

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 4, 2018

MASS READINGS

MONDAY: 2 KGS 5:1-15AB, PS 42, LK 4:24-30

TUESDAY: DAN 3:25,34-43, PS 25, MT 18:21-35

WEDNESDAY: DT 4:1,5-9, PS 147, MT 5:17-19

THURSDAY: JER 7:23-28, PS 95, LK 11:14-23

FRIDAY: HOS 14:2-10, PS 81, MK 12:28-34

SATURDAY: HOS 6:1-6, PS 51, LK 18:9-14

**NEXT SUNDAY: FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT-
RDGS: 2CHR 36:14-16, 19-23, PS 137, EPH 2:4-10,
JN 3:14-21**

MASS INTENTIONS

MONDAY: KATHY LESTER

TUESDAY: CHARLIE & CATHERINE SPITZNAGLE

WEDNESDAY: PEGGY GRAY

THURSDAY: JOHN RENN

FRIDAY: POOR SOULS

VIGIL: FR. CHARLES MULLER

7:30: ARCHBISHOP THOMAS DONNELLAN

10:00: ARCHBISHOP EUGENE MARINO

NOON: FOR THE PARISH

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

Jane Clapp. Mary Ann McCarthy. Gary McDaniel.
(Jackie Mahorney & Brian Luck). Michael & Rose-
mary Cavanaugh. Jody Geller. Dorothy Nelson.
Marvin Anthrop. (Ed & Judy Buckles, Pam Mercer,
Wayne Reisinger, Kathy Schmiltz). Charles & Mabel
Clapp. Mildred Schluttenhofer.

GOSPEL REFLECTION:

*Take these out of here,
and stop making my Father's house a marketplace."*

We might do well to shift our attention for a moment away from the physical building known as the Temple and look to something decidedly more spiritual. To do this we begin in John's Gospel where Jesus tells the people that he will "destroy this temple and in three days build it up again," (Jn 2:19). Our commentator reminds us that Jesus is speaking of his body and referencing his own glorious resurrection. It is in the reality of Our Lord's bodily resurrection that we ground our reflection on this Sunday's gospel. In the same gospel Jesus reminds us that if he be lifted up (raised on the cross) he will lift all to himself, (Jn 12:32). Identifying ourselves with the crucified and risen Lord we will share in that reality as St. Paul reminds us, (Rom 6:8). Thus, we become a Temple as the Apostle clearly affirms: *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.* (I Cor 6:19-20). Aware now, as we are, that we are united with Christ we can return to today's gospel and apply the words of our own interior lives and thus cooperate fully with the graces given to us to enhance and perfect this union with Our Lord. Take "these" out of here he says. What are the "these"? According to the gospel anything which frustrates this union. In the gospel it is the money changers, in our lives we must honestly identify whatever area(s) is pertinent and begin to address it in order to remove it from our live, i.e. to "take it out of here". First, we acknowledge that the work of Our Lord's. He will assist us in this identification and begin the process of removal, or to use another image, he will prune (Jn 15:2). For our part we must offer no resistance and through heart-felt prayer, disciplined fasting and genuine works of mercy we are well on our way to following the command of the Lord in reference to our interior lives and thus making progress in assuring our works are pleasing to the Father. This is our way of identify with the Lord as we take up our cross (cooperating in "getting these out of here") and following him. Lent adds a serious note to what should be taking place each day of the year. Let us not miss an opportunity to catch and thereby address anything which may impact our eternal happiness.

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 4, 2018

DYING TO SELF, PUTTING TO DEATH THOSE OBSTACLES (DEFECTS) WHICH KEEP US FROM GIVING OURSELVES TOTALLY TO THE FATHER, THROUGH THE SON (PUTTING ON THE MIND OF CHRIST) IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

When Self Magazine made its debut a few decades ago, it certainly was a sign of the times. Ours is an age when it is socially acceptable to admit that life is all about me

But selfishness is nothing new. Ever since Eve bit into the forbidden fruit, human beings have made the choice to dethrone God and put in His place the unholy trinity of me, myself, and I.

