

"I WILL LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR THE SHEEP." —JN 10:15

4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

EXCERPTS FROM THE LECTIONARY FOR MASS ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD. ©LPI

## **Ss. Cosmas & Damian Parish**

616 W. Mahoning St., Punxsutawney, PA 15767

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## Mass Intentions for This Week

### Saturday, April 24

4:30 p.m. Gertie Eggleston --  
C. D. of A., Court St. Rita #353

### Sunday, April 25

8:00 a.m. Parishioners  
11:00 a.m. Mary Fusco --  
C. D. of A., Court St. Rita #353

### Monday, April 26

8:00 a.m. Clark & Mary Kay Brown -- Anita Bowser

### Tuesday, April 27

8:00 a.m. Vera McGeehin -- Paul & Susan Koza

### Wednesday, April 28

8:00 a.m. Karen Davis -- Vilkinofsky Family

### Thursday, April 29

8:00 a.m. Theresa & Guy Astorino --  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Fairman

### Friday, April 30

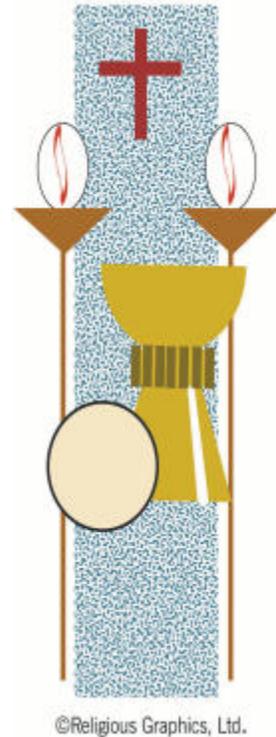
8:00 a.m. Kaye Long Miller -- Dorothy Vilkinofsky

### Saturday, May 1

11:00 a.m. First Communion Mass  
4:30 p.m. Jack Sisk -- Nick & Barb Gresock

### Sunday, May 2

8:00 a.m. Barbara Brink -- Family  
10:00 a.m. Angela Skarbek -- Nick & Marcy Gianvito



### The Week Ahead

#### Wednesday, April 28 -

10:00am - Bible Study - Meeting Room

#### Thursday, April 29 -

6:00 pm - Bible Study - Meeting Room

### **NO 8AM MASS NEXT SATURDAY, MAY 1st**

Because of the celebration of First Communion at an 11am Mass next Saturday, May 1st, there will not be an 8am First Saturday Mass that day.

Anyone who wishes to attend First Saturday Mass is welcome to attend the 11am Mass.

Keep in mind that the front pews are reserved for the children and their families. Masks and social distancing are required.

**T**he Church encourages frequent, even daily, Holy Communion, but if at any time we cannot go to Mass, in or out of this season of the coronavirus, we can still unite ourselves to the Eucharist by making a spiritual Communion. When we make an Act of Spiritual Communion, we express our faith in Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist and ask him to unite himself with us.

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.  
Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



Dear Parishioners:

*Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away – and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."*

Shepherds did not have sheepdogs in Jesus' time. They didn't need them, because sheep would *follow* their shepherd of their own free will. Jesus called himself a shepherd: the People of God are not to be driven by fear but led freely by love. In the early centuries the figure of Jesus as a shepherd was a favorite one, and the earliest representation of him (some art historians claim) shows him as the good shepherd.

Shepherds were humble folk. If Jesus had been born in the inn at Bethlehem rather than in the stable, the shepherds would not have been allowed in to visit him; this was the first signal of his accessibility. St Thomas Aquinas saw the same wisdom in the incarnation itself: the Word became flesh, he said, so that God would be *accessible* to us in Jesus.



The good shepherd, Jesus said, "lays down his life for his sheep." Who were the bad shepherds, then? Not the literal shepherds, the simple men on the hillside looking after their sheep. Not these, but the 'shepherds of the people', the leaders. In the Old Testament the term was applied to kings, royal officers, the elders, all who have any kind of authority. In nearly all Scriptural passages such 'shepherds' were being faulted for neglecting their responsibilities to the 'flock', the people. In Ezekiel 34 for example they are being severely reprimanded for neglecting "the weak, the sick, the wounded, the strayed, the lost," for fattening themselves instead of tending to the needs of the flock. It is in contrast to these and to the religious authorities that Jesus calls himself the good shepherd. On every page of the gospel we find him seeking out these marginalized people: public sinners, lepers, Samaritans, the sick, the tormented.... He stood up to the authorities for their sake, he defied the systems that made them outcasts, he laid down his life rather than turn his back on them and kowtow to the authorities.

