

MARCH 21, 2021

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

The Church of ST. ALBERT *the* GREAT

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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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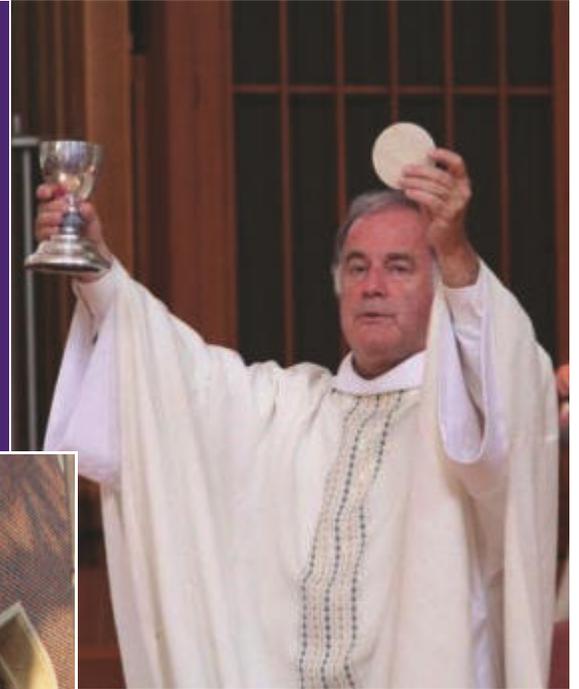
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www.saintalbertthegreat.org

*"I will be
their God
and they shall be
my people."
Jeremiah 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, March 20 – Betty Schuster †

Sunday, March 21 –

9:30 am – Susan Bielinski

12:00 pm – Dorothy Geis †

Monday, March 22 – Bonnie Anderson †

Tuesday, March 23 – Elaine & Russ Rasmussen ††

Thursday, March 25 – Tillie Rompa †
Marie Pavlicek †

Friday, March 26 – Ruth Roesner †

Saturday, March 27 – Dorothy Geis †

Sunday, March 28 –

9:30 am – Dorothy Geis †

12:00 pm – Tom Donnelly †

In our prayers

We remember those who need healing, including Michael Callaghan, Diane Marrin, AnneMarie Christensen, Lenny Klosinski, Dave Buck, Rosie Ekelund, Jack Lachenmeyer and Dick Martin.

Please add a prayer for those who have died, including Ruth Roesner.

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.

IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY

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.**
- **The change of seasons is making it tough to control the church heat.** We've been warning you about bundling up for the cold, and now we're saying to wear layers because it might be too hot! It IS nice to have the open doors and windows refreshing the space,
- 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 was that masked man?”

In the early 1950's most of the homes in my neighborhood did not possess televisions. So, without fail at 7 P.M. on Thursday evenings, many of the neighborhood children would meet at Marie Troffler's home to watch our favorite television program, The Lone Ranger. Marie possessed a nifty sixteen inch black and white Motorola TV, and provided popcorn and Kool-Aid while we sprawled on the her living room floor.

With riveted attention, we quickly became absorbed when the announcer intoned, “A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust, and a hearty Hi-ho, Silver, The Lone Ranger!” The program ended with Gioachino Rossini's “William Tell Overture” blaring in the background as the Lone Ranger, wearing his black mask and riding his white horse named Silver, galloped into the next episode made for television. Accompanying the Lone Ranger was his faithful Indian companion, Tonto, riding a horse named Scout. Tonto, who insisted on calling the Lone Ranger *Kemosabe* (trusty scout), was eminently practical in survival skills and saved his pal more than once in each episode. When the Lone Ranger galloped away in a cloud of dust at the end of each episode, on cue we would shout, “Who was that masked man?”

Gioachino Rossini did not have The Lone Ranger in mind when he composed the finale to his peppy musical score for the “William Tell Overture,” but for my generation just hearing the score still conjures up a masked man on a white horse fighting for truth and justice. The composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein told stories of conductors who had to stop playing when children in the audience began shouting, “Hi-ho Silver, away!”

