

St. James the Greater

Palm Sunday Passion of the Lord ✚ March 28, 2021



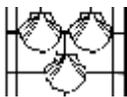
PALM SUNDAY

Those preceding him as well as those following kept crying out:

"Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

- Mk 11:9



Message from Fr. Tom

Blessed Holy Week to everyone. Sometimes time flies by, but in this case it does seem like a very long time since we celebrate Holy Week 2020 without any people in the pews. We did our level best with a handful of volunteer readers and singers, and of course Don and Landon to broadcast it all, but it was far from ideal. We will be a lot closer to that ideal this week! While we will still not have a packed church on Palm Sunday or Easter Sunday, I am hoping the weather cooperates and we will have a full playground for our “Mass on the Grass”—10:00 Palm Sunday and 10:30 Easter Sunday.

As I mentioned at our masses last weekend, **we are doing our level best to maintain a safe worship environment while accommodating as many people as possible who would like to attend mass in person.** This is the reason we are planning to have our 10:00 Sunday masses outside for the foreseeable future. If in fact there are not so many people attended the outdoor mass, then I suspect we will re-evaluate that decision. Our thought is that it will attract a lot of regular 10:00 people and also others who are still understandably reluctant to worship indoors because of the virus. Surely there will be some who want to go to mass at 10:00 on Sunday but indoors. **To these good folks and to all whose #1 preference is “not on the menu,” I simply ask for your kind understanding, with the knowledge that we’re trying to do what is best for the greatest number of our people.**

You might recall that we sent about \$1500 to Catholic Relief Services from our Ash Wednesday collection. Reading its recent newsletter, I can see that our money is being very well spent. The world’s largest refugee camp today is in Bangladesh, populated by 600,000 Rohingya people forced to flee from neighboring Myanmar. CRS is involved constructed safe shelter and ensuring safe water, overall sanitation, counseling, education and protection for vulnerable women and children. In El Salvador, where 75% of good farmland has been destroyed by poor land stewardship, young Carlos decided he would have to leave farming to support his family. However, after taking a taking part in a CRS school program that taught new techniques that both produce food and restore the environment, he is now able to continue farming. I loved his comment about his choice: “He who know has an obligation to act.” Those are just two examples of the **great things CRS does with the money we offer.**

Locally, our Catholic Charities-supported homeless shelter, **Sojourner House**, is moving back to its location downtown on Barstow Street after several months at the old Shopko on Clairmont were they could be more physically distant because of the bigger space. There are plans to build an extra floor onto the existing structure on Barstow to make more room. It’s sad that more room is needed and inspiring that people are finding the means to meet this need. We made a push at St. James for volunteers for this social ministry, and we had a great initial response. Since Covid, however, **the number of our volunteers has declined and we could use some more. So, give it some thought and prayer and if you could join other parishioners for a few hours of service once a month, please let us know.** You’ll be working alongside of some of our very finest!

Speaking of service, **I wonder what Pope Francis will be doing for Holy Thursday and the Washing of the Feet.** I’m always so inspired by his choices. He has gone to prisons, to nursing centers, and he has washed the feet of refugees, men, women, Christian, Muslim—such as example of selfless service that considers only the goodness of caring for people in need. Perhaps there will be no Washing of Feet this year because of the virus—Italy was in shut-down last I heard. Even here we are substituting a food offering for the foot washing, so if you’re coming and can remember bring some tuna (or your favorite non-perishable food).

Some people are asking me about when the **Parish Bike Rides** will begin. I think more people like that we have them than there are people who actually want to go on them! In any event, I think we can plan on going on our first ride the Sunday after Easter, **April 11—meet at 12:00** in the 11th Street parking lot. So, grease up those chains and get ready!

Again, Blessed Holy Week. **May the dying and rising of Jesus the Lord enter more fully into each of our hearts and minds.** Peace.

21 March 2021

Fifth Sunday of Lent

John 12: 20-33

One thing I'm supposed to do as a priest of the Diocese of La Crosse, is to submit a plan for my funeral. I haven't done this yet. I've thought about it, though. I think I will choose for the Gospel reading what we heard today, at least the first half of it. The only thing that makes me a tad reluctant is the part about "hating your life on this earth" (addressed a little downpage), but I am so very sold on the central theme of the reading: The process of dying and rising that is at the core of Christian spirituality. "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and die, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it bears much fruit."

