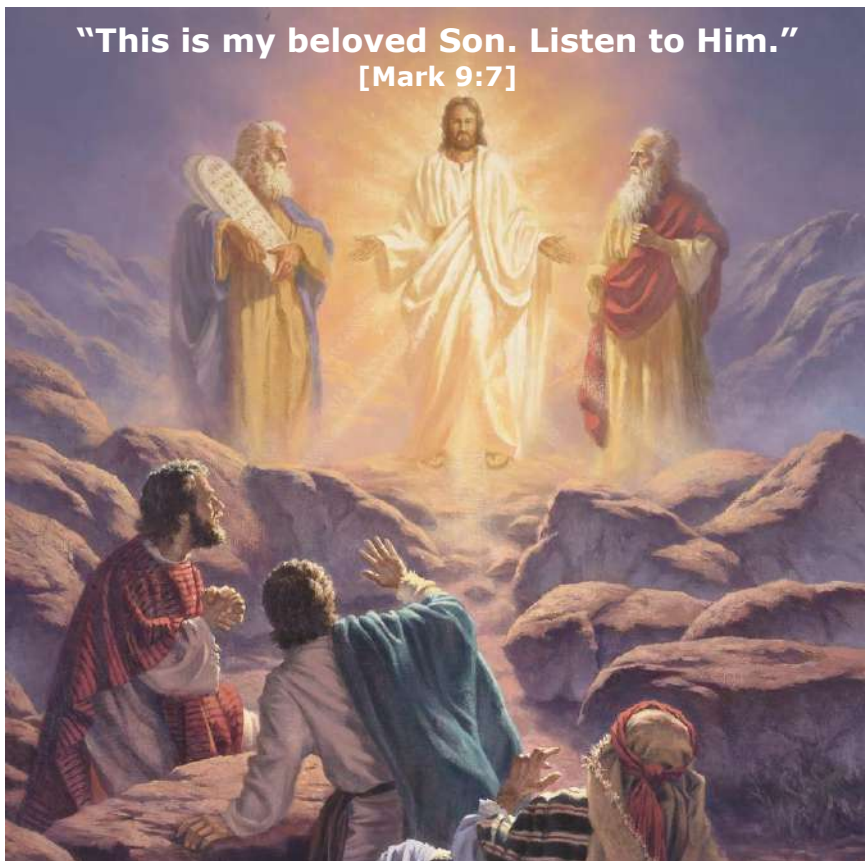


Second Sunday *in the season of* LENT

"This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him."
[Mark 9:7]



"Today, the Eucharist, which we are preparing to celebrate, takes us in spirit to Mount Tabor together with the Apostles Peter, James and John, to admire in rapture the splendor of the transfigured Lord. In the event of the Transfiguration we contemplate the mysterious encounter between history, which is being built every day, and the blessed inheritance that awaits us in heaven in full union with Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. We pilgrims on earth, are granted to rejoice in the company of the transfigured Lord when we immerse ourselves in the things of above through prayer and the celebration of the divine mysteries. But, like the disciples, we too must descend from Tabor into daily life where human events challenge our faith. On the mountain we saw; on the paths of life we are asked tirelessly to proclaim the Gospel which illuminates the steps of believers."

+Pope Saint John Paul II



HOLY MASS SCHEDULE

SEE BULLETIN FOR HOLY DAYS

Saturday Vigil	4:00pm
Sunday	8:30am
	10:30am
	12:30pm
	5:00pm

Daily

Monday-Friday	6:30am
Monday-Saturday	8:15am

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

2:00pm on first and third Sundays.
Pre-Baptism class is at 2:00pm on second Sunday. All by appointment.

Sponsors need letter from their pastor.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

2:30-3:30pm every Saturday;
Weekly Holy Hour with Confessions from 6:30-7:30pm every Wednesday.
Anytime upon request.
(Call for appointment.)

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

No date should be set prior to seeing a priest or deacon six months before desired date.

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK

Please contact the Parish office.

614.885.7814

SAINTMICHAEL-CD.ORG
5750 NORTH HIGH STREET
WORTHINGTON, OHIO 43085



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SAINT MICHAEL STAFF DIRECTORY

Website: saintmichael-cd.org

Parish Office: 614-885-7814

MINISTERS TO THE PARISH

Pastor: Fr. Michael J. Lumpe

Parochial Vicar: Fr. Wojciech Stachura, SAC

Priest in Residence/Diocesan Judicial Vicar:

Fr. Robert Kitsmiller

Priest in Holy Service: Fr. Peter Fegan, O.P.

Permanent Deacons:

Dcn. John Crerand

Dcn. Bill Demidovich

Dcn. Klaus Fricke (Retired)

Pastoral Minister: Sr. Riya Mary

srriya@saintmichael-cd.org

Youth Minister: Jake Asuncion

jasuncion@saintmichael-cd.org

Director of RCIA: Jake Neal

jneal@sjchcc.org

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Choir Director/Organist: Ron Barrett

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ST. MICHAEL SCHOOL

Website: stmichaelworthington.org

School Office: 614-885-3149

Principal: Sr. Mary Regina, O.P.

principal@stmichaelworthington.org

Preschool Director: Laura Wells

lwells@stmichaelworthington.org

PARISH REPRESENTATIVES

Athletic Association Representative: Liz Trolli

smaa@saintmichael-cd.org

Knights of Columbus Representative:

Seth Walker

grandknight@kofc11445.com

St. Vincent de Paul Society Representative:

Elaine Miracle

svdp@saintmichael-cd.org

SAINT MICHAEL INFORMATION CENTER



LOW-GLUTEN HOST

If you are in need of a low-gluten host, please scan this QR code for full details.



