



# ST. BERNADETTE Catholic Church

March 22, 2020 • 4th Sunday of Lent

Although our parish office will remain closed for the duration of the outbreak, we remain accessible via phone. Priests are available for emergency anointings and funerals are still being scheduled. You may reach us at 708-422-8995 or through email.

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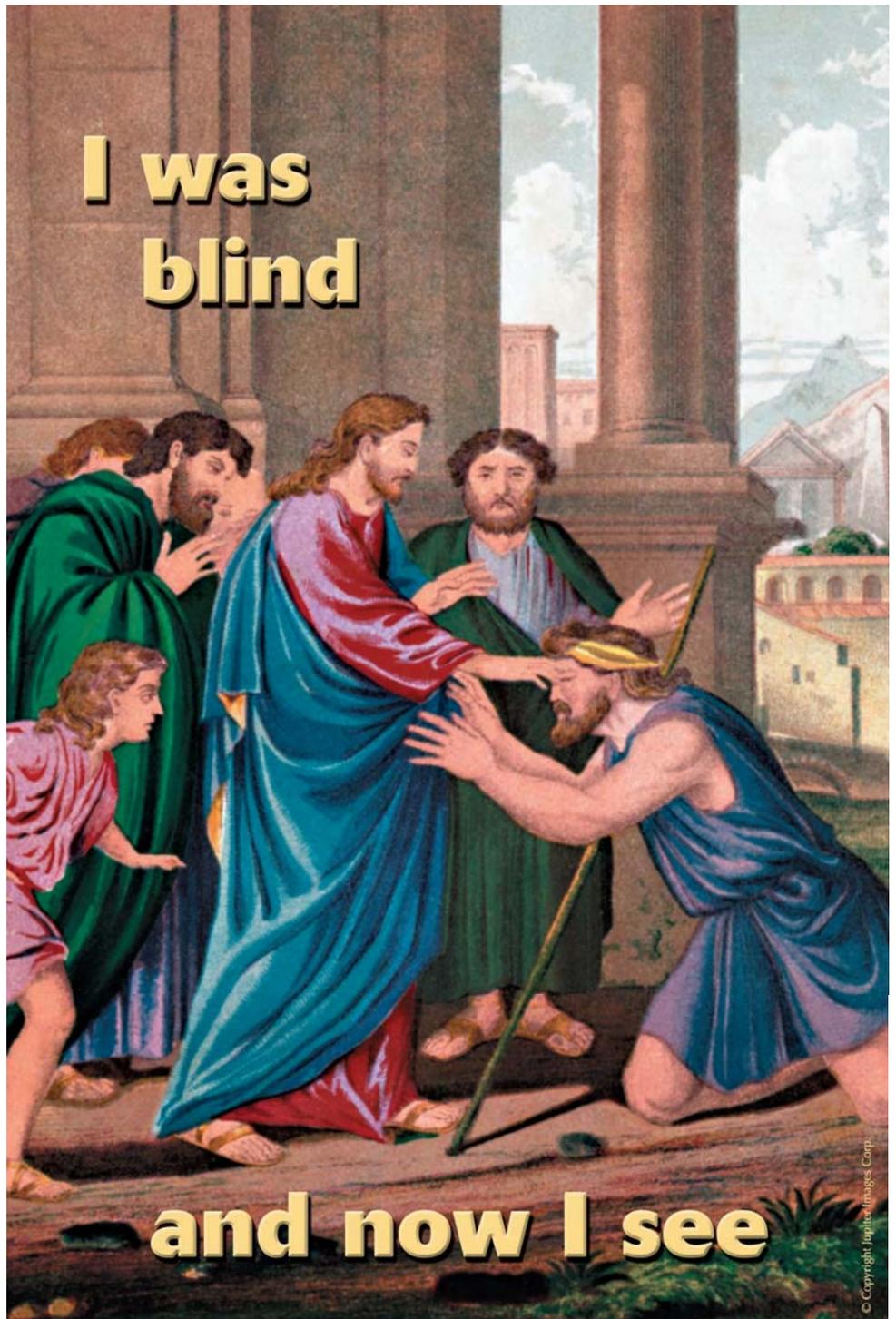
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## *From Our Pastor's Desk*

Dear Parishioners,

These are truly extraordinary times we are living through. Many of you may be scared, many may even know people who have become sick. Prayer and our faith in Christ Jesus may be one of the best weapons we have against this fear and this illness. We will continue to do our best to provide opportunities for you to grow spiritually and stay connected to your parish community remotely. In the meantime, we also ask for your prayers for all of our health care workers, everyone who is sick, and all those on the front lines of the coronavirus outbreak.

