

For The Bulletin Of February 17 2019



THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN WINTER'S ORDINARY TIME

From Father Robert

When parents leave children on their own for the first time, it can be a big decision. Instructions are clear, often written down on a sheet of paper. Maybe a mobile phone or a home phone is available so the parties can stay in touch. And oftentimes the children remember or misremember instructions, reaching out to parents for additional clarity. Did the parents say no to dessert? Or no dessert until after dinner? Did they say no to TV/screen time, or limited TV/screen time? Some might remember the instructions differently.

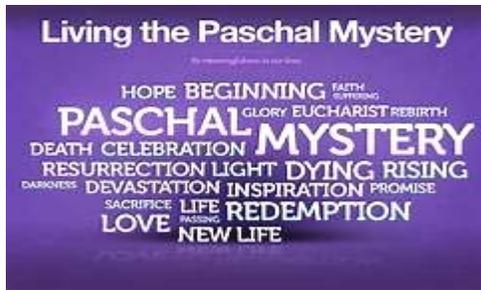
Today in the gospel of Luke we have Jesus' Sermon on the Plain as opposed to Matthew's Jesus Who gives the Sermon on the Mount. Luke's Jesus preaches to a great crowd of disciples (indicating there were more than twelve) whereas Matthew's Jesus preaches to the disciples (and there were only twelve in the Gospel of Matthew).

But perhaps one of the greatest differences in the two version of this

story is not the setting or the audience but the message itself. Both Luke and Matthew begin with four beatitudes, but Mathew concludes with additional beatitudes. Luke, on the other hand, matches the four beatitudes with four woes that are frankly disturbing to the moderate, middle-class listener from the developed world.

We might ask what's wrong with being well off, having our fill of food and laughter and being spoken well of? This might even be the goal of the so-called prosperity gospel we hear about so often in popular culture. But Luke sees it differently. Blessings are for those who are poor, hungry, weeping, and those hated. For whom is this good news? The rich and content? Hardly. Luke's Sermon on the Plain echoes themes introduced in Mary's *Magnificat* in the opening of the gospel. The hungry are fed while the rich are turned away empty. Jesus' values are not those of the world. To be countercultural means identifying with those who are blessed, not clawing one's way to keep company with those who are destined for woe.

Luke has something to say to us today. This message is not limited to the time of Jesus. It is for us. Where do we find ourselves? In the four beatitudes or the four woes? This message is as much for us as it is for the disciples, if we dare to carry that name.



Sometimes it can be difficult to imagine why Jesus faced suffering and death. Often there is a popular idea that would have Jesus preaching only love, peace, kindness, and lilies of the field. The thinking goes that in the face of such preaching he was put to death by those who were against love, peace, and kindness. Such is too facile an explanation.

Jesus' preaching was certainly about love, but it was about much more. Somebody preaching love is no threat to the establishment, no threat to the powerful. Somebody preaching love can easily be dismissed as a dreamer and best left alone.

Today's gospel gives us some of Jesus' preaching that likely created enemies for Himself. His preaching favored the poor, the hungry, weeping, and hated. He upended not only ancient cultural norms and values but modern ones as well. Rather than simply give a verbal pat on the head to those on the bottom rungs of society, He also pulls down the mighty and issues woes that apply just as much to us as they did to those in power in antiquity. In so doing, Jesus creates enemies, not of the poor but of the powerful. It is they who will ultimately put Him to death. But as we know, His suffering and death is not the end. God raises Him up to glory, giving us the Paschal Mystery. His followers find

themselves allied with those blessed by Jesus.

- In the reading from the prophet Jeremiah and in the psalm, there is a common image: the one who trusts in God and mediates on God's law is like a tree planted beside flowing water. Nourished deeply by the living water of God's love, the just one flourishes and bear fruit. Where do you find living water in your own life? How might God be inviting you to drink even more deeply?
- In the Nicene Creed we state: "I look forward to the resurrection of the dead." How does belief in the resurrection of the dead affect your faith life?
- In your daily life what are some actions you can take to align yourself with those Jesus proclaims as blessed: the poor, the hungry, the grieving, and the outcast?
- In Luke's Sermon on the Plain, Jesus includes statements of woe after the more familiar statements of blessing that are also included in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount. Why do you think these statements are included? How do they challenge you in your life of faith?



