

BELOVED:
CHRIST SUFFERED
FOR SINS ONCE [...]
THAT HE MIGHT LEAD
YOU TO GOD.

—1 PETER 3:18

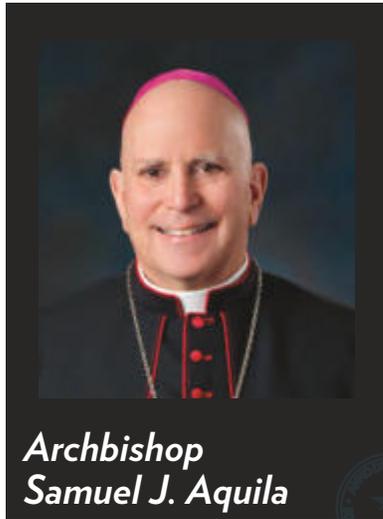


February 21, 2021
The First Sunday of Lent
nool.us | (303) 469-5171



NATIVITY
OF OUR LORD

A LETTER FROM OUR BISHOP



**Archbishop
Samuel J. Aquila**

Samuel J. Aquila



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At the outset of our collective Lenten journey of prayer, penance and almsgiving, I am writing this pastoral note to reflect on where we are in our cultural moment, to share how I believe we as an archdiocese are being called to respond and, finally, to invite you personally to three practices this Lent. Ultimately, it is my wish to propose to you, in a turbulent time, the one answer to every question and longing of the human heart: Jesus Christ, and him crucified. He who is “the way, the truth and the life,” who leads us to and shows us the Father (Jn. 14:6-7).

The Close of Christendom

The COVID-19 pandemic, social and political unrest, and even strife within the Church has left many of us reeling, wondering where to turn for answers and consolation. The bewildering confusion and discouragement many feel is certainly a consequence of all three of these events, but these symptoms also arise from something far deeper. “Ours is not an age of change but a change of age.”¹ In this phrase, Pope Francis summarizes our period in history well. Our Church has always encountered challenges in proclaiming Christ to the culture. Today, however, you and I are now living our Catholic faith in a post-Christian world.

What do I mean by “post-Christian?” The successful evangelization of the early Church during the first apostolic age flowered into a culture, referred to as “Christendom,” that was itself built on Christian principles and ideals. While Christendom was rarely the perfect embodiment of those ideals, it was a cultural period based on them, at least in principle, and striving to live them.

Our Apostolic Moment

A Lenten Pastoral Note to the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Denver

It was marked by an explosion of art, science, universities, hospital systems, countless social services and the formation of peaceful societies based on the rule of law in what had previously been a barbaric and pagan Europe—all for the greater glory of God. A secularizing momentum, which has had its ebbs and flows over the last few hundred years, has now brought this Christendom culture to a close. Archbishop Fulton Sheen put it most bluntly, as long ago as 1974, stating, “We are at the end of Christendom. Not Christianity, not the church. Christendom is the economic, political, and social life as inspired by Christian principles. That is what is ending and, because we live in it from day to day, we do not see the decline.” We can see two clear and devastating effects of secularism in the empty churches of Europe, once a bastion of Christianity, and in the rapid growth in the numbers of “nones” in the United States.

Called to Hope

But more than a collapse in Church attendance, as people forget God, we can observe and experience a general collapse of hope. This clarifies so much of what we see going on today. In the words of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, “A spiritual desert is spreading: an interior emptiness, an unnamed fear, a quiet sense of despair.”² Perhaps more frighteningly, we see a growth in violence, born of deep restlessness and the death of supernatural charity in many souls. Again, to quote the Pope Emeritus (then Cardinal Ratzinger), “The deepest poverty is the inability of joy (which) presupposes and produces the inability to love, produces jealousy, avarice—all defects that devastate the life of individuals and of the world.”³ To lose God is to lose the purpose and meaning of life, and in that barren landscape where can hope and love take root and thrive?

We could find ourselves tempted to wish for smoother sailing, a time that was more supportive of Christian beliefs and practices, but God did not choose you and me for those times. We are living in an apostolic era that calls for joyful witness in the face of opposition. He picked us for this moment for a reason and he wants us to engage with both the unique obstacles and opportunities of our time for the sake of the Gospel. He is calling his Church to go on mission.