The imagery of shepherding has become so much part of the Christian mind that it becomes almost invisible. The words 'pastor' and 'pastoral' come from the Latin for shepherd. A bishop's crozier is really a sort of stylish shepherd's stick. Those ancient shepherds carried a stick not to beat and prod their sheep but to beat off any wild animals that threatened the flock.

In today's reading, mention of the shepherd's death seems very sudden and unexpected, but in its own setting perhaps it was less so. This fidelity of the shepherd to his flock continues even into modern times. W.M. Thomson (+1894), describing his travels in the Holy Land, wrote, "A poor faithful fellow last Spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedouin robbers until he was hacked to pieces with their khanjars, and died among the sheep he was defending."

Yes, your bishop and your pastor are expected to die if necessary in your defense. Your parish priest too. In fact, all Christians are challenged to lay down their lives if necessary for others. The cross of Christ is not an ornament to hang on the wall but a pattern of Christian life.

God Bless!

Msgr. J. Riccardo

SUMMER MASS SCHEDULE

Please remember that our Sunday Mass times will change to the Summer schedule beginning **next Sunday, May 2nd.**

**May, June, July, August**

Saturday Evening - 4:30pm

Sunday Morning -

8:00 & 10:00am



A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

Today's gospel is a job description for Christian parents. For most people, the most influential shepherd in their lives is a parent. Every parent is called to be a "good shepherd" to "freely lay down their life" for their children, to "love" and "know" their children and to "lead" them so "they know your voice."

OUR CEMETERIES

We are beginning to prepare both Calvary and Adrian-Anita Cemeteries for the summer season.

**All artificial flowers must be removed at this time.** Any artificial flowers remaining on the graves will be removed as they are dangerous for mowing and not permitted during the mowing season.



MUSIC AND PRAYERS AT MASS

Since we are not currently able to have our books in the pews, we are providing sheets with the hymns and prayers for your use at Mass.

Please pick one up from the table when you come in and then either take it home with you or throw it away after Mass. Please do not return it to the table. They cannot be reused. Each person will then have access to an unused hymn sheet when they come in to church.

CHILD PROTECTION AND CREATING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

**Child Abuse Prevention Month:**

**Mandated Reporters** in the Diocese of Erie are people who hold positions of trust in our schools, parishes, agencies and institutions and are mandated by Pennsylvania law and the diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children to report suspected abuse of a minor. All employees and volunteers working/serving for the Diocese of Erie, in our parishes, schools or agencies are considered mandated reporters, both legally and morally obligated to report any reasonable suspected child abuse to ChildLine, the local police, or other appropriate agency.

Visit <https://www.eriecd.org/childprotection/> to learn the specific reporting procedures required by the diocese.

GOOD SHEPHERD COLLECTION

This weekend all parishes and missions in the Diocese of Erie are taking a special collection to support the needs of our retired Diocesan priests.

This special collection will assist those dedicated priests who are elderly, seriously ill or incapacitated, and in need of supplementary assistance for expenses such as non-insured medical costs, nursing home and long-term care assistance. As the number of retired priests increases in the upcoming years the Priest Retirement Plan will need to be adequately funded to meet their future needs.

Your generosity will make a difference in the lives of priests who have served faithfully and serve now as a "thank you" for their many years of faithful service. Help provide them the same love and generosity they provided for us for generations.





For the benefit of those who are unable to, or who are concerned about returning to Mass at this time, SSCD is live streaming Mass twice a week. Look for this graphic on our parish website, [sscdchurch.com](http://sscdchurch.com), and click the link on Fridays at 9am and Sundays at 11am to join.

If you have any questions, just call the office.



PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Elizabeth Raymer, sister of Bertha Koza, Michael Liscinsky, and Joseph Liscinsky of our parish, who died this past week.

Please keep her and her family in your prayers. May her soul rest in peace.

SCRIP PROGRAM

Join the Scrip Program and earn rebates on all your regular purchases and gift giving!

Scrip Cash and Carry is available in the School Office. Please use the walk up window next to the principal's office to purchase your Scrip, Monday - Friday, 8:00am - 2:20pm.

You can also use the Scrip "PrestoPay" feature that provides electronic delivery options (i.e. electronic credit to spend online or refill a merchant's card that you already have in your possession). Questions about PrestoPay can be directed to the Scrip program coordinator.

