



First Sunday of Lent

February 21, 2021

SUNDAYS
10:30AM MASS
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1st

SUNDAY OF LENT

**"This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at
hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." - Mk 1:15**

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

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WEEKEND MASSES:
SATURDAYS AT 5PM
SUNDAYS AT 10:30AM

DAILY MASSES:
TUESDAYS &
THURSDAYS 8AM

RECONCILIATION:
SATURDAYS 3:30 - 4:30PM

HOLY HOUR:
WEDNESDAYS 6 - 7PM

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MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, February 20

8:00am: Living and Deceased
Parishioners of Immaculate
Conception Parish
5:00pm: Parishioners of Immaculate
Conception Parish

Sunday, February 21

10:30am: Otto Cortesi
Gretchen Callahan

Monday, February 22

8:00am: Ida Santi

Tuesday, February 23

8:00am: Loretta Manfredini
Eda Nunez

**Wednesday, February 24**

8:00am: Maria & Luigi Police

Thursday, February 25

8:00am: Mario Marsiglio
Sor Maria Rosa

Friday, February 26

8:00am: Deceased Parishioners of
Immaculate Conception Parish

Saturday, February 27

8:00am: Betty Lou Shoemaker
5:00pm: William E. Burns
Ray Geraci
Barbara Stephens

Sunday, February 28

10:30am: Parishioners of Immaculate
Conception Parish
Melinda Henson
Rudy Cuassay



Sunrise Assisted Living in Highland Pk. is running a drive to collect clothing items for women, teens and children who are escaping from abuse domestic abuse situation. Many leave with just the clothes on their back so any clothing, shoes, etc. that you may no longer need, would be appreciated. There are bins for collection outside the main entrance to Sunrise (plastic bags probably best for drop off). The organization handling the donations is called "Wings" and picks up the items each week. **The drive will end on February 24th.**

Anything that you may have would be appreciated. If you need a tax slip, just ring the bell and one will be given to you.

Father Mike's Homiletter – February 21, 2021 First Sunday of Lent

Scripture: Genesis 9:8-15; Psalm 25:4-9; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:12-15

Once again, snow has dominated our weather, and our thinking, this week. While ultra-cold temperatures usually mean less snow, this week has certainly been the exception which proves the rule. I enjoy the silence of a snow fall, and find it says interesting things about God. Science tells us every snow flake is different, so snow brings to mind an image of God taking care to think up a different pattern for every single snow flake. Why would He do that? To add beauty to our world and give us a sense of fun and joy. And to tell us something about Himself.

In our first reading, God pushes the “reboot” button with humankind and with Noah after the flood. Having wiped out the entire world in a flood (except for Noah and his companions on the ark), God makes a new covenant with Noah and all living beings: never again will a flood devastate the earth. But Noah and his family, eight in all, start again in a new world, one washed clean. As St. Peter tells us in the second reading, this is much like the new start we all have in Baptism. Yet it is not just about washing away physical dirt and dust: it is about seeking a clear conscience, a new way of seeing the world. In our Gospel, St. Mark describes a similar process for Jesus: just after His baptism, He is “driven” into the desert by the Spirit, to ready Himself for the mission ahead. He is tempted by Satan, who would like to de-rail His preparations, but He is also supported by angels, while surrounded by wild beasts.

These are familiar images at the beginning of Lent, ones many of us have encountered before, perhaps often enough to find them boring or meaningless. “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.” As John Shea points out in an essay on our Gospel, turning away from sin is not enough; we need to turn to something positive. This year, the concept which catches my imagination may be an unusual one: Jesus alone in the desert. We 21st century citizens of the world don't think much of being alone: we feel obligated to be available and in contact with work, friends, family and others 24/7. We keep televisions, radios, computer news feeds in the background much of the time, and walk around wearing some form of ear piece so we can listen to our particular brand of musical anesthesia while getting the car washed, walking to the train station, traveling to work, doing our grocery shopping. During our Covid-19 quarantine of whatever form, the most frequent complaint has been about isolation – being alone. Even within our family “germ pods”, many still feel alone because they can't see their friends. Why are we so afraid of being alone? Are we afraid we might have to think? About who we are? About the life we lead? Are we actually hiding from God amid all the busy-ness?

