

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 22, 2020

MASS READINGS

MONDAY: IS 65:17-21/JN 4:43-54

TUESDAY: EZ 47:1-9,12/JN 5:1-16

WEDNESDAY: IS 7:10-14; 8:10/HEB 10:4-10/LK
1:26-38

THURSDAY EX 32:7-14/JN 5:31-47

FRIDAY: WIS 2:1A,12-22/JN 7:1-2,10,25-30

SATURDAY: JER 11:18-20/JN 7:40-53

**NEXT SUNDAY: FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT –
EZ 37:12-14/ROM 8:8-11/JN 11:1-45 OR 11:3-
7,17,20-27,33B-45**

MASS INTENTIONS

MONDAY: BUD & BRIDGET FITZSIMONS

TUESDAY: GEORGE ROSS

WEDNESDAY: SI: ROBERTS FAMILY

THURSDAY: AIDA BAYLOSIS

FRIDAY: POOR SOULS

VIGIL: FRANCIS MCMILLEN

7:30: GEORGE ROSS

10:00: GEORGE KELLER

NOON: FOR THE PARISH

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

Burnell/Anna/Henry Totten, Robert Stump, Victor & Dorothy Ringle. (Ronnie Vaughn & Peter Albrecht). (George/Robert Bolinger, Vivian Calhoun, Jack Renn, Norbert & Catherine Renn). Bill & Virginia Buckles. Bob Bohan. Marian Schwartz. Dorothy Nelson. Farrell & LaGuire families. Alvessa Trevino. (Jason Anderson & John Scowden).

GOSPEL REFLECTION:

“Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

He answered and said,

“Who is he, sir that I may believe in him?”

Jesus said to him,

“You have seen him,

For those who lives seem to resemble the back and forth of this reading, the controversy and conflict and, simply put, the tedium of trying to figure out what really matters when it comes down to it the vision of Jesus standing right in front of us is a more welcome site than we could have possibly imagined. And yet for many their vision is so clouded that the progress of this story seems to crawl and day after day finds them stumbling and falling over something else placed in their path. The life of faith is one of discernment. The blind man in this story was confronted by a variety of folks who offered their interpretation of what it was he was supposed to see and yet his own internal blindness told him that they were far from the mark. His encounter with Jesus and by connection his run in with everyone else confirmed what his heart was trying to tell him, namely that the Son of Man was directly in front of him and all he had to do was look and see and follow. Prayer, fasting and works of charity are the means by which the “eyes of our hearts” are opened to recognize the presence of Jesus in our midst. Prayer, most important of all, allows us to sort out all the other voices and opinions which seek to describe for us what it is we are supposedly seeing by looking at the world with its many offerings. Through prayer we begin to see more clearly the way in which things are related and subordinated to what really matters, that which we proclaim in the Creed, “for us and for our salvation”. Once we have begun to discern this vision of truth, fasting comes along and invites us to “organize” the things we perceive into greater and lesser good always below the Supreme Good, God. During Lent, in an even greater way, we employ the practice of fasting by attempting to live more conclusively the results we have arrived at in our “organizing” process. We come to regard the “higher things” and place them in such a way as to experience from them the greatest good possible, this is why we are encouraged to engage in more frequent acts of pray and devotion in the hope that once Lent is concluded we will actually see that this is the way we should be living throughout the rest of the year. This in turn leads us to works of charity. True charity grows out of our successful experiences of prayer and fasting. Here we have discovered that God is indeed and love and those who abide in love abide in God and God in them. Our words and actions reflect this abiding presence with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Indeed we begin to see more clearly now what is our destiny, namely to have life and to have it in abundance.

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SPIRITUALLY BLIND

WE RUSH ABOUT OUR DAILY LIVES,
WE WORK, WE EAT, WE SLEEP.
WE TRY HARD TO GET AHEAD,
BUT THE RUT WE'RE IN IS JUST TOO DEEP.

WE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS, WE SEARCH FOR
TRUTH,
BUT THESE THINGS WE DO NOT FIND.
THOUGH WE HAVE EYES WE DO NOT SEE,
OUR PERSUITS HAVE MADE US SPIRITUALLY
BLIND.