Dan Rather, a former anchor for CBS News, once remarked, “An intellectual musical snob is someone who can listen Rossini's finale for the “William Tell Overture” and not think of The Lone Ranger.” I haven't reached the “musical snobbish level”, and I am still apt to feel the rush of energy associated with The Lone Ranger as he galloped into my imagination many years ago in Marie's living room. The mythical hero on the white horse still looms large in my imagination, as does the quest for truth and justice.

The pandemic of this past year has brought on the use of mask wearing as a preventative health protocol in helping to mitigate the effects of the virus, Covid-19. While procuring one of the current vaccines available might offer more confidence, mask wearing continues to stifle the spread of the virus in the context of larger groups. I recall the first time I walked into a branch office of U.S. Bank and everyone was wearing a mask. I thought for a moment and realized that no one was attempting to rob the bank! Even the mask wearing Lone Ranger would seem normal under the circumstances.

Traditionally, mask wearing originated in the Greek and Roman theater and would exaggerate the theme of the story (comedy or tragedy) and help to tell the characters apart. While mask wearing is mentioned in the Bible (Genesis 24:65; Exodus 34:33; Isaiah 6:2; I Corinthians 3:15), we are invited never to mask the truth or the gift of God's justice. Jesus, especially in the Gospel of Matthew, railed against the Pharisees and called them hypocrites (pretenders, hiding behind the Law, masking the truth).

Beginning the Fifth Week of Lent, the identity of another “lone ranger” seeking to bring truth and justice to the world becomes clearer. Jesus' revelation of His mission to the visiting Greeks who “*wished to see Jesus,*” prompted a clear statement regarding the conditions of those who were to be His followers. “*Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will*

honor.” Offering a quick insight into the dangers and the perks of His mission, Jesus predicts His own death and resurrection when He uses the simple analogy, “*Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*” (John 12:20-33).

Perhaps the Greek visitors were still perplexed by Jesus' paradoxical statements and the voice “*that came from heaven*” validating Jesus' mission. Before the Greeks could ask the question, “Who was that masked man?” Jesus said: “*This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from this earth, will draw all people to myself.*”

The gospel account of John does not say whether the Greek visitors understood Jesus or were convinced about becoming disciples, but the invitation was clear that if you were to follow Jesus, then you must be willing to risk your life in order to save it. The consequences of hearing voices, especially heavenly ones, would, as St. Paul said, seem “*foolish to the Greeks and a stumbling block for the Jews.*” (I Corinthians 1:23). The question persists: Are we willing to follow the cross of Jesus? Certainly, Lent offers us opportunities to test our faith and commitment to the Word of God, whether we are wearing masks or not.

Forging a lasting relationship with God can be a comforting experience, especially in times of personal uncertainty and doubt. God speaks to the prophet Jeremiah with great affection regarding the house of Israel when He says, “*I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*” (Jeremiah 31:31-34). God continues to love us, even in the middle of a pandemic and the search for the “new now.” Jesus might never fit the metaphor of a “masked stranger riding in on a big white horse”, but it is nice to imagine Jesus' plea for justice, truth and compassion.

At some point, we need to break away from galloping through life with high anxiety and discover an oasis where we can take off our masks and be at peace. Even at the risk of Dr. Fauci or President Biden's disapproval of not following the imperative to “Mask Up,” we might be able hear the strains of the “William Tell Overture” signaling some masked individuals bearing gifts of Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

As we get closer to Jerusalem on our Lenten journey, we can dare to dream of a better world to come. Straining to hear the faint sound of the traditional *Exsultet* (the Proclamation of Easter), we can imagine a masked Savior, a Kemosabe, who will lead us out of darkness into the light of a Promised Land. Hi-ho, Silver!

*Peace,
Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.*



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