5th Sunday of Lent
March 29, 2020

“I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live.” - Jn 11:25
Dear Friends,

We continue to work on getting Mass available from St. Mary online. Please be patient with us. If the students were in school I could ask one of them and they’d probably have a dozen different technical ideas and solutions. Hmmm. Not a bad idea!

I am trying to write a daily reflection and post it on Flocknote which is sent to each family email address when they register through our parish website (www.stmary-wc.org). This is a great way for us to keep in prayerful touch, and I will especially be using that as we celebrate Holy Week and Easter.

Let us continue to pray for each other and for our world. May the healing power of God’s grace be with each one of us.

Father Fred

P.S. – Do something special and order take-out from your favorite local restaurant!

Since public Masses have been canceled and therefore, there is no offertory collection, our parish budget is being impacted. If you normally give through the collection basket at Mass, you can continue to submit your church contributions in one of two ways:

♦ You can use the ONLINE GIVING option on the website. You can also give to our second collections through this option.
♦ You can mail a check, made out to St. Mary Church, to 2051 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Thank you for your continued support of the parish through these trying times.

The parish office is closed until further notice. If you come to the church to pray, you can pick up a copy of the Sunday bulletin, although the number of copies available is reduced. We encourage you to read the bulletin online, on our website: www.stmary-wc.org.

If you have not been receiving email updates from the parish, you can sign up on our website to receive emails. On the website home page, click on WELCOME, then on JOIN OUR COMMUNITY; then on the BLUE SHEEP on your left. Additionally, if you would like to have the bulletin emailed to you directly from our publisher, J. S. Paluch, you can sign up at https://ebulletin.jspaluch.com.

SECOND COLLECTION

The second collection scheduled for this weekend is the one to benefit our St. Vincent de Paul food pantry. The pantry is still open on Thursday afternoons to serve clients who come seeking help. Please help SVDP continue to assist the needy. You can contribute online on our website or send a check payable to St. Vincent de Paul. Thanks for your support!

The Chrism Mass will still be celebrated in the Cathedral as scheduled on April 2, 2020 at 7pm. However, in light of the shelter-in-place order in effect for the Bay Area, the Chrism Mass will NOT be open to the public and only a limited number of clergy will participate. The public may participate in the Chrism Mass via livestream through the Cathedral of Christ the Light’s Facebook page: facebook.com/ctlcathedral.org

ORGANIZATIONS

CYO, Jerry Florence stmarycyo.wc@gmail.com 510-504-5954
Charismatic Prayer Group, Jim Crowley 944-0359
Eucharistic Adoration, Mary Johnstone 954-7205
Filipino-American (Fil-Am) Ministry, Elena Gaoiran 525-7089
Finance Council, Brian Mulligan 210-1031
Hispanic Ministry, Maria Castro 550-3016
Homebound Ministry, Helene Vizcarra 891-8936
Hospital Ministry, Angeles Ron 856-8780
Knights of Columbus, John Cuddihy 286-4515
Respect Life Ministry, Jim Crowley 944-0359
Rosary Makers, Ana Lau 256-4428
St. Vincent de Paul, Barb Erickson 937-2817
Walking with Purpose, Laura Lencioni 997-4379
I lift up my eyes toward the mountains; from where shall help come to me? My help is from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 121:1-2

Even though we are not celebrating public Masses at the moment, be assured that our priests are praying for and honoring these Mass intentions in their daily private Masses.

Eucharistic Adoration has been suspended until further notice.
GOSPEL MEDITATION

Even though we say that we believe, there is a part of us that doesn’t. There are many times in our lives when we experience death, whether it be the physical death of someone we love, a failed relationship, the loss of a job, or a broken dream. As we are going through these death experiences, we can easily find ourselves reaching out to God to make it better and fix it! We think that the proper order of life is to maintain the things of this world, especially those things that are essential to our sense of well-being and security. We do not like change. The grieving that comes from our death experiences can keep us stuck and in despair. If we have lost something or someone of great value, the very meaning and essence of life is lost with them. We need gentle companions to lift us from despair and that is precisely who God desires to be in our life as well.

God calls us out of our tombs, where we have been closed up in fear and despair, and shouts, “Come out!” He desperately wants to show us the path to hope and the new life that is possible after loss and death. But our faith can be weak, and we still prefer to cling to the memory of what we had rather than the joyful possibilities of tomorrow. We sometimes live as if God is not real and that the transformative power of His resurrected presence is a story found in the Bible rather than a narrative unfolding in our lives.

