



St. Michael the Archangel The Third Sunday of Lent

The Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
The Crowning with Thorns

5750 N. HIGH STREET WORTHINGTON, OHIO 43085
614.885.7814 ~ SAINTMICHAEL-CD.ORG

SAINT MICHAEL STAFF DIRECTORY

Website: saintmichael-cd.org

Parish Office: 614-885-7814

MINISTERS TO THE PARISH

Pastor: Father Stash Dailey

Parochial Vicar: Fr. David Johnstone

Priest in Residence/
Diocesan Judicial Vicar:

Fr. Robert Kitsmiller

Permanent Deacons:

Dcn. John Crerand

Dcn. Bill Demidovich

Pastoral Minister: Sr. Riya Mary

sriya@saintmichael-cd.org

Youth Minister: Jake Asuncion

jasuncion@saintmichael-cd.org

Director of OCIA: Jake Neal

jneal@sjhcc.org

PARISH OFFICE

Secretary & PGC: Kathy Trafford

ktrafford@saintmichael-cd.org

Receptionist: Rhonda Marinelli

rmarinelli@saintmichael-cd.org

ST. MICHAEL PARISH 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:

Adam Rohrer

smaa@saintmichael-cd.org

Knights of Columbus Representative:

Mike LaMorte

grandknight@kofc11445.com

St. Vincent de Paul Society

Representative:

Elaine Miracle

svdp@saintmichael-cd.org

Parish Council Representative:

Martha Bogue

SAINT MICHAEL INFORMATION CENTER

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Pre-Baptism classes offered at 2:00 p.m. on the second Sunday; preregistration required. All baptisms are by appointment only; sponsors need Letter from their pastor. Baptisms may be scheduled on Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons. Please contact the Parish Office.

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.

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 each Monday from 9:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m. and from 5:00 a.m. Tuesdays until 9:00 p.m. Friday evenings. 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 or use the QR code.

MASS INTENTIONS



Mass Intentions are currently available to schedule for 2026. If you would like to remember a loved one in this way, please scan the QR code to order and pay online or visit the Parish Office. One should never forget the infinite graces that flow from the Sacrifice of the Mass which benefit one's soul, both for the living and the deceased.

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.

LOW-GLUTEN HOST



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

BULLETIN DEADLINE

To submit a bulletin request, the request must be made no later than 12:00 p.m., Monday. Send bulletin requests to office@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 sriya@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.



MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, March 7

8:15 a.m. +Andrew Debitetto
 4:00 p.m. For the Living and Deceased Members of the Parish

Sunday, March 8

8:30 a.m. +Leo Zupan IV (Zupan Family)
 10:30 a.m. +Daniel Myers (Jim & Cory Bracken & Family)
 12:30 p.m. S.I. Carolyn & Steve Bolen
 5:00 p.m. +Paul D. Carroll, Jr. (Dorothy J. Carroll)

Monday, March 9

6:30 a.m. +Stephen Debitetto
 8:15 a.m. S.I. Fr. Dailey, Fr. Johnstone & Fr. Kitsmiller (AHG Troop OH1247)

Tuesday, March 10

6:30 a.m. +Deceased Members of the Hickey Family (Aleshire Family)
 8:15 a.m. Carmelite Sisters for the Aged & Infirm (Fr. Michael Lumpe)

Wednesday, March 11

6:30 a.m. S.I. Mr. & Mrs. Greg Daniel (AHG Troop OH1247)
 8:15 a.m. +Dan Myers (Sharon Fricke)
 6:00 p.m. +Thomas Lilly (Courtney Sheeran)

Thursday, March 12

6:30 a.m. S.I. Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist (AHG Troop OH1247)
 8:15 a.m. S.I. Einhorn Family

Friday, March 13

6:30 a.m. +Teresa Burnett (Kevin & Lisa Barlage)
 8:15 a.m. +Michael Plunkett (Janet Plunkett)

Saturday, March 14

8:15 a.m. +Fr. Ronald Schmelzer (Fr. Michael Lumpe)
 4:00 p.m. +Joseph L. & Judith Giannetto (Bob & Christine Miller)

Sunday, March 15

8:30 a.m. For the Living and Deceased Members of our Parish
 10:30 a.m. S.I. Josephine Adams (Adam Family)
 12:30 p.m. +Richard Hinterschied (The Moore Family)
 5:00 p.m. Souls of Orphans & Unborn Children (Uyen Le Zupan)