Although we have suspended all events and activities, we want you to remain connected to St. Bernadette. Therefore, we are publishing this "mini-bulletin", available in church and online, and encourage you to visit our website at [www.stbernadettechurch.org](http://www.stbernadettechurch.org) or check our Facebook page at [facebook.com/stbernadetteparish](https://facebook.com/stbernadetteparish).

If you find being separated from the Liturgy and the Eucharist difficult, we encourage you to view daily or weekend Mass online. Bishop Bob Barron is streaming daily Mass at [www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass](http://www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass) and I will celebrate Sunday Mass from St. Bernadette which will be made available on our website. I also recommend this prayer on spiritual communion, attributed to St. Alphonsus Liguori: "My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen."

Finally, I invite you to join in solidarity with Cardinal Cupich and the entire Archdiocese of Chicago in prayer five times a day. We will also be ringing our church bells at the hours of prayer. I ask that you share this call with your family and friends. Let us all unite in asking God for His protection, especially for groups particularly impacted by the pandemic. I encourage you to print or save this page so that you

can pray these prayers with us.

Beginning Saturday, March 21, the prayers and intentions for each hour of prayer are below:

**9:00 a.m. - Prayer for those infected with the virus and all who are ill:** Lord, place your healing hand on those who suffer illness. Bring them to full health and ease their anxious hearts. May our prayer and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary encourage them that they are not alone. We ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN

**12:00 p.m. - Prayer for health care workers and those attending to the sick:** Lord, we are ennobled by those who put their lives at risk in caring for the sick. Keep them safe and embolden them when they are weary. We ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN

**3:00 p.m. - Prayer for first responders and essential workers:** Lord, we pray for those who run to danger to keep us safe and those who serve the common good. Embrace them with your mantle of protection and comfort the fears of their families. We ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN

**6:00 p.m. - Prayer for people of every nation and their leaders:** Lord, the pandemic opens our eyes to see each other as brothers and sisters in one human family. We pray for people of every nation and their leaders, asking that they be inspired to seek the good of all and quell the voices of division. We ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN

**9:00 p.m. - Prayer for those who have died today:** Lord, we grieve the passing of our sisters and brothers who have died this day. We commend them to your tender mercy, confident that nothing, not even death, will separate us from your love. We ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN

Thank you for your understanding and may the peace of Christ be with you all,  
Fr. Benedykt

## Amazing: How Sweet Life Can Be!!

The Scottish hymn “**Amazing Grace**” says it all: **How sweet it is when we accept God’s love for us and begin to convert our blindness into truly loving God despite our wretched self!!** We were lost once, twice, or thrice; yet, now we are found – we were blind; yet, now we see. It really is God’s grace that teaches our hearts to fear as well as relieving our fears. God has no favorites; he simply wishes us to believe in Him. That is why it is so sad to hear someone say, “**I don’t believe in God.**” In stark reality to someone who does, this statement says more about the person than the statement. How can we say we do not believe or maybe it is about the hurt that exists in us. In any case, it is only by the grace of God that we accept His love for us; and in order for this to happen, we need to be ready and willing to accept that grace that saves us from our anger and guilt-ridden selves.

Now, let’s see what this blind man story is all about! Jesus simply heals a blind man who was blind from birth. He lived in darkness most of his life; he saw no color let alone what he looked like to others. Jesus gives him a gift, but others around begin to question: How could this be since even his disciples thought he suffered the blindness because of his own sins or the sins of his parents. Jesus responds, “Neither. It is so that the works of God might be made visible through him.” You see, when we see a blind person, we hopefully fill up with compassion and want to help. We wish we could do something. Sometimes we do. It allows us to see how God works in mysterious ways through a blind person. It allows us to possibly see our own blindness. And that is precisely the point of the story. Those who are blind and are given sight through some miracle are not angry at all; they are simply grateful that they can see color and appreciate the wonders of God. Those who can see are the ones at times that are blind because they may think that they do not need God in their life – they can do anything all on their own. We sometimes can fall into the same traps. When we feel this way, we are in trouble. Those blind need God to guide them. When they receive sight, they are simply grateful because they have learned humility from the very start of their lives. Those with sight from the beginning are the ones who lose their sight over the pleasures of life and thus may lose sight of God. In the end, who is the real blind person?