NEW MEMBERS

Registering in a parish is a declaration of your desire to be part of a Catholic community and a commitment to the life of the parish family. We are often asked to provide affidavits for parishioner standing. We can only do this if a person is a registered, active, and contributing member in our parish. You can register by scanning the QR code above or by visiting our website at www.saintmichael-cd.org.

BULLETIN DEADLINE

To submit a bulletin request, the request must be made no later than 12:00 p.m., Monday. Send bulletin requests to rlund@saintmichael-cd.org with "BULLETIN REQUEST" in the subject line with all details and contact person for questions. Early submission deadlines may be required surrounding holidays. All bulletin requests are subject to approval.

HOMEBOUND MINISTRY

St. Michael's Homebound Ministry is available to bring the Eucharist to the homebound. If you or a loved one within St. Michael Parish boundaries would like someone to bring the Eucharist to you, please reach out to Sr. Riya Mary to coordinate. She can be reached by calling the Parish Office or by emailing srriya@stmichael-cd.org.



ONLINE GIVING

St. Michael offers online giving as a convenient tool for you to use. Scan the QR code to learn more or to set up online contributions.

ADORATION CHAPEL

There is no better way to spend an hour of your week than in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Consider signing up for Adoration. Our Adoration Chapel offers Eucharistic Exposition on Thursdays and Fridays from 9:00 a.m., Thursday morning through 9:00 p.m., Friday evening. Adoration is available at all other times with the Blessed Sacrament reposed in the tabernacle. Registration is easy to do from your phone. Visit StMichael.WeAdoreHim.com to sign up. You can also visit the Church on Wednesdays for our weekly Holy Hour with Confessions from 6:30-7:30 p.m. each week.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

DAILY MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, February 25

- 8:30 a.m. + Major Alan Dover (Erin Wade)
- 10:30 a.m. + For the Living & Deceased Members of our Parish
- 12:30 p.m. + Michael Jolley
- 5:00 p.m. + Jack Auer

Monday, February 26

- 6:30 a.m. + Sharon Burr
- 8:15 a.m. Special Intention of Father Michael Lumpe
(Rich & Theresa Agnello)

Tuesday, February 27

- 6:30 a.m. + James Farrell (Susan Farrell)
- 8:15 a.m. Special Intention of Sister Maria Kolbe, OP
(The Lund Family)

Wednesday, February 28

- 6:30 a.m. + Bonnie J. Henry (Lisa Lyle Henry)
- 8:15 a.m. For the School
- 6:00 p.m. + Daniel Phillip Rako, II (Exodus 90 Ministry)

Thursday, February 29

- 6:30 a.m. Special Intention of Susan Cecil (Rich & Theresa Agnello)
- 8:15 a.m. + Robert & Joan Brown (The Brown Family)

Friday, March 1

- 6:30 a.m. + Diana & Larry Evans (Karen & Lou Griffith)
- 8:15 a.m. + Paula Diaz & Luis Caso (Francoise Caso)

Saturday, March 2

- 8:15 a.m. + Eric Sprenger
- 4:00 p.m. Special Intention of Bill & MaryBeth McDonald

Sunday, March 3

- 8:30 a.m. + Patricia Reynolds
- 10:30 a.m. + Donata Tempesta (Armando & Liliana Tempesta)
- 12:30 p.m. + Kyle Ann Kowaleski (Kristy & Steve Wagner)
- 5:00 p.m. + For the Living & Deceased Members of our Parish



MINISTRY FAIR

AFTER ALL MASSES

MARCH 2 & 3

MARIAN HALL

Join us after weekend Masses to learn more about what's happening at St. Michael! Representatives from various parish ministries will be present to share more about their ministries and opportunities for you to get involved at our parish.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

FEBRUARY 14, 2024:

Ash Wednesday Collection

for J.O.I.N: \$ 3,199.40

PARISH CALENDAR FEBRUARY/MARCH

SUNDAY, February 25	11:30 a.m. PSR (LMR) 11:30 a.m. RCIA (UMR) 3:00 p.m. Middle School Youth Group (G) 6:00 p.m. High School Youth Group (MH)	Thursday, February 29	Eucharistic Exposition (AC) 5:30 p.m. Cub Scout Meeting (U) 6:30 p.m. Young Adult Bible Study (LMR) 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice (C)
Monday, February 26	6:30 p.m. Boy Scouts (U)	Friday, March 1	Eucharistic Exposition (AC) 5:00 p.m. Fish Fry (U) 6:00 p.m. Power & Love High School Retreat (G) 7:30 p.m. Stations of the Cross (C)
Tuesday, February 27	5:00 p.m. PreK Parent Information Night (LMR) 7:30 p.m. WFF Bible Study (UMR)	Saturday, March 2	Parish Ministry Fair after Vigil Mass 6:45 a.m. Men's Faith & Fellowship (UMR) 7:00 a.m. Pietra (LMR) 9:00 a.m. Power & Love High School Retreat (G) 2:30 p.m. Confessions (C)
Wednesday, February 28	6:00 p.m. Weekly Lenten Mass, Holy Hour & Confessions (C)	SUNDAY, March 3	Parish Ministry Fair & Friendship Sunday after all Masses 11:30 a.m. RCIA (UMR) 3:00 p.m. Middle School Youth Group (G) 6:00 p.m. High School Youth Group (MH)

