



March 17, 2024 - Fifth Sunday of Lent

*I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts;
I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ~ Jeremiah 31:33*

St. Patrick Catholic Church

San Francisco's Historic Landmark #4

Founded in 1851

756 Mission St. (between 3rd and 4th Streets)

San Francisco, CA 94103

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Pastoral Staff

Fr. Roberto "Fr. Obet" A. Andrey - *Pastor*

Fr. Ted (Teodoro) Magpayo - *Parochial Vicar*

Deacon Ferdinand Mariano - *RCIA Coordinator*

Rachelle Morales and Nenette Murata -

Religious Education Coordinators

Charles Corpus - *Music Coordinator*

Virginia Dilim - *Wedding Coordinator*

Nora Regaspi - *Office Manager*

Camelle Sudario - *Parish Receptionist*

Emy Pasion - *Bookkeeper*

Mass Times

Monday - Friday: 7:30 a.m., 12:10 p.m., 5:15 p.m.

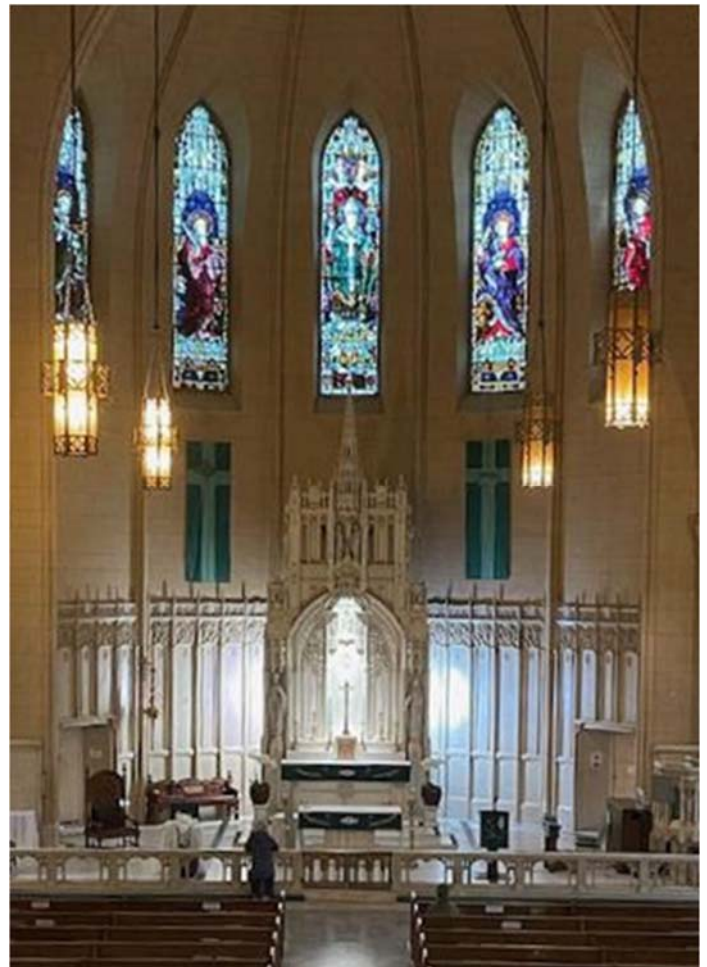
Saturday: 7:30 a.m., 12:10 p.m. 5:15 p.m. Vigil Mass

Sunday: 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 5:15 p.m.

Tagalog Mass: 1st Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

Family Mass: 2nd Sunday at 12:00 p.m.

Charismatic & Healing Mass: 3rd Sunday at 2:00 p.m.



March 17, 2024 ~ Fifth Sunday of Lent ~ Year B

Jer 31:31-34; Ps 51:3-4,12-15; Heb 5:7-9; Jn 12:20-33

The grain of wheat must die to produce fruit (3). Such dying must be cultivated by obedience (2) and by our covenant with God, rooted in love and forgiveness (1,Ps).

or Fifth Sunday of Lent ~ Year A Readings (RCIA)

Ez 37:12-14; Ps 130:1-8; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45 or 11:3-7,17,20-27,33b-45

Jesus is our resurrection and our life (3). Because he has given us of the Spirit, we are no longer dead because of sin, but alive (1,2). In Jesus is the fullness of redemption (Ps).

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Because the people broke the old covenant, God promised a new covenant, not in the blood of oxen and other animals, but in the blood of the Son, Jesus Christ. This new covenant, foreseen from afar by Jeremiah and the prophets, was not to be engraved on stone, or written on paper, but carved on our hearts, so that we might know God intimately. Not by keeping many laws are we to be saved, but by the love of God, living and real in our hearts through the sacrifice of Christ.

Our Eucharist is the pledge of that indwelling of Christ, and of our response of praise and thanksgiving to God for the mercy, love, and kindness to us in forgiving our sins and cleansing our hearts of everything evil. God issues this invitation to intimacy by offering us the chance to have our sufferings transformed into the perfect love of the Savior, who first loved us.

Sacrifice and Service

Jesus prayed fervently out of his suffering, a prayer deep with longing for our good and for deliverance from the power of evil. In his sacrifice, the old covenant was not done away with, but fulfilled for all people. No longer do we offer the blood of rams and bullocks, but we offer a sacrifice of thanks and praise, the Eucharist, as we commemorate Christ's death and resurrection—his triumph over evil and its consequence, death.

