



More News

The Seasonal Newsletter of
St. Thomas More Catholic Parish
Scranton, Pennsylvania

Lent 2020



From the Pastor

Dear Members & Friends,

On those occasions that I have made public presentations about the discipline of clerical celibacy in the Catholic Church, I have defended it as a gift to the faithful, in keeping with St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 7, to be exact. Though I am married, I have never sought to be a poster-boy for the married priesthood, seeking instead simply to be the most faithful servant I can be, grateful that by God's grace and mercy He has permitted my ordination and sacramental ministry within His Church. Indeed, although I have given talks about this matter in places as far afield as San Diego, California and Fairfax County, Virginia, I have never to my knowledge delivered this address to you, my own parishioners. Well-publicized happenings outside our parish, however, have prompted questions from so many of you that I believe now is the time for clarity from me, in order that you may have answers for our interlocutors.

Happily, Pope Francis' Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation did not provide for a regional exception in the Amazon to the Latin Church's millennium-old required discipline of priestly celibacy, a change that more than a few, perhaps unreasonably, expected to come. Even more notably, just prior to the Holy Father's announcement, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Robert Cardinal Sarah collaborated on a book, not yet published in English, in which the case for this venerable and ancient discipline is made far better than your humble pastor could hope to argue. Nevertheless, the unique exception made for me and so many of my brothers in our diocese requires that we be prepared immediately to evangelize our neighbors about how exactly celibacy is so good.

First, we must point out that Jesus himself was celibate. His celibacy was in no way a diminishment or a denial of His humanity, but stands rather as a sign of His complete devotion to His Eternal Spouse, the Church for whom He laid down His life. Moreover, he commends this complete devotion in St. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 19, which naturally implies

that the graces to fulfill this calling are available to those He calls to live it out. His undivided affection is the exemplary standard by which we must measure every man who stands in His place, in persona Christi, offering to God the Father, as another Christ, as an alter Christus, in an unbloody manner the same sacrifice offered on Calvary. The importance of this voluntary continence becomes even more apparent when, as has so often been the case in the history of Christ's Church, the priest is called to the martyrdom that receiving Holy Communion indicates he is prepared to suffer.

Therefore, the second salient point relates so closely to the first: the celibate priest enjoys the same radical freedom to serve – and die – that Jesus Himself possessed. As much as I love Jesus and His Church, as much as I love you, I am not as free to lay down my life as are my celibate brethren. My wife, Kristina, and my ten children must be taken into account in formulating for me any assignment or missionary endeavor. We ask, "So how risky is it?" Is it as dangerous as the Jesuit mission to England in the 16th century, when men knew their capture would mean torture and certain death at the hands of Queen Elizabeth the first? Well, then, I don't get to go, however valuable and necessary my gifts may be, for my ordination to the priesthood must never be construed as permission to abandon my responsibility to my beloved and our children. A just and merciful calculus, knowing already the danger ahead, requires that I, the married man, stay on the docks at Miletus and kiss the celibate St. Paul good-bye before he sails to the trials that await him (Acts 20).

Hence, the third explanation for why the Latin Church should retain the discipline of priestly celibacy as a universal norm has to do precisely with this image, the husband with just one bride for whom he is able unreservedly to pour out his life. To communicate as evangelists the love between Christ and His Church, how much easier is it to explain their exclusive devotion to each other when the priest has just one bride? The marital bond between Christ and His Church is paradoxically imaged better by the celibate priest united to his flock than by the married cleric with two commitments.

Once we can articulate these three unsailable reasons for the discipline of priestly celibacy, it should be clear that our circumstance at St. Thomas More is a sign of the Church's merciful kindness, to help effect the unity among His disciples for which Christ prayed on the first Holy Thursday (John 17). The Holy Father wanted to see our separated brethren united to Holy Mother Church, and the proof of that can be seen in his formation of the Personal Ordinariates in 2011 and 2012 in Australia, Europe, and North America, by which thousands of souls have become Catholic and scores more men in my situation have been ordained after their conversion to the Faith. We married priests are not the exception that will become the rule, but an exception from the rule that serves the greater purpose of unity. And this exception is a temporary one. Only celibate men from our parishes will henceforth be ordained priests.

