



St. Katharine Drexel Parish

1922 SW 20th Avenue | Cape Coral, FL 33991
239.283.9501 | office@drexelcc.org | www.drexelcc.org

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil 4:00 pm
Sunday 8:30 am, 10:30 am
and 12:30 pm

Weekday:

Monday-Friday 9:00 am
Wednesday Evening
6:30 pm

Parish Office Hours

Monday to Friday
8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Faith Formation

(239) 283-0525
rose@drexelcc.org

Confessions

Wednesdays

After 9:00 am Mass
6:00 pm before Evening Mass

Saturdays

After 9:00 am Morning Mass
3:00 pm to 4:00 pm

First Fridays of the Month

After 9:00 am Mass
6:00 pm to 7:00 pm

-Or-

By Appointment

New Parishioners

Registration forms are available
in the church narthex, parish
office and on the parish website.

March 20, 2022



Third Sunday
of

Lent

God called out to Moses from
the burning bush and said,
“Remove the sandals from your feet,
for the place where you stand is holy ground.”

Exodus 3:4, 5

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*This Lent we are being called to change our path in life.
We are called to repent. We are called to be nurtured and
fertilized and take the time and effort to grow.*

Parish Staff

Pastor —Father Ricky Varner (varner@drexelcc.org)
 Administrative Assistant—Alba Gibbons (alba@drexelcc.org)
 Bookkeeper—Francis Newcomb (frank@drexelcc.org)
 DRE—Rose Marie Talbot-Babey (rose@drexelcc.org)
 Director of Music—John Hudak (hudak@drexelcc.org)
 Youth Director—Aileen Vasquez (aileen@drexelcc.org)
 Maintenance—Ernie Sierocinski (ernie@drexelcc.org)
 Housekeeping—Gilma Avalos (gilma@drexelcc.org)

Finance Council

Barbara Borders, William Carty, Deborah Eppinger, Kathleen Houghton, Steve Ketteler, Mark Pennington and Steve Shaw

Saint Padre Pio: *"Pray, hope, and don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer."*

"America you are beautiful... and blessed..." the ultimate test of your greatness is the way you treat every human being, but especially the weakest and most defenseless. If you want equal justice for all and true freedom and lasting peace, then America, defend life."

—Saint John Paul II



"O Come, Let Us Adore Him" *Perpetual Adoration*

Saint Katharine Drexel Chapel
He is present in the tabernacle!

Prayer is the best weapon we have: it is the key to God's heart. You must speak to Jesus not only with your lips, but with your heart. - Saint Padre Pio.



Chapel code is available in the parish office

Sacramental Information

Sacrament of Baptism: Please obtain a baptism registration form either at the weekend Masses, or visit our website. After reading the requirements and completing the form, turn it to Religious Education. For more information please email rose@drexelcc.org. Baptisms are scheduled after consultation with a priest.

Sacrament of Marriage: Please contact the parish office at (239) 283-9501 at least nine (9) months prior to the desired date of the ceremony.

Sacramental Prep: Call Faith Formation at (239) 283-0525.

Sacrament of the Sick: Are you going for a surgery? Do you need Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick? Please see the priest after any Mass or call the parish office.

Homebound Parishioners: If you'd like a priest to visit you with the sacraments, please call the parish office.

Parishioners in Hospital: If you are in a local hospital and would like a visit from a priest, please call the parish office. If it is an emergency, please call appropriate church for that hospital.

Thank you for your Generosity!



Want to try online giving? Visit parish website:

www.drexelcc.org

and click on the Online Giving link!

Stewardship March 6, 2022

Offertory: \$15,851.00

Online Giving: \$6,940.00

Catholic Faith Appeal 2022

Our Goal: \$198,000.00

Pledged to Date: \$64,986.00

Payments to Date: \$29,701.60

Your gift to the Catholic Faith Appeal will continue to make a difference in the lives of others.

