

St. James the Greater

Third Sunday of Lent ☩ March 7, 2021



*Assorted Quotes of
Blessed Julian of Norwich*
c.1342-1416

“All shall be well,
and all shall be well,
and all manner of
things shall be well.”

“The greatest honor
we can give Almighty God
is to live gladly because of
the knowledge of his love.”

“God loved us
before he made us;
and his love has never
diminished and never shall.”

“...the goodness of God is
the highest object of prayer
and it reaches down
to our lowest need.”

—Assorted Quotes of Julian of Norwich

All Shall Be Well

Parish Staff

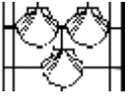
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Bulletin deadlines: end of day Mondays.



Message from Fr. Tom

We are solidly into Lent! I was preaching at daily mass this week that Lent is a time when we try extra hard to make our bodies consistent with our minds. What I meant by that was that probably everyone who comes to church resonates with the idea of being closer to God. We want that. We want hearts purified and made new. In other areas of life, we have to follow through with actions to make our desires come true. As a young adult, I had the desire to play Bob Dylan songs on a guitar. It only happened because I bought a guitar and took a few lessons. How do we make our desire to be closer to God come true? I don't think there's one special recipe, but it certainly involves "upping our prayer game," and the Church also draws on the Bible to recommend giving to the poor and disciplining our bodies by going without certain comforts, such as when we fast. Maybe it's just my own weakness talking, but **it seems like spirituality is the one area where we think it's enough to desire something without doing the hard work of achieving it.**

I did something last week that took a good deal of humility—I recorded a vocal back and forth duet with **Becky Santine!** I hate to rank quality of voices among our singers, but let's just say Becky's voice is really really good, and mine is OK at times. Together we recorded the Easter Vigil hymn "The Exsultet," which is one of many musical pieces that Mary Kolstad is coordinating with the help of many others to keep our choir members actively ministering and to give the rest of us a real treat. Becky's part of the Exsultet will be a real treat for sure!

My eyes are a little buggy as I write this tonight because I just spent the last three hours revising the itinerary for our **next Holy Land pilgrimage in February 2022.** Yep, I surely hope there are no major virus curve balls and this one can proceed as planned—after canceling the two previous ones. We spend the first four days in Jordan and then it's Israel for the next ten days, February 2-17. I still have over twenty original pilgrims who remain, and a handful new people have given me their \$500 deposits to reserve spot, so **I now have about 30 of a possible 48 pilgrims** eager to go. Once I nail down flight information, I will put some itineraries out on our tables. I'm happy to send what I have to anyone who is interested. Total cost is \$4400, including flights, tour/hotels, all tips, and most meals. I can't wait to get back there!

Our video parliamentarian, **Don Byrne,** sent me an email this week to let me know our YouTube channel has garnered over 90,000 views since we started it up on the Feast of St. Joseph (March 19) last year. That is such a tribute to Don and **Landon Cerny,** and **Mike Kolstad** and to all who contributed to and promoted this project. It will be interesting to see how many people will seek out our video ministry when the pandemic subsides. Our plan is to continue streaming the Sunday mass.

I just found out **Reva Syverson** is the student council president at North High School. My first thought was, "Of course she is!" One of the sadnesses of this COVID time is that Reva never got to shine as one of our adult acolytes, and soon she'll be off to Winona State. Anyway, I'm always happy to highlight accomplishments of our youth, though especially these Covid days, I am unaware of them. Feel free to pass on any information.

One great new thing in our parish devotional life is happening from 9:00-10:30 on Tuesday mornings. First we celebrated mass and about 15 people came. Then the PCCW started saying the rosary after mass and about 30 people came. This Lent we added **Eucharistic Adoration** from the end of mass until 10:30, and now the church almost looks like a Sunday morning with social distancing. You might enjoy, as I have, this time of prayer with others. Thanks to the rosary leaders and Bob Hollern for so ably getting everything ready for adoration. **One more recommendation** if you have access to YouTube is to listen to **Fr. John Heagle's 20-minute talk that really so well articulates the heart of Christianity and the meaning of the cross.** I can't believe he could communicate all he did in 20 minutes—a real treasure! Just go to YouTube and search for "St. Anne Wausau Fr. Heagle" and it'll come up. It's also posted on our own Facebook page. Peace, let's all do something beautiful for God every day this week.

28 February 2021

Fr. Tom's Homily

Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis 22:1-18; Romans 8:31-34; Mark 9:2-10

We have very substantial readings today, worthy of the season of Lent. The Genesis reading about Abraham and Isaac always makes the pious soul squirm. **Would God ask anyone to kill their child as a test of faith?** It seems rather twisted. I read something this week that I found helpful is sorting through this story.

