

PRAYER CORNER

Almighty God, as we ask your help
for our brothers and sisters who are ill,
we ask you to help us to be healing people in our time and place.
May your love touch others through us,
and may I help all people to live in peace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Frances of Assisi

JESUS SPEAKS TO US

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

John 3:16-18

March 7th Collection

Regular:	\$4,615.39
Parish Maintenance:	\$333.80
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Thank you so much
for your generosity and support



OUR MOTHER OF MERCY

Historically African-American Catholic Church—all are welcome!

March 14, 2021



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Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT—MARCH 14TH

The **Gospel** is from St. John 3:14-21. This man Nicodemus had a half-open mind as regards Jesus. He was moved by his teaching and miracles. He defended him when his companions were out to have Jesus arrested. He helped to have him properly buried when his enemies had him put to death. There is no mention of him in the first Christian community of Jerusalem. What held him back, what kept him from giving himself fully to Jesus who spoke so kindly and told him so clearly that he himself was indeed a teacher who had come from God, that he had been offered by God as the sacrificial victim who would save the world? All Nicodemus had to do was to accept his word, "believe in him" and be baptized and he too would have eternal life.

Why did he not do this? The answer is given in the beginning of his story "He came to Jesus by night." He was one of the leading Pharisees and evidently was afraid of what they would think of him had they seen him associating with Jesus. How much more so did he dread what their reactions would be had he become a follower of him whom they called "this impostor." Nicodemus had only half of his mind open to the truth, the other half was closed and barred by his fear of what his own class would think of him. He risked his own future happiness in order not to lose the present respect of his sinful associates.

What a foolish man we would all say! Yet, are not many of us often like Nicodemus, when it comes to living up to our following of Christ? There are Catholic men who would like to, and should, go much more often to Holy

Communion but are afraid of what their fellow-parishioners, who receive but rarely, would think of them. There are many, far too many, Christians who will not defend or stand up for their religion when it is insulted and attacked in their place of work or in a saloon. There are Christians who stand idly by, and give at least tacit approval, when grave injustices are being carried out by individuals or by local or national groups. These and many more like them are Christian types of Nicodemus

Nicodemus probably thought he had made reparation for his lack of openness to Jesus when he assisted at his burial. What value, however, had that work of mercy for one of his frame of mind? There are amongst us today, humanists, most of them ex-Christians, men and women who make assisting their neighbor, while excluding Christ and God, the essence of religion. While the assistance the neighbor receives will benefit him materially, what spiritual or religious value can it have for the humanist who excluded God and our Savior Jesus Christ? Humanism or concentrating on our neighbor to the exclusion of God, is an imitation of religion and a very false imitation at that.

Thank God, we have accepted Christ with our whole heart and our whole mind. It is through him that we have been made sons of God. It is through him that we have learned to love God and learned of God's infinite love for us. True humanism sees in the neighbor the workmanship of the almighty Creator, and what is more important still, the elevating effects of the divine Savior, as well.

Excerpted from *The Sunday Readings*
by Fr. Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M.

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In Loving Memory of
Larry & Olga Martinez,
One Day at a Time. ✝

Rev. Jerome Gaston LeDoux

February 26, 1930—January 7, 2019

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Mass Schedule:

Monday-Friday — 7 a.m.

Saturday — 8 a.m.

Saturday — 5 p.m.

Sunday — 10 a.m.

Holy Day -- see bulletin

Reconciliation (Confession):

Friday & Saturday Confessions
9:00 a.m. — noon

Office Hours:

Mon, Wed, & Fri
10 a.m. — 3 p.m.

FATHER BART'S CORNER**My sisters and brothers:**

During Lent we will go through 5 Main Steps of a Good Confession.

Step 4—Amendment of Life

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church this step is combined together with the 5th step—Satisfaction. First of all it is so important to clarify the meaning of the word “amendment”. In this context it means improvement/correction. Even a very honest confession without the desire for improvement, will not bring any changes necessary for spiritual growth.

Is the amendment of life presented in the Bible. Yes, it is: "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So he got up and went to his father..." LK 15:17-20

In some countries of the world this step Amendment of life is placed before or after an honest confession. We don't have to argue about it but the most important thing is to make an amendment of life in our thoughts and put it into practice. I truly believe that we who confess our sins can pay more attention and realize that we use the words signifying amendment of life when we pray act of contrition.

Act of Contrition (traditional)

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love.

I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

Do we always mean what we say???

With prayers and love,

Fr. Bart, S.V.D

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Monday, March 15

Live Stream on
our Church Website

Mass: 7 a.m.

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Tuesday, March 16

Live Stream on
our Church Website

Mass: 7 a.m.

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Wednesday, March 17

Live Stream on
our Church Website

Mass: 7 a.m.

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Thursday, March 18

Live Stream on
our Church Website

Mass: 7 a.m.

Friday, March 19

Live Stream on
our Church Website

Mass: 7 a.m.

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Adoration: 8:00 a.m. — noon

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Saturday, March 20

Live Stream on
our Church Website

Mass: 8 a.m.

