

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

From the Pastor's Desk

This Sunday we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Lent. We are quickly moving through the Lenten Season. In the past I had made mention that this Sunday is traditionally referred to as "Laetare Sunday" (Rejoice Sunday). The liturgical color as noted by the vestments worn by the priest is Rose. The color rose is to signify a sense of joy as we rejoice at the midpoint of Lent and quickly heading toward our Easter celebration. The opening antiphon for the liturgy is taken from the Prophet Isaiah chapter 66. "*Rejoice Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be Joyful, all you who were in mourning;*" We rejoice, but we still have so much more to do. So, we persevere in our Lenten observances with renewed efforts in prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

We rejoice in the midst of our season of penance. This seems rather odd for us to consider after all the Lenten season is somber. Yet a joyful heart is the mark of a Christian (we have a lot of work to do here). We are to be joyful of heart in good times, which is easy, and bad times which is a challenge. A joyful heart is the mark of all the faithful of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Joy is not the same thing as happy. For an insight into joy we must consider its Biblical roots. For the individual or more to the point the community of faith, joy and rejoicing is characteristic of one who is in *communion with God*. It is a joy that is rooted in the heart that is in union with God. It reflects a complete trust in God: in His love and mercy. This trust in the Divine Providence of God and the peaceful joy associated with it. Sometimes one must challenge himself/ herself to keep joy and rejoicing in the heart because the times are particularly trying and press us in the opposite direction. Joy and rejoicing are a matter of choice. We must it. True joy and rejoicing cannot be dictated by our emotions or feelings. In a manner of speaking, it is like the virtue of love or the virtue of faith: Joy is an act of the will.

This past Tuesday the first reading for morning mass was a passage from the Book of Daniel. This passage was taken from the larger story about King Nebuchadnezzar. The King had three young Hebrew slaves who worked in his royal palace. Although the best of servants they refused to worship the god of the King. As a punishment for their refusal of the King's orders they were thrown into the fiery furnace. The youths preferred to remain faithful to the God of Israel. This was a violently desperate time for the Hebrews since they were all required to abandon their faith in the God of Israel and worship the king's god. The youths were heavily bound and thrown into the white-hot furnace. From the furnace the three faithful Israelite youths began to sing the praises of God. They also prayed for the mercy of God on the unfaithful Israelite people. During the crisis forced upon them and the Israelites they praised God in Joy. It was a sincere rejoicing because it flowed from their absolute faithfulness to God.

I am also reminded that during WWII and the great persecution of the Jewish people. Many of the faithful Jews, in the midst of such oppression and darkness of those years, observed the Sabbath as best they could. In the face of all opposition they paused and observed the Sabbath. Many may have had to force themselves in their observance. Many could only observe the Sabbath in their hearts with praise of God and joy. I am confident that many had hard questions for God as they faced those dark days. But even these hard times and questions had to be considered in the context as an act of their faith in God by turning to Him. They had to will it. On the Sabbath they had to give rightful praise and thanksgiving to God. As for the Passover, even if they could not celebrate the Passover in a manner that they were accustomed, they did so in their hearts: especially during their time in the concentration camps. They had to recall how God brought them out of the land of slavery, entered

a covenant with them and brought them into the Promised Land. When the world tells them to give up and despair, they had to renew their confidence that all is in God's hands. As the Psalms remind us, God is the guardian of our soul. It is not necessary for us to understand now but we must be faithful and have joy and rejoicing in our hearts. Such is the place and the attitude of a faithful people in a sinful world.

We are in the midst of the Lenten Season. In the eyes of the world Lent makes little sense. In fact, our Lenten observances may even be laughed at or made the punch line to a joke. *All restaurants stock up on fish during Lent because of those Catholics!* Just the same, many Catholics do not engage in the rigors of Lent. *Give something up for Lent? Why? What's the big deal?* Sadly, many of those who have such an attitude live pretty monotonous lives, especially in matters of faith. There is an element of being lukewarm about our Catholic faith and in fact about life itself. A life that is lukewarm is neither hot nor cold, especially in matters of virtue and faith. In a lukewarm heart there is rarely a thought of joy and rejoicing. (I refer you to Revelation 3:16).

