

Fr. Joseph's Corner "St. Maria Goretti"

Maria Goretti was born on October 16, 1890, in Corinaldo, in the Province of Ancona, Italy. Her family lived in deep poverty, and when her farm-worker father moved them to Ferriere di Conca, near Anzio, their hardship only worsened. After her father died of malaria, Maria's mother was left to care for and provide for her children alone.

While her mother and older siblings labored in the fields, young Maria shouldered great responsibility at home. She cooked, sewed, kept the house, and lovingly cared for her youngest sister, Teresa. Despite their poverty, the Goretti family was united by a strong faith and deep love for God.

On July 5, 1902, tragedy struck. Maria sat on the steps of her home, quietly sewing, while Alessandro Serenelli, an 18-year-old neighbor who shared the farmhouse with her family, worked nearby in the barnyard. Suddenly, Alessandro attacked her, attempting to force her into grave sin.

Maria resisted with all her strength, crying out that what he was doing was a mortal sin and warning him that it would endanger his soul. "No! It is a sin! God does not want it!" she exclaimed, declaring she would rather die than offend God. Enraged by her resistance, Alessandro stabbed her 14 times before fleeing.

Awakened by her sister's cries, the family rushed home and found Maria gravely wounded. She was taken to the hospital in Nettuno, where surgeons operated without anesthesia. During the procedure, the surgeon asked her to remember him in Paradise. With simple faith and serenity, Maria replied, "Then I will gladly think of you."



Though she did not fully grasp the severity of her condition, Maria endured her suffering with remarkable peace. Before dying on July 6, 1902, she forgave her attacker, saying she wished to see him with her in Heaven. She died gazing at an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, holding a crucifix close to her heart.

Alessandro Serenelli was soon captured and sentenced to 30 years in prison. For many years, he remained hardened and unrepentant. Eventually, he underwent a profound conversion after a dream in which Maria appeared to him in a garden, offering him lilies that burned as he held them. From that moment, his life changed. Upon his

release 27 years later, he sought out Maria's mother and begged her forgiveness. She replied, "If my daughter can forgive him, who am I to withhold forgiveness?"

Maria Goretti was beatified on April 27, 1947, and canonized on June 24, 1950, by Pope Pius XII at St. Peter's Basilica. Remarkably, Alessandro Serenelli was present at her canonization, seated among the faithful. He later lived as a lay brother with the Capuchin Franciscans, spending the rest of his life in penance and prayer.

St. Maria is honored as a martyr not only because she died defending purity but also because her life reveals the Gospel's deepest truth: that forgiveness is stronger than violence and mercy more powerful than sin. Her body rests in a crypt of the Basilica of Our Lady of Grace and St. Maria Goretti, where it is preserved in a statue beneath the altar. Though sometimes described as incorrupt, her remains are not. She is often depicted with flowing hair, wearing white or simple farm clothing, and holding lilies, a symbol of purity and forgiveness. Her Feast Day is July 6th.

—*Prayerful Wishes, Fr. Joseph*

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE ON OUR PRAYER LIST:

David Leonard ♦ Steve Forrester ♦ Carl Johnson ♦ Dolores Koivisto ♦ Anita Marquez ♦ Ben Guyger
Georgia Fitzgerald ♦ Chuck Renwick ♦ John Huthmacher ♦ Ed McNamara ♦ Brittany
Duncan Osgood ♦ Julie Bither ♦ Mary Bither ♦ Lyn Rodgers ♦ Fred Vandehey ♦ Ralph Lee
Mary Lee ♦ Peggy Holtz ♦ Michael Kuenzi ♦ Mary Ellen Marquez ♦ Barbara Hopla
Gilbert Marquez ♦ Sam LeFevre and the LeFevre family ♦ Joanie Holland ♦ Tara Lamb
Julian Gomez ♦ Vanessa Ortega ♦ Mary Ellen Schiedler ♦ Carolyn Ausborn

St. Joseph Catholic Church

150 E First St., P.O. Box 1315, Prineville OR 97754

April 26, 2026 † 4th Sunday of Easter

Vigil Mass Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Sunday Mass (English)* 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Mass (Spanish) 12:00 p.m.
Holy Days 8:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Mondays • Tuesdays • Thursdays 8:00 a.m.
Wednesdays • Fridays 12:00 p.m.
*Coffee and fellowship are served after the 9 a.m. Mass.

Pastor ♦ Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Kunnelaya T.