Thank you for supporting SSCD School through your participation in the Scrip Program.



SAINT VINCENT DePAUL WEEKLY FOOD DONATION

Food Donation next Sunday, **May 2 - Dinty Moore Stew**. Thank you for your support!

SAINT VINCENT DePAUL VOLUNTEERS  
Saturday, May 1 - Dan & Karen Burkett

LECTORS AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS



Lectors or Eucharistic Ministers wishing to be placed on the schedule for weekend Masses are asked to call the office, 814-938-6540, ext. 210.

We are currently scheduling on a week-by-week basis and will be happy to add your name to the list of those currently active in these ministries.

At this time, we are scheduling one Lector and just one Eucharistic Minister for each weekend Mass.

SANCTUARY CLEANERS THIS WEEK

SSCD - Bob Henretta, Katie Roberts, Rita Yenzi  
St. Anthony - Susan Walker

**FORMED**

PICK OF THE WEEK  
April 25, 2021

WATCH

INTO THE BREACH

As we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph the Worker this week, we encourage all men to watch into the Breach, a groundbreaking series that seeks to answer what it means to be a Catholic today. Inspired by Bishop Olmsted's apostolic exhortation, into the Breach challenges men to embrace the greatness we are all



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## FIRST EUCHARIST

Next Saturday we will celebrate the reception of First Communion among our third graders. This is a momentous occasion in the life of our youngsters. It speaks of their faith journey within our church and our shared faith.

Our thanks to the First Communion Coordinator, Sue Dahrouge, and their teachers, Patricia Murdock and Douglas Covatch.

We congratulate the following children and join in prayer for them on their journey of faith:

*Liam James Covert*

*Rachel Elizabeth Horner*

*Greyson Martin Kendra*

*Taylor Nicole Logsdon*

*Emma Faith Martino*

*Benjamin Walker Smith*

*Sydney Leann Thompson*

*Isabella Jane Valkosky*

*Bailey Mae Schneider*



## SUMMER MAINTENANCE HELP



Home for the summer? Need a part time job?

We have a position(s) open in our maintenance department for the summer.

If you are interested, please contact our Business Manager, Tony Bofinger, at 814-938-6540, ext 214.

## OFFERTORY CONTRIBUTIONS

**Thank you for your continued support throughout this past year.**

One way for you to easily support our parish is through on-line giving. There is a link for you to access this on our parish website, [sscdchurch.com](http://sscdchurch.com).

If you prefer to mail your offertory envelopes to the office, drop them in the mail slot in the breezeway, or put in the collection basket at church, please continue to do so. Thank you!

## E-MAIL ADDRESSES

If we don't have your email address, or if your address has recently changed, please contact us at [sscdofc@comcast.net](mailto:sscdofc@comcast.net) so we can add you to our address book.

We will never share your e-mail address. Help us to stay in touch with you!



## PRAYER CHAIN

To add a name to the Prayer Chain, call Pat Rougeux, 814-938-4464 or Anna Smoczek, 814-427-2456.

If you are unable to reach either of them, you may call the office weekdays 9am - 4pm.

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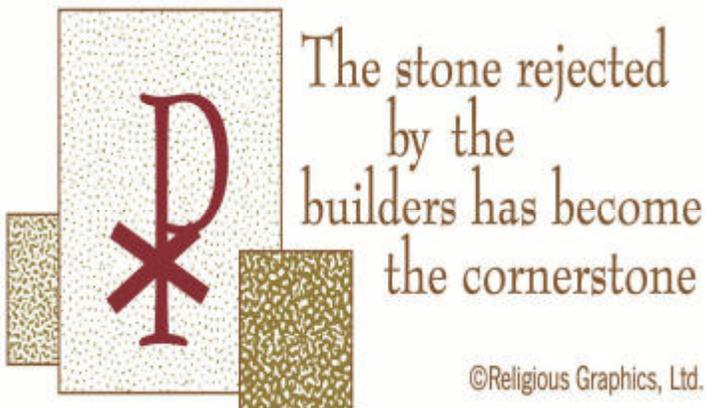
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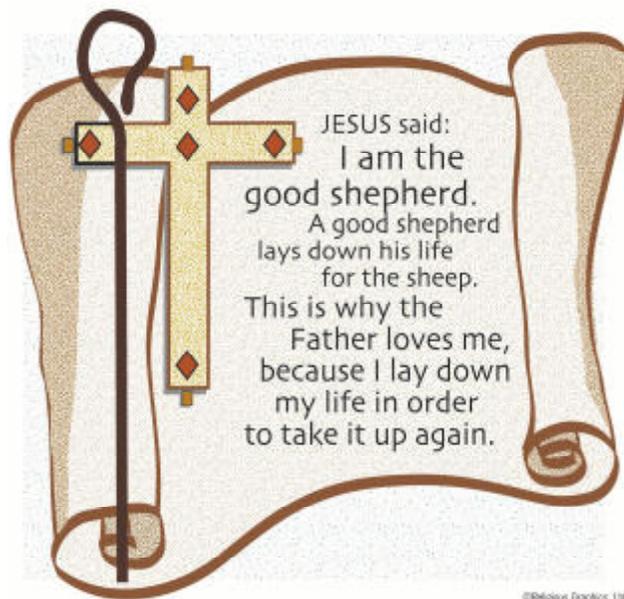
**Prayer in Time of Pandemic**

