

St. Mary's Catholic Church

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 22, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

It is a common theme in literature and movies that someone who is the least expected is able to do great and wonderful things. The least likely candidate accomplishes something amazing, is very successful, and eventually wins out in the end. We recognize this phenomenon as the **"Cinderella story"** and we often see it happening in sports, fairy tales, science fiction, and even in everyday worldly events. In Scripture we see this theme of the least likely person being able to accomplish great things. By God's grace, unlikely individuals are able to do God's work and accomplish amazing things. The story of David and the Blind Man in today's Scripture readings remind us how God often makes eccentric choices. God graces and empowers unlikely individuals to do His ministry and work.



In today's first reading we hear how the prophet Samuel was commissioned by God to choose Israel's King Saul's eventual successor. Samuel was sent to the family of Jesse of Bethlehem to anoint one of his eight sons as the future king of Israel. Samuel is impressed by Jesse's eldest son Eliab and presumes that this young man would be God's choice. But this is not so. Samuel learns that: "God does not see as man sees; man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart." Jesse presents his six other sons to Samuel but none are suitable. Finally Jesse presents his youngest son David, the shepherd boy, and the Lord sees in David something more than meets the eye. Young David is God's eccentric choice to become Israel's future king.

In today's Gospel passage from John, we have another example of God's eccentric choice; a blind beggar who becomes a theologian, pointing out who Jesus really is! John's story tells us how a blind man comes to see the light in Jesus; both physically and spiritually. The blind man's physical and spiritual healings becomes a sign to all that Jesus is **"the Light of the world."** The blind man's healing manifests the truth that Jesus' presence in the world is the light that makes God's work possible.

The healing of the man's physical blindness and restoration of his sight was instantaneous but his growth in faith and spiritual sight was gradual. Slowly the blind man comes to recognize and acknowledge Jesus not merely just as a man but rather as a prophet. Later on he accepts Jesus as his Lord. The man moves from sight to insight to a deep and profound faith. He sees Jesus as the Son of Man.

The story of David and the blind man speak to us of God's choices. Because God sees the heart He chooses differently from the way we do. *(continued...)*

...Both David and the blind man are remembered because they point beyond themselves to the reality of the divine. With God's grace both were able to do God's work.

God has elected all of us to display His works. In our baptism we have been chosen to lead others to Jesus by the witness of our lives. For many people (and perhaps even to ourselves) we may seem to be an unlikely choice. Our greatness lies in the fact that we have been chosen by God to do ministry. By allowing God to work in and through us, we can keep alive the story of God's eccentric choices. Have a blessed week.

Love & prayers,
Fr. John

P.S. As all of us navigate the uncharted waters of this Coronavirus/COVID 19 pandemic we are experiencing a type of blindness. We are afraid, fearful, and worried as we find ourselves in the darkness of a global health crisis. The Good News is that we are not alone in our darkness. Our God is with us and our God will always be a shining light guiding us through these troubled times. Let us place our trust and hope in God and let us pray for one another!

Weekend Masses

Sat Mar 21	4:00 p.m.	Ellen, Lillian, and Richard Von Lehmden
Sun Mar 22	10:00 a.m.	Rosemary Meyer
Sat Mar 28	4:00 p.m.	For our parishioners
Sun Mar 29	10:00 a.m.	Special Intention

Daily Mass

All Masses in Ohio are suspended at least through Easter Sunday. See the statement from Bishop Thomas here: [https://toledodiocese.org/images/uploads/page_assets/Coronavirus%20Statement%204%20Final\(1\).pdf](https://toledodiocese.org/images/uploads/page_assets/Coronavirus%20Statement%204%20Final(1).pdf)

SUNDAY COLLECTION

Adults	\$2,110.00	Loose	\$325.00
Children	\$2.00	Total	\$2,437.00
36 envelopes returned = 17%			



*Thank you for your generosity!
Thank you also to those who give
electronically!!*

Readings for March 29, 2020 Fifth Sunday of Lent

1st Reading: Ezekiel 37:12 – 14
2nd Reading: Romans 8:8 – 11
Gospel Reading: John 11:1 – 45

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Daily Updates from Fr. John in regards to COVID-19

3/17/2020 Dear Brothers and Sisters:

In order to safeguard the faithful and the greater community from the serious threat and spread of the Coronavirus/COVID-19, our Bishop Daniel Thomas has decreed **all publically celebrated Masses and other liturgies (Stations of the Cross, Prayer Services) in our Diocese will be temporarily suspended.** This decree is effective immediately and will remain in place at least through Holy Week and Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020. All of the faithful are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday mass during this time accord with the Church's Code of Canon Law. In these extraordinary times we must take extraordinary measures for the safety of all. While we may have to refrain temporarily from attending Mass and receiving the Eucharist, it is my hope that such a sacrifice will unite us in a deeper love and appreciation for the Most Holy Eucharist as well as a deeper love for and communion with our neighbors.