(U) = Undercroft/Cafeteria, (S) = School, (C) = Church, (G) = Gym, (MH) = Marian Hall, (SL) = School Library, (UMR) = Meeting room on the first floor of the Parish Ministry Center, (LMR) = Meeting room in the basement of the Parish Ministry Center, (AC) = Adoration Chapel

FROM THE PASTOR

ON THIS SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT, we are treated to the great event of the Transfiguration of Jesus before those assembled on Mount Tabor. There are many things we can meditate about today's Scripture, but I think it is worth noting that on the mountain, Peter, James and John finally saw that there was much more (infinitely so) to Jesus than meets the human eye. During the Transfiguration, they got a glimpse of the future glory of Jesus' Resurrection. Like them we, too, get glimpses of the presence of God in our lives. We get glimpses of God in the love we receive from other people. We get glimpses of God when badly needed help suddenly comes to us from out of nowhere. We get glimpses of God when we look back over our lives and what we couldn't understand in the past makes sense now. We see glimpses of God when we see someone making a sacrifice to help somebody else. We see glimpses of God in the beauty of a fine day, or in simple courtesies and acts of kindness that are extended to one another. We see glimpses of God when a passage from the Bible or a homily strikes a chord in our hearts. We get a glimpse of God when we spend time in prayer and experience the loving presence of God in our lives. We get more than just a glimpse of God when we receive the Body of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion, in the Eucharist. We get a glimpse of God's love and mercy when we seek Him through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Transfiguration coming early in Lent encourages us to continue our Lenten penances because it reminds us of the glory of Jesus risen from the dead. When Jesus and the disciples came down the mountain, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone about His Transfiguration until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. Of course they did not know what He meant at the time by this statement. Unknown to them, the glory of Jesus' Transfiguration was preparing them to accept the scandal of the cross. They would understand this only afterwards when looking back. The good times take us through the bad times. So when our cross is heavy or when we are tempted to despair about the meaning of life, let us look beyond the pain of the present moment and remember those times when we got glimpses of God, those times when God sent us His consolations. Let us look beyond the pain of life and see the presence of God in our world, and the offer of life that God wants to make to each of us. Let us look beyond the illusion of happiness that this life offers to the real happiness that God offers us. God the Father loved the Son completely, but incredibly, in a certain sense, God the Father loved someone even more. He loved each of US more. He allowed His own Son to be sacrificed on the Cross, so that each of US would not have to die eternally. This is the most stupendous truth of faith ever imaginable. God loved US that much that He sacrificed His own Son for US, so that each of US might not only experience, but enjoy the Father-child relationship that God wants US to have for all eternity. But that's not all. In his letter to the Romans today, St. Paul says, "If God did not even spare his own Son but handed him over to us all, will he not give us, with Him, everything else besides?" Folks, if God loved us that much, there isn't anything He won't give us to come to our full stature as His sons and daughters. That's the most important thing for us to realize this Lent. The point of it is not just to give up good things, to do penance, *et cetera*, but in doing penance, in going to Confession, in turning away from sin, in repenting for our sins, and believing in the Gospel, we might come to realize the full meaning of God's love for us and then start to live in that love. God our Father, who only speaks three times in the Gospel, said in today's Gospel, "Listen to Him!"—listen to Jesus! Pay attention to Him! Be challenged by what He says! Embrace what He says! Live what He says! And Jesus says to us this Lent what he says to us every Lent, the words of His first homily, which we heard on Ash Wednesday: "Repent and believe in the Good News!" Repent from everything keep you from God, trusting in God like Abraham did in today's first reading, and then believing in the greatest news ever, this news of God's love, triumphing over it all. We finish with St. Paul's faith, a faith like Abraham's, a faith that each of us are called to develop over the course of this season of Lent beginning today. And so we should ask ourselves what St. Paul says in the continuation of his letter that comes on the heels of today's second reading: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39). Folks, may each of us not only believe in this love, but may each of us live this love as "doers of the word, not hearers only" (James 1:22).

JUST SAYIN': I LOVE LENT! I love the Catholic traditions that we have during this Season, especially the Friday Fish Fry Dinners (thank you Knights of Columbus and all volunteers who make this possible), followed by the Stations of the Cross – Friday nights in Lent are wonderful expressions of our faith! I love the increased numbers of people at our daily and Sunday Masses, and the increased number of people coming to our Wednesday 6:00 p.m. Mass and Holy Hour with Confessions! As we continue our Lenten journey to Holy Week, the Sacred Triduum, and to Easter Sunday, let's "keep in mind" the lyrics to the Lucien Deiss Hymn "Keep in Mind" – *"Keep in mind that Jesus Christ has died for us and is risen from the dead. He is our saving Lord, He is joy for all ages."* (<https://catholichymn.blogspot.com/2016/03/keep-in-mind.html>)

– Fr. Mike

SEASON OF LENT

Saint Michael the Archangel Parish + 5750 N. High Street + Worthington, Ohio 43085 + (614) 885-7814

The Feathers of Gossip: How Our Words can Build Up or Tear Down

By Dr. Edward Sri

The story is often told of the most unusual penance St. Philip Neri assigned to a woman for her sin of spreading gossip. The sixteenth-century saint instructed her to take a feather pillow to the top of the church bell tower, rip it open, and let the wind blow all the feathers away. This probably was not the kind of penance this woman, or any of us, would have been used to!

