

ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PARISH



CONVENT STATION, NEW JERSEY · 973-267-5330 · WWW.STMNJ.ORG

MARCH 12, 2017

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT



This is my
BELOVED SON
Listen to him!

GOD has called you
to a holy life because of

**CHRIST
✠ JESUS**

who destroyed death and
brought life and
immortality to light
through the gospel

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Weekly Eucharists

Saturday 5 pm

Sunday, 9 am, 11 am, 7 pm

Monday – Saturday: 8:15 am

Reconciliation

Saturday 3:30 pm or by appt.

Holy Days

8:15 am, 12:10 pm, 7 pm

Parish Office Hours
Mon. - Wed, 9:30–2 pm

*Other times & days,
call to see if office
is open.*

www.stmnj.org

What's Happening?

Sunday
Religious Ed
Clothing Collection

Wednesday
ALPHA, 7 pm

Friday
Stations of the Cross, 7 pm

Next Sunday
Religious Ed.

Every Sunday
Pound A Week

Stewardship of Treasure

Last Week's Collection: \$ 6547

Online Contributions: \$ 1082

Please sign up for electronic giving at stthommore.

weshareonline.org



Increased Offering Program

Thank you to all parishioners who have completed and submitted your Commitment Card to the church. As a reminder, all commitments need to be submitted to the church no later than March 26 in order to be accounted for in the final Summary Report. Please complete and submit your card to the church either in the box behind the last pew or by mail, even if you are unable to make a change to your current level of giving. For those registered parishioners not currently supporting the church with regular offertory gifts, please consider a monthly gift to support the needs of our parish..



This Week's Question

For Adults:

How has your faith in Jesus transformed you? What difference does your faith in Jesus Christ make in your life

For Children:

How has the example of Jesus helped you become a better person and Christian?



WELCOME

To all our visitors this weekend

As a faith community, we keep in mind who have asked us to pray for them, that they may experience the healing power of our gracious God.

Special requests for prayers at liturgy and donations made in honor of loved ones. These intentions and names of our sick are noted on the Gifts Table in the Remembrance Book and on the Weekly Sheet.



Ministry to the Homebound

If you know a homebound person who would like communion and/or on a regular basis, if you are ministering in that way OR if you can visit and/or bring communion to a homebound person, please fill out the form on the info rack in the vestibule.

Living the Eucharist

This is a weekly insert in the bulletin during Lent. You can receive daily Lenten devotionals by downloading *Living the Eucharist Mobile App* and begin praying *From Exodus to Easter: My Daily Journey Through Lent*. Get it on Google Play or Apples AppStore.

Rice Bowl



Evelina encounters nutrition as she and other mothers in her community learn new ways to provide nutritious meals for their growing children and families in Zambia. How do we ensure that those who are hungry have not only food but true nourishment? Visit crsricebowl.org for more..

Can We Eat Meat on St. Patrick's Day?

This has been published this year as well as previous years, explaining the Church's understanding of meatless Lenten Fridays: *There still seems to be misunderstandings of Fridays of Lent as being meatless, or days of abstinence. Perhaps this comes from older belief that eating meat on Friday was a mortal sin and sent shivers down one's spine, even if done by forgetfulness.*

No one should be scrupulous in this regard; failure to observe an individual day is not considered serious. Neglecting the whole season is different than eating meat on a particular Friday, especially is there is a good reason, such as a birthday or St. Patrick Day celebration.

Still, many people have asked if there was a dispensation from not eating meat on St. Patrick's Day. Considering the above explanation, a dispensation would not be in order since the church has stated that it's a personal responsibility and decision. It would make sense to eat meat if attending a St. Patrick's Day event or partaking in traditional Irish food on that day. That's very different than using the day to eat sausage and meatballs or sauerbrauten for it's neither observing the occasion or the Lenten day.

Nevertheless, some whom might be accustomed to a pre-Vatican II, more formidable Church might be uneasy making conscience decisions and want concrete statements. Perhaps for this reason, Bishop Serratelli has given a dispensation from the dietary expectation on St. Patrick's Day.

PLAN NOW!!!! Parish Retreat, Week of March 27: Spirituality of Imperfection

This parish retreat will be led by Fr. Lou Bihl. Fr. Lou is a retired priest of our diocese who began his ministry in Paterson. As a young priest and CYO Director he founded Fr. English Community Center for he realized that hungry kids can't eat basketballs. He also established Youth Haven, the first runaway house for teens in New Jersey. His last ministry in the diocese before retirement was still in Paterson as chaplain at Straight & Narrow, ministering to adults living with addictions. Fr. Lou is a powerful preacher and witness who has been at St. Thomas More with Straight & Narrow Gospel Choir a number of times.

