



Established
July 5, 1840

St. Michael the Archangel Parish

We are disciples who act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with God.

Churches: † Immaculate Conception-Holualoa † Holy Rosary-Kalaoa † St. Paul's-Kawanui † St. Peter's by-the-Sea-Kahaluu
St. Michael's Church 75-5769 Alii Drive | Kailua-Kona, HI 96740 | Phone: (808) 326-7771

Email Address: stmichaelarchangel@rcchawaii.org / Office Hours: Monday through Friday | 9am - 4:30pm

WEEKDAY MORNING MASSES: 7am Monday through Saturday at St. Michael the Archangel

WEEKDAY EVENING MASSES: 5pm Mon Tues Thurs Fri (English) & 6pm Wed (Spanish) at Immaculate Conception

Adoration: Wednesday 7:30am - 4:45pm / Confessions: Saturday 9am at St. Michael's Church

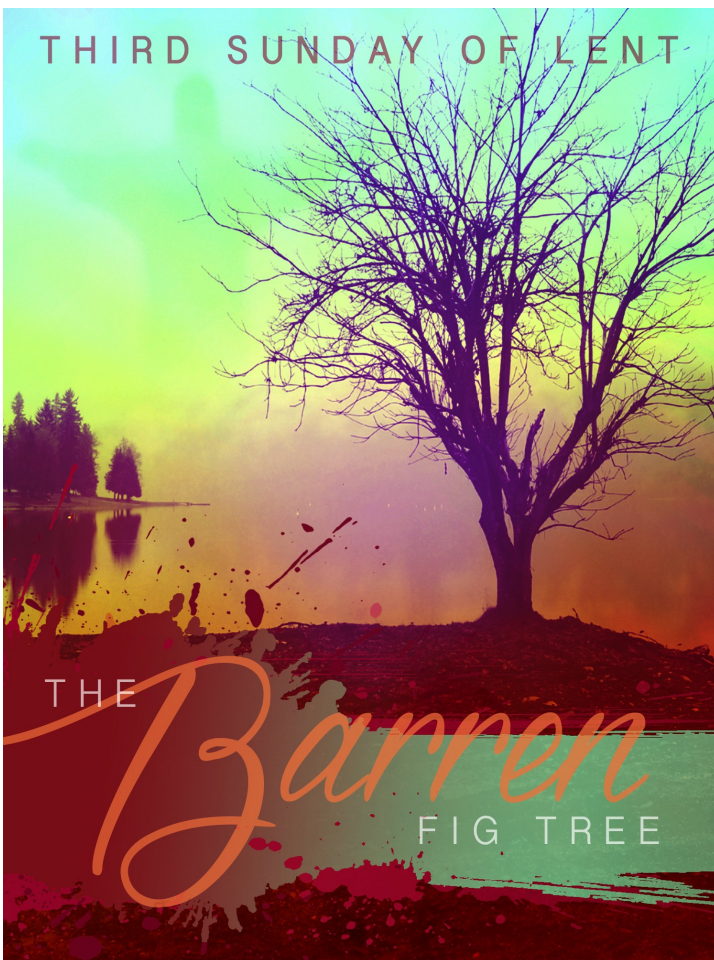
WEEKEND MASSES: Sat 4pm, Sun 7am, 9am, 4pm / SPANISH MASS: Sun 12noon

Gift Shop Hours: Sun 7:30am - 11:00am

Website: saintmichaelparishkona.org **March 8, 2026 | 8 de marzo de 2026**

Third Sunday of Lent

Reading I - Exodus 17:3-7 | Psalm - 95:1-2,6-7,8-9 | Reading II - Romans 5:1-2,5-8 | Gospel - John 4:5-42
Primera Lectura - Éxodo 17:3-7 | Salmo - 94:1-2,6-7,8-9 | Segunda Lectura - Romanos 5:1-2,5-8 | Evangelio - Juan 4:5-42



