

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

St. Stephen's Catholic Parish

MARCH 6-7, 2021

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3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area. - Jn 2:13b-15a

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD

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MASS INTENTIONS

3rd Sunday of Lent

SATURDAY, MARCH 6th

8:00am-8:45am - Confessions

9:00am - Frank & Margaret Wellnitz
+Sacred Heart Devotion+

4:00pm-4:45pm - Confessions

5:00pm - For the People of the Parish

SUNDAY, MARCH 7th

8:00am-8:45am - Confessions

9:00am - Fred Hildebrandt

**Confessions 30 minutes
before each daily mass*

MONDAY, MARCH 8th

+St. John of God+

- No Mass at St. Stephen's

TUESDAY, MARCH 9th

+St. Frances of Rome+

-5:30pm - Holy Mass

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10th

-8:00am - Holy Mass

THURSDAY, MARCH 11th

-7:00am - Holy Mass

FRIDAY, MARCH 12th

-8:00am - (+) Jim Lipetri

-5:30pm - Stations of the Cross

4th Sunday of Lent

SATURDAY, MARCH 13th

8:00am-8:45am - Confessions

9:00am - Holy Mass

4:00pm-4:45pm - Confessions

5:00pm - For the People of the Parish

SUNDAY, MARCH 14th

8:00am-8:45am - Confessions

9:00am - Bill & Ethel Mullooly

Dear Saint Stephen's Family,

We are reminded this Sunday of the reality that while everyone is free to choose, one cannot choose the consequences of those choices. I am free to choose to run on ice, but the nature of ice and the laws of gravity will eventually catch up to me. I am free to touch a fire, but I am not free to choose whether it burns or not.

This concept seems fairly straightforward, yet in today's culture there is a skewed sense of freedom. We forget we are a redeemed people, rescued from the grips of death by a God who has literally chased us down to bring us back to him. This skewed sense of freedom leads to so many misunderstandings about the Ten Commandments. Are they just arbitrary rules from ancient times meant to make us feel bad? Are they still applicable today? Couldn't we bend them to speak to modern man? But in the readings today, if we read closely, we see a message of a Father who is madly in love with his children. **By following God's commands, we experience the true freedom of children being cared for by their Father.**

The first reading begins not with an admonition, but with a reminder of love: "I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery." Before the Commandments are given, God reminds His people that He is a God that is on their side. They were once living in oppression as slaves, but it was God who brought them freedom. It's important to read the following verses in this context. God doesn't set out a long list of rules to control or harm His people. Rather, after bringing them freedom, He shows them the way to stay within the boundaries of that freedom. *The Ten Commandments are a love story of a God who wants to do everything possible to bring His people back to Him.* He knows the weakness of humanity, and **He guides us as a loving Father to the ways that will make us more human, the ways to live a morally upright life.**

In the Gospel Jesus teaches us the path to this freedom: through authentic worship at the new temple, his Body. Fr. Jacques Philippe says in his book *Fire and Light*, "the Eucharist makes clear the degree of intimacy which God wants to draw us. In the Eucharist, the mad dream of all lovers is realized." Jesus stops the money changers not because he is losing control, but because the boundaries of his love free our hearts. **Authentic worship and prayer are what will free us**, not using our churches as places for commerce.

In this culture of faux freedoms, God is calling us back to Himself. We are free to choose to follow Him or not, but we are not free to choose the consequence of that choice. Only in choosing to follow Christ do our hearts find the answer to our deepest longings.

As St. Augustine so famously said in his *Confessions*, "our hearts are restless until they rest in You." Know of my daily prayers for you and your families!

In Christo per Mariam,

Fr. Andrew

**Thank You
for your continued
GENEROSITY!**

Ministry of Giving

January 31: \$3,022

February 7: \$1,104

February 14: \$5,455

February 21: \$ 6,195

DURING LENT

- Stations of the Cross every Friday at 5:30pm
- Confessions 30 min before all daily masses
- With additional masses being said during Lent, you are encouraged to stop by the Parish Office if you would like Masses said for intentions or deceased loved ones

Faith Formation

CLASS – March 10th @ 6:30pm All Grades at Hall

PRAYER CHALLENGE –

Keep memorizing those Prayers!!

If you have any questions, please contact the Faith Formation Coordinator Heather Schneider 608-676-7329.

COMING SOON

Sunday, March 14th - Daylight Saving Time
Friday, March 19th - Solemnity of St. Joseph
Sunday, April 11th - Confirmation at OLA, 12:30pm
Saturday, April 24th - 1st Communion Retreat



Please continue praying for the RCIA candidates and catechumens as they continue to journey towards the Easter Vigil.



The Pontifical Good Friday Collection



April 2nd, 2021

Pope Francis has asked our parish to support the Pontifical Good Friday Collection, which helps Christians in the Holy Land. Your support helps the church minister in parishes, provide Catholic schools and offer religious education. The Pontifical Good Friday Collection also helps to preserve the sacred shrines. The wars, unrest and instability have been especially hard on Christians. In these times of crisis, the Pontifical Good Friday Collection provides humanitarian aid to refugees. When you contribute to the Pontifical Good Friday Collection, you become an instrument of peace and join with Catholics around the world in solidarity with the Church in the Holy Land. PLEASE BE GENEROUS! For more information about Christians in the Holy Land, visit www.myfranciscan.org/good-friday

OLA FISH FRY



Drive-Thru Fish Fry

Fri, March 12th, 4:30 - 6:30p.m.

Go to www.olabeloit.com or call

the OLA Parish office 608-362-9066 for details

3D SUNDAY OF LENT



◆ Covid disrupting your lives? Don't let the stresses destroy your marriage. Join us for an in person Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend.

◆ Take a weekend away at a Worldwide Marriage Encounter to gain a richer, fuller married life together and learn the tools needed to keep your marriage strong.

◆ Sign up today to attend a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend on April 9-11 in Brookfield, WI or June 25-27 in Geneva, IL.

◆ Early registration is highly recommended..

For more information visit our website at: alifetimeoflove.org or call (888) 574-5653.

Webinar: Rural Resiliency: Caring for You and Yours



March 2, 9, 16, 23 from 7:30 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.

This webinar series focuses on dealing with rural behavioral and brain health, communication skills, and relationship enrichment for self, marriage and families. Dr. Larry Tranel, Pastoral Psychologist and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Dairy Specialist, is the featured speaker.. Farm families and those who work with them as consultants or neighbors are encouraged to attend.

• March 2 – Farm Stress Resiliency and Grief

• March 9 – Personality Keys When “Married” to Farm Stress

• March 16 – Dealing with the Stresses of Men, Women, and Children

• March 23 – Brain and Behavioral Health “Hacks” to Mitigate Distress

Via ZOOM RSVP: <http://www.aep.iastate.edu/stress>

Questions about the program can be directed to Larry Tranel at: 563-583-6496 or tranel@iastate.edu

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