

March 22, 2020 – Fourth Sunday of Lent

Welcome to the University Parish Newman Center. We cherish your presence among us and invite you to enter wholeheartedly into our worship. As Catholics, we understand our worship as our community's grateful response to God's goodness and love. Thus our liturgy is not a "spectator" experience; participation in prayer and in song is everyone's responsibility and privilege. Please do not be a stranger. Pray and sing with us as members of God's human family.

Staff is on reduced hours. Please leave a voicemail or email and we will get back to you when we are in the office. We will continue to use Constant Contact and the parish website to communicate any news and updates.

**Online giving** If you need to adjust or suspend your recurring giving, you may do so at kentnewmancenterparish.weshareonline.org. If we are not in the office but you need assistance, you may contact WeShare directly at 800-950-9952 (press #3 and then press #2) or weshare@4lpi.com.

Please check in on each other. While we can not physically be together, we can still connect through phone calls, emails, texts, video chats, etc. If able, help your friends and neighbors who may not be able to go to the store or have other needs. If there someone in the parish you know that may need help, let the parish staff know and we will do what we can to help.

While we cannot gather publicly, Fr. Steve will still be saying Mass. Our Mass intention today is for Fr. Antonio Moser, OFM.

**SUNDAY COLLECTION**  
**Sunday, March 15**  
\$3,019.00  
*Thank you for your generosity!*

**2020 Annual Bishop's Appeal for Catholic Charities and Church**  
**THANK YOU** to all who have pledged to the 2020 Bishop's Appeal. As of March 19, 96 families have pledged and we have collectively committed \$26,564.00 and are at 36% household participation! You may pledge online through www.doy.org or by mail. We ask every family to prayerfully participate in the Annual Appeal. Thank you in advance for your reflection and generous response.

Wednesday, March 25 is the **Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord**. Here is a poem you may use for reflection on that day:

**Annunciation to Mary**

Not that an angel came in, understand, was she alarmed. As little as others start when a sunray or beam of moonlight darts into a room and busies itself here and there, would she have been made angry by the guise in which an angel came. Could she surmise how tedious angels find such tarrying here? (Oh, if we knew how pure she was! A hind, once when resting, saw her in the wood, and gazing lost itself until it could— all without any coupling with its kind— conceive the unicorn, pure animal, the beast of light.) Not that he entered, but that he bowed down so close to her the face of a young man, this angel, that her gaze as she glanced up joined with his, as if all outside there suddenly seemed void and what the millions saw, were doing, suffering, seemed forced into them: only she and he— the seeing and seen, the eye and eye's delight nowhere else but in this one place. See! this is frightening. And they were both afraid.

Then the angel sang his melody.

Rainer Maria Rilke

**Readings for the Week of March 22, 2020**

- Sunday Fourth Sunday of Lent**  
1 Sm 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A; Ps 23; Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-41
- Monday** Is 65:17-21; Ps 30; Jn 4:43-54
- Tuesday** Ez 47:1-9, 12; Ps 46; Jn 5:1-16
- Wednesday Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord**  
Is 7:10-14, 8:10; Ps 40; Heb 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38
- Thursday** Ex 32:7-14; Ps 106; Jn 5:31-47
- Friday** Wis 2:1A, 12-22; Ps 34; Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
- Saturday** Jer 11:18-20; Ps 7; Jn 7:40-53
- Sunday Fifth Sunday of Lent**  
Ez 37:12-14; Ps 130; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45

**Laetare Sunday and the Theological Virtues (Faith, Hope, and Love)**

The fourth Sunday of Lent is called Laetare Sunday as a reference to the Latin Entrance Antiphon for this Sunday which translates, "Rejoice, Jerusalem!" This antiphon would have been pronounced at the start of the Mass, with a psalm and a "Glory Be", and functioned much like our opening song does today. The liturgical color for the Mass, like the analogous Gaudete Sunday in Advent, is rose. This lightening of the Lenten (and Advent) penitential purple is to remind us that our season of fasting and self-denial will come to a close and that on the other side of this season is a joy that is beyond our ability to imagine. But first we have to pass through the final suffering in which this joy is made manifest: for Mary the pangs of childbirth brought us the Savior of the World, and for Jesus, that same Savior, the suffering and death on the cross resulted in not only His resurrection, but the promise of eternal life for all who believe in Him.

I think this next week will bring home a new perspective as we move into the time that used to be called "Passiontide." As we struggle with this new reality that is the result of this pandemic, many of us will be experiencing the Passion of Jesus in a corporeal way. Things that make up the fabric of our lives, work, school, church, gathering with friends and family, are no longer accessible to us in the way in which we are accustomed. Some of us may endure illness and physical suffering. Sadly, someone we know and love may not survive this disease we face. Through it all, we need to remember that Christ is with us, and indeed God has given us supernatural powers to endure these trials. The Church calls these powers the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love.

No doubt you recall St. Paul's discourse on these virtues in 1 Corinthians, which ends "So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (cf. 1 Cor 13:13) While love is the greatest virtue, in the place we find ourselves today, I think hope is the virtue we must attend to. For hope is the antithesis of despair, which is a sin against the Holy Spirit. But hope must be nurtured; it can gradually slip away without our even noticing that we are losing hope. We can be so consumed by our own personal Passiontide that we cease to keep our eyes on the gift that comes on the other side. In the absence of hope, we lose our sense of worth, our reason for being. In extreme cases, it can cause us to lose our faith and to be insensible to the transforming power of love. We must strive to maintain hope.

How do we do that? First we pray; pray for the virtue of hope. Pray the Rosary contemplating the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love on the first three beads. Listen to the Word of God in the scriptures. Our scriptures are the living Word of God not a story book of times gone by. They are infused with hope in God. Spring is upon us; look for signs of things hoped-for in the newness of life around us. Check on one another; be a sign of hope to those around you. Remind one another that we are not alone even if we cannot be together physically. Finally, remember that we live in the sure and certain hope that, together with all who have died in Christ, we will rise with him on the last day. If we remain steadfast in our hope, we will experience the joy that is celebrated this day.

**Covid-19: A Prayer of Solidarity**

For all who have contracted coronavirus,  
We pray for care and healing.  
For those who are particularly vulnerable,  
We pray for safety and protection.  
For all who experience fear or anxiety,  
We pray for peace of mind and spirit.  
For affected families who are facing difficult decisions between food on the table or public safety,  
We pray for policies that recognize their plight.  
For those who do not have adequate health insurance,  
We pray that no family will face financial burdens alone.  
For those who are afraid to access care due to immigration status,  
We pray for recognition of the God-given dignity of all.  
For our brothers and sisters around the world,  
We pray for shared solidarity.  
For public officials and decisionmakers,  
We pray for wisdom and guidance.  
Father, during this time may your Church be a sign of hope, comfort and love to all.  
Grant peace.  
Grant comfort.  
Grant healing.  
Be with us, Lord. Amen.

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