JESUS IS THE ONE TRUE ANSWER,
FOR EVERYTHING LIFE BRINGS YOUR WAY.
ALL HE ASKS YOU TO DO,
IS TRUST IN HIM AND OBEY.

SO REPENT AND BE BAPTISED,
AND ANSWER THE MASTER'S CALL.
SPREAD THE WORD TO EVERY NATION,
ABOUT THE BLOOD HE SHED FOR US ALL.

Written by Timothy L. Franks

**SEEING WITH THE EYES OF FAIHT:
DYING TO SELF, PUTTING TO DEATH THOSE OBSTACLES (DEFECTS) WHICH KEEP US FROM GIV-
ING 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."

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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.

What Every Catholic Needs to Know about putting God first Ten steps to making God our first and most important priority by Leisa Anslinger

The first step toward a more mature and living faith is the desire and willingness to put God first in our lives. It seems so simple, and yet most of us realize this is a challenge of Christian living in today’s world. Some might say it is the challenge.

Ordering our lives to make God our first and most important priority is for many of us a consistent element in need of attention. An Internet search illustrates the immensity of this challenge. Type “put God first” in your search engine, and 26.4 million responses appear. We are not alone, and we need help!

Go to any bookstore and you will find a large section of books labeled “Self-Help.” Many such books have been written by professionals whose experience leads them to believe they have beneficial insights for those whose lives need change or whose life skills need development or improvement.

In another section of the bookstore, we find collections of quotations or brief statements of direction or guidance. Some are lengthy; others are little more than one-liners. One particular genre of such books are labeled “Little Instruction” books and are intended to give the reader quick thought-bites, small statements of “instruction” for those in a particular stage or situation in life.

What about we who hope to put God first in our lives? Where do we go for challenge and inspiration? Where might we find a “little instruction” for making God our first priority? The answer seems simple enough: the Bible, the collective wisdom of the Tradition of the Church, the experience and witness of the saints who have gone before us — these hold the insight we need in order to learn the steps for making God the center of our lives.

But the Bible is no “Little Instruction” book, nor is the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nor any collection of the lives of the saints. So, from whom or from what do we learn the steps to take to keep God our highest priority? Where will we find direction, and, importantly, how might we take what we find there and apply it to our lives today?

Learning from Jesus

While there are no doubt thousands of applicable quotations from a variety of sources, let us begin with our Lord and Master. What steps does Jesus teach us in order to put God first in our lives?

In a telling passage in the Gospel of Mark, we learn from an encounter between Jesus and a scribe. Jesus is asked, “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Jesus replied, “The first is this: ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

The scribe recognizes the truth in Jesus’ reply, and we are told, “And when Jesus saw that [he] answered with understanding, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God’” (Mk 12:28-34).

Guiding Passage

Sacred Scripture is filled with insightful guidance for our living, but one section is particularly enlightening as a plan for the Christian life: Matthew 5:1-7:29, in which we learn from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

Instruction No. 1: Begin With A Reality Check

Any time we find ourselves drifting from our commitment to put God first, we must search our hearts to rediscover the reality of God’s love for us and to find again our real and true love for God. Sometimes we say we want to give our lives to Our Lord, yet we do little more than go through the motions.

When our commitment comes from a real desire to love God, in response to the great love of God for us, keeping first things first becomes not only possible but desirable.

Where is your relationship with God at this time in your life? How will you take a step toward a deeper relationship with God, knowing that Our Lord is always ready to embrace your heart with love?

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Instruction No. 2: Pay Attention:

Recognizing God's love for us and deepening our response to that love is the work of our lifetime. Notice Jesus' use of the foundational Shema prayer in response to the scribe's question. That prayer guides the Jewish people, and us, to nurture a total and all-encompassing love for God — with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Such love requires attention to the One who is loved; such love cannot be ignored!

Being completely truthful to yourself, how much attention do you give God? How might you take a step toward increasing your attention to God each day?

