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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.

We support the quality, faith-based K-8 education at

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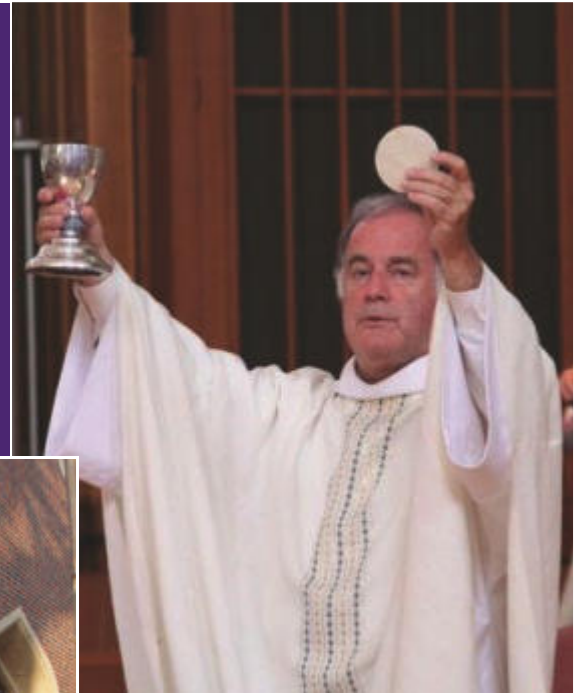
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Call the Parish Center
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 to learn more about this
 special ministry of sharing
 God's caring presence.

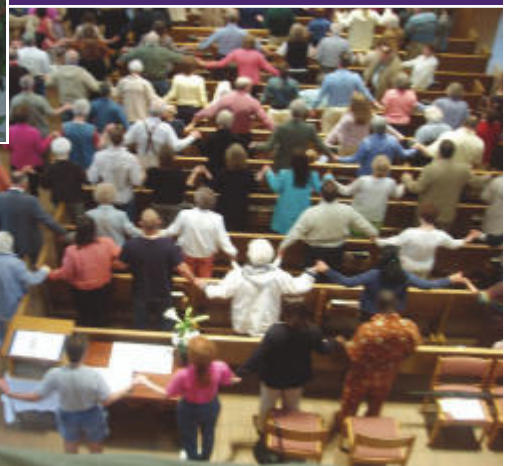


www.saintalbertthegreat.org

**"If GOD
 is for us,
 who can be
 against us?"**
 Romans 8: 31



**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. 27 – Dorothy Geis †

Sunday, Feb. 28 –

9:30 am – Francis Rowe †

12:00 pm – Michelle Hockett †

Monday, March 1 – James Otto †

Tuesday, March 2 – Dorothy Geis †

Thursday, March 4 – Jake McCoy †

Friday, March 5 – Dorothy Geis †

Saturday, March 6 – Peter Daley

Sunday, March 7 –

9:30 am – Joe Messenbrink †

12:00 pm – Anita Ludwinski †

In our prayers

We remember those who need healing, including Michael Callaghan, Laura Schomer, Joan Ellison, AnneMarie Christensen, Bernie Cook, Lenny Klosinski, Dave Buck, Copper Schadow, Ellen Goettsch, Mary Ann Egan, Jack Lachenmeyer and Mary Rose.

Please add a prayer for those who have died, including Tom Donnelly, Mickey Hockett, Jake McCoy, and in memory of Kathy Thompson.

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.

NEW INFORMATION:

The church elevator will now be available at all masses for those with mobility issues. Please limit to one family per elevator ride as a Covid-19 precaution.

Thanks!

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, along with the elevator entrance. (One household at a time in elevator.)**
- * 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 out-

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.

“Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows.”

As my family rode home on late Sunday afternoons, my father would switch on the radio of our 1949 blue Ford to catch some of the popular radio dramas. My favorite program, “The Shadow”, a collection of serialized dramas that ran from 1937 to 1954, was especially exciting. The distinctive sound of Orson Welles’ introductory lines, “Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!” caught my undivided attention. The Shadow, a vigilante who worked only at night and used his psychic powers to thwart evil and foil the corrupt plans of his enemies, had unusual powers. He could defy gravity, speak any language, “cloud men’s minds” and render himself invisible to them. The Shadow was never seen, only heard. The Shadow was, in my mind, a bit like God.

