

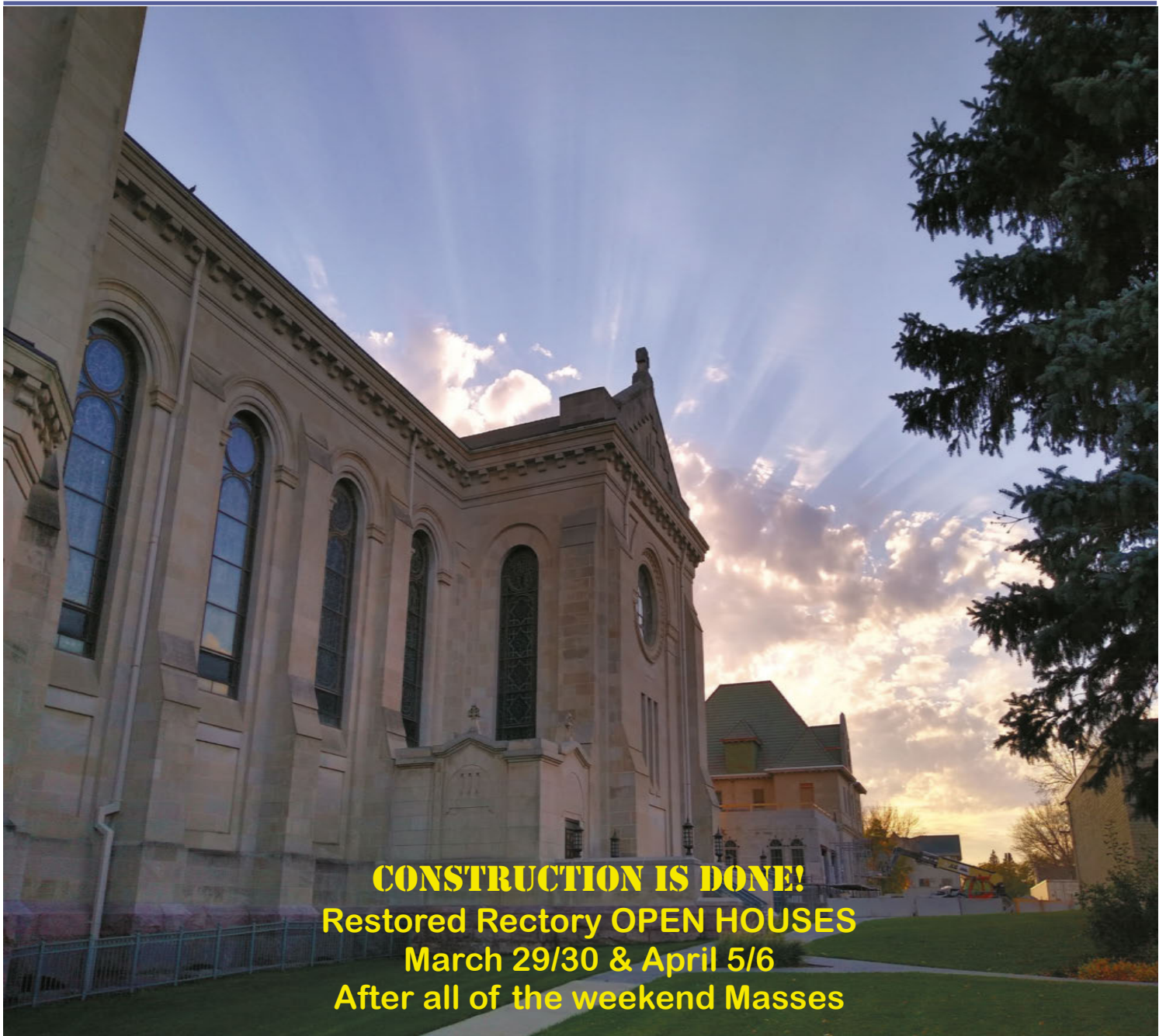
March 30, 2025 • *Fourth Sunday of Lent*



The Cathedral of **SAINT JOSEPH**

521 North Duluth Avenue • Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57104

www.stjosephcathedral.net



DIOCESE OF SIOUX FALLS

Most Reverend Donald E. DeGrood, *Bishop*

LITURGY GUIDE - March 30, 2025

The Fourth Sunday of Lent

Welcome to the Cathedral of St. Joseph and thank you for joining us for the celebration of Holy Mass today!

