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Email: info@saintalbertthegreat.org

Office staffed T thru Th, as we are able.

We are cautiously adding masses which are open to the public. The Sunday 9:30 am mass continues to be live-streamed on our Facebook page. We are now offering a Saturday 5:00 pm mass and a Sunday 12:00 pm (noon) mass.

In the spirit of trying to make room for those who choose to attend, while adhering to the requirement to limit to around 30% of our capacity, we encourage people to attend based on their last names:

A-G Saturday, 5:00 pm

H-M Sunday, 9:30 am

N-Z Sunday, 12:00 noon

Attendance at mass is NOT required. Please make choices that keep you and the community safe.

Fr. Joe and the staff hold you all in our prayers, and ask that you pray for us and for all the essential workers who are striving to keep things running.

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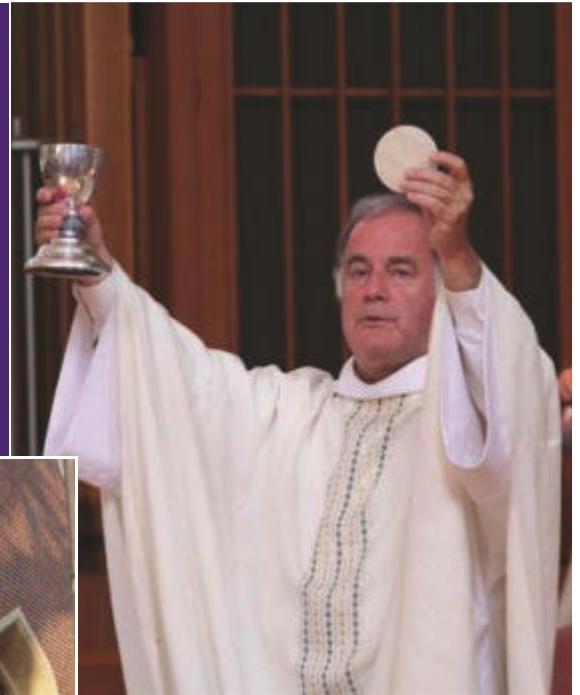
Call the Parish Center
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to learn more about this
special ministry of sharing
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**"Repent,
and believe
in the
good news."**

Mark 1:15



**Say YES to
love and peace.
Amen!**



This week at St. Albert's

(masses and intentions are in **BOLD** type)

*During the pandemic, we are offering **three** masses per weekend to help attendees maintain social distancing. Fr. Joe is still celebrating private daily masses for the intentions below.*

Saturday, Feb. 20 – Betty Schuster †

Sunday, Feb. 21 –

9:30 am – Dorothy Book †
Kathy Brown

12:00 pm – Joe Messenbrink †

Monday, Feb. 22 – Jeanne Schoeneberger †

Tuesday, Feb. 23 – Paul Schoeneberger †

Thursday, Feb. 25 – Del Sawyer †

Friday, Feb. 26 – Clare McMullan †, Mike Rompa

Saturday, Feb. 27 – Dorothy Geis †

Sunday, Feb. 28 –

9:30 am – Francis Rowe †
12:00 pm – Michelle Hockett †

In our prayers

We remember those who need healing, including Michael Callaghan, Laura Schomer, Rosie Ekelund, Bernie Cook, Lenny Klosinski, Dave Buck, Copper Schadow, Ellen Goettsch, and Mary Ann Egan.

Please add a prayer for those who have died, including Deacon Tom Winninger and Tom Donnelly.

Due to HIPAA privacy standards, hospitals and care centers cannot notify us of your need for our prayers or visits unless you direct them to call.

If you or someone you know would like to be included in our prayers, or have the Sacrament of the Sick, or communion brought to you, please let the office know at 612-724-3643. Messages are checked regularly.

If you don't want your name printed or spoken aloud, you can always ask to be included in the Prayer Chain, a group of parishioners who will hold you quietly in their prayers.

Ideas for Lent

Take something on – 40 days of letter writing, 40 acts of kindness, 40 phone calls to the important people in your life.

As a part of your Lenten almsgiving, make a point to learn more about a particular social issue (immigration, human trafficking, racism, the environment, public education, child poverty). Give money to an organization related to your chosen issue that supports the dignity of the human person.