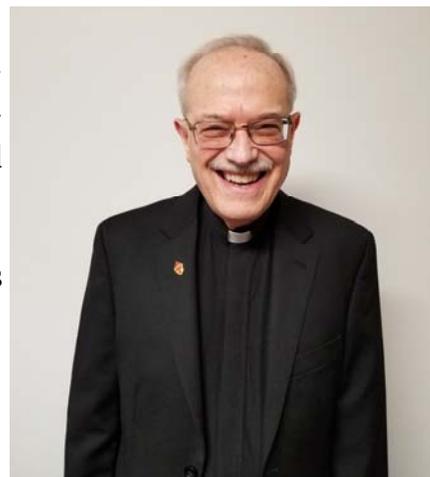
And so, the moral of the story brings us to see that Lent is about seeing the good in others, seeing the good in ourselves, recognizing the potential we have to do good, being amazed at God’s grace both in us and others, thanking God for blessings received, praying to God that we may see, acting on the opportunities that are presented to us to help others, and simply appreciating what is as we contemplate the **now** of our lives.

Life is about living and seeing the beauty in others and in ourselves. The blind man saw and was grateful; others were the blind people in the story who did not believe that the blind man had been healed by Jesus.

Amazing, the paradox of life; maybe that is why the hymn is called, “**Amazing Grace.**”

Have a great 4<sup>th</sup> Week of Lent!

Fr. Bob



**Please pray for our faithful departed**

**Robert Stumpf**

### **Update on Church Hours for Private Prayer**

It is with sadness that we must inform everyone that we can no longer keep our church open for private prayers. Our state has issued a "shelter in place" order and has asked that everyone remain at home, unless absolutely necessary, to prevent further spread of the virus. We have therefore decided to close the church until the order lifts. We ask you to understand that this decision was made with the safety of the community in mind.

### **Update on the Pilgrimage to Ireland and to Germany**

We have been getting questions about the pilgrimages to Ireland in July and Germany in September. As of right now, the pilgrimage for Ireland is still scheduled and proceeding as planned. However, the pilgrimage to Germany, along with the Passion Play of Oberammergau, has been postponed until 2022. This is all the information we have at this time. However, if you have questions or concerns you can contact Ellie Joyce at [ejoyce@stbernadettechurch.org](mailto:ejoyce@stbernadettechurch.org).

### **St. Bernadette Parish Outreach Ministry**

The mission of St. Bernadette Parish Outreach program is to support those in need in our parish who are faced with hardships; whether that be poor health, financial struggles, or those with spiritual and emotional needs. It is our desire to seek them out and assist them with the gifts of help and hope. If you are in need of Outreach support or know of someone who is, please contact the ministry at 708-425-7697. All requests are confidential and kept private.

### **Mass Intentions for the Week**

Fr. Benedykt and Fr. Bob continue to say Mass daily and pray for our intentions. You may still request Mass intentions by calling the parish and leaving a message or by emailing [mwilkey@stbernadettechurch.org](mailto:mwilkey@stbernadettechurch.org).

#### **Monday, March 23, 2020**

8:30 a.m. †John & Dorothy Kelly

#### **Tuesday, March 24, 2020**

8:30 a.m. †All mothers, living & deceased

#### **Wednesday, March 25, 2020**

8:30 a.m. †All fathers, living & deceased

#### **Thursday, March 26, 2020**

8:30 a.m. Eileen McNamara, for God's blessing on her birthday

#### **Friday, March 27, 2020**

8:30 a.m. †Robert Stumpf

#### **Saturday, March 28, 2020**

8:30 a.m. All doctors, nurses, first responders and health care workers

4:00 p.m. †John Dobbs, †Mary Sobyra, Sean Hunter, for God's healing

#### **Sunday, March 29, 2020**

8:30 a.m. †Jean Wozniak

10:30 a.m. †Connie Moran, †Alfreda Jablonski

### **Thank You for Continuing to Support St. Bernadette**

As St. Bernadette tries to remain your spiritual home during these extraordinary times, we continue to rely on your support. We sincerely appreciate you giving what you can. We understand that many people are struggling with uncertainty around their job or their finances, and may not be able to give at all. For those that can, we recommend using GiveCentral, if you are not using it already. Visit <https://www.givecentral.org/location/261/> We also remind you that you can support St. Bernadette through AmazonSmile anytime you shop at Amazon.com. Just visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose St. Bernadette Parish in Evergreen Park, IL as your charity.



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March 19, 2020

Dear Brothers in Christ,

This mid-March is unlike any other. It is a strange time. Its markers are disruption, inconvenience, isolation, discouragement, fear, anxiety, and sadness. The virus has upended all of our routines. And, while we sense that the virus has put us in a dangerous place, we also know that we have entered unknown territory, a foreign land.

