

St. William Parish Community



Walled Lake, Michigan 48390

February 14, 2021

www.stwilliam.com



If you really are perfectly content with what you see in the world around you, with its culture of violence, its confusion over moral issues, its increasing devaluation of the human person, and its political turmoil, well, you probably don't need Lent... although you might need therapy.

Lent is a time when we are called to do penance and seek a change of heart, both for our own personal failings **and** for those of the world around us. It's a time to tune in more clearly to God and His plan for our lives. It's a time to pull back, slow down, evaluate, reflect, and then get re-energized for the task ahead!

What task ahead? Glad you asked! We are called to **UNLEASH THE GOSPEL!** The Archbishop has given us our marching orders in his pastoral letter of the same name. Once again this Lent, we have an opportunity to focus our attention on our **MISSION**. It's easy, in the rush and anxiety of day-to-day activity, *to lose sight* of what we're trying to accomplish. (In other words, *lose our Vision*.) As the old saying goes, "When you're up to your armpits in alligators, it's hard to remember your original intention was to drain the swamp." **Our MISSION is to become great disciples ourselves, and then make other disciples.** We have a formal Mission Statement that expresses this. Can you recite it from memory? If not, practice! (Hint: it's on the front page of our bulletin.)

Personally, I am really looking forward to Lent this year! I always find it to be a time of renewal for me. **Lent begins this Wednesday.** Start praying now that you, your family, and our parish, will have a beautiful Lent this year.

It is a "penitential" season (that's why there is little in the way of floral decor around the sanctuary during Lent, since the whole Church is in a more reflective, introspective mood), but that does not mean that it has to be a *depressing* time; quite the opposite. I encourage you to make whatever decisions are necessary to ensure that **THIS** Lent will be truly blessed for you: a time of prayer, a time of penance, a time of reconciliation, a time of growth,



Ash Wednesday Schedule

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Mass:
8:00 AM and 7:30 PM

Prayer Service
12:00 PM

a time that leads to *joy!*

There is always joy when we find ourselves growing closer to the Lord. How close we are to the Lord is a measure of how "holy" we are. It's been said that there is little difference between true "wholeness", and "holiness". (This is another way of saying that the Lord actually wants you to be *happy!*)

So that our parish might grow in holiness, **I especially encourage your family to be absolutely faithful in "keeping HOLY the Lord's Day"**. As we are beginning to make progress is overcoming the COVID pandemic, the general dispensation from required Mass attendance expires on March 13—but regardless of whether you fit in one of the categories of people who still may be excused, *everyone* still needs to make Sunday a special day of prayer. If that part of your week needs to be upgraded, start making the changes now; you don't have to wait until Lent!

I'm glad the Archbishop is calling people back to Mass, even in stages, because Mass is central to what we are all about as Catholics—just as, within families, having meals together bonds and builds the family. Under Church Law, attendance each Sunday is still considered a serious matter. But even more than whether people are fulfilling an obligation, I don't want anyone to needlessly miss out of the deeply rooted joy that can come from the regular celebration of Eucharist. "Virtual" Mass, while great for the homebound—helping them to pray and stay connected with the community—is still no substitute for the real thing: worshipping as a

(Continued on page 3)

Parish Mission: *"To live the Good News so joyfully, that we can't help but proclaim it!"*

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday 4:30 pm,
Sunday *10:00 am (*also Live-streamed)
and Sunday 12:30 pm
Tues., Wed. & Thur., 8:00 am

Office Hours

Monday through Thursday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Many issues can be taken care of with a phone call, 248-624-1421.

Registration

For many reasons it is important to be formally registered as a parishioner. Contact the rectory for friendly help. Ext. 341

Baptism

To begin the preparation process for Baptism please call Deacon Bob Dreyer at 624-1421, ext. 345. Baptisms are normally scheduled the first and third Sundays of the month.

Marriage

To celebrate a valid marriage Catholics must have the help of a priest or deacon. Call at least six months in advance.

Funeral

Please contact the parish office to make arrangements.

Ministry To The Sick

We are happy to visit the sick and provide anointing. Please contact the Parish Office at 624-1421.

