

ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

4900 Rialto Road, West Chester, Ohio 45069 • (513) 645-4212

www.sgg.org • www.SGGResources.org

Traditional Latin Mass: Sundays 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM High, 11:30 AM, 5:45 PM

Most Reverend Daniel L. Dolan, Pastor • Rev. Anthony Cekada
Rev. Charles McGuire • Rev. Vili Lehtoranta • Rev. Stephen McKenna

March 15, 2015

LENT IV

LAETARE SUNDAY

ST. CLEMENT MARY HOFBAUER, C



¶ ROSE SUNDAY

Today the blessing of expectant mothers will be available at the Communion rail, after all Masses. Sunday classes for adults and children are at 10:40 AM. Vespers with Benediction are at 4:45 PM.

¶ NEXT SUNDAY: PASSION

Next Sunday commences Passion-tide, with the statues and images shrouded in purple. Sunday classes for adults and children will be at 10:40 AM. Vespers as usual at 4:45 PM, followed by Benediction.

Set Your Missal: Passion Sunday with collect of St. Isidore the Farmer and of Our Lady and All the Saints. Preface of Lent.

¶ THIS WEEK

This **Tuesday** is **St. Patrick's Day**. The Lenten fast is dispensed, as was traditional in the United States long before Vatican II. A Solemn High Mass will be sung at **11:20 AM**. **Wednesday** is the feast of **St. Joseph**. All are welcome to assist at the 11:20 AM High Mass and blessing of St. Joseph's Table. **Blessed hot cross buns for all!** Bring a non-perishable food item for the poor. Lenten fast is dispensed for those who attend Mass.



WHAT GOD HATH JOINED

Erin's grief and Erin's gladness,—
How they merge and how they mingle!
Erin's joy and Erin's sadness,
Erin's pleasure, Erin's pain,—
In the selfsame heart you find them,
In the selfsame nerve they tingle.
God in one has stooped to bind them,
And they can not live as twain.

—Denis A. McCarthy



JESUS MULTIPLIES THE LOAVES AND
FISHES

¶ NEXT WEEK

Wednesday of next week, **March 25th**, is the Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady and our Children's Day of Recollection. *Contact the church to let us know if your children are attending.* On **Friday, March 27th**, we have our final Lenten evening with the Potluck Supper at **6:45 PM**, and Stations at **7:30 PM**, followed by the Sorrowful Mother Novena with blessing of the sick. If you haven't yet come to one of these evenings of recollection, do at least come to the last one.

¶ YOUR PRAYERS, PLEASE

Two priests are ailing: Fr. Martin Gomez of Mexico is recovering from a heart attack, and Fr. David Baryj of California was in the hospital last week. Please remember also a special intention for one priest.

Katie had a fall in the church on Friday. Remember too all of those who can't make it to church due to illness or distance, and all of our sick, including those we're praying for in the Sorrowful Mother Novena.

"Jesus Christ gave you all; He left nothing for Himself." —St. John Chrysostom

¶ EASTER MASS NOVENA & MEMORIAL FLOWER OFFERINGS

Envelopes for the Easter Novena of Masses and memorial flower offerings are available in the pews.



The *Novena of Masses* will be said daily beginning with Easter Sunday. *Names of loved ones for the memorial flower offerings will be listed in the Easter bulletin.* Envelopes for the flower offerings must be returned by **Monday, March 30th**, to be included in the Easter bulletin. Please be generous! May God reward you.

Collection Report

Sunday, March 8th.....\$6,501.00
Thank you for your generosity. Remember St. Gertrude the Great in your will.

✠ THE CALENDAR

All Sunday Masses, school day Masses, Friday evening and Saturday morning Masses are webcast at SGGResources.org.