Please, silence your cell phones and refrain from eating, drinking or chewing gum in the Cathedral. Help keep our Cathedral tidy by utilizing the waste baskets found near the main entrances.

Please, do not take pictures during the Mass celebration. You are welcome to take pictures after Mass.

INTROIT - (At 9:15 AM & 11:00 AM THE ENTRANCE PROCESSION IS ACCOMPANIED BY THE INTROIT, SUNG BY THE CHOIR)

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Laetare Jerusalem: et conventum facite omnes qui diligitis eam: gaudete cum laetitia, qui in tristitia fuistis: ut exsultetis, et satiementini ab uberibus consolationis vestrae .</i> | Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast. (Verse) I rejoiced when it was said unto me: "Let us go to the house of the Lord." |
| <i>(Verse) Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi: In domum Domini ibimus</i> | |

OPENING HYMN (4:00 PM & 7:30 AM) DARWALL'S 148TH 731 Rejoice, the Lord is King

PENITENTIAL ACT

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, **(striking breast three times) through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;** Therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading Joshua 5:9a, 10-12

The LORD said to Joshua,
"Today I have removed the reproach of Egypt from you."

While the Israelites were encamped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, they celebrated the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth of the month.

On the day after the Passover, they ate of the produce of the land in the form of unleavened cakes and parched grain.

On that same day after the Passover, on which they ate of the produce of the land, the manna ceased.

No longer was there manna for the Israelites, who that year ate of the yield of the land of Canaan.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7

(Refrain sung first by cantor, then congregation repeat)



Taste and see the good - ness of the Lord.

Text: Refrain trans., *Lectioary for Mass*, © 1969, 1981, 1997, ICEL; verses, *New American Bible*, © 1970, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine
Music: Michel Guimont, © 1994, 1998, GIA Publications, Inc.

I will bless the Lord at all times; praise of him is always in my mouth. In the Lord my soul shall make its boast; the humble shall hear and be glad. **R**

Glorify the Lord with me; together let us praise his name. I sought the Lord, and he answered me; from all my terrors he set me free. **R**

Look toward him and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed. This lowly one called; the Lord heard, and rescued him from all his distress. **R**

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Brothers and sisters:

Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.

And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us.

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Gospel Acclamation

Please Stand

(Sung first by cantor, then congregation repeat)



Praise and hon - or to you, O Lord Je - sus Christ.

I will get up and go to my Father and shall say to him:
Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. **R**

Gospel

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So to them Jesus addressed this parable:

"A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.'

So the father divided the property between them.

After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.

When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any.

Coming to his senses he thought, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.”’

So he got up and went back to his father.

While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.

His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.’

But his father ordered his servants, ‘Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’

Then the celebration began.

Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing.

He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him,

‘Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him.

He said to his father in reply, ‘Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.’

He said to him,

‘My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’”

PROFESSION OF FAITH
Please Stand

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,

the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(bow here) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary, and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST
 PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR AND GIFTS

OFFERTORY HYMN *(4 PM & 7:30 AM)*
784

ST. COLUMBA
The King of Love

OFFERTORY ANTIPHON *(9:15 AM)*

*Illumina oculos meos,
nequando obdormiam in
morte: nequando dicat
inimicus meus: Praevalui
adversus eum.*

Enlighten my eyes lest I fall
into the sleep of death; lest
my enemy say: “I have
prevailed against him.”