Mass: 5 p.m.

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Sunday, March 21

Live Stream on
our Church Website

Mass: 10 a.m.

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Vocation View

To be cut off from the treasures of the Church is to be cast away from life itself. As the Israelites longed to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem, so must we long to continue to build up the Church today.

Divine Word Vocation Office
1-800-553-3321
www.svdvocations.org

Weekly Readings

3/15—IS 65:17-21; JN 4:43-54

3/16—EZ 47:1-9, 12; JN 5:1-16

3/17—IS 49:8-15; JN 5:17-30

3/18—EX 32:7-14; JN 5:31-47

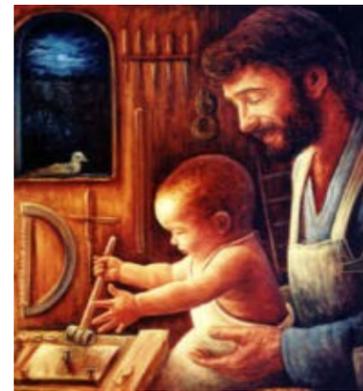
3/19—2 SM 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16;
ROM 4:13, 16-18, 22;

MT 1:16, 18-21, 24a; or LK 2:41-51a

3/20—JER 11:18-20; JN 7:40-53

3/21—JER 31:31-34; HEB 5:7-9;
JN 12:20-33, 35; or EZ 37:12-14;

ROM 8:8-11; JN 11:1-45 or 11:3-7,
17, 20-27, 33b-45

PARISH CORNER**St. Joseph**

March 19th is the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

St. Joseph was an ordinary manual laborer although descended from the royal house of David. In the designs of Providence he was destined to become the spouse of the Mother of God. His high privilege is expressed in a single phrase, "Foster-father of Jesus." About him Sacred Scripture has little more to say than that he was a just man—an expression which indicates how faithfully he fulfilled his high trust of protecting and guarding God's greatest treasures upon earth, Jesus and Mary.

The darkest hours of his life may well have been those when he first learned of Mary's pregnancy; but precisely in this time of trial Joseph showed himself great. He was to be, for all times, the trustworthy witness of the Messiah's virgin birth. After this, he modestly retires into the background of holy Scripture.

Of St. Joseph's death the Bible tells us nothing. There are indications, that he died before the beginning of Christ's public life. His was the most beautiful death that one could have, in the arms of Jesus and Mary. Humbly and unknown, silent and almost forgotten he remained in the background through centuries of Church history.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Laetare Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent, takes its name from the Latin word which begins the entrance antiphon (introit) for that day. *Laetare* means *rejoice*, and this Sunday is marked by a relaxation of the penitential character of the Lenten season. In church, flowers may be used to adorn the altar on this day.

On this Sunday, we look with expectation to the great Solemnity of Easter for which we have been preparing ourselves as a Church during the Lenten season. By its anticipation of the joy of Easter, Laetare Sunday is meant to give us hope and encouragement as we slowly progress towards the Paschal Feast.

On both Laetare Sunday and Gaudete Sunday (the Third Sunday of Advent), a priest may wear rose vestments. The color rose is used as a sign of the joy which characterizes these two Sundays. The use of rose vestments probably stems from an ancient papal tradition of blessing golden roses which would be sent to Catholic heads of state in Europe on the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

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"Pilate again said to them, 'Then what shall I do with the man whom you call the King of the Jews?' And they cried out again, 'Crucify him.'" — MARK 15:12-13

Jesus told us "whatever you do for the least of my brothers, you do for me." Every day we are presented opportunities to help someone. Every day we have the opportunity to see the face of Jesus in others and be the face of Jesus to others. Every day we pass by someone in need. Pray for the strength and courage to be the answer to someone's prayer.

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CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**PRAYER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE****Jesus prays****II. PRAYER OF PETITION**

2633 When we share in God's saving love, we understand that *every need* can become the object of petition. Christ, who assumed all things in order to redeem all things, is glorified by what we ask the Father in his name.¹¹⁰ It is with this confidence that St. James and St. Paul exhort us to pray *at all times*.¹¹¹

III. PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

2634 Intercession is a prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all men, especially sinners.¹¹² He is "able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them."¹¹³ The Holy Spirit "himself intercedes for us . . . and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."¹¹⁴

2635 Since Abraham, intercession - asking on behalf of another has been characteristic of a heart attuned to God's mercy. In the age of the Church, Christian intercession participates in Christ's, as an expression of the communion of saints. In intercession, he who prays looks "not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others," even to the point of praying for those who do him harm.¹¹⁵

110 Cf. *Jn* 14:13.

111 Cf. *Jas* 1:5-8; *Eph* 5:20; *Phil* 4:6-7; *Col* 3:16-17; *1 Thess* 5:17-18.

112 Cf. *Rom* 8:34; *1 Jn* 2:1; *1 Tim* 2:5-8.

113 *Heb* 7:25.

114 *Rom* 8:26-27.

115 *Phil* 2:4; cf. *Acts* 7:60; *Lk* 23:28,34.

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