We follow Jesus in our life's sufferings, because he invites us into his own life, death, and resurrection. The paradox of losing one's life and finding it is revealed to us in the death and resurrection of Christ. We lose the unimportant aspects of our existence, the trivial things to which we cling for support, and we gain a life of meaning and fullness in Christ and life to come. We live our daily lives with a sense of detachment from dependence on what we have and what we do, because all is gift from God for our good. We pray, as in the psalm, that our hearts be cleansed and our spirits renewed. The strength to live, not for ourselves but for God, in service to others, is God's gift to us and not our own doing

Made Perfect in Suffering

Therefore we can trust that this work, impossible for us, is made perfect in us, as it was made perfect in Christ, through the suffering that is inevitable in all our lives. We are asked to trust that God's word to us will be fulfilled, as it was for all the prophets and saints before us.

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Risks

I risk being wrong if I trust too much. But I risk living in torment if I don't trust enough.

~ Anonymous

Looking for Lay Ministers

The proclamation of the Word of God at Masses and other Liturgies is one of the sources of faith, wisdom and understanding God and Jesus have given to the Church. Because of its importance, the Church takes great care in ensuring that the Spoken Word is proclaimed with dignity and reverence. As a parish, we try our very best to fulfill these expectations.

The source and summit of our life as a people of God are the gifts of Christ's Body and Blood, the Eucharist, and the community gathered to share in this Eucharist. Over time, the Church has seen the need for Lay Faithful to assist with the distribution of Communion at Masses and other Liturgies. As well, Eucharistic Ministers assist the parish by bringing Communion to people who are unable to attend Mass.

If you're looking for a way to serve your parish, or if you've ever wanted to be a lay minister and serve during Mass, now is your chance. Please contact the office to volunteer.

Stations of the Cross

Everyone is encouraged to join the communal praying of the Stations of the Cross every Friday after the 12:10 p.m. Mass during Lent. Stations of the Cross prayer books are available in the gift shop for a small fee. The Santo Niño Novena, normally prayed on Fridays, will not be prayed in lieu of the Stations of the Cross.

Living Stewardship Now

"We should strive to keep our hearts open to the sufferings and wretchedness of other people, and pray continually that God may grant us that spirit of compassion which is truly the gift of God."

~ Saint Vincent de Paul (1580-1660),

French priest, religious founder, servant of the poor
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Happy Birthday!!

Happy Birthday to our Parishioners celebrating a birthday this week.

Corazon Mariano	03/17	Roberto Oviedo	03/20
Mary McSweeney	03/17	Catalina Bohol	03/22
Nenita Murata	03/17	John Matienzo	03/23
Mario Belocura	03/18	Rosita Pelaez	03/23
Maria Fe Wolf	03/19		



Please Pray for our Holy Father's Intention for March

Pope's Intention: For the new martyrs. We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.

Celebration of The Solemnity of St. Patrick

On Ash Wednesday, God has called His Church to enter the beautiful season of Lent. Vatican II with its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, teaches that this season is meant to celebrate the paschal mystery by recalling or preparing for baptism and by penance (cf. SC, n. 109). And, when different solemnities are properly celebrated during this season, they do not deter us from living a holy season of Lent and preparing ourselves to celebrate Easter, “the greatest and the most noble of all solemnities” (The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night, Roman Missal, n. 1).

The Feast of Saint Patrick is celebrated as a Solemnity in the Archdiocese of San Francisco, as he is a Patron of the diocese. Since March 17, 2024 is the Fifth Sunday of Lent, no other Solemnities may be observed. This is in conformity with the Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, which teach the following: “Because of its special importance, the celebration of Sunday gives way only to Solemnities and Feasts of the Lord; indeed, the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter have precedence over all Feasts of the Lord and over all Solemnities. In fact, Solemnities occurring on these Sunday are transferred to the following Monday unless they occur on Palm Sunday or on Sunday of the Lord’s Resurrection” (n. 5).

Nevertheless, it is important that the Feast of Saint Patrick, a most beloved solemnity with deep historical roots in our Archdiocese, be observed in our Archdiocese. Therefore, for the Feast of Saint Patrick:

- The Solemnity of Saint Patrick, Bishop, will be celebrated on Monday, March 18th. Masses that day should include the Gloria, the Creed, and use the propers and readings for the Feast.
- For the Liturgy of the Hours:
 - Evening Prayer on Sunday, March 17th: the Second Vespers for the Fifth Sunday of Lent are celebrated.
 - Morning Prayer on Monday, March 18th: Morning Prayer for the Feast of Saint Patrick are celebrated.
 - Evening Prayer on Monday, March 18th: the First Vespers for the Solemnity of St. Joseph are celebrated.
- The churches in the Archdiocese that are used to covering the crosses and images on the Fifth Sunday of Lent may postpone the covering until Wednesday, March 20th.



Annual Chrism Mass

The annual Chrism Mass will be celebrated on Thursday, March 21 at 5:00 p.m. in the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption. The Chrism Mass is a celebration of the whole Church of San Francisco, during which the Archbishop will bless the sacred oils, which will be used in sacramental celebrations in all of the parishes throughout the year.

In this Mass, all the priests of the Archdiocese will renew, before Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone and the congregation, their commitment and dedication to their priestly ministry.

We extend this invitation to the Chrism Mass to all our parishioners, especially those who will be receiving the sacraments in which these holy oils will be used in the coming year, as well as their catechists and family members.