Pray for Our Military

A1C Matthew J. Clarke USAF
 Maj Michael J. Clifford ARNG
 1LT Brent Cox, III, USA
 Capt. Hayes M. Cozza USMC
 Capt. Santino E. Cozza USAF
 SR Jayden Curr USN
 GySgt Evan Fancher USMC
 Maj Shaun Floersch USAF
 Lt. Col. James Hannigan USA
 2Lt H Matthew Hernandez USMC
 PFC Alex Heuer USMC
 Capt. David J. Jacobs USAF
 SRA Richard K. Jones USAF
 Capt Armand Kalugdan USA
 PVT Kole Kalisch USA
 SSgt Kole J. Koontz USAF
 Maj Joseph M. LaPointe USA
 SGT James Losh USA
 MSgt. Brian Lynn USMC
 SSgt Jonathan Mamott USAF
 CPT Ryan McMahon USA
 Capt. Sean McMahon USAF
 PFC Chance McQueen USA
 SGT Michael Mercer, Jr. USA
 Maj Christopher Miller USAF
 PVT Quinn Ogdon USA
 PV2 Joseph Patton USA
 SSGT Paul L. Perez USMC
 SGT Alexander Private, USA
 SSgt Taylor M. Purvis USAF
 LtCol Christopher Richardella USMC
 CPL Gabriel J. Roesler USMC
 SPC Iliana I. Ruiz USA
 LTJG Dean N. Rye USN
 AB Kelsey Santini USAF
 CPL Anthony Saracino, Jr. USMC
 SGT. Nicholas Sbarra USA
 Cpl Aaron Seminara USMC
 SPC Phillip G. Sierocinski USA
 PV2 Alexzander Smith USA
 SN Andrew Tank USN
 CPT Christopher Turley USA
 SGT Madison Valdivia USA
 TSgt Erika Velasco USAF
 CPL Robert Christopher Volski USN
 CPT Garrett Alden Wadsworth USA
 SPC William A. Wallace USANG
 AB Zachary Wheeler USAF
 LT Brad Wilkin USN
 SGT Austin J. Zbierski USA

For info, Email Rita at: SKD_Prayers_for_Military@yahoo.com

Mass Intentions

Monday	March 21
9:00 am	Angelina Yezzi
Tuesday	March 22
9:00 am	Mary Spaeth
Wednesday	March 23 - St. Turibius of Mogrovejo
9:00 am	Janet Barham
6:30 pm	Johnny Stone and Julio Calero
Thursday	March 24 - Saint Oscar Romero
9:00 am	† Ian Lowes
Friday	March 25 - Annunciation of the Lord
9:00 am	Robert Spadaro
Saturday	March 26
9:00 am	Socrates Rivero
4:00 pm	SKD Parishioners
Sunday	March 27 - Fourth Sunday Lent
8:30 am	Mary C. Baluch
10:30 am	Piacente Family
12:30 pm	Cullen and Weldon Families



Week of: March 20, 2022

SKD Church Sanctuary Lamp
 is lit this week in Memory of
Tom Nuccio

By Tom and Darlene Nuccio

Adoration Chapel Sanctuary Lamp
 Is lit this week in Memory of
Scott M. Jobe

By Ralph and Susan Jobe

The red sanctuary Lamp by the tabernacle burns to remind us of the sacramental presence of Jesus Christ.

Saint Katharine Drexel, pray for us.

Saint Katharine Drexel Parish Ministries

Adoration Chapel: Is open 24 hours. Please call the parish office for more information at (239)283-9501.

Praise & Worship: First and Third Fridays, 6:30 pm

Altar Servers: Call Rose at (239) 283-0525

Bereavement Schedule: First Friday at 5:30 pm, and third Monday at 2:00 pm FFE. contact Mrs. Carrie Daniels at (239) 770-1510 carriebereavement@hotmail.com

Bible Study : Thursdays 7:30 pm Call Russ (239)574-4743

Boy Scouts: Tuesdays, Call Andy Hitchcock, 470-1914

Charismatic Prayer Meeting: First Thursday at 6:30 pm Hall. Contact Renee Marazon at (renee@marazon.com)

Music Ministry: Call John Hudak at (239) 283-9501

Church Decorators: Contact Alexandra Ceravolo (239) 246-7646 and Donna Frys (239) 540-7568