The Parish Retreat will begin with the Parish Lenten Penance Service on Monday, March 27 at 7 pm

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK'S LITURGY

Third Sunday of Lent

First Reading: Exodus 17:3-7

The book of Exodus tells of the Israelites' escape from Egypt and their wanderings in the wilderness. Their trials during that time, the way they faced them and the way God responded, provided future generations with food for thought whenever they faced difficulties..

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-8

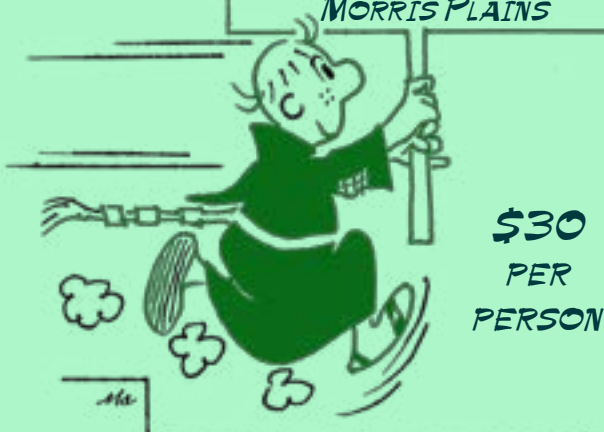
In writing to the Romans, Paul is dealing with a community he had not yet visited. Many Roman Christians were converts from Judaism who believed they would be saved by how they lived out the Jewish Law. Paul stresses here, as he does frequently in his writings, that Christians are saved not by the Law, but by faith—faith in what Jesus accomplished by his dying and rising.



Parish on a Journey

**IT'S
THIS
WEEK!!**

**ST. PATRICK DAY
PARTY
SATURDAY, MARCH 18
6:30 - 10:30 PM
VFW HALL
MORRIS PLAINS**



**GET YOUR RESERVATIONS IN
AND TELL YOUR FRIENDS**

God's Grace is Young Enough

For the Young and Young At Heart

Readings for this Sunday

Genesis 12:1-4; 2 Timothy 1:8-10; Matthew 17:1-9

Transfigured in Christ

Suggested Reflection Questions

- Last week, we listened to the story of the Fall. Today, we hear the call of Abram, an epic journey of a man who, despite great odds, age, and uncertainty, trusted that God would make him a great nation in which communities of the earth would find blessing. The reading consists of a call, a promise, a mission, a blessing, and Abram's faith response. Abram's obedience to God's call is a model for all believers.
- After exhorting Timothy to be willing to suffer for the Gospel, Paul reminds him of the holiness of life he has been called to and how Christ grants us grace to live a holy life. We are able to live in holiness because of the "grace bestowed on us," not because of "our works."
- This story is proclaimed each year on this Sunday. As the Elect make final preparation for Baptism, the Transfiguration presents us with a classic image of baptismal transformation. As Christ was totally transfigured, we are totally transformed into the likeness of Christ when we are baptized.

Second Sunday of Lent



Daily scripture reflections are on our website under "Faith Formation" and in the vestibule.

ALPHA

Alpha program believes everyone should have the chance to explore the Christian faith, ask questions and share their point of view; wherever they are in the world.

Alpha is...

Real. Alpha presents the reality of who Jesus is. Those that run Alpha are open and authentic, and this allows guests to be real themselves.

Relational. Alpha is based on real friendships that are built over a few weeks, and often last for years afterwards.

Reliant. We rely on the Holy Spirit for it is only God who changes people's lives – we just introduce him.

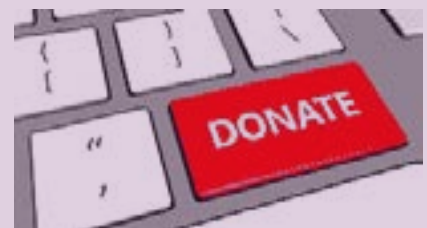
Wednesdays, beginning at 6:45 week with supper.

If you will be attending for the first time or know someone who is, please let us know so that we can prepare food.

Wednesdays at 6:45 pm

Not the old life

When Jesus rose from the dead, he didn't just resume his old life; he was given a new and glorious life. As we move to the Day of Resurrection, let us use Lent to ReNEW our life!