Our Apostolic Moment

How do we as an archdiocese respond to this “change of eras?” In this new apostolic age, we will respond as we always have, with the Gospel. Like the early Church, we must become capable of compellingly proclaiming Jesus Christ and the freedom he won for us from the current and eternal damage inflicted by sin.

The way to return to fruitfulness is to encounter Jesus personally, repent and return to him. It is he who shows us what it really means to be fully human; he alone can teach us in these critical days how to find the fullness of life for which we all long.

Jesus is calling us to be bold in fighting trends in the world that are opposed to the Gospel, and to be even bolder in loving people as we invite them to the joy that can only be found in his Church. This is a difficult challenge; doing so will require even greater conversion for every Catholic and institution in the Archdiocese of Denver. Still, I believe this is what God is calling us to and he promises to supply us all we need. By his grace, we will become the forerunners of a new and fruitful missionary age of the Church.

How do we begin? This Lent, I sense that the task before us is to begin by begging the Lord to make us an apostolic people. To that end, as we prepare to celebrate our Lord’s resurrection at Easter, I want to invite you to three important practices that will begin to guide us.

Invitation #1: To Rediscover the Lens of the Gospel

First, I invite you to encounter—or re-encounter—the vision of the Gospel. This story, of a God who, out of love, created and then sent his Son to win his world back when it had fallen far from him, is the “why” that animates everything we do as a Church. The fundamental message of the Gospel firmly establishes us in our identities as beloved daughters and sons of the Father and spurs us on to embrace the complementary calls of holiness and mission.

It is our response to this proclamation which brings vitality to our faith and provides meaning and context for all of life. Grounding ourselves in these timeless and fundamental realities can cut through the noise of our moment, no matter the troubles we face. It is a declaration of Good News to a weary world. (*continued on p. 10*)

DAILY READINGS

DAY	1ST READING	2ND READING	GOSPEL
Sat 2/20	IS 58:9B-14		LK 5:27-32
Sun 2/21	GN 9:8-15	1 PT 3:18-22	MK 1:12-15
Mon 2/22	1 PT 5:1-4		MT 16:13-19
Tues 2/23	IS 55:10-11		MT 6:7-15
Wed 2/24	JON 3:1-10		LK 11:29-32
Thurs 2/25	EST C:12, 14-16, 23-25		MT 7:7-12
Fri 2/26	EZ 18:21-28		MT 5:20-26
Sat 2/27	DT 26:16-19		MT 5:43-48
Sun 2/28	GN 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18	1 PT 3:18-22	MK 9:2-10

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BULLETIN INFO

For all bulletin submissions,
please email us at:

BULLETIN@NOOL.US

PARISH TIMES

Mass Times

Monday - Friday
7:00am | 9:30am

Saturday

9:30am | 4:00pm
5:00pm

Sunday

7:30am | 8:30am
9:30am | 11:00am
12:00pm | 4:00pm | 5:00pm

Confession

Thursday
5:00-6:00pm

Saturday

8:00-9:30am
3:00-4:30pm

Sunday

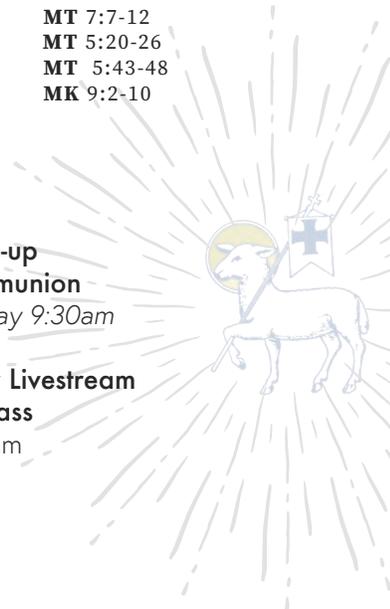
During Mass
when possible

Drive-up

Communion
Sunday 9:30am

Daily Livestream of Mass

9:30am



Sign up at nool.us or at app.flocknote.com/nool

flocknote
Nativity's main communication tool

Visit nool.us for our interactive bulletin, latest news, and more.

NATIVITY
OF OUR LORD

The submission deadline is every Tuesday at noon. Be on the lookout for early holiday submission times.