Council of Catholic Women: Meets 1st Tuesday, September-May, Contact Jennie Carroll at (239) 209-4952

Cursillo/Ultreya: Contact Donna at dmfrays20@aol.com

Gift Shop: Open Sundays 9:30 am to 11:45 am

Girl Scouts: Contact Janice at Jkovacs8000@gmail.com

Divorce Support Group: Call Vicki at (239) 322-9301 or Marty (239) 848-6177

Health Care Ministry Contact Laurie Haefele, APRN at (516) 351-3226

Hospitality: Call Virginia Hinspeter at (239) 283-3880

Redeemer Associates: 4th Mondays at 7:00 pm. Email alicehof3@gmail.com

Knights of Columbus: First Monday, 7:30 pm, www.kofc11177.org or call Bob Snyder at (239) 321-9012

Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary: Call Alice Hofer at (239) 980-8211

Lay Augustinians Every 2nd, 4th and 5th Wednesday at 7:45 pm Call Russ Summerton at (239) 574-4743

Lectors: Contact Donna Frys at (239) 540-7568

Legion of Mary: Contact Patricia Crowder (239)573-8318

Narcotics Anonymous: (866) 389-1344-agulfcoastfla.org

Over 50 Singles: Call Betty (239) 898-1434

Prayer Network: Call Jean at (239) 699-2624

Prayer Team Ministry: Contact Renee Marazon at renee@marazon.com

Prayer Shawls: Call Karen at (239) 464-9254

RCIA: Please call Parish Office

Respect Life: Email Maria at RespectLifeSKD@gmail.com

Rosary: After Weekday Mass and Sundays at 12:00 Noon.

Secular Franciscans: Second Saturday, 9:30 am Contact Doug Elliott (585) 370-6178

Social Committee: Contact Bob Parker at (239) 219-4538

TOPS: Weight loss support, Wednesdays at 9:00 am Contact John Batrim and Pam Macabio (239) 677-8852

TOPS: Weight loss support, Wednesday at 6:00 pm, Contact Debbie Baker at (937) 626-6247

Vocations: Call Parish Office at (239) 283-9501

Welcoming Committee: Contact Alice at (239) 282-2012 or Email: alicehof3@gmail.com

Wedding Coordinator: Karen karenrn1008@gmail.com

Youth Group: Email: aileen@drexelcc.org

Middle School and High School (Facetime), First and Third Fridays, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm. High School (Upper Room)

Pope Francis Prayer intention for March: “Let us pray together that the Church may appreciate the urgency of formation in spiritual discernment, both on the personal and communitarian levels.”

Abuse Reporting

An allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by anyone should be reported immediately to: **Florida Department of Children and Families Child Abuse Hotline:** 1-800-96abuse (800-962-2873) or visit <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us>.

If the alleged abuser is a diocesan employer/clergy/volunteer,
also notify Victim Assistance Coordinator – Susan Benton at (941) 416-6114

LITURGY CORNER



Blessed Veronica of Binasco transmits to posterity a message of simplicity of life, work, and dedication to others, and a deep interior life.

Giovanna Negroni was born in Binasco, (Milan) Italy, in 1445, the daughter of a family of peasants. At the age of twenty-two she entered the monastery of Saint Martha in Milan as a lay sister, since she was illiterate. Because of her devotion to the passion of Christ, she took the name of Veronica. She was a great contemplative, but she also engaged in numerous manual activities. She took very loving care of the sick sisters and developed an intense apostolate throughout Milan and its environs as she went begging for the community. Biographers tell of her ecstasies and her gifts of prophecy and discernment. She journeyed to Rome in order to give Pope Alexander VI a secret message from Christ. She was very humble and used to desire that all her actions be done under the sign of obedience.

The biography of this holy nun is extraordinarily varied in content. There is her friendship with several sisters of her monastery, one of whom was her great admirer and biographer. Then there is the experience of her physical mistreatment by the devil, and her devotion to the Lord's passion and the Eucharist. She enjoyed a great reputation among important people of her day, such as Louis the Moor, the avaricious Duke of Milan. Like Saint Catherine of Siena she journeyed to far-off places, bearing special messages. Once she traveled to Como to confer with the Franciscan Fray Giovanni, and another time to Rome in 1495 to meet with Pope Alexander VI.