MON	03/16/15	FERIAL DAY 11:20 AM High Mass †Fr. McKenna's Grandmother (<i>R. Stump</i>) 12:20 PM Vespers
TUE	03/17/15	ST. PATRICK, BPC ST. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA, C 7:00 AM Low Mass Poor Souls (<i>A Friend</i>) 11:20 AM Solemn High Mass Fr. Nkamuke & Nigerian Catholics (<i>Kirby & Jean Bischof</i>) 5:00 PM Low Mass Bishop Dolan & the Fathers (<i>Patton Family</i>)
WED	03/18/15	ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, BPCD ST. WALBURGA, V BL. SEBASTIAN OF APARICIO, C 8:00 AM Low Mass Nathan Clark (<i>Frances Mattingly</i>) 11:20 AM High Mass †Fr. Martin Stepanich, O.F.M., S.T.D. (<i>Samantha</i>) 12:20 PM First Vespers of St. Joseph 3:00 PM Children's Stations, Holy Communion 5:00 PM Low Mass Special Intention – deceased friend (<i>Tom & Karen Simpson</i>)
THU	03/19/15	ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF OUR LADY 6:00 AM Low Mass Private Intention (Ian, Majesty, Ben, Brett) (<i>Rebecca Stump</i>) 11:20 AM Solemn High Mass In honor & thanksgiving to St. Joseph (<i>Bishop Dolan</i>) Blessing of the Bread 5:00 PM Low Mass St. Joseph – thanksgiving (<i>Mr. & Mrs. Maki</i>)
FRI	03/20/15	FERIAL DAY ST. PHOTINA & COMPANIONS, MM THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD 8:00 AM Low Mass Michael Faith – Happy Birthday (<i>L. Faith</i>) 10:55 PM Confessions 11:20 AM High Mass Unity amongst Catholics (<i>Richesson Family</i>) 12:20 PM Vespers 5:15 PM Confessions & Rosary 5:45 PM Low Mass The Poor Souls in Purgatory (<i>Mrs. Joshua Gunsber</i>) 6:45 PM Lenten Potluck Supper 7:30 PM Stations, Sermonette, Sorrowful Mother Novena, Blessing of the Sick, Benediction & Sacred Heart Novena, Holy Communion
SAT	03/21/15	ST. BENEDICT, AB 7:30 AM Low Mass †Gladys Pepiot – 3 year anniversary (<i>Scott Pepiot</i>) 8:10 AM Sermon, Low Mass Special Intention (<i>Phyllis & Ralph Otis</i>) 9:00 AM Opening of Altar Boys' Day Low Mass For our servers
SUN	03/22/15	PASSION SUNDAY ST. ISIDORE THE FARMER, C ST. CATHERINE OF GENOA, W

✠ PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

Almighty, eternal, just, and merciful God, have us poor wretches for Your sake do what we know You want, and have us always want whatever is pleasing to You; so that cleansed interiorly, and interiorly enlightened and aglow with the fire of the Holy Ghost, we may be able to follow the footsteps of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Aided by Your sole-saving grace, may we be able to get to You, Who in perfect Trinity and simple Unity live and reign and triumph as God almighty world without end. Amen.

INSPIRATIONS FOR INVALIDS

Anna Schäffer (1882-1925)

Growing up in Bavaria, Anna desired to enter a missionary order, but after her father's untimely death she had to work to support her family. In February 1901, while working in a laundry, she slipped and fell into a vat of boiling lye, suffering severe burns. The next months were ones of excruciating pain. Anna survived gangrene, only to undergo thirty unsuccessful surgeries for skin grafts. Finally the word came that she would be bedridden for the rest of her life.

At first Anna struggled against this diagnosis. Yet, through prayer and frequent Communion, she began to embrace a new path. Anna devoted her days to writing letters of consolation and creating needlework for local churches. "I have three keys to heaven," she said. "The biggest is made out of pig iron and heavy—it is my suffering. The second is the sewing needle, and the third is the penholder. With these different keys, I strive each day to open the door to heaven."

As her prayer life deepened, so did Anna's joyful confidence in God's plan. Paralysis set in, and then colon cancer. A fall from her bed caused neurological injury that robbed her of her voice. Yet on her deathbed she made one last prayer: "Jesus, I love You."

Loving Father, like Anna Schäffer, may I see in the work You have given me, especially that work I have not chosen, the key to open the door to heaven.