Pray for somebody. As you're walking the streets, driving the highways, or waiting for a meeting to start, pick out a person who appears to be in need and pray for that person. Be mindful of the words of philosopher Philo of Alexandria, who said, "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle."

As you consider returning to in-person mass:

- * We are continuing to offer three Masses each weekend for those who wish to attend in person at 5 PM Saturday and at 9:30 and noon on Sunday. We encourage those who are age 65 or older or who have underlying health conditions to stay home and view the 9:30 AM livestream. Anyone with symptoms or recent exposure to COVID-19 must remain at home.
- * ONLY Front center church doors are open.
- * While we have asked that people separate themselves alphabetically by last name so we need not turn anyone away, you may attend what's convenient for you. Saturday 5:00 pm: A-G; Sunday 9:30 am: H-M; Sunday noon: N-Z.
- * The 9:30 AM Mass is the most popular. If you have the flexibility to attend at 5 PM Saturday or noon on Sunday, we invite you to do that. We have not yet had to turn anyone away due to overcrowding, but we will regretfully do this if we run out of space at any liturgy.
- * Thank you for wearing your masks! This important health measure is *required* in the state of Minnesota. Please remember that your mask must cover both your nose and mouth and that you should keep it on for the entire time you are in church except when receiving communion. If you need a mask, we have disposable ones available.
- * As appealing as our music is at masses with cantors, we ask you NOT to sing, even while masked. This is a precaution the Archdiocese recommends, as even when we keep six feet apart, viruses can still travel further through the air when propelled by speech or singing,
- * Please sit in designated spaces only. We have marked three spaces in each open pew. Please sit at one of these spaces. These spots are marked to ensure that people remain six feet apart. Larger families may need to occupy two spots. *Do not sit in an available spot if you cannot maintain six feet of separation from people who are already seated in that pew.*
- * Remember that we will have doors and windows open for maximum fresh air flow, even during the winter cold. Please dress accordingly.
- * Communion will be distributed after the dismissal. Please exit the church immediately after receiving communion. The only people remaining in church will be staff and volunteers who are cleaning the church in preparation for the next service. You are welcome to have conversations outside with appropriate physical distancing.

To request that the Eucharist
be brought to you at your home,
please contact Fr. Joe at 612-245-3345,
or Jim Curran at 612-483-1546.

They will mask and safely
deliver communion to you.

“What floats your boat?”

Good question, I thought, as I stared at the bumper sticker on the boat trailer in front of me. “What does float my boat?” Having never owned a boat I think I would be apt to say, “Water.” However, having friends who own boats, I think they would probably say, “Money, and lots of it.”

The slang expression, “What floats your boat?” might be a light-hearted way of asking, “What motivates you?” or “What soothes your soul?” The invitation can be perceived as intrusive or simply conversational. However, I think the question might be a good one for all of us as we launch our Lenten cruises while trying to chart moral courses that will help us avoid the perils of a life on the rocks.

Our first reading from the Book of Genesis, describing Noah and his life on the ark, might offer some metaphorical imagery allowing us to remain afloat in a world of sin and persistent cynicism. Perhaps a feeble attempt at a limerick will offer the question in another format:

Unskilled Noah had to build a boat,
And filled with beasts it stayed afloat.
Later skilled pros built the Titanic,
The outcome was less than romantic.
So what does it take to float one's boat?

By the time we enter the story of Noah (Genesis 9:8-15), the flood waters have receded, and Noah has left the ark with his wife (not Joan of Arc), his sons (Shem, Ham and Japheth), their wives and all the creatures who had been cooped up for one year and seventeen days (you do the math, starting with Genesis 6:14 and ending with Genesis 8:15). On dry land, Noah, as an act of thanksgiving, had set up an altar of sacrifice offering holocausts to God. Any thoughts on which animals volunteered for the sacrificial offerings?

God is speaking with Noah and his family: “As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you.” God’s promise is one of hope and the sign will be: “I have set my bow (the rainbow) in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.” Unlike later covenants with Abraham and Moses, God offers Noah and his descendants a freebie! Having wiped the slate clean with the flooding of the earth, God promised an abiding relationship with Noah and his crew with no contractual conditions. God’s only command is, “To be fertile, then, and multiply, abound on the earth and subdue it.”