Her biographers note her intense spiritual life, her zeal for the salvation of souls, her suffering over the few days available for communion, and the faith which she confessed when she was able to receive communion. This biography goes on to say that this unlettered nun was hardworking and a contemplative for thirty years. She "always appeared with peaceful countenance, smiling eyes, and was always quick to help, being of a strong constitution."

Veronica died on 13 January 1497. The devotion given to her at the time of her death and burial is well documented in several sources. Due to the great throngs that came to venerate her, the body of Sister Veronica remained unburied for five days, and "many of the infirm who touched the holy body recovered their health." "The archbishop, being too ill to investigate, sent his vicar, who entered the monastery to see and ascertain if what was being reported was true. This was the fourth day after her death, and seeing that what had been said was true, he was both amazed and filled with wonder."

On 15 December 1517 Pope Leo X granted the nuns permission to celebrate Veronica's feast. As a result Blessed Veronica's name was inserted in the Roman martyrology. In 1798, with the suppression of the monasteries of Lombardy by the revolutionaries, her body was moved to the parish church of Binasco where her mortal remains are preserved.

Her feast is celebrated by the Augustinian Family on 13 January.



Saint Katharine Drexel Parish – Lent 2022

More About the Three Basic Lenten Disciplines

FASTING: Expresses our desire to find happiness in God rather than in the satisfaction of our physical needs. The control we gain over our appetites helps us recognize more deeply that all true and lasting pleasure comes from God. Knowing this we are freed to gratefully accept food and savor it, or to avoid or limit foods that we know are unhealthy for us. Through fasting, our relationship to ourselves is reoriented toward God.

ALMSGIVING: Provides assistance to the poor among us and helps us recognize God as the true source of our security. Property and wealth exercise less control over us when we give away or share our wealth out of love for God and for others. Almsgiving is a way of bringing our relationship to others into the orbit of Christ's love.

PRAYER: Changes our relationship to God. Through prayer, we admit our need for a power that is greater than ourselves. We acknowledge our limitations and let go of the drive to control everything. In the process, we open ourselves to all that God has to offer us.

Adult Faith Formation Opportunities

Lenten Spiritual Enrichment Series:

Monday Mornings 10:00 am – Parish Hall
Monday Evenings 6:00 pm – Faith Formation Building (West)

Bible Studies: The Book of Genesis Series

Wednesday Mornings 11:00 am – Faith Formation Building (West)
Thursday Evenings 7:30 pm – Faith Formation Building (West)

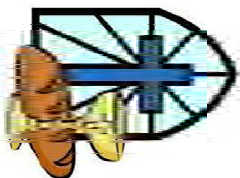


Lenten Soup Suppers ~

Fridays – 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm (in the Parish Hall)

~ Stations of the Cross/Lenten Lessons ~

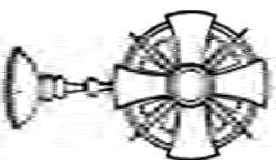
Fridays – 6:30 pm (in the Church)



~ Lenten Mass Schedule ~

Saturdays 9:00 am / 4:00 pm (Vigil Mass)
Sundays 8:30 am / 10:30 am / 12:30 pm
Monday to Friday 9:00 am
Wednesday Evenings 6:30 pm

40 Hours Devotion



Saturday, April 2
-5:00 pm Adoration begins
Sunday, April 3
-3:00 pm Divine Mercy
-6:30 pm Evening Prayer w/ Holy Hour
Monday, April 4
-6:30 pm Mass w/ Anointing of the Sick



~ THE TRIDUUM ~

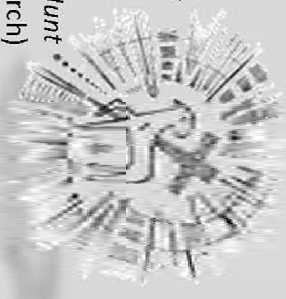
Holy Thursday –
7:00 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper
10:00 pm Night Prayer (Parish Hall)