Servers

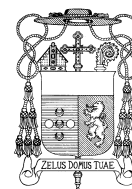
SUN 03/22:

7:30 AM LOW: Brueggemann Bros.
9:00 AM HIGH: CHAPLAINS: R. Vande Ryt, J. Simpson **MC:** B. Lotarski **TH:** J. Lacy **ACs:** P. Omlor, S. Arlinghaus **TORCH:** T. Lawrence, M. Simpson, C. Richesson, C. Arlinghaus
11:30 AM LOW: N. & N. McClorey
4:45 PM VESPERS & BENEDICTION: J. Murray
5:45 PM LOW: G. Miller

7:30 AM Low Mass Gerry & JoAnn Wilker (*Dale Wilker family*)
9:00 AM High Mass Sr. Isidore Maria – Happy Feast Day
10:40 AM Catechism Classes
11:30 AM Low Mass Happy Birthday †Ralph Patton (*Patton Family*)
4:45 PM Vespers & Benediction
5:45 PM Low Mass For the people of St. Gertrude the Great

✠ THE BISHOP'S CORNER ✠

I can't remember when Spring has been so welcome as this year, and Winter's passing so little regretted. What a mercy when Spring emerged out of the morning mists last Wednesday. I write this on Mid-Lent Day, which marks the halfway point already of our spiritual Spring, whose celebration rejoices us today with its rose vestments anticipating Easter joys, the new organ pealing forth withal.



The celebration continues this week for St. Patrick and St. Joseph, with the fast dispensed or lessened, Solemn Mass and other beloved traditions for these feasts, and some really beautiful music, as we had last Sunday. The chant was sublime, and the girls' voices soared, leaving even the excellent new organ behind. Don't you be left behind for St. Patrick or St. Joseph. Bring some food for the poor, "St. Joseph's Table," on Thursday and assist at the Mass and blessing of the Bread afterwards, Hot Cross Buns for all.

Next Sunday, however, plunges us into deepest mourning with all the purple of Passiontide. Such is the way of Lent, which leads us swiftly now to Holy Week and Easter. But blessed are they who go to Easter by the Way of the Cross, and from Mass to Mass.

Last week's fine Spring Weather reminded me of a March morning, the 10th I think, when we had our first funeral at St. Gertrude the Great, some thirty five years ago. I flew in from New York on Delta, my first time with them, as they were just developing the Cincinnati market they are now slowly leaving. The deceased had kept his Catholic faith, and wanted to be buried with the old Mass. I remember that a fallen away priest who was working as a church organist was brought in to sing the Mass, and told me he would have sung the whole Absolution had he known I wanted it, but that priests usually preferred everything done as quickly as possible. The family gave us a beautiful large missal which we still use today, especially in Lent.

Last Sunday's mild weather pre-intoned Winter's end, and I thought everybody would make it to Mass for the first time in a month, but some stragglers forgot the time change, or else were perhaps beguiled by the early Spring sun, and still didn't come. Nevertheless, we had a pretty good attendance, and many of you conscientiously made up missed collections.

The young lady who did such a beautiful job on St. Francis has also repainted Our Lady's robe for the Pietá, beautifully colored and shadowed. She and her mother have also undertaken the restoration of the punctured painting of the Sermon on the Mount, a major work, which is coming along nicely. Imagine artwork vandalized right at church! But imagine too, talented and devoted souls who can restore what carelessness or worse have hurt.

Well this is a symbol of Lent, isn't it? Mother Church and Our Blessed Mother bring us to the divine Artisan and Physician of souls, Who slowly heals us over Lent's long weeks, restoring the beauty and even innocence which seemed lost. The goodness of God!

Let us rejoice today by anticipation of Easter, but also of eternity, the good things God has prepared for them that love Him. But never forget that even gentle St. Francis reminds us "woe to those who do not die in penance, for they shall be children of the devil...and go into everlasting fire." Take Lent seriously, lest you be taken un-awares. This makes for deep and enduring joy.

Laetare!

—Bishop Dolan



Come Celebrate St. Joseph's Day!

Thursday, March 19th, 2015

Solemn High Mass will be sung in honor of St. Joseph at **11:20 AM**. The Blessing of the Bread takes place after Mass. Hot cross buns will be available for all! Honor St. Joseph as well by bringing some food for the poor.

Those who hear the Solemn Mass may consider themselves dispensed from the fast.

Low Masses will be at 6:00 AM & 5:00 PM.

Appendix 4: A Long Vacancy of the Holy See

SOME TRADITIONALISTS have offered another objection: Vatican I taught that St. Peter would have “perpetual successors” in the Primacy. (DZ 1825) Doesn’t this mean that it would be *impossible* for the Church to be without a true pope for such a long time — since Vatican II in the 1960s, as you seem to say?