The space allotted here does not permit me to address why celibacy for priests became the norm in the West, even as the Eastern Catholic Churches have never ceased to ordain married men. Thus, I will continue my thoughts here next month, in the next edition of *More News*, explaining why married men, including our first Pope, St. Peter, have always been ordained to the priesthood and why Pope Benedict XVI personally approved my ordination to the priesthood.

The uncomfortable spotlight now shining on our work comes fittingly at the beginning of Lent, which promises this year to give us ample opportunity to exercise the patience through which the ignorant are educated and by which glory is given to God. Remember how passionate people can be about these matters, and plead silently to the Holy Spirit for wisdom and charity before engaging both the congratulatory and the suspicious.

With gratitude for your commitment to the Church we love, which has so loved us, I am, faithfully,

Your servant in Christ,

The Rev. Eric L. Bergman

Worship

Eucharistic Adoration

Our monthly offerings of Eucharistic Adoration continue according to their regular pattern. **24-Hour Adoration** is offered on the **First Friday & Saturday of each month**. We begin at **4:30 p.m. on Friday** with Exposition of the Sacrament, and **Choral Evensong and Benediction** (sung by our Academy Choir), concluding at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday. **Mass** punctuates the 24 hours on **Saturday at 8:00**



a.m. Adorers are asked to sign up for a time slot on the sheet at the back of the church.

Monthly Adoration is also offered on the **First Sunday of each month**, immediately following 10:00 a.m. Solemn Mass until the Sacrament is reposed at 1:30 p.m.

All are warmly encouraged to avail themselves of these opportunities to pray, adore, and worship in our Lord's very presence.

Shrove Tuesday Evensong

Our annual observance of Shrove Tuesday – the last day before Lent – will take place on **Tuesday, February 25** with **5:30 p.m. Evensong** – sung by our Maria Kaupas Academy Choir – followed by our annual Shrove Tues-



day Pancake Supper (see our "Fellowship" section). Please consider taking the opportunity to invite friends to both, introducing them to both the beauty of our worship and the warmth of our company!

Ash Wednesday Masses

Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday, February 26**. **Said Mass with Imposition of Ashes** will be offered at **11:15 a.m.**, and **Solemn Mass with Imposition of Ashes** at our normal Wednesday Mass time, **5:30 p.m.** Please join



us for this solemn commencement of the season of fasting and penitence.

Stations of the Cross

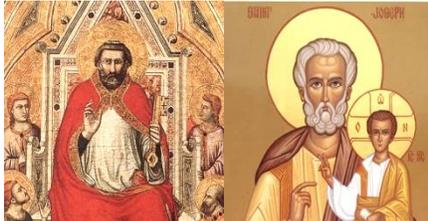
Among of the finest artistic jewels of St. Joseph Church are the Stations of the Cross. As always, we continue our practice of offering **Confessions at 4:30 p.m.** and **Stations of the Cross at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday eve-**



nings during Lent preceding 5:30 p.m. Mass, and Stations on **Friday evenings at 6:00 p.m.** (including *Good Friday*). Please join us on **Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m.** and/or **Fridays at 6 p.m.** for this quintessential Lenten devotion.

Masses for Chair of St. Peter, St. Joseph, & Annunciation

Given the respective patronage of our church building and our ecclesiastical jurisdiction, two Solemnities that feature prominently in our liturgical cycle at St. Thomas More are the Feasts of the **Chair of St. Peter**



(**February 22**) and **St. Joseph (March 19)**. Our observance of the former will be on **Sunday, February 23**, transferred to the nearest Sunday to enable maximum participation by the Ordinariate faithful. **St. Joseph Day** will be observed with **Solemn Vigil Mass on Wednesday, March 18 at 5:30 p.m.**, with said Masses on Thursday at 7:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

The Annunciation of our Lord falls each year on **March 25**... exactly nine months before Christmas. Falling this year on a Wednesday, **Said Mass** will be offered at **11:15 a.m.**, with **Solemn Mass at 5:30 p.m.** Please



note that while these days fall in Pre-Lent and Lent, parishioners may observe all these occasions as feast days, dispensing with Lenten disciplines

Holy Week / Easter Schedule



(7 p.m. and Lehigh Valley Masses according to usual schedule unless otherwise stated)

Palm Sunday, April 5, 10 a.m.