This coming Tuesday evening, all those involved in Liturgical Ministries are invited to an Evening of Enrichment. It begins at 7:00 p.m. in the parish hall and will include light refreshments and hospitality. This is an opportunity to come together, to focus on an area of liturgy, to pray together, and be enriched in our call to serve our worshipping community. I hope you will all join us.



Last Saturday morning, the Leadership of our parish, Pastoral Staff, Pastoral Council, and Finance Council, met from 9:00 a.m. to Noon to reflect on the first six chapters of Fr. James Mallon's book, "Divine Renovation: Bringing Your Parish From Maintenance To Mission." We broke into four groups of five to discuss among ourselves the implications of each chapter for our parish, along with observations, areas that we agreed with, and challenges that each chapter presents. The first three chapters were addressed in the first hour; the second three chapters were addressed in the second hour and actually ran over into the third hour, leaving us just enough time to discuss how each group addressed the chapters/sections and share feedback with the entire group.

We found it enlightening, challenging, and also that we all identified similar responses and areas of agreement. We are meeting for a second time in May and will continue our work, addressing the seventh chapter on "Leadership" which will hopefully bring us to some conclusions about how to proceed with regard to our parish and its future. The conversation was open, honest, transparent, and provided an atmosphere where every member could speak freely, even to the point of saying "the hard thing." I am grateful to **Maryann Peddicord, Frances Rojek, Rowena Cayaban, Reggia Desmond, and Estrella Rusk** for providing the hospitality. I will continue to update you on our progress following future meetings.



Beginning next weekend, we invite you to return your dried palm fronds in preparation for Ash Wednesday. The dried palms will be burned in the fire sculpture on Shrove Tuesday, following the Morning Liturgy and then ground to become the ashes with which we will be marked at each of our liturgies on Ash Wednesday. Please place your dried palms in the box provided in the narthex.



Ash Wednesday and The Beginning of Lent

The Season of Lent begins on Wednesday, March 6th. Our schedule of liturgies that day is as follows:

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes

12:00 Noon Liturgy of the Word and Imposition of Ashes

5:30 p.m. Liturgy of the Word and Imposition of Ashes

7:30 p.m. Sung Evening Prayer and Imposition of Ashes

The Ash Wednesday Collection has once again been designated for the support of our adopted parochial school of St. Peter Martyr, Pittsburg. Ash Wednesday is also a **Day of Fast and Abstinence**, meaning that anyone between the ages of 13 and 59 is obligated to take only one full meal, to abstain from meat and meat by-products, and to take only two lesser meals not equivalent to a full meal. Those over the age of 59 are not obliged to fast but are obliged to abstain from meat.

Installation of the Lenten Environment

You are invited to join us in preparing the church for Lent by joining the members of the Art & Environment Committee in removing the environment for Winter's Ordinary Time and installing the environment for Ash

Wednesday and the Season of Lent. We begin at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 5th and will work through the morning, and if necessary, into the early afternoon to complete our work. Coffee and pastries are provided mid-morning and lunch if necessary. This is a wonderful way to develop your liturgical spirituality.



Where would our parish be without our wonderful volunteers who do so much to help us in so many ways? Our thanks to those who clean and maintain the church and parish hall: **Carole Miller, Angela Bueno, Jean Rogers, Al Cosce, Alfred Madoshi, Rose Salamanca, Dora Pesapane.**

...to those who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall: **Steve Rojek, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, Theresa Chandler, Harlan Young, and Father Robert.**

...to **Dilcia Aparicio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens.

...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week:

Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan Young, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.

...to **our counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections.

...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week:

Sharon Cissell, Melodye Costanza, Rowena Cayaban, Yvette Young,

Harlan Young, Joe Fanfa, Bev Iacona and Paul Riofski.

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week's donations: **Frank Zamora and Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Dave Costanza (Lead), Carole Miller, Beth Enea, Richard Enea, Kathy Augusta, Vince Augusta, Sherry Webb and Deanna Ribeiro.**

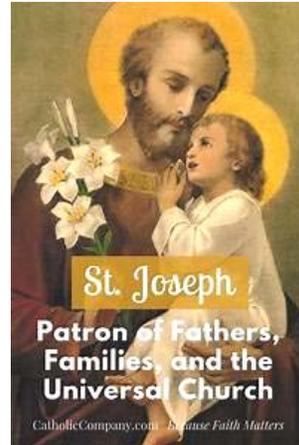
...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keeps watch over our vehicles during the weekend Liturgies: **Don Benson and Steve Rojek.**



On Friday evening, February 22nd, at 8:00 p.m., our very own **Don Pearson**, will play a concert celebrating his 50th Year in Church Music as an Organist and Director of Music as well as his 70th Birthday. A festive reception will follow the concert in the parish hall.