We hope many of our parishioners will come to show their affirmation to their priests.

Saints & Special Observances

**MONDAY: SOLEMNITY ~ ST. PATRICK, BISHOP,
PRINCIPAL CO-PATRON OF THE ARCHDIOCESE**

**TUESDAY: SOLEMNITY ~ ST. JOSEPH,
SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

Saturday: optional memorial ~

St. Turibius of Mogrovejo, Bishop

SUNDAY:

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

Readings for the Week

MONDAY: 1 Pt 4:7b-11; Lk 5:1-11;

Mt 1:16,18-21 24a or Lk 2:41-51a

TUESDAY: 2 Sm 7:4-5a,12-14a,16; Rom 4:13,16-18,22;

Mt 1:16,18-21 24a or Lk 2:41-51a

Wednesday: Dn 3:14-20; Jn 8:31-42

Thursday: Gn 17:3-9; Jn 8:51-59

Friday: Jer 20:10-13; Jn 10:31-42

Saturday: Ez 37:21-28; Jn 11:45-56

SUNDAY:

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

Mk 11:1-10 or Jn 12:12-16 (procession);

Is 50:4-7; Ps 22:8-9,17-18,19-20,23-24; Phil 2:6-11;

Mk 14:1-15:47 or 15:1-39

Today’s Readings

First Reading — I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts. (Jeremiah 31:31-34) *or* Ezekiel 37:12-14.

Psalm — Create a clean heart in me, O God (Psalm 51) *or* Psalm 130.

Second Reading — Christ became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him (Hebrews 5:7-9) *or* Romans 8:8-11.

Gospel — If a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it produces much fruit (John 12:20-33) *or* John 11:1-45 [3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45].

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Saint of the Week



Patrick, † 461 at Down; born about 389 of Romano-British origin, perhaps in Wales; founded metropolitan See of Armagh; authored *Confessio*; the famous *Lorica* (Lat. “breastplate”), a work praising Christ, is probably his; patron of Nigeria; apostle and patron of Ireland.

Saint Patrick's Prayer

(Breastplate)

A shield for Divine Protection.

Christ with me,

Christ before me,

Christ behind me,

Christ in me,

Christ beneath me,

Christ above me,

Christ on my right,

Christ on my left,

Christ when I lie down,

Christ when I sit down,

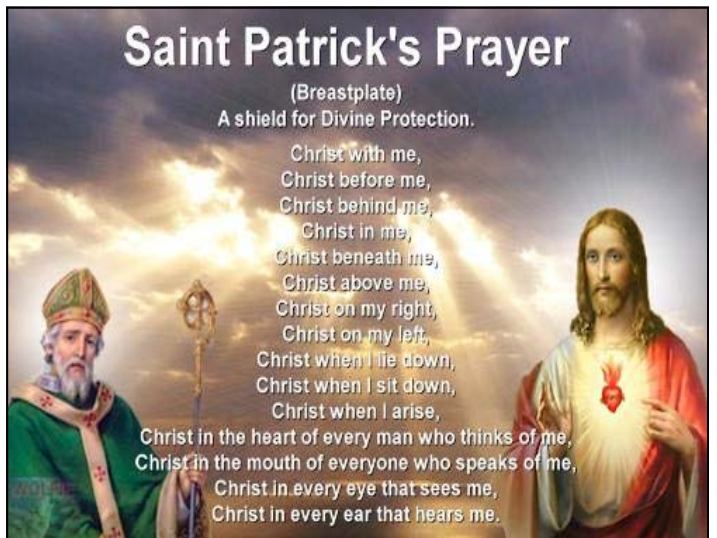
Christ when I arise,

Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,

Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,

Christ in every eye that sees me,

Christ in every ear that hears me.



Palm Sunday

- Next week, the Church celebrates Christ's entrance into Jerusalem to accomplish his paschal mystery. Accordingly, the memorial of this event is included in every Mass, with the procession or solemn entrance before the principal Mass, with the simple entrance before other Masses. The solemn entrance (but not the procession) may be repeated before other Masses that are usually well attended. Red vestments are worn: chasuble (or cope) for the presider, dalmatic for the deacon.
- The opening rites may take one of three forms (see *Sacramentary* for details). After the solemn entrance or procession, the opening collect is said. After the simple entrance, the opening greeting precedes the collect of the Mass.
- The gospel of the Passion of the Lord is read without candles or incense, and with no greeting or signing of the book, by a deacon or another priest, if present; otherwise, by the priest. It may be read by lay readers, with the part of Christ, if possible, reserved to the priest. At the end of the reading, the book is not kissed, but "The Gospel of the Lord" is said with its response.
- Where the Mass cannot be celebrated, there should be a celebration of the word of God on the theme of the Lord's messianic entrance and passion, either on Saturday evening or Sunday at a convenient time.

Feast of Faith

The First Reading

Each Sunday, we listen to three scripture readings. The first reading usually comes from the Old Testament. "The New Testament lies hidden in the Old; the Old Testament comes fully to light in the New," we read in the *Introduction to the Lectionary*. "Christ himself is the center and fullness of the whole of Scripture" (5). On Sundays, these readings usually have a close connection to the Gospel. In this season of Lent, for example, the Exodus account of the thirst of the Israelites in the desert is paired with the Samaritan woman's encounter with Jesus at the well. Ezekiel's vision of the Lord raising people from their graves is paired with the narrative of Christ raising Lazarus from the dead.