Sung Mass with reading of the Passion

Maundy Thursday, April 9, 7 p.m.

Solemn Mass with Washing of the Feet

Good Friday, April 10, 12 noon

Good Friday liturgy with Communion from the Reserved Sacrament

Holy Saturday, April 11, 8 p.m.

Solemn Vigil of Easter with Sacraments of Initiation

Easter Sunday, April 12, 10 a.m.

Solemn Mass for the Resurrection of the Lord - No 7:00 p.m. Mass -

Sarum Vespers in Philadelphia

The office of Vespers according to the Sarum Use – the pre-Reformation liturgy of Salisbury Cathedral, England, from which elements of our Divine Worship Missal are drawn – was offered on Candlemas Eve,



February 1 at the Church of St. Patrick in Philadelphia, with a congregation of over 700 in attendance. The liturgy was organized by Ordinariate parishioner James Griffin (of St. John the Baptist Parish, Bridgeport); the Officiant was Fr. Jason Catania (of St. Barnabus, Omaha); and our own "organist in absentia" **Deborah Rojas** sang in the choir. A video of the service is available online [here](#).

Discipleship

Lent Adult Education

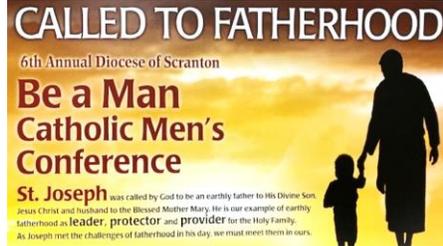
Our 2020 Lent Adult Education Series will follow the accustomed pattern of light potluck lunch following all 10:00 a.m. Sunday Masses throughout Lent, followed by a teaching session. Rather than adopting a pre-packaged video-based series, Fr. Bergman has decided to craft a series on **“Just War in the Catholic**



Tradition,” examining the Church’s teaching on the conditions under which it becomes morally permissible for a nation to wage war. Not merely dabbling in esoteric theory, the series will have more practical implications that one might initially suppose in a Parish with many young families, with military service being a live possibility for our childrens’ future occupations.

Catholic Men’s Conference

The annual Diocese of Scranton Catholic Men’s Conference will be offered on **Saturday, April 25 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Holy Redeemer High School** in Wilkes-Barre, focusing on the theme **“Called to Fatherhood.”** Guests include



Mike Aquilina, Fr. Glenn Sudano, Jim O’Day, and Bishop Joseph Bambera. Call 570-207-2213, or visit: www.BeAManConference.com.

Spring Parish Pilgrimage

Though our monthly Family Enrichment program of former years has more recently morphed into a less formal monthly birthday potluck lunch, the much-anticipated annual spring pilgrimage always undertaken by that ministry will by all means continue, now open

to the entire Parish. On **April 25 (pending approval)**, we will return to the **Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, Maryland,**



after many years since our first and only other visit. As always, our goal will be for the motor coach to be free of charge, though these funds are raised through our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and Spring Rummage Sale (see elsewhere in this newsletter), for which all prospective pilgrims are asked to volunteer, publicize, and patronize. Please contact Sandy Campbell to indicate your intent to attend.

Fellowship

“Neighbor Nights”

February 15, March 21

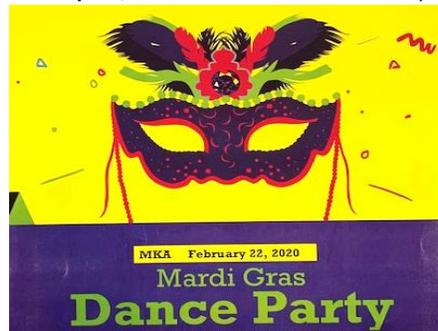
Our monthly Neighbor Nights continue on the **third Saturday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall**, featuring **FREE** pizza, pool, ping-pong, board games, wifi, conversation, and a movie on the big screen. These



events are intended to provide a low-threshold opportunity to invite non-Catholic or non-Christian friends and neighbors to experience our hospitality and fellowship. Happily, we have never had a Neighbor Night that has lacked guests from outside our Parish family, whether responding to our outdoor banner, personal invitation, or both. Please pray about a friend or neighbor *you* would like to invite; a flyer is available [here](#).