Instruction No. 3: Give Out of Love

Jesus' one commandment is twofold; love God, love neighbor. Because the scribe acknowledges Jesus' answer, we are told that he is not far from God's reign. Are we? Jesus links love of God with love of neighbor, yet often we try to keep our love for God in a neat and tidy place that seems to have little bearing on our actions. Jesus knows that when we love God, that love will be spilled out for others. The scribe who is not far from the kingdom of God understood this. Sometimes we need to recognize that we are blessed with talents and gifts that are meant to be shared. Disciples give of themselves in meaningful ways for others, especially the poor, lonely, imprisoned, sick and weak, by using their talents as reflections of God's grace in their lives. This call to being poured out in service helps us to prioritize our lives in gratitude for the talents, time and resources we have been given, and for the grace of God which propels us toward others.

How will you take a step toward identifying and offering your talents in service, out of love for God and others?

Instruction No. 4: Pray

It is not surprising to think of prayer as an important step on the path to put God first in our lives. Prayer is the way to place God in the center of our lives, knowing that God is there first! "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him," Jesus tells us, and then we are taught the Lord's Prayer (see Mt 6:8-13). By ordering our day around prayer, our days take on a more ordered tone. We are able to clearly keep the challenges, activities and responsibilities of life in perspective, and realize again and again that God is both the path and the destination of our walk, step by step.

"In bringing us to the reality of our life, prayer also introduces us to the reality of God's life. We are put in touch with the persons of the Holy Trinity, not through words but at a deeper level. We feel that we are from the Father and that our whole life is a journey toward God. We discover a sense of solidarity with the Word, in our being bonded with the person of Jesus and in our union with all the saints," Abbot Michael Casey writes in "Toward God" (Triumph, \$12.99). "We experience the presence of the Holy Spirit, inciting us to good, turning our thoughts to God, directing our actions, supplying for our weakness and, like a homing beacon for an incoming plane, guiding our steps toward the very heart of God."

How will you take a step toward more authentic participation in Mass, in the life of your parish, in the Sacrament of Penance? How might you draw others to Christ through the body of Christ, the Church?

Instruction No. 10: Learn from the saints

We recognize the saints as people who kept God first in their lives, often in the midst of the threat of bodily torture, imprisonment, persecution and trials beyond what most of us can imagine. We know that their resolve was not always without struggle. Still they found the grace to put God at the center of their lives and to order their thoughts, actions, decisions and relationships accordingly. As St. Teresa of Ávila prayed, "Let us make our way together, Lord; wherever you go I must go: and through whatever you pass, there too I will pass" ("The Way of Perfection," No. 26).

The saints who have gone before us lived as those whom Jesus describes as "blessed" in his Sermon on the Mount. They met the very real and challenging demands of life by placing their trust in God, and keeping God first before all else. They, like the scribe whom Jesus encountered, understood and embraced Jesus' path and found themselves "not far from the kingdom of God" in this life, and we believe they now enjoy God's presence for eternity.

How will you take a step toward putting God first in your life? Who stands as a model and inspiration for you? Who intercedes for you, asking the Lord to fill you with the wisdom and courage needed in order to grow in holiness?

Taking the Steps

We have considered 10 instructions for putting God first in our lives. What steps will you take in order to make God and God's ways your greatest priority?

How will you take a step toward:

- Loving and trusting God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?
- Being a good steward of your talents, time and resources out of love for God and others?
- Expressing your relationship with God in prayer, participation in Mass, reconciliation and the life of your faith community, and in your decision-making?
- Meaningful reflection on that which you treasure?
 - Putting God at the center of your life?

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DIOCESE of LAFAYETTE-IN-INDIANA

Bishop Doherty is dispensing from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass, but regularly scheduled public Masses will go on; this is in response to Governor Holcomb's announcement from March 12 that non-essential gatherings must be limited to no more than 250 people. This is not a permanent dispensation and we will provide updates as the situation evolves.

