



ST. MARY CHURCH  
OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



stj ST. JOHN VIANNEY  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

# Catholic Atheist

## WEEK 4 - March 15-21, 2026

### *A Disciple Believes . . . WE NEED A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!*

*We are in the fourth week of our Catholic “Atheist” tour! Last week, we explored our tendency to worry about our anxieties (about family, finances, work, the future, and more.) We also considered the path to eliminating such worry: lifting our concerns to God in prayer and trusting that He will order our steps and provide solutions for us that, many times, we cannot even imagine, ourselves.*

*This week, we will consider how to develop an increasingly close relationship with God.*

#### OPENING PRAYER

**Heavenly Father,** As we gather for this week, we thank You for reminding us that we do not have to carry our worries alone. You invite us to place our anxieties about family, work, finances, and the future into Your hands and to trust that You are guiding our steps.

Tonight, draw us closer to You. Help us move from simply believing in You to truly knowing and trusting You. Deepen our relationship with You, quiet our hearts, and open us to Your presence.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### INSIGHTS FROM WEEKEND’S READINGS

[CLICK HERE TO READ THIS WEEKEND’S READINGS](#)

- First Reading: [1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a](#)
- Second Reading: [Ephesians 5:8-14](#)
- Responsorial: [Psalm 23: 1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6](#)
- Gospel Reading: [John 9:1-41](#)

In this week’s Gospel, we see a blind man evolve from calling Jesus a “man,” to referring to Him as a “prophet,” to worshipping Him as the God that He is while the Pharisees only see the man’s blindness.

Our Spiritual Journey is much like the blind man’s journey, growing to recognize Him as God our Father, Who is accessible to us in His Son, Jesus. It is sometimes easier for us to build a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus because He lived the life of a human and knows our joys and challenges. One of the shortest versions in scripture is “Jesus wept.” ( John 11:35) A reminder that our Lord understands grief and the suffering we experience in this life. He loves us so much that He came down to experience what we experience and to ultimately conquer it.

We need to ask ourselves, “Do I believe in the Son of Man? Do I believe He is my Savior?” Then we need to realize that “I have seen Him; it is He Who speaks to me when I pray.” And then we can truly say, “Lord I believe” and begin deepening our relationship with Him.

A Disciple Believes that We Need a Personal Relationship with God ... and takes time in silence to listen to Him in prayer.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

Take some time to reflect on this week's message and discuss with your group:

1. Who knows you best of all? Whom do you know best of all? What is necessary to know someone so well? How does this relate to the way we get to know God?
2. How would you like to grow in your knowledge of Christ? Is there something you hope to grow in? (*Trust, Faith, Wisdom, Understanding, Peace*)
3. Listening is a powerful way to get to know someone. Why do you think listening is so important? What can you do to listen more intentionally?
4. God can speak to us through nature, scripture, and others. What is one experience you've had where God spoke to you?
5. What can you do to help create more silence in your life?

## SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION

"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." **James 4:8**

"Abide in me, and I in you... I am the vine, you are the branches." **John 15:4-5**

### PRAY

- Join us for our parish reconciliation service as a small group. This is a tangible way to come pray together as a larger community of faith.
- Spend 5 minutes in prayer with God every day. Just ask him "What do you want to say to me today?"

### ACT

- Try to be more intentional about the noise you are consuming around you ( music, TV, phone) etc. Is there space for silence? What can you turn off this week?
- Join us for the Lenten Parish Reconciliation Service ( 3/16 at 7pm at SJV & 3/24 at 7pm at SMIC)

### INSPIRE

- Tell someone else how prayer has impacted you. Share with someone else this week what God has done for you.
- Bring a loved one along with you to a quiet place in nature and invite her/him to join you in silence as you pray and experience God's Presence.

## INTERCESSIONS FOR THE GROUP

Take some time to pray together for the persons or people on the Hearts of your small group members.

## CLOSING PRAYER

**Heavenly Father** – We thank You for this time together and for the grace of reflecting on what it means to grow closer to You. Continue to deepen our trust in You and strengthen our desire to know You more personally each day.

Help us to carry what we've shared tonight into our homes, our work, and our daily lives. When we are tempted to rely only on ourselves, remind us to turn to You in prayer and confidence.

Bless each person here and the intentions we hold in our hearts. Draw us ever nearer to You. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**