Mardi Gras Ball Feb. 22

A Mardi Gras Ball will be offered in the Parish Hall on **Saturday, February 22, 6:00-10:00 p.m.**, a fundraiser for Maria Kaupas



Academy. *This is a whole parish/school/family /friends event!* Purchased in advance, tickets are \$7 per person, capped at \$25 per family; at the door, \$8 per person, capped at \$30. Please contact [Katy Kadonoff](#) for more information or tickets.

Donut Sale February 23

Krispy Kreme donuts will be sold for \$8 a dozen after 10 a.m. Mass on **Sunday, February 23** (just before Lent!) in support of Maria Kaupas Academy. Please alert [Katy Kadonoff](#)



if you’d like a dozen (or more) set aside; they can also be picked up the following day.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Our annual observance of Shrove Tuesday – a final day of feasting to “fatten up” for the Lenten fast – will take place on **Tuesday evening, February 26**. Evensong will be sung



at 5:30 p.m., followed by the annual **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper** in the Parish Hall (**\$6/person, \$25 max per family**), raising funds for the annual spring pilgrimage. Please plan to join us for a delicious supper, and invite your friends and neighbors!

Second Sunday Birthday Potlucks

A reminder that our recently formalized tradition of a potluck lunch on the **second Sunday of each month** in celebration of birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and other



annual commemorations among parish families continues next on **March 8**. All are welcome! Please bring a dish to share, and families of those celebrating, please bring cake (or another treat) and birthday candles.

Outreach

St. Joseph Day Bake Sale

Continuing a variation of the Italian tradition we acquired during our congregation's time at St. Anthony of Padua Church during our early nomadic existence, we will again hold a bake sale to benefit the poor on the **Sunday closest to St. Joseph Day** (in this case, **Sunday, March 22**). Please bring your favorite baked goods that morning, and plan to pur-



chase others after Mass! All proceeds will be donated to **St. Francis of Assisi Kitchen** in downtown Scranton. Volunteers are needed to coordinate the event, price items, and staff the table after Mass; please speak with Fr. Bergman if you can help.

Rummage Sale April 18

Our annual Spring Rummage Sale – whereby the funds are raised to cover the costs of the annual spring pilgrimage – has been scheduled for **Saturday, April 18, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.**, a date that provides a freed-up Parish Hall during the Academy's post-Easter break. Item donations from members and friends are

gratefully encouraged between now and the event. Volunteers, baked goods, and kitchen help will also be key to the success of this sale; thank you for doing your part to help, particularly if you plan to attend the pilgrimage funded by the sale.



Evangelization

Former Anglican Joins Bishop Barron's Institute

Readers may recall that a year ago we reported on an Episcopal Canon to the Ordinary coming into full communion with the Catholic Church. We are pleased to report that



Andrew Petiprin has now joined Bishop Robert Barron's Word on Fire Institute as Fellow of Popular Culture.

The Word on Fire Institute is a community of evangelists who share in Bishop Barron's mission and desire to proclaim Christ to the culture using beauty, goodness, and truth. Subscribers receive an easy-to-use digital platform offering specialized training, community discussions, live presentations, and courses in theology, philosophy, evangelization, and cul-

ture from Bishop Barron and the Word on Fire Institute Fellows on any of their digital devices.

Online readers can view a video interview with the Yale- and Oxford-educated scholar by two other Institute Fellows [here](#), describing his journey first to the Anglican tradition and then into the Catholic Church, his role at the institute, and some of his favorite books and films.

Queen's Former Chaplain Becomes Catholic

The Tablet reports: A prominent Anglican clergyman and former chaplain to the Queen, Gavin Ashenden, has been received into the Catholic Church.

"In an article for The Tablet he explains: 'I am awash with relief, a sense of fully belonging, and with an unashamed sense of the depth, richness and authenticity of the fullness of Catholic faith.'

