

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

From the Pastor's Desk

Today is the Second Sunday of the Lenten Season. By now we should be well into our Lenten Spiritual exercises of Prayer, Fasting/Abstinence and Almsgiving/Acts of Charity. These simple little exercises are effective in the conversion of the heart and mind to God. They all have an external expression, but they cannot stay at that level. They must go deeper. We say our prayers which is a good and excellent practice. However, we must internalize our prayers. When we internalize, we take our prayers to heart. They are intended to orient our hearts to God. That which dwells in the heart are those things that are of great importance. When we pray about the mysteries of our faith; the teachings of the Church, we work to internalize them. Once internalized, they become real and touch every aspect of our lives. When we are drawn closer to God, we manifest the virtues of religion in our thoughts and actions. In essence this is holiness. We pray to orient our lives to God and to grow in our Catholic Christian faith.

There are so many things that we let occupy our thoughts as well as our hearts. They are usually pleasant, and we mull them over and over. The more we do this the more they become a major part of our life. If for instance, an individual is overly preoccupied with money. Money fills the mind and finds a central place in the heart. In the pursuit of money, thoughts grow in terms of acquiring more and actions are set in motion to pursue this objective. The more it is acquired the more one wants. When a need arises the first consideration is about cost over the nature of the need. Money can easily become the measure of the value of a gift, or quality of relationships. The thoughts and actions flow from this mindset. The prudent use of money is a good thing. The over preoccupation is not. Our Lenten practices are intended to challenge such things. As Christians in the world our mind and heart are to center on Christ.

It is an interesting thing when we must face difficult times. Usually our minds go to things that give us comfort, security, pleasure. We turn to those things that we find most familiar and safe. It is easier to turn to those thoughts than to turn to what our Catholic faith would tell us. Do we find more comfort in the things of this world or in Christ? Do we turn to prayer?

Along with prayer this is where fasting can become helpful. We fast and abstain from food which speaks of a physical need. Fasting can easily be understood as purely physical hunger. At this point it may become pointless if there is no internal motive. Fasting with prayer has a way of internalizing hunger at a deeper level: a hunger for something more important than the food that physically sustains us. Ideally it is to be hunger for spiritual nourishment. Recall Jesus' time in the desert. Satan tempts him to turn rocks into bread. Jesus replies to Satan with the words... "Not by bread alone does man live but by every word that comes from the mouth of God". Jesus gives us the true meaning of our Lenten fasting: hunger for the Word of God. We are to hunger for the Word made flesh: Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life. There is a connection here between the Word of God (Sacred Scripture) and the Eucharist. Jesus Christ feeds us with the most important bread: in Word and Sacrament. If we keep this only on the physical level, we have not internalized this very important lesson of our Catholic Faith. When we fast, uniting it with prayer, we turn to the Word of God and focus on our hunger for the Lord.

Prayer and Fasting in this manner reconfigure our lives to be more like Christ. Paraphrasing St. Augustine, we are reminded that when we pray, we desire to become more like Christ. Thus, when we receive the Word of God and the

Eucharist, we pray that we become what we receive: The Body of Christ in this world; the Church. We cannot be Christians in this world without Christ. Jesus gives us the means to this end in Word and Sacrament.

When we become more like Christ, we must become loving like Christ. This is where our charitable acts or almsgiving come into play. These acts of mercy, inspired by the love revealed in Jesus Christ help to reconfigure our lives to Christ. It is in being charitable that we become charitable. It is in acting in love that we become loving. It is doubtful that anyone would deny that this is a good thing for us. Who wouldn't like to be known as a loving person? This is good. However, it doesn't happen without our acting in love. In order to act in a loving manner, it has to come from the heart. The virtue of Love needs to be prayed over, contemplated in mind and heart, and then manifested as an act of the will. We need to commit our lives to love. If we are to commit our lives to Christ we need to hunger for Christ, we need to pray and internalize that desire and we need to act on it. This is the conversion process. This is what we do during the Lenten season. This is penitential.

The penitential practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are good tools for us to use. If we seriously desire to engage these practices and spend time in thoughtful consideration we will, with the grace of God, see our lives being reconfigured to Christ.