Lord Jesus, You came to bring salvation to our world. You humbled yourself to accept death on a cross. Be with us as we confront the spread of the coronavirus with courage and hope. Be present to the sick and to those who accompany them in their suffering. Strengthen our medical professionals and caregivers; comfort families who are separated from one another. Protect those who are at risk of the virus in their work.

Grant wisdom to our civic officials and perseverance to scientists. Spare us from the ravages of this illness and console us in our uncertainty and fear.

Unite us in hope, enlighten us in faith, and give us the grace as a Church to love one another as You have loved us. Through the intercession of our Heavenly Mother, we make this prayer as we place our trust in You. Amen.

Imprimatur, April 8, 2020  
The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, J.C.L., Bishop of Erie



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**Observances for the Week of April 25th, 2021**

- Sunday: 4th Sunday of Easter; World Day of Prayer for Vocations
- Wednesday: St. Peter Chanel, Priest and Martyr; St. Louis Grignion de Montfort, Priest
- Thursday: St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin and Doctor of the Church
- Friday: St. Pius V, Pope; Arbor Day
- Saturday: St. Joseph the Worker
- Next Sunday: 5th Sunday of Easter

**WEEKLY OFFERTORY ANALYSIS**  
April 18, 2021

Church Offertory	
Envelopes sent	715
Adult Envelopes Returned	162
Adult	\$5,071.00
Holy Day	\$0.00
Easter	\$40.00
Children	\$3.00
Loose	\$322.00
Monthly	\$407.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,843.00</b>
Weekly Goal	\$8,000.00
Surplus (Deficit)	(\$2,157.00)
Accumulated(+/-) Goal	<b>\$10,837.14</b> <i>Under goal</i>

**Catholic Services Appeal 2021**

2021 Diocesan Assessment \$76,000.00	
<b>Total Parish Goal \$126,000.00</b>	
Pledged Amt:	\$88,380.00
Paid on Pledge:	\$74,794.44
Unpaid Pledges:	\$13,585.56
Unpledged Donations:	\$4,980.00
Collected to Date:	\$79,774.44

**Readings for the Week of April 25, 2021**

- Sunday: Acts 4:8-12/Ps 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29 [22]/1 Jn 3:1-2/Jn 10:11-18
- Monday: Acts 11:1-18/Ps 42:2-3; 43:3, 4 [cf. 3a]/ Jn 10:1-10
- Tuesday: Acts 11:19-26/Ps 87:1b-3, 4-5, 6-7 [117:1a]/ Jn 10:22-30
- Wednesday: Acts 12:24—13:5a/Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6 and 8 [4]/ Jn 12:44-50
- Thursday: Acts 13:13-25/Ps 89:2-3, 21-22, 25 and 27 [2]/Jn 13:16-20
- Friday: Acts 13:26-33/Ps 2:6-7, 8-9, 10-11ab [7bc]/ Jn 14:1-6
- Saturday: Acts 13:44-52/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 [3cd]/Jn 14:7-14
- St. Joseph the Worker: Gn 1:26—2:3 or Col 3:14-15, 17, 23 -24/Ps 90:2, 3-4, 12-13, 14 and 16 [cf. 17b]/ Mt 13:54-58
- Next Sunday: Acts 9:26-31/Ps 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32 [26a]/1 Jn 3:18-24/Jn 15:1-8

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