



Ascension Catholic Church

12700 Lanham-Severn Rd. | Bowie, Maryland 20720 | Ph. (301) 262-2227

MASS SCHEDULE

ALL MASSES ARE IN THE CHURCH

Weekends

Saturday — Vigil 4:00 pm

Sunday — 8:00 am, 10:00 am, & 12:00 pm

Weekdays

Mon -Wed, Fri -Sat — 9:00 am

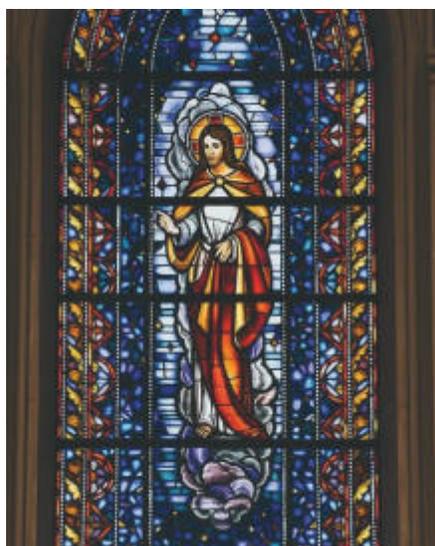
CONFESSION SCHEDULE

ALL CONFESSIONS ARE HEARD IN THE CHURCH

Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri — 8:40-9:00 am

Tuesdays — 5:45-6:45 pm

Saturdays — 8:40-9:00 am; 3:00-3:30 pm



MASS INTENTIONS (MARCH 8-15)

Monday (9:00 am) +Florence Simasek

Tuesday (9:00 am) +Joan Kozak

Wednesday (9:00 am) +Jovita Castro

Friday (9:00 am) +Charley Missar

Saturday (9:00 am) Special Intention

(4:00 pm) +Thomas V. Mike Miller

Sunday (8:00 am) Parishioners

(10:00 am) Ladies Auxiliary

(12:00 pm) Special Intention

3rd Sunday of Lent

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area.

John 2:13b-15a

Dear Parishioners,

—Greetings from Fr. Tim—

Today St. Paul describes two ways faith in Christ can get derailed: "Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles..."

It's important to understand what Paul is and is not saying. On the one hand, Paul is not saying that all miracles or signs are bad. After all, God is a God of "signs and wonders," beginning with Abraham (miraculous Isaac, the Promised Land), through Moses (the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, the manna), all the way up to Jesus and the apostles (Mk 16:20; Acts 5:12). Miracles point to the power and mercy of God and urge us to accept His Word.

So what is Paul criticizing? What Jesus often criticized: the Pharisees' excessive demand for signs, displaying an inability to humbly trust. Many of them saw Jesus' miracles, one after another, but still demanded further miracles to prove that He was who He claimed to be; they effectively wanted Jesus to force them to believe, to "test" him. But this is a problem: there comes a point when enough has been offered -- when no more evidence is necessary -- because faith is knowledge based on trust. It is trust in the testimony of another, who sees what I do not see, but whose character can be judged as reliable, and therefore moves me to assent to the testimony. When I continue to resist after sufficient reason to trust has been offered, the problem is not a lack of evidence, but my own will, which stubbornly refuses to admit what I do not want to hear. And so Scripture speaks of a "hardened" heart, or "evil generation" (Ex 17:7; Jn 3:2; Jn 3:19-20; Jn 6:30; Mt 13:15, etc.); a "rebellious house, who have eyes to see, but see not, who have ears to hear, but hear not" (Ez 12:2).

Well the fact is that many times we still do the same: God gives us plenty of indications of His will, but we still can't seem to see the way forward. The solution is often not to ask for more clarity, but to beg in prayer: "Lord, I repent. Help me to want what you want. Help me to let go of what I want... Lord, that I may see..." As Scripture says: "Seek the Lord in sincerity of heart, because he is found by those who do not put him to the test, and manifests himself to those who do not distrust him" (Wis 1:1-2).

Now unfortunately that is not the only problem Paul describes today; the second is that of the Greeks, who "look for wisdom," and therefore deem the Gospel "foolishness." What is the problem here?

Not "wisdom" in and of itself. After all, God created the world by His wisdom (Jer 10:12; Prov 3:19; Prov 8); urges us to seek wisdom (Sirach 6:18ff); and Paul uses philosophy (Acts 17:28) and urges his readers to seek "whatever is true" (Phil 4:8). Peter likewise urges us to have a "reason" for our hope (1 Pet 3:15). The attainment of wisdom, the principles behind reality, can only accord with God, because God is the wise orderer of all things; truth cannot contradict Truth (see Rom 1:20). And so the Church since the earliest days has sought to "test everything" in culture, science, and philosophy, purifying them of error, but "retaining what is good" (1 Thes 5:21).