Secretary ♦ Darlene Counts

Parish Office Hours ♦ Monday – Thursday ♦ 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Parish Office Telephone: (541) 447-6475

Fr. Joseph: 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. ♦ (541) 420-4458

Parish Website: <https://stjosephsprineville.org>

Email: stjosephparish@bendbroadband.com

Pastor: fatherjoseph@bendbroadband.com / joekunel55@gmail.com

Facebook: St. Joseph Parish / Instagram: st._josephparish

Director of Religious Education ♦ Barbara Dalton

OCIA ♦ Jim Friese / OCIA (Spanish) ♦ Yurizet Villasana

Parish Bulletin Designer / Editor ♦ Tina Hill



Confessions

Wednesdays: 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Saturdays: 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

(other times by appointment)

Anointing of the Sick

Contact Fr. Joseph for this Sacrament

- ♦ DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET AND GENACLE GROUP: Every Monday after the 8 a.m. Mass.
- ♦ FRIDAY ROSARY at 11:30 a.m., MASS at 12:00 p.m., EXPOSITION of the Blessed Sacrament immediately following Mass, EUCHARISTIC ADORATION 1–2 p.m., BENEDICTION AND REPOSITION



Baptisms

Baptisms will be held on Saturdays.

Parents of children to be baptized must be registered members of the parish 6 months prior to baptism.

A Baptismal Preparation Class is mandatory for both parents and godparents.

For more information, call the Parish Office.

Marriages

Couples need to make an appointment with Fr. Joseph 6 months before the proposed date.

A Marriage Preparation Course is mandatory.

MASS INTENTIONS / READINGS FOR THE WEEK

The practice of requesting a Mass to be offered for loved ones, living or deceased, is a beautiful and wonderful part of our Catholic tradition.

Please Call the Parish Office to Have a Mass Intention Reserved

Monday	04/27/2026	8:00 a.m.	Ruth Ralls (D)	Acts 11:1-18; Jn 10:11-18
Tuesday	04/28/2026	8:00 a.m.	Diane Franks (L)	Acts 11:19-26; Jn 10:22-30
Wednesday	04/29/2026	12:00 p.m.	Mike McCabe (L)	Acts 12:24-13:5a; Jn 12:44-50
Thursday	04/30/2026	8:00 a.m.	Albina Stagnoli (D)	Acts 13:13-25; Jn 13:16-20
Friday	05/01/2026	12:00 p.m.	Sam LeFevre (L)	Acts 13:26-33; Jn 14:1-6
Saturday	05/02/2026	5:00 p.m.	Sami Pedersen (D)	Acts 6:1-7; 1Pt 2:4-9; Jn 14:1-12
Sunday	05/03/2026	11:00 a.m.	St. Joseph Parishioners (L)	Acts 6:1-7; 1Pt 2:4-9; Jn 14:1-12

(L) = Living ♦ (D) = Deceased

Today's Homily—Today Is Good Shepherd Sunday

ON THIS 4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER, the Church gives us a beautiful and comforting image: **Jesus as the Good Shepherd.** In today's Gospel, Jesus says, "I am the gate for the sheep... whoever enters through me will be saved." And elsewhere, He tells us, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

This is not just a poetic image—it is a deeply personal one. Because in this image, **we are the sheep**, and Jesus is speaking about His relationship with each one of us.

A shepherd in the time of Jesus was not distant. He did not drive the sheep from behind. He **walked ahead of them**, called them by name, and they followed because they knew his voice. This is the first message for us today:

1. The Lord Knows Us Personally

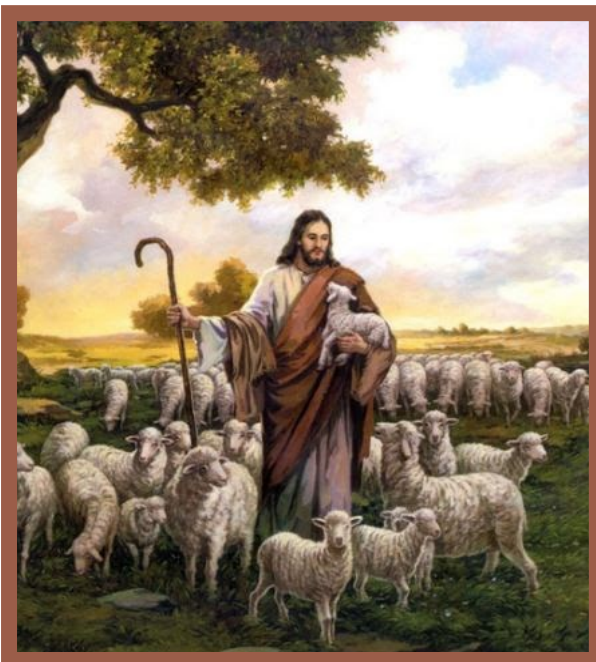
Jesus says, "The sheep hear his voice . . . he calls his own sheep by name." Think about that—God does not love us in a general, vague way. He knows your name, your struggles, your fears, your hopes. He knows the silent prayers you carry in your heart. And He calls you—not as part of a crowd—but personally.