But the penance didn't end there. Philip Neri gave her a second and more difficult task. He told her to come down from the bell tower and collect all the feathers that had been scattered throughout the town. The poor lady, of course, could not do it — and that was the point Philip Neri was trying to make in order to underscore the destructive nature of gossip. When we detract from others in our speech, our malicious words are scattered abroad and cannot be gathered back. They continue to dishonor and divide many days, months, and years after we speak them as they linger in people's minds and pass from one tale-bearer to the next.

The Power of Our Words

We often do not realize the power of our words. Our words can be used to buildup or to tear down. We can have a positive impact on other people's lives when we use our words for good. Consider how much we appreciate it when someone takes time to express words of gratitude, honor, or praise; or how enriched we are when someone takes a genuine interest in our lives. Conversation that focuses on what is good and honorable can edify other people's lives and help strengthen the community.

Very often, however, our speech is used in a destructive way. St. James states "the tongue is a fire," and he describes how easy it is to fall into sinful speech: "No human being can tame the tongue — a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men" (Jas.3:6, 8-9). St. Paul exhorts us: "Outdo one another in showing honor" (Rom. 12:10). Yet many people fall into negative humor, constantly pointing out others' faults, albeit in a joking fashion. Young people today, instead of outdoing one another in showing honor, often imitate characters on popular TV shows and YouTube videos and try to outdo one another with a witty quip that pokes fun at another person.

We tear down others when we point out their weak points, criticize them, or complain about them when they are not present. We may, for example, start off speaking positively about someone, yet add a "but" in the middle of our sentence that precedes our mentioning a certain fault or annoying point we think that person possesses. "He's a great guy, but sometimes he talks too much." "I love mom, but sometimes she can get on my nerves." Such detraction is not necessary and diminishes the honor that is due to the other person.

Detraction

The vice of detraction consists of disclosing, without good reason, "another's faults and failings to persons who did not know them" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no.2477). According to St. Thomas Aquinas, issuing injurious words with the intention to dishonor someone is sinful. Words that expose someone's faults to the detriment of his or her honor thus should generally be avoided. Just because a certain statement might be true does not mean I should say it. If I were to tell others about a person's hidden faults — even if they were truly weaknesses of his — this would be to the detriment of his honor, since now these faults would be in most people's minds when they thought of him and overshadow the honor that is due to him. Instead of giving him the honor he deserves, others might now dwell more on this person's particular faults and failings.

There may be some circumstances in which speaking of a person's faults is not done with the intent to dishonor him or her, but for some good purpose — for example, to correct the person or to protect the community. Yet even in these cases, a person should delicately choose his words with great discretion and



moderation. Bl. Mother Teresa of Calcutta once needed to discuss with her close advisors a disciplinary issue involving one of the sisters in her community. She began the conversation by reminding them to speak carefully and not say anything they did not need to say. She led them in prayer asking God to help them speak gently about this particular sister, pointing out that it was as if they were holding her in the palm of their hands as they spoke about her.

Backbiting

Another sin of speech is backbiting, which denies or disparages one's good points. It speaks ill of another person when he or she is not present "in order to blacken his good name." [1] Whereas detraction openly seeks to dishonor someone, backbiting aims at depreciating one's reputation and it seeks to do so secretly. This can be done by speaking falsely about someone, presenting his faults as greater than they really are, or ascribing a bad intention to his good deed. We can fall into backbiting also by deliberately concealing or diminishing someone else's good qualities. We may not directly criticize a particular person whom we do not like, but we never mention that person's praiseworthy accomplishments or virtues to others because we do not want their reputation to be enhanced.

According to Aquinas, backbiting is a mortal sin more serious than theft. He quotes Proverbs 22:1: "A good name is to be chosen rather than riches." To take away someone's good name is a graver offense than to take away that person's property.

This is why we must resist when others start backbiting in our presence. We should want to protect the trashing of our neighbor's reputation just as we would want to protect their home from being robbed. Some of the great saints of our modern era



had parents who were excellent role models in courageously resisting sinful speech. St. Thérèse of Lisieux's father, for example, would never allow his friends to gossip or speak uncharitably about others in his presence. Similarly, Mother Teresa's own mother, Drana, trained her children never to speak negatively of others. When the children once were complaining about their teacher, she turned off the main switch in their home and told the children she would not waste electricity on their sinful speech. The kids had to walk around and do their chores in the dark for more than an hour that evening. On another occasion, when a customer for her daughter's dressmaking business told an uncomplimentary story about someone while waiting in her home, Drana pointed to a sign that announced speaking against others was not welcome in their home. Infuriated, the woman stormed out of the house and the family lost her business. Drana was unmoved, however, and told the children: "We can do without money, but we cannot do with sin."



When our conversation is charitable and focuses on what is true, good, and beautiful, it edifies others and builds deeper communion among people.

That kind of resistance to backbiting St. Thomas Aquinas would praise. He taught that if a person does not resist backbiting, he seems to consent to it and shares in that person's sin. Aquinas also notes that a person might sin even more than the backbiter himself if he induces the man to backbite ("So tell me more about that . . .") or if he enjoys hearing the critique on account of his hatred for the person being detracted.

Finally, one even more sinful use of speech is tale-bearing. Similar to backbiting, it seeks to disparage someone's good name and seeks to do it in secret. But tale-bearing is worse because it does so with the specific intention to divide friendships. The Book of Sirach refers to this kind of sin when it states, "Curse the whisperer and deceiver, for he has destroyed many who were at peace" (Sir. 28:13). According to Aquinas, tale-bearing is worse than detraction in general or backbiting, because friendship is an even greater good than one's honor or good name.