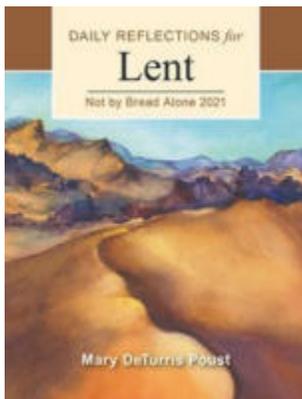
One positive practice to which we can turn during Lent is to practice being alone with God for a few minutes each day. It does not need to be long: ten or fifteen minutes, even five minutes if that's all there are. It does not need to be busy with formal prayer or devotion: no rosary, no novena. (This is not a race to fill the air with Hail Marys.) Just be quiet with your Divine Friend, perhaps with a cup of coffee, leaving the door of your mind open for the Holy Spirit to enter. It could be on the train, or during a lunch break. It could be getting up ten minutes early or going to bed ten minutes later, but whatever it is, it should be purposeful, meaning you empty your brain of everything else. (It doesn't seem likely that Jesus spent His forty days in the desert figuring out which town He would visit in what order.) You don't have to have an agenda, though you could present an issue to God as one that troubles you, but this is not the time for you to try to solve the problem. Practice being at peace, being open to whatever God might present to you, including nothing at that moment. If He can spend time on each individual snowflake, He will certainly have time for you, and He will know how to spend your time together to get the most out of it. Jesus was not afraid to spend forty days alone with His Father – we hear how He kept trying to get more “alone” time with the Father throughout the Gospels. He knows it takes getting used to – but what a Lenten gift: fasting from noise, praying quietly on a regular basis, giving back to our Creator some of the time He gave us.

I wish you all a peaceful, noise-free Lent!
Father Mike

Food for Thought...

When...the earth was flooded, Wisdom again saved it, piloting the righteous man on frailest wood.

Wisdom 10:4



Daily Reflections of Lent - Not by Bread Alone

eFormats are currently available for purchase if you are interested:

<https://litpress.org/Products/6424/Not-By-Bread-Alone>



Stations on Fridays

7PM

February 26

March 5

March 12

March 19

March 26

Sign up for Stations of the Cross here:

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054ea4ad28a1f49-masses>

Lenten Regulations (Ash Wednesday - Good Friday)



Abstinence from meat is to be observed by all Catholics 14 years old and older on all the Fridays of Lent.

The special Paschal fast, as well as abstinence, are prescribed for Good Friday and encouraged for Holy Saturday.

SAVE THE DATE... 2021 St. Norbert School Virtual Curriculum Fair K-8th Grade

MARCH 11, 2021

4:00PM - 5:00PM

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PREP

On Thursday evening 2/11, many of our PREP First Communion students gathering for a virtual banner making event and pizza dinner.

As you'll see, the creations and gluing in progress below led to a reveal of the children's final First Communion banner. The children shared their favorite parts of their banner which included the doves, cross, and bread.

Families who ordered pizza from Piero's were treated to a generous discount.

A big thank you to all our catechists, students, families and Piero's for making this evening so special and engaging.

We all felt the love from each other and Jesus ahead of Valentine's Day.

The children will be able to enjoy their banner at home in anticipation of their First Communion Day 5.8.21.



The Zoom became very quiet while everyone was deep in creative thoughts and gluing!



The banner reveal!

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Community: the Antidote to the Virus

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

On Jan. 30, Pope Francis spoke about the isolation and sense of loneliness caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. He observed that the virus has “dug into the living fabric of our existence, fueling fears, suspicions, mistrust and uncertainty.” How true it is.

