip Neri infused the joy of his faith in all he met, radiating in his holiness and in the way he evangelized others. It was said that all who met Philip Neri immediately felt the joy of his faith. Do we truly feel joy in our life of faith? How are we passing on the joy of our faith with others? May the joy of Christ’s Gospel message always fill our hearts. - Father Lincoln.

**August 6, 2023**

Jesus tells his disciples not to be afraid when they are gripped by fear at seeing the transfiguration. It is natural for us human beings to be afraid of something, especially something that is new or beyond our comfort zone or that goes against our personality. In Scripture, we sometimes hear the words of an angel saying not to be afraid when that angel appears to someone according to a mission to God. The light of Christ can dazzle us, even to the point of making us afraid. Yet, if we place our trust and hope in our faith, we will be reassured, we will feel strength, courage, and confidence. Jesus also tells us that we must take up our crosses and follow him. The disciples see a foretaste of Christ’s glory in the transfiguration of the Lord on the mountaintop, but they must return to carrying their crosses and to working toward the fulfillment of God’s kingdom. If we persevere, if we commit ourselves, if we work with conviction in our ministries and in our proclamation of God’s kingdom, then God will bless us on our journey. We are called to transformation on our journey of faith. Our faith, if it truly means something to us, will bring about transformation. May we move beyond our fears and our discomfort to let the light of Christ transform us and to transform others.

Starting this weekend, I will be away for four weekends in a row on mission appeals, traveling to California and New England. I will miss being with all of you, but I know that Father McGing will enjoy celebrating the weekend Masses with all of you. Through the mission appeals, I am able to bring our Diocese’s story to other parts of the United States. This month, the mission appeals will be in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, in the communities of Burbank, Arcadia, and San Gabriel, and in the Diocese of Providence in the state of Rhode Island. Blessings to all of you as we celebrate the Transfiguration this weekend. Father Lincoln.

**August 13, 2023**

I am still in the middle of three mission appeals in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. I am preaching at parishes in Burbank, Arcadia, and San Gabriel in the metropolitan Los Angeles area. Today, we hear Jesus telling the disciples to not be afraid as the wind tosses around their boat and as the disciples are shocked at seeing him walking on the water. Jesus is there for us to comfort us in the midst of our fears and our struggles. Tomorrow, on August 14, we commemorate the feast day of St Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan priest from Poland who died in the Auschwitz concentration camp when he voluntarily took the place of another inmate who was going to be put to death. St Kolbe courageously fought against the Nazi regime in WWII. He realized that his actions would put his life at risk, but he was willing to take those risks in order to stand up for his faith. Very devoted to the Blessed Mother, St Kolbe died on August 14, 1941, the day before the solemnity of the Assumption of Mary. May we have the courage to live out the values of our faith in the struggles, risks, and fears we have. Blessings to all of you - you are in my prayers as I undertaken these mission appeals in California. Father Lincoln.

**August 20, 2023**

I am in my last weekend of mission appeals in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. I will be back in Mississippi for a few days this upcoming week before I head to New England for my last mission appeal of the summer. Going out to mission appeals each summer to different Dioceses throughout the country and telling the stories of our missionary Diocese of Jackson help us be in solidarity with the universal Catholic Church. Although I miss being with all of you here in Clinton and Raymond, I enjoy visiting different parishes throughout the country. The missionary spirit that I gained from all my missionary service in places like Canada and Ecuador continues to be very strong within me in the Diocese of Jackson. I am very excited about the different faith formation and evangelization activities we will have going on in our parishes this school year. Blessings to all of you as we continue our journey of faith during these weeks of Ordinary Time. Father Lincoln.

**August 27, 2023**

After being out in Los Angeles for the past three weekends for mission appeals, I came back to Mississippi for a few days before I headed out to New England for a mission appeal in Rhode Island this weekend. This summer at our parishes in Clinton and Raymond, I have been addressing the topics of the Eucharistic renewal, our outreach to our brothers and sisters in need through works of mercy, and the evangelization of our parish community and those beyond our community boundaries. As we hear Jesus ask Peter who he says that Jesus is, we all need to proclaim who Jesus on our own journey of faith, most importantly in the way we live out our faith each day, not just in our words. It is easy for us to say something in words, but more challenging for us to live out the meaning of those words each day. May the values of our faith be integral to the way we live each day. Have a blessings week everyone - Father Lincoln.

**September 3, 2023**

I remember that during my childhood and youth, Memorial Day weekend meant the beginning of summer and Labor Day meant the end of summer and the beginning of school. However, with the new schedule of the Clinton public school system and with school now starting again during the summer months, our ideas of the summer and the school year may have changed somewhat. With Labor Day commemorated this Monday, we give thanks for our jobs that help us provide for our families and help us contribute to society. We pray that workers are treated with dignity and respect, while we also pray that workers treat their employers and their work with dignity and respect. Indeed, in our work, we should try to find a way to live out the holiness to which God calls us. The Gospel this weekend calls us to deny our own desires and caprices and to carry our crosses with love and courage. May our work lives, our personal lives, and our lives of faith be united in the way we live out the Gospel each day. Blessings to all of you. It is certainly good being back with all of you this weekend after being away on the mission appeals. Father Lincoln.