We are challenged when we consider these things. Joy and the rejoicing that flows from it are deeply rooted in the faith. It needs to have a place in our prayer life. When times are good and spiritually rich there is fervor in the faith. Joy and rejoicing come naturally and easily. But is that joy real? Fare weather joy. When times are particularly trying, especially when there is crisis and difficulties, we need to prayerfully keep joy and rejoicing in our hearts. Just as faith is challenged so is the joy that goes with it. Faith is necessary in challenging times so is joy.

However, when things are bland, mundane or in a word 'lukewarm', one can easily get lulled into complacency. This can lead to indifference and spiritual sloth. This attitude becomes indifference. Indifference is a big deal because it is care-less. It is deadly for the spiritual life. It is particularly dangerous for our faith. The lack of faith, or indifference to faith, leaves a life that is not filled with praise, thanksgiving, joy and rejoicing in the Lord. Simply put, the Lord is not at the center nor is there concern about this condition. This is tantamount to a joyless life.

We have much to be thankful. We are in a covenant relationship with God. God is always faithful in his faithfulness and love for us. This covenant is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, the incarnate love and faithfulness of God. We have every reason to put our faith in the God who loves us. This is a joy. Most especially when times are not going as we would have them, we need to push ourselves to reaffirm our trust in God's love. This is the very foundation of our lives and our joy is a reflection that all is in God's loving hands.

One further note on this: our confidence in God is particularly evident when we face death. We say that the Christian has joy even in the face of death: especially in the face of the death of a loved one. This does not mean that we are not sorrowful and filled with grief at the death of a loved one. By all means we grieve. We mourn our loss. We experience emptiness. Yet we have hope in the love and faithfulness of God. We have hope in the resurrection. We have hope in the fullness of life promised to us in and through Jesus Christ. That is why we pray when faced with death, our own or that of another, to renew our trust in the goodness of God. This is precisely the reason for our joy. Christ is our joy.

As we approach Easter, our celebration of the death and resurrection of our Lord, we reaffirm our faith in the one who saves us from sin, death, and despair. Easter is the fulfillment of our hope and the cause of our true joy. If we experience indifference to this feast of great joy as we anticipate it on this

Laetare Sunday, we had best do some soul searching. If we are indifferent about our faith, we need to do a serious examination of our conscience. "Oh, if you were either hot or cold..." is the warning St. John expressed it in the Book of Revelation. The likely result may well be that there is something sinful pressing upon the heart. Ignoring sin, wishing it away, justifying behavior deadens the heart and soul and causes indifference, lukewarmness, and joylessness. All of which are not good. Maybe a good confession is in order.

Have a renewing Lenten Week.
Father Ralko

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

Church Support

March 7, 2021	
OFFERTORY	\$12,538.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$8,649.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly surplus	\$1,789.00

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

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.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: After enjoying a delicious fish dinner at the K of C, join us at St. Nicholas Church from 7:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. for Stations of the Cross.

FEBRUARY BOOSTER MANIA WINNERS

George Potts- \$100, Mike Musselman- \$75
\$25- Susan Michel, Kaela Meyer, Bonnie Bendure, Joyce Shilling, Bernard Kuhn and Elaine Pitcock

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 31.

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.

THANK YOU! After many years of dedication to St. Nicholas, Rosalyn Headington, and her husband Phil, have retired and relocated to Cleveland to be closer to their family. Rosalyn, as a volunteer, was the Director of St. Nicholas Nursing Home and Homebound ministries. She spent many, many hours helping our parish every week. We wish Rosalyn and Phil the very best in this new chapter of their lives. God Bless!

EASTER FLOWERS

Due to publishing deadlines we need to have donations for Easter flowers to the parish office by **Monday, March 22**. Thank you.