This is not the first time people of faith have experienced alienation and dislocation and we can learn from the past. In fact, the story of Israel gives us hope, for it is in their moment of exile, of entering into unknown territory, that God reveals the full breadth of His fidelity, His presence and action in the world. In a word, the exile, while bringing great suffering, was even more so a moment of grace, for the People of God came to know the God who is close to them. How can Israel's experience of exile and alienation inspire us to see this crisis as a time of grace? How could God be moving in all of this?

Let me suggest some graces of this moment that you may want to share with your people. These are hidden blessings that we might easily overlook precisely because we are distracted and even absorbed by so much that is negative. Consider these graces:

**The grace of knowing our fragility.** You hear it said that young people take risks, sometimes really awful risks because they feel invulnerable. Well, it's not just young people who feel invulnerable. Even those of us who can count many years in our lives march into each day feeling in control and ready to master whatever we will face. Our sense of mastery over life is an illusion. We are fragile and vulnerable and not in control, even if we are not conscious of that. The grace of knowing our fragility in the time of the virus puts us in touch with a necessary trust and surrender into the hands of the God who made us, who has faithfully walked with us and who one day will call us home.

**The grace of true freedom.** With the virus, our movements are restricted and so are our options for doing things. The usual choices and freedom of movement are just not available. If we define our freedom in terms of the choices available to us, then the virus has made us much less free than we would like. On the other hand, the restrictions we experience can open an opportunity for us to reflect on the true meaning of freedom. In our religious tradition, genuine



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freedom is not about the number of choices we have, but about the possibility of giving ourselves over to God and others in love. Jesus says of himself, “No one takes my life from me. I lay it down to pick it up again. For this the Father loves me.” (See John 10) That is true freedom.

**The grace of time.** The pace of life has slowed with the virus. Less commuting, less opportunity to work, more empty spaces—this amounts to a very altered rhythm of life. We have more time on our hands, but without entertainments and sports and social gatherings, we don’t have ways to fill it up. This unusual, even odd situation may force us to reconfigure our sense of time. It has been observed that for most Americans, life is lived in a pendular rhythm of work and escape. We work hard and earn our escape time. Then we escape until we have to go back to work. But time is more than what is filled by work and escape. In our faith tradition, Sabbath time puts us in touch with another dimension of time. It is neither work nor escape but resting in God, an alert attentiveness to what is deep and sometimes mysterious in our lives. It is a gift to re-imagine time.

**The grace of each other.** Social distancing is, of course, the new normal for the time of the virus. Still, there are other ways, especially in our families, in which we have been pushed closer together. We are facing each other in our homes and across generations in new ways. That contact brings its own share of tension, no doubt. Still, it nudges us to rediscover each other and to value each other anew. It can teach us the value of “wasting time” with each other. Think, for example, of helping young people to realize the vulnerability of older members of their family and our need overall to protect and nurture each other. All this can awaken a new sense of urgency about “loving one another, as I have loved you,” in the words of Jesus.

**The grace of wisdom.** So much of our ordinary, “non-virus” life, is dominated by the pursuit of short-term results, such as financial, business and human-human transactions. The opposite of a short-term mindset is wisdom. Only wisdom cracks open the bigger picture of our faith tradition, in fact, the biggest picture imaginable. Wisdom gives us the capacity to look at all things in terms of God’s plan and destiny, of their ultimate goal. It is in moments of loss and upheaval that we are forced to take a fresh look at our lives and value the things that really matter. This time of the virus, upended as it is, pushes to take in the big picture. Then we can begin to name and embrace what really matters, what really counts.

There is so much that is sad and serious about the coronavirus and its impact on our lives and the lives of those we serve. All that is real enough. But, so too are the hidden graces



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that God has given His people in times of loss and exile into unfamiliar territory. All we need to do in response is open our eyes to the reality of God's faithful presence in our life and remember He walks with us now as he walked in fidelity with people in former times. We surely do not want to suggest to people that all the pain and struggle we face in moments like these will magically evaporate. But we can encourage them to trust in God's promise, revealed in the suffering Christ, that He will share our suffering and in the end will bring us into a greater share in His life.

These are some of the thoughts that have come during my prayer that God guide me in ways that can be of help to you in your ministry. I hope they are of some encouragement.

Let us continue to pray for one another.