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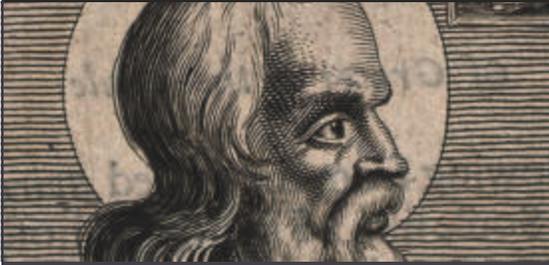
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SAINT OF THE WEEK



ST. POLYCARP, BISHOP AND MARTYR
Tuesday, February 23

ARCHBISHOP'S LENTEN PRAYER

Leader: For the Archdiocese of Denver, that through the fatherly intercession of St. Joseph, patron of the universal Church, the Holy Spirit will stir into flame our local Church; boldly focused on mission and committed to announcing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Together we pray.

All: Come, Holy Spirit. Fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created and you shall renew the face of the Earth.

SACRISTY LAUNDRY

NICKI BATTISTA

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, February 20

9:30 † Hilda Quintero
by The O'Campo Family
4:00 † Ryan Mcneil
by Linda Mcneil
5:00 -

Sunday, February 21

7:30 Special Intention
8:30 Special Intentions
for Kristen Caldwell
by Becky White
9:30 People of the Parish
11:00 Abandoned Souls
by A Friend

(Sunday continued)

12:00 The Holy Souls
in Purgatory
4:00 All of Our Priests
5:00 For Our Country

Monday, February 22

7:00 † Father Luigi
Giussani
9:30 Holly Peterson
by Family

Tuesday, February 23

7:00 The Founding Fathers
by Bette Dean
9:30 Our Homeless
by A Friend

Wednesday, February 24

7:00 Larry and Bev Grau
by Becky White
9:30 The Golay Family

Thursday, February 25

7:00 † Fred Kowalewski
by Michael and Lisa
Talamantes and Family
9:30 The Saenz Family
by The Wilk Family

Friday, February 26

7:30 † Holy Souls in Purgatory
by The Solano Family
9:30 Woodbury Family
by The Pollar Family

Saturday, February 27

9:30 † Maria Marian Cwierz
by The Wegrzyn Family
4:00 In Thanksgiving for
Christopher Knight
by The Knight Family
5:00 † Thomas Nguyen
by Vivian Nguyen

Sunday, February 28

7:30 † Imelda Kluzerz
by Frank Hillenbrand
8:30
9:30 People of the Parish
11:00 † Boudrias Family
by Mary
12:00 -
4:00 -
5:00 -

PARISH CALENDAR

Sunday, February 21

7:30am Mass
8:30am Mass
9:30am Drive-Up
11:00am Mass
12:00pm Mass
4:00pm Mass
5:00pm Mass
6:00pm HS Youth Group

Tuesday, February 23

7:00am Mass
9:30am Livestream Mass
10:00am SVdP
1:00pm Bible Study
4:30pm RE
6:30pm RCIA
6:30pm RE
7:00pm Venturers

Thursday, February 25

7:00am Mass
9:00am ENDOW
9:30am Livestream Mass
10:00am SVdP
5:30pm Stephen Ministry
6:30pm Sacrament Prep
7:00pm Sojourners
7:00pm CL

Saturday, February 27

7:45am Cenacle Prayer Group
8:50am Prolife Rosary
9:00am CL
9:00am Men's Retreat
9:30am Livestream Mass
11:00am Baptisms
4:00pm Mass
5:00pm Mass

Monday, February 22

7:00am Mass
9:30am Livestream Mass
10:00am SVdP
2:00pm Apologetics—Mark
6:30pm SVdP
7:00pm Boulder CL
7:00pm St. Joe's Men's Group

Please see the website, nool.us, for updated parish schedule due to changes in COVID-19 procedures.

Wednesday, February 24

5:30am St. Joe's Men's Group
7:00am Mass
8:00am ENDOW
9:30am Livestream Mass
10:00am SVdP
1:00pm God Bible Study
4:00pm RE
6:30pm CL
7:15pm Scouts
7:30pm Book Club

Friday, February 26

7:00am Mass
7:30am Men of Emmaus
9:00am ENDOW
9:30am Livestream Mass
10:00am SVdP
3:00pm CL
4:00pm Cub Scouts
5:00pm Soup and Stations
6:30pm Scouts

Sign up on Flocknote for up-to-date information delivered directly into your inbox at:
app.flocknote.com/nool

If you're going to the hospital and need a visit from a priest or deacon, please call the front desk at: 303-469-5171

If you have any prayer requests, please contact Joanne Farver at 303-466-8859 or at joannefarver@comcast.net.