No. Vatican I’s definition was in fact directed against heretics who taught that St. Peter’s special power from Christ *died with him* and was not passed along to his successors, the popes. “Perpetual successors” means that the *office* of the Primacy is perpetual — not limited to Peter, but “a power that will perpetually endure to the end of the world.” (Salaverri, *de Ecclesia* 1:385)

But this papal office can remain vacant for a long time without becoming extinct or changing the nature of the Church. Here is the explanation:

A. Dorsch (1928) “The Church therefore is a society that is essentially monarchical. **But this does not prevent the Church**, for a short time after the death of a pope, or **even for many years, from remaining deprived of her head**. Her monarchical form also remains intact in this state....

“Thus the Church is then indeed a headless body.... Her monarchical form of government remains, though then in a different way — that is, it remains incomplete and to be completed. The ordering of the whole to submission to her Preme is present, even though actual submission is not....

“For this reason, the See of Rome is rightly said to remain after the person sitting in it has died — for the See of Rome consists essentially in the rights of the Preme. These rights are an essential and necessary element of the Church. With them, moreover, the Primacy then continues, at least morally. **The perennial physical presence of the person of the head**, however, **is not so strictly necessary.**” (*de Ecclesia* 2:196–7)

Appendix 5: Where Would We Get a True Pope?

IF THE POST-VATICAN II popes are not true popes, how might the Church one day get a true pope again? Here are some theories:

1. *Direct Divine Intervention*. This scenario is found in the writings of some approved mystics.
2. *The Material/Formal Thesis*. This holds that should a post-Vatican II pope publicly renounce the heresies of the post-Conciliar Church, he would automatically become a true pope.
3. *An Imperfect General Council*. The theologian Cajetan (1469–1534) and others teach that, should the College of Cardinals become extinct, the right to elect a pope would devolve to the clergy of Rome, and then to the universal Church. (*de Comparatione* 13, 742, 745)

Each of these seems to present some difficulties. But

this should not be surprising, because the precise solution to an unusual problem in the Church cannot always be predicted beforehand. This can be seen from the following comment in the 1913 *Catholic Encyclopedia*: “No canonical provisions exist regulating the authority of the College of Cardinals *sede Romanâ impeditâ*, i.e. in case the pope became insane, or personally a heretic; in such cases it would be necessary to consult the dictates of right reason and the teachings of history.” (“Cardinal,” CE 3:339)

Moreover, an inability at present to determine exactly *how* another true pope would be chosen in the future does not somehow make Paul VI and his successors into true popes by default.

Nor does it change what we already *know*: that the post-Conciliar popes promulgated errors, heresies and evil laws; that a heretic cannot be a true pope; and that promulgating evil laws is incompatible with possessing authority from Jesus Christ.

To insist despite this that the post-Conciliar popes *must* be true popes creates an insoluble problem for the indefectibility of the Church — Christ’s representatives teach error and give evil. Whereas a long vacancy of the Holy See, as noted in Appendix 4, is *not* contrary to the indefectibility or the nature of the Church.

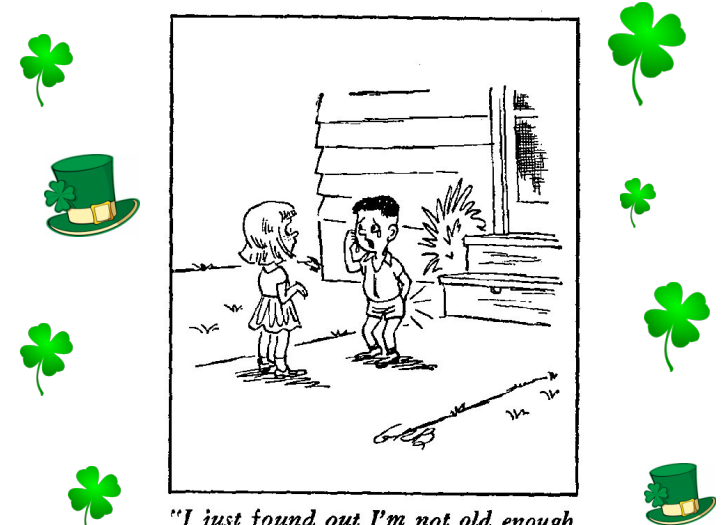
—Fr. Cekada

www.traditionalmass.org

LAETARE SUNDAY HUMOR

Have you heard the story about the two Protestant young men who applied for jobs as assistants to a pious Catholic innkeeper in Ireland? Afraid they might be fired, they let the Irishman think they were Catholics. The first night one of the youths missed work. The next day he asked his fellow-assistant how things had gone the first day on the job.