In Christ,

  
Archbishop of Chicago

## Sunday, Mar 22, 2020

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT; SECOND SCRUTINY OF THE ELECT

### Clarity at last

Darkness and light are biblical themes that invite us to take an internal sight exam. How clearly do we see? Like the man in today's gospel, we're all born blind into a world grown accustomed to the blurred vision of habitual sin. We view most decisions in terms of what's in it for us. It's difficult and challenging to climb up to a higher point of view to ask: What will serve the common good? Today, we pray that our Elect will have the grace to seek and attain that higher ground. And might we too ask for the same?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41 (31). *"What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?"*

## Monday, Mar 23, 2020

MEMORIAL OF TURIBIUS OF MOGROVEJO, BISHOP

### Step down to your calling

God must have a great sense of irony. Imagine the head of an important court suddenly being summoned to pastor a far-off land filled with people who speak unknown languages. Such was the destiny of Turibius of Mogrovejo, summoned from his post as chief inquisitor in Granada, Spain to pastor the Lima archdiocese, which included the indigenous Andean communities of 16th-century colonial Peru. Turibius went with the flow admirably, traversing his vast archdiocese three times on foot, alone, ministering to all along his route. He defended those who suffered the greatest injustice under the colonial rule he himself represented. Downward mobility is a pattern in saints' biographies. Time to evaluate your priorities?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 65:17-21; John 4:43-54 (244). *"He and his whole household came to believe."*

## Tuesday, Mar 24, 2020

LENTEN WEEKDAY

### Be a voice for the voiceless

Saint Oscar Romero, the archbishop of San Salvador who spoke out against grave social injustice in El Salvador, was assassinated by his opponents while celebrating Mass on this day in 1980, and it is commemorated by the United Nations as International Day for the Right to the Truth. Today is an opportunity for you to honor the memory of human rights victims, pay tribute to those who struggle to protect those rights for all, remember the important work of Romero, and commit yourself to his values of speaking truth to power, even when it costs you.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; John 5:1-16 (245). *"Look, you are well; do not sin any more, so that nothing worse may happen to you."*

## Wednesday, Mar 25, 2020

SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

### Say yes to God

The Annunciation is a beautiful feast that celebrates Mary's "yes" to God during her encounter with the angel Gabriel. Mary doesn't rattle off a quick response but rather pauses and ponders, wondering what this might mean. Her response is a choice not simply to give birth to a child, but to fully embrace her identity and her calling as an intimate companion with God. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord." It is as if Mary is saying, "Look! My

life is fully in God! Everything about who I am is for and with God!" During this day of Annunciation, reflect on your daily "yeses." How do these reflect your own identity and life in God?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10; Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38 (545). *"Mary said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.'"*

## Thursday, Mar 26, 2020

LENTEN WEEKDAY

### Reflect in your heart

Imagine taking a walk with the Lord today. As you walk along, he suddenly stops and looks at you with a question in his eyes. He hesitates, but then goes ahead and asks: "Do you have the love of God in your heart?" You might respond: "I am doing my best to be patient, to think of others first, to be kind and generous. It is Lent after all." Jesus persists: "But do you have the love of God in your heart?" Take five minutes today and consider that question. Be at peace with whatever thoughts come to mind. Then allow the insights you gain to set the rest of the day's course.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 32:7-14; John 5:31-47 (247). *"It is simply that I know you and you do not have the love of God in your hearts."*

## Friday, Mar 27, 2020

LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

### What price would you pay?

Today's gospel has an aura of doom about it, with Jesus getting a clear message that authorities would like to kill him. The church teaches that "Jesus went up to Jerusalem voluntarily, knowing well that there he would die a violent death because of the opposition of sinners," as the Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it (569). How far are you willing to go to "do the right thing"? Contemplate today the sacrifices you have made and what you would be willing to do to be true to your beliefs.

TODAY'S READINGS: Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30 (248). *"Some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem said, 'Is he not the one they are trying to kill?'"*

## Saturday, Mar 28, 2020

LENTEN WEEKDAY

### The plot thickens

Next weekend we observe Palm Sunday, ushering in a dramatic week that includes the tragedy of Our Lord's suffering and death. The gospels describe for us the suspicion and plotting that will lead to his Crucifixion. Among the religious leaders, only Nicodemus gives Jesus the benefit of the doubt and tries to argue his case. This is the same Nicodemus who has already visited Jesus under cover of night to discuss his teachings and who provides the burial spices after Jesus is crucified. How can you be Nicodemus in situations where others are subject to suspicion and suffering?

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 11:18-20; John 7:40-53 (249). *"I, like a trusting lamb led to slaughter, had not realized that they were hatching plots against me."*

*Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time*



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