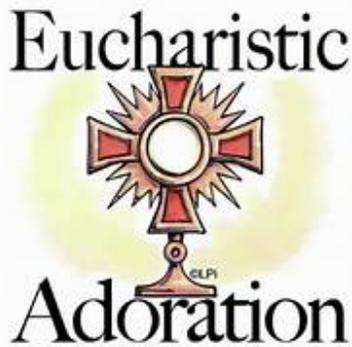
In his honor, I am establishing **The Donald Pearson Concert Fund** to provide for our on-going concert series and funding to bring in organists to play on the series. Over the past eight years that Don has been with us, he has played the majority of the concerts without taking a fee but to bring in other musicians, it is necessary to provide

them the requested fee to do so. I would ask you to honor Don on this special anniversary by making a contribution to the Fund as indicated. This will ensure the continuation of our Concert Series for many years to come and will continue to bring in musicians/organists of the highest caliber to play our wonderful instrument.



We are once again combining our celebration of St. Patrick's Day and St. Joseph's Day with a festive dinner on Saturday evening, March 16, 2019, immediately following the Saturday evening 4:00 p.m. Vigil Eucharist. Tickets will go on sale soon and you will not want to miss this unique and wonderful celebration that honors both our Irish and Italian heritage. You are invited to join the members of our Social Events Committee in its planning by attending a meeting on Thursday, February 21st, at 5:00 p.m. in the parish hall. Wonderful food, wonderful beer and wine, and the spectacular desserts of the St. Joseph's Table!!! You won't

want to miss this unique and wonderful evening of food, fellowship, and fun!



At our Deanery Meeting at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Brentwood, this past Tuesday morning, one of the announcements shared with us is that The Bishop has requested 24 hours of Eucharistic Adoration with the Sacrament of Reconciliation on March 7th and 8th. IHM will be the host for this observance in our Delta Deanery with the priests of the Deanery being present during the 24 hour period to hear confessions. It begins at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 7th and concludes on Friday, March 8th at 5:00 p.m. I have signed up to hear confessions on the Thursday date from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Each priest will be hearing 2 hours of confessions during the 24 hour period. This observance has been requested by The Bishop for the victims of clergy sexual abuse and for the healing of the church from cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, nuns, and lay ministers who have acted out inappropriately sexually with children.



Deanery Reconciliation Liturgies

Throughout the eight parishes of the Deanery, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be celebrated communally on the following days and times:

March 20: Immaculate Heart of Mary, Brentwood; 7:00 p.m.

March 25: Holy Rosary, Antioch; 7:00 p.m.

March 27: St. Peter Martyr of Verona, Pittsburg; 7:00 p.m.

April 3: St. Anthony, Oakley; 7:00 p.m.

April 4: St. Anne, Byron; 7:00 p.m.
St. Ignatius of Antioch, Antioch, 7:30 p.m.

April 8: Church of the Good Shepherd, Pittsburg; 7:00 p.m.

April 17: Our Lady, Queen of the World, Baypoint; 7:00 p.m.

40th Anniversary Marriage Celebration

In June 2019, our parish commemorates an incredible faith journey that has lasted for four decades. The 40th Anniversary Committee is charged with coordinating a number of celebrations and remembrances that celebrate the milestones that mark the life of this vibrant Catholic Christian Community.

Last Sunday, the Committee organized and hosted the wonderful Valentine's Day Celebration of Marriages after the 8 am and 10 am liturgies to honor and salute the hundreds of marriages and marriage blessings that have been a part of our history over the past 40 years. I am truly grateful for the continuing efforts of the Committee to highlight the many blessings that God has bestowed on our community. Thank you also to those families that shared memories of their special day. We can look forward to more celebrations over the coming months that will culminate with an Anniversary Mass of Celebration and Dinner/Dance on June 1, 2019.