OFFERTORY MOTET *(11:00 AM)*
 O Psalm 42

Felix Mendelssohn
 (1809-1847)

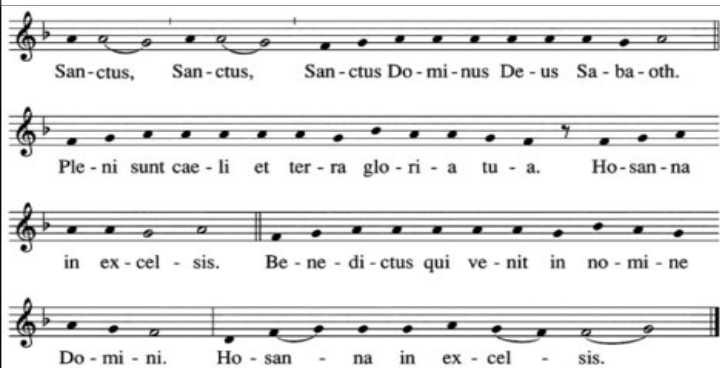
*Wie der Hirsch schreit nach
frischem Wasser,
So schreit meine Seele,
Gott, zu Dir.*

As the deer cries out
for running streams,
so my soul cries,
O God, to you.

Celebrant: Pray brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

R. May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

SANCTUS



San-ctus, San-ctus, San-ctus Do-mi-nus De-us Sa-ba-oth.
 Ple-ni sunt cae-li et ter-ra glo-ri-a tu-a. Ho-san-na
 in ex-cel-sis. Be-ne-di-ctus qui ve-nit in no-mi-ne
 Do-mi-ni. Ho-san-na in ex-cel-sis.

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION



We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Re-sur-rec-tion un-til you come a-gain.

AGNUS DEI



A-gnus De-i, qui tol-lis pec-ca-ta mun-di: mi-se-re-re no-bis.
 A-gnus De-i, qui tol-lis pec-ca-ta mun-di: do-na no-bis pa-cem.

ECCE AGNUS DEI

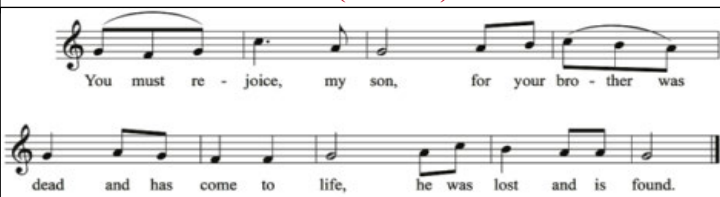
Celebrant: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

R. Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

HOLY COMMUNION

All Catholics who have prepared themselves to receive Holy Communion are invited to come forward. Our brothers and sisters of other faiths are invited to approach with their arms crossed over their chest to signal their desire to receive a blessing.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (4:00PM)



You must re-joice, my son, for your bro-ther was
 dead and has come to life, he was lost and is found.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (9:15 AM & 11:00 AM)

Oportet te fili gaudere, quia frater tuus mortuus fuerat, et revixit; perierat, et inventus est.

You must rejoice, my son, for your brother was dead and has come to life, he was lost and is found.

COMMUNION MEDITATION (11:00 AM)

René Clausen

Set Me as a Seal (Song of Songs)

(b. 1953)

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love; neither can the floods drown it. Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death. (Song of Songs 8:6a; 8:7a)

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

SLANE

622

Lord of all Hopefulness

CLOSING HYMN

ST. ELIZABETH

519

Fairest Lord Jesus

CLOSING HYMN (9:15 AM)

443

Ave Regina Caelorum

*Ave, Regina Caelorum,
 Ave, Domina Angelorum:
 Salve, radix, salve, porta
 Ex qua mundo lux est orta:
 Gaude, Virgo gloriosa,
 Super omnes speciosa,
 Vale, o valde decora,
 Et pro nobis
 Christum exora.*

Hail, O Queen of Heaven.
 Hail, O Lady of Angels Hail!
 thou root, hail! thou gate
 From whom unto the world,
 a light has arisen:
 Rejoice, O glorious Virgin,
 Lovely beyond all others,
 Farewell, most beautiful
 maiden, And pray for us
 to Christ.