Good Friday –
7:00 pm Liturgy Service
12 Noon Stations of the Cross/Confessions
3:00 pm Divine Mercy/Rosary

Holy Saturday –
9:00 am Knights of Columbus Easter Egg Hunt
10:00 am Blessing of Food Baskets (in Church)

Easter Vigil – 8:30 pm

Easter Sunday –
7:00 am Sunrise Mass (West Parking lot)
8:30 am / 10:30 am / 12:30 pm



Safe Haven Sunday! Next weekend March 27, 2022 Saint Katharine Drexel will be celebrating our second annual "Safe Haven Sunday." This weekend of awareness will provide free resources to you to give you confidence for how to talk to your children about internet dangers, as well as social pressures from peers make it difficult for children to live virtuous and holy lives. In the digital age, it's not a matter of if your child will see something inappropriate online, Its only a matter of when. And regrettably, internet pornography is teaching our children how and what to think about sex and marriage.

THE
SAFE DIGITAL FAMILY
Challenge



Text
SECURE
to
66866
to get started

Receive one email
a day for seven days
to help you with the
latest parental control
ideas for your home.

Emails Include:

- YouTube Restricted Mode
- Understanding Apps
- Setting iOS Screen Time and Content Restrictions
- Google SafeSearch
- The Importance of Accountability
- Social Media and Teens
- Critical Conversations

Totally Free • Available in English and Spanish

Joshua Johnson Memorial Scholarship

**The Knights of
Columbus
Council #11177**

at Saint Katharine Drexel parish, will once again be sponsoring a scholarship competition for high school seniors who are registered members of **Saint Andrew's, Saint Katharine's or Miraculous Medal** parishes, and who are planning to pursue their education beyond high school. Applications for the **Joshua Johnson Memorial Scholarship** are available on your parish website. Paper copies will also be available in the narthex information counter at Saint Katharine parish.

Complete applications and all supporting documents must be postmarked no later than April 4, 2022. For further information contact Mike Sushil at (239) 560-2454.

SKD Mass Intentions Book for 2023

The Mass Intention Book for 2023 will open on

March 24, 2022

from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm
at the Parish Hall



Please note: *there will be a limit of two (2) weekend Masses and two (2) Weekday Masses per family.*

Ukraine Relief

All donations made to the Special Collection on Ash Wednesday, will be used as charitable relief for the Ukraine and assistance in providing humanitarian aid, as well as recovery efforts. Please pray for the people of the *Ukraine* and send your donations to:

**Diocese of Venice in Florida
Ukraine Relief
1000 Pinebrook Road
Venice, Florida 34285**

40 DAYS FOR LIFE

From **March 2 through April 10**, our community unites with many others from coast to coast – and internationally – for a major simultaneous pro-life mobilization – the 40 Days for Life campaign. Faithful believers are praying that these efforts will mark the beginning of the end of abortion.

Mother Angelica said “If you are not a thorn in somebody’s side, you are **not** doing Christianity right.”

So, please be a thorn in the side of Planned Parenthood come, pray outside the **Planned Parenthood, 6418 Commerce Park Drive, Fort Myers, 33966**

Vigil hours for Saint Katharine Drexel Respect Life Ministry

Thursday, March 24 - 12 PM to 4 pm

Thursday, March 31 - 12 PM to 4 pm

Thursday, April 7 - 12 PM to 4 pm

Come, pray and save a baby!!

Contact person: Maria at RespectLifeSKD@gmail.com



Rite of Election



On Sunday March 6, 2022, the Diocese of Venice held the Rite of Election at Epiphany Cathedral. The Rite of Election is when those who are choosing to enter into the Catholic Church. This year's OCIA Candidates:

Bill Garther

Brittney Davis

Mark McCullough

Let us continue to lift up prayers and petitions for these candidates.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- March 20** Ice Cream Social for New Parishioners
@ 1:30 pm - Parish Hall
- March 25** Grilled Fish Dinner @ 5:00 pm - Parish Hall
- March 25** Parish Office Closed in Observance of
The Annunciation of the Lord
- March 26** Diocese of Venice Marriage Retreat
@ 9:00 am - Parish Hall

Immaculée Ilibagiza

Rwandan genocide survivor, nationally acclaimed speaker and award winning author.