PARISH CALENDAR: MARCH

SUNDAY, March 8	Eucharistic Exposition (AC) Girl Scout Cookie Sale After Masses (MH) 9:00 a.m. OCIA (UMR) 9:00 a.m. PSR (A) 11:30 a.m. St. Gerard Blessing (C) 2:00 p.m. Altar Server Training (C) 2:00 p.m. Pre-Registered Baptism Class (UMR) 3:00 p.m. Middle School Youth Ministry (G)
Monday, March 9	Eucharistic Exposition (AC) 7:00 a.m. Confessions (C) 5:30 p.m. PSR (A) 6:30 p.m. Boy Scouts (U) 6:30 p.m. KOC Meetings (LMR) 7:00 p.m. Bible Timeline Study (MH)
Tuesday, March 10	Eucharistic Exposition (AC) 7:00 a.m. Confessions (C) 9:00 a.m. History of God Study (UMR) 11:00 a.m. Live Wires (MH) 6:00 p.m. Historical Society Mtg (LMR) 6:00 p.m. AHG Troop Mtg (U)
Wednesday, March 11	Eucharistic Exposition (AC) 7:00 a.m. Confessions (C) 5:30 p.m. Women of the Parish – Stations of the Cross (C) 6:00 p.m. Mass followed by Holy Hour & Confessions (C) 7:30 p.m. Passion Narrative Meditations of the Gospels (UMR)
Thursday, March 12	Eucharistic Exposition (AC) 7:00 a.m. Confessions (C) 9:00 a.m. History of God Study (UMR) 6:00 p.m. Cub Scout Den Mtg (U) 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice (C)
Friday, March 13	Eucharistic Exposition (AC) 7:00 a.m. Confessions (C) 9:30 a.m. Mom's Day Out (UMR) 12:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross (C) 5:00 p.m. Lenten Fish Fry (MH/LMR/U) 7:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross (C)
Saturday, March 14	6:45 a.m. MFF (UMR) 7:00 a.m. WFF Pietra (LMR) 8:00 a.m. Order of Malta (LMR) 9:30 a.m. SVDP Meeting (UMR) 2:30 p.m. Confessions (C)
SUNDAY, March 15	9:00 a.m. OCIA (UMR) 10:30 a.m. KOC Mass & Donuts (U)

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

MARCH 1, 2026

Envelopes \$ 14,078.00
 Online Giving \$ 12,185.00
Total:\$ 26,263.00

To view Parish Masses & Ministry Activities in advance, please view our Parish Calendar online by visiting www.saintmichael-cd.org/about-us/calendar/.
 (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, (A) = Atrium

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

March is the month of St. Joseph and it's also a month of Life.

On the 19th of March, we will celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph and indeed we will really celebrate! In addition to having an extra Mass at 5:30 p.m., we will follow it with St. Joseph's Table. The entree will be provided by the parish (think really good Italian food!) And those who come are invited to bring a side to share. RSVP so we are prepared to welcome you.

On the 25th of March, we will celebrate the Solemnity of the Annunciation! During this great event, we celebrate the Incarnation taking place, God takes flesh and the Word becomes Incarnate. While there is a popular Marian connotation with this Feast, and rightfully so, it is powerfully Christological. It is nine months before the celebration of the Solemnity of the Nativity, Christmas. We should each be celebrating the Annunciation with the same degree of joy and excitement as we do with Christmas, for God becomes present among us at the Annunciation, visible, and then becomes "seen" at Christmas. The celebration of the Annunciation is a liturgical point of formation for us in the Gospel of Life as well as a fortification in our defense of the dignity of life for the unborn child or, perhaps better put, the not-yet-born child. When one begins to grasp the gravity of the Sacred Liturgy celebrating the conception of Jesus Christ in the flesh, it is simply unfathomable that one would call themselves a Christian, a Disciple of Jesus Christ, and not hold to the dignity and the sacred reality of the life of a child within the womb of the mother.

There is a lead time needed to prepare to celebrate such incredible moments like the Solemnity of St. Joseph and the Solemnity of the Annunciation. We should prepare ourselves for such celebrations. Now is the time to think of a special intention to bring before St. Joseph during the Novena that leads up to the 19th. We should begin preparing now for that special way in which we will celebrate the Annunciation on the 25th.