What is the backstory of this reading? Perhaps the real lived experience of Abraham went like this: Abraham wanted to please God more than anything. In a world where child sacrifice was not an unusual religious practice, the idea entered his head that this would be the greatest test of faith, the greatest thing he could offer God to show him how faithful he was. Then, when the time came, with Isaac bound and slaughtering knife in hand, he looked at Isaac looking at him, and he knew that he couldn't do it. **Further, he knew that God did not want him to do it.** In a moment that seemed like an angel staying his hand, **Abraham changed his understanding of God.** It was a transforming moment in the history of religion on our planet, Abraham realized that God does not demand that we kill, that it is not pleasing to God but repugnant to God, to kill a child.

Abraham's evolution from thinking of God as a testing God to a loving God reminds me of a lovely woman I once knew. She was well into her 80's when I met her. She was devout with her prayer and parish support. She was plagued in her conscience, however, by one thing. Once when her daughter was very sick, **she promised God that if her daughter got better she would not eat candy** for the rest of her life. Well, the daughter got better, but despite her very best intentions and efforts, she could not stop eating candy. **And it was like every time she tasted the butter rum or peppermint, she was handing Jesus over to the Romans like Judas.**

There's something about her sincerity that you have to love about her, just like there's something about Abraham's sincerity with his knife that you have to love about him. **But...she was missing what Abraham found—a new revelation that God isn't up there demanding such a thing.** Honestly, I think she went to her grave wondering how she would be punished for eating the candy all those years. That's sad to me, but this sadness is outbalanced by confidence in my vision of God holding her with love despite her initial protestations until she surrenders and melts, finally convinced of his mercy.

If God is for us, who can be against, St. Paul writes to the Romans. At the transfiguration, God's booming voice over a vision of the glorified Christ tells Peter, James and John, and us, to Listen to him. When you try to Listen to him, what do you hear?

Some things challenging, for sure: Love your enemies, forgive 70 x 7 times, Go and sin no more...these commands are not threats; rather they help us move more intimately into the life of God. And to encourage us we also here: Your faith has saved you. Neither do I condemn you. It is I; do not be afraid. Stand pick up your mat and walk. Peace I give you; my peace I leave with you. It is mercy I desire, not sacrifice.

What words of Jesus might you hear, from Scripture like these, or spoken into your own heart, if you listen? You'll know it is truly from him if the words draw you closer to him and closer to one another.

Ways to Pray

Fr. Tom is demonstrating different ways to pray on Thursdays during Lent such as Lectio Divina, except on the Thursday of the Reconciliation Service.



Fish Fries

Mar. 12 - St Raymond
 Mar. 19 - St Olaf
 St Raymond
 Mar. 26 - Immaculate Conception
 St Raymond
 Apr. 9 - St Olaf
 Apr. 23 - St Olaf

**Tired of Covid isolation?****Want to connect with others?**

Join the St. James Zoom Social!

Consider it a table at hospitality, only over zoom—a chance to chat with fellow parishioners, get together for coffee, but safely in your own living room.

Contact Christine at christine@stjameseauclaire.org for info or if you are interested.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Try this Lenten Practice: Adoration.

Adoration will be offered for an hour after the Tuesday Mass during Lent. The Rosary will be recited at the side altar after Mass, and will be completed before 10 AM, allowing a half hour for quiet adoration.

The IM (Inclusive Ministry Church) is a coalition of several faith communities working together to provide a monthly message of God's love and a meal for people with cognitive and other disabilities. We have been unable to meet in person due to the pandemic but have kept in contact with all participants by Facebook and mailings. St. James is the host church for March and Fr. Tom has prepared a beautiful musical video and Deborah Skalecki has prepared a meaningful Lenten flyer to be sent. A sincere thank you to both of them.

The Passion Narrative in the Gospel of Mark (via Zoom), offered by the Franciscan Spirituality Center.

Mar. 9, 16, 23 (Tuesday, 7-8 PM), Presenter: John McHugh, \$10 per session. Attend just one or all sessions Register at www.FSCenter.org or 608-791-5295.

All four New Testament Gospels tell the story of Jesus' passion and death. However, each Gospel writer adds their own style and content. Those subtle differences carry important messages for the reader, even 2,000 years later. Biblical scholar and local leadership executive John McHugh will present a series of virtual talks on these events as related in the Gospel of Mark for the Franciscan Spirituality Center.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER:

John McHugh has earned degrees from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, and the Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. John serves on the boards of Trust Point, National Mutual Benefit Society, Viterbo University and Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse.

Mass Intentions & Schedule

Weekday masses are at 9:00 AM Tuesday-Friday.

Wednesday and Friday have limited seating when school is in session.

Saturday 4:30 PM, Sunday 8:00 and 10:00 AM.