THIRSTING FOR LIFE-GIVING WATERS

Especially during the Lenten, Holy Week, and Easter seasons, the prayer texts of the Eastern Church revel in paradoxical images of Christ: the eternal life who is put to death, the host of the supper who is also its meal, the thirsty crucified one with living water streaming from his side. These images flow from the evangelists' portrayals of Jesus and from his very ministry, during which he often upset or reversed people's expectations about him or the ways of God. This "reversal" is at play in today's Gospel, as Jesus speaks to an enemy foreigner who is also a woman beneath his status. In addition he, the thirsting one, shows the woman to be the one truly thirsting. He - whose parched lips will say "I thirst" before he dies - is the source of life and life-giving water. Lent calls upon us to dwell on how each of us is thirsting for Christ, and it leads us, ultimately, back to the life-giving waters of our baptism into his Body.

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PRAYER TO ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.

Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do you, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Prepare for Next Week's Scripture Readings

1st Rdg/Primera Lectura: 1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-13

Psalm/Salmo: 23(22): 1-3a,3b-4,5,6

2nd Rdg/Segunda Lectura: Ephesians (Efesios) 5:8-14

Gospel/Evangelio: John (Juan) 9:1-41

Aloha! Welcome to Our Parish - We hope you will find our parish community a place where your faith will be nourished. We encourage you to register with the parish. Registration forms are available in the kiosk, or can be completed online at saintmichaelparishkona.org. To our visitors, we pray that you enjoy your stay in Kona and are blessed with safe travels home.



March 8, 2026

Third Sunday of Lent

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Ex 17:3-7 | Rom 5:1-2, 5-8 | Jn 4:5-42

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

As the Israelites wandered in the desert, Moses heard their cries and recognized their deeper need, not simply for water, but for hope. And so Moses calls upon the Lord, who gives them water in the desert, revealing his trustworthiness. In the big and little ways that we ask the same question – “Is the Lord in our midst or not?” – our loving and generous Father reminds us that he has not abandoned us and that his goodness will ultimately prevail. It’s easy to become disgruntled like the Israelites when there is great pain and suffering around us. But through the ways that we care for one another and the peace that we find in prayer, the Father reminds us that he stands with us, granting us sustenance and grace.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

When Christ told the woman at the well that those who drink the water he gives will never thirst again, she thought he was offering literal water. Christ was instead revealing his own identity as the Son of God. This woman, who hears the words of Christ and knows God’s promise of a Messiah, is filled with hope as she comes to recognize that the Lord indeed was in her midst. And I find it interesting that when she told people in town of her encounter with Christ, she told them of how he saw the mistakes of her past. Jesus loved her, and called her to step into the fullness of who she could be by turning away from the past that she clung to. We live in a world where we have very real physical needs, like the Israelites who thirsted, and the need to be seen in love, like the Samaritan woman. Ultimately, at the core of both of these needs is the desire for the hope that only God can give. When we serve our neighbors and look upon others with love, we can also be the vessel through which the presence of God is made known.

WITNESS

In our world, people are constantly asking the question, “Is the Lord in our midst or not?” Reflect on one way that you can share the Good News of the Gospel through word or action to make the presence of God known to those in your community.

Life of Stewardship

Our readings for this second Sunday of Lent offer us, as Christian stewards, the motivation to continue our 40-day journey toward deeper holiness.

The first reading from the book of Genesis describes God's call to Abram (who would later be called Abraham). God instructs Abram to leave his home and set out to a land that God had chosen for him. Abram's response is an ancient example of good stewardship. Instead of clinging to his comfortable home and way of life, he recognizes that all he has is a gift from God, puts his trust in God, and obeys. And God rewards him, saying, "I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."

To "be a blessing" is the true aim of a stewardship way of life. It is also an excellent way to live out the season of Lent. The sacrifices we take on, the spiritual disciplines we practice, and the extra acts of service we perform during this season - all give glory to God and transform our lives into a blessing for others.

