

St. Mary's Catholic Church

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 29, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

For the past two weeks we have heard Gospel stories about people who had life-changing encounters with Jesus. Two weeks ago we heard the story of the Samaritan woman who encountered Jesus at the well. Jesus gave the woman the gift of His **"living water."**



Because of her encounter with Jesus the Samaritan woman experienced a new way of living. Last week we heard the story of the blind man who was healed of his **blindness** through his encounter with Jesus. Both stories share a commonality in that we hear about people who slowly come to understand who Jesus really is through their conversion experience. In today's Gospel story Mary, Martha and their deceased brother Lazarus will have an encounter with Jesus and their lives will also be changed forever.

Today's Gospel passage begins with the news that Lazarus (a close friend of Jesus) is seriously ill. Jesus, however, does not immediately go to see Lazarus but rather stays where He had been for two more days. Jesus' disciples and others find this response very strange. But Jesus knows what He is going to do and why He is going to do it. Jesus knows that He will raise Lazarus from the dead, restore his life and prove that Jesus truly **is the Giver of life**. Jesus will prove that death does not have the final say and a resuscitated Lazarus will demonstrate that truth.

By the time Jesus arrives Lazarus has already been dead for several days. Martha and Mary (Lazarus' sisters) voice their anger and disappointment with Jesus by reprimanding Him: "If you had been here earlier things would have turned out differently." Both sisters show that they really do not know who Jesus really is; **the Giver of life**. This lack of understanding causes Jesus to become perturbed with Martha and Mary and so He weeps. Finally, they all arrive at Lazarus' tomb. Jesus demands that the stone covering the entrance way to the tomb should be removed. Jesus then calls Lazarus to come out of his tomb. He does so, still wrapped in his burial bandages. Jesus commands that Lazarus be untied and set free. Paradoxically, Jesus' restoring Lazarus to life would eventually lead to Jesus' own death. Ironically, Jesus' death will give new life to the world.

The Lazarus resuscitation story proclaims the great truth that Jesus **is the Giver of life**. Just as Jesus called Lazarus out of his tomb, restoring his life so too Jesus calls us out of **our** tombs, restoring our lives. In our baptism Jesus called us to new life by bestowing upon us His Spirit. This Spirit is eternal and has the power to transform us from sinners into saints and from fools into prophets. This Spirit restores our hope by entangling us from the bindings of despair. This Spirit frees us from the snares of our fears and sadness. This Spirit raises us up from the bonds of

death, giving us new life. And this Spirit reassures us that we are always God's beloved children.

As the end of the Lenten season draws near we are asked to ponder upon the same questions that Jesus asked Martha and Mary: "Do you believe that I **am** the Resurrection and the life? Do you believe that whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die?" If we boldly answer **"yes,"** to Jesus' questions then let us pray for a renewal of our hearts to Jesus, who truly **is the Giver of life**. Have a blessed week.

Love & prayers,

Fr. John

P.S. The Coronavirus/COVID 19 pandemic has been a life-changing experience for all of us. Like Lazarus many of us have been "bound up" and placed in a tomb. Perhaps we may even feel that we are just one of the "walking dead." We are suffering physically, emotionally and spiritually. We are losing hope, getting discouraged and angry, and like Martha and Mary we are saying: "Lord Jesus only if you were here things would be different." Don't despair, have courage because our Lord Jesus **is with us** in this health crisis. Our Jesus **is the Giver of Life** and He will pour out His compassionate love upon us and deliver us from this pandemic. Things will get better and life will be restored! Do you believe? I hope so! Let us continue to pray for one another.

Weekend Masses

Sat Mar 28	4:00 p.m.	For our parishioners
Sun Mar 29	10:00 a.m.	Special Intention
Sat Apr 4	4:00 p.m.	For our parishioners
Sun Apr 5	10:00 a.m.	Nora & Allison Yeagle

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



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

Readings for April 5, 2020

Palm Sunday

1st Reading: Isaiah 50:4 – 7

2nd Reading: Philippians 2:6 – 11

Gospel Reading: Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

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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.



To participate in Mass via TV, Live Stream, or Radio Broadcast, please follow this link to see the various options around the Diocese:

<https://toledodiocese.org/Live-Stream-Masses-Diocese-of-Toledo.pdf>

St. Gerard's in Lima live streams Mass throughout the week at 8:30 a.m., on Saturday at 5 p.m., and on Sunday at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. To view this live stream, go to their website:

<http://www.stgerardchurch.org/> and click on the icon on the right side of the page that says "Live Webcast Watch Here"

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 desire to receive You into my soul. 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.

New Parish Hours:

In response to the Coronavirus/COVID-19, the church will be open for a limited amount of hours for individual private prayer on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Fr. John will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Saturday from 3 – 4 p.m. or by appointment during the week. Please use your best judgment and refrain from coming if you, or anyone you have been in contact with, have symptoms.

The Redemptorists will be hosting a Mission that will begin on Monday, March 30th, and will conclude on Wednesday, April 8th. To join, "like" and "follow" the Redemptorist Facebook Page (@TheRedemptorists) and on the day of the mission, around 10 a.m., you will receive a notification that a live "watch party" has begun with an invitation to join. Please feel free to share your prayer requests in the chat, where a Redemptorist missionary will be present and praying for all who join us and, indeed, for the whole world. For those who are not on Facebook use this link: <https://www.facebook.com/RedemptoristsBaltimore/> to attend!

We know that this time may be a time of financial uncertainty for many, but if you are able, please continue to remember our parish. You can send your envelopes in the mail, or give online by following this link:

https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?appver3=wWsk24ZWJSTZKsGd1RMK1g0BDvsSG3VIWQCPJNNxD8upkiY7JIDavDsozUE7KGOxFx2NSo8LdUKGuGuF396vbbTpChmfNbhzhx8xPU2s5sRX7sm9wYZo2onRxYng5iCQvEEUgbepsAG1d1O5A7L11HEasYeBPLeVLqkBUb4MjnA=&ver=3 Thank you for your continued support and generosity!

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 53% of the way there, which helps continue these programs and services! For more information or to donate online, visit toledodiocese.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.



God Squad--High School Youth Group



God Squad High School Youth schedule TBD. Stay healthy!