Prayers for the sick and for the deceased:

We pray for all who are sick, and for our deceased relatives and friends that they may speedily attain the blessedness of heaven and rejoice in the eternal treasure of God's glory and love.

MONDAY APOLOGETICS

WITH MARK

Beginning
February 22
in Cabrini Hall.



WE TALK.

ABOUT.

HOT TOPICS.

Fridays of Lent Soup & Stations

Friday, February 19

No Soup
5:30pm Stations
7:00pm Mass

Mass is for the anniversary of the death of Luigi Giussani and will be celebrated by Archbishop Samuel Aquila.

Fridays
February 26 - March 26

6:00pm Soup
7:00pm Stations

Sign up for Soup
at nool.us.

Show up, no sign-up
for Mass and Stations!

Sunday Lenten Mass Schedule

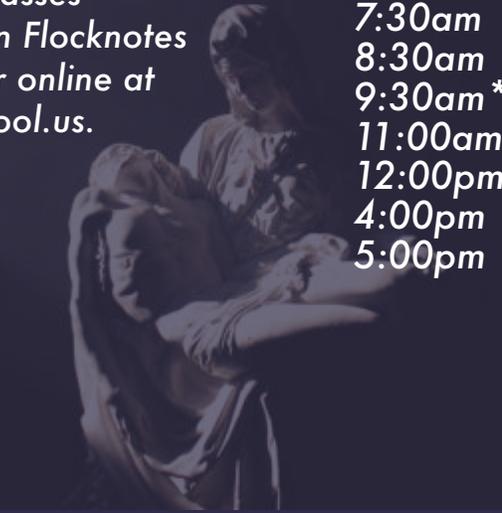
Will continue with the same mass schedule we enjoyed thus far in 2021 and will continue as usual leading up to Palm Sunday.

Sign up for
the Saturday
4:00pm and
Sunday
9:30am

masses
on Flocknotes
or online at
nool.us.

Saturday
9:30
4:00pm *
5:00pm

Sunday
7:30am
8:30am
9:30am *
11:00am
12:00pm
4:00pm
5:00pm



ADULT CONFIRMATION CLASSES

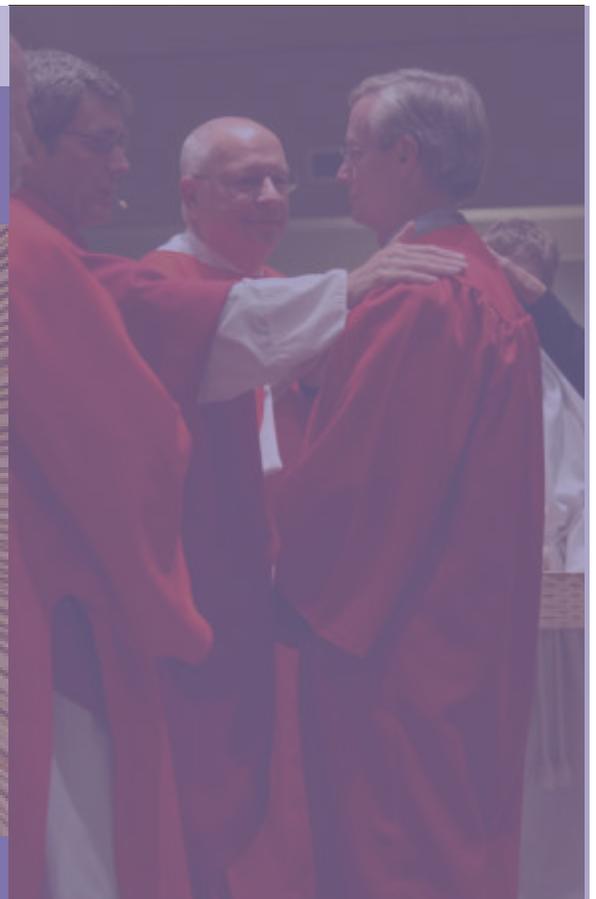
IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO
RECEIVE CONFIRMATION.

Join our Wednesday
class! We will begin
in March
6:00-7:00pm.

Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

<https://www.nool.us/adult-confirmation>

March 10 • April 14 • April 21 • April 28





MEN'S LENTEN RETREAT

A Year with St. Joseph

Saturday, February 27
check-in after 9:30am Mass,
retreat ends at 3:45pm
Cabrin Hall



Cost: \$16/retreatant paid
by February 26 at 3:00pm
Includes lunch, snacks, and bottled water

To register and pay, go online to:
www.nool.us/lenten-retreat
or visit the front desk for paper registration.