ONLINE GIVING

Stewardship is easier than ever with our online giving system, WeShare. Visit <stthommore.weshareonline.org> for one-time or ongoing giving.



The Light of the World

Lord of all the nations,
 you gather us into your arms
 and bless us with your love and mercy.
 Give us your eyes,
 so we may see you in all peoples,
 and respond to the needs of the most desperate.
 Give us your hands to reach across barriers
 and repair the wounds
 wrought by closed hearts and minds.
 Give us your loving heart,
 so in our lives we may, as Abram, do your will
 and work to become one community of the earth.

May the blessings you instill in us
 become blessings for all;
 and may Christ, the Light of the World
 shine on all peoples.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Eucharist, Anchor of My Prayer Life



Prayer, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us, is the "vital and personal relationship with the living and true God" (2558). Prayer can happen anywhere, and at any time. In the celebration of the Eucharist, however, we pray in an incomparable way.

JESUS TEACHES US TO PRAY

Jesus modeled prayer. Throughout his earthly life, his intimate and loving relationship with God the Father could be seen by how he prayed. His disciples witnessed him praising and thanking God and calling upon "Abba," his heavenly Father, for help. Frequently he took time to go to "a lonely place" and pray. He also went to the synagogue and the Temple, and shared in the prayerful rituals of the Jewish people.

Jesus formed his followers in the way of prayer. He urged them to be persistent in prayer and to avoid showing off their piety to gain recognition from others. He taught them that humility is essential to prayer. They were to use few words, but pray from the heart. When his disciples asked him, "Teach us to pray," Jesus gave them the Lord's Prayer—the touchstone of all Christian prayer.

Before his Passion and death, Jesus spent the night in intense prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. From the Cross, he cried out in the words of Psalm 22: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" These words of prayer from the Scriptures carried his anguish to God at the moment of his greatest pain and desolation.

After the Resurrection, the two disciples at Emmaus recognized Jesus as he "said the blessing" and broke the bread. Through this simple ritual of blessing the food they were about to eat, they knew him as the Risen Christ.

What does the example and teaching of Jesus on prayer show us about Eucharist?

THREE LESSONS FOR OUR PRAYER

First of all, *Eucharist cannot be the sum total of our prayer*. Just as Jesus went to "a lonely place" to pray, and recommended that his disciples spend time praying "in secret," so we must continue to find time, outside of Mass, for personal prayer. In moments of immense suffering and times of great joy, passionate prayer may arise spontaneously. At other times, habits of prayer help us to remain attuned to God's nearness and care for us.

Nevertheless, Jesus also treasured ritual prayer, communal prayer. Regular ritual prayer was part of the very fabric of his life, as it continues to be part of ours as Catholics. In the Eucharist we remember what Jesus said and did at a ritual meal—the Last Supper. Thus, second: *private personal prayer is no substitute for liturgy*. Sometimes one hears people say "I can pray at home. Why should I go to Mass?" Such an attitude finds no basis in the life of Jesus. Indeed, we encounter Jesus, as Risen Lord, when we break the bread of Eucharist.

Third, the prayerful approach to Eucharist is one of *heartfelt humility as we enter into the presence of God*. The movements of prayer found in the Mass—praising and adoring God, praying for our own needs or the needs of others, offering

thanks, or responding with gratitude after receiving Holy Communion—flow most freely when they are prayed with a humble heart.

PRAYER AS GIFT

St. Paul urged the community of believers to “pray constantly” and pointed to the action of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to pray. When we cannot pray, or do not know how to pray, the Spirit intercedes for us (see Romans 8:26-27). Such confidence in God’s initiative and God’s empowering role in our prayer has enabled Christians through the centuries to regard prayer as a gift. Even as we practice disciplines of prayer and strive to be constant and faithful in prayer, we know this would be useless if God did not desire a relationship with us first.

“The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depth of God’s desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2560).

EUCHARIST, THE SACRAMENT OF CHRIST’S PRESENCE

The Eucharist is the great liturgical prayer of the Church. Within the celebration, the sacrament of Christ’s presence, offered and received in Holy Communion, can have a profound effect on our whole life of prayer.

What happens when we receive Holy Communion? On the physical level we have eaten a bit of bread and taken a sip of wine from a common cup. Yet in faith we believe something more profound has taken place: the Risen Christ comes to us. The living and true God