But Jesus commands us to “love thy neighbor as thyself.” Doesn’t this imply that love of self is OK, even required?

Absolutely. God placed in us a drive towards self-preservation. He made beneficial activities, like eating, pleasurable. And he made destructive activities painful.

But, He also gave us intellect and will so that we are not driven simply by instinct, as are the animals. Thus the ancient enemy of humanity has to do his best to deceive our intellect into thinking that what is destructive is actually good for us. And he entices us to use our will to choose these destructive things contrary to God’s commandments. The end justifies the means, he argues, and so if we have to trample over others and defy God to get what we want, so be it.

This is the kind of self-love that Jesus condemns (Mt 10:37-42). It leads to ruin, confusion, and emptiness. There is no way to tame this or to fit religion into it. The only solution is to kill it.

In baptism, this old egocentric self is crucified and buried with Christ (Romans 6:11). There can only be one Lord—Jesus or me. Accepting him means allowing Him to be boss, allowing Him to call the shots and direct my steps. Picking up the cross and following Him means accepting the Father’s will, even where it crosses my will, even when it leads to suffering. This is the meaning of Jesus’ words to Peter “as a young man you fastened your belt and went about as you pleased, but when you are older, you will stretch out your hands and another will tie you fast and carry you off against your will” (John 21:18).

When Jesus had finished saying this, he looked at Peter and said, “Follow me.” A little over a decade ago, he said much the same thing to a new successor of Peter, Pope Benedict XVI. Those pundits who spoke of his maneuvering to build support for his “candidacy” before and during the conclave made me laugh. Cardinal Ratzinger had tried to retire twice before the death of John Paul II! Both times the Pope refused to accept his resignation. When during the conclave he saw momentum began building for his election, he cried out to God begging to be spared. The room where the newly elected Pope first dons the Papal vestments is called the “Room of tears” for a reason.

Jesus says “follow me” to each of us. It may mean making a change of career. It may mean breaking off a relationship that is leading us away from Christ. Or it may just mean doing what we are already doing but for an entirely different reason . . . achieving great things not to draw attention to ourselves, but to glorify Christ . . . seeking an intimate relationship no longer to take but to give. . . working not for the weekend, but for the kingdom.

The ironic thing is that such abandonment of our own agenda is precisely what allows God the freedom to give us the true desire of our hearts. For he knows us better than we know ourselves and he loves us more than we love ourselves. So to lose ourselves for his sake finally makes it possible for us to find ourselves. To renounce self-love is actually enlightened self-interest.

This is precisely what we see with the Shunemmite woman who gave of herself and opened her home and heart to a man of God (2 Kings 4:8-11). She was barren in an age when barrenness was the greatest of curses. Yet she forgot her need in order to meet Elisha’s need. In return God prompted Elisha to meet her need. For one thing is certain about God—He will not be outdone in generosity.

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 4, 2018

From Character Defects to Character Effects: The Conversion Journey of an Alcoholic Jim Connelly Caught in the Web of Obsession and Compulsion

I drank to handle one or more of these defects, because I had no fortitude to confront them on my own. So I drank, and for a little while they would go away and then come roaring back drawing their strength from my weakness. My solution was: Have a few more drinks and anesthetize the defects into submission. The result and side effect was that I anesthetized myself and my cognition went to perdition.

In AA we speak of a Higher Power. And from my Catholic faith, I know there is a Lower Power — Satan. He searches out the weakness in everyone, not just alcoholics, and pounds away at us daily to remove us from our fellowship with God. No matter what my failures, I believe that God sees in my heart who I desire to be and loves me unconditionally — warts and all.

I was caught in a web of self. I was so concentrated on trying not to drink that it actually made sense to me to think that the way to stop drinking was to keep drinking! Alcoholics believe the answer is in the bottle. A woman in AA with over twenty-five years sobriety, once said to me, with concern: “You can’t stop drinking — drinking.” I dismissed this as inane. I really did not want to try and understand the truth in what she said.