“Well,” said the other, “I was a little afraid when he asked me to stay after work to say the Rosary with him. But he seemed quite pleased with us. When he finished the prayers, he ended up with: ‘May the divine *assistants* remain always with us.’”



“I just found out I’m not old enough to have freedom of speech.”



"I arise today through the strength of Christ with His baptism, through the strength of His crucifixion with His burial, through the strength of His Resurrection with His Ascension." —St. Patrick

EARLY MASS IN IRELAND

The sloe is on the thorn
This holy Sunday morn,
The corncrake is hidin' in the grass.
There's the bell within the steeple,
Sends a message to the people
To be kneelin' when the priest begins
the Mass.

The scythe is put away,
An' the sun in heaven this day
Is gildin' all the meadows that you pass.
Hurry through the chapel gates,
Sure 'tis God Himself Who waits
For the people when the priest begins
the Mass!

The dew is on the corn
This blessed Sunday morn,
The daisies dance before me on the grass.
How my old heart beats with feelin',
'Tis so full of joy when kneelin'
Near the railin' when the priest begins
the Mass!

Rockin' gently to and fro,
Sayin' sweet old prayers I know,
On the beads that through my trem-
blin' fingers pass.
Don't ye smile at me, my dears,
If I can't keep back the tears,
Near the railin' when the priest begins
the Mass.
—Rev. P.J. Carroll, C.S.C

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

He was a good man, a poor man, and
wise.

He talked with birds, and people said
He walked in paradise.

Right joyful was he, and never a mite
Had eyes as bright; his step
Was free and light.

He was a friendly man, and prone
To chat of humble things; his voice
Had music in its tone.

The littlest child that knew his smile
Might tell you in whisper he had known
God's friend a while.

The burdened and the sorrowing
Could hear upon his lips
God's own comforting.

Skeptics smiled to hear his word,
Who said he lived with God,
Yet every heart was stirred.

He was a good man, a poor man, and
wise.

He talked with birds, and people said
He walked in paradise.

—Thomas F. Doyle



THE STIGMATA OF ST. FRANCIS

1. *Marionette*

You should be the saint, St. Francis,
Of marionettes, whose every move
In all their seeming mad-cap dances
Depends on strings pulled from above.

As in that scene of strange desires,
When God peered from the mountain's
crest

And lifted you with golden wires
That pierced your hands and feet and
breast.

"Where does one draw the line between mortal and venial with the sin of gossip?" J.M., Indiana.

Gossip, the favorite indoor sport, covers a broad field: it may take the form of uncharitable speech; may even go further and become detraction; not infrequently, it ends in calumny.

Gossip is considered uncharitable speech when it is merely criticizing people for their actions, speech, manners, or talking about others' minor faults and defects. This, the most frequent kind of gossip, is a venial sin.

By gossiping, we may understand detraction. "How often does it happen that a person, from criticizing the failings of others which are generally known, is gradually led to mention some hidden and grave sin which robs him of his reputation and honor!" We detract from a person's character when we reveal a hidden fault. Generally speaking, people are not guilty of detraction when they discuss those faults or crimes of others which were made public—announced over the radio or printed in the newspapers; e.g., the remarriage of a divorced movie star. Or if one's fault is generally known otherwise—usually all the people in the neighborhood know who the person is coming home drunk three and four nights of the week. People detract from another's honor only when they reveal a secret fault or defect of another; e.g., to tell that a couple got married because they had to; to reveal an illegitimate birth. This type of gossip is a mortal sin.

Gossiping may imply or mean calumny. This is the worst form of gossiping for then we impute to or accuse a person of a crime which he did not commit; we damage his reputation by lying about him. This type of gossiping is a mortal sin.

—The St. Anthony Messenger



May the grace of the Holy Ghost enlighten our senses and our hearts.

Indulgence of 500 days

REV. FATHER:

I desire to touch again on a subject which, I believe, was the theme of a former contribution of mine. It is on indecent dress amongst women and also men in Church. I cannot refrain from doing so, for I think it is getting a little too bad. I would just like to relate an incident to you, which priests in very rare cases observe.