Lest we grow weary on this path, our Gospel passage today, from Matthew, offers us a powerful image of the great God we serve. It is the story of the Transfiguration of Jesus, when our Lord reveals Himself in His true glory and the Father says, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." The apostles who witnessed this were awestruck. But our loving Savior reassured them saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid."

As we continue our Lenten journey, let us take these two verses, "Listen to him," "Rise, and do not be afraid" to heart. Let us rely on God's strength to aid us in our spiritual disciplines as we move through Lent. We will arrive at Easter with deeper holiness, as a blessing to God and others - and as better stewards of all God's gifts to us.

- Stewardship Reflections by Catholic Stewardship Consultants

Parish News

Hawaii Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal

Our **Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal** is an exciting opportunity for our parish community to come together and *Share God's Gifts* in support of the vital ministries that strengthen our Church across the islands. Make your gift online using the QR code. Envelopes will be provided as soon as we receive them. Your generosity supports Catholic schools and faith formation programs, outreach to individuals and families in need, evangelization efforts, and the formation of seminarians preparing for the priesthood. Together, we can make a lasting difference!



40 Cans for Lent

The Knights of Columbus started their "40 Cans for Lent" campaign on Ash Wednesday. **Please consider donating one can for each day of our Lenten season.** Donations can be left in the carts inside the front entrance of the Church.

Lenten Soup Supper-Wednesdays after Benediction

Every Wednesday during Lent, our various ministries will provide a simple soup and bread supper after Benediction.

Come and spend an hour of adoration between 7:30 and 5pm in the Church. Join us for Benediction at 5pm and then our Soup Supper in the Grace Parish center. We look forward to seeing you as we come together to embrace the Lenten season.

Lenten Stations of the Cross

Every Friday during Lent, the **Stations of the Cross** will be prayed **at 5pm at St. Michael's in English** and at **6pm at Immaculate Conception in Spanish.**

Lenten Fish Fry Fridays

Please join us each Friday after Stations of the Cross from 5:45pm to 7:15pm, for Lenten Fish Fry Fridays in the Grace Parish Center. Hosted by the Knights of Columbus. Eat-In or Take-Out dinner is only \$15 per person. See posters on the church kiosks for more information.

40DaysForLife

The Respect Life Committee continues the international 40DaysForLife Campaign, until Sunday, March 29. You're invited to join us in 40 days of prayer and fasting for an end to abortion. If you'd like to volunteer as a prayer disciple, or stand up for life and participate in our community outreach, please sign up at www.40daysforlife.com/en/kona.

St. Michael the Archangel Scholarship Program

Our St. Michael the Archangel Scholarship aims to empower young adults to become active witnesses of the Catholic faith, supporting students in developing and participating in a faith-based environment at their campus or local church. The scholarship is available to incoming or current students at an accredited university, college, community college, or technical school.

Visit St. Michael's website saintmichaelparishkona.org for eligibility criteria and application. Scholarship amounts can vary and will be determined based on availability of funds. Deadline to apply is March 15. Top candidates will be notified by May 1. If you wish to donate to the scholarship fund, envelopes are available in the kiosks.

St. Michael Statue Brick Garden

We are accepting orders for Phase 2, scheduled for installation in the Spring 2026. Order forms and information are available after Mass at the coffee station, at the kiosk, or at the Parish Office during the week. Three brick sizes are offered, each with your choice of engraving. Let your legacy become part of our parish grounds. Together, let's build something beautiful for generations to come. Everyone is welcome to participate.

