

The Bells of St. Mary's The Church of the Immaculate Conception

Fifth Sunday of Lent *March 29, 2020*

From Fr. Anthony Ekanem, MSP

~ CHRIST, THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE ~

As we enter this final week before Holy Week, the narrative of Jesus' life on earth builds to a climax. This moment makes me recall Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's words on Vocation: "Lent is a favorable time in which to rediscover faith in God as the foundation of our lives and our Church's life." Since the 3rd Sunday of Lent, the First Scrutiny, the Gospel readings from St. John have been descriptive and extensive. Last two weeks, Jesus gave water to those who thirsted and light to those who could not see. Both are the essentials of life.

What have we learned so far as we get closer to the final week during this dreadful and risky pandemic?

It seems to us, all the essentials are pointing us towards the inner conversion and a renewed faith in God. We can see what is happening as we draw closer to the end of our six weeks before the Easter celebration. Here, Mary and Martha are weeping over the death of their brother. According to them, had Jesus been there with them; their brother would not have died. Jesus is at the center of that whole scene. He is the one who gives hope (water, light, and life) to those who have faith when surrounded by the shadows of death.

John's main aim is to elicit faith in Jesus and to show the effects of faith in Him. "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake, I am glad I was not there because now you will believe." For "many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and saw what He did believe in Him." All these took place not merely because Jesus was a family friend to Martha and Mary but because He is the Anointed One of God. Martha as we can observe, is a model of faith in this situation. See how she made a beautiful profession of faith: "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into the world." (John 11:27)

Jesus is the source of life, not just by His physical presence, but the life of God in Him. This new life of faith is that which the Samaritan woman came to believe, the Man born-blind began to profess, and now in today's Gospel reading, Mary, Martha, and many of the Jews came to witness this faith when Jesus brought Lazarus back to life.

The keywords in this story are: "I am the resurrection and the life." The delay in coming to Martha and Mary and the fact that Lazarus has been dead for four days serve to underline the point the evangelist is making, namely, that Jesus is the Master of life and death.

Let us take a look at what is happening around us today. Isn't it amazing how each day brings a new reality into our lives due to this Coronavirus pandemic? Initially, I thought this whole pandemic thing was like any of the viruses where scientists will just help us deal with it within a short period of time. But to my greatest surprise, I am hearing everywhere people talking about a stay home command, shut down of schools, places of worship, businesses, government offices, etc. All these awakens in me some sense of what matters most in this world. Like Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, says about "rediscovering faith in God."

As we are socially distancing ourselves from one another to help flatten the curve, we need to go on our knees at home with our family members praying that

- All those severely affected may gain calmness and enlightenment, especially amid these uncertainties and anxieties.
- All parents and teachers who are making arrangements for children at home with this new chapter of online studies will carry out their responsibilities with patience, love, and care.
- All those laid off, losing their job may have means to support their family during this trying period through the intercession of St. Joseph.
- All the additional stress and tension that are rising now in families out of fear may not destroy the family bond.
- A quicker resolutions to these strange challenges around us.
- A smooth return to normalcy may quickly come.

Last Sunday, you may have noticed three of us trying to live - stream 9:00 am, 11:00 am, and 12 noon Masses; in Spanish, English, and Arabic languages, respectively. We will continue to work on trying to bring the message of Christ Jesus during this time to our parish family everywhere. Though we understand how eager you will love to participate at the celebration of the Eucharist, know you are all in our prayers. Always remember to join us online with Spiritual Communion Prayer. Our Holy Father Pope Francis is encouraging this desire to be expressed when we are not physically present during the celebration of the Mass and to pray for all those affected and also for God's intervention to eradicate this corona virus disease.

Martha and Mary, who were desperately looking for Jesus to raise His friend, their brother Lazarus from the dead, we, in turn, are desperately crying out for an end to this virus outbreak that has altered our lives. We would like to hear: "O my people; I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel."

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.