Though gossip, detraction, backbiting, and tale-bearing can cause injury to other's good name and divide people from each other, God intended that we use our speech for good. When our conversation is charitable and focuses on what is true, good, and beautiful, it edifies others and builds deeper communion among people. The following exhortation of St. Paul to the Philippians is also quite applicable to the way we should approach our conversations: "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil. 4:8).

This article is made available courtesy of the Catholic Education Resource Center.

Lectio Divina

SCRIPTURE READING + MEDITATION + PRAYER + CONTEMPLATION

“What page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life?” ~Saint Benedict, from the *Rule of Saint Benedict* (73:3)

The month of February is dedicated to the Holy Family.

“The purpose of Lent is not only expiation, to satisfy the divine justice, but above all a preparation to rejoice in His love. And this preparation consists in receiving the gift of His mercy—a gift which we receive insofar as we open our hearts to it, casting out what cannot remain in the same room with mercy. Now one of the things we must cast out first of all is fear. Fear narrows the little entrance to our heart. It shrinks up our capacity to love. It freezes up our power to give ourselves. If we were terrified of God as an inexorable judge, we would not confidently await His mercy, or approach Him trustfully in prayer. Our peace and our joy in Lent are a guarantee of grace.” ~FATHER THOMAS MERTON, OCSO

Monday, February 26 ~ Second Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Luke 6:36-38 Jesus said to his disciples: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. “Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

Meditation: God seeks our highest good and teaches us to seek the greatest good of others, even those who hate and abuse us. Our love for others, even those who are ungrateful and selfish towards us, must be marked by the same kindness and mercy which God has shown to us. It is easier to show kindness and mercy when we can expect to benefit from doing so. How much harder when we can expect nothing in return. Our prayer for those who do us ill both breaks the power of revenge and releases the power of love to do good in the face of evil. How can we possibly love those who cause us harm, ill-will, and grief? With God all things are possible. He gives power and grace to those who know his love and who ask for the gift and help of the Holy Spirit. Paul the Apostle reminds us that “God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us” (Romans 5:5) God's love conquers all, even our hurts, fears, prejudices and grief. Only the cross of Jesus Christ and his victory over sin can free us from the tyranny of malice, hatred, revenge, and resentment, and give us the courage to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).

Prayer: O God, who have taught us to chasten our bodies for the healing of our souls, enable us, we pray, to abstain from all sins, and strengthen our hearts to carry out your loving commands. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: What makes Christians different and what makes Christianity distinct from any other religion? It is grace – treating others, not as they deserve, but as God wishes them to be treated – with loving-kindness and mercy. Do you pray for mercy and forgive those who wrong you? When we are confronted with our sinful condition and failings we experience guilt and shame. This can often either lead us to cast off pride and make-belief or it can lead us to lose our inhibitions and fall into more shameless deeds! If we are utterly honest and humble before God, we will admit our sins and ask for his mercy and forgiveness. Do you know the joy and freedom of repentance, forgiveness, and a clean heart?

Tuesday, February 27 ~ Second Week in the Season of Lent

Optional Memorial + Saint Gregory of Narek, Abbott and Doctor of the Church

Holy Gospel: Matthew 23:1-12 Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They

tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.' As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Meditation: Jesus seemed to be warning both his disciples and the religious leaders about the temptation to seek titles and honors to increase one's reputation and admiration by others. The scriptures give ample warning about the danger of self-seeking pride: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6; Proverbs 3:24). Respect for God and his ways inclines us to Godly humility and simplicity of heart. Why should we embrace true humility? True humility is not feeling bad about yourself, or having a low opinion of yourself. True humility frees us from preoccupation with ourselves, whereas a low self-opinion tends to focus our attention on ourselves. Humility is truth in self-understanding and truth in action. Viewing ourselves truthfully, with sober judgment, means seeing ourselves the way God sees us (Psalm 139:1-4). A humble person makes a realistic assessment of oneself without illusion or pretense to be something one is not. A truly humble person regards oneself neither smaller nor larger than one truly is. True humility frees us to be ourselves as God sees us and to avoid despair and pride. A humble person does not wear a mask or put on a facade in order to look good to others. Such a person is not swayed by fame, reputation, success, or failure. Do you know the joy of Christ-like humility and simplicity of heart?

Prayer: Guard your Church, we pray, O Lord, in your unceasing mercy, and, since without you mortal humanity is sure to fall, and directed to all that brings salvation. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer ~ Saint Gregory of Narek: Almighty and eternal God, who gave your holy Church blessed Gregory as Doctor, grant that what he taught when moved by the divine Spirit may always stay firm in our hearts; and, as by your gift we embrace him as our patron, may we also have him as our defender to entreat your mercy. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Humility serves as the foundation of all the other virtues because humility enables us to see and judge correctly, the way God sees. Humility helps us to be teachable so we can acquire true knowledge, wisdom, and an honest view of reality. It directs our energy, zeal, and ambition to give ourselves to something greater than ourselves. Humility frees us to love and serve others selflessly, for their sake, rather than our own. Saint Paul the Apostle gives us the greatest example and model of humility in the person of Jesus Christ, who emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and ...who humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:7-8). Do you want to be a servant as Jesus served and loved others? The Lord gives grace to those who humbly seek him.