AARP Offering Free Tax Help

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is available free to taxpayers with low and moderate income, with special attention to those ages 50 and older. West Hawaii has two sites offering service from **February 4 until April 10.** Hale Halawai, located at 75-5600 Ali'i Drive is open on a walk-in basis on **Thursdays from 8am until 12 noon.**

Yano Hall located at 82-6156 Mamalahoa Highway in Capt-ain Cook is open for walk-in and appointments (808-765-9141) on **Wednesdays from 10am until 4pm.**

Stewardship of Treasure

February 23rd - March 1st, 2026

ONLINE GIVING	\$ 3,925.00
SUNDAY OFFERINGS / MAILED-IN OFFERINGS	\$ 19,518.75
BUILDING REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	\$ 8,064.11

We are grateful that our construction debt for the Grace Parish Center has been paid off. Our weekly second collection will be for our Building Repairs & Maintenance. *Mahalo* for your continued generosity!

Offerings can be mailed directly to the parish office; or use our website's "Online Giving" to share your blessings.

STEWARDSHIP OF OUR TREASURE FOR THE MONTH MARCH 2026 MONTHLY DIOCESAN ASSESSMENT: \$14,082.75

The Diocesan Assessment covers shared staff and administrative resources from the Diocese supporting every parish. The new "Annual Appeal" assessment starting in January provides funds for collaborative Catholic ministries and services that extend beyond the capacity of any single parish.

Online Giving

St. Michael's Church provides **Online Giving** - a convenient and safe way to make a one-time or recurring donation. Getting started is easy - visit saintmichaelparishkona.org and click our **ONLINE GIVING** tab. Your gift will be securely transferred directly to the parish bank account.

NEW Helping Children with Loss program

All of us have experienced grief throughout our lives, a result of many changes and losses. These losses begin in childhood - for example, when we move from one home to another, when our parents go through divorce, when a pet dies, a first love doesn't work out, or our team lost. The "**Helping Children with Loss**" program **teaches adults** (parents, grandparents, teachers, daycare providers and others who have, love, or work with children) **how to help children to deal with loss**. The program is an action-based program with reading and writing assignments, outlined in the book "*When Children Grieve*" (book provided). Based on the Grief Recovery Method program, "**Helping Children with Loss**" is a 4-session program for a total of 10 hours. This is **not** a drop-in program, as each session builds on previous sessions. All 4 sessions must be completed. This program will be held on Wednesdays, **April 8 - April 25, 2026 from 10am to 12:30pm. There is no charge**. To register, please call **Suzanne Zaw**, Certified Grief Recovery Specialist, before Friday March 27, 2026, at (808)339-7980.

Faith Formation

Faith Formation (Grades K-5)

Classes continue every Sunday from 10:15 to 11:50am in the Grace Parish Center. Class attendance is required in order to receive your Sacraments.

Youth Ministry (Grades 6-12)

Spring Break Bible Campers meet at handicap parking Sunday at 5:15 pm. Pray for us. We return on Saturday March 21. Next YM session Sunday March 29 at 5:15 pm.

Third Sunday of Lent

Recently I received a note from a teenager I met years ago. He wrote, "Dear Father Muir, you probably do not remember me, but I wanted to thank you for your inspiring and humorous homilies at the parish. They helped me appreciate the beauty of Catholicism, which I have now embraced in a personal way." That small note moved me more than he probably imagined. I had no idea my words had taken root in him. I was simply sowing seeds - week by week, Mass by Mass. Someone else - his parents, a youth minister, or God Himself was doing the deeper work. Now this young man is joyfully reaping a harvest of faith.

In today's Gospel, Jesus offers living water to a Samaritan woman whose life had been full of searching and disappointment. By the end of their encounter, she becomes a bold and joyful evangelist. Then Jesus turns to his disciples and says something easily overlooked: "One sows and another reaps" (John 4:37). He is helping them and us to understand how evangelization works. Often, the one who sows the seeds of faith is not the one who sees the fruit.

This Lent, ask yourself: Are you in a sowing phase or a reaping phase? If you are sowing - raising children, praying for someone, mentoring - be patient. Your work matters. If you are reaping - seeing someone come alive in faith - be grateful. You are standing on sacred ground, tilled and watered by others.