God is the God of surprises, not our demise. God opens new possibilities, begins new chapters, creates new verses, and brings us to new heights! We spend so much time and energy ruminating over what we left behind yesterday that we are far too tired to see what can unfold tomorrow. Loving someone new doesn’t negate our past loves. Embracing the love of a person, God, or life itself tomorrow doesn’t diminish the love of yesterday. Each of our loves is different, and one cannot be replaced by another. They don’t cancel each other out. God truly has tended to every detail of our lives, and if we listen to each detail, we find that they all lead us back to Him. Jesus wants us to come out of our closed-up tombs. Are we going to listen this time?

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and/or donated to Winter Nights Family Shelter. The shelter will continue to serve our current families but without the help of volunteers in order to comply with community health guidelines.

Good News - St Mary will be providing catered/restaurant food April 1 - 4. Your generous donations will more than cover the cost of these meals.

I will miss the privilege of serving side by side with you, but I am grateful for your willingness to share your time, talent, and treasure. Let us be united in prayer and trust in our God who is good, all the time.

Peace to you,
Stephanie Baker, cccwinternights.org

Due to the “Shelter in Place” directive from Contra Costa County, we have decided to move our vigil “home.” That means that we will keep our assigned hour of prayer, but instead of going out to Planned Parenthood, we will pray at home. Seasoned volunteers can now sign up for more hours of prayer, and new volunteers can sign up at: 40daysforlife.com/walnutcreek

Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."— Jeremiah 1:4-5

Lord God, we confess that in You we live and move and have our being. Because You are, we are. May we find grace from You to affirm the being of every human and may we labor to make this truth known to the world around us.

Faith Formation and all ministry meetings and activities have been suspended until further notice.

Remember that the church is open for prayer from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm daily.
It has long been a Catholic understanding that when circumstances prevent one from receiving Holy Communion, it is possible to make an Act of Spiritual Communion, which is a source of grace. Spiritual Communion is an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and lovingly embrace him at a time or in circumstances when one cannot receive Him sacramentally. The most common reason for making an Act of Spiritual Communion is when a person cannot attend Mass. Acts of Spiritual Communion increase our desire to receive sacramental Communion and help us avoid the sins that would make us unable to receive Holy Communion worthily.

**Spiritual Communion Prayer**

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 in 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.

**CREATE A FAMILY PRAYER SPACE AT HOME**

In the coming weeks, families will be spending more time together at home. One good use of this time would be to pray together on a regular basis. This prayer time together can be enhanced by creating a place in your home dedicated to prayer. Making a place for prayer in your home can help us do what the Gospel tells us, to go into an “inner room” to pray (Matthew 6:6). Make your prayer place as quiet, uncluttered, and “desert-like” as possible. It can be the corner of a room or any unused space. Furnish your prayer place with a Bible, prayer books, cross, rosary, icons, and a candle. Encourage family members to use the prayer place for personal as well as family prayer. You can bless your place of prayer, saying:

Come, Holy God. Dwell in this place of prayer, and bless it with your peace and presence. Bless all who seek you here. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Since we are unable to go to Mass at the moment, one idea for prayer together is to find a resource with the prayers and reading for Sunday Mass and pray those together. See box on this page for suggestions.

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**Online Masses and other liturgical resources for Spiritual Nourishment during the Coronavirus Pandemic**

Daily Scripture readings from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in English and Spanish

- [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

Mass celebrated by Pope Francis in Italian:


Mass celebrated by Pope Francis in Spanish:


**Daily Mass (including Sunday)**

- CatholicTV
  - [http://www.catholictv.org/masses/catholictv-mass](http://www.catholictv.org/masses/catholictv-mass)
- EWTN: [http://ewtn.com](http://ewtn.com)
- Bishop Robert Barron’s Daily Mass
  - [https://www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass](https://www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass)
- Relevant Radio (audio only):
  - [http://relevantradio.com/](http://relevantradio.com/)

**Sunday Mass**

- Catholic Extension Society:
  - [https://www.catholicextension.org/stories/Sunday-catholic-mass-online](https://www.catholicextension.org/stories/Sunday-catholic-mass-online)

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**WITH GOD**

With God, go over the sea. Without God, don’t even go over the threshold.

—Russian proverb

We would like to thank the advertisers who sponsor our bulletins. We want them to know how much they are appreciated for their support of this important channel of communication and how they are needed now more than ever. We encourage our parishioners to check the back page of our bulletin, and support our advertisers with your patronage, which we surely need in these difficult times. When you patronize these businesses, please be sure to thank them for their support.
Q. What is the difference between a basilica and a cathedral?

