

3rd SUNDAY OF LENT

ST. NICHOLAS PARISH

From the Pastor's Desk

Today we observe the Third Sunday of Lent. Lent is quickly passing. With this Sunday we are getting into the serious business of Lent after the stage was set by the last two Sundays. On the First Sunday of Lent we always read one of the Gospel accounts of Jesus being tested in the desert by the devil after his Baptism in the Jordan. During his forty days in the desert Jesus was tempted by Satan. We have embarked on our "forty days in the desert" of Lent in which we face the temptations that lead us to sin. Last Sunday we read one of the Gospel accounts of the Transfiguration of Jesus: this year it was from Matthew. Jesus is glorified in the presence of Peter, James, and John. Moses and Elijah joined him in his glory. Jesus is the central figure and thus the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. The Glory he shares with them is no less than the Glory of God. The Glory of God shines through the Law and the Prophets. It shines in its fullness and perfectly in and through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, is the perfect revelation of God. Thus, we hear the words..." *This is my beloved Son, listen to him.*"

Now, starting with the Third Sunday of Lent we focus on this year's theme for our Sunday liturgies: personal conversion. Today's Gospel is about *the Woman at the Well*. Next Sunday we read about *the Man Born Blind*. Then finally the Fifth Sunday of Lent we read the miracle story of Jesus restoring to life his friend *Lazarus who was dead*. All three are stories about individuals who encountered Jesus. These encounters lead to life changing conversions and in the case of Lazarus restoring to life. These "signs" in the Gospel of St. John mirror the conversion celebrated in the Sacraments of Initiation.

When we at last get to Palm Sunday, we will read of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of Mass and the Passion according to St. Matthew as the Gospel passage for the mass.

All these readings are a wellspring for meditation. There are numerous themes that we can draw upon for our spiritual nourishment. One important theme for this Sunday is about the conversion available to us through the life-giving Grace that flows abundantly from Christ. "*If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.*" The living water is surely an image of Baptism. It also refers to the continuing flow of the Grace of Baptism that endures through our lives. We are reborn in Baptism and the Grace of Baptism always refreshes and renews throughout our lives. We have new life in Christ and Christ continually refreshes our lives. However, we need to be conscious of the Grace of Baptism and appeal to it throughout our lives. We must cooperate with the Grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Grace is not magic. Some think of Grace as a magical gift from God that makes everything alright without our having to do anything. Grace properly understood builds on nature and does not set it aside or change it. We must ask, and we must cooperate with Grace. Our efforts are transformed and elevated by the grace of God. It is an important thing for us to appeal to the grace of our Baptism trusting that we have the necessary assistance we need to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

The Christian is a pilgrim in this life. We are on our way to the Kingdom of God. All along the way we will be met with temptations to divert us from our journey. These temptations try to distract us from our Christian faith with allurements or discouragement along the way. These are persistent. Often, we experience setbacks, failures or difficulties that test our resolve

and tempt us to throw in the towel and just abandon our Christian way of life. Left to our own efforts we get worn out and wonder if it is worth it. We need Grace to endure.

During these times we need to recall our baptism. We must trust the grace given to us to continue our personal pilgrimage. This grace is the life-giving water that renews and refreshes us along the way. This grace comes from Christ through his Church.

The *Man Born Blind* is the man who encounters Christ and suddenly sees clearly. What a shock that must have been. His blindness could be considered normal. His blindness was his way of "seeing" and understanding the world. In his encounter with Christ he suddenly sees the world in a completely different way. He is enlightened by Christ. It is a dramatic difference in seeing the world from a purely human perspective (blindness) and seeing life through the eyes of faith given by Christ. When we look at the world from a purely human point of view, we understand the world from a very narrow perspective. We can say that if we only look at life from our narrow perspective; we are blinded to the full reality. When our eyes are opened by Jesus as it were, we look at the world, life or reality in a completely different way. With Jesus we see with new eyes: *eyes of faith*. This is the work of the Holy Spirit: pointing to the Sacrament of Confirmation. We humbly desire to see as God would have us see the world. We need the gifts of the Holy Spirit to see and understand our world as God would have us.

Finally, as part of the path of conversion we come to the story of the raising of *Lazarus from the dead*. In this story we read that Jesus tells Lazarus' sisters... "*I am the Resurrection and the Life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.*" Jesus the Savior gives us new life. Jesus gives us his life in Word and Sacrament. This points us to the pinnacle of the Sacraments; the Eucharist. The same imagery is in the Gospel of John chapter 6: The Bread of Life. "*Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.*" John 6:53. Jesus comes to Lazarus, once dead, and raises him and restores his life. Lazarus resumes living his new life in this world. I suspect Lazarus lived his new life in a completely different way. Living a life worthy of the gift he has received: the gift of life in Christ. In the Eucharist we too must live a life worthy of the incredible gift we have received from Jesus: the gift new life in Christ.