Lenten challenge: Thank someone who once sowed faith into your life. And keep sowing, even when the harvest is unseen.

- Father John Muir, ©LPI

The 6 Characteristics of an Everyday Stewardship for Lent - Grateful

Happy Birthday! It may or may not be your birthday now, but I know it will be coming up at some point. I hope you receive many cool presents and get to spend quality time with friends and family. On special days like birthdays, Christmas, and anniversaries, it is good to celebrate. After all, we need some fun and celebration in our lives.

But what about the day after? Presents remain, but the presence of others may be over, and it is back to the daily grind. Yesterday, you were filled with gratitude. You hold the memory of yesterday still close so that fuels you for the day. However, how about 2, 3, or 4 days from then? The truth is that many joys in this life cannot stay with us forever. They belong to a certain place in time. We will have our memories, yet those thoughts will never be a suitable substitute for the real thing.

There is one joy that remains throughout all our days: the joy we find in Jesus. What he gives us does not fade. The amazing thing about what he offers us is that it also provides a lens through which we see all things. Now we can see the smallest reasons to be grateful. We no longer have a life where we go from one celebration to another with the ordinary in between. All life and time are extraordinary! All gifts, great and small, are precious. This

YOU ARE INVITED

(schedule may change without advance notice)

MONDAY

- Friendly Place Lunches 10:30am-12pm
- Knights of Columbus 5:45pm
(2nd Monday of the month)
- Church Cleaning 6:00pm

TUESDAY

- Coffee with the Priests 7:30-9:00am
- Charismatic Prayer Group 6:00-7:30pm

WEDNESDAY

- Adoration 7:30-5:00pm
- Kupuna Ministry 8:30-10:30am
- Benediction/Evening Prayer 5:00pm
- Hula Ministry Practice 5:30-6:30pm
- Men of Faith 5:30-6:30pm
- Neocatechumenal Way 6:00-7:00pm
(Last Wed. of each month) 7:00-8:00pm

THURSDAY

- Spiritual Book Club 4:00-5:30pm
(3rd Thursday of each month)
- Young Adults Group 6:00-7:00pm
(First Thursday - Grace Parish Center)
(Third Thursday - Ola Brew)

FRIDAY

- Women of the Word 12:00-1:00pm

SATURDAY

- Church Cleaning 7:30am
- Grounds Maintenance 7:30am
- Confession 9-10am

SUNDAY

- Gift Shop Open 7:30am-11am
- Children's Rosary Group After 9am Mass
(Last Sunday of each month)
- Immigration Seminar 1:00-2:00pm
(Last Sunday of each month)
- Consecration to God the Father 3:00pm
(1st Sunday of each month)
- Order of Christian Initiation of Adults After 9am Mass

Baptism

Baptism Classes are held monthly as needed. Parents and Godparents must attend class. The next class will be held at 8:30am on Saturday, March 14 in the Office Conference Room.

To register, please email baptism.stmichaeklona@rcchawaii.org

Marriage

Please notify the office and allow six months before the date of marriage for preparation.

offering seems too good to be true, so what's the catch? Like all gifts given to us, for the gift to have meaning, we must be willing to receive it. The choice is yours. You can live in the ordinary, or you can revel in the extraordinary, now and forever.

- Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS © LPI

Recognize God in Your Ordinary Moments- When God asks for Water

One of my earliest memories is of my mother weeping. The last few months of her pregnancy with my little brother were tremendously painful for her, and more than once the pain brought her to tears. I have a hazy image of her in my mind, belly swollen with a twelve pound baby lying transverse in the womb, sitting on the edge of her bed, dabbing at her face with toilet paper.

I had brought her the toilet paper. I would do that when I saw her crying, to wipe away her tears. I have a hazy memory of that, too - of the way my heart was wrenched by the sight of her suffering, of my desperation to do something to help, and of my immense satisfaction when she would take the toilet paper, smile and say, "Oh, thank you, sweetheart!" as if I had just airlifted her out of a war zone.