Such moments as the Solemnities of the Church give us occasions where we are reminded of the great gift it is to be alive and to know the Lord in this life.

In Jesus the Lord,
Fr. Stash Dailey

AROUND THE PARISH

2026 Easter Triduum Services

Holy Thursday

Office of Readings and Lauds 8:15am
(no 6:30am or 8:15am Mass)

Mass of the Lord's Supper 7:00pm

Good Friday

Office of Readings and Lauds 8:15am
(no 6:30am or 8:15am Mass)

Stations of the Cross 12 Noon

Passion & Veneration 3pm

Stations of the Cross 7pm

Holy Saturday

Office of Readings and Lauds 8:15am
(no 8:15am Mass)

Easter Vigil Mass 9:00pm

Easter Sunday

8:30am, 10:30am
12:30pm & 5:00pm

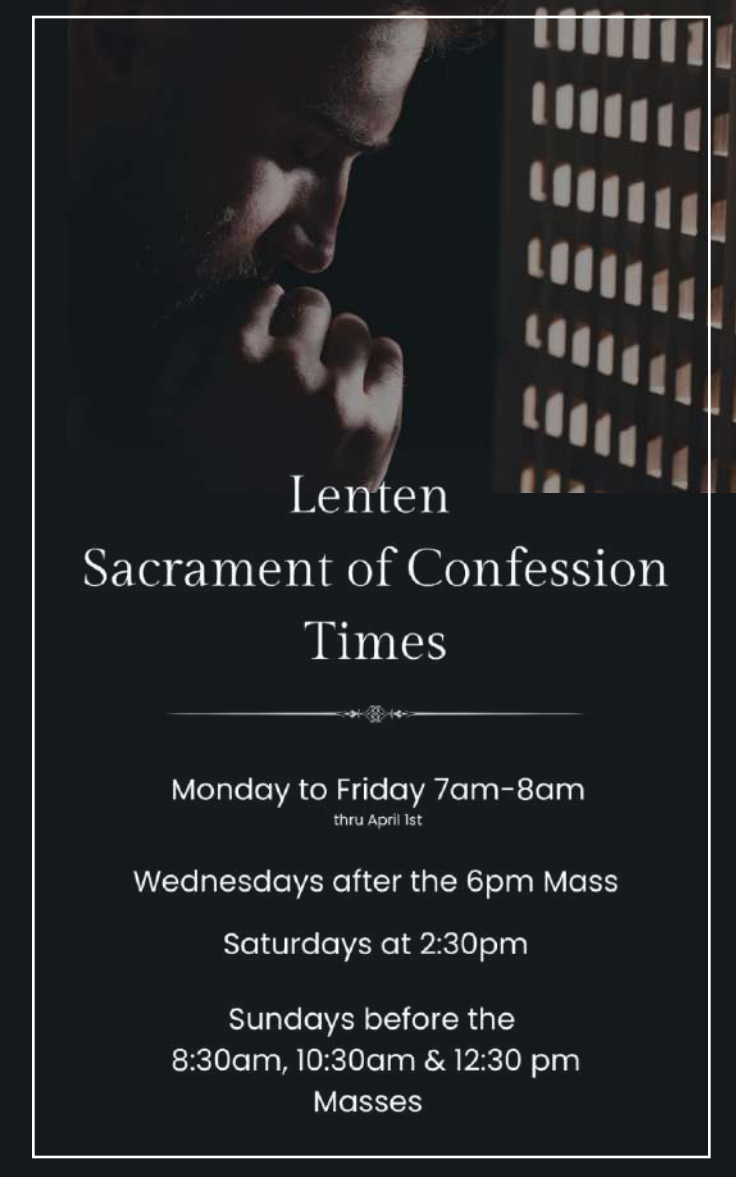
Holy Week Confessions - Monday & Tuesday 7am to 8am
Wednesday 7am-8am & 6:30pm



ST. GERARD MAJELLA BLESSING

Sunday, March 8th is the monthly blessing of those who are hoping to conceive, who are expectant mothers, who are sick children or mothers, as well as all particular intentions through the intercession of St Gerard Majella.