RECESSIONAL (11:00 AM)

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

arr. Gilbert Martin

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LENTEN MEAL & STATIONS OF THE CROSS

A simple **Soup Supper** will be offered every Friday during Lent in the Parish Hall from 5:30-6:45 pm. Enjoy a meal & fellowship. Free will offering.

Stations of the Cross begin at 7:00PM in the main Cathedral.



Save the date ~ St. Lambert's Sister Camp - will be earlier than usual this year, **June 2-6**. This year's theme is the Sacraments. More information and registration this Spring.



BISHOP
O'GORMAN
 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

6 Elementaries,
 O'Gorman Junior High,
 O'Gorman High School

Summer Care open to parish families! Did you know that you can sign up for our summer care program? Our summer care is open May 19th - July 25th, 2025.

<https://www.ogknights.org/parents/summer-care>

Scholarships Deadline is April 1st! To view a complete list of available scholarships for O'Gorman visit <https://bit.ly/BishopOGScholarships>

COMMUNITY NEWS

USD Newman Center 60th Anniversary - Join us on Saturday, April 6, as we celebrate 60 years of faith, community and impact at USD! Enjoy alumni and student testimonies, a keynote by **Fr. Chuck Cimpl**, and more. **Fr. James Morgan** will emcee, with special hosts welcoming you. The day begins at 4 p.m. with an optional history and Newman Center tour. Anniversary celebration runs from 5-8 p.m. at the Dakota Center in Vermillion. Limited tickets, so RSVP now: bit.ly/3Y3vWr0. Contact Kenna Kleinschmit: 406-203-2877 or campusministry@usdnewman.org.

CDA Annual Scholarship - Court Mother Teresa #2510 of the Catholic Daughters awards a \$300 scholarship annually to a Catholic Student attending a post-secondary school in the Fall of 2025. The deadline for submission is **May 1, 2025**. Application forms for the scholarship are available through the area churches and O'Gorman High School.



April 8, 2025 - "Day of Recollection" 10am - 3pm
Fr. Rodney Farke. Retreat consists of two conferences, Mass, Adoration and Reconciliation. Register at abbeyofthehills.org



St. Joseph Academy is a hybrid, Catholic, classical school for preK Montessori to 8th grade students. Applications for the 2025-2026 school year are now being accepted. To learn more and apply, visit us online at stjosephclassicalacademy.org. Become a part of our growing and vibrant community!

Diocesan Vocation Camps:

Saint Maria Goretti Camp - June 4-6, 2025 at Abbey of the Hills, Marvin, SD. This camp is for young women ages 12-16, led by religious sisters. Please contact Fr. Michael Kapperman: frmichaelkapperman@sfcatholic.org Emma: 605-988-3772.

JPH Vocations Camp - July 29-August 1, 2025 at Abbey of the Hills, Marvin, SD. For young men ages 12-16, led by Priests and seminarians of the diocese. Please contact Fr. Tony Klein: frtonyklein@sfcatholic.org or Emma: 605-988-3772.

Fiat Dinner

Who: All Young Women Seeking God's Call

What: Mass, Dinner and Talks with Bishop DeGrood and religious communities

When: Sunday, April 27th, 4-8 pm

Where: Mater Ecclesiae Monastery
506 N Summit Ave, Sioux Falls, SD

RSVP: sfwomensdiscernment.org



4TH SUNDAY OF LENT



Liturgical Roles

9:00 am - First Saturday Mass
Lector - Julie Cleary
Server - Henry Lanners



April 5/6

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

4:00 pm Susan Albers, Julie Cleary
7:30 am Carl Eisenberg, Robert Renner
9:15 am Craig Meyer, Connie Luke, Matthew Erickson
11:00 am Bob Lux, Michelle Sletten, Nancy Ann Kadinger
4:00 pm Ministers as Scheduled