I wanted to stop, but the physical and emotional pain was so bad that when I thought of stopping, the only answer was to drink to take away the pain. It was always easier to quit after “just one more.” I was in a vicious circle with nothing in the middle to grab onto. Once I was inside the cocoon of alcoholism there was no world outside. Alcohol allows no entry to anything or anyone. I functioned from day to day and existed with the normal people, but I let no one in and I did not reach out except when it was in my best interest: pacifying, looking responsible, showing up. Trying to do things as best I could.

Unless you are an alcoholic, you cannot understand the obsession and compulsion. The only thing that matters is the next drink. Your day is planned around it. If an alcoholic was writing his plan for the day, the first entries would be times for drinking and all other “responsibilities” would fit in among the anesthetics.

Self-Absorbed and Manipulative: That Was Me

That sounds cruel, doesn’t it? It is. I was devious and manipulative. It was the life I lived so I could live the life I was helpless not to live. My focus was limited to alcohol and everything else that I was responsible for had to fit in among the empties.

I went to AA meetings and I read the literature. I met with counselors and I read the biographies of others who had struggled and finally found peace in sobriety. All of this was wonderful stuff, but until I wanted what the people in AA had — sobriety; until I did not pick up the first drink, I was intellectualizing all this wonderful stuff — but I was not sober. My attention was on me and my pain. I was yet to realize that it was not within my power to heal myself. I would come to believe that asking God to heal me was my only option.

The issue of where your focus lies is the key to healing. In the book *Serenity: A Companion for Twelve Step Recovery* (1990, Thomas Nelson), Doctors Hemfelt and Fowler make an interesting point:

As we move into any addiction or dependency, we tend to become more self-centered, self-absorbed and self-preoccupied in trying to address the pain driving the addiction. Paradoxically, this self-preoccupation only draws us more deeply into the addiction. We become more self-centered and self-preoccupied as we seek to address the pain, yet self-preoccupation itself creates more pain, loneliness, and isolation. The addiction pulls us more deeply into its pain cycle. In order to surmount the pain cycle, ultimately we must step out of ourselves and look beyond ourselves.

Please note that the word “self” and “ourselves” occurs nine times in that paragraph. When I admitted to my focus on self as the negative quality responsible for my weakness for alcohol, and then accepted that in my weakness I could find strength by abandoning myself to God’s care, that is when my healing began. The healing manifests itself in what I call my “Character Effects.”

My recovery program of almost nine years has been blessed. Through the grace of God, I have been allowed a slow, steady, healing growth, clarity of mind and a relief from mental isolation.

Alcoholism was a small and lonely prison with no room for anyone but me. Relationships were only surface interactions. I would never allow anyone into my intimacy. I wore a mask to appear to be what people wanted to see. (Alcoholics wear masks just like “normal” people.) I was most comfortable around other drinkers. There are an abundance of them — not all alcoholics, but party people.

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Escaping the Lonely Prison of the Walking Wounded

Surrounded by others with whom I had little except the bottle in common, I never realized how lonely I was — and busy. Alcoholism is a world of planning. My day revolved around the next drink. Who would I drink with? What would I drink? When, where, how, and why? But on the positive side I never missed one of our children's activities.

“Wait a minute. You never missed a child's activity?!”

Let me make something clear. Alcoholics are not old men lying in the gutter or sitting in the doorway stoop of an abandoned building. CEOs are alcoholics, surgeons and celebrities are alcoholics. Somewhere in your neighborhood are men and women and young people you know dwelling in their self-inflicted prison of alcoholism. Like the CEOs you don't know, they are rarely the ossified relics you usually picture. These are the “maintenance” and/or “functional” alcoholics. They work, they play, they drink. The majority of them are deceitful and sneaks. It's how they survive. They are in permanent denial of the life they work so hard at living.

Alcoholics want it “now.” They want to walk into their first AA meeting and be cured. They spend twenty/thirty years in alcoholism and can't understand why it takes so long to get sober. Instead of an instant cure, they have to undertake a journey of repentance and conversion and learning. There is slow healing — in God's time. It takes what it takes. The bad news is that only one person out of three attains sobriety — and even some of them have a “slip” but begin recovery again. The good news is that God is with them the whole time. All they have to do is reach out and ask for His help. He listens and He helps those who sincerely want to be helped.