This will take place after the 10:30am Mass in front of the Blessed Virgin's side altar. Thank you to the Confraternity of Christian Mothers who sponsor the monthly blessing.



Lenten
Sacrament of Confession
Times

Monday to Friday 7am-8am
thru April 1st

Wednesdays after the 6pm Mass

Saturdays at 2:30pm

Sundays before the
8:30am, 10:30am & 12:30 pm
Masses



ALTAR SERVER TRAINING FOR ALL CURRENT AND NEW SERVERS

St. Michael Church is offering Altar Server Training for 5th through 12th graders. All current servers must also participate. Please register for the training date below by emailing Jake Asuncion at jasuncion@saintmichael-cd.org

- Sunday, March 8th at 2:00 p.m.

Join us on March 19th
for
St. Joseph's Table
at
St. Michael Church
5750 N. High St., Worthington, OH 43085

Mass at 5:30pm
Followed by Dinner & Fellowship

Pasta & Meatball entree will be provided by the Parish.
Please consider signing up to bring a side or dessert to share.

RSVP is requested for planning
Please scan here




Easter Flowers

All Easter Flower envelopes and donations must be submitted no later than by March 23rd to be included in the Easter Bulletin.

Parish Office Holiday Hours

Please note, the Parish Office will be closed April 3rd through the 6th.

Early Bulletin Request Deadlines

March 15th requests due by March 9th

March 22nd requests due by March 16th

March 29th requests due by March 18th

April 5th requests due by March 25th



WOMEN'S STATIONS OF THE CROSS

WEDNESDAYS DURING LENT



The Confraternity of Christian Mothers invites all women of the parish to pray the Stations of the Cross through the eyes of Mary

5:30pm on Wednesday
followed by the 6:00pm Mass



Meditations on the Passion Narratives from the Gospels

Every Wednesday at 7:30pm in the Upper Meeting Room
Meditations on the Passion Narratives from the Gospels will be led by Dr. Meruzzi
Scripture Professor at the Josephinum & fellow parishioner

Station Churches of Rome

March 3rd & March 24th
at 7pm in Marian Hall

Join us
for this two part presentation by famed architect,
Mr. William Heyer
as we walk us through the Station Churches of Rome



We invite you to join us for a new study at St. Michael:

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

Atheism is on the rise. How can we turn the tide of secularism and draw people back to God? Skeptical thinkers like Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris vigorously attack belief in God as irrational or, even worse, dangerous. The so-called New Atheism has attracted millions of young people thanks to bestselling books such as *The God Delusion* and *God Is Not Great*. Who is God? Why does he matter? In *Mystery of God*, you'll not only discover the answers yourself, but also how to share them with others, especially those who no longer believe.

Facilitated by Deacon Demidovich
Meetings will take place in the Upper Meeting Room on the following dates:

March 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 26 and April 1
9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Scan the QR code to RSVP Today!



Live Wires
Senior Potluck Lunch

Our Annual potluck lunch will be held
 Tuesday, March 10th in Marian Hall
 11:00am to 1:00pm

Please join us and bring a friend!

To RSVP, please call the Parish Office by
 10:00am on Monday, March 9th

SWEET NEWS!

GIRL SCOUT COOKIES

→ AFTER MASS ←

BY ST. MICHAEL GIRL SCOUTS

→ SUNDAY, MARCH 1
 → SUNDAY, MARCH 8



CASH  VENMO **\$6 / BOX**

ACCEPTED HERE!

ALL DONATIONS TO THE TROOP GREATLY APPRECIATED!

St. Michael's Knights of Columbus Annual
Lenten FISH FRY!

5-7:30
HOT & CRISPY

EVERY WEEK
 Fried Cod Dinner
 Mac & Cheese Dinner
 Clam Chowder
 Desserts

DINE IN & DRIVE THRU

SPECIALS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2/20: Baked cod | 3/13: Cheese ravioli |
| 2/27: Cheese ravioli | 3/20: Baked cod |
| 3/6: Baked cod | 3/27: Cheese ravioli |

EXPERIENCE PIETRA

A whole-person fitness class that stretches and strengthens the body while refreshing the soul with prayer and meditation. In one hour, you will feel calmer, stronger, and renewed! Join our **Pietra classes!** Saturdays from 7:00-8:00 a.m. at St. Michael Church. Contact Maria Elliott at maria@viribuswellness.com for more information or scan the QR code to sign up today.