Lectors

4:00 pm Mary Gayle Rogers, Shawn Cleary
7:30 am Rich Hazen
9:15 am Matthew Erickson, Abby Erickson
11:00 am Michelle Sletten, Bob Lux
4:00 pm Readers as Scheduled

Altar Servers

4:00 pm Pontifical Servers
7:30 am Thomas Mogle
9:15 am Dane Erickson, Henry Lanners, Jacoben Schmidt
11:00 am James Mogle, Dominic Ostermann, Isaac Stanek
4:00 pm Servers as Scheduled

Mini-Bus Driver

4:00 pm Jim Leyse

Dow Rummel Don & Stephanie Rahn

Good Sam Chris Lent

Readings for the week of March 30, 2025

Monday: Is 65:17-21/Ps 30:2 and 4, 5-6, 11-12a and 13b/
Jn 4:43-54

Tuesday: Ez 47:1-9, 12/Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9/Jn 5:1-16

Wednesday: Is 49:8-15/Ps 145:8-9, 13cd-14, 17-18/
Jn 5:17-30

Thursday: Ex 32:7-14/Ps 106:19-20, 21-22, 23/
Jn 5:31-47

Friday: Wis 2:1a, 12-22/Ps 34:17-18, 19-20, 21 and 23/
Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Saturday: Jer 11:18-20/Ps 7:2-3, 9bc-10, 11-12/
Jn 7:40-53

Next Sunday: Is 43:16-21/Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6/
Phil 3:8-14/Jn 8:1-11

CONGRATULATIONS

Marguerite Kasemodel is Cathedral 500 Club's fifth winner for March 2025. She has received a check for **\$87**. Anyone interested in joining will find applications at the front entrance (Duluth Ave) of the Cathedral. Cost is \$5/month. Applications must be received by **March 31** to be in the April 2025 drawings. Call the Parish Office at [605-336-7390](tel:605-336-7390) for details.

Mass Intentions:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Mon. Mar. 31• | <i>Lenten Weekday</i> |
| 12:00 pm | Hahn Bui |
| Tue. Apr. 01• | <i>Lenten Weekday</i> |
| 12:00 pm | Kathy Kooima |
| Wed. Apr. 02• | <i>St. Francis of Paola, Hermit</i> |
| 11:00 am | Chrism Mass - Open to the public |
| Thu. Apr. 03• | <i>Lenten Weekday</i> |
| 12:00 am | ✠ Sally Holiday |
| Fri. Apr. 04• | <i>St. Isidore, Bishop & Dr. of the Church</i> |
| 12:00 pm | ✠ Ken Culp |
| Sat. Apr. 05• | <i>St. Vincent Ferrer, Priest</i> |
| 9:00 am | Kathryn Lux |
| 4:00 pm | ✠ Richard Martin |
| Sun. Apr. 06• | <i>Fifth Sunday of Lent</i> |
| 7:30 am | ✠ William Entringer |
| 9:15 am | Ron & Mary Reineke |
| 11:00 am | Joe Tibbetts |
| 4:00 pm | Pro Populo |

Sacred Heart Sanctuary Candles

- 1.) Amanda Roth
- 2.) ✠ Holy souls in Purgatory
- 3.) Lee Roschen & Family
- 4.) Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- 5.) Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Cathedral Events Calendar

Monday, March 31 - No Young Adults Meeting

Tuesday, April 1-

- 9:00 am - Quilter's Group, School
- 10:00 am - Women's Group/Bible Study, School (200)
- 6:30 pm - Knights of Columbus - School

Wednesday, April 2 - Chrism Mass

- 11:00 am - Open to the Public (**No** Noon Mass)
Parish Office will be closed 10am - 2pm
- 6:45 pm - OCIA, Parish Hall