RECTORY

Email: Rectory1@stwilliam.com
531 Common Street (248) 624-1421

Pastor	Rev. Michael G. Savickas	Ext. 346
Deacons	Rev. Mr. Bob Dreyer Rev. Mr. John Liddle	Ext. 345
Baptisms	Dcn. Bob Dreyer	Ext. 345
Business Office		Ext. 341
Business Manager	Mrs. Deborah Diviny	Ext. 349
Receptionist	Rose Campeau	Ext. 341
Administrative Asst.	Lisa Geoffrey	Ext. 342
Christian Service:	Mrs. Karen Sommers 248-624-8870	Ext. 344
Maintenance: Supervisor	(248) 669-5522 Mr. Dave Colby	Ext. 312

EDUCATION CENTER

135 O'Flaherty Street

Office of Faith Formation	(248) 624-1371
Dir. of Rel. Ed.	Dcn. Michael McCrandall Ext. 307
Dir. Of Initiation	Mrs. Nancy Thomas Ext. 306
Youth Ministry	Mrs. Karen Trojniak Ext. 308
Music Ministry Dir.	Mr. Bill Richart Ext. 310
Administrative Asst.	Mrs. Lisa Geoffrey Ext. 342
School Office	(248) 669-4440
Principal	Mrs. Betsy Gabrish Ext. 303
Secretary	Ext. 302
CYO Sports	
Athletic Director	ad@saintwilliam.net

Since Sunday Masses have been reduced to the public, contributions have greatly declined.

If you are in a position to help, automatic giving can be easily arranged online. Go to Faithdirect.net, or follow the link from our website, www.stwilliam.com.



Offeritory Report

(The fiscal year begins July 1)

	Collected	Budgeted*	Over/(Under)
As of Dec., 2020	*\$413,537	\$499,998	(\$86,461)

*This does NOT represent *needed* income, but only the amount we expected would actually come in.

Note: For clarity and accuracy, this report now shows reconciled month-end balances.

The "One-Hour Challenge!"

To have a *happy, peaceful life*, it is important that we have our lives in order, with our grateful response to God for his gifts being our top priority. That is how a disciple responds in the areas of *prayer, family, finance, and service*.

If you need help to put balance in your life, take the "one-hour challenge": Each week, spend at least...

- One hour in prayer and worship.
- One hour, special, focused on your family or other important relationship.
- One hour's wage (if you have a job) for the Lord. No job? Then give what seems right for you.
- One hour in service. (Helping another, or working for some cause.)

It's important to be *specific* in what steps to take in order to ensure that each "hour" actually happens!

May God bless you!

(Continued from page 1)

community, and sharing Holy Communion.

If you are looking for some further suggestions to improve your Lent this year, you might look through the “commitment card” that is available in the Tower Entrances. You can use it to decide about your Lenten sacrifices, whether as individuals or as families. We’ve made these cards available for the last couple of years, and they are for your personal reflection and commitment, and will not be turned in.

Remember that Ash Wednesday is a day of FAST and ABSTINENCE. The specifics of the law are detailed in this bulletin (pg. 5)—but a word of caution here: these laws are designed to describe the *minimum* we should do. They are not designed to tell us the *maximum*. Sometimes taking on a little more than is minimally required can be a big benefit to our spiritual life. For example, try *fasting* every Friday of Lent instead of just abstaining from meat—and younger children can join the rest of the family in abstaining from meat on Fridays.

Note to all, regarding “Abstinence”: The law applies to ALL Catholics age 14 and older, and applies on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays of Lent. **Senior citizens are not exempt!** I’ve heard some confusion on that point, probably because adults 60 and older are not obliged to *fast* on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Again, the law stipulates the *minimum*. Personally, even though I’m 73, I plan on fasting.

Children are certainly welcome to join the adults for Parish prayer opportunities such as the public recitation of the Stations of the Cross on Fridays at 7PM. Stations are followed by Night Prayer, The exception to this schedule is on Friday, March 5th, when our Parish Director of Music, Bill Richart, will once again present a special experience of the Stations. That particular event, also at 7 PM, lasts a little over an hour-and-a half, will give you great insight into this devotion, and it got rave reviews last year. Likely, we will also livestream that event.