Please Join
St Vincent de Paul Society
 in Almsgiving

Please help to supply our pantry with personal hygiene items.
 Purchase and drop-off items in our designated boxes in Marian Hall
 March 1st, through March 29th

←—————→

Items Needed

- Deodorant (men and women)
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Bodywash
- Toothpaste
- Individual wrapped Toothbrushes
- Baby wipes

“Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.”
 Proverbs 19:17

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 March is dedicated to Saint Joseph

“God sees you in secret. Know that He sees into your very depths, infinitely further than you do yourself. Make a simple, lively act of faith in His presence. Christian soul, place yourself entirely under His gaze. He is very near. ... O Light that enlightens the world! O Life that gives life to all the living! O Truth that feeds us all! O Good that satisfies all! O Love that binds us together! I praise You, my heavenly Father, Who sees me in secret.”

~EXCERPTED FROM *MEDITATIONS FOR LENT* BY BISHOP JACQUES-BENIGNE BOSSUET

Monday, March 9 ~ Third Week in the Season of Lent

Optional Memorial: Saint Frances of Rome

Holy Gospel: Luke 4:24-30 Jesus said to the people in the synagogue at Nazareth: “Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But he passed through the midst of them and went away.

Meditation: When Jesus went to his hometown and spoke in the synagogue, his statement that no prophet or servant of God can receive honor among his own people was rather startling to those in attendance. He then angered them when he complimented the gentiles who seemed to have shown more faith in God than the “chosen ones” of Israel. They regarded gentiles as “fuel for the fires of hell.” Jesus’ praise for “outsiders” caused them offence because they were blind sighted to God’s mercy and plan of redemption for all nations. The word of warning and judgment spoken by Jesus was met with hostility by his own people. They forcibly threw him out of the city and would have done him harm had he not stopped them. The Lord offers us freedom and pardon and the grace to walk in his way of righteousness. His discipline is for our good that we may share his holiness (Hebrews 12:10). Food for thought: “Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates reproof is stupid” (Proverbs 12:1).

Prayer: May your unfailing compassion, O Lord, cleanse and protect your Church, and since without you she cannot stand secure, may she be always governed by your grace. 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 limits God’s grace and power in our lives to undergo change and transformation of mind and heart? Our indifference and lack of faith for starters! The prophets confronted God’s people with their indifference and unbelief. God’s grace and mercy is offered freely to those who seek it with sincerity, repentance, and faith. When Naaman, a non-Jew went to Jerusalem to seek a cure, the prophet Elisha instructed him to bathe in the river. In faith he obeyed and was healed. Jesus did not hesitate to confront his own people with their indifference and unbelief. Have you looked at where your faith life is? Are you indifferent? Are you lukewarm about your faith, and how you live out your faith? If so, it’s time to set your faith on fire. But you need first to rid yourself of those things which hold you back – whatever they may be. Pray that you will rid yourself of these barriers. Then free from those things which hold us back, may our faith lives flourish and bear much fruit.

Tuesday, March 10 ~ Third Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35 Peter approached Jesus and asked him, “Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus answered, “I say to you, not

seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the Kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.' Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan. When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, 'Pay back what you owe.' Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he had him put in prison until he paid back the debt. Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?' Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart."

Meditation: Who wouldn't be grateful to have someone release them from their debts? But can we really expect mercy and pardon when we owe someone a great deal? The prophet Amos speaks of God forgiving transgression three times, but warns that God may not revoke punishment for the fourth (see Amos 1:3-13; 2:1-6). When Peter posed the question of forgiveness, he characteristically offered an answer he thought Jesus would be pleased with. Why not forgive seven times! How unthinkable for Jesus to counter with the proposition that one must forgive seventy times that. Jesus made it clear that there is no reckonable limit to forgiveness. And he drove the lesson home with a parable about two very different kinds of debts. The first man owed an enormous sum of money – millions in our currency. In Jesus' time this amount was greater than the total revenue of a province – more than it would cost to ransom a king! The man who was forgiven such an incredible debt could not, however bring himself to forgive his neighbor a very small debt which was about one-hundred-thousandth of his own debt. The contrast could not have been greater!