For questions email: catholicmensgroup@nool.us

PARISH LIBRARY WORK DAY

Saturday, March 6
9:00am-5:00pm
Parish Library/St. Jerome Room

It's time for another parish library work day! Together we will be organizing, covering, and cataloguing the books in our collection. Pizza, beer, and soda will be provided.

Please RSVP to Jacquie at j.fankell@nool.us if you plan to attend for any or all of the day.

ALTAR CLOTH SEAMSTRESS

We are looking for an experienced seamstress who will help to sew and maintain the altar clothes. This work can be done at home, it does not require a lot of skill in terms of embroidery, just good basic sewing skills and attention to detail. Should be available during the weekday to coordinate with sacristan, Marylou on the work to be done.

Contact Marylou with interest and questions,
m.sivigliano@nool.us

AGES 65+ COVID VACCINATION

Fr. Michael has agreed to collaborate with an epidemiologist from Broomfield Health to collect the information of our parishioners 65+ years of age who would like to receive the Covid Vaccine.

If you are 65+ and interested in the vaccine, please call or email **Ilene DuBey (303-469-5171, ext. 116 | i.dubey@nool.us)** as soon as possible with the following information and any questions you may have regarding this opportunity:

Please provide Ilene DuBey with your,

1. Name
2. Phone Number
3. Birth Year

RESPECT LIFE: 40 DAYS FOR LIFE

Wednesday, February 17 - Sunday, March 28

40 Days for Life begins Wednesday, February 17. A group of us continues to pray on Tuesday mornings at the Boulder abortion clinic. Please go to: 40daysforlife.com/boulder to sign up for a prayer vigil at the clinic.

Sign up to receive our flocknotes for updated information, and contact Eloise or Janet for more information or questions.

Eloise Georgen: 303-469-8156 or eegptg@msn.com
Janet Carpenter 720-939-7192 or janetacarpenter@comcast.net

"Pray that the witness of 40 Days for Life bears abundant fruit, and that we begin again each day to storm the gates of hell until God welcomes us into the gates of heaven."

—Fr. Frank Pavone, 40 Days for Life, Day 41+, March 18, 2008



HELP US WATER THE CHURCH PLANTS

Easter Volunteers: Daily, Daytime Tending to Easter Lilies

Looking for individuals or families who will help water our church flora and fauna throughout the year, but especially during the Christmas and Easter seasons. For Easter of this year, we are looking for daily attention and watering to our lilies, which will adorn the church throughout the easter season; people or families who can come during the daytime each day to help water the lilies.

Contact Marylou with interest and questions,
m.sivigliano@nool.us



The HOPE CORNER: A Mental Health Ministry

By: Becky Kusick, MA, LPC

As the COVID pandemic continues, one of the dilemmas that has emerged is a mental health crisis. The statistics around the world of anxiety and depression have increased from 20% (pre-COVID) to 50% currently resulting in a global mental health crisis. Despite this, I've seen so many examples of people offering encouragement through painting words of hope on rocks and signs, neighbors grouping together when someone is ill, people helping each other find supplies, delivering groceries, offering heartfelt words of sympathy and paying it forward with love and kindness. Many agencies are offering free mental health resources.

This month, Mental Health Partners (MHP) has a new series of virtual support with courses on coping skills, information and hope during COVID.

- February 19**.....2:00pm-3:00pm
A Conversation about Surviving Motherhood in a Pandemic
- February 19**.....1:00pm-2:00pm
Finding Fun with the Family during a safer-at-home winter
- February 24**.....6:00pm-7:30pm
Supporting Children's Mental Health during COVID-19

For free registration, go to:
<https://cutt.ly/MHP-events>

The Hope Corner is a free mental health ministry committed to instilling hope and reducing stigma. Please contact The Hope Corner with any questions or comments. If you or a family member are in need of any referrals, information or community-based resources, contact: Becky Kusick, MA, LPC at 303-907-6499 or hopecornerministry@gmail.com. If you are having a mental health crisis, please call Colorado Crisis Services at 844-493-8255 or text "TALK" to 38255.