We have witnessed how those deep visceral responses have invaded our political life, creating unrest and violence. Gun sales have skyrocketed in Illinois since March, as gun-transfer requests in 2020 spiked 44%, according to Illinois State Police. Indeed, the pandemic has bred the additional viruses of division, fear and even panic.

Yet, the pope urges, we must learn the lesson that this moment of crisis has taught us: “The only way to get out of a crisis better is to get out of a crisis together, re-embracing with more conviction the community in which we live.”

What makes Pope Francis’ remarks all the more noteworthy is that they came on the occasion of his address to members of the National Catechistic Office of the Italian Bishops’ Conference, as it celebrates its 60th anniversary. He took this moment to urge that the need to place community at the center of all we do has much to say about how we are to carry on as a church, especially as we pass on its teachings.

“This is not the time for elitist strategies. ... The great community,” the pope continued, is “the holy faithful people of God. We cannot go on outside the holy faithful people of God, who — as the [Second Vatican] Council says — are infallible in believing.” Elitism “distances you from the people of God, perhaps with sophisticated formulas, but you lose that membership of the church that is the holy faithful people of God,” the pope said.

The message is clear. We all must listen to one another in the church, and no person or group can claim to have all the answers. The task before us is to pave the way in the church for all to participate. This is not a time to discard those who disagree or have not yet come to a full understanding and acceptance of what the church teaches. Rather, this is a time to cultivate an ethic of genuine listening, of broadening participation in the life of the church — both as a path toward a more unified community of faith, and as a means of escaping isolation of several kinds.

As the Holy Father observed, this is “the time to be artisans of open communities” and “missionaries” of “communities that look disappointed young people in the eye, that welcome strangers and give hope to the distrusted. ... It is the time of community that, like the Good Samaritan, knows how to be close to those who are wounded by life, to bandage their wounds with compassion.”

His words bring to mind the homily of St. Pope Paul VI, given on the occasion of my classmates’ ordination to the priesthood in St. Peter’s Square on Jan. 29, 1975. He urged the hundreds of priests he ordained that day: “Know how to welcome as an invitation the very reproach that perhaps, and often unjustly, the world throws against the messenger of the Gospel! Know how to listen to the cry of the poor, the candid voice of the child, the pensive cry of youth, the lament of the weary worker, the sigh of the sufferer and the criticism of the thinker! Never be afraid! ‘Nolite timere!’ the Lord repeated. The Lord is with you.”

Pope Francis continues this same message in our day by putting the word “synodality” at the centerpiece of his service as pontiff. Synodality, rather than a process of decision-making, describes the nature of the church.

For the church to be true to its nature, circumstances must be created to allow all its members to take co-responsibility by sharing their talents in a bond of mutual communion and respect. Or, as the Holy Father noted in his address celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Synod of Bishops (Oct. 17, 2015), “The ‘sensus fidei’ [the appreciation of the faith by the faithful] prevents a rigid separation between an ‘ecclesia docens’ and an ‘ecclesia discens’ [a teaching and learning church], since the flock likewise has an instinctive ability to discern the new ways that the Lord is revealing to the church.”

That includes young people, women and men, critics, those who suffer injustice and live at the margins of society. This is a time to build bridges so that community life can flourish, even if there are still unsettled tensions and different points of view, for it is in this space that God’s grace is often given. Everyone must be included in charting a path forward, as opposed to selecting who remains and who is cast out.

The pope is right. The pandemic has left us isolated, fearful and suspicious of one another. This virus has dug deeply “into the living fabric of our existence,” as he noted. All the more reason for us as a church to be vigilant so that this infection will not invade the life of the church by leaving us suspicious or mistrusting of one another. The only antidote to this virus of division is one that Jesus himself prayed for on the night before he died — “that they may be one.” It is community, our shared life together, that must be the core value we pursue and promote.