I will privately offer daily Mass on behalf of all of you and your intentions. St. Gerard Parish in Lima will live stream daily Mass at 8:30 AM and Saturday evenings at 5PM and Sundays at 8:30 and 11 AM. You can tune into their live stream by going to their homepage - <http://www.stgerardchurch.org/> and click on the icon on the right side of the page that says "Live Webcast Watch Here"

Sunday still remains a holy day so I encourage all to pray using the rich resources of our catholic faith - Scripture, the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Liturgy of the Hours, Stations of the Cross, Private Devotions and Novenas, Meditations, etc.

Please pray for all who are suffering from illnesses or disease, for all health care workers, and for an easing of the anxiety and tension caused by this pandemic situation. Relying on our Blessed Mother Mary and uniting our sufferings with Jesus we will get the strength to persevere during this difficult time. Be assured of my prayers for you and your families. Stay healthy and God bless.

Love and blessings,
Fr. John

P.S. Our Church will remain open from 9AM until 3:30 PM from Monday – Friday for individuals who want to come in to pray.



3/18/2020 Hope you are doing well as we navigate through this Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Be assured of my thoughts, prayers, and blessings for everyone. I would like to share some information with you.

1. A community call number has been established for area residents. If you believe that you have COVID-19 symptoms, please call **419-226-9000** before visiting a Healthcare provider, Emergency Room, Urgent Care or Walk-In Centers. The Call Center will direct you to the next step and appropriate care.
2. Since we have to refrain temporarily from attending Holy Mass and the reception of the Most Holy Eucharist, I would like to share a simple prayer with you that you can pray on a daily basis. The prayer is from St. Alphonsus Liguori's (founder of the Redemptorists) book entitled *Visits To The Most Blessed Sacrament And The Blessed Virgin Mary*:

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe you are really present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you more than anything in the world, and I hunger to feed on your flesh. But since I cannot receive Holy Communion at this moment, feed my soul at least spiritually. I unite myself to you now as I do when I actually receive you. Never let me drift away from you. Amen.

3. In case of an emergency please contact me at 419 358-8631 (Parish Office).
4. I know that some of us may be experiencing some economic difficulties these days but I humbly ask and encourage you to please continue supporting our Parish with your weekly offering. You can mail it to the parish office or drop it off in person. Thank you very much.
5. I will be here on Saturdays from 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. during this time to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession. If

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you would like to celebrate during the weekdays, please call the office to set up an appointment. If you are experiencing any symptoms, or if your health is compromised, please refrain from attending.

- 6. *As a reminder, our church will be open Monday – Friday from 9 A.M. – 3:30 P.M. for private individual prayer*
- 7. *Catholics have always joined together in intense prayer during times of crisis throughout the ages. We have ministered to the sick, attended to the dying and buried the dead. May this unprecedented time in our history bring us closer to God and to one another. May the Lord, in his mercy, continue to pour out his compassionate love on us and deliver us from this health crisis.*

*Grant, Lord God, that we, your servants, may rejoice in unending health of mind and body,
and, through the glorious intercession of Blessed Mary ever-Virgin, may we be set free from present sorrow and come to enjoy eternal happiness. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.*

(Collect, 44. The Blessed Virgin Mary, Health of the Sick, Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

Let us continue to pray for one another during this trying time. God bless you. Fr. John

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If you were inspired by Sister Carol's presentation and want to support the work at the border, you can make checks out to Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande



Valley and send them to 955 W. Price Rd. Brownsville, Texas 78520, with "Respite Center" in the memo line. For more information, to donate online, or to see what other items are needed, please visit the website at www.catholiccharitiesrgv.org and click on the "Donations" tab at the top of the page!



The 2020 Parish Mission Trip to Booneville, KY is cancelled. If you would like to assist the work there financially, checks can be sent 1439 KY-11S, Booneville, KY 41314 or you can visit the website at <https://cdlex.org/holy-family-booneville> to donate online.

Are you a Young Adult between the ages of 19-35 (single or married) and you would like to deepen your relationship with Jesus and strengthen your Catholic faith? Would you like to meet and pray with other Young Adults in our St. Mary's Community? Would you like to come ask questions about our Catholic Church today? If so, then I invite you to join our Young Adult Ministry Group. If you would like to join, please contact Fr. John or Rachel in the Parish Office.

Countless lives are touched by every contribution to the 2020 Annual Catholic Appeal. Children, seminarians, the sick and aged—they all depend on our generosity. Our parish goal is \$11,500, and we are currently 33% of the way there, which helps continue these programs and services! For more information or to donate online, visit toldedodocese.org/ACA

P.R.E.P

Children's Liturgy of the Word is suspended

K-6: Class is cancelled for the time being

Jr High: Class schedule to be determined.

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God Squad--High School Youth Group

God Squad High School Youth schedule TBD. Stay healthy!

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Order your candy or toy filled eggs to be delivered to your yard
(scattered, not hidden) for Easter morning!

Orders must be in by March 25th
email Amanda at amandas3701@icloud.com or Rachel at
rawelch47@yahoo.com to order

Cash, check, or online payment accepted. Make checks payable to Saint
Mary's Catholic Church. All funds support Catholic Youth Summer
Camp