

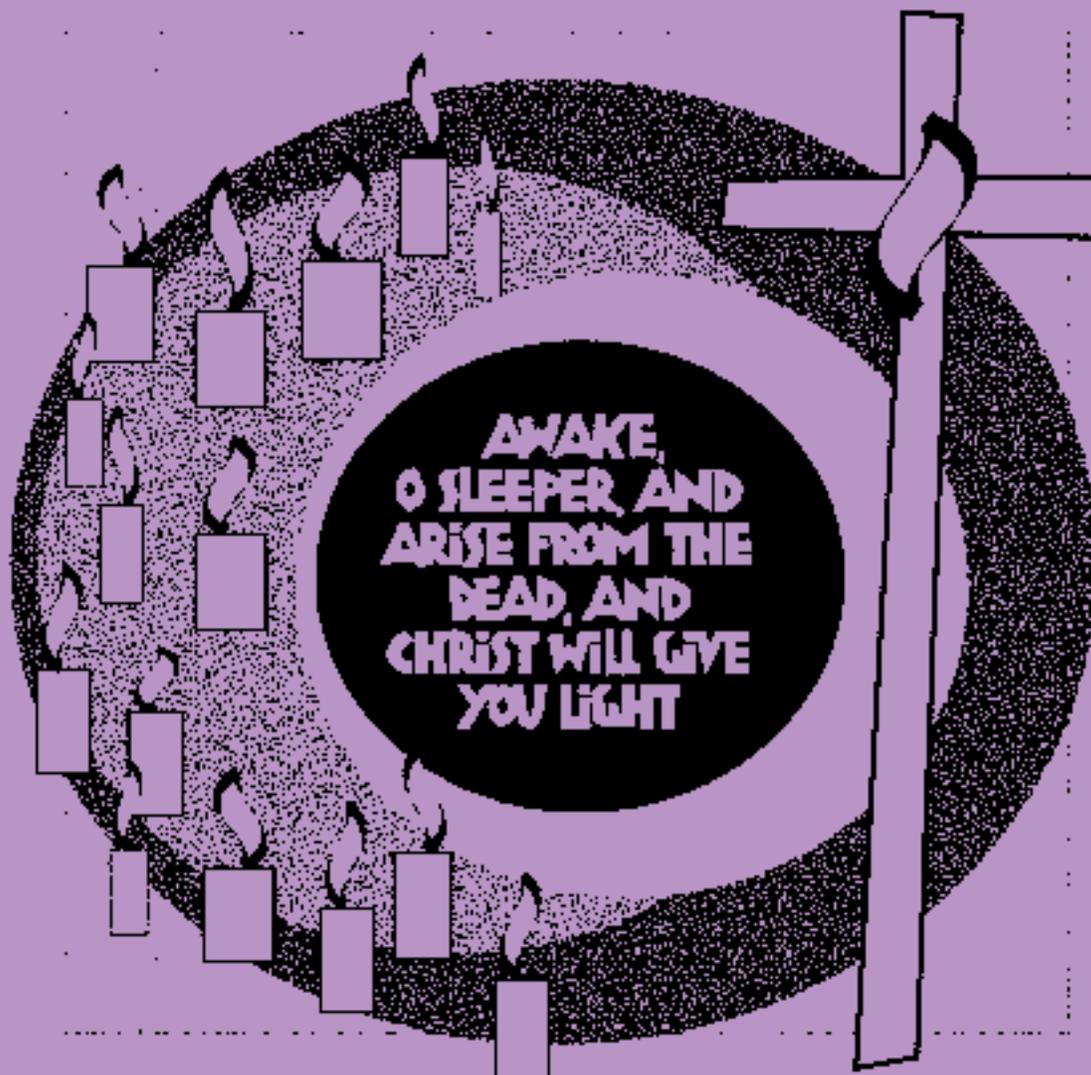
# ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PARISH



CONVENT STATION, NEW JERSEY › 973-267-5330 › [WWW.STMNJ.ORG](http://WWW.STMNJ.ORG)

MARCH 26, 2017

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT



**Mail:** P.O. Box 286  
Convent Station, NJ 07961

**GPS:** 4 Convent Rd.  
Morristown, NJ 07960

973-267-5330

## Weekly Eucharists

Saturday 5 pm  
Sunday, 9 am, 11 am, 7 pm  
Monday – Saturday: 8:15 am  
Reconciliation  
Saturday 3:30 pm or by appt.  
Holy Days  
8:15 am, 12:10 pm, 7 pm

Parish Office Hours  
Mon. - Wed, 9:30–2 pm

*Other times & days,  
call to see if office  
is open.*

[www.stmnj.org](http://www.stmnj.org)

**What's Happening?**

Sunday  
Religious Ed

Parish Retreat  
All Week – 7 pm  
Penance Service -Monday

Tuesday  
Women's Guild, 1 pm

Friday  
Stations of the Cross, 7 pm

Next Sunday  
Religious Ed.