Thursday, April 3 -

- 7:00 pm - Adoration & Confessions, SH Chapel

Friday, April 4 - First Friday

- 11:00 am - Adoration before noon Mass (No Rosary)
- 5:30 - 6:45 pm - Lenten Soup Supper, Parish Hall
- 7:00 pm - **Stations of the Cross**, Cathedral Nave

Saturday, April 5 - First Saturday

- 9:00 am - Mass (First Saturday of the Month)
- 9:00 am - OCIA Retreat 3rd Floor School
- 12:00 & 3:00 pm - Confessions in the Cathedral Nave
- Restored Rectory Open House** - After the 4:00pm Mass

Sunday, April 6 -

Restored Rectory Open House - After **all** of the Masses

After 9:15 am Mass - Donut Social in the Parish Hall

2:30 pm - St. Josephine Bakhita, First Communion Class, Cafeteria

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS



TODAY

MARCH 30TH

AFTER 9:15 MASS

(Cathedral Parish Hall)

Get reminders or volunteer here:



• Connect with fellow parishioners • Crafts & activities • Designated toddler area

Cathedral Rectory Open Houses - Come to one of the Rectory Open Houses either **March 29/30** or **April 5/6** after all of the Weekend Masses.

Chrism Mass - **Wed. April 2nd at 11:00 am** the Bishop and the clergy will be gathering to celebrate the annual Mass of Blessing of the Holy Oils used in the Sacraments for the coming year. **NO NOON** Mass the **public is invited** to attend this beautiful liturgy at 11:00 am. (Parish Office closed 10-2)

First Friday, April 4 - 11:00 am Adoration before Mass

First Saturday, April 5 - 9:00am First Saturday Mass. These two Masses of Devotion are for the reparation of sins committed against the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate & Sorrowful Heart of Mary.

Welcome New Members!

*Thank you for choosing Cathedral of St. Joseph
for your Faith Family*

**Trevor Case
Nicole Krebs
Bailey Larson**

*If you are interested in becoming a Cathedral Parishioner
please, contact the Parish Office at 605-336-7390.*



Our Catholic faith is a gift from God. As people of the Diocese of Eastern South Dakota, we are united in faith. We are people who hope and pray and help each other on our journey of faith.

Gifts given to the **Catholic Family Sharing Appeal** are given out of love of God and love of one another.

We have reached **36% of our CFSA goal of \$154,000** in just one week! Thank you for your quick response and stewardship! Our goal is 100% participation - please return your card/envelope as soon as possible. Thank you!

WEEKLY OFFERING MARCH 22/23



| | | |
|---------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Envelopes | \$ | 9,548.00 |
| Online/EFT | \$ | 3,860.00 |
| Visitors/Loose Cash | \$ | 4,236.72 |
| Total | \$ | 17,644.72 |

*Scan QR code to be directed to our Giving Page
Thank you for your Support and Prayers!*

CATHEDRAL INFORMATION

Parish Office: [605-336-7390](tel:605-336-7390)

Parish Office Email: cathedral@sfcatholic.org

Office Hours: 9:00am-4:00pm M-Th, 9:00am-3:00pm Fri.
Closed - Saturday and Sunday

Cathedral Church Hours:

Monday-Saturday - 8:00am-4:00pm

Sunday - 7:00am-Noon & 3:30pm-5:00pm

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:00pm (First Sat. of the month a Mass at 9am)

Sunday 7:30am, 9:15am, 11:00am,
4:00pm (St. Josephine Bakhita Community)

Weekday Masses

Cathedral - Monday - Friday, 12:00pm (Noon)

Monastery - Monday - Saturday, 7:00am

Confessions

Thursday 7:00pm (w/Adoration) in the Sacred Heart Chapel

Saturday 12:00pm & 3:00-3:30pm in Cathedral Nave
(In the Sacred Heart Chapel if a Wedding is scheduled)

Adoration

Sacred Heart Chapel - Thurs. 7:00-8:00pm (w/confessions)