The readings are taken from many sources—historical books like Judges, Kings, and the Acts of the Apostles, prophets like Isaiah and Ezekiel, wisdom literature like Proverbs or Ecclesiastes. But no matter its genre, the first reading always ends with the same acclamation: "The word of the Lord." The scriptures are written by human authors who wrote in widely different cultural and historical contexts, but these human authors are also divine instruments through whom God speaks to us. And so we say, "Thanks be to God."

~ Peter Scagnelli, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Living God's Word

Loving God, give us a new heart in these final days of Lent, a heart that carries within it your loving imprint, that we may always know your will and yield to it, even when it calls for a dying of some kind. In such dying, may we trust that you will bring forth new life.

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Love and Death

Unhappy is death
without the love of the Savior;
unhappy is love
without the death of the Savior.

~ St. Francis de Sales



Letters from Heaven



Start with the letter in the shaded square. Draw a path from letter to letter to complete the Biblical statement. Move one square at a time, up, down, right, left and diagonally until all letters are used once. Ignore any black squares.

Jesus said, "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also ..."

B	E	S	W
T	Y	E	I
M	N	L	R
	L	A	V


W _____ ."

Answer: *will my servant be*

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saint snippets
March 17




Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

St. Patrick
5th-century British missionary known as "the Apostle of Ireland"

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saint snippets
March 19




"St. Joseph, how I love him!
What does me a lot of good
when I think of the Holy Family
is to imagine a life that was
very ordinary, just like our own."

—St. Thérèse of Lisieux

St. Joseph
Husband of Mary, Foster Father of Jesus,
Patron saint of the Universal Church and of
a happy death

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saint snippets
March 20



Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty, or have to keep coming here to draw water.

St. Photina
The Samaritan woman at the well recounted in St. John's Gospel. According to tradition, she preached the Gospel and was imprisoned and martyred.

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God Upholds Me

I take for my sureties: the power of God to guide me, the might of God to uphold me, the wisdom of God to teach me, the eye of God to watch over me, the ear of God to hear me, the word of God to give me speech, the hand of God to protect me, the way of God to go before me, the shield of God to shelter me.

~ St. Patrick

CATHOLIC CORNER

A CLEAN HEART

We are getting very close to the end of Lent. There are two choices for Gospels today. Whichever Gospel you hear—Jesus saying he would be lifted up on the cross (John 12:20-33) or the story of his friend Lazarus (John 11:1-45)—both psalms remind us that we need forgiveness and we can ask God's help to change our hearts. Today's two psalm responses psalms are:

Create a clean heart in me, O God. (Psalm 51:12a)

With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption. (Psalm 130:7)

If your parish has catechumens—people who will be baptized at Easter—part of their preparation is the celebration of scrutiny rites on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. A scrutiny is an examination or careful study. The catechumens have the opportunity in these rites to examine their lives and ask the questions, "What am I doing that is good?" and "What things in my life do I need to change?" You might ask yourself the same questions. Use the letters of the word "forgiveness" to think of some actions or thoughts in your life that are good and others that need changing. Some examples are done for you. Mark good actions with a G and those you need to change with a C.

I am F riendly to others (G)
O
R
G
I
V
E
N
E
I will stop S aying mean things (C)
S

If you sing the psalm at Mass today, listen carefully to the melody of the response.

Try to remember it and sing it during the week.

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The Little Ones

Jim Burrows



God's Word Today

"I will be their God, and they shall be my people." This statement is at the heart of the new covenant God established with the house of Israel. God promised to "remember their sin no more." This Lenten season has offered us opportunities to recall the covenant God established at the moment of our baptism. In that moment, we became the people of God. Too often we forget this covenant and turn away from God. Lent is all about returning to the Lord with our whole heart. As the living word of God is proclaimed today, let us remember the faithfulness of our God and offer thanks for the gift of the Lord Jesus, who, as today's letter to the Hebrews tells us, is "the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him."

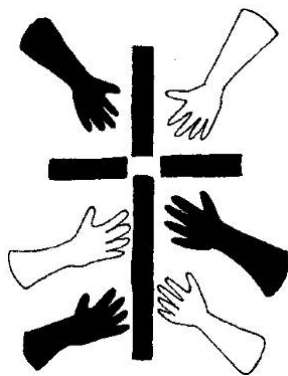
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Pastor Al®



Father, Forgive Them



The promise made by the LORD in the first reading is very bold. He says that all people shall know him, without having to be taught by others. He doesn't restrict the promise to only the holiest people: He says that the way people will know Him is through forgiveness of their sins. Remember, he is speaking to the Israelites, who had so many laws and commandments, they needed scribes and Pharisees to keep track of them. When they broke a commandment or law, they were isolated from the community. So the promise that God would place his law in their hearts meant they would be free to do God's will because they want to, not because they were feared punishment or rejection.

Jesus says something similar in today's gospel. He tells the disciples that his crucifixion would draw everyone to him. Now, Jesus' death showed that he took on the punishment for sins in place of us, who deserve it. In Luke's gospel he even prays for those who crucified him, asking God's forgiveness. (Lk 23:34) By dying on the cross, Jesus shows how much God loves us. By rising from the dead, he shows that we can rise from sin to a new life of faith and love.