Every Sunday  
Pound A Week

Stewardship of Treasure  
Last Week's Collection: \$ 4843

Please sign up for electronic giving at stthommore.weshareonline.org

**Increased Offering Program**

Within the next couple of weeks you will receive a Summary Report detailing the results of our Increased Offertory Program. Several weeks ago we began this program. We are beginning to see signs that our Sunday offertory collections are growing through the generosity of many, many parishioners. Thank you so very much to all who have chosen to participate in this very important program. Your generosity shows your willingness as faithful stewards to be a part of the ongoing missions of St. Thomas More Church..

**Concert for Pediatric Cancer**

Various music groups of Drew University are running a benefit concert on April 1 at Drew's Concert Hall. Tickets: [www.f4mmc.org/benefitconcert](http://www.f4mmc.org/benefitconcert)  
Proceeds benefit Goryeb Children's Hospital at Morristown Medical Center.

**This Week's Question**

*For Adults:*

What are you doing in your life right now to move toward light rather than darkness?

*For Children:*

How can you let the light of your faith in Jesus shine for others to see?



**WELCOME**

To all our visitors this weekend

*As a faith community, we keep in mind who have asked us to pray for them, that they may experience the healing power of our gracious God.*

Special requests for prayers at liturgy and donations made in honor of loved ones. These intentions and names of our sick are noted on the Gifts Table in the Remembrance Book and on the Weekly Sheet.



**Ministry to the Homebound**

If you know a homebound person who would like communion and/or on a regular basis, if you are ministering in that way OR if you can visit and/or bring communion to a homebound person, please fill out the form on the info rack in the vestibule.

**Living the Eucharist**

This is a weekly insert in the bulletin during Lent. You can receive daily Lenten devotionals by downloading *Living the Eucharist Mobile App* and begin praying *From Exodus to Easter: My Daily Journey Through Lent*. Get it on Google Play or Apples AppStore.

**Rice Bowl**



This week Maria in Mexico, encounter a community of hardworking women share joys, sorrows and fellowship while growing economic opportunity at a greenhouse. How have your communities helped you encounter Christ anew this Lent?

Visit [crsricebowl.org](http://crsricebowl.org) for more.

**Reflections on the Stations of the Cross**

Reflections written by Blessed Miriam Teresa. \$1.00 per copy. Contact Sister Rita O'Farrell, 973-290-5465, [rofarrell@scnj.org](mailto:rofarrell@scnj.org)

**PLAN NOW!!!! Parish Retreat, This Week  
Spirituality of Imperfection**

This parish retreat will be led by Fr. Lou Bihr. Fr. Lou is a retired priest of our diocese who began his ministry in Paterson. As a young priest and CYO Director he founded Fr. English Community Center for he realized that hungry kids can't eat basketballs. He also established Youth Haven, the first runaway house for teens in New Jersey. His last ministry in the diocese before retirement was still in Paterson as chaplain at Straight & Narrow, ministering to adults living with addictions. Fr. Lou is a powerful preacher and witness who has been at St. Thomas More with Straight & Narrow Gospel Choir a number of times.

**The Parish Retreat will begin with the Parish Lenten Penance Service on Monday, March 27 at 7 pm**

**Holy Hour for Peace**

The Sisters of Charity invite all to a monthly Holy Hour of Quiet Prayer at their Chapel, 6:30 – 7:30 pm, the third Tuesday of every month beginning March 21. Info: Sr. Maryanne Tracey, [mtracey@scnj.org](mailto:mtracey@scnj.org).

**Hearing God's voice**

It can be difficult to "hear" God's voice in today's world, but with some effort, we can learn to recognize it. Read a chapter of the Gospels and listen: a phrase may grab your attention or you may experience peace and joy.

Remember, God often speaks to our hearts, not our ears.