We are reborn in baptism. We have the grace of baptism always available to us throughout our lives. On our pilgrimage we journey along seeing life in a new way with the eyes of faith. We are renewed and refreshed by Christ in Word and Sacrament. The object of our faith and the final destination of our pilgrimage is Jesus Christ; who is the Resurrection and the Life. Jesus Christ is the Lord of life and our Savior. This is the Good News of the Gospel. This is the gracious gift of God. Thus, we are to live a life worthy of the gift we have received.

As we continue along our Lenten path, we examine our conscience in prayerful reflection. We honestly recall our baptismal call to be followers of Jesus Christ. We renew our dependence on the grace we have been given in Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. We may have failed along the way, but we stop, express sorrow and continue our pilgrimage.

We enter the simple and serious practices of prayer, fasting, abstinence and almsgiving to assist our lives in seeing the world with the *eyes of faith*. We take inventory of our lives and resolve to live the new life and understanding we have received.

We open our lives to grow in greater Faith, Hope and Love in our relationship with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Lent is to remind us that we have all we need to reach the Kingdom of God. We have the grace, the vision and the promise of eternal life if we but believe in Jesus Christ. During Lent we pause and pray, we reflect and discern our lives in order to draw closer to the Lord. We are sorry for the times we squandered those blessings through our sinfulness, and we seek opportunities to grow in the grace of God.

With minds and hearts open to the grace of this holy season we ask God to assist us along our pilgrimage to the Kingdom of God and the celebration of the Paschal Mystery.

Have a blessed Lenten week.
Father Ralko

ELCETRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS

St. Nicholas Church has a convenient way to make your regular offerings. With our electronic giving program, you can easily set up a recurring giving schedule. We encourage you to set up a schedule of recurring contributions. It's convenient for you and provides much-needed consistency for our church. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. Even when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, our church will continue to receive your contributions on an uninterrupted basis. To become an electronic giver, call or visit the church office for a brief form to fill out.

LENTEN GREETING CARD PROJECT

Seasonal cards are sent throughout the year to all Catholics living in area nursing homes and to homebound parishioners. Birthday cards are sent to all senior parishioners. This year's we need cards for Easter (with a religious message), summer and fall, Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day. Volunteers will add appropriate greetings to blank cards. A basket has been placed in the church vestibule for your donations. Monetary donations may be placed in an envelope identified for Lenten Greeting Card Project and placed in the collection basket. Thank you for helping to keep those who cannot join us at Mass feel connected to our parish community. If a member of your family is homebound and you have not notified the parish office, please do so as soon as possible. If you have any questions about the project, please call Rosalyn Headington at 740-454-0274.

This week we pray Week III of the Liturgy of the hours.

Church Support

March 8, 2020	
OFFERTORY	\$13,074.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$9,185.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly deficit	\$2,325.00

Josephinum Seminary to host Spring "Live-In" Weekend: The Pontifical College Josephinum (www.pcj.edu) will host a spring live-in weekend from **4:00 p.m. Thursday, March 26, through noon Saturday, March 28**, for young men of high-school and college age, along with men who already have their undergraduate degrees who are discerning a vocation to the priesthood. There is no cost associated with the live-in experience, however registration is required. For more information please contact Father Michael Lumpe, Vice-Rector, at mlumpe@pcj.edu, or Arminda Crawford at acrawford@pcj.edu; both can also be reached by calling the Josephinum at 614-885-5585. The Pontifical College Josephinum is located at 7625 North High Street, Columbus, 43235.

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

Lenten Fish Fries at Knights of Columbus Council 505



Knights of Columbus Council 505 at 275 Sunrise Center will have Fish Fries during lent every Friday throughout Lent, except Good Friday. Meals will be served from 4:00 – 9:00

p.m. **STATIONS OF THE CROSS:** After enjoying a delicious fish dinner at the K of C, join us for Stations of the Cross at St. Nicholas. Retrace the final journey of Jesus Christ to Calvary Fridays of Lent at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome!

Spring cleanup –Mt. Olive Cemetery will begin cleaning off wintertime decorations in preparation for mowing at the end of March. Families are advised to remove any personal keepsakes they wish to retain before March 29.

Did you know that the Palms from last year's Palm Sunday are sacramentals? Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. They prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it. When sacramentals no longer serve a purpose, they cannot be thrown in the trash, they must be disposed of reverently. The proper way is to burn them and bury the ashes, or simply bury them in the ground where no one will walk. To aid in the disposal of last year's palms, a collection station has been placed in the vestibule. Palms may be placed in the box found on the table near the steps to the choir loft. After Easter, they will be buried at Mt. Olive Cemetery.