I have been blessed to see my character defects gradually replaced with “Character Effects”: the fruit of the Spirit. After a meeting I can be patient and stand and listen to a suffering alcoholic's pain. I can love because it's the greatest gift I can give myself and others. I don't sulk anymore because I have joy. I am not as anxious as I used to be and I have the peace that I longed for all my life.

I am compassionate and considerate because I care about people. The effect is a gentle spirit.

These are some of the Character Effects of the grace of God, sobriety, my faithfulness to the program and the fellowship of AA. They help me to correct my defects as I look beyond myself and concentrate my efforts on the growth of my spiritual progress.

In AA “we claim spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection.” I believe the word “claim” is used because humility is a major part of recovery — it is the antidote to the mask of perfection that “maintenance” and “functional” alcoholics habitually wear. In AA we do not claim spiritual perfection, but we pray and live daily practicing rigorous honesty, believing that God will bless us with His grace as we strive for His spiritual perfection.

If you are an alcoholic, then I hope you understood while you were reading that I have shared with you a little of my experience, strength and hope. But you have to choose. According to its by-laws, Alcoholics Anonymous is a “program of attraction not promotion.” You have to want what we have. You have to make the decision that there is a better way to live. It is true: you can go one day without a drink. All you have to do is one day. Today. Live one day at a time.

We try not to dwell on the past or wonder/worry about the future. We try to live in today. We try to live in the moment. I use the word try because it's a choice and a struggle and journey. We try every day to be the person God wants us to be. When we do, we move a day closer to the peace and serenity God wants us to have.

Jim Connelly and his wife live on the Island of Avalon in southern New Jersey. They have been married 49 years and have six children and twenty grandchildren.

NOTE: The alcoholic (one who makes alcohol an idol) is not the only person with character defects. Whatever our own personal idols may be, money, sex, drugs, gambling, compulsive behavior of any sort, we find that this impacts our lives negatively and thus sets up obstacles between ourselves and God and those with whom we live. Working on character defects, once we have seriously sought the Lord's help in replacing our idols with HIM is a vital part of our spiritual lives. And nothing is more effective in removing these defects as constant prayer, disciplined fasting and frequent and sincere works of mercy.

I can do
ALL THINGS
through Christ
who
STRENGTHENS ME

Phil 4:13

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Put On the Mind of Christ Fr. Ed Broom, OMV

Saint Paul commands us: “Put on the mind of Christ.” He also says: “You have the mind of Christ.” Of course the mind of Christ was the most pure, holy innocent, humble, wise and intelligent, retentive, and noble that ever existed—nobody with a right mind could deny this.

How then can I implement this imperative of the great Apostle Saint Paul who could say in all sincerity: “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me!”

Of course a daily meditation on the Word of God, especially the heart of the Bible the Gospels, can transform our way of thinking. The saying you are what you eat is true. Even more to the point is you are what you think!

Still we would like to propose another way to put on the mind of Christ; indeed another way to actually have the mind of Christ. The most efficacious way to actually put on the mind of Christ is a well-prepared, humble, fervent, faith-filled reception of Holy Communion.

Holy Communion is truly and substantially the Body, Blood, and Substance of Christ. The noblest members of the Body of Christ is His Heart and His mind.

Indeed when we receive Holy Communion worthily then we have a “Spiritual Heart-transplant”. The Sacred Heart of Jesus beats within our heart upon receiving Holy Communion with the proper dispositions.

Furthermore, when we receive Holy Communion we receive the whole and entire Body of Jesus and that of course includes His mind. With this knowledge we can indeed put into practice the mandate of St. Paul: “Put on the mind of Christ.” Then after Holy Communion has been received worthily we indeed truly have the Mind of Christ. Praise the Lord!