**September 10, 2023**

I remember when Labor Day marked the end of the summer and the beginning of the school year. However, the school year begins in July for Clinton district and in August for other districts in the area, making it harder to tell when summer ends. I am glad to be back here at the parishes this month after all my travels in August. Today, in the Gospel, Jesus talks about the ways we should reconcile with our neighbor. This message is crucial in a society that is divided and where people attack rather than reconcile with each other. In the pastor reimagining process that the parishes in our Diocese are undertaking, Bishop Kopacz states that healing, reconciliation, and trust are crucial for achieving unity in the Church and Diocese. Hopefully, when we gather around the table of the Lord together at Mass to celebrate the Eucharist, we can feel a sense of unity and diversity amongst our brothers and sisters in Christ. In my visits to parishes in California, Indiana, and Rhode Island in the mission appeals this year, I enjoyed sharing stories with the people and priests of those parishes, seeing the different ways our Church is present in the diversity of our country. Have a blessed week everyone - Father Lincoln.

**September 17, 2023**

This weekend, as we continue our journey during Ordinary Time, and as we celebrate Catechetical Sunday, we honor our catechists, teachers, and all who participate in the religious education program in our parish. Life-long formation for our children, youth, and adults was one of the topics that our parishes identified in the synodal process. Evangelization, faith formation, Eucharistic renewal, and outreach through acts of mercy are some of the areas I have been emphasizing to all of you this past year as your pastor as well. We are very thankful to so many parishioners who contribute to these areas in so many different ways. The theme of Catechetical Sunday this year is: “Come to me all you who labor and are burdened.” (Matthew 11:28). This year’s theme reminds us of the invitation we receive from our Lord to follow him and the way he does not want to add to our burdens, but to lighten them. Blessings to all of you as we celebrate Catechetical Sunday. Have a blessed week - Father Lincoln.

**September 24, 2023**

As we hear the parable of the landowner of the vineyard who hires workers for a wage, we might ask ourselves what type of work Jesus wants us to engage in as his disciples. A couple chapters later in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus announces that we will be judged in the end days by the ways we have fed the hungry, clothed the needy, reached out to the poor, and visited the sick and those in prison. But just as the landowner rewarded those laborers who did not work a full day, even if we have been complacent or inactive in the way we have lived out our faith, God gives us hope and calls us to action. Just as the landowner paid all the same wage, God’s same love and mercy are extended to all who accept his gift of salvation. We have loving vibrant welcoming parishes at Holy Savior and Immaculate Conception. We extend our invitation to all around the table of the Lord. We hope all of you accept our invitation to become engaged in our parishes in the Mass, in our devotions, and in our different activities. Blessings to all you - have a blessed week. Father Lincoln.

**October 1, 2023**

It is hard to believe that we are starting the month of October this weekend. October is Respect Life month. Our Mass today on this first Sunday is dedicated to Respect Life issues. Jesus reached out to everyone in society, but had a very specific ministry to sinners and to the oppressed. This year’s theme of Respect Life month calls us to radical solidarity. We have been stressing unity and solidarity in our synodal process and in our pastoral reimagining process. Radical solidarity is more than a few sporadic acts of generosity. It calls us to a mindset and to a way of life. Radical solidarity calls us to get invoked by word and deed in people’s lives. It calls us to embrace human life, to touch the suffering flesh of Christ in others. It calls us as the Body of Christ to build a culture of life here in our society. Respect Life month draws us to these particular issues that are sometimes very complicated in our modern world. This month, let us all reflect upon how we are living out these values as a community, as a Diocese, and as individuals. Blessings to all of you - Father Lincoln.

**October 8, 2023**

Reflection In the last several weeks, we have heard a lot about vineyards in our readings in our Sunday Masses. As we just celebrated the feast day of St Francis of Assisi this past week, we can reflect upon the way we live in the vineyard of God’s creation here on earth, called to be good stewards of the resources and gifts that we have been given. We also celebrate several feast days this upcoming week that help us reflect upon our faith in different ways. Tuesday, we celebrate St Daniel Comboni, a priest from Italy in the 19th century who had a dream of evangelizing Africa with Christ’s Good News. I served with the religious order that he founded, the Comboni Missionaries, as a lay missionary in Ecuador. Wednesday, we celebrate the feast day of John XXIII, who served as Pope from 1958 to 1963. He called the Second Vatican Council, which called for the Church to help transform our modern world, but to also to return to our apostolic traditions. Finally, we celebrate Our Lady of the Pillar on Thursday, the first apparition of the Blessed Mother, which took place in Zaragoza, Spain in the first century, when she appeared to the Apostle James to encourage him in his missionary work. These feast days celebrate a dedicated missionary, a 20th century Pope, and the Blessed Mother, celebrating three wonderful aspects of our Catholic faith. May we grow in our appreciation of the richness and diversity of our Catholic faith. May these different aspects of our Catholic faith help us on our journey. Father Lincoln.