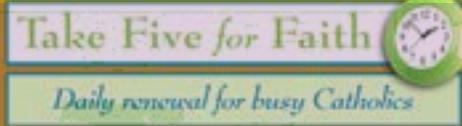
"So be imitators of God...and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us" (Ephesians 5:1).

# Fourth Sunday of Lent



## See into Our Hearts

Father Almighty,  
 you who have blessed our ancestors  
 and anointed them with the oil of your Spirit;  
 you have given your grace and light to those in need  
 and guided the hands of our leaders in faith.  
 See into our hearts today,  
 and find us ready to receive you,  
 as you guided Samuel  
 to recognize the Lord's chosen.  
 May we open our eyes to see you,  
 and our hearts to accept you,  
 and may we find Christ in others as you guide us.  
 Teach us to know your ways,  
 to follow your path,  
 and to trust in your guidance.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Daily scripture reflections are on our website under "Faith Formation" and in the vestibule.

### Daily Examen

*St. Ignatius Loyola's introspective prayer done at the end of each day.*

#### 1. Find a Quiet Place

Choose a place where nothing will bother you.

#### 2. Identify a Moment of Gratitude in that day.

Notice those feelings and be grateful for them, knowing that gifts come from God.

#### 3. Ask for Freedom

Freedom from the things that trip us, distract, or bias our judgments.

#### 4. Review Your Day

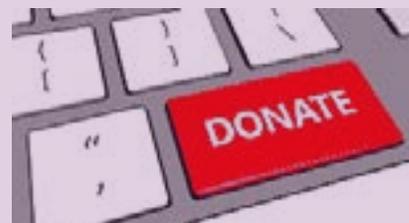
Recall the events of the past day as if you were watching a movie.

#### 5. Talk with God

Tell God anything that is on your mind. You might express gratitude, you might ask for forgiveness, you might look for assistance. Our prayers change us..

#### 6. Finish your Prayer

End your prayer with an Our Father or any favorite prayer.



### ONLINE GIVING

Stewardship is easier than ever with our online giving system, WeShare. Visit [stthommore.weshareonline.org](http://stthommore.weshareonline.org) for one-time or ongoing giving.

## PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK'S LITURGY

### *Fifth Sunday of Lent*

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:12-14

The prophet Ezekiel spoke to God's people during their exile in Babylon, six centuries before Christ. In today's passage, the prophet (using the image of death and resurrection) assures the people that God will one day bring them back to their homeland.

Second Reading: Ephesians 8:8-11

Paul's letter to the Romans is his most detailed and important theological work. Throughout the letter, he teaches that Jesus overcame sin and the effects of sin. In today's passage, Paul stresses that through the Spirit, this saving power of Jesus is present and active in Christians of all times and places.



## *Parish on a Journey*

### PARISH LENTEN RETREAT SPIRITUALITY OF IMPERFECTION WITH FR. LOU BIHR

THIS WEEK

MONDAY THRU THURSDAY, 7 PM  
PENANCE SERVICE ON MONDAY  
EUCHARIST TUES. & WED.  
CLOSING ON THURSDAY  
WITH RECEPTION



## *God's Grace is Young Enough*

For the Young and Young At Heart

Readings for this Sunday  
*1 Samuel 16:1-13; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 4:5-42*

### *Thirsting for God*

Suggested Reflection Questions

- During this Lenten season, as we examine our conscience, and as those preparing for Baptism, we are reminded that we must always seek to see as God sees. At our Baptism, we too were anointed with oil to remind us that God has a special mission for us.
- Those who sin prefer darkness. Here, Paul goes further and suggests that we not only live in the light of Christ but also become light for others. If we produce "goodness and righteousness and truth," then we light the way for others and make their lives brighter. That's a good goal for each of us this Lent.
- Jesus' cure of the blind man has several baptismal references. Healed and anointed and enlightened by Jesus, the blind man who comes to see and believe in Jesus typifies every believer. Washed and anointed at baptism, we are to live in the light of faith, walk by the light of truth, and follow Jesus who is the Light of the world in all we are, in all we do, in all we say.

# The Chance of a Lifetime

When someone has good news for us, what might we expect? A bonus? Some unexpected benefit? The chance of a lifetime? The Good News of Jesus Christ is all three of those things rolled into one: a wonderful gift; something good beyond our dreams, freely given; the chance of a lifetime for eternal happiness. Why, then, are we so shy about proclaiming it?



