

MARCH 7, 2021

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

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Office staffed T thru Th, as we are able.

We continue to offer three masses each week to enable people to attend while maintaining appropriate social distancing. The Sunday 9:30 am mass continues to be live streamed on our Facebook page. We are also 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 maintain physical distancing of 6 feet between households, 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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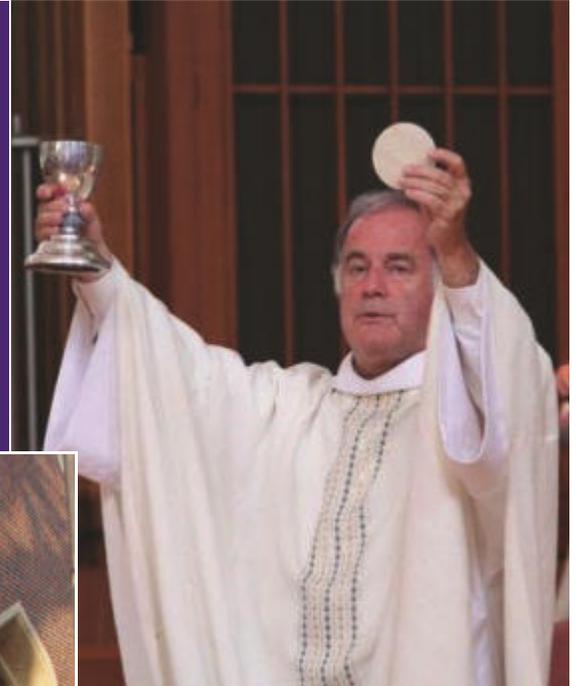
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Which  
commandment  
challenges  
YOU?



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, March 6 – Peter Daley

Sunday, March 7 –

9:30 am – Joe Messenbrink †

12:00 pm – Anita Ludwinski †

Monday, March 8 – William Gulla †

Tuesday, March 9 – Tom Donnelly †

Thursday, March 11 – George Buck †

Friday, March 12 – Willard Blaser †

Saturday, March 13 – Peter Daley

Sunday, March 14 –

9:30 am – Peter Daley

12:00 pm – Dorothy Geis †

**In our prayers**

We remember those who need healing, including Michael Callaghan, Dave Boehnen, Diane Marrin, Laura Schomer, Joan Ellison, AnneMarie Christensen, Lenny Klosinski, Dave Buck, Copper Schadow, Ellen Goettsch, Mary Ann Egan, Jack Lachenmeyer and Dick Martin.

Please add a prayer for those who have died, including Marylis Boyden.

*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.

**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 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.

## “Faith is the absence of proof.”

Mel Brooks, who wrote, produced, directed and starred in the 1981 comedy film, “History of the World, Part I”, portrays Moses descending from Mount Sinai carrying three stone tablets that he received from God. Standing before the Israelites, Moses proclaims: “The Lord Jehovah has given unto you these fifteen commandments.” Whereupon Moses drops one of the tablets which promptly shatters. “Oy vey!”, Moses shouts. “The Lord Jehovah has reconsidered and gives you Ten Commandments!”

During Lent we are invited “cleanse our temples” of those things that might be drawing us into levels of dysfunction and sinfulness. While the readings for the Third Sunday of Lent offer some helpful hints for choosing Heaven as an alternate destination, ultimately, we are the ones who must choose to live good lives and seek the Kingdom of God. No doubt about it, if we follow the Ten Commandments we will be moving in the right direction.

Our reading from the Book of Exodus (20:1-17) offers a road map to Heaven in the traditional form of the Ten Commandments. With occasional tweaking of language and minor arrangements of numbering, the Ten commandments remain intact:

1. Do not worship any gods but the Lord your God
2. Do not make idols of any kind
3. Do not take the Lord’s name in vain
4. Remember to keep the Sabbath holy
5. Honor thy father and mother
6. Thou shall not kill
7. Thou shall not commit adultery
8. Thou shall not steal
9. Thou shall not testify falsely against your neighbor
10. Do not covet your neighbor’s goods

The preservation of the Ten Commandments has provided a moral framework for both Jews and Christians over the centuries. The Commandments not only govern our attitudes and actions towards God and one another but offer a way of acting justly in a world that often seems indifferent to loving and caring for one’s neighbor. While eight of the commandments are in the negative (“you shall not”) and address behaviors to avoid, the other two Commandments are positive in confirming behaviors that keep holy the Sabbath and honor family. While the first three Commandments focus on the community’s relationship with the Lord, the remaining seven focus on our relationships with one another.