We are beginning the Second Week of Lent and our readings introduce us to voices belonging to unseen speakers. In the Book of Genesis (22:1-18), the unseen God tested Abraham and said, “*Take your son, your only son Isaac whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will show you.*” When Abraham prepared to kill his son, another hidden voice, this time an angel in heaven, called out and said: “*Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him.*” While the stay of execution was voiced from afar, the impact of God’s voice would be felt in the immediate world of both Abraham and his son Isaac. In last week’s reading from Genesis (9:8-15), the unseen God spoke to Noah and his sons offering practical suggestions on how to build an ark, and later establishing a protective covenant with them. Sight unseen, Abraham and Noah followed the orders of God. Indeed, the unseen God would lead them out of the shadow of evil, if they were willing to listen.

In the gospel reading (Mark 9:2-10), we encounter the story of the Transfiguration of Jesus on a high mountain. The disciples Peter, James and John accompanied Jesus and witnessed an encounter with Moses and Elijah. A cloud appeared and overshadowed the disciples, Peter, James and John, and then came a voice saying, “*This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him.*” The disciples, “*in looking around saw no one with them, but only Jesus.*” In accounts of the Transfiguration found in Matthew (17:1-80) and Luke (9:28-36), we encountered the same disembodied voice coming out of the cloud saying, “*This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him.*” During their fears, the disciples were led down the mountainside in a rather perplexed state of mind. Then Jesus said, “*Tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.*” If they were confused by the voice on the mountain, how much more confusing would Jesus’ enigmatic secret be? Only the Shadow (God) would know.

In seeking to obey the voice of an invisible God, we might conjure up images of the Wizard in the “Wizard of Oz.” When Toto pulls back the curtain to reveal a little old man barking out commands to Dorothy and her pals, the omnipotence act is up. The Wizard takes umbrage when called a “bad man” by Dorothy and he replies, “I am a good man, just a bad wizard.” In many ways, God is like a good human being as well as a good wizard who invites us to seek the Kingdom of Heaven. In the practical theology of St. Paul, God is personified in Jesus.

In his letter to the Romans (8:3-37), Paul tells his listeners: “*If God is for us, who is against us? He did not wish to withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us. It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, and who sits at the right hand of God and intercedes for us.*” Finding a way to by pass the evil that lurks in our own hearts and listen to the words of Jesus, Paul declares emphatically that nothing will separate us from the love of Christ, if we really love Christ. “*Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*”

During this year long pandemic, we have been fighting what appears to be an invisible enemy. The Covid-19 virus lurks in the bodies of women and men and has accounted for over 500,000 deaths in the United States. The edge of panic continues as access to appropriate vaccines get compromised by production and delivery difficulties. Listening to the voices of unseen expert epidemiologists and the often-confusing commentaries of the “talking heads” on news programs, we need to also listen for the voice of God and the assurance of God’s presence among us.

After Sunday mass, a woman who arrived very late, came up to me. She was clearly upset that she had missed the mass, so I talked with her about receiving Holy Communion. After receiving Communion, she spoke of needing courage as she prepared to undergo surgery for a double mastectomy later in the day. In receiving the Eucharist, she felt an intimacy with Christ, which she described as, “an inability to be separated, even from a God I can’t always see.” I kept thinking about Paul’s words to the Romans: “*What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*” I could easily add breast cancer, bankruptcy, job loss, alcohol addiction and divorce to the list. I promised that I would visit her in the hospital. Later that evening, I prayed with her husband while she slept. When I was about to leave, he said, “I will tell her that God stopped by and assured her that all would be well.”

There is an old Irish expression; “God is closer to us than our shadow.” What an interesting image to carry as we search for intimacy with God. Lent offers us ample opportunities to meditate on the “Real Presence” of God in the world. It is the Eucharist that puts “flesh and blood” on the invisible shadow of God’s presence in the world. However, the traditional recitation of the rosary is another way of bringing to life the “unknown God” by meditating on the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries. The dream-like imagery of the mysteries can easily spark an imaginative understanding of the unimaginable God.

Jesus enlivens our understanding of the invisible God when, in chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew, he offers the real presence of God in feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick and imprisoned and burying the dead. God knows what evil lurks in the hearts of all people, but God knows the goodness we are capable of as well. God comes to life in the experience of Jesus’ presence among us and, rather than clouding our minds, Jesus offers clarity and certainty even if we are afraid of our own shadows.

At the end of each half-hour broadcast of the radio show, The Shadow (whose alter-ego was named Lamont Cranston) reminded listeners, “The weed of crime bears bitter fruit. Crime does not pay...the Shadow knows.” Lent is a time for repentance and for maintaining due diligence regarding evil lurking in the world and in own minds. Being willing to stand in the shadow of the cross, seeking both forgiveness and courage, we can find strength and perseverance in not only hearing God’s voice, but learning to trust in a God we cannot see.

Peace,
Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.



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