Because it has been so popular, we will be celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours (Morning Prayer) on Mondays and Fridays of Lent. Morning Prayer will be at 8 o’clock, takes about 20 minutes, and Holy Communion will be distributed. Morning MASS is on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 8 AM.

Again this year, through the generosity of our Dads’ Club and the Knights of Columbus, there are printed aids available to help you in your Lenten journey. Copies of “The Little Black Book” and the Lenten edition of “The Word Among Us” are available in the Tower Entrances, while they last. (The *Spanish* edition of “The Little Black Book” has a glossier cover.)

I’m still trying to work out extra opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in these unusual times. Stay

tuned. Or better yet, make sure that the Parish has your email address (which we always treat confidentially) so that I can advise you as things come up.

Finally, remember especially in your Lenten prayers the candidates and catechumens who are in their final stages of preparation for being received fully into the Church at the Easter Vigil. (By the way, if you know of any persons who need to inquire about joining—or returning to—the Church, don’t wait to invite them. *Anytime* is good!)

In Jesus,
Fr. Michael

P.S. What about ashes on Ash Wednesday? We will be having Mass at 8 AM and 7:30 PM, as well as a special service at noon, but due to the impracticalities of distributing ashes in an hygienic manner that meets the criteria established by the Archdiocese, we won’t be imposing ashes individually on the forehead (or sprinkling ashes over the head, which is another ancient symbol of grieving). BUT, during the Masses and the Noon Service, we will be distributing a *reminder* of our need to repent. It will be a small sticker that you can either wear, or put somewhere you will see it frequently during this holy season.

Pastoral Care Regarding the Vatican's Note on Baptism



In August of 2020, the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a response to questions regarding the use of the words, “We baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” instead of the proper form of “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. The Vatican ruled that the form “We baptize” does not convey the Sacrament of baptism.

In the Archdiocese of Detroit, we are aware that between 1986 – 1999, potentially invalid baptisms occurred at St. Anastasia Parish in Troy, conducted by Deacon Mark Springer using the improper form. We are in the process of contacting those individuals who may be affected and we are asking for your help.

If you or someone you know was baptized at St. Anastasia Parish during this time period or you have any questions or concerns about the validity of your sacrament(s), we invite you to visit the website aod.org/sacramentsupdate for more information and to submit questions or concerns using the online form.



St. Vincent de Paul Society
Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time:

In the Gospel today Jesus moved with pity touched the leper and healed him. Let us pray today for the grace to be generous with our gifts to help those who are suffering.

By your gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul you indeed put your faith into action as you bring healing to the poor, hungry and weeping.



Right to Life — Lifespan
Happy Valentine's Day

A day set aside to share love and good wishes with family and friends. While exchanging greetings take a moment to give thanks for the precious gift of life. As we say in our prolife talks and publications...."Love Life!"

USCCB *Word of Life*

"Married love differs from any other love in the world. By its nature, the love of husband and wife is so complete, so ordered to a lifetime of communion with God and each other, that it is open to creating a new human being they will love and care for together."

USCCB, *Married Love and the Gift of Life*



As husband and wife, may we remember to have and to hold . . . for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until death do us part.

-Order of Celebrating Matrimony, 2nd edition

ST. WILLIAM CATHOLIC SCHOOL

A Community of Faith, Family, and Learning



Open House for Preschool - 8th grade!

- **February 27, 2021 - OPEN HOUSE** - 10am - 12pm - Activity Center - Small group - based on Covid mandates - sign up required - 2 sessions. Must wear masks.
- **March 20, 2021 - OPEN HOUSE** - 10am - 12pm - Activity Center - Small group - based on Covid mandates - sign up required - 2 sessions. Must wear masks.

*Check our website for updates and sign up information at:
stwilliam-school.com/registration-tuition/

135 O'Flaherty, Walled Lake, MI

(248) 669-4440

The Unfailing Goodness of God

I have always wondered why Jesus told the cleansed leper not to publicize how he had been healed by the Son of God. It's not that I can't understand why Jesus would want to keep the matter quiet — after all, he knew that as soon as people heard, he would be mobbed with requests for healings, and his movements restricted.