- Bishop Doherty will be celebrating 8:00 a.m. (Eastern) Mass at Church of the Blessed Sacrament for the next 3 Sundays (March 15, March 22, March 29) which will be livestreamed here: <http://churchoftheblessedsacrament.yourstreamlive.com/> and would love the presence of those unable to attend their parish Mass.
- If county schools are closed, then religious education and youth ministry events should be canceled as well.
- Starting Monday, March 16 all parish events should be canceled until April 6.
- All elderly (as defined by the health department as 60+ years of age) volunteers and those with compromised immune systems should stay home.
- Weddings/Funerals/Confirmations will continue as planned unless further recommendations are issued by the local health department. o We do recommend no funeral lunches after the Mass at this time.
- Parish meetings and small gatherings may continue as planned unless further recommendations are issued by the local health department.
- Communicate in your bulletin or online that persons who choose to stay home can still make the Lord's day holy by prayerfully reading and discussing together the Scriptures for Mass and making a Spiritual Communion together.
- Families should also strive to unite as family in charitable acts for those affected by the Coronavirus and other family devotions such as the Rosary, novenas, Lectio Divina and refrain from any unnecessary work.
- Continue to stress the importance that if you are sick or have symptoms, stay home from Mass.
- Food pantries may continue to serve those in need but please make sure your process includes a way for goods to be packaged in a sanitary way by volunteers and respects personal space. The personal protections for the physical safety of volunteers should be considered.
- We are following the guidelines of the state, therefore all prison and hospital visits should be limited to only priests at this time, if they are even allowed to visit.
- If you are in a parish with only one parish priest and the priest becomes ill there will be no service. Request that parishioners pray at home and watch a live streamed Mass.
- All nursing home and home-bound visits by laity should be canceled.
- Our older clergy need to be very careful and use their discretion about making homebound and nursing home visits.

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With only four classes remaining in the current SRE year it seemed prudent to cancel for the remainder of the year. For those preparing for your First Communion, Mrs. Douglas will be in contact to present all relevant materials for you to work at home in your preparation. We are still planning on Sunday, April 26th at the 10:00 a.m. Mass for your First Communion.

For those in the Confirmation preparation class your confirmation date is October 4th at the 10:00 a.m. Mass. I am sure that Dr. Mattingly will be able to communicate with you all the necessary information between now and then and perhaps during the summer or closer to the confirmation date you can all get together as we have in

the past.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for all our catechists. Each and everyone of you has been a beacon of light to this program and I am immensely proud of you. Tania Hanthorn has been with us the longest. She was teaching with her brother when I arrived. Each year she has demonstrated great professionalism and dedication to her students. Her classes have been informative and spot on when it comes to solid catechesis. I am grateful for her contribution to this program and the parish is lucky to have her.

Maria Curley has also been with us several years and has demonstrated a great sense as well of caring and compassion toward her students. She has remained a constant source of joyful presence and has radiated the true spirit of what it means to hand on the Faith.

Joining us over the past few years has been the Walz family, Aaron and Kara and their children have been very helpful to the program, taking on responsibilities and providing materials and activities for the students to enjoy and to grow from. I am grateful to them as well.

Melanie Douglas has been a great help to me personally especially in taking care of the protocol responsibilities we must follow and keeping records and communicating with the diocese. She has assumed this responsibility with great attention to detail to make sure that we have complied in every aspect of the program. I cannot say enough about the help she has been in this most important matter.

Dr. Mattingly has been an integral part of our confirmation program along with Mr. Ryan Douglas. Both have demonstrated a profound sense of what it means to be Christian and have successfully communicated this to their students. They are men dedicated to the faith and to their parish and this combination makes them very valuable to this program as they seek to assist the "next generation" to take responsibility by pursuing what it truly means to live "in the Spirit" in keeping with what we teach regarding the Sacrament of Confirmation. I am grateful to both of them.

Finally, I am happy to have had such a staff over the years and thanks to those who have been a part of this program since my arrival in 2007. I consider myself blessed to have known you all and can assure you all that you will be in my daily prayers and masses as I embark on the wonderful journey known as retirement. Blessings and Peace to you all.....*Fr. Dominic*

SUNDAY OFFERING

\$4169.00

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

ST. AUGUSTINE