About Saint Gregory of Narek: St. Gregory was born in the city of Narek about 950 A.D. He was a monk, poet, mystical philosopher, and theologian, born into a family of writers. He became a priest at the age of 25 and dedicated himself to God completely, always searching for the truth. Most of his life he lived in the monasteries of Narek where he taught at the monastic school. He launched his writings with a commentary on the "Song of Songs;" he also wrote a number of famous letters, sharagans, treasures, odes, melodies, and church writings. However, his masterpiece is considered to be his Book of Lamentations, commonly called "Narek," in which his genius is displayed. Considered the greatest poet of the Armenian nation, Saint Gregory of Narek was canonized and proclaimed a Doctor of the Universal Church on April 12, 2015 by Pope Francis.

Wednesday, March 28 ~ Second Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Matthew 20:17-28 As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the Twelve disciples aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day." Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached Jesus with her sons and did him homage, wishing to ask him for something. He said to her, "What do you wish?" She answered him, "Command that these two sons of mine sit, one at your right and the other at your left, in your kingdom." Jesus said in reply, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the chalice that I am going to drink?" They said to him, "We can." He replied, "My chalice you will indeed drink, but to sit at my right and at my left,

this is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” When the ten heard this, they became indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus summoned them and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Meditation: Have you ever given any thought as to who or what takes first place in your life? Selfish ambition drives us to get ahead of others. When two of Jesus’ disciples tried to get ahead, Jesus did the unthinkable by telling them that the path to glory would be through suffering and the cross. And he wedded authority with selfless-service and with sacrifice – the willing offering of one’s life for the sake of another. Jesus used stark language to explain what kind of sacrifice he had in mind. His disciples must drink his cup if they expect to reign with him in his kingdom. The cup he had in mind was a bitter one involving crucifixion. What kind of cup does the Lord have in mind for us? For some disciples such a cup entails physical suffering and the painful struggle of “martyrdom” in one form or another. This entails the long routine of the Christian life, with all its daily sacrifices, disappointments, set-backs, struggles, and temptations. A disciple must be ready to lay down his or her life in martyrdom and be ready to lay it down each and every day in the little and big sacrifices required. An early church father summed up Jesus’ teaching with the expression: to serve is to reign with Christ. We share in God’s reign by laying down our lives in humble service of one another as Jesus did for our sake. Are you up to this call?

Prayer: Keep your family, O Lord, schooled always in good works, and so comfort them with your protection here as to lead them graciously to gifts on high. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Jesus paid the price for our redemption with his blood. Slavery to sin is to want the wrong things and to be in bondage to destructive desires. The ransom Jesus paid sets us free from the worst tyranny possible – the tyranny of sin and the fear of death. Jesus’ victory did not end with death but triumphed over the tomb. Jesus defeated the powers of death through his resurrection. Do you want the greatest freedom possible – that is, the freedom to live as God truly meant us to live as his sons and daughters? Embrace his laws, his teachings, and his will, and true and lasting freedom will be yours!

Thursday, February 29 ~ Second Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Luke 16:19-31 Jesus said to the Pharisees: “There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man’s table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.’ Abraham replied, ‘My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.’ He said, ‘Then I beg you, father, send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.’ He said, ‘Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ Then Abraham said, ‘If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Meditation: The name “Lazarus” means “God is my help.” Despite a life of misfortune and suffering, Lazarus did not lose hope in God. His eyes were set on a treasure stored up for him in heaven. The rich man, however, could not see beyond his material wealth and possessions. He not only had every thing he needed, he selfishly spent all he had on himself. He was too absorbed in what he possessed to notice the needs of those around him. He lost sight of God and the treasure of heaven because he was preoccupied with seeking happiness in material things. He served wealth rather than God. In the end the rich man became a beggar! Do you know the joy and freedom of possessing God as your true and lasting treasure? Those who put their hope and security in heaven will not be disappointed (see Hebrews 6:19)?

Prayer: O God, who delight in innocence and restore it, direct the hearts of your servants to yourself, that, caught up in the fire of your Spirit, we may be found steadfast in faith and effective in works.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Jesus' parable about the afflictions of the poor man Lazarus brings home a very important lesson for us to think about during Lent, and to change the way we choose to help or not help those in need. In this story Jesus paints a dramatic scene of contrasts – riches and poverty, heaven and hell, compassion and indifference, inclusion and exclusion. We also see an abrupt and dramatic reversal of fortune. Lazarus was not only poor, but sick and unable to lift himself. He was “laid” at the gates of the rich man’s house. The dogs which licked his sores probably also stole the little bread he got for himself. Dogs in the ancient world symbolized contempt. Enduring the torment of these savage dogs only added to the poor man’s miseries and sufferings. The rich man treated the beggar with contempt and indifference, until he found his fortunes reversed at the end of his life! In God's economy, those who hold on possessively to what they have, lose it all in the end, while those who share generously receive back many times more than they gave away.

Friday, March 1 ~ Second Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46 Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people: “Hear another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey. When vintage time drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to obtain his produce. But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat, another they killed, and a third they stoned. Again he sent other servants, more numerous than the first ones, but they treated them in the same way. Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.’ They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes? They answered him, He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper times.” Jesus said to them, Did you never read in the Scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes? Therefore, I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he was speaking about them. And although they were attempting to arrest him, they feared the crowds, for they regarded him as a prophet.