But here is the question: **Do we recognize His voice?** In a world full of noise—social media, opinions, anxieties, distractions—it can be hard to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. Many voices promise happiness, success, or security, but not all lead to life. Jesus gently reminds us today: "My sheep hear my voice . . . they follow me." To hear His voice, we need **silence, prayer, Scripture, and trust.** The more we listen, the more familiar His voice becomes.

2. The Lord Leads Us to Life, Not Harm

Jesus also says something striking: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

The Good Shepherd does not control or burden the sheep—He **leads them to life.** Sometimes we think that following Christ means restriction or loss. But in truth, it is the opposite. When we follow His way—love, forgiveness, humility, compassion—we find **real freedom and deep joy.**



On the other hand, Jesus warns about "thieves and robbers"—those things in life that **steal our peace:** sin, selfishness, addiction, resentment, or false priorities. These voices may seem attractive at first, but they ultimately lead us away from life. The Good Shepherd always leads us toward **what is good, true, and life-giving.**

3. The Lord Protects and Sacrifices for Us

Perhaps the most powerful part of this image is this: **The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.** Jesus is not a hired worker who runs away when dan-

ger comes. He stays. He protects. He gives everything—even His life. And we know this is not just a metaphor. On the cross, Jesus literally gave His life for us. This means: We are never abandoned. We are never forgotten. Even in suffering, He is with us. There may be moments when life feels confusing, painful, or uncertain. But the Good Shepherd walks with us through every valley.

4. We Are Also Called to Be Shepherds

Today is also a day when the Church prays for vocations—especially to the priesthood. But in a broader sense, **every one of us is called to reflect the Good Shepherd** in our own way.

Parents are shepherds to their children—teachers, leaders, caregivers—all are called to guide, protect, and love. And even in simple ways: when you listen to someone who is hurting, when you guide someone gently, when you forgive instead of judge, you are acting like the Good Shepherd.

CONCLUSION

My dear friends, today Jesus speaks to us with tenderness and strength: "I know you. I call you. I lead you. I protect you. Trust me."

Let us ask ourselves this week: Am I listening to His voice? Am I following where He leads? Am I helping others experience His care?

And let us pray for the grace to trust the Good Shepherd more deeply—because when we follow Him, we do not walk in darkness. We walk toward life.

April—The Month of the Blessed Virgin Mary

World Day of Prayer for Vocations



THIS SUNDAY, APRIL 26TH, is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

Everyone is invited to join in a **Holy Hour from 3 to 4 p.m.** to pray for the clergy and religious serving our Diocese, and to pray for an increase of religious and priestly vocations in our diocese and the world.

If you cannot attend in person, please join us spiritually from wherever you are.

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1st Holy Communion

Let's celebrate our students together as they begin their spiritual journey, receive the Eucharist for the first time, and grow closer to God. This is a joyful milestone in their faith journey!

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Pastoral Council

There will be a **Pastoral Council meeting on TUESDAY, APRIL 28TH, at 4 p.m., in the Parish Hall.**

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Religious Education News

We have many upcoming changes in our department—**several volunteer teaching positions need to be filled.**

There are some requirements you must meet before you can take the position. You will need to watch a video and pass a background check.

The classes are being held on **Wednesdays from 3 to 5 p.m.**

Please inquire at the Parish Hall after 3 p.m. or call **Barb Dalton** at (541) 410-3720.

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50+ Wedding Anniversary

St. Joseph Church joyfully celebrates the enduring love of couples who have been happily married for 50 years or more. **Join us on Sunday, May 3rd, right after the 11 a.m. bilingual Mass, for a warm luncheon and a heartfelt celebration** honoring our cherished parishioners' milestone. We warmly invite everyone to be a part of this special occasion and share in the joy!

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

"I have come so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

Live your married lives "more abundantly" by participating in a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience from **Friday, May 1st, to Sunday, May 3rd, in Beaverton, Oregon.**

To apply for your WWME Experience or to search for other dates, go to rediscoverthespark.org.

For information about WWME, call (503) 704-0836 or send an email to: reservations@rediscoverthespark.org.

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Book Club

Our next book club selection is ***From Orphan to Inspiration*** by Betty Simon.

We will gather on **Tuesday, May 12th, at 6 p.m., in Room #4 of the Parish Hall.**

All are welcome to read the book and join the discussion.

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Burrito and Bake Sale

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported our fundraising efforts! We're truly grateful to those who generously donated baked goods, supplied farm-fresh eggs for the burritos, came out to make a purchase, and volunteered their time. Your support means the world to us—thank you so much!

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Seasonal Job Opening



A seasonal, part-time, groundskeeping assistant position is open at the Diocese of Baker Retreat Center in Powell Butte.

This is a great summer position for a young college student! Duties include mowing, trimming, and irrigation.

Please contact **Joe Graziano** at (503) 887-2939 or send an email to him at: joe@dioceseofbaker.org.