BRHS Shimmer of the Night Auction and Dinner ~ Saturday, April 4, 2020

Cocktails and Silent Auction Begin at 6:00 p.m. Dinner served at 7:00 p.m. and Grand Auction at 8:00 p. m. RSVP by March 20 to 740.452-7504 or www.catholicschoolsofzanesville.org Individual tickets \$50, Couple \$100, Corporate \$550. Sponsorship and donation opportunities available ~ contact Ashley Moyer 740.704-1585 or ashley@ashlevmoyer.com

PILGRIMAGE TO CAREY: The annual Sadie Corey Pilgrimage to the Our Lady of Consolation Basilica and Shrine in Carey, Ohio, will take place on May 6. Trip includes bus transportation to and from Carey and hot lunch. Cost is \$47 per person. Reservations are due April 2. Checks can be made payable to Margaret Kronenbitter, 2700 Wayne Ridge Rd., Zanesville. For further details, call Mary Margaret Murphy at 740-452-4454 or Margaret Kronenbitter at 740-453-7657.

3rd SUNDAY OF LENT

ATTENTION ALL ALTAR SERVERS, LECTORS, AND EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION, PLEASE SEND YOUR MASS PREFERENCES FOR APRIL AND MAY NO LATER THAN MARCH 17TH. SPECIAL MASSES INCLUDE: HOLY THURSDAY – 7:00 P.M.; GOOD FRIDAY – 2:00 P.M.; EASTER VIGIL AT DUSK; EASTER SUNDAY 8:15, AND 10:45, MAY 2ND – 1ST COMMUNION – 11:00 A.M.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS SCHEDULE

It is your responsibility to find a substitute if needed.

March 22, 2020
4th Sunday of Lent

Saturday, March 21 @ 5:15 p.m.

Cantor: Jim Gable
Lectors: Tom J. Pitcock, Adelaide Pitcock
Servers: Rex Hankinson, Logan Pratt
Eucharistic Minister – Coord: Dan Snider
Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Judy Hamilton, Karen Robinson
Eucharistic Ministers: Jon Calendine

Sunday, March 22 @ 8:15 a.m.

Cantor: Sandy Black
Lector: Peggy Hill, Patti Logan
Servers: David Eppley, Caiden Hogue
Eucharistic Minister- Coord: Dan Sylvester
Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Theresa Hogue, Marvin Paul
Eucharistic Ministers: Cheryl Sylvester

Sunday, March 22 @ 10:45 a.m.

Cantor: Kerby Staker
Lectors: Wendy Hart, Sam Palleschi
Servers: Nathan Hart, Justin Hart
Eucharistic Minister - Coord: Karen Hardman
Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Jim McKee, Mary Mirgon
Eucharistic Ministers: Larry Taylor

Our thoughts and prayers remain with those serving our country currently and with their loved ones at home. We pray for a safe homecoming and that the world may one day be at peace.

PLEASE REMEMBER ST. NICHOLAS PARISH IN YOUR WILL. CALL THE PARISH OFFICE AT 453-0597 FOR MORE DETAILS.

Praying the Rosary will resume in the St. Nicholas Parish Office Chapel at 2:00 p.m. sometime in March. The exact date will be published in the bulletin.

What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, March 16

7:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m., Confessions, Church
8:00 a.m., Mass: Florence Schoeppner, Church

TUESDAY, March 17, St. Patrick

8:00 a.m., Mass: Clara Shumate, Church
9:30 a.m., Tuesday Morning Bible Study, Parish Office

WEDNESDAY, March 18, St. Cyril of Jerusalem

8:10 a.m., School Mass: Michael E. Nestor, Church
11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m., Confessions, Church
6:15 p.m., Rosary, Parish Chapel
7:00 p.m., R.C.I.A., Parish Office

THURSDAY, March 19, St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

8:00 a.m., Mass: L/D Members of the Hohman & Crum Families, Church

FRIDAY, March 20

8:00 a.m., Mass: Glenn Sidwell, Anniversary, Church
5:30 p.m.- 6:30 p.m. Confessions, Church
7:00 p.m., Stations of the Cross, Church

4th Sunday of Lent

SATURDAY, March 21

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church
5:15 p.m., Mass: Barb Mendelson, Church

SUNDAY, March 22

8:15 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church
9:15 a.m.-10:30 a.m., Religious Education, Bishop Fenwick
10:45 a.m., Mass: June Shawger, Church

Readings for Week of March 16

Mon.	2 Kgs 5:1-15b	Lk 4:24-30
Tues.	Dn 3:25, 34-43	Mt 18:21-35
Wed	Dt 4:1, 5-9	Mt 5:17-19
Thurs.	2 Sm 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16	Lk 2:41-51a
Fri.	Hos 14:2-10	Mk 12:28-34
Sat.	Hos 6:1-6	Lk 18:9-14
Sun	1 Sm 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a	Jn 9:1-41

LOOKING FOR A GIFT?! - We have a collection of beautiful handcrafted rosaries and bracelets donated to the church for the benefit of the window project. The value of the rosary's ranges from \$20.00 to more than \$300.00 (Swarovski crystals). Bracelets start at \$10.00. They will be available for purchase at the parish office. Great gifts for First Communion, Confirmation, Anniversaries, etc.