INFORMATION

JOIN US FOR DAILY MASS LIVESTREAM BY GOING TO <https://icmary103@gmail.com>

Our schedule of Private Masses that will be live streamed will be as follows:

.. Saturday: 5:00 PM English

.. Sunday: 11:00 AM English

The Spanish Masses will be in YouTube

.. Thursday: 7:00 PM Spanish

.. Saturday: 7:30 PM Spanish

.. Sunday: 9:00 AM Spanish

All Weekday Mass intentions are being celebrated by the priests privately

Please go to the website www.icmary.com about 15 minutes before the posted time to join the English live stream. There is a 30 second delay on the video feed. A recording of the Spanish Saturday 7:30 PM will be uploaded to YouTube.

CONTINUED FINANCIAL SUPPORT We urge all who can to please consider joining the online WeShare automated giving program by going to:

<https://icmary.churchgiving.com/> to set up automatic giving to keep our staff, clergy, and buildings ready for us when this crisis ends, as it will. After the page opens, look around WeShare at the collection opportunities and click on the yellow button, "Make a Donation", and follow directions. God bless you for your continuing sacrifices.

While we are still able to keep our churches open for private prayer you will see collection boxes at the top of the center aisles. Please place your collection envelopes or any contribution you wish to make to help support our parish, staff and our utility expenses.

Sundays Readings:

First Reading: Ezekiel 37: 12-14, (34A) p. 55

The Lord God told the people that soon the graves of the dead would open and they would rise. "I will put my spirit in you that you may live...says the Lord."

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 130: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8,p. 55 With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

Second Reading: Romans 8: 8-11 p. 56 "Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." God, who raised Jesus from the dead, will raise also those in whom the Spirit dwells.

Gospel: John 11: 1-45 p. 56 Lazarus died, and Jesus raised him from death. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."

Religious Education

There will be no Religious Education classes until further notice from the Archdiocese

When public schools resume classes will begin for Religious Education.

Blessings to all the families of the Religious Education program of St. Mary's. Continue to pray together as a family and study your prayers. God bless you

Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal

Update of 2020 Appeal Goals Goal:\$37,500 Pledged: \$ 20,655.00 Paid: \$13,093.00

Thank you so much for your cooperation again towards Cardinal's Appeal. Please, we are still in need of more support in order to reach our parish goal for 2020 as we have been doing.

Lenten Season is a good time to consider giving towards Cardinal's Appeal.

To donate you can go to cardinalsappeal.org, click on Donate, select an amount, and direct your gift to our Church:

#567 Immaculate Conception, Yonkers

**Mass Intentions for the week of
March 28 to April 5, 2020****Saturday, March 28, 2020:**

12:05 pm - Virgil Borrelli + * Wife Angelina

5:00 pm - Maura W. Ledrick * Catherine Reid

7:30pm - Kilmara Cortes * De Sus Hijos

Sunday, March 29, 2020:

7:30 am - For the Parishioners/Para los Parroquianos

9:00 am - Silvana Suárez * Paula Manzueta

11:00 am - Benjamin Onambele for Special Intention

Monday, March 30, 2020:

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Benjamin Onambele for Special Intention

Tuesday March 31, 2020:

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Maria Angelina Rubio + * Maria Rubio

Wednesday, April 1, 2020:

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Benjamin Onambele

Thursday, April 2, 2020

8:15am - Mary Goss + * Mr. & Mrs. Michael Martin

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

7:00 pm - Maria Angelina Rubio + * Maria Rubio

Friday, April 3, 2020:

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Sagrado Corazon * Marta Vega

7:00 pm -

Saturday, April 4, 2020:

12:05 pm - Available/Disponibile

5:00 pm - Regina, Manuel, John, Michael David + * Mr & Mrs. Michael Anthony

7:30pm - Legion De Maria * Grupo Legion de Maria

Sunday, April 5, 2020:

7:30 am - For the Parishioners/Para los Parroquianos

9:00 am - Claudia Alvarez & Alvaro Solorzano + * The Family

11:00 am - Available/Disponibile

+Indicates deceased *Indicates the person (s) who requested the Mass.