Presents Her

"Story of Faith, Hope and Forgiveness"



Thursday, March 24, 2022

\$25.00 Per Person

Includes wine, beer & heavy appetizers.

St John XXIII Catholic Church

Parish Life Center

13060 Palomino Lane, Fort Myers, FL 33912

Online registrations at www.faithandale.com

Checks: Payable to Faith & Ale - Fort Myers, Inc.

Mail to: Tom Callans, Treasurer,

15161 Canongate Dr., Ft Myers, FL 33912.

Tickets are limited and will NOT be available at the door.

Hosted by Faith & Ale and Faith & Wine Lee County

Word of Life: *"Sometimes our actions speak for themselves; other times, words are needed. Whatever the situation, Jesus knows how to speak to each person's heart, we simply need to follow where he leads"* - USCCB



Ultreya - NO March ULTREYA because of the Lenten Season. Come share your Lenten Holy Moment at our April Cape Coral/Pine Island Ultreya on Friday, **April 22nd** at St Katharine Drexel, Faith Formation Bldg WEST, 1922 SW 20th Ave meeting begins at 7:00 PM.



**Thank you!
Thank you!
Thank you!**



Our sixth Feed My Starving Children MobilePack was a huge success. We had over 600 volunteers help pack 147,744 meals. This is enough food to provide a daily meal to 404 children for an entire year. We also hit a milestone when we packed the one millionth meal in our MobilePack's history on Tuesday. Since we started in 2016, we have packed 1,004,832 meals!

Final totals from the donations received at the event are not in, but we exceeded our financial goal of \$36,000 thanks to many of you. Lastly, our canned food drive at the event took in 600 pounds of food that was delivered to the Cape Coral Caring Center.

Thanks again to all who volunteered, donated and prayed for us. This event could not be done without all the incredible volunteers from Saint Katharine Drexel.

15th Annual Parish Grilled Fish Dinner

Sponsored by S.K.D's K of C, Ladies Auxiliary

WHEN: FRIDAY, MARCH 25TH 5-7 PM

WHERE: PARISH HALL OR TAKE-OUT

Adults: (1) large piece of grilled fish \$15.00/pp

(2) pieces of grilled fish \$18.00/pp

Children 12 yrs. and younger \$5.00/pp

Includes sides, *dessert and *soft beverage

BYOB

***dessert and beverage not included with takeout**

TICKET SALES:

March 12th & 13th and March 19th & 20TH



NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE DOOR



Coming soon to SKD... HANDBELLS!!!

The music ministry will soon embark on an official fundraising campaign to bring the beauty of English Handbells to our parish community!

This past week we received a VERY generous donation of \$1000.00 to "kick-off" our endeavor.

We are HOPING to purchase the "Etude Package" from Malmark Handbells which will give us 49 bells (4 octaves of bells) that will require 12 ringers... And you could be one of them!!!

SO much more to come...Watch the bulletin!



SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL LENTEN 40 HOURS DEVOTION

BEGINS: Saturday, April 2 at 5:00 pm (after Vigil Mass)

ENDS: Monday, April 4 (before Evening Mass with Anointing)

Inviting all SKD parishioners to sign-up to take some Adoration time for the Lenten 40 Hours Devotion which will begin on Saturday, April 2 at 5:00 pm (after the Vigil Mass).

I am calling on the Parish Staff, Knights of Columbus, Ladies Auxiliary, Council of Catholic Women, Sons of Saint Joseph, Youth group, as well as every other ministry and organization at Saint Katharine Drexel, to take segments of the 40 hours and encourage your members to cover Adoration times in the chapel.

We, as a parish, had a long tradition of adoring the Lord together. I know we can do this. It is a wonderful way to pray in Lent. So, as the sign-up sheets go out this weekend, I ask you to begin considering which times you will take to keep our Lord consoled and accompanied during these hours of prayer.