What gets me is the fact that Jesus simply must have realized the leper would not listen to him. Why give someone a command you know they will ignore? It's a complicated question, and when I reflect on it, I can't help but connect it to another equally complicated question: why does God, all-good and all-knowing, allow bad things to happen?

Yes, God is all-good and all-knowing. So when He gives us free will, He knows what we will do with it. However, He is also all-powerful. He can and will bring good from any situation, any tragedy, or even any instance where someone ignores Him.

Was it a sin for this leper to do other than what Jesus had said? That's a heavy question for a Sunday morning! But it's plain to see that, even though this man ignored Jesus' command, God still used his actions. How many were brought to Christ because of the news spread by this leper!

As someone trying to live out a stewardship way of life, what is God requesting of you right now?

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

Prayer Opportunities for Lent

Liturgy of the Hours—Morning Prayer
with communion service
Mondays & Fridays of Lent, 8:00 am

Friday Stations of the Cross
7:00 pm

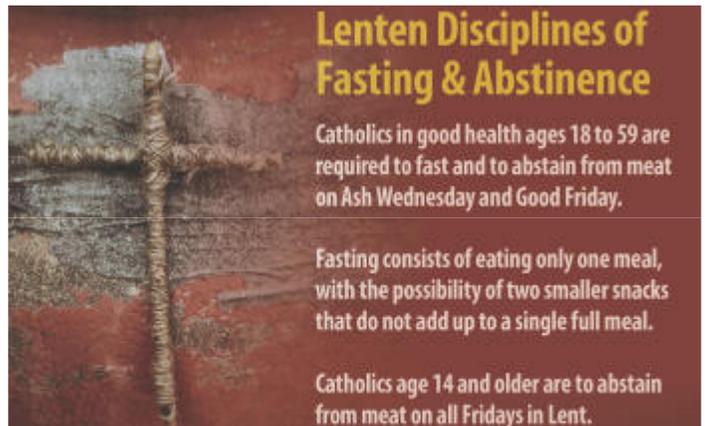
Special Presentation by Bill Richart
Stations of the Cross
Friday, March 5th, 7:00 pm
will also be live streamed from our website,
www.StWilliam.com

Augustine Institute Media — TITLES FOR LENT!

Stop by the Augustine Institute Media kiosk in the East Tower and check out the latest CD's and Books. There are numerous Lenten CD titles for only \$3.00 each. We also have 2 of the books Father Michael spoke about in a recent Bulletin article available for \$5.00 each, a very good price! Why not take advantage of these offerings and share with your families and friends? Please remember that this is a self-funding program so please deposit monies in the box if you take a book or CD.

February

Tu 16	Rosary, 6:30 PM followed by Legion of Mary Meeting
Wed 17	Ash Wednesday, Mass at 8 am & 7:30 pm Service at 12 noon.
Th 18	AA Meeting, 7:30 PM Lower Zepf Hall
Fr 19	Dads' Club Fish Fry, 4-8 pm Drive-Up Service, https://saintwilliam.net
Tu 73	Eucharistic Exposition & Benediction 7pm with Rosary
Th 25	AA Meeting, 7:30 PM Lower Zepf Hall



WHY DO WE DO THAT? -

Question: In today's digital world, do we really need to be face-to-face with a priest to confess our sins? Would Facetime or Zoom ever be allowed?

Answer: The question of whether or not Catholics can celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation virtually (via social media, by phone, or in some other way) is a question that has actually been around for several years. The recent COVID-19 pandemic brought the question back in a new way, especially as many parishes were forced to introduce a sort of "social distanced" confession, with the sacrament being celebrated outdoors.

In reflecting on this question, however, there are a couple points that we want to keep in mind. First, as the Code of Canon Law observes in different places, the faithful have a right to the sacraments of the Church and the Church's ministers have a responsibility to make them accessible. At the same time, however, we always have to be sure that we respect the nature of the sacraments themselves.