Ashenden, who had also been ordained bishop in a continuing Anglican church after leaving the Church of England, was received by Bishop of Shrewsbury Mark Davies. Now a member of the laity, his bishop has written to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith asking for his future to be considered, which could possibly open the door to ordination as a Catholic priest.



"Married with grown-up children and a grandson, Ashenden could nevertheless receive special dispensation to become a Catholic priest. Many married former Anglican clergy have been ordained Catholic priests, both through the Ordinariate and through such special dispensation.

"Ashenden, 66, told The Tablet that his journey to Rome had been 'straightforward', like being on a moving escalator. He quoted Britain's most famous convert, St John Henry Newman, canonised this year: 'To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.' He said: 'The culture has been moving in one direction while I have been moving in the other.'

"He had been convergent with the Catholic faith for a long time, but needed something extra to make the final leap. 'It was probably my local bishop saying, Come and help us.' He had also received many emails from other

people along similar lines, but thought carefully because, as he puts it, becoming a Catholic is not like joining a team. It involves a major submission to authority.

"The history of this is that the Church of England has been negotiating the pace of cultural change for 40 to 50 years. This has had a political dimension to it.' One of the things he had hoped for back in 2012, when agreement to ordain women bishops was reached, was a third province as a home for 'catholic' Anglicans. He was then asked to accept episcopal responsibility in another Anglican body, one outside the Anglican Communion. When he realised that this was not going to lead to a coming-together of like-minded traditionalists and conservative evangelicals, he began once again to consider his future, and where his ecclesial home might lie.

"He was looking for stability and coherence. "The only ecclesial outfit that does provide that ecclesial glue through the Magisterium is the Catholic Church."

AP Carries Major Story on Former Anglican Married Catholic Priests

The Associated Press has produced a major article on formerly Anglican married Catholic Priests, entitled "[Father Josh: A rare married Catholic priest in a celibate tradition.](#)" The article takes as its subject Fr. Josh Whitfield, one of the "Fort Worth Six," a wave of six Texas Episcopal Priests received into the Catholic Church and ordained in 2012. While Fr. Whitfield opted to be incardinated in the local diocese rather than taking the Ordinariate route, the article nonetheless can serve to educate both non-Catholics and Catholics alike in a reality about which few are even aware. Tim Sullivan writes, in part:

"The priest wakes up at 4 a.m. on the days he celebrates the early Mass, sipping coffee and enjoying the quiet while his young children sleep in rooms awash in stuffed animals and Sesame Street dolls and pictures of saints. Then he kisses his wife goodbye and drives through the empty suburban streets of north Dallas to the church he oversees.

"In a Catholic world where debates over clerical celibacy have flared from Brazil to the Vatican, Joshua Whitfield is that rarest of things: A married Catholic priest.

"The Roman Catholic church has demanded celibacy of its priests since the Middle Ages, calling it a 'spiritual gift' that enables men to devote themselves fully to the church. But as a shortage of priests becomes a crisis in parts of the world, liberal wings in the church have been arguing that it's time to reassess that stance. On Wednesday, Pope Francis side-stepped the latest debate on celibacy, releasing an eagerly awaited document that avoided any mention of recommendations by

Latin American bishops to consider ordaining married men in the Amazon, where believers can go months without seeing a priest.

"Even the most liberal of popes have refused to change the tradition. It is 'the mark of a heroic soul and the imperative call to unique and total love for Christ and His Church,' Pope Paul VI wrote in 1967.

"Then there's Josh Whitfield.

"Whitfield is a husband, a father of four and a relentlessly good-natured priest beloved by the parishioners at Dallas' St. Rita Catholic Community. His life is spent juggling two worlds. He celebrates Mass, he hears confessions; he drives his son to karate practice, he encourages his oldest daughter's love of baseball. He is, he says, 'an ecclesiastical zoo exhibit,' one of the tiny community of married priests — men who slipped through a clerical loophole created 40 years ago — that even most Catholics don't know exist.

"But inside St. Rita, he's just Father Josh.

"It's people like you who are interested in married priests. Here at St. Rita we just get on with it. My job is just to do the tasks the bishop



has given me as best I can, and try and make it work,' he said in an interview in his book-filled office, where photos of his wife and children vie for space with photos of popes and sketches of his religious heroes.