Jesus would summarize the Ten Commandments into two: To love God with your whole heart, mind and soul and to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:34-40; Luke 10:25-28). Like any religious Jew, Jesus would have been reciting the great Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) three times a day: “Hear, O Israel, The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” While this prayer expresses the essence of Judaism, Jesus’ perception of love of neighbor would flow from loving the Lord. When Jesus emphasized the love of neighbor, he transcended the cultural and religious boundaries of traditional Jewish thinking and his troubles began in earnest. As Jesus reached out to Jews and Gentiles (Goyim) alike in his healing ministry, he was accused as a blasphemer and heretic. Perhaps, the most prominent illustration of Jesus expanding the concept of neighbor is found in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke: 10:25-37), but so many of Jesus’ healing miracles would involve individuals outside the boundaries of traditional Judaism.

The unique incident talked about in our gospel reading for this Third Sunday in Lent (John 2:13-25), pits Jesus against all of those who have

turned the Temple into a den of iniquity. The “cleansing of the Temple” is found in all four gospels, but the placement of the incident occurs early in the gospel of John at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. In the Synoptic gospels (Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48), the incident takes place in the final week of Jesus’ life. In all four gospels, the upsetting of the money changers’ tables and the driving out of the sheep and the cattle would polarize Jesus with the Pharisees. Jesus’ protection of the first two Commandments, worship only the Lord and rid oneself of false idols, find graphic expression in the statement: “*Zeal for your house will consume me.*” The theological significance of this incident acts as an ideal metaphor for Lent. “Cleansing our temples” demands that we rid ourselves of the “false gods” that distract us from loving our God with our whole minds, hearts and souls and our neighbor as well.

In Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians (1Cor.1:18-25), he was adamant about the message of the cross and Christ crucified: “*For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.*” Paul realized that in preaching Christ crucified he was battling against the traditional wisdom of the Greeks and their need for heroic gods. Paul’s formidable faith would allow him to risk everything in reconciling the fractured community of Corinth with the gospel of Jesus and the love of neighbor. Even though the cross remains a stumbling block and foolishness for many, it is in the recognition of the suffering of our sisters and brothers that we forge a desire to care for our neighbor.

Officially, we have survived the pandemic for over a year, and, with the availability of vaccines, a sense of hope has begun to appear in the imaginations of those who have felt trapped in the movie, “Groundhog Day!” While it might be tough enough to be stuck in Punxsutawney, PA., being trapped in this year-long pandemic has stretched most of us to the limits of our endurance. Despite the inconveniences of masks, safe-distancing and sheltering in place, navigating Covid-19 has taxed our social skills, catapulted our economy onto the rocks, created massive unemployment, challenged our cultural and religious rituals and created exponential suffering and death. Trying to maintain a sense of faith and hope has not always been easy, especially when the fear of assisting one’s neighbor is perceived as a “super spreading opportunity.”

The hopeful platitude of the day might be summarized in the phrase, “Trust the Science.” However, in the absence of absolute proof of a cure, doubt can compromise hope. Hope abounds for those who have faith, whether in both science and/or God. The poet Emily Dickinson once described hope as “the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without words and never stops at all.” Perhaps, in the wordless silence of our doubts, resurrecting faith in both science and God will intentionally ease our fears and cultivate a future filled with hope.

With only four more weeks to go, Lent continues to invite us to follow Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem. Trying to avoid “the money changers in the Temple” and the fear mongers among us, we need to focus on the traditional Ten Commandments and the love of neighbor as safety-nets in our moments of doubt. As people of faith, hope and love we must reject the temptation to fashion golden calves in times of frustration and rediscover faith, even without absolute proof, in God. For those who doubt miracles can happen, the introductory words of the film, “Song of Bernadette”, might offer comfort: “For those who believe in God, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not believe, no explanation is possible.” Oy vey!

Peace,  
Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.



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