Meditation: What is the message of the parable of the vineyard? Jesus’ story about an absentee landlord and his not-so-good tenants would have made sense to his audience. The hills of Galilee were lined with numerous vineyards, and it was quite common for the owners to let out their estates to tenants. Many did it for the sole purpose of collecting rent. So why did Jesus' story about wicked tenants cause offense to the scribes and Pharisees? It contained both a prophetic message and a warning. Isaiah had spoken of the house of Israel as “the vineyard of the Lord” (Isaiah 5:7). Jesus' listeners would likely understand this parable as referring to God's dealing with a stubborn and rebellious people; this parable speaks to us today as well, as it conveys important truths about God and the way he deals with his people. God trusts us enough to give us freedom to run life as we choose, but “free will” can be dangerous if we do not follow the path of Christ – choices have consequences. Not once, but many times he forgives the tenants their debts, but while the tenants take advantage of the owner's patience, his judgment and justice prevail.

Prayer: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, purifying us by the sacred practice of penance, you may lead us in sincerity of heart to attain the holy things to come. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Jesus foretold both his death and his ultimate triumph. He knew he would be rejected and be killed, but he also knew that would not be the end. After rejection would come glory – the glory of resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father. The Lord blesses his people today with the gift of his kingdom. And he promises that we will bear much fruit if we abide in him (ref. John 15:1-11). He entrusts his gifts and grace to each of us and he gives us work to do in his vineyard – the body of Christ. He promises that our labor will not be in vain if we persevere with faith to the end (ref. 1 Corinthians 15:58). We can expect trials and even persecution. But in the end we will see triumph. Do you do any labor for the Lord? Do you do so with joyful hope and with confidence in his victory?

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Daily meditations and contemplations adapted from the Irish Jesuits’ *Sacred Space* web page and *Biblical Medications for Lent* by Rev. Carroll Stuhlmueeller, C.P.; prayers are from *The Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing, 2011; information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of the Catholic Culture web site.

OUR *Catholic* FAITH

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Hear God Speaking to You

by Fr. Killian J. Healy

Many people never listen to God because they are not aware that He speaks to them. Yet, God does speak. One way to live in His presence is to acquire the habit of recognizing His voice when He speaks. If we do not know that God wishes to communicate with us, or the ways He has chosen, then our passage through life will be devoid of the most perfect of guides.

When does God speak to us? He speaks at all times, especially in prayer. Prayer is a conversation with God. But it is not a monologue. When we pray, then, we should also listen, because a good conversationalist is also a good listener. We do not pray well when we recite ready-made formulas quickly and distractedly. We act as if God has only to listen to us, and that we have no need to listen to the thoughts and desires that He wishes to communicate to us. He has promised, "If thou wilt hear the voice of the Lord thy God, and do what is right before Him, and obey His commandments, and keep all His precepts, none of the evils that I laid upon Egypt will I bring upon thee."

Unfortunately, many of us have never trained ourselves to listen to His voice. But, if we are to know God's will, we must listen to Him and obey Him when we recognize His commandments.

But how does God speak to us? God is a pure spirit. Unlike man, He has no voice. If He wishes to speak to us, He must use some means outside of Himself, adapted to our nature, by which He can communicate ideas. He may use things we can see and hear in order to stir our imagination, or He may enter directly into our thoughts.

God speaks to you personally

Does God, then, speak to man? How can we ever doubt it? How foolish it is to read all types of books and neglect the word of God! The Scriptures were not meant only for particular groups of people; they were meant for all men at all times. God is eternal; His words are eternal. Although He speaks to all men, He speaks to us personally.

This does not mean that every person should take the Bible and interpret it according to his own fancy. No, the Church alone is the divinely appointed authority to guide us in the correct interpretation of the Bible. The Church encourages us to read it, because she knows that the word of God can enter into our minds and that God, in His own mysterious way, can teach the true way of life, the way of love and intimate union with Him.

St. Ignatius of Loyola felt that God was speaking directly to him, when, on his sick bed, he read the words: "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?"

But, we ask, is this *prayer*? It is at least the beginning of prayer. We listen to these words of Christ; we ponder over them; they awaken thoughts and desires within us. We begin to believe, to hope, to love. Our will becomes inspired, and we break forth in ardent affections, calling on Christ to help us, begging forgiveness, expressing gratitude, performing little acts of adoration — and surely *this* is prayer.

We often read of visions, apparitions, and revelations in which God spoke to the saints. St. Paul on the road to Damascus is a classic example. And we read in the life of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque that, while she was engaged in prayer, Jesus often spoke to her of the devotion to His Sacred Heart.

Such conversations with God are not rare in the lives of the canonized. But must we in our conversation with God await the appearance of Jesus, of some heavenly voice or extraordinary apparition, some heavenly manifestation from God? Absolutely not. It is true that God does single out some chosen souls to whom He speaks directly and who actually experience the divine power working in them, but these are very few; it is not the way that God ordinarily uses. We should not even desire that God speak to us in this extraordinary manner. We should not expect it. Visions and revelations are not necessary for us to grow in deep love for God. We may fall deeply in love with Him and practice

faithfully the presence of God, yet never receive any extraordinary manifestations from Him. These are special gifts, and God gives them to whom He wills, and when He wills.

God speaks to your mind and to your heart

Nevertheless, God does speak to all of us without exception in a more direct way than we have yet mentioned. It is a hidden way, by which He enters directly into our thoughts and desires. Our most hidden secrets are not secrets to Him. He comes right into our mind. Our thoughts are not only our thoughts; our desires are not only our desires — they may also be God's thoughts and desires. We know we can do nothing without God. Even such ordinary things as eating, breathing, and walking cannot be done without the ordinary help that God gives us. But, in this instance, we are presupposing this natural help of God and are referring to a greater and more noble assistance from Him.