"There are around 125 married Roman Catholic priests like Whitfield, an Episcopal convert, across the U.S., experts say, and perhaps a couple hundred total around the world.

"Surveys of Catholics show widespread backing for a married priesthood. ...But there's one very small, very notable Catholic constituency that mostly doesn't support opening up the priesthood to married men: Married priests themselves.

"So many of the married priests, like myself, hold this sort of strange, almost contradictory position. And I get that it's hard to understand. But that's sort of the irritating beauty of Catholicism. The church persistently thinks theologically, and not sociologically and not politically, at her best,' said Whitfield.

"The Catholic Church, which includes nearly two dozen rites, allows married priests in its Eastern Rite churches. It also allows in some married priests like Whitfield, a former Episcopal priest who converted to Catholicism with his wife, Alli, in 2009 and was ordained as a Catholic priest three years later.

"Whitfield, 41, became a Catholic priest in 2012 through the Pastoral Provision, a set of rules crafted by Pope John Paul II in 1980 that gives married Episcopal priests who have converted to Catholicism the chance to apply for ordination in the Catholic church. The process, which can take years, includes everything from psychological interviews to exams on Catholic theology and, in the end, a special dispensation from the pope.

"Many of the married converts had become disenchanted with the Episcopal church as they watched it grow increasingly liberal in recent decades, amid bitter battles over such issues as women priests and gay marriage. ...Whitfield, who left the Episcopal church in part because he was alienated by the bitterness of its divisions, and felt called to the traditionalism and obedience of Catholicism, avoids debates about celibacy.

"There's a clear joy in how he and Alli have made it work. With four children under 10 years old, they live amid the chaos of school and sports and toys and birthday parties. Dinners can be loud, bathtimes can be challenging and scheduling for so many children can be relentlessly complicated. It is, Whitfield says, 'a mess of a beautiful family.'

"Whitfield is a gentle-spoken man who beats himself up over his bad Spanish and wonders sometimes if he spends enough time with his children. He's a relentless reader — his shelves hold everything from Jane Austen to Dickens to Ta-Nehisi Coates to treatises on Catholic theology and a biography of St. Benedict. Theirs is, in many ways, a traditional marriage: he works; she oversees the house and the kids.

"The demands on Whitfield are relentless: Masses, confession, church administration, counseling, bureaucratic issues with the church's school, regional clergy meetings. Both sometimes find themselves wrestling with the dual pulls of the church and family. 'It would be nice if he would be with us on a Saturday morning,' said Alli, because that's when Josh often has Mass and confession and she is juggling soccer games and birthday parties.

"[Alli] sees her family as completely normal, albeit more conservative and religious than most. When Whitfield was wrestling with his Episcopalian faith, her concerns were often more prosaic. 'We were at this nice (Episcopal) church and they were supportive of us. We knew where his paychecks were coming from. And if we became Catholic all that would stop. I think that was the big fear for me: Your husband not having a job all of a sudden.'

"Sometimes, she's still surprised at where she has found herself after meeting Josh in college, when she was just out of her teens. 'I didn't ask for any of this. I was a 20-year-old girl just praying for a man with some faith. But you know, I guess God thought this would be pretty funny.'"

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Shrove Tuesday Evensong & Pancake Supper

Tuesday, February 25

- 5:30 p.m. Evensong
- 6:30 p.m. Supper
- \$6/person, \$25 max/family



Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 26

- 11:15 a.m. Said Mass with Ashes
- 5:30 p.m. Solemn Mass with Ashes



Adult Education

Sundays in Lent

- Potluck Lunch & Program after 10 a.m. Mass: "Just War in the Catholic Tradition"



Stations of the Cross

- 5:00 p.m. Wednesdays
- 6:00 p.m. Fridays



Confessions

- Prior to All Masses
- 4:30 p.m. Wednesdays

Special Solemnities

Chair of St. Peter, February 23

- 10 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sung Masses



St. Joseph, March 19

- Solemn Vigil Mass Mar. 18, 5:30 p.m.
- Said Masses Mar. 19, 7 & 11:15 a.m.



Annunciation, March 25

- Said Mass 11:15 a.m.
- Solemn Mass 5:30 p.m.