In many ways this story and the enduring covenant marked by the rainbow provides a wonderful sign of hope as we begin another Lent in the ongoing pandemic. The image of the ark swirling around in a sea of sin offers a life raft of confidence, even for the most cynical among us. Searching for a rainbow of hope, even in the most troubling and darkest of times, stretches our faith and allows us to grasp for the forgiving and helping hand of God. I suspect that none of us expects to hear the booming voice of God (check out Bill Cosby’s 1963 version of God talking to Noah and arguing about the length of a cubit) telling us to build an ark, but Noah was charged by God to build an ark: “And you shall make it 330 cubits long, fifty cubits wide and 30 cubits high.”

We must be confident and mature enough to figure out how “to float our own boats” and trust in God’s promise of redemption and forgiveness. The complexities of building a life of penitential practices might be far easier than trying to figure out what constitutes a cubit and following bewildering verbal blueprints. Rather, Lent invites us into finding ways to exercise compassion with others and ourselves. As we explore the traditional practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we will rediscover the basis for “floating our boats” in the dangerous waters of an uncertain world.

The imagery of water found in the Genesis story of the flood prefigures the

cleansing act of baptism highlighted in our other readings, 1 Peter 3:18-22 and the gospel of Mark 1:12-15. Peter directly alludes to the Genesis account of the destructive nature of the flood waters: “God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark in which a few, that is eight persons, were saved through water.” The Letter of Peter clearly states: “Baptism, which this story prefigured, now saves you.” The interesting saving power of water (baptism) is in contrast to the destructive waters of the flood. Floating one’s boat finds assurance in the ancient rite of baptism and the promise of salvation.

In the “bare bones” style of Mark’s recounting of Jesus’ entrance into ministry, we hear that after Jesus was baptized by John, “The spirit drove him out into the wilderness where he was tempted for forty days and nights by Satan.” For a more elaborate and dramatic account of Jesus’ wilderness experiences, both Matthew (4:1-11) or Luke’s (4:1-13) accounts enliven the clash between the personalities of Jesus and Satan. Fending off the temptations surrounding the human needs for hunger, power and pride, Jesus triumphs in the face of temptation. However, according to the threat of the Devil, the onslaught of temptations would continue to plague Jesus: “And when the devil ended every temptation, he departed from him until a more opportune time” (Luke 4:13). Can’t you just imagine the devil as the Wicked Witch of the East in “The Wizard of Oz” and saying to Dorothy: “I’ll get you my pretty and your little dog too!”

Lent has begun and the vestiges of ashes are barely visible on our foreheads. Yes, it is kosher to bathe during Lent, but the temptations of fatigue can easily set in in the form of discouragement. While the expression of “forty days and forty nights” might seem interminable, the grace of God, if sought, will give us the courage to persist. Admiring the persistence of both Noah and Jesus, we are assured the grace we will need to persevere. Undertaking the rigors of the journey ahead, despite the uncertainty of the terrain or the raging waters, we can maintain our balance and float our boats.

While we will not have to contend with an ark full of animals (ever think of how many newspapers it would take to line the floors of the ark?) or endure fasting in the desert for forty days and nights, the journey of Lent is always conducted in the company of others who have admitted their own sinfulness. Confronting our personal and corporate sinfulness, we might successfully challenge the dysfunctions of our ecclesial, political and economic institutions. With the help of God and the exposure to truth, we might stop the madness of war, economic inequity and the marginalization of the disenfranchised members of our communities. Debunking the perpetuation of fake news with safe-guarded litmus tests of truthfulness, we might rediscover the Common Good.

Courageously believing that “somewhere over a rainbow” there is a land of peace, justice and compassion, we can unabashedly move towards making the dream become a reality. Despite the on-going wrangling over the recent impeachment trial, we must move beyond what appears to be the dangling partisanship of diametrically opposed political parties and rise above our differences. Seeking ways to be of service to others rather than being obsessed with our own self-serving interests will provide the buoyancy to float our boat.

A cartoon in the New Yorker Magazine depicted two lions sitting on their haunches and speaking to Noah: “You’ll have to find another gazelle.” Judging from the number of lions in the world, Noah did not throw them overboard for eating the gazelle. Perhaps this might be a metaphor for us: we make mistakes, no lying about it, so tell the truth, accept the consequences and find ways not to wreck the boat. Lent is a time for accountability, forgiveness and courage, so let us sail on under the power of God’s redemptive grace and float our boat.

Peace, Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.



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