## STUCK IN THE SALT SHAKER

We are sent out to evangelize: to proclaim the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ. The Gospel says we are the “salt of the earth.” Our calling makes us a lively, flavorful ingredient that will bring out the best in the world around us. The Good News is ours to share. But often enough we hesitate. We are salt... but we get stuck in the salt shaker.

There are various reasons for this. Here are a few common ones, along with some reasons why they shouldn't hold us back.

*It's not how I was raised.* True enough, some of us were brought to church as babes in arms, by stern silent parents and grandparents who believed that if we died before the water was poured we'd go to limbo. Earlier generations expected stability, tradition. You inherited your religion like you inherit being Irish, or Italian, or Polish, or Mexican. Everybody was something. You were Catholic.

Think about it, though. A lot has changed since that time. Religion is no longer a given, harnessed by generations reaching back to time immemorial. The number of unchurched and those not subscribing to any religion is fast-growing. Many are searching for faith. We need more than ever to reach out, witness, and invite.

*I don't want to look like a holy roller.* One of the effects of the privatization of religion is that some people consider

it bad taste to talk about faith at all. Anyone who wants to share what they believe, in this sort of mindset, is suspected of being a fanatic, abnormal.

But is this really the case? Religion is interesting. Faith is a plus in life. In general, people who have a faith community live longer, are more healthy, and are happier than those who don't. Why wouldn't you want to talk about it? Perhaps at one point in your life you were buttonholed by someone who tried to convert you, and you've sworn never to do this to someone else. Fine. But be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will give you the right words to share your faith, in a genuine, convincing way. You might be surprised how long the conversation goes on, and how much interest there is in what you have to say.

*It feels risky.* Almost all of us carry around some anxiety about sharing something as personal as our faith. Suppose I share this precious part of my life with my non-believing friend or co-worker, or with a family member who no longer practices, and they reject it. Aren't they rejecting me also? Suppose they make fun of me, or ask me a question I can't answer. Will I look like a fool?

Truth to tell, there's always the possibility that sharing the Good News will not result in the outcomes we want—at least not immediately. We have no control over how people will respond. But we have to trust that God will be there to help us.

Sharing the Good News requires us to step out in faith and take a risk. But the risk is small compared to the potential gains. It's unlikely that you will make a fool of yourself. But suppose you do. Better a fool for Christ than tasteless salt in a salt shaker!

## WITNESS AND INVITATION

To share the Good News is an act of faith. Yet proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ does not have to be overwhelming. It can happen quite naturally, through life witness and invitation.

Those who live their faith with sincerity and joy already give the most important witness: life witness. By their simple and unaffected commitment to whatever is good and true in the world around them, by their joy and fellowship with other believers, by their confidence in the promises of Christ and in a truth that transcends their present struggles, they offer an example of faith for all to see. Life witness is the cornerstone of proclaiming the Good News, because it gives flesh to the message of Christianity. An example is worth a thousand words.

Example alone, however, is not enough. Witness of life must be complemented by the invitation to "come and see" what Jesus Christ and his Kingdom are all about.

How do we invite others to discover faith in Jesus Christ for themselves? It may be easier than you think. Here are some suggestions:

- Invite someone to come with you to a church event and talk with them about it
- Share something in your faith that brings you joy; if it is good news to you, it may be good news to someone else
- Listen actively; respect the other person's freedom and journey

- Speak about Jesus and the Church from within your own experience
- Pray for the person whom you wish to reach

Any believer can witness and invite. It doesn't take advanced training or special skills. Neither does it require a life of perfect sanctity. Ordinary, fallible, imperfect people can do this. The witness we bring is not to ourselves, but to Jesus Christ, who loves us. And that is very good news.

## REFLECT

Who are the people in my life who have no church home or who have drifted away from active participation in the Church? Do I understand and identify with their questions and longings? How can I be a bridge for them?

## ACT

Decide on one concrete step you can take this week to reach out to someone with the Good News. Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help you.

## PRAY

Holy Spirit, fill me with so much joy in my faith that I will want to share it with others. Give me the words to speak, the listening heart, and the courage I need to reflect your love. Let me be your witness today!

**AUTHOR** ■ Rita Ferrone is an award-winning writer and speaker in the areas of liturgy, catechesis, and renewal in the Roman Catholic Church.

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