A. Basilicas are churches that are so titled because of their antiquity, dignity, historical importance, or significance as centers of worship. A cathedral is the principal church of a diocese, which contains the chair of the bishop, or “cathedra” in Latin. The chair is the symbol of the bishop’s teaching authority.
LA HISTORIA CONTRARIA DE EZEQUIEL

Es difícil exagerar la triste situación que enfrentó el pueblo de Israel y que describe Ezequiel en la lectura de hoy. Babilonia había invadido Jerusalén, matado a muchos de sus habitantes y destruido el Templo. Algunos de ellos fueron forzados a ir en exilio a Babilonia. Sus captores y vecinos probablemente concluyeron que la deidad babilonia había triunfado sobre la deidad hebrea y dieron al Dios de Israel por muerto, al igual que al pueblo de Israel.

En medio de esta catástrofe, Ezequiel anuncia una historia diferente: El relato de la muerte de Dios es falso. El Dios de Israel está vivo, y el aliento del mismo Dios restaurará sus vidas. Se levantarán de la tumba del dolor y la desesperación, y regresarán a su tierra. El mensaje de Ezequiel es para todos nosotros que sabemos lo que es una honda desorientación, la separación de los seres queridos y una pérdida profunda. Dios mismo llevará cargado nuestro insufrible dolor, y el espíritu de Dios nos ofrecerá nueva vida y esperanza.

LA RESURRECCIÓN Y LA VIDA

El Evangelio de hoy nos habla de la resurrección de Lázaro. En el diálogo entre Jesús y Marta, la hermana de Lázaro, ella se refiere a la resurrección universal de la muerte en “el último día”. Entonces Jesús cambia la perspectiva al identificarse él mismo como “la resurrección y la vida”. ¿Qué significa esto? Anteriormente Jesús había hablado de la hora “en que los muertos oirán la voz de Dios, y todos los que la oigan, vivirán” (Juan 5:25). Cuando Jesús con voz alta dice: “Lázaro, sal!” Jesús cumple ese papel en el presente, ofreciendo vida nuevamente en este momento a través de una nueva relación con él. La resurrección se ofrece no solamente en el último día, y no solamente en el momento de nuestra muerte física, sino también en nuestro diario vivir. Algunas veces estamos enterrados en tumbas de sufrimiento o atrapados en el pecado. Cuando encontramos la muerte en sus muchas formas, con fe podemos escuchar a Jesús, quien nos llama de la muerte a la vida.

LECTURAS DE LA SEMANA

Martes:   Nm 21:4-9; Sal 102 (101):2-3, 16-21; Jn 8:21-30
Miércoles: Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95; Dn 3:52-56; Jn 8:31-42
Jueves:    Gn 17:3-9; Sal 105 (104):4-9: Jn 8:51-59
Viernes:   Jer 20:10-13; Sal 18 (17):2-7; Jn 10:31-42
Sábado:   Ez 37:21-28; Jer 31:10, 11-13; Jn 11:45-56

LA HISTORIA CONTRARIA DE EZEQUIEL

TRADICIONES DE NUESTRA FE

Para ser cristiano en la Iglesia católica, necesitas recibir los tres sacramentos de Iniciación, es decir, el Bautismo, la Confirmación y la Eucaristía. Si te falta uno de estos sacramentos, no estás completamente iniciado. Algunos cristianos insisten en que si no estás confirmado, no te puedes casar por la Iglesia, pero esto no es completamente cierto. Según las leyes de la Iglesia, los cristianos que desean contraer Matrimonio deberían buscar ser confirmados, si les es posible sin grave dificultad (Canon 1065).

Todos conocemos el Bautismo y la Eucaristía, pero ¿qué es la Confirmación? El nombre lo dice todo. Con la Confirmación, confirmamos ante Dios y la Iglesia que deseamos ser cristianos por el resto de nuestras vidas. Confirmarse es comprometerse, es entregarse al servicio de Dios ayudando al próximo con la gracia y el poder del Espíritu Santo. Por eso es importante recibir una buena preparación.

La mayoría de nosotros no tuvimos opción cuando nuestra mamá y nuestro papá nos bautizaron. Nuestros padres y padrinos dijeron sí por nosotros y, si cumplieron con su compromiso, nos enseñaron con palabras y buen ejemplo como decir si al Evangelio de Cristo. Sea que nos hayamos bautizado como infantes o como adultos, la Confirmación nos da la oportunidad de dar un sí pleno. ¡Sí! A ese bautizo, ¡Sí! A la Iglesia y en especial, ¡Sí! A Cristo.

--Fray Gilberto Cavazos-Glź, OFM, Copyright (c) J. S. Paluch Co., Inc.

Lecturas de hoy: Ez 37:12–14; Sal 130 (129):1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8; Rom 8:8–11; Jn 11:1–45 [3–7, 17, 20–27, 33b–45]

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