Go to Parish website, click on 40 Hours icon to sign-up for Adoration: www.drexelcc.org

Also, please join me in welcoming Dr. John Gresham, retired Director of the Institute for Catholic Studies (DofV), Formation and Seminary Professor, and a SKD parishioner for 40 Hours Devotion Lenten Talks:

Sunday, April 3

- **3:00 pm Divine Mercy** (followed by Confessions)
- **6:30 pm Evening Prayer with Holy Hour**
(Talk from Dr. John Gresham)
- **Prayer Teams available for intercessory prayer**

Monday, April 4

- **9:00 am Mass** (followed by Rosary)
- **6:30 pm Healing Mass with Anointing**
(Talk from Dr. John Gresham)
- **Prayer Teams available for intercessory prayer**



40 Hours Devotion will conclude at the end of Mass with Anointing. I look forward to praying with you during this part of our Lenten journey! Thank you for your participation.

GROWTH

There are times when we may feel our lives are covered in dung, and we lie dormant through a plethora of difficult and painful moments. But Jesus is calling us to use this time, to draw strength from it, to use the dung in our lives as fertilizer, to begin a slow and steady transformation to a new and better place, until we too can bear fruit. Growth is always a process, and we have to start somewhere. While there is always a call to repentance and conversion, we are blessed with a God who is loving enough and patient enough to wait for us to come to our senses, however long that may take. This Lent we are being called to life. We are called to repent. We are called to be nurtured and fertilized and take the time and effort to grow.

Third Sunday of Lent

Overconfident? As we get to the halfway point of Lent, we may be tempted to overconfidence: "The first three weeks weren't so hard. I can go a few more weeks without the things I gave up. And I've only committed a few sins; maybe I'll go to confession right before Easter." If so, it might be a good idea to look at the second reading and the Gospel.

St. Paul says that anyone who is overconfident about their lack of sin "should take care not to fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). He compares those people to the ones Moses brought through the desert. Just because they were God's chosen people and had survived years in the desert doesn't mean they are perfect. In fact, many were punished because they were tempted to follow false gods or to complain about the food and drink God provided them. Could the same thing happen to us?

One form of overconfidence is rejecting what we learned as children. We may think, "I'm old enough to decide if I should go to church" or "I can take care of myself now; I don't need God's help." Or we may think that holiness is just for priests and religious: "I go to church on Sundays; no need to pray the other days of the week." If these sound familiar because you have thought that way yourself, Paul has a warning. His analogy of the Rock following the Hebrews in the desert refers to God's constant presence to the people. In the same way, he is present to us today. A couple of chapters after our second reading Paul says, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27). But just as God was not pleased with those in the desert, God may not be pleased with us if we continue to ignore the Lord.

That brings us to the Gospel. In the parable of the fig tree, the owner is not pleased--the tree has not produced any fruit. Unlike the fig tree, God would be happy with any fruit we produce. We could be generous to the poor, we could fight for the unborn child's right to life, we could welcome new members to the church, or we could simply teach our children how to pray. But if all we give is one hour a week in church, and ignore God the rest of the time, we need to take heed. Like the owner of the fig tree, God is patient, but we only have so much time. So when do you plan to bear fruit?



Pray. Commit to spending more time in prayer during this Lenten season. Add brief moments of prayer to your day by praying a breath prayer such as (inhale) "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God," (exhale) "Have mercy on me, a sinner."

Repent. Conduct a daily examination of conscience and resolve to turn away from sin and repent for sins of the past.

Fast. In addition to fasting on the prescribed days of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday and abstaining from meat on all Fridays in Lent, commit to fasting or abstaining on other days. Donate the money you would've spent on those meals to an organization working to eliminate hunger and food insecurity.

Grow. Start seedlings for spring planting. Use the plants as a reminder to grow in your relationship with God during this Lenten season.

Refrain. When considering what to "give up" for Lent this year, consider refraining from behaviors such as mindlessly scrolling social media, binge watching shows, or other activities that distract you from God and those around you. Use the time for prayer, journaling, or checking in with a friend or loved one.

Give. Select an organization that is committed to works of mercy — feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, instructing the ignorant, and so on. Learn how you can give both your time and money to support the work of the organization and do so.

Confess. Restore your relationship with God by receiving the healing and forgiveness offered through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Check with your parish to find confession times.

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