Many suffer torments of the mind and in many different ways. Ugly memories from the past pursue us like ugly nightmares. Past hurts from our youth pursue us like vicious wolves. Immodest images of past viewings and actions never seem to leave our mind at peace. Memories of past hurts of our childhood due to bad family experiences seem to leave almost indelible scars. Even the devil maneuvers and manipulates his way into our mind accusing us, blaming us and condemning us. Even something as simple as the failure of memory; the memory seems to have been transformed into a leaky bucket, retaining only a few drops of information.

How can this sad state of affairs, all related to my mind, memory, understanding, and imagination be purified, enlightened and raised on high? Once again the answer is receiving Jesus in Holy Communion with lively faith and a burning love.

The Mind

The mind is one of the most noble gifts and faculties that God has bestowed on every human person. The mind contains memory, understanding and imagination. These are the three specific faculties present in the mind.

Holy Communion can transform the whole mind, each of these three different faculties! Holy Communion is not a symbol that represents Jesus. Holy Communion truly and substantially is JESUS!!!! Let us analyze briefly what Holy Communion can do to transform our mind into the mind of Christ.

Memory

Our memory is weak, short-lived, tormented with past ugly memories that never seems to leave us at peace. Why not try this! Next time you receive Jesus in Holy Communion beg the Lord to purify your memory of past hurts and ugly images; beg the Lord to fill you with a bright light in your memory. Beg the Lord that with this Holy Communion your memory will only retain the good and repel and reject the evil. In other words, beg the Lord that all the good influences would be absorbed and retained like a sponge; and beg the Lord that all evil influences would be repelled like water bouncing off a rock!

Understanding

How often have we read something, heard a lecture or conference, or even listened to a conversation and our understanding did not kick into gear? The message seemed to be murky, unclear and confused! Why? Due to the simple fact that as a result of Original Sin our mind and understanding have been damaged— not destroyed but impaired! In Holy Communion we receive the “Total Christ”. Why not beg Jesus next time you receive Holy Communion to give you His Mind with His understanding. One of the effects that this will produce in us is a more keen and penetrating understanding of the truth. You will notice, as a result of frequent and well-prepared Holy Communion, that a light bulb will be turned on in your mind giving you certain insights that you never had before. Why? Because Holy Communion truly gives you the Mind of Jesus, with His brilliant understanding.

Imagination

In the Marian classic, True Devotion to Mary, St. Louis de Montfort expresses an earnest appeal to Our Lady related to the imagination: “O Mary, check our wandering imagination...” Saint Teresa of Avila calls the imagination “La loca de la casa.” — Literally, the “Mad woman of the house”. Why? Very simply, the imagination can run wild in any time and in any place. It can be compared to a spoiled and untrained child or even a wild animal left at large! Our imagination is neutral! It can be used for great evil—as in the case of willfully recalling and pondering pornographic images. However, on the contrary, St. Ignatius exhorts us to use our imagination to enter into the lives of Mary and Jesus and to become part of His life — all be means of training the imagination! St. Ignatius calls this the prayer of “Contemplation”.

This being said, upon receiving Holy Communion, not only do we receive the Mind of Jesus, the Understanding of Jesus, but also we receive the IMAGINATION of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Indeed only Jesus can help us to overcome our sinfulness in thought, word, deed and omission. Upon receiving Holy Communion the “mad man of the house calms down” and a more peaceful and controlled thought process in the imagination takes over!

Conclusion

The greatest action that the human person can do on earth is to receive Jesus in Holy Communion. Saint Paul says: “Put on the mind of Christ; you have the mind of Christ.” Why not start today to aim at the habit of frequent, well-prepared and fervent reception of Holy Communion. Holy Communion is truly the total Christ— His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

This includes His Sacred Mind, with the three specific faculties: memory, understanding and will. Try it! You will never regret it! Not only will you put on the mind of Christ; rather, you actually will have the mind of Christ. As St. Augustine highlights, Our Lady first conceived Jesus in her mind and then in her body. May Our Lady, who pondered the word of God in her mind, attain for us an ardent yearning to receive her Beloved Son so as to have truly the Sacred mind of Jesus!