YOUNG ADULTS NEW TO DENVER

Virtual Meet-Up: Tuesday, February 23 | 7:00-8:30pm

So, you moved to a new city in the middle of a global pandemic and are looking to build community? We have just the thing! Join Denver Catholic Young Adults for a virtual meetup for anyone new to the Mile High City.

There will be a little healthy trivia competition and casual spotlights on local young adults who will share how they got involved in their new city and tips for you as you settle into life in Denver. Have your drink of choice on hand and be prepared to rock the trivia! All are welcome. If you've been here a while but are still looking for community, or you want to help welcome those new to our city, please join us for the event on Zoom.

For the Zoom link, reach out to Mary McGeehan
mary.mcgeehan@archden.org

FEBRUARY SAINT SERIES

Join the Archdioceses of Chicago and Denver every Saturday in February for an in-depth educational experience for Black History Month. We strive to inspire the Christian faithful through the witness of our Catholic candidates for sainthood. We will celebrate how they triumphed over tragedies and learn how we can do the same.

- February 6** Pierre Toussaint and Elizabeth Lange
- February 13** Henriette Delille and Augustus Tolton
- February 20** Julia Greeley and Thea Bowman
- February 27** Augustus Tolton: Renewal, Restoration, and Reconciliation

Virtual Doors Open: 3:45pm EST
Program Starts: 4:00pm EST

Free Admission: eventbrite.com/e/134671105903



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Outdoor Free Throw Championship
Saturday, February 20, 2021

Nativity of Our Lord School Parking Lot
900 West Midway Blvd.

Boys and Girls Ages 9-14, join the Knights of Columbus in a free-throw competition on Saturday, February 20. Registration begins at 12:30pm, with the combined Council and District Competition starting at 1:00pm!

AGE & START TIME

9	1:00pm	12	2:00pm
10	1:20pm	13	2:20pm
11	1:40pm	14	2:40pm

For more information, please contact:

Paul Fabian
720-323-8456
paul@ctd-materials.com



Listen to the Weekly Homily

Search for "Nativity Homilies"

NOOL.US/HOMILIES

Listen on Spotify

Listen on Apple MUSIC

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Charity is Love

"Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love."
(Corinthians 13:13)

Many faiths, including our own as well as Islam and Buddhism, have traditions which offer aid and gifts to people in need but we have a particular understanding as Christians when we offer prayers, observe fasting, and show charity. For the Christian, giving to those in need is not a duty, but rather, a sincere expression of love and compassion. Our inspiration to give is grounded in God's love and provides a strong foundation for our spiritual lives and faith.

When we offer an act of charity, it is not done out of pity, or offering what we have to spare. Nor do we offer alms or prayers as a public expression to receive accolades. Our intention and motivation is to freely help our neighbor and to follow Jesus as he taught us—how we treat others is how we will be judged. We commit to charity for the common good, so that every person or family's needs are met, not as a handout, but to fulfill Christ's commandment to love one another.

We offer our communities an encounter with God's love by sharing the blessings available to us. In turn, this inspires others to do the same. Whether you give some of your time, donations or financial aid, or volunteer your skills, this Lent you can look for the greater good of those in need as a form of sharing your gifts from God. Love of God and love of neighbor are one and the same. As we enter Lent, let us remember that charity is love.

LOOKING FOR BABYSITTER

Tuesdays 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Babysitter needed for seven-month-old and three-and-a-half-year-old starting ASAP at \$50 per week. Please call Raquel at 307-214-5104 for more information.

VIGEO CONSTRUCTION HIRING

We're Hiring, Join our Team!

Vigeo is looking for experienced craftsmen / crafts-women to join our residential remodeling division. Learn more at vigeoconstruction.com. Send resumes to: recruiting@vigeoconstruction.com



IN THE CLASSROOM

Thank you, Archdiocese of Denver Office of Catholic Schools, for the cookies this week. This sweet treat reminded us of all the fun of Catholic Schools Week this month!



ONE HUNDRED DAYS OF KINDERGARTEN



When the 100th day of kindergarten falls on your teacher's birthday, that's a cause for celebration - counting, snacks, crafts & more!



A LETTER FROM OUR BISHOP

Our Apostolic
Moment

Continued from page 2

To let this story wash over us anew and to re-encounter Jesus Christ, I encourage you this Lent to read the four Gospels. You are also invited to participate in our archdiocesan Lenten initiative to host small groups who together go through the program, *The Search*, from the Augustine Institute and Chris Stefanick, as a way of re-encountering this message.