This weekend we will/ have heard from Bishop Robert Brennan in a video presentation. At the writing of this column I am not completely aware of what he will be saying. However, he will be addressing a major project that we are undergoing in the diocese and our parish. The program that is being presented comes for a group called Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI). The Bishop has a long-term vision for our Diocese into the twenty-first century. For our part we have seen changes here in Zanesville and in Muskingum County. What we are experiencing here is also being experienced throughout the Diocese of Columbus. It is no surprise that we have fewer priests in the diocese. We also have fewer practicing Catholics in the diocese as well as in Zanesville. We have fewer viable parishes. What we have been doing and are doing has not brought about growth in the Church. This is a concern and we need to be doing something in order to prepare to make some adjustments and to implement some changes as we forge a brighter future for the Diocese and Zanesville.

The program that the Bishop initiated is called...REAL PRESENCE, REAL FUTURE. (RPRF) Several dioceses across the country have already entered into this program with success. It is our hope that the Diocese of Columbus will do the same. You will be hearing more about this now and into the future.

To serve that end we will be participating in a parish-wide survey about being Catholic. At this point we need your help. You are asked to complete a 10 – 15-minute survey. This survey is available from now until March 21. You will be asked to reflect on your own spiritual growth. This will enable you to provide feedback on what our parish is doing to help you grow. The survey will be available online and in a paper format with more instructions to follow. All responses will be confidential, and the parish will only receive information about the community as whole. The survey results will hopefully be invaluable for the parish as we seek ways to best support everyone in their Christian journey. We will continue to have the website portal in the next couple of bulletins. It can also be found on our parish website. Our unique link...
<https://portal.catholicleaders.org/dmi/survey/kk68bk2685>

For those who would prefer a paper format for the survey, they will be available in the church. After you have filled a survey out you can drop it in the collection basket on Sunday or drop it off at the office or by mail. We will forward your survey to those who will be collating all this information.

I thank you for your consideration of this matter and hopefully we will be able to gather important information to help us move into the future. In the meantime, have a Blessed Lent.

Father Ralko

This week we pray Week II of the Liturgy of the hours. Church Support

February 21, 2021	
OFFERTORY	\$10,783.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$6,894.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	<u>\$(890.00)</u>
Other Income	<u>\$1,855.00</u>
Weekly surplus	\$34.00

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

Youth Ministry News!

Catalyst Nights – Students grades 7-12 are invited to a Catalyst Night at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in the activity center on Sunday, February 28th at 6:00 p.m. The evening is led by the National Evangelization Team (NET), college age missionaries. The night includes dinner, presentations, games, skits, prayer, friends, and fun. This is a joint, St. Thomas and St. Nicholas youth event and all teens grades 7-12 regardless of affiliation are invited. Parents are welcome!

Eucharistic Adoration: Friday, March 5th (First Friday), and Friday, March 19th (In honor of St. Joseph, guardian and faithful spouse of Mary, foster father of Jesus). Immediately following 8:00 a.m. Mass to 4:00 p.m. Adorers (those who sit with Jesus) are needed for both days. Hour increments are recommended. Please contact the parish office to sign up for your hour of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Call (740) 453-0597 ext. 14. Or pboggs@stnickparish.org. ‘Of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament [Jesus present in the consecrated Host] is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us. Saint Alphonsus Liguori.

K of C Fish Fry

The K of C will be offering fish fries once again every Friday throughout Lent. The hall opens at 5:00 p.m. Wednesday- Friday and 11:00 a.m. Saturday. Stop in and enjoy a meal with your fellow members

Council 505 is forming a Golf League on Wednesday evenings at Jaycees Golf Course. It will be a 2-man scramble format and is open to men, women, and non-members. The total number of teams will be 22. The league will start in the last two weeks of April and run through September. If you would like more information, contact Mark Hill at 740-607-5477 or mapco60@gmail.com