Does God help us in a special way to think good thoughts and to desire holy things? He most assuredly does. For we are living in a supernatural order and destined to a supernatural end, the Beatific Vision. To attain this end, God not only gives us the principle of supernatural life, sanctifying grace, but He also gives us actual graces that help us to perform supernatural actions and thus to grow in the grace of God. These actual graces are, especially, the holy thoughts and desires that God creates in us.

God does not have to use external words and signs to attract our attention and convey ideas to us. He enters our minds directly. He speaks secretly, noiselessly, as befits the Divinity. It is only by faith that we know He is working in us. For example, God once spoke in a special, hidden way to St. Peter, who then confessed Jesus to be the Son of God. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona," said our Lord. "For flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee, but my Father in Heaven."

St. John tells us that we will know all things from the Holy Spirit: "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things." St. Paul says that God enters our very thoughts: "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."

God also enters our hearts and inspires us to holy desires. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God, was listening; and the Lord touched her heart to give heed to what was being said by Paul."

Thus, the Scriptures and the Church tell us that God speaks to us in the silence of our minds and hearts. He speaks to all men, but all men do not hear Him. God speaks to our mind and heart when we kneel to meditate or to adore Him in the Blessed Sacrament. He enters our mind when the passing things of time excite our thoughts. It is He who gives us holy thoughts to conquer our temptations. It is He who stirs up within us the desire to persevere against all adversaries.

Perhaps we have never realized that God is illuminating our intellect and inspiring our will. Yet He does just that. That is why we are told not to do all the talking in prayer. For, if we continually recite vocal prayers without pausing now and then to think, we will stifle the thoughts and desires that God wishes to excite in us.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux tells us how she listened to the voice of God. "I know and have experienced that 'the Kingdom of God is within us,' that our Master has no need of books or teacher to instruct a soul. The Teacher of teachers instructs without sound of words, and though I have never heard Him speak, yet I know He is within me, always guiding and inspiring me; and just when I need them, lights, hitherto unseen, break in upon me. As a rule, it is not during prayer that this happens, but in the midst of my daily duties."

But we are not only to listen; it would be folly to remain in a state of mental blankness, waiting for God to speak. No, prayer is a loving conversation, and, when the Holy Spirit moves us, it is time to begin our part of the colloquy.

One way, then, to practice the exercise of the presence of God is to listen to God, to be aware that He speaks to us, to be ever conscious that God can use all things to communicate with us.

This article is made available courtesy of the Catholic Exchange and is an excerpt from Fr. Healy's book AWAKENING YOUR SOUL TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD which is available from Sophia Institute Press, www.sophiainstitute.com.

AROUND THE PARISH

Join us this week for
Stations of the Cross
Friday at 7:30pm



ATTENTION ALL BAKERS!

The Knights of Columbus are accepting baked goods for the dessert table for the Fish Fry. Please drop off baked goods at the Church any time after 3:30 p.m. on Fridays through March 22. Thank you for your support and generosity!



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YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Young adults of the parish are invited to join our Bible Study on Thursday evenings in the Lower Meeting Room from 6:30-7:30 p.m. All are welcome, invite a friend to join you! Questions? Email Jake Asuncion at jasuncion@saintmichael-cd.org.

MEN'S FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP

Saturday, March 2nd, we resume *Worthy of the Call* with Fr. John Burns with insights from St. Francis de Sales. The Four Last Things are our focus to understand the deep repercussions of sin which only leads to unhappiness. We meet in the Upper Meeting Room at 6:45 a.m. to pray the Rosary followed by the presentation and discussion. Men of all ages may join us; ask a friend to join you. Any questions can be directed to mensgroup@saintmichael-cd.org.

SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Are you planning for a scheduled medical procedure, or are you being admitted to a hospital or other out-patient facility for surgery or for medical treatment? If so, please see one of the priests before or after any of our parish Masses so that he can provide you with the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick **BEFORE** you have your procedure, treatment or surgery. In the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, the priest anoints the seriously ill, injured, or the elderly with the "Oil of the Infirm" which is a special oil, blessed by the Bishop, used for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Obviously, there are emergency situations, but anything that you can do in advance to receive the sacramental graces of the Anointing of the Sick – physical, spiritual and emotional healing – is helpful to you, your family, and to the priests.

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Parents of incoming and prospective students are invited to join us in the Lower Meeting Room of the Parish Building. The information night will include an information session, Q & A, and an option to tour the PreK classrooms. Please RSVP using the QR code so we can plan accordingly. Questions? Contact lwells@stmichaelworthington.org



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CATHOLIC MEN'S LUNCHEON – FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2024 – SPEAKER MICHAEL FRY

Please join us Friday, March 1 at St. Patrick Church in downtown Columbus for a luncheon featuring a talk by Michael Fry entitled "A Visit with Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen." If you are interested in sponsoring a luncheon, contact Pat Foley at foleyp513@gmail.com. Holy Mass (optional) begins at 11:45 a.m. followed by lunch at 12:10 p.m. and Mr. Fry's presentation. No reservations are necessary. \$12.00 covers the lunch and meeting. Bring a friend! **Our next luncheon is Friday, April 5, 2024, and will feature a talk by William Heyer on Sacred Architecture. Mark your calendar.**





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