I am hopeful that parishes will find many opportunities in addition to those above to let this proclamation of the Good News ring out: through preaching, retreats and efforts to announce the Gospel. I invite everyone to let the Gospel shape our perspective of who we are as a Church and what Christ has promised he will accomplish through us.

Invitation #2: To a Movement of Prayer and Fasting

My next invitation to you is to the spiritual battle of an earnest prayer and fasting. Undoubtedly, you will be taking on various mortifications for Lent this year. I ask in your prayer that you add an intention to your list: for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Archdiocese of Denver, that our local Church might be boldly focused on mission and committed to preaching the Gospel. Today, I am inaugurating a wave of intercessory prayer that will wash over northern Colorado so that hearts, minds, parishes, schools and civic institutions might be flung open wide to the workings of God. This will include, but not be limited to:

- A prayer to be read at all Masses from Ash Wednesday through Easter
- A 54-day Rosary novena for renewal, beginning Ash Wednesday and ending Divine Mercy Sunday (April 11)

I ask you to add your own prayer and fasting to this effort. Offer Holy Hours that we may grow humble and docile to the inspirations of the Father, like St. Joseph, in this year set aside in his honor. Fast, so that in our lack, we might become a Church that is hungry for the love of the Father, a deeper encounter with Jesus Christ, especially in the Eucharist, and ready to be filled by the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Invitation #3: To Form Our Consciences

Finally, I invite us all to engage in the formation of our consciences. In the messiness of apostolic times, we must root our minds in the truths of the faith that will keep us from being blown about by the fierce cultural winds coursing through society and even the Church today. Each one of us must take this important duty seriously. We must ask ourselves: which voice do I listen to and is it the voice of Jesus Christ? Do I subordinate my thoughts, words, actions, and, yes, my entire life to Jesus Christ and to the Father? Prudential judgment is needed in responding to each of our spheres of influence, and all these efforts must be anchored to the Gospel.

Today, a myriad of voices surrounds us. We hear from the world, priests and bishops, fellow Catholics, secularists, and yes, even the voice of the Devil. Beware which voices you listen to, which fill your time and your heart. The Devil, whose name in Hebrew, Satan, means accuser, is the one who seeks to sow division, doubt and animosity by constant accusation. We cannot allow our minds and hearts to be filled with bitterness and anger, lest we become a brood of vipers—those who seek to tear down others with anger and poisonous speech. We must test, in the Holy Spirit, every voice with the teachings of Jesus Christ, which we discover in Sacred Scripture and Apostolic Tradition. We must test our own motives when we speak, to ensure our voices align with Christ's.

While we must proclaim the truth and not shy away from conflict, when necessary, there is a distinctly Christian way to approach those who do not agree with us. We must begin with seeking the good of everyone we encounter, approaching them with charity in our hearts.

Invitation #3

Ad hominem attacks against others cannot be a work of the Holy Spirit. We should also ask ourselves what is forming our hearts and minds; is it podcasts, blogs and social media, or the Gospel? As St. Paul reminded the Romans, he reminds us today, “watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naïve,” (Rm. 16:17-18).

I feel a pressing duty to remind you that Jesus Christ calls us, as a Church, to a supernatural unity that is more than what the world offers. Of course, we must always stand for the truth and the dignity of the human person, but we must never let that undermine our witness to God's love. What matters for us is that we are not creating or fueling division ourselves but are patiently enduring the trials that such divisions bring. We must maintain our fidelity to Christ and the deposit of faith we have in the Church, while never losing charity for our neighbor, or even our enemies.

Conclusion

These three simple invitations: to encounter Jesus Christ anew in hearing the core Gospel message, to pray and fast for our archdiocese, and to form your conscience, might not seem like grand spiritual quests, but I assure you: each is essential and foundational to the apostolic conversion to which we are called. I am grateful for your prayerful consideration of each request. Over the coming years, I intend on continuing to periodically release these pastoral notes as a method of sharing my heart and prayer with you as your archbishop.

Since Pope St. John Paul II's visit for the extraordinary occasion of World Youth Day in 1993, our archdiocese has long been known as a bellwether of the New Evangelization in the United States. Yet, what Christ said is true, “Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more” (Lk. 12:48). May we continue to fulfill the vision he set before us on that great occasion. This Lent join me in praying for the fire of the love of Jesus Christ to be enkindled in our hearts. May he remain our first love!

God bless you this Lenten season,

Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila

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