On a recent day, when assisting at Holy Mass, a young lady, a rather tall and slender figure, attired in very abbreviated clothes, piously marched up the aisle of the church to light a votive candle in front of the communion railing. While doing this, she had to stoop down to reach for a taper to facilitate the lighting. As she did so, the worshippers had to look away and stop thinking.

Moreover, some ladies even seem to be so bold as to do these unbecoming things on purpose. This is only one instance of a hundred and a thousand, even in the church. A very pious young lady, all around very decently dressed, with the exception of a very, very abbreviated skirt, comes to Holy Mass every morning and goes to Holy Communion at the same time and is so absorbed in her devotion, that she seems to be a statue rather than a living person. Have these women lost all the respect before the Holiest of the Holy and the Purest of the Pure and even have the impudence to receive Him in their heart? Doesn't it seem sometimes with their gestures to even wantonly provoke the evil passions of the masculine sex even in the Holy Place?



A sad feature of this matter is that in summer our young men seem to take special pride in imitating their fair sisters in the vulgarity of the dress of today. They come to church to attend divine services in a costume as though they were just ready to start a football game, going to Holy Communion with big numbers and letters on chest and back of their garments, or coming with their shirtsleeves rolled up and their chest open as if they were just about to dig off a hill in one day.

Would they appear before the President of the United States in such a make up? Have they less respect before our Supreme Ruler of the whole creation than before a mere creature? Would it not be more becoming, at least for the time being, to slip on a coat and thus appear more respectful before their God?

—Brother Franciscus, Massachusetts

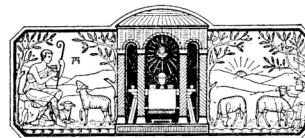
Believe it or not, this was penned in 1929! (From the St. Anthony Messenger)

THE EVERLASTING SPRING CHARM OF THE FRANCISCAN LIFE

Francis himself was by very nature happy and joyous, as the Three Companions attest. He was in this a true son of his mother. Donna Pica, a child of the joyful Provence, rich in song and music, had endowed him with a heart so joyous that it could not be clouded even by the somber, calculating and mercenary spirit of his father, Peter Bernardone. Even the partnership in the paternal business failed to dampen his youthful gaiety. Though prudent and shrewd in commercial affairs, he retained his sunny disposition, "a youth full of the joy of life, merry, and devoted to mirth and song," as the biographers declare.

"From that hour [of his conversion] he was filled with such joy that he could no longer contain himself, but was forced to manifest his interior jubilation in the company of men." He began to show his chivalrous love for God by rendering heroic charity toward the lepers; in this, humanly speaking, loathsome and disgusting occupation he experienced an excessive sense of joy. ...an overpowering sense of heavenly bliss took possession of him.

His entire life was henceforth attuned to this basic note of joy. Thomas of Celano assures us: "The Saint constantly endeavored to persevere in this gladness of heart, to keep ever fresh the unction of the spirit and the oil of joy. With utmost solicitude he avoided the greatest evil of ill-humor; ... With imperturbable calmness and cheerfulness of mind he sang to himself and to God songs of joy in his heart." His ceaseless endeavor was to keep himself interiorly and exteriorly in a joyous mood. In the intimate circle of his brothers he likewise knew how to sound the pure key-note of joyfulness and to make it swell to such full harmony that they felt themselves raised to an almost heavenly atmosphere. The same joyful note pervaded the converse of the Saint with his fellow-men. Even his sermons, in spite of their burden of penance, became hymns of gladness, and his mere appearance was an occasion of festive joy for all classes of people.



☆ Altar Boys' Day! ☆

This coming Saturday, March 21st, is our third annual Altar Boys' Day!

All altar boys are expected to attend, beginning at **9:00 AM** with Holy Mass, followed by a day of fun.

The day concludes at approximately 2:30 PM.

Any questions, please call Mr. Vande Ryt at (513) 658-4751.

*Texts taken from
“The Words of St. Francis”
by Rev. James Meyer, O.F.M.*



MONDAY IN LENT IV

It was given to St. Francis by God ever to aspire to what was great and best as he saw it at the time. That held from his youthful aspiration to knighthood, on through his life of renunciation, to his complete final self-immolation.

Military, knightly glory first led him, sustained doubtless by his mother's oft-expressed conviction that her Francis should one day be a great prince. And he was the King of Revels to Assisi's youth.