This phrase has very intense meaning, as well as meaning for our everyday lives. On the intense end of things, it is Jesus just on the edge of entering into his passion—the next chapter begins the Last Supper. His hour has come; He is the grain of wheat that will die to bear fruit. He is troubled, apprehensive, but finally very confident that by his coming death and total solidarity with suffering humanity he will glorify his Father in heaven.

Also very intense was the life and death of St. Oscar Romero who died a martyr's death by an assassin's bullet in El Salvador 41 years ago. Perhaps you know his story. Selected as Archbishop of San Salvador just a few years earlier, he was considered a safe choice who would not make waves or challenge the oppressive military government. But he did. When the government directed the military to murder those who were educating and organizing the landless poor, Romero used his position to call out the government to stop the repression, and called on soldiers in this solidly Catholic Christian country not to obey orders that would lead to the deaths of their brothers and sisters in Christ. He was warned to stop it or else.

That "or else" came on March 24, 1980 during a mass he was celebrating for nuns at a local convent. The Gospel reading for that mass was the very same that we heard today. Unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it bears much fruit." He was shot and killed just moments after he concluded his homily. In this homily he said "*You must not love your life so much that you avoid getting involved in the risks of life that history demands of us. Those who avoid all danger lose their life, but those who out of love for Christ give themselves in service to others will live.*" His last words.

In the life of Jesus, in the life of Romero, there is a clear witness, a clear call to make our lives about more than, well, our lives. I think this is what the evangelist's use of the phrase "hate your life in this world" means. There's a call to lose ourselves in our service to others, in solidarity with others, and by this we glorify God. I remember Lily Tomlin's short joke: "The problem with the rat race is that even if you win you're still a rat." In our Gospel vocabulary, if all you do is take care of yourself, you're still just a grain of wheat. You might be one fantastic grain of wheat, biggest grain in the room, but nothing in comparison to those who die to themselves, their egos, and rise as new creations who live for God (cf. Romans 6).

The grain of wheat can have that intense meaning as lived in the final days of Jesus and Romero, but it also applies to our much less intense everyday lives. In comparing his upcoming passion and death to a grain of wheat that dies, Jesus seems to tell us that this process of dying and rising that he will go through literally, is written into the very nature of creation. His death and resurrection is like what happens in nature. In order for an apple tree to grow, a seed from an apple has to die, to lose itself in the warm moist earth from which new life will spring.

That dying and rising is writing into our hearts also. I was listening to that Wilson Phillips song "Hold On for One More Day," which says to a discouraged person: "Don't you know things can change. They'll go your way if you hold on for one more day." That's loving advice and it's often true that when things are really hard they come around if we hang in there. There's a bit of the paschal mystery, the dying and rising in that. But Jesus is saying more than that. He is calling us into communion with our dying and rising God, and we live this communion in our daily efforts to love one another. Some days we'll do that by simply taking the garbage out or texting an encouraging message. Other days we might be called to do something riskier like stand up for someone who is being put down.

A quote from the German philosopher Goethe's poem, "The Holy Longing": "And so long as you haven't experienced this: to die and to rise, you are only a troubled gu

Last Fish Fries

Apr. 9 - St Olaf
Apr. 23 - St Olaf

What's happening at St. James Elementary:

April 1, 2, and 5 - No School (Spring Break)
April 5 - No School Easter Monday
April 12 - Lifetouch Spring Pictures
April 20 - Jeans for Jesus (Lenten Mite Boxes)
April 28 - Early Release 1:30 PM

Amoris Laetitia Family



On March 19, 2021, the Church celebrated the fifth anniversary of the publication of Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, on the beauty and joy of love in the family. On this same day, Pope Francis launched the year "Amoris Laetitia Family," which will con-

clude on June 26, 2022, during the X Meeting of Families in Rome with the Holy Father.

Pope Francis announced the year of "Amoris Laetitia Family" during his Angelus Message on the Feast of the Holy Family on December 27, 2020. He ended his address invoking the Blessed Mother, "May the Virgin Mary grant that families throughout the world be increasingly fascinated by the evangelical ideal of the Holy Family, so as to become a leaven of [a] new humanity and of a genuine and universal solidarity."

For more information on the year of "Amoris Laetitia Family" or to read the full text of *Amoris Laetitia*, please visit the Vatican website.

St. Peter's Chicken Dinner

St. Peter's Catholic Church in Tilden will be having a Chicken Dinner on Wednesday, April 21, from 4-7 PM or until gone. The price of the meal is \$10. The meal features chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, cabbage salad, and more. This event is drive-thru only. Co-sponsored by Catholic Life Insurance. Please contact Kathy Blum for more information: 715-288-6471.