NOTE: The interior life is not about “fixing ourselves” to make us more appealing to God, it is about allowing him to love us and in so doing we find ourselves “lovable” in him who is LOVE. Daily attention to his Word in prayer, keeping watch over our lives in the world and especially a genuine concern for our neighbor is the surest and quickest way God demonstrates his love for us. Since he is the power behind all this and we “fellow workers” with him, this “adventure of love” is a cooperative display of God loving, ourselves being loved and love returning us to God.

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 4, 2018

Announcements and Upcoming Events



" Every Friday during Lent, the Knights of Columbus will be cooking up a fish fry from 5:30-8 pm. Bring your Saint Ann's bulletin for \$1 off your dinner."

Catholic Relief Services carries out the commitment of the Bishops of the United States to assist the poor and vulnerable overseas. We are motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to cherish, preserve and uphold the sacredness and dignity of all human life, foster charity and justice, and embody Catholic social and moral teaching as we act to:

PROMOTE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT by responding to major emergencies, fighting disease and poverty, and nurturing peaceful and just societies; and,

SERVE CATHOLICS IN THE UNITED STATES as they live their faith in solidarity with their brothers and sisters around the world.

As part of the universal mission of the Catholic Church, we work with local, national and international Catholic institutions and structures, as well as other organizations, to assist people on the basis of need, not creed, race or nationality. Our annual second collection will be the weekend of March 3rd & 4th. Supporting the missionary activity of the Church is a corporal work of mercy. Lord we thank you for this opportunity.



The Lafayette Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus would like to extend a note of gratitude to all who participated in the 5th annual Spaghetti Dinner that was held on Jan 28th at St. Ann's Parish. Delicious salad, spaghetti, rolls and donated desserts were enjoyed by all. The event was a huge success and will go a long way in the support of the General de Lafayette Assembly Scholarship fund. Each year the 4th degree Knights of Columbus offer a scholarship(s) to a Catholic high school senior(s) from the area of the assembly, and the spaghetti dinner is the largest fundraiser in support of the award. A raffle was also held for a 55" LED Smart TV, which was won by Irene Mullane. Thanks again for all your support.

ST. BONIFACE PARISH MISSION

MARCH 4-8, 2018

FR. ZELJKO GUBEROVIC

FISH FRY AND TALENT SHOW-MARCH 3 @ 6PM

CONFERENCES EACH EVENING BEGINNING MARCH 4 @ 7PM

CONFESSIONS FOLLOWING THE CONFERENCES ON MARCH 5, 6, & 7

CLOSING MASS ON MARCH 8 @ 7PM

STEWARDSHIP BY THE BOOK: Our First Reading from the Old Testament Book of Exodus presents the Ten Commandments, as God gave them to Moses. The Commandments also appear in the Book of Deuteronomy (Chapter 5; verses 6-21). The Commandments are reaffirmed in the New Testament by Jesus Himself and especially in the Gospel of John. The Ten Commandments are also called the "Decalogue," which means literally "ten words." According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2056) "God revealed these 'ten words' to His people on the holy mountain. They were written 'with the finger of God.' They are pre-eminently the words of God"

At another point the Catechism fortifies the Commandments by saying, "...from generation to generation...the 'deposit' of moral teaching has been handed on. Along with the Creed and the Our Father, the basis for catechesis has traditionally been the Decalogue, which sets out the principles of moral life valid for all people." (#2033)

The Commandments are considered essential for spiritual good health and growth. They serve as the basis for Catholic social justice. A review of the Ten Commandments is a common type of examination of conscience before receiving the sacrament of Penance.

As Lent draws to a close, it is important for each of us to go to confession and receive the sacrament of Penance. As part of that we may wish to look at our lives and how we live them through the holy words of the Ten Commandments.

SUNDAY OFFERING

\$10,057.00

"FIND OUT HOW MUCH GOD HAS GIVEN YOU, AND FROM IT TAKE WHAT YOU NEED; THE REMAINDER IS NEEDED BY OTHERS"

ST. AUGUSTINE