Getting back to the first reading, we experience that promise when we bring our sins to God. When we forgive people who have hurt us, we also help them to experience that love. After all, if I can forgive someone, surely God will forgive them. We also help others to know God when we share or experience of being forgiven. Still not sure if God has forgiven you? The sacrament of Reconciliation gives us the assurance of God's forgiveness, as well as the experience. Along with the other sacraments, it helps us keep God's love in our hearts.

Tom Schmidt, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Receive and Pass It On

Should you find it hard to get to sleep tonight, just remember the homeless family who has no bed to lie in. Should you find yourself stuck in traffic, don't be angry. There are people in this world for whom driving is an unheard-of privilege. Should you have a bad day at work, think of the man who has been out of work for the last year. Should you despair over a relationship gone wrong, think of the person who has never known what it's like to love and be loved. Should you grieve the passing of another vacation, think of the woman in dire straits, working twelve hours a day, seven days a week, to feed her family. Should you run out of gas, think of the paraplegic who would love the opportunity to take that walk to the service station. Should you notice a new gray hair in the mirror, think of the cancer patient in chemotherapy who wishes she had hair to examine. Should you find yourself at a loss and pondering "What is my purpose in life?" be thankful. There are those who didn't live long enough to get that opportunity. Should you find yourself the victim of other people's bitterness, ignorance, smallness, or insecurities, remember, this also happened to Jesus. Today may there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, and bask in the sun. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you accept that you are a child of God.

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The New Covenant

Today's first reading is an enormously important passage, not only in the history of the Jewish people, but also for us as disciples of Jesus, who see in it a foreshadowing of the Christian dispensation. The prophet announces that God has chosen to forgive the people, and that as a sign of divine forgiveness a new covenant will be established. Contrasting the new covenant with the one made with Moses on Mount Sinai, Jeremiah says that the new covenant will be written on the people's hearts rather than on tablets of stone. No longer will the community's tradition be the sole bearer of the covenant; henceforth, God will speak directly and personally to each individual, forgiving sin and calling for a return to God in faithfulness. No longer will mere outward compliance with the dictates of the Law suffice; henceforth, God asks for an obedience that springs from the depths of one's heart.

Precisely that kind of obedience is highlighted in today's second reading, where the author of the Letter to the Hebrews describes Jesus as the mediator of the new covenant whose obedience has made him the source of salvation for all who, in turn, obey him.

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Treasures From Our Tradition

Ask senior parishioners about this fifth Sunday, and they will share memories of this Sunday years ago, when it was known as "Passion Sunday." In those days, the statues and crucifixes were draped in purple cloth, and a deeply somber atmosphere infused worship. The structure is different today for good reason. The stunning changes in the appearance of the church building drew attention away from the twofold work of Lent: reconciliation and preparing for initiation. Today, this Sunday is given to reflection on the necessity to commit, like Jesus, to the Father's will. Wherever elect are present today, the "A" reading reveals Jesus' compassion in the face of human suffering, and his desire to call us from the tombs of sin, isolation, and even death itself.

As Lent draws to a close over the next ten days, and before the beginning of the Easter Triduum on Holy Thursday, we enter an ideal time for celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation. Today's old title of "Passion Sunday" has migrated to next Sunday, also called "Palm Sunday." In many places, people prepare their own bundles of branches for next week's liturgy: pussy willow, forsythia, dogwood. If your parish schedules a procession, you may want to prepare these branches at home and bring them along.

~ Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



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Saved By God's Love

Because the people broke the old covenant, God promised a new covenant, not in the blood of oxen and other animals, but in the blood of the Son, Jesus Christ. This new covenant, foreseen from afar by Jeremiah and the prophets, was not to be engraved on stone, or written on paper, but carved on our hearts, so that we might know God intimately. Not by keeping many laws are we to be saved, but by the love of God, living and real in our hearts through the sacrifice of Christ.

Our Eucharist is the pledge of that indwelling of Christ, and of our response of praise and thanksgiving to God for the mercy, love, and kindness shown to us in forgiving our sins and cleansing our hearts of everything evil. God issues this invitation to intimacy by offering us the chance to have our sufferings transformed into the perfect love of the Savior, who first loved us.

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Treasures From Our Tradition

Over the next two weeks, as we hear of the interior anguish of Jesus, we are led to the Garden of Gethsemane, the scene of a night of suffering, failure, and loss. In Hebrew, the word means "olive press," and it was an olive grove, although only a few trees remain. Olives can't be eaten off the trees, they need to be cured—knocked from the trees at harvest time, scooped into a stone basin, and cracked open by a heavy millstone. The crushing stone weight was itself called a "gethsemane," and once it was lowered onto the olives, oil from the fruit and the inner stone would drip into a groove and flow into jars. The night before his death, Jesus experienced such anguish that scripture says his own blood perspired from him, an image no one who understands olive oil production could miss.

Today, the Mount of Olives is within the city of Jerusalem and the site of the Church of All Nations, also known as the Basilica of the Agony. It was built in 1924, funded by Catholics in twelve different countries. An open-air altar on the grounds is used by Anglicans on Holy Thursday every year. Nearby is the Russian Church of Mary Magdalene, built by the czar in 1888, its magnificent golden domes a distinctive landmark. There is also another tiny Catholic Church, called *Dominus Flevit*, or "The Cry of the Lord," built in a teardrop shape in the mid-1950s. For centuries, the Franciscan order has had the care of the shrines of the Holy Land, and our Good Friday collection helps sustain these precious sites.

~ Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Joy Unlimited

I want to know Christ ad the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection of the dead. Not that I have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ~ Philippians 3:10-12

If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are halfhearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

Lord Jesus Christ, help me to reach as far as I can toward you.
from *Mere Christianity* ~ C. S. Lewis

The New Covenant

When the prophet Jeremiah coined the term "new covenant" he was actually doing something quite radical. For the Jewish people, there was only one covenant, the one made between the Lord God and Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai. For Jeremiah to suggest that God would somehow supersede the covenant with a new one would have sounded audacious to Jewish ears. But in this way he is a predecessor of Jesus who, in the Gospel of John, is continually portrayed as superseding the past, establishing the reign of God in a new way. And in today's Gospel passage, Jesus the "new covenant" speaks the language of his "new commandment" of love when he tells of the dying grain of wheat, and of our own need to die to self in order to be raised with Christ. As Lent ends and we prepare to enter into Holy Week, the dying grain of wheat serves as an excellent symbol of the kind of dying and self-sacrifice to which disciples are called, a symbol of that new covenant written deep within our hearts.

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Reflecting on God's Word

One of the earliest pictures of Jesus I can remember portrayed him at prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. I still see his hands, clasped tight. They spoke to me of an inner struggle long before I knew about his words, "Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will" (Mark 14:36). More than any other scene in the Gospels, this one brought home what it meant to say Jesus was truly man.

Today's Gospel has been called John's version of the agony in the garden. The word agony (*agonia* in Greek) means struggle, and we can hear the struggle in Jesus' awareness that "the hour" he has spoken of before in John's Gospel, beginning at Cana, has finally arrived. It is the hour of his being lifted up—the hour of both his glory and his crucifixion. It is why he came into the world, and yet we hear him say, "I am troubled." We hear him wrestling with himself, asking for release from the hour, but then recognizing that it holds "the purpose for which I came."

Hebrews affirms this when it says "he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence" (5:7). He was able to bear the suffering and become the source of eternal salvation for all who listen to him and follow in his steps.

~ James A. Wallace, C.Ss.R.

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Fifth Sunday of Lent

March 17, 2024

I will place my law within them
and write it upon their hearts;
I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

~ Jeremiah 31:33

Third Scrutiny



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Covenant—Obedience

The word “covenant” is almost too familiar to Christians. It is a word so often found in our liturgies, in our prayers, and in our mouths, that it comes too trippingly off the tongue. And yet, “covenant” is far too strong and too binding a word to be tossed off and trifled with. Today, most attorneys would advise against using the word “covenant” in a contract, because the word is so legally binding. When one makes a covenant with another, one is making a promise and commitment that cannot be broken without serious consequences. Christians are a people of covenant, a God-made and God-given covenant. When God established the covenant with us, God knew exactly what it entailed: God and humanity were bound in an unbreakable relationship, a relationship so strong it would outlast even death itself.

Comment

In today’s first reading, Jeremiah, who had seen the fall of Jerusalem, now predicts its rise and the reestablishment of God’s people. Those in exile will return home. The uprooted will be replanted. God will make a new covenant written not on tablets of stone, but on hearts of flesh. In other words, the will of God will not be something imposed from without, but something discovered from within. What’s so radically “new” about this covenant, then, is its universality. No longer shall God’s will and law be the purview of a few “chosen;” it shall be accessible to each and every person—to all people: “All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the LORD.”

Likewise, this new covenant will not rely on the fidelity of fickle people but on the constancy of the God of faithfulness. Because of this new covenant, all people will know, from the bottom of their hearts, that God is their God and that they are God’s own. This new covenant will be so powerful as to cause the God of all remembrance to forget—to forget the sins and failings of God’s people—to forget and to forgive. This new covenant is ours if we but open our hearts.

And how do we open our hearts? The author of the letter to the Hebrews gives an answer, but it is not a simple one: obedience, a word most of us do not like to hear. Yet the personification of the new covenant, Jesus Christ, is also the personification of perfect obedience, obedience to death, even to death on a cross.

Only the openhearted can afford to obey. Only the openhearted can trust enough to obey. Today’s second reading calls us to be openhearted, to trust enough to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Through such obedience, salvation is guaranteed. We claim our share in the benefits of the new covenant by doing as Christ did, that is, by becoming obedient to him, by dying and rising as he did.

The Gospel graphically demonstrates the meaning of God’s new covenant and the obedience it requires. Only through obedience will the grain become what it was meant to become. Only through obedience will the covenant flower. John tells us that Jesus himself is the seed who is buried and dies in obedience to God’s will. Then, when John relates that Jesus says, “Whoever serves me must follow me ... The Father will honor whoever serves me,” the evangelist is telling us that the covenant established by Jesus’ death and resurrection is our covenant if we but follow Jesus in obedient service. Here John is inviting us to claim our share in the paschal mystery, the source and proof of the new covenant, and to realize that the salvation wrought by adherence to the covenant is no cheap grace. It will require sacrifice and suffering. Jesus himself will suffer, will give himself over to death as does a grain of wheat, only to rise, blossom, and produce grain on which others may feed. John reminds us that such is the lot of all who, through obedience, claim a share in the covenant—a dying, to be sure, but then a resurrection to a new and more glorious life.