Although modern forms of technology and communication can help us in our work of evangelization catechesis, the Pontifical Council for Social Communication has reminded us that, "Virtual reality is no substitute for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the sacramental reality of the other sacraments, and shared worship in a flesh and blood human community. There are no sacraments on the internet" (The Church and the Internet, no. 9).

Although our encounters with others on the internet and via social media can be considered "real" in one sense, in the sacraments we encounter Christ in a personal and ecclesial way. It is never just a private experience but is always grounded in the life of the Church and this means that it must truly be personal, including the contact between the confessor and the penitent. While the convenience or ease of online celebrations might be appealing for many reasons, at heart, we always want to keep in mind the fullness of the Church's tradition and the meaning of the sacraments.

Marriage Coaching – Help for Your Marriage

Are you struggling in your marriage or in need of a marriage refresher and not sure where to turn for help?



The Marriage Support Office of the Archdiocese of Detroit is pleased to offer the Marriage Coaching program – a couple-to-couple mentoring opportunity designed to assist couples live out God's plan for their marriage.

When differences begin dividing, hurt is hardening the heart, "growing pains" are becoming "regular pains", and the passion and affection is lacking, then your marriage needs help. Like our vehicles that need preventative care, tune-ups or repairs to prevent major damage, so do our marriages.

Trained Coaching Couples will give the support and practical tools needed to help couples restore and realize the fullness they desire for their Catholic marriage. The Marriage Coaching program consists of seven main coaching sessions that are strictly confidential and provided at no cost.

To learn more and get started with the help you need for your marriage contact: 313-237-4680 | www.aod.org/marriagecoaching | familyministry@aod.org. All inquiries are strictly confidential.

Whether you are wanting a marriage tune-up, feeling stalled, or experiencing a downward spiral, you need not settle for anything less than the fullness that God intends for your marriage relationship.

No need to delay, there is help for your marriage ...contact us today!

Sponsored by the Archdiocese of Detroit, Office for Marriage Support



Intercessory Prayers

Intercessory prayer boxes have been placed in the tower entrances. Our Intercessory Prayer Teams will lift your intentions up in prayer for two weeks. You may also email your prayer requests by clicking the link on our website, www.StWilliam.com. All prayer requests are kept confidential.

A Family Perspective

by Bud Ozar

Family life is about decisions. The leper in today's gospel knew this when he said to Jesus. "If you will, you can make me clean." Jesus knew this when he said, "I do will it." Love is not an emotion. It is a decision to be with and for another person in "good times and bad," even when we don't feel like it.

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OUR MISSION

“We exist to provide a school environment in which Christ is encountered and Discipleship is fostered through the teaching and practice of Catholic Tradition, values and doctrine, while challenging each student to academic excellence.”



1st and 2nd graders enjoyed flashlight reading on Pajama Day during Catholic Schools Week!

upcoming events

February

- 15 Winter Break
- 16 Winter Break
- 17 Ash Wed. Mass 8am

For more information visit
www.stwilliam-school.com/advancement-events/



St. William School Fundraising Committee presents:

AROUND THE WORLD *in 80 Minutes*

TICKET PRICES

COMFORT PLUS \$15 - includes access to the silent auction and bidding

BUSINESS CLASS \$35 - full silent auction access and single access pass to trivia night

FIRST CLASS \$85 - includes all access above as well as a choice between two drink/snack options
<https://cbo.io/tickets/StWCS/tix>

TICKETS on sale NOW!

MARCH 13 2021

Prices Increase After March 1, 2021!!!!

PRIZES will be awarded to the winning trivia team! Auction items will be open for bidding for an entire week before wrapping up the final evening! Compete with friends! Visit our event page for more event details and to secure your spot!!!
www.stwilliam-school.com/advancement-events/

SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL

Kroger Community Rewards
Go to www.krogercommunityrewards.com
Choose St. William School
Our School ID is NS244

Box Tops for Education
Clip Board
NEW! Earn Box Tops via
Phone App
www.boxtops4education.com

Amazon Smile
Start each shopping session at
<http://smile.amazon.com>
Select St. William School as charity
We will receive 0.5% of all eligible purchases

Mass Intentions:

Tuesday, Feb. 16

8:00 am

Members of St. William Parish (L&D)