What a powerful gift to give to a child still learning the meaning of compassion and selflessness - the gift of being able to feel that she has, even in some small way, "rescued" a person she worships. Her smile of gratitude lives, immortal, in my mind, along with the swell of satisfaction it produced in the deepest corner of my heart. This was when I learned that it feels good to help people, and this memory is a perpetually replenished well of living water for me. I draw from it daily, three decades later.

This is a gift that Christ gives, over and over again, in the Gospels. He allows us to encounter him tired, afraid, sad and hungry. Omnipotent power subjected to the utter vulnerability of human form.

Before the Incarnation, God looked down from Heaven and said, "You are thirsty. Here is something to drink." After the Incarnation, God sits down beside us and says, "I'm thirsty. Give me something to drink."

- Colleen Jurkiwicz Dorman © LPI

LIVE THE LITURGY - INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

Jesus did not convert the Samaritan woman with miracles. He converted her with presence. He was not afraid of her sins or her failures.

He listened to her. He sat with her. Let us learn from this: when we are present to others, we can show them the face of God. -©LPI

Mass Intentions

SATURDAY, MARCH 7TH

- 4pm - Richard Alger, Rest in Peace

SUNDAY, MARCH 8TH

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

- 7am - Craig Aina Ynigues, Jr., Rest in Peace
- 9am - Wonga Jules Patrick, Nseke Tengele Genevieve, Eben Sang Kotta Bachir, Ekitti Bruno Firmin, Logbayong Bruno Germain, Penda Eben Lucien, Ngueng Penda OScarine, Eben Wonga Bruno, May they all Rest in Peace
- 4pm - Zola Ingram, Rest in Peace

MONDAY, MARCH 9TH

- 7am - Leopoldo Mendez Vargas, Juan Sanchez Geronimo, Mark Weaver, Jacen Ham, Christopher Kanoko, Catalina Ramos, Gabriel Zarate, All Souls in Purgatory
- 5pm - Necitas Revilla, 2nd Anniversary of Death

TUESDAY, MARCH 10TH

- 7am - Jimmy McClean, Rest in Peace
- 5pm - Alex Jaramillo, deceased, Birthday Remembrance

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11TH

- 7am - MISSA PRO POPULO

THURSDAY, MARCH 12TH

- 7am - Frank Marver, Death Anniversary, Rest in Peace
- 5pm - Thanksgiving for Jaymie & Children & Grandchildren

FRIDAY, MARCH 13TH

- 7am - Richardson K. Smith, Sr. deceased, Death Anniversary
- 5pm - Mass of Thanksgiving

SATURDAY, MARCH 14TH

- 7am - Hi'iilei Kaaua, Rest in Peace

Requesting a Mass Intention

A Mass intention can be scheduled by calling the Office at **808-326-7771**.

Mass cards are available.

"For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat..."

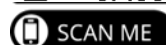
—Matthew 25:35

The Food Pantry Ministry

The Food Pantry is open the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month from **9 - 9:45am at Immaculate Conception Church Parking Lot.**



Use this QR Code for our Amazon Wishlist. Items purchased can be mailed directly to the Parish Office.



Mahalo for your support!

A Brave Questioner

This Week's Readings at Mass

- ▶ Exodus 17:3-7 • Water from the rock
- ▶ Romans 5:1-2, 5-8 • Faith, hope, and love
- ▶ John 4:5-42 • The Samaritan woman at the well