Reflection

Obedience is not a popular term these days. To our ears, obedience smacks too much of subservience, of giving up and giving over one’s free will. And yet, Jesus was clearly *the* model of obedience. Can we really claim that Jesus is our model, too? We can if, like Jesus, we recognize that God’s new covenant with us is one that is heartfelt and heart-written. We can if we realize that God’s new covenant with us is one that asks no limits of and places no limits on us. Then, as heart of our hearts, God’s new covenant will surely lead us to obedience. It will prompt us to give of ourselves to others, to be “lifted up” for others, even to die for others, all for the sake of the love that exists both between us and God and among all of us whose hearts God has embraced.

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Harden Not Your Hearts

Hear His voice today: “Harden not your hearts (Ps 95:8).

This prayer is relevant and necessary, but it is particularly recommended in the course of these forty days *that we hear the voice of the living God*. It is a penetrating voice, when we consider how God speaks in Lent not only with the exceptional richness of His Word in the liturgy and in the Church’s life but above all with the paschal eloquence of the Passion and Death of His own Son. He speaks with His cross and with His sacrifice. In a certain sense, this is the last discourse in His dialogue with man, lasting centuries, a dialogue with his mind and with his heart, with his conscience and his conduct. The heart means man in his inner spirituality, the very center, so to say, of his likeness with God. The interior man. *The man of conscience*.

Our prayer during Lent aims at awakening of consciences, arousing them to the voice of God. In fact, the diseases of consciences, their indifference to good and evil, their errors, are a great danger to man. They are indirectly a menace to society as well, because the level of society’s morals depends in the ultimate analysis on the human conscience.

A man who has a hardened heart and a degenerate conscience is *spiritually a sick man*, even though he may enjoy the fullness of his powers and physical capacities. Everything must be done to bring him back to having a healthy soul. “Hear today his voice... harden not your heart.”

*From “Prayers and Devotions - 365 Daily Meditations”
~ Pope John Paul II*

God’s Wheat

I am God’s wheat; I am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts that I may end as the pure bread of Christ.

~ St. Ignatius of Antioch

Repentance

God has promised pardon to one who repents, but has not promised repentance to one who sins.

~ St. Anselm

The Inner Word: What's in your Heart?

We have not kept the old covenant, so God offers us a new one. God forgives our evildoing and remembers our sin no more.

- How does God's forgiveness affect me?
- If death leads to life, how must I die today?
- How must I hate my life in order to preserve it?

Applying the Word: No more go-betweens

In just a few short years, the Greeks would have no need of Philip or Andrew to bring them to Jesus: Jesus was coming to them in the gospel of Saint Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and others. The movement of the gospel would be forward and outward, beyond Jerusalem and Judea, beyond Judaism and the synagogue itself. Christianity would become not merely a sect within the Jewish community, but another religion entirely. But Christianity would also remain an interior reality, not expressed simply in exterior rituals but in an indwelling Spirit who would remind us of Jeremiah's new covenant written on hearts. The God within would require no mediation or explanation to those who accept Christ's life within them. ~ *Alice Camille*

Scripture links

Philip in John's gospel: 1:43-48; 6:5, 7; 14:8

No more favorites or subordinates: Gal. 3:26-29; 4:6-7; Col. 3:11

Church mission shifts to Gentiles: Acts 15:1-35; Eph. 2:11-13; Rom. 11:11-29

Catechism links

(Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraph numbers)

Eucharist involves each of us: CCC 790; 1140-1144; 1368-1405

Direct lay participation: CCC 903; 1118-1121; 1348

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Relevant Radio

Tune your radio to 1260 AM or 101.7 FM for 24-hour broadcasts concerning Catholic teachings and prayers.

Treasures From Our Tradition

As we approach Holy Week, the creative juices of the ancient church of Jerusalem begin to shape our journey. In old Jerusalem at this season of the year, the attempt was made to recall the events leading up to Christ's passion. Those attempts were based not only on time, with celebrations of events as close to the day and hour as possible, but also on people's best guesses as to the actual place of these events. Vast numbers of pilgrims flooded the city during the forty days of Lent, many of them catechumens in their last stages of preparation for initiation. The fourth-century Spanish nun Egeria wrote a delightfully detailed diary of her experience of this lively and aerobic liturgy, which involved hearty singing, strong preaching, and nimble processions across vast and arduous terrain.

Much of this energy was lost over the centuries, with the procession of palms a noteworthy exception. Northern climates had to reinterpret this Jerusalem liturgy, using forsythia, willow, or olive branches, but to this day the entry into Holy Week by a community on the move accompanied by joyful song hearkens back to a venerable tradition. Egeria's letters were rediscovered a little more than a hundred years ago, but they reveal a pattern of prayer: full, conscious, active participation, to which we have a right and a duty.

~ Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

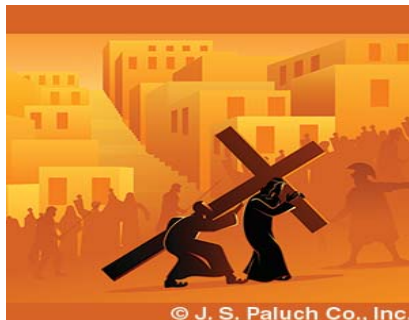
Dying You Destroyed Our Death

Every First Friday of the month for five years, I brought an elderly gentleman Holy Communion. And every time, he would tell me with great certainty that it would be my final visit. He was sure that he would be dead by the next First Friday. I would always end by giving him a blessing and saying, "See you next month, God willing." He would shake his head, sure that I was wrong. After five years of First Fridays, he was finally right. God called him home. I am certain he approached the pearly gates with a triumphant smile, feeling that he had predicted his death all along.