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17

8:00 am

Gloria Raddant (D) Rose Campeau; **William & Olivia Soares (SI)** family

7:30 pm

Chris Moersch (D) Phillips family; **Phyllis Guadagni (D)** family; **Anthony Troskey (D)** family; **William Keenan (D)** family

Thursday, Feb. 18

8:00 am

Members of St. William Parish (L&D)

Saturday, Feb. 20

4:30 pm

Andrea Rostelli (D) family; **Peggy Junglas (D)** family; **Doris Camilleri (D)** family; **Emily West (SI)** Linda Anderson

Sunday, Feb. 21

10:00 am

Members of St. William Parish (L&D)

12:30 pm

Pham, Ngoc & Hoang families (D); **Mary Lukasik (D)** family; **Nissan & Saleena Shamoun (D)** family; **Judith Woznicki (D)** Roger

Readings for the week

Sunday: Lv 13:1-2, 44-46/Ps 32:1-2, 5, 11 [7]/1 Cor 10:31—11:1/Mk 1:40-45

Monday: Gn 4:1-15, 25/Ps 50:1 and 8, 16bc-17, 20-21 [14a]/Mk 8:11-13

Tuesday: Gn 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10/Ps 29:1a and 2, 3ac-4, 3b and 9c-10 [11b]/Mk 8:14-21

Wednesday: Jl 2:12-18/Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14 and 17 [cf. 3a]/2 Cor 5:20—6:2/Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday: Dt 30:15-20/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6 [Ps 40:5a]/Lk 9:22-25

Friday: Is 58:1-9a/Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 18-19 [19b]/Mt 9:14-15

Saturday: Is 58:9b-14/Ps 86:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 [11ab]/Lk 5:27-32

Next Sunday: Gn 9:8-15/Ps 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 [cf. 10]/1 Pt 3:18-22/Mk 1:12-15

Pray for the Sick of Our Parish

All-powerful and ever-lasting God, your Son accepted our sufferings to teach us the virtue of patience in human illness. Hear the prayers we offer for our sick brothers and sisters. May all who suffer pain, illness, or disease realize that they have been chosen to be saints and know that they are joined to Christ in his suffering for the salvation of the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| ♦ Andrew Hailo | ♦ Michael Martin, Jr. |
| ♦ Betty Jo Weaver | ♦ Nancy Elibri |
| ♦ Bonny Mesaros | ♦ Norma Kirk |
| ♦ Casey Michael | ♦ Pam Flanigan |
| ♦ Colleen Wolf | ♦ Sharon Ryan |
| ♦ Dan Lessard | ♦ Trevor Monfette |
| ♦ Dennis Ryan | |
| ♦ Ellen Dawson | |
| ♦ Georgia Slavin | Residents of: |
| ♦ Helen Anderson | ♦ Bloomfield Villa |
| ♦ Jack Moores | ♦ Brookdale |
| ♦ Jennifer Alexander | ♦ First & Main |
| ♦ John Benedict | ♦ Henry Ford |
| ♦ John Shubsda | ♦ Maple Manor |
| ♦ Joseph Schuld | ♦ Novi Lakes |
| ♦ Kelly Benedict | ♦ Serenity |
| ♦ Mack Barnes | ♦ Sunrise Senior Ctr. |
| ♦ Mary Kay Dreyer | ♦ Waltonwood |



*Happy are those who have died in the Lord;
let them rest from their labors for their good
deeds go with them—Rev. 14:13*

