

## 4th SUNDAY OF LENT

From the Pastor's Desk

Today we celebrate the Fourth Sunday in Lent. Traditionally this is referred to as "*Laetare*" Sunday which is translated from the Latin as "*Rejoice*" Sunday. This sets the tone of joyful anticipation of the Easter mystery. For the liturgy the priest wears the Rose-colored vestment to signify this joyful anticipation. Lent is more than halfway through and we take a joyful break as we take a breath and renew our efforts in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We do this especially if we have failed in our resolutions. We can restart anew; so, rejoice. As we renew our resolve, we prepare ourselves to hear and respond to the call for greater conversion as we set about our Lenten journey for a few more weeks.

Having our minds and hearts set on greater conversion, it may have proven itself to be more difficult and in particular considering the many things that are happening these days globally and at home. With the present coronavirus pandemic, we are dreadfully preoccupied. During these days we are asked to stay close to home and lay low as much as possible. I know that my parish duties have been greatly curtailed: there are strict limitations for nursing home visits; the schools are closed for at least the next three weeks; meetings have been cancelled and many other things have been cancelled or postponed. If anything, all of this has created an inconvenience for our daily routines.

Now that our daily routines are disrupted, we are forced to take time to account for those things that we have taken for granted. We are blessed with so many things that we take for granted: our coming and going at will; the convenience of grocery stores; restaurants; coming to mass. There are so many things that are important in our daily lives that we do not fully appreciate. These are very important for the healthy functioning of our lives. We are now being forced to evaluate our routines, our priorities and the way we use them.

Nevertheless, we are smart enough to deal with this. We need to keep and use our wits about us. We just must use the brains God has given us and use common sense to make good decisions for those who are dependent on us and ourselves as well. A caution needs to come into play: the use of social media. Good information is a good thing to communicate. Just the same, bad information and gossip are not.

One particular inconvenience has to do with the practical business of our parish. The obligation to attend Sunday mass has been sensibly lifted. I will continue to offer the Sunday masses: I live here and am not going anywhere: literally. Many have used their good judgement and determine to opt out of attending Sunday Mass. This is good. However, I ask that you would be mindful that we still have bills to pay to keep the parish running during these days. We will be facing a situation that will financially cripple our parish. This situation looms over us considering the next three weeks and possibly longer (I hope not). With everything that is happening I am asking you to keep this in mind. It is our parish and we have a great responsibility to care for our parish employees, the various ministries that are an integral part of the mission of the Church and our facilities. Please continue to make your weekly offerings. If you miss a weekend, please double down the next weekend or mail in your contribution. This is very important. I would not be bringing it to your attention if it were not a serious concern.

With this in mind, we have received a notice from the Diocese of Columbus concerning a *scam* that people are receiving via email, text, phone etc.... It is directed to those who are thinking about or using electronic transfers for their contributions.

The following notice was communicated to the parish: "*Please be aware of communications via email or text or possibly even phone calls concerning alternate routing of your offertory if you are not able to make it to Mass at your parish. Already, some phony communications have been received by parishioners (in the diocese) who thought that the situation was odd. They had the sense to contact their parish office and, in doing so, discovered that their hunch was correct - - this was indeed a scam. Please do not become a victim to any type of financial scam. If you receive a communication about any financial aspect in relationship to your parish, schools, or social outreach, please contact your parish office by phone to authenticate that communication.*"

With this in mind, it has been suggested to me that we should seriously consider electronic transfer of funds for our parish offertory collection. I know that many parishes already have this in place and many of our parishioners also use this method for their contributions. I am a little "old school" on this and think it is important for Catholics to come to church and make their offering at the appropriate time of the mass. It is subtle but I think the physical act of making an offering is important as part of our Sunday mass: it is part of our conscience participation. However, the "new school" people tell me that almost all people do their banking and pay bills online. So, if parishioners are interested in starting to make their parish contributions with electronic transfers, please contact the parish office and the parish secretary would be more than glad to help you set this up. Thank God they are good at this sort of thing.