Now there is a difference between such wisdom, human and divine, and what Paul calls "the wisdom of the world": the collection of opinions, myths, and superficial arguments (sophistry) which do not proceed from or comprise a sincere search for truth, but trade in half-truths and popular but ultimately baseless theories. Such superficiality obstructs the path to God, because it does not train the mind to see the order of creation with sincerity. In this way some of the "philosophers" that Paul encountered were lovers of this kind of wisdom, "spending their time in nothing but hearing or telling something new" (Acts 17:16-32); no wonder they were not interested in his testimony.

Continued on next page

PRAYERS FOR OUR SICK

Francis Barnes, Mary Ann Boyer, Mary Burton, Laura Chesnick, Rosita Dietrich, Cynthia Graham, Larry Hudson, James Kaufman Jr., Beverlee Lee, Ida Mullikin, Terrence O'Brien, Jr., Earl Perry, Norma Perry, Norma Raffaele, Geralyn Roberson, Mickey Ryan, Barbara Shipp, Doreen Darzinski, and Shirley Mackessy.

Continued from previous page

And so we must be on guard today. We can easily identify several likenesses of such "worldly wisdom": scientific materialism (the belief that science alone can arrive at reality, purported to be only material), relativism (the belief that all truth claims are relative to the one expressing them), Marxism (progress is achieved by violent class struggle), sexual/gender Ideology (my "self" has no inherent tie to my body, which I can freely manipulate or contradict without consequence), etc. These and many other worldviews refuse to admit all the relevant data with honesty, interpreting reality by a limited and biased lens, and thus obstruct the path to God.

Of course, we need to separate the individual person holding such views from the views themselves; the human being, irrespective of worldview, individual sins and vices, or disordered inclinations, always retains inherent dignity as "created in God's image"; we are "wounded," not totally corrupt, and God desires the salvation of all (1 Tim 2:4). But we must not accord the same respect to error itself, which must be rebutted, since ideas have consequences, and bad ideas have dangerous consequences for humanity. How to solve such a problem? Partially, through teaching; "the truth will set you free" (Jn 8:32). We need to speak the truth, and defend our beliefs, not only using Scripture but also good science and reason. But again the root problem is often deeper, the will: at times we want to see what agrees with our desires, more than we want to see the truth that does not -- trying to conform reality to the mind instead of the mind to reality. And therefore winning the person out of love for God is not just a matter of debate, of intellectually sound arguments, but winning over their affect, softening their resistance to the truth, by beauty and by charity: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt 5:44).

All of this, of course, is summed up in the example of Christ: "Christ crucified." Just when we thought Christ "weak" and His teaching "foolish," He was vindicated as the "wisdom and power of God" in the Resurrection: "For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength." And the same goes for the Church, Christ's "Body" on earth (1 Cor 12): after so many centuries of saints, profound thinkers, apparitions, and miracles, many still resist its testimony, thinking it "weak" and "foolish" compared to the "wisdom and power" of the world -- the newest theories that try to show the Gospel "mistaken," the technology that enables limitless freedom, devoid of moral considerations. The ancient temptation to "become like gods" on our own terms (Gen 3:4) and build "a tower with its top in the heavens" (Gen 11:4) remains ever present. But the Church, faithful Bride of Christ, knows better. Teaching His truth and living in charity, what looks like "foolishness and weakness" is only "Christ crucified" -- and the Crucifixion always leads to the Resurrection.

God bless,
Fr. Tim



Congratulations! This week's raffle winner is
John & Lynne Bosworth!

Share Food Menu for the month of March

All specials are of limited quantity!

Value Package \$22: Chicken halves (5lbs), ground beef (1lb), Italian meatballs (1lb), cheese (1lb), spaghetti (1lb)PLUS 8-10lbs of fresh fruits and vegetables!

Mixed Beef Special \$35: 4 Ribeye steaks (8oz ea.), 2 pkgs of sirloin tips (1lb ea.), 2 pkgs of ground beef (1lb ea.)

Ham Special \$22: 7-9lb Spiral Ham

Breakfast Sandwich Box \$15: 12 Jimmy Dean egg/cheese on an English muffin (NO MEAT)

Orders must be placed by Noon, March 12 with pickup at Ascension Catholic Church from 8-9 am, March 27.

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