Prayer: May your grace not forsake us, O Lord, we pray, but make us dedicated to your holy service and at all times obtain for us your help. 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: There is no way we could repay God the debt we owed him because of our sins and offenses. Only his mercy and pardon could free us from such a debt. Despite how we may feel at times toward people in our lives, there is no offense our neighbor can do to us that can compare with our debt to God! If God has forgiven each of us our debt, we, too must forgive others the debt they owe us. Through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross – which atoned for our sins – each one of us have been forgiven a debt beyond all reckoning. It cost God his very own Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to ransom us with the price of his blood. Jesus paid the price for us and won for us pardon for our sins and freedom from slavery to our unruly desires and sinful habits. God in his mercy offers us the grace and help of his Holy Spirit so we can love as he loves, pardon as he pardons, and treat others with the same mercy and kindness which he has shown to us. God has made his peace with us. Have you made your peace with God? Have you reconciled yourself with God? Especially during Lent we are called to reconcile ourselves with God and with one another. A healthy trip to the confessional to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a first and important start. Have you been to confession lately? If not, why not?

Wednesday, March 11 ~ Third Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Matthew 5:17-19 Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven."

Meditation: Notice how Jesus consistently taught reverence for God's law – reverence for God himself, for the Lord's Day, reverence or respect for parents, respect for life, for property, for another person's good name, respect for oneself and for one's neighbor lest wrong or hurtful desires master us. Reverence and respect for God's commandments teach us the way of love – love of God and love of neighbor. What is impossible to men and women is possible to God and those who put their faith and trust in God. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit the Lord transforms us and makes us like himself. We are a new creation in Christ (ref. 2 Cor. 5:17) because "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy

Spirit which has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). God gives us the grace to love as he loves, to forgive as he forgives, to think as he thinks, and to act as he acts. The Lord loves justice and goodness and he hates every form of wickedness and sin. He wants to set us free from our unruly desires and sinful habits, so that we can choose to live each day in the peace, joy, and righteousness of his Holy Spirit (ref. Romans 14: 17). To renounce sin is to turn away from what is harmful and destructive for our minds and hearts, and our very lives. As his followers we must love and respect his commandments and hate every form of sin. Do you love and revere the commands of the Lord?

Prayer: Grant, we pray, O Lord, that, schooled through Lenten observance and nourished by your word, through holy restraint we may be devoted to you with all our heart and be ever united in prayer. 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: How do you look upon the laws of God? Negatively? Positively? Pick-and-choose when it suits you (the old "cafeteria Catholic" approach)? Jesus' attitude towards the law of God can be summed up in the great prayer of Psalm 119: "Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day." For the people of Israel the "law" could refer to the Ten Commandments or to the five Books of Moses, called the Pentateuch, which explain the commandments and ordinances of God for his people. The "law" also referred to the whole teaching or way of life which God gave to his people. The Jews in Jesus' time also used it as a description of the oral or scribal law. Needless to say, the scribes added many more things to the law than God intended. That is why Jesus often condemned the scribal law. It placed burdens on people which God had not intended. Jesus, however, made it very clear that the essence of God's law – his commandments and his way of life – must be fulfilled. So, once again, how do you view God's law? How do you put God's law into action and practice in your daily life?

Thursday, March 12 ~ Third Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Luke 11:14-23 Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute, and when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke and the crowds were amazed. Some of them said, "By the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he drives out demons." Others, to test him, asked him for a sign from heaven. But he knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house. And if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that it is by Beelzebul that I drive out demons. If I, then, drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own people drive them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I drive out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man fully armed guards his palace, his possessions are safe. But when one stronger than he attacks and overcomes him, he takes away the armor on which he relied and distributes the spoils. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

Meditation: Jesus himself encountered personal opposition and battled with Satan when he was put to the test in the wilderness just before his public ministry. He overcame the evil one through his obedience to the will of his Father. Some of the Jewish leaders reacted vehemently to Jesus' healings and exorcisms and they opposed him with malicious slander. How could he get the power and authority to release individuals from Satan's power? They assumed that he had to be in league with Satan. They attributed his power to Satan rather than to God. Jesus answers their charge with two arguments. There were many exorcists in Palestine in Jesus' time. So Jesus retorted by saying that they also incriminate their own kin who cast out demons. If they condemn Jesus they also condemn themselves. In his second argument he asserts that no kingdom divided against itself cannot survive for long. We have witnessed enough civil wars in our own time to prove the destructive force at work here for the annihilation of whole peoples and their land. If Satan lends his power against his own forces then he is finished. How can a strong person be defeated except by someone who is stronger? Jesus asserted his power and authority to cast out demons as a clear demonstration of the reign of God. Jesus' reference to the finger of God points back to Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh and his magicians who represented Satan and the kingdom of darkness (see Exodus 8:19).