Eucharistic Adoration - Friday, March 19th (In honor of St. Joseph, guardian and faithful spouse of Mary, foster father of Jesus"). Begins after the 8:00 a.m. Mass and ends at 4:00 p.m. This is a great devotion for families, marrieds, singles, young and old alike. All are encouraged to participate in Eucharistic Adoration. "One cannot know the Lord without this habit of adoring, of adoring in silence. I believe, if I am not mistaken, this prayer of adoration is the prayer least known by us, it is the one we do the least, as if it were a waste of time before the Lord, before the mystery of Jesus Christ. Instead, we should rediscover the silence of Adoration: he is the Lord and I adore him". Pope Francis

We Want to Hear from You!

Don't miss your chance to fill out the diocesan-wide Disciple Maker Index Survey through an online link through our website, <https://portal.catholicleaders.org/dmi/survey/kk68bk2685> or by paper copy provided by your parish or Catholic school. The Disciple Maker Index (DMI) is an anonymous survey of parishioners that provides insights into the level of missionary discipleship in the parish in addition to the effectiveness of the Mass experience, preaching and other aspects of the parish. The survey window closes on **March 21**, so don't miss your opportunity to participate!



Join us for the **first Converging Roads medical ethics conference** presented by the St. John Paul II Foundation, the Diocese of Columbus, and the Catholic Medical Association of Central Ohio.

On the topic of **Health Care and Human Dignity**, this one-day conference offers continuing education for healthcare professionals rooted in the Hippocratic and Catholic ethical tradition.

Saturday, April 24, 2020 | 8:30 AM – 7:30 PM
In Person and Online | Pontifical College Josephinum | Columbus, OH

Mass Celebrant: Most Rev. Robert J. Brennan, Bishop of Columbus

Speakers: Greg Burke, MD, FACP; Thomas W. McGovern, MD; Robin Pierucci, MD, MA; Claudia R. Sotomayor, MD, DBE; and more!

In-Person Registration ranges from \$69-\$149 based on CME/CNE inclusion.

Online Registration ranges from \$39- \$119 based on CME/ CNE inclusion.

Student scholarship rate is \$15 for In-Person attendance and \$0 for Online attendance.

For more information, please visit convergingroads.com or email sara@forlifeandfamily.org.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

THE GRIEF RECOVERY METHOD – GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP –

Maybe it just happened or maybe it was a year or more ago. Grief knows no time. Help is available. An 8-week program led by Becky Joseph begins Tuesday, April 13th. Two opportunities are available, 1:00 -2:00 p.m. or 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Meetings will be held in the Parish Office. Pre-registration is requested to aid in planning. Please call Patty (740) 453-0597 for more information or to reserve your spot.

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 20 & 21

5:15 p.m. Sandy Black

8:15 a.m. Sr. Bernadette

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 15

8:00 a.m., Mass: Clara Shumate, Church

10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Confessions, Church

2:00 p.m., Rosary: Parish Office

5:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

7:00 p.m., Mercy Bible Study, Parish Office

TUESDAY, March 16

9:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

WEDNESDAY, March 17, St. Patrick

9:00 a.m., School Mass: Sandy Young, Church

THURSDAY, March 18, St. Cyril of Jerusalem

8:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

7:00 p.m., Adult Children of Alcoholics Meeting, Church Basement

FRIDAY, March 19, ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

8:00 a.m., Mass: Richard Paul, Church

10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Confessions, Church

1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m., Confessions, Church

7:00 p.m., Stations of the Cross, Church.

Fifth Sunday of Lent

SATURDAY, March 20

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

5:15 p.m., Mass: Mary Anshutz, Church

SUNDAY, March 21

8:15 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church

9:15 a.m., Sunday School, Parish Office

10:45 a.m., Mass: Barb Mendelson, birthday, Church

Readings for Week of March 15

Mon.	Is 65:17-21	Jn 4:43-54
Tues.	Ez 47:1-9, 12	Jn 5:1-16
Wed	Is 49:8-15	Jn 5:17-30
Thurs.	Ex 32:7-14	Jn 5:31-47
Fri.	2 Sm 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16	Lk 2:41-51a
Sat.	Jer 11:18-20	Jn 7:40-53
Sun	Jer 31:31-34	Jn 12:20-33