Masks & social distancing are required.

Sat.	Mar. 06	4:30 Lyle and Arlee Berg
Sun	Mar. 07	8:00 People of St. James 10:00 James Connolly
Tue.	Mar. 09	Joe Reigel
Wed.	Mar. 10	Lorraine Falkner
Thu.	Mar. 11	Linus Miller
Fri.	Mar. 12	Larry Hagens
Sat.	Mar. 13	4:30 Dick Crisp
Sun	Mar. 14	8:00 People of St. James 10:00 Theresa Meanner

March at St. James Elementary School:

Mar. 8 & 25 - Battle of the Books

Mar. 26 - No School, Diocesan In-Service

Mar. 29-Apr. 5 - No School, Spring Break

Communal Reconciliation Service

A prayer service to examine our consciences and seek forgiveness. Thursday, **Mar. 18, 7:00 PM in church.**

With Covid restrictions, we will not be hosting other priests to come in and hear confessions.

Instead, to help us enter the spirit of repentance and forgiveness, at this service we will ponder sin in our lives and our world, and proclaim God's forgiveness.

For those wanting the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Fr. Tom will be available afterward to hear very brief confessions and offer absolution.

Other opportunities for the sacrament are at 3:30 PM on Saturdays at the Last Supper sculpture, and by appointment.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

March 22, NOON to 6, in the . Gathering Space. Sign up on the Red Cross website, or through the parish office.

Sermon on the Amount

February 21, 2021

Sunday Adult Envelopes (176)	\$22,477.50
2020 same week (163) \$10,320.00	
Students	\$0.00
Plate	<u>\$206.00</u>
Total	\$22,683.50

Year to date Adult Env./CPL Income through Jan. 31, 2021:

Actual (July 1-Jan. 31)	\$389,670.14
Budgeted (July 1-Jan. 31)	\$369,630.00

Long term maintenance & facilities improvement fund and Past*Present*Future Campaign income for Feb. 21 was \$240.00 for a total since July 1, 2020 of \$47,183.44.



the Dayton family doing their "Lent in a Box" activity.



We love our violinists at St James! Thanks Emma and Hannah

Music Ministry

Just as conversations in a room can trip over one another and sound chaotic at times, *MUSIC brings Harmony!* During this Lenten Season, let us bring HARMONY to our lives. This harmony can be in the way of love, patience, forgiveness and all those pieces that interrupt our feeling of HARMONY! Listen to the words that music has given us, and "TURN to ME "says the Lord. Let us all Turn to him as we journey through Lent.

May the GONG that rings & echoes as we gather and close our time together, bring us closer to Him. Barbara Wimunc-Pearson, our beloved pianist, has graced us with this work of art to CALL us to the Journey! Thank you Barbara!



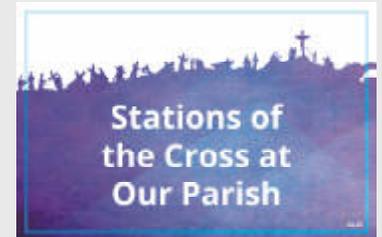
Stations of the Cross

We are doing virtual Stations of the Cross; the link is on our website and released on our YouTube channel for every Friday at 6 PM in March for Lent. Each week will be a different Stations of the Cross. Videos are available now, as of March 5.

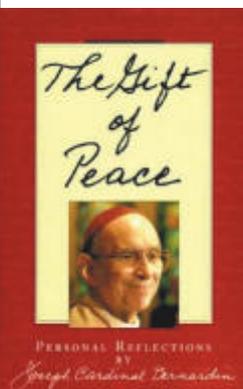
We will have:

- a Children's Stations, which include children from Religious Education and children from St James reading stations,
- a Music Reflection Stations, which will include singers from St James coordinated by Mary Kolstad,
- a Shadow Stations, which will include Stations written by Fr Tom, and lastly,
- a walk with Jesus stations, which will include Stations read by Jacky Miller.

Please join us in March every Friday at 6 PM.



Book Group:



When he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago was the objection of much attention from the press and he was very open about his process of faithfully living his last days. A bestseller in the 90's, this personal and easy to read memoir, this book will be discussed via Zoom on March 23, 6:30. Let us know in a comment if you're interested and not on our email list, and I will add you with Zoom details. -tk

Growing Through Grief –

God doesn't give us what we can handle, God helps us handle what we are given. "All Are Welcome" as we create an environment of hope, support, respect, coping skills, care plans and mutual trust for anyone experiencing the loss of a loved one. This is a place to share positive discussions on a topic that is emotional, physical, sensitive and private. What is said in this group, stays in the group. For more information or to join a group contact Pat Hanson at 715-835-9811, or St. James Parish office 715-835-5887.

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