Prayer: We implore your majesty most humbly, O Lord, that, as the feast of our salvation draws ever closer, so we may press forward all the more eagerly towards the worthy celebration of the Paschal Mystery. 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: We live in a world of compromise – people searching for some type of middle ground in an attempt to satisfy everyone. This approach is fine for ordering a pizza – one wants pepperoni, another wants mushroom, so you split and get half pepperoni and half mushroom. But what about our faith? What

is the price of compromise when it comes to our faith? There are some aspects of our life that we just cannot afford to compromise on – *especially* our faith life: the laws of God, the teachings of Christ, and the teachings of the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Remember, the teachings of the Church have their foundation in the laws of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ and are applied to every day contemporary situations. Jesus makes it clear that there are no neutral parties. We are either for Jesus or we are against him – we are for the kingdom of God or against it. Once we start going down the road of compromise, we turn against God and Jesus, because we begin to place our will above and before the will of God (sound familiar – Adam and Eve?). There are two kingdoms in opposition to one another – the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness under the rule of Satan. If we disobey God’s word – if we compromise God’s word – then we open to door to the power of sin and Satan in our lives. If you want to live in freedom from sin and Satan, then your house – your life and all you possess – must be occupied by Jesus where he is enthroned as Lord and Savior. Is the Lord Jesus the Master of your home, heart, mind, and will?

Friday, March 13 ~ Third Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Mark 12:28-34 One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him, “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Jesus replied, “The first is this: *Hear, O Israel! / The Lord our God is Lord alone! / You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, / with all your soul, / with all your mind, / and with all your strength.* The second is this: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* There is no other commandment greater than these.” The scribe said to him, “Well said, teacher. You are right in saying, *He is One and there is no other than he. And to love him with all your heart, / with all your understanding, / with all your strength. / And to love your neighbor as yourself* is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” And when Jesus saw that he answered with understanding, he said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Meditation: The Pharisees prided themselves in the knowledge of the law and their ritual requirements. They made it a life-time practice to study the six hundred and thirteen precepts of the Old Testament along with the numerous rabbinic commentaries. They tested Jesus to see if he correctly understood the law as they did. Jesus startled them with his profound simplicity and mastery of the law of God and its purpose. What does God require of us? Simply that we love as he loves! God is love and everything he does flows from his love for us. God loved us first and our love for him is a response to his exceeding grace and kindness towards us. The love of God comes first and the love of neighbor is firmly grounded in the love of God. The more we know of God’s love and truth the more we love what he loves and reject what is hateful and contrary to his will. What, then, makes our love for God and his commands grow in us? Faith in God and hope in his promises strengthens us in the love of God. They are essential for a good relationship with God, for being united with him. The more we know of God the more we love him and the more we love him the greater we believe and hope in his promises. The Lord, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, gives us a new freedom to love as he loves.

Prayer: Pour your grace into our hearts, we pray, O Lord, that we may be constantly drawn away from unruly desires and obey by your own gift the heavenly teaching you give us. 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: In light of today’s gospel, the following prayer of Saint Anselm is worth contemplating today: “We love you, O our God; and we desire to love you more and more. Grant to us that we may love you as much as we desire, and as much as we ought. O dearest friend, who has so loved and saved us, the thought of whom is so sweet and always growing sweeter, come with Christ and dwell in our hearts; that you keep a watch over our lips, our steps, our deeds, and we shall not need to be anxious either for our souls or our bodies. Give us love, sweetest of all gifts, which knows no enemy. Give us in our hearts pure love, born of your love to us, that we may love others as you love us. O most loving Father of Jesus Christ, from whom flows all love, let our hearts, frozen in sin, cold to you and cold to others, be warmed by this divine fire. So help and bless us in your Son.”

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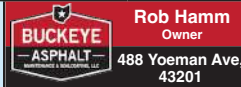


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