

Pastor's Note

For most of my life, I understood God's plan of salvation, especially the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection in a more impersonal way. God did what God had to do in order that humanity might be redeemed and saved. And I could see my place in God's plan as being a member of the flock or herd. I was just one head among many, utterly indistinguishable from the others. If we understand the will and action of God in this way, it makes it so difficult for our hearts to be touched and moved. Our faith and the practice of our Catholic Christianity can become mechanical, without feeling and superficial. When such a faith confronts the world, the temptations of the world will most likely overwhelm it. Most tragically, we will not receive the "free gift" of Jesus Christ, as St. Paul writes, that the "free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many." Perhaps this Sunday, we can begin to see and receive the free gift of Christ in a more personal way.

Some years ago, when I was on a retreat and was praying the three temptations that Christ faced in the desert, through the Holy Spirit I imagined myself seeing Christ enduring his suffering of the forty days. I saw him feeling great hunger and being tempted to eat. I saw him poor and being tempted to force the Father to send the Angels to serve him. I saw him alone and being tempted to receive the world's adulation. As he suffered and struggled, I imagined him finding the strength to say "No!" to the Devil's promptings. When the Devil spoke his lies, I saw the Lord looking at me. In a way, I was the cause of his strength. It is the depth of his love for me and you that that gave him the strength to refuse expose the temptations as mere straw. It is the depth of his love for you that the Lord said to the tempter, "Away with you, Satan!"

During our forty days of Lent, we have this most precious opportunity to receive the "free gift" of Christ more deeply within our hearts. To realize that each one of us is not an indistinguishable member of the herd. Rather, we are the reason for every word Jesus speaks. We are the reason for every action Jesus takes. The depth of his personal love frees us to understand the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection in a new way. A way that is personal; a way that is formed by love; and, a way in which his gift of himself becomes

our own. And our penance, prayer and almsgiving are done in response to what he has done – he has loved with a love beyond all telling. As we see him struggle beneath the weight of the Cross, we see a love that we do not fully comprehend but we know he is giving us life. And so, "O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise."

God Bless and Take Care! *Fr. John*

Archdiocese Refugee Sponsorship Program for Family Members of Parishioners

The Office for Refugees is launching a program to assist parishioners who would like to sponsor a family member overseas who is a refugee. If you are a parishioner, and would like to sponsor a family member, please contact the parish office (416-924-6257 or info@lourdes.to) to schedule a meeting prior to March 31. The Office for Refugees will look to the sponsoring family to provide the necessary funds for sponsorship.

A separate program is available to assist non-parishioners and friends of parishioners. Further information about this program will be announced on the Office for Refugees website in April 2020. The website address is www.archtoronto.org/. Click on "About us", then choose department "O to Z", and select "Office for Refugees".

Lent 2020

Way of the Cross | Fridays throughout Lent, 7pm in the Church | A devotion to focus on the Passion of Jesus Christ - this is a wonderful way to deepen our relationship with Jesus throughout Lent. Come and pray the Way of the Cross with us and invite a friend. Next Way of the Cross: Friday, March 6 at 7pm (*followed by the monthly first Friday Mass in the Charismatic Tradition at 7:30pm*)

Lenten Penance Service | Wed, March 18 at 7pm in the Church | Join us for our communal celebration of the Sacrament of Penance. There will be individual opportunities for Confession with one of the many priests present. All are invited to experience the joy that is God's Mercy.

Mass Intentions

Monday, March 2

8:00 am Joseph Andrade + [Neville & Sunita Andrade]
 12:10pm Donald R. MacDonald + [Ada]
 5:15 pm ADELAIDA DECANO + [Fatima Group]

Tuesday, March 3

8:00 am Antonio Bermejo + [Emmanuel Bermejo]
 12:10 pm Augustine & Razzouk Shammass + [Faris Shammass]
 5:15 pm EMILY LUMANOG + [Mylene Moore]

Wednesday, March 4

8:00 am Aproniano Semblante + [Brenda]
 12:10pm Hilarion Larry Bercasio + [Caridad Tomas]
 5:15 pm MARY WALSH & Arnold Wellman for Healing
 [Emily Dy Pac]

Thursday, March 5

8:00 am Pablo Torrente + [Eva]
 12:10pm HELEN RASHOTTE + [Warlyn Irwin]
 5:15 pm Reydante & ISABELL Jaluague + [Family]

Friday, March 6

8:00 am BETTY SMITH + [Yvonne Parnell]
 12:10pm All Souls in Purgatory [Teresita Mabugat]
 5:15 pm MONA PITT + [Eileen & Peter Lonergan]

Saturday, March 7

8:00 am Romeo & TERESITA Porca + [Estela Verdadero]
 12:10pm MILADY, Jimoh & IZIEN's Birthday [Maria Luz B.]

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE RECENTLY DECEASED:

*Antonio Perez III, Lucille Gonzalez
 Donald Williamson, Brian Beirne*

Parish Events

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament | Next date: Friday, March 6 | 8:30am to 7pm | Come and spend some time in quiet prayer in our Church. During the day, weekday Masses are held at the usual times (8:00am, 12:10pm, and 5:15pm) and Mass in the Charismatic tradition is held at 7:30pm.

Alpha | Tuesdays 6-8pm in Lynch Hall.

Seniors Day Program | Ages 55+ | *Third Fridays of every month* | Next event: Friday, March 20 | Includes lunch (\$2) and a different fun activity every month. Meets 1-3:30pm, Lynch Hall.

Social Outreach

Volunteer Tax Clinic | Sat, March 14, 10am-3pm | Please call the Parish Office at 416-924-6257 for an appointment. A drop-off service is also available for the homebound – please contact the office.

Corrections/updates? Email bulletin@lourdes.to

Lenten Parish Mission with Michael Swan

Theme: Written on My Heart
 March 23, 24, and 25 at 7pm
 Our Lady of Lourdes Church

The Lenten Parish Mission is an annual event consisting of three evenings of talks and prayerful reflection. This year's Mission will be led by Michael Swan, award-winning journalist and photographer, Associate Editor of *The Catholic Register* and Our Lady of Lourdes parishioner. Michael is the author of a new book *Written on My Heart: Classic Prayers in the Modern World*.

Parish Groups

Catholic Women's League Spring Sale | Saturday, March 7 | 9am-2:30pm, Lynch and Bernadette Hall | Donations to the sale, such as small appliances or knick knacks, are most welcome. | Sorting of items will take place March 5 and 6. | Please bring donations to Lynch Hall on those days. | Please, no books or clothing.

Development & Peace Way of the Cross | Monday, March 16, at **6:30pm** in the Church | A Way of the Cross evening in solidarity with the defenders of the Amazon people and lands, organized by the Parish's chapter of Development & Peace. *Please note the time change from 6pm to 6:30pm.* All are welcome.

All-Inclusive Ministries Book Club | Meets on the Third Friday of every month at Bernadette Hall, 6:45pm-8:45pm. Visit www.allinclusiveministries.org for more details.

Beauty from Our Faith

"Mercy is to fasting as rain is to the earth. However much you may cultivate your heart, clear the soil of your nature, root out your vices and sow your virtues, if you do not release the springs of mercy, your fasting will not bear fruit. When you fast a thin sowing of mercy will mean a thin harvest. When you fast what you pour out in mercy overflows into your barn. So do not lose by saving, but gather in by scattering."

~ St Peter Chrysologus.