Mass Intentions & Schedule

Weekday masses are at 9:00 AM Tuesday-Friday.
Wednesday and Friday have limited seating when school is in session.

During Spring Break, Mar. 26-Apr. 5, there will be no students.
There will be an additional Monday Mass offered on Mar. 29 for Holy Week.

Masks & social distancing are required.

Sat.	Mar. 27	4:30 Jim and LaVonne Kelley
Sun	Mar. 28	8:00 Pat Johnson 10:00 People of St. James
Mon.	Mar. 29	Peter Castner—health
Tue.	Mar. 30	Liturgy of the Word w/ Communion
Wed.	Mar. 31	Patricia Grosveld
Thu.-Sat.	Triduum (see page 5 for details)	
Sun	April 4	8:30 World Peace 10:30 People of St. James

New Parishioners/Pastoral Visitations/Prayer Tree/Elizabeth Ministry: Please contact Christine if you would like to join the parish, be visited at home or at the hospital, have a prayer request, or if you or someone you know is expecting and would like to be supported by volunteers.

Sign up for Mass Cancellations

If you have a sign up for mass and cannot make it, PLEASE let Christine know.
Masses are filling up, and no-shows are preventing someone else from being able to come to church.

Sermon on the Amount	March 14, 2021
Sunday Adult Envelopes (145)	\$11,707.00
2020 same week (167)	\$14,790.50
Students	\$2.00
Plate	\$82.00
Total	\$10,791.00

Year to date Adult Env./CPL Income through Feb. 28, 2021:	
Actual (July 1-Feb. 28)	\$436,032.14
Budgeted (July 1-Feb. 28)	\$417,320.00

Long term maintenance & facilities improvement fund and Past*Present*Future Campaign income for Mar. 14 was \$1,350.00 for a total since July 1, 2020 of \$50,191.36.

Parish Staff

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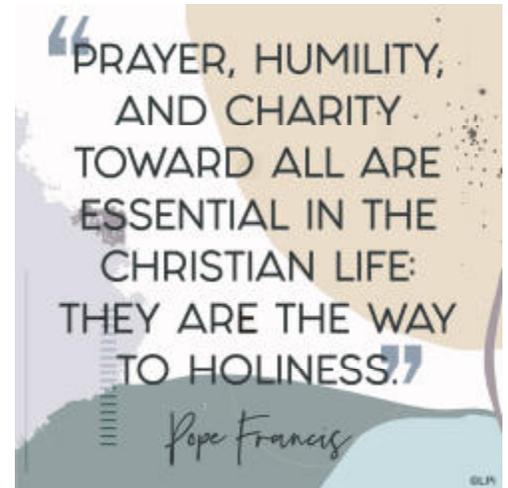
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Bulletin deadlines: end of day Mondays.

Easter Egg Hunt—we are still looking for parishioners to donate plastic Easter eggs, filled or unfilled, or donate candy to use to fill them, for a parish-wide Easter Egg Hunt. (Fr. Tom's comment in his chat wasn't totally accurate...) If you choose to fill them here are some ideas: small candy, a quarter, a prayer, a gift certificate for an ice cream cone...).

You can bring them to the Gathering Space.

The Easter Egg hunt will be for all families on Easter Sunday, in front of the church, after the 10:30 AM outdoor mass.



Social Time!

The first two social zooms went great—it's not too late to join us!

We will be starting to zoom on THURSDAYS at 11 AM. Contact Christine to be invited to the zoom. All are welcome!

We chat about anything we feel like—camping tips, zoom tips, birds, whatever you feel like. It's a no pressure conversation. Join us!!



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Holy Week Liturgies

Holy Week

Mass 9:00 AM Monday-Wednesday (no school)

Triduum:

Holy Thursday Apr. 1 7:00 PM

This year, instead of washing feet, we ask you bring a non-perishable food item, and place by the altar after the homily, as service to the poor.

Good Friday Apr. 2 1:00 PM (inside) and 6 PM (outside)

Easter Vigil Apr. 3 8:00 PM

Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday Apr. 4 8:30 AM (inside)
10:30 AM (outside)

Services will be on YouTube.

Please sign up for the liturgies on our parish website, or by calling Christine at 715-579-1523.

If you've signed up and cannot attend, please let Christine know so she can make room for someone else.

Outdoor masses do NOT need to be signed up for, although for now you can if you like because it gives us an idea of how many to plan for. Thanks!!

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