Cathedral - 11:00am, First Friday of the month

Monastery - Mon-Sat 7:45am-6:00pm, Sun 10:30am-6pm

Tours

Self-guided - 1:00pm Monday-Friday (except Holy Days)

Guided Tours-By appointment [605-336-7390](tel:605-336-7390)

Parish Staff

Rector, Very Rev. James P. Morgan

Parochial Vicar, Rev. Pasquale Armando Francesco

Weekend Sacramental Assistance, Rev. Anthony Klein

Deacon, William Radio

Deacon, Jonathan Eckrich

Director-Operations & Finance, Heidi Solem

Administrative Assistant, Mary Anne Lux

Music Director, Dr. Jared Ostermann

Assistant Music Director, Nicole Gerdes

Tour Docent/Guide, Susan Albers

Wedding Coordinator, Mary Enderson

Counseling Services, The Lourdes Center - [605-988-3775](tel:605-988-3775)

Sacramental Preparation:

Baptism - The sacrament of Baptism is celebrated for our parishioners on Sundays after the 11:AM Mass. Parents must attend a Baptism preparation meeting.

To schedule a meeting for Baptism preparation contact the parish office at [605-336-7390](tel:605-336-7390).

Matrimony - Six months preparation required. Registered parishioners, please contact the parish office. All others please contact the pastor of your home church. For wedding information, go to www.stjosephcathedral.net under Sacraments.

Anointing of the Sick - Please call the parish office to request this Sacrament if you have been diagnosed with an illness, in preparation for surgery or in the case of serious illness.

Catholic Cemetery - St. Michael's Cemetery [605-338-3376](tel:605-338-3376)

CLERGY REFLECTION

There was a time when my birthday was strange and unpleasant. This is because I was born an identical twin, but he suffered from a sky diving accident and later succumbed to his injuries. So, birthdays served as a reminder of my loss. On that terrible day, my family converged at the hospital to gather in support of each other, and to visit my brother for, perhaps, the last time. A nurse asked my father, "How many children do you have?" His reply was immediate, "*Eight, and every one is an only child.*" This answer was puzzling to me at the time. What my dad meant was that, yes he had eight kids, but his pain, his suffering over his son was no less diminished, no less mitigated by the fact that he had seven other kids who were still healthy. His pain was no less than if Karl was his only son. *To lose one child out of eight is as big a loss as to lose one child out of one.* And, what he was willing to sacrifice for *all* his children was no less, no more, than if he had only one child.

This is how God feels about each one of us. Over the millennia, God has created billions of souls, and each one is just as important to him as if an only child. God has shown his willingness to make an infinite sacrifice for the redemption of all mankind, for every one of those billions of souls. To this end, God sent Jesus, his Beloved, to share in our humanity. That's an infinite sacrifice. Then as man, Jesus gave all he had on the cross. He did this because of the sins of us all. But consider this: let's say that no one has sinned, not Adam & Eve, not Moses, not King David, not Judas, no one. No one has ever sinned, except for one person. Only one person of all those billions of souls has sinned. That one person is you. Only you have sinned; only you need saving. So, what do you think God would do? Is he going to make the same redemptive act for just one person: Jesus' life for yours?

If you were the only one in need of redemption – redemption that only he can give – he would indeed make the same sacrifice. If you were the only sinner in all of creation, God who loves you perfectly would make the same perfect, infinite, redemptive sacrifice. God loves you as an only child. He would trade his only begotten Son's life for the sake of yours. And what's more, he would do this knowing that you have freewill to reject him. He would take that chance because he won't force himself on you. So when we respond to God with a "no," it isn't like one voice among billions that says "no." It's as if God's only child is saying "no." And when we respond to God with a "yes," it pleases God just as much as if his only child is saying "yes" to him.

I hope you know how much God loves you, that God is willing to do for *only you* what he has done for all of humanity. If you were to ask God, "How many children *do* you have?" His reply would be, "Billions, and every one is an only child.."

Deacon Jon Eckrich

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