If there is one thing we can be certain of, it is that we are going to die. We cannot be anywhere near as certain as to exactly when that is going to happen. It remains out of our control. Yet we try to control it by denying it. We run from it and we hide from it and we fear it.

Because death is so out of our control, we should rather celebrate every moment of life that has been given to us. Lent began—not ended—with ashes being placed on our foreheads. Easter is a celebration of life that conquers sin and death. We still need what remains of Lent to lead us to becoming the Easter people who celebrate life, eternal and unending life, promised to us by the covenant God has made with us and signed with the cross.

~ *Father Dominic Grassi*



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and Evidence of the Soul from Our Transcendental Desires

February 27 : Scientific Evidence of an Intelligent Creator and
Philosophical Proofs of an Intelligent Creator

March 5: Evidence for Jesus' Divinity and The Historicity of Jesus' Miracles

March 12: Science and the Shroud of Turin and Why Believe in
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3 MARIAN ROUTE
START: Mississippi Headwaters, Lake Itasca, MN

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THERE CAN BE NO EUCHARIST WITHOUT THE PRIESTHOOD

~ POPE FRANCIS

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Mass Intentions for Mar 17 - 23

Date	Time	Intention
Sunday 17	7:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 12:00 p.m. 2:00 p.m. 5:15 p.m.	SI Virginia Chan SI Jeff & Nenette Murata † Jordan Chavez † Msgr. Fred Bitanga † Cesar Rosario
Monday 18	7:30 a.m. 12:10 p.m. 5:15 p.m.	SI Claudine Yu † Jordan Chavez † Charlie Yparraguirre
Tuesday 19	7:30 a.m. 12:10 p.m. 5:15 p.m.	SI Andam Kukuwa † Jordan Chavez SI Joy, Jen & Jackie Bandelaria
Wednesday 20	7:30 a.m. 12:10 p.m. 5:15 p.m.	BD Nora Regaspi † Jordan Chavez SI Valente Banez
Thursday 21	7:30 a.m. 12:10 p.m. 5:15 p.m.	SI Evelyn Bird † Jordan Chavez SI Maria Bravo
Friday 22	7:30 a.m. 12:10 p.m. 5:15 p.m.	SI John & Judith Casper † Jordan Chavez SI Dan & Katya Coming
Saturday 23	7:30 a.m. 12:10 p.m. 5:15 p.m.	SI Derrick Chang † Jordan Chavez † Nicomedez & Juanita Abello

Parish Schedule

Parish Office Hours

Monday through Friday
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation (in the Rectory)

(appointments are preferred)

Monday, Thursday, and Friday
9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Novena to Our Mother of Perpetual Help

Every Tuesday after the 12:00 p.m. Mass

Sto. Niño Devotion

Every Friday after the 12:00 p.m. Mass

Sacred Heart

First Friday of the month at 11:00 a.m.

Communion in the Home

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Black Nazarene

**Feast Day
January 9**

Rosie Drapiza
Lydia Cagampan
Rene & Elsa Tuazon



San Lorenzo Ruiz 1st Filipino Saint (Sep 28)

Maureen Oakes
Fe Macatangay
Cathy Bohol
Alma Raymundo

Shiela Montemayor
Maribelle Olegario
Gino Percival Ventura
Torno Family
Alejandra Ayala

St. Anne

**Feast Day
July 26**



PRAYER TO St. Anne

O GOD, You
bestowed on St.
Anne such grace
that she was found
worthy to become
the mother of
MARY, who
brought forth
Your only
begotten SON.
Grant that we may
be helped by her
intercession.
Amen.

Photo: THE HOLY ROSARY Daily
www.holyrosary.com

Parish Registration

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Ph. No. _____

D.O.B. _____

Gender _____

Marital Status _____

Occupation _____

Please drop in the collection basket or return to the parish office

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 DECIDED IN
 YOUR HEART
 TO GIVE
 NOT RELUCTANTLY OR
 UNDER COMPULSION
 God **LOVES**
 A CHEERFUL
GIVER

*Krista Mari, Ezra Mari,
 & Juliana Mari*



*Laeti bibamus sobriam
 profusionem Spiritus.*

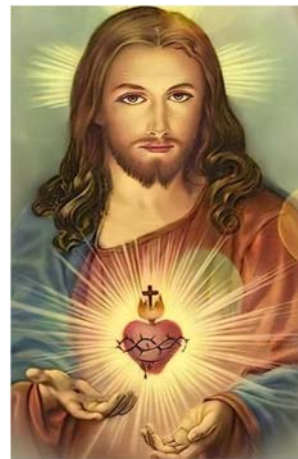
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Matt Dorsey



*Most Sacred Heart
 of Jesus,
 Have Mercy on Us.*

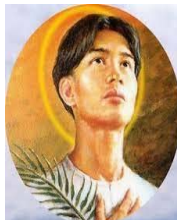
*First Friday
 of the month at
 11:00 a.m.*



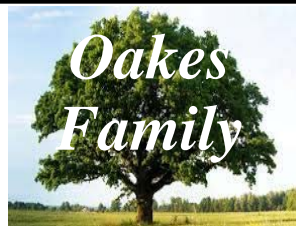
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 LADY
 OF
 FATIMA**
Pray the rosary



*San Pedro
 Calunsod
 2nd Filipino
 Saint
 (April 2)*



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