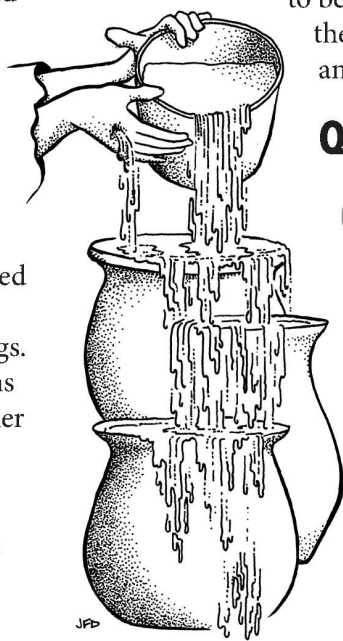


So many biblical scenes take place in the desert and revolve around the question of where people will find the water and food they need to survive. It makes sense, given that our ancestors in faith lived in a region where finding their daily bread and water was literally a matter of life or death. The first reading today tells the famous story of God making the impossible possible, providing Moses and the Israelites with water from a rock just when they thought they might die in the wilderness.

The Gospel reading tells a story of a woman who was thirsty, but in a different way. She has access to H₂O at Jacob's well, but until she meets Jesus, she doesn't realize she is thirsting for more. She knows her religious and theological tradition well. She understands Jews and Samaritans don't share physical items in common. She knows the history of Jacob's well. She knows about the prophets in her religion. She knows her people's historical place of worship. She knows about the Messiah they are awaiting.

She seems proud of her religious heritage and isn't easily pushed over. She values it and won't let it go without good reason. On the other hand, she is open to new understandings and isn't so prideful that she remains inflexible when presented with someone new. In that way, she was unlike some others Jesus met during his ministry who refused to consider new interpretations of their scripture or religious teachings. When Jesus answered her questions to her satisfaction and addressed her doubts about who he was, she was swift to accept him as her savior.

Notice Jesus' willingness to engage her hard questions. Notice his pa-



Panel 1: A sheep stands in a field, looking thoughtful. A speech bubble says, "I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT MY DIRECTION IN LIFE." To the right, a thought bubble contains the text: "I just want you to love me and care for my loved ones."

Panel 2: The sheep is speaking to an unseen person. A speech bubble says, "GOSH, GOD. THIS ISN'T ABOUT YOU! EVERYTHING ISN'T ABOUT —"

Panel 3: The sheep is speaking again. A speech bubble says, "OH, WAIT— EVERYTHING IS ABOUT YOU, ISN'T IT?"

Panel 4: The sheep is silent, looking down.

© Jean Denton flock.pastoralcenter.com

Sheepish Question:
Realizing it is all about Jesus, what must I do differently with my life?

tience in letting her gradually come to a new understanding. Notice the respect and freedom he gives her to have her own thoughts and opinions. Notice how he gets fed by his conversation with her. Notice his joy when she spreads the good news about him (just like he was asking his apostles to do!).

Rather than focusing on the woman's marital history, what changes if we focus on how Jesus relates to her, and what happens as a result? "Many more began to believe in him." All because she bravely asked the questions she had and listened well to Jesus' answers.

Questions of the Week

- 1 Who has challenged you on your religious beliefs and helped you come to a new understanding of them?
- 2 What do you think of Jesus and how he relates to the woman in this passage? Is this a Jesus you would want to meet?

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Catechesis. The Documents of Vatican Council II.

II. Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*.

2. *The Church, a Visible and Spiritual Reality*



Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

Today, we will continue our exploration of the Conciliar Constitution [*Lumen gentium*](#), a dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

In the first chapter, which is primarily intended to answer the question of what the Church is, she is described as a “complex reality” ([no. 8](#)). Now we ask ourselves: what does this complexity consist of? Some might answer that the Church is complex in that she is ‘complicated’ and therefore difficult to explain; others might think that her complexity derives from the fact that she is an institution steeped in two thousand years of history, with characteristics that differ from any other social or religious group. In Latin, however, the word ‘complex’ indicates rather the orderly union of different aspects or dimensions within the same reality. For this reason, [*Lumen gentium*](#) can affirm that the Church is a well-organized body, in which the human and divine dimensions coexist without separation and without confusion.