But early another note began creeping in: in prison at Perugia, half in fun and half in earnest, it was:

“Why do you think I am so happy-hearted? I have other matter to think about. Some day I am going to be venerated throughout the world as a saint.”

TUESDAY IN LENT IV

Not that earthly dreams now left him. On his crusade to Apulia the vision asked him,

“Who can do more for you, a servant or the master?” Characteristic was Francis' response:

“What is it you want me to do, Lord?”

Said the vision: “Go back to your home country, for your vision will be fulfilled there spiritually by Me.”

After his return a happy Francis would tell people he would be a great prince some day.

Francis did not remain under the illusion. Abstracted in the midst of his revels one day, he makes the sudden baffling statement to his teasing questioners:

“*I am* going to marry a bride, one nobler and fairer than any you have ever seen, one that will be outstanding for beauty and will impress everybody else for wit.”

WEDNESDAY IN LENT IV

A definitely spiritual ideal, it begins taking proper shape when at St. Damian's the Crucified tells him to repair the crumbling house of God. He says:

“Gladly will I do it, Lord.”

And he proceeds to beg stones and to repair the walls, giving the priest money for a lamp to be kept burning before the Crucifix, as generous to his Lord as he had been to his boon companions and still the fair-dealing draper's clerk:

“Whoever gives me one stone, shall have one reward, but whoever gives me two stones, shall have two rewards, yes and whoever gives me three stones, he shall have three rewards.”

THURSDAY IN LENT IV

There was need for generosity, for suffering was to bring out the best in Francis. As it should be, his father was the man to introduce him to the lady of his choice, to the Lady Poverty, though Francis himself did not realize that till later. Heavy fell the strokes, but no heart ever more willing than that of Francis. To his wrathful father:

“Here I am. I do not mind your locking me up or beating me. I am glad to suffer any evil at all in the name of Christ.”

Soon it is:

“From now on I shall be free to say, ‘Our Father Who are in Heaven,’ and no longer, ‘Father Peter Bernardone.’ To him right here I now not only return his money but give up all my clothes. Thus, naked will I go my way to the Lord.”

FRIDAY IN LENT IV

FEAST OF THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD

To the bandits, he goes forth:

“I am a herald of the Great King.”

He pays with a snow bath for that dedicatory declaration.

When his brother, seeing Francis shiver at his prayers in the cold, prompts someone to ask him for a penny's worth of his sweat:

“Indeed I am going to sell that, and very dearly, to my Lord.”

He begins to recognize the Lady Poverty, now constantly at his side. Even what he can have, he gives up:

“You will not always find this priest about, to keep supplying you with such alms. That is no life for a person professing poverty. It is not good for you to get accustomed to such treatment; you will gradually return to what you have spurned and go yearning again for delicacies. Get right up now and beg from door to door for your mixed victuals.”

SATURDAY IN LENT IV

Gradually he came to recognize his lady’s royal quality:

“The Son of God was nobler than we, and He made Himself poor in this world for our sake. For love of Him we have chosen the path of poverty; we ought not to be embarrassed at going out for alms. It is in no way fitting for the heirs of the Kingdom to blush over the token of their heavenly inheritance. I tell you there will be many noble, learned men joining our company who will take it as an honor to beg for alms. You, therefore, who are the first fruits of them, be glad, feel happy, and do not refuse to do the things you are handing down to those holy men to do.”

PASSION SUNDAY

Again:

“Understand that poverty is a choice way of salvation; the fruit it bears is manifold, and rare are they who know it well.”

He called it the “royal virtue,” since it shone forth so exceptionally in Christ the King, and Mary the Queen.

“It is poverty which makes people heirs and kings of the Kingdom of Heaven, not your false riches.”

To Cardinal Ugolino, who was hurt that Francis begged alms while his guest—playfully:

“Rather, I have shown you honor by giving honor to a greater Lord in your house. For that Lord takes great pleasure in poverty, especially in the form of voluntary begging, while I possess a regal dignity and a distinguished nobility when I imitate the Lord, Who, rich as He was, became poor for our sake, ...I get more satisfaction out of a poor table set with little alms than out of grand tables with almost countless dishes.”

We adore Thee, most holy Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all Thy churches that are in the whole world, and we bless Thee; because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.



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Lent with St. Francis of Assisi



Daily Thoughts and Prayers for Lent 2015

Fourth Week of Lent