The Disciple Maker Index! Saint Nicholas Parish is participating in a parish survey about discipleship conducted by the Catholic Leadership Institute! The information provided by the survey will be helpful to the parish. The Survey is LIVE and will be open until March 21, 2021. To take the survey, please visit <https://portal.catholicleaders.org/dmi/survey/kk68bk2685> . If you prefer a paper copy, you may pick it up after daily and Sunday Masses. The surveys will be in the vestibule and on the front pews. To submit the completed paper survey, please drop it in the Sunday collection basket, hand deliver it to the parish office or mail it to the parish office at 955 E. Main Street, Zanesville Ohio 43701. To make special arrangements for getting a paper copy, please contact the parish office at (740) 453-0597. We really need your help in making this a success, please participate!

Sacramentals Did you know that the Palms are sacramentals? Rosaries, medals, and anything blessed and used for prayer including crucifixes, statues and icons are also sacramentals. Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church to prepare us to receive the fruit of the sacraments and to sanctify different circumstances of our lives. When sacramentals no longer serve a purpose or are broken and can no longer be used, 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. To aid in the disposal of palms from year’s past and other sacramentals, a collection station has been placed in the vestibule. Sacramentals 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.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Mt. Olive Cemetery has a part time position available. Duties would include mowing, weed eating, helping to open and close graves, help pouring footers for headstones and snow removal. If interested, please call the Parish Office at 453-0597.

Pre-Jordan Class

Due to Holy week the **Pre-Jordan class** for March has been moved to **Tuesday, March 23rd at 7:00 p.m.** in the Parish Office building. The Class is for parents and sponsors of infants and small children who are to be baptized. Please call 453-0597 to register for the class.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

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. 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 something prevents 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 or our website: stnickparish.org.

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.

Please join us each Monday at The St. Nicholas Parish Office Chapel at 2:00 p.m. as we gather to pray the Rosary asking Our Lady's Intercession or the many needs of our nation, community, and parish.

Cantor Schedule

March 06 & 07
5:15 p.m. Sandy Black
8:15 a.m. Laura DeCoy
10:45 a.m. Kerby Staker

INCOME TAX

If you would like to have a record of your donations to the Church for tax purposes, please fill in your envelope number, name and address or email and place it in the collection basket. A statement will be sent to you.

Envelope No. _____
Name _____
Address _____ or
Email address _____

What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, March 01

8:00 a.m., Mass: **Margaret Paul**, Church
2:00 p.m., Rosary: Parish Office
7:00 p.m., Mercy Bible Study, Parish Office

TUESDAY, March 02

9:00 a.m., Mass: **St. Thomas Intention**, Church
6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

WEDNESDAY, March 03, Saint Katharine Drexel

9:00 a.m., School Mass: **Deacon Gene Staker**, Church
7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

THURSDAY, March 04, Saint Casimir

8:00 a.m., Mass: **St. Thomas Intention**, Church
7:00 p.m., Adult Children of Alcoholics Meeting, Church Basement

FRIDAY, March 05, First Friday

8:00 a.m., Mass: **Allison Moore**, Church
8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Adoration, Church
10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Confessions, Church
5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m., Confessions, Church
7:00 p.m., Stations of the Cross, Church.

Third Sunday of Lent

SATURDAY, March 06

11:00-Noon, Confessions, Church
4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church
5:15 p.m., Mass: **Cathy Nash Burkhart & Ann Burkhart**, Church

SUNDAY, March 07

8:15 a.m., Mass: **St. Nicholas Parishioners**, Church
9:15 a.m., Sunday School, Parish Office
10:45 a.m., Mass: **Dee Joseph**, Church

Readings for Week of March 01

Mon.	Dn 9:4b-10	Lk 6:36-38
Tues.	Is 1:1-10	Mt 23:1-12
Wed	Jer 18:18-20	Mt 20:17-28
Thurs.	Jer 17:5-10	Lk 16:19-31
Fri.	Gn 37:3-4,12-13a,17b-28a	Mt 21:33-43,45-46
Sat.	Mi 7:14-15,18-20	Lk 15:1-3, 11-32
Sun	Ex 20:1-17, 9a, 10-13, 15-18	Jn 4:5-42