In this time of need the Bishops of the United States encourage us to pray and more specifically to seek the maternal intercession of our Blessed Mother: Our Lady of Guadalupe. They proposed this prayer.

*"Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas; we fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son as you did at the wedding in Cana.*

*Pray for us, loving Mother and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels that we may be spared the worst of this illness.*

*For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust.*

*In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind. Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.*

*We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy.*

*Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, and help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen."*

**BREAKING NEWS:** At this moment as I finish this column (Monday afternoon) a major communication landed in my email. The Bishops of Ohio have, with great sorrow, cancelled all public masses in the state until Holy Week. This news is a heartfelt sorrow. I will immediately have their Letter put on our parish website and inserted in this bulletin. This is very difficult!

As we have further developments that concern our diocese, our parish and the Catholic community in Zanesville we will communicate the information to you by way of our parish website: [www.stnickparish.org](http://www.stnickparish.org)

Take good care of yourselves and with the Grace of God we will get through this.

My prayers and best wishes for a good Lent.  
Father Ralko

## This week we pray Week IV of the Liturgy of the hours.

# Church Support

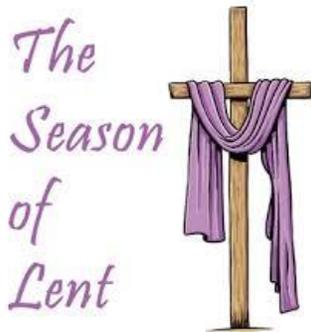
March 15, 2020	
OFFERTORY	\$9,424.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$5,535.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly deficit	\$(1,325.00)

**May God bless you for supporting your parish!**

**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.

### ELECTRONIC 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.

**Bishop Rosecrans High School is seeking a head football coach for the 2020-2021 school year. If interested, please send a cover letter and resume to Kelly Sagan, Executive Director at [ksagan@cducation.org](mailto:ksagan@cducation.org). Deadline to apply is March 25, 2020.**

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.

**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.



## Laetare Sunday



The Fourth Sunday of Lent is called **Laetare Sunday**, from the first words of the Introit at Mass, "Laetare Jerusalem" ('Rejoice, O Jerusalem').

Like Gaudete Sunday midway through Advent, Laetare reminds us of the event we look forward to at the end of the penitential season and the joy in anticipation of the Resurrection. The vestments for this day will be rose, as they are on Gaudete Sunday in Advent.

 Catholic Fortress

*"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again" JOHN 4:13*

## 4th SUNDAY OF LENT

Dear Heavenly Father,

We are moved by the alarming news and crisis that our country is facing.

This, the greatest nation, founded in the belief that "In God We Trust" & the "Land of the Free". Please have mercy on those suffering, hurting and in fear, and give wisdom & strength to those who are assisting. May the forces of evil be broken by your power and may we humble before thee, our strength and refuge.

Give wisdom to our President & our leaders and bring your comforting peace through the power of your Holy Spirit. Help us here to reach to those that have been affected by this tragedy.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*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 23  
NO MASS

TUESDAY, March 24  
NO MASS

WEDNESDAY, March 25  
NO MASS

THURSDAY, March 26  
NO MASS

FRIDAY, March 27  
NO MASS

## *5th Sunday of Lent*

SATURDAY, March 28  
NO MASS

SUNDAY, March 29  
NO MASS

### *Readings for Week of March 23*

Mon. . . . .	Is 65:17-21	Jn 4:43-54
Tues. . . . .	Ez 47:1-9, 12	Jn 51-16
Wed . . . . .	Is 7:10-14; 8:10	Lk 1:26-38
Thurs. . . . .	Ex 32:7-14	Jn 5:31-47
Fri. . . . .	Wis 2:1a, 12-22	Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
Sat. . . . .	Jer 11:18-20	Jn 7:40-53
Sun . . . . .	Ez 37:12-14	Jn 11:1-45

**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.