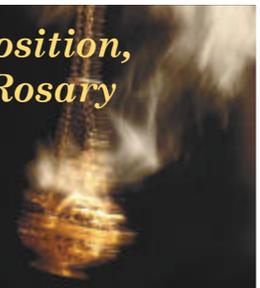
Raymond Winters

***Eucharistic Exposition,
Benediction & Rosary***

Tuesday

February 23rd

7:00 pm



Live the Liturgy

Everybody has a place at the table, and nobody deserves to feel inferior, unworthy, unwanted, or marginalized. It is not part of God's vision. Jesus came to heal, make things whole, set things right, and restore relationships. No one is to feel unwelcome or alienated from the community. Whether we like it or not, this message is at the core of the Gospel. It makes a lot of sense when you think about it. Perhaps this is why people kept coming from everywhere to listen to Jesus speak and to be in his presence. He made perfect sense. Most of us have no issue buying into this vision. We run into trouble, however, when we fall into the trap of privilege and power. We diverge from God's vision when the powerful begin to control who is entitled to wholeness and inclusion, and greed becomes a driving force. Prejudice and entitlement have no place in the kingdom of God, and even the most needy and hurting among us are worthy of the compassion Jesus desires to offer. There are no easy solutions to the world's dilemmas. But one thing is for certain, no one can be singled out, excluded or mistreated. Everyone matters.

©LPi



Pray the Rosary

Our Legion of Mary members invite you to join them Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm to pray the Rosary.

All are welcome to stay after and attend their brief meeting.

Gospel Meditation

The Church, as a voice of the Gospel, proclaims the sacredness of all human life. Everyone created by God is fashioned in God's image and has Divine DNA at the center of their soul. God never leaves what God creates but always remains intimately bound to what he has given form. Everyone has a place and because they have received the gift of Divine Blessing, nobody deserves to feel inferior, unworthy, unwanted, unclean or marginalized. Even the most broken of souls has a place. We, the Body of Christ, have the privilege and responsibility to give voice to the voiceless. The cries of the little one in his or her mother's womb are just as sacred as the cries of one who is homeless and hungry. The migrant deserves our attention as much as the forgotten elderly and even the prisoner, with a heart hardened by anger and resentment, deserves respect and dignity.

The Gospel of Life is often hard to swallow, and we would rather keep those we consider unclean, different or unfixable in a place by themselves. It is hard to see them with us, but they deserve to be. There is far too much violence in this world and the result of that violence is the assault on human life. Many are forced to leave the place they call home in search of safer ground, finding few if any along the way who will help them. How different today's Gospel story would be if Jesus gave in to what was politically correct at that



time. The leper would have been turned away and a soul, already beaten down by disease and fear, would have experienced an even deeper wound. Jesus wouldn't have captured much attention from anyone, nor would he have mirrored the Father's compassion and love.

Where do we stand with all of this? Do we at least understand that God's vision is often in conflict with the vision put forth in our world and even the one we advance ourselves? There is no doubt that it is incredibly challenging to find a place for everyone at the table. This challenge is compounded when the systems of operation and structure that are so ingrained in us affirm power and privilege rather than inclusivity and justice. Everything really goes askew when the powerful begin to control who is entitled to wholeness and inclusion, and greed becomes a driving force. Prejudice and entitlement raise their ugly heads and we find ourselves with quite a mess. It's time to admit that things have been a mess for a very long time. The mess needs to be healed, not by erasing it but by allowing God to touch it and make it whole. We need to bring God back to the center of life where God belongs. There are no easy solutions to the world's dilemmas. But, knowing that wholeness, healing, and dignity are worthy pursuits, we can more confidently labor to achieve God's vision.

©LPi

Gospel

It is not fun to be sick. You miss your friends at school. You can't go outside to play. On top of being bored and lonely, you don't feel well at all. The man with leprosy in today's Gospel was sick a long, long time. He was really bored, lonely, and feeling awful. There was no medicine for leprosy. Jesus was the only one who could help him.

Prayer

God, you have the power to heal. Help me to trust you, even when I'm sick.



LEPROSY
JESUS
POWER

WELL
WARNED
SHOW

GIFT
HEALED
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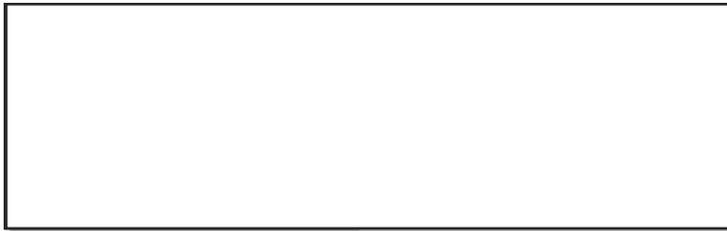
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