The first dimension is immediately perceptible, in that the Church is a community of men and women who share the joy and struggle of being Christians, with their strengths and weaknesses, proclaiming the Gospel and becoming a sign of the presence of Christ who accompanies us on our journey through life. Yet this aspect – which is also evident in its institutional organization – is not sufficient to describe the true nature of the Church, because it also has a divine dimension. The latter does not consist in an ideal perfection or spiritual superiority of its members, but in the fact that the Church is generated by God’s plan for humanity, realized in Christ.

Therefore, the Church is at the same time an earthly community and the mystical body of Christ, a visible assembly and a spiritual mystery, a reality present in history and a people journeying towards heaven (*LG*, 8; *CCC*, 771).

The human and divine dimensions integrate harmoniously, without one overshadowing the other; thus, the Church lives in this paradox. She is a reality that is both human and divine, which welcomes the sinful man and leads him to God.

To illuminate this ecclesial condition, [*Lumen gentium*](#) refers to the life of Christ. In fact, those who met Jesus along the roads of Palestine experienced his humanity, his eyes, his hands, the sound of his voice. Those who decided to follow him were moved precisely by the experience of his welcoming gaze, the touch of his blessing hands, his words of liberation and healing. At the same time, however, by following that Man, the disciples opened themselves to an encounter with God. Indeed, Christ’s flesh, his face, his gestures and his words visibly manifest the invisible God.

In the light of the reality of Jesus, we can now return to the Church: when we look at her closely, we discover a human dimension made up of real people, who sometimes manifest the beauty of the Gospel and other times struggle and make mistakes like everyone else. However, it is precisely through her members and her limited earthly aspects that Christ’s presence and his saving action are manifested. As [Benedict XVI](#) said, there is no opposition between the Gospel and the institution; on the contrary, the structures of the Church serve precisely for the

“realization and concretization of the Gospel in our time” ([Address to Swiss Bishops](#), 9 November 2006). An ideal and pure Church, separated from the earth, does not exist; only the one Church of Christ, embodied in history.

This is what constitutes the holiness of the Church: the fact that Christ dwells in her and continues to give himself through the smallness and fragility of her members. Contemplating this perennial miracle that takes place in her, we understand ‘God’s method’: He makes himself visible through the weakness of creatures, continuing to manifest himself and to act. For this reason, [Pope Francis](#), in [Evangelii gaudium](#), exhorts us all to learn “to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5)” (no. 169). This enables us still today to build up the Church: not only by organizing its visible forms, but by building that spiritual edifice which is the body of Christ, through communion and charity among ourselves.

Indeed, charity constantly generates the presence of the Risen One. “If only we could all just let our thoughts dwell on the one thing, charity! It’s the only thing, you see, which both surpasses all things, and without which all things worth nothing, and which draws all things to itself, wherever it may be” (*Sermon 354, 6, 6*).

Summary of the Holy Father's words

Dear brothers and sisters, in our continuing catechesis on the [Second Vatican Council](#), today we consider the mystery of the human and divine dimensions of the Church as presented by the Dogmatic Constitution [Lumen Gentium](#). Just as Jesus’ humanity was immediately apparent to those who walked by his side, so too the human dimension of the Church is easy to perceive: it is a community of men and women who, with their gifts and their flaws, seek to proclaim the Gospel within a visible structure. Those who followed Jesus more closely, however, recognized that his humanity — his loving gaze, his merciful gestures and his powerful word — manifested his divinity, which led them to salvation. In a similar way, through the visible and human dimension of the Church, the spirit of Christ and his saving action are present and active in the world. Let us strive to be authentic witnesses of the love of Christ so that all can recognize in us and among us the charity that characterizes true Christians and builds up the Church.

Special greetings

I greet all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s Audience, particularly the groups from England, India, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam and the United States of America. With prayerful good wishes that this Lent will be a time of grace and spiritual renewal for you and your families, I invoke upon all of you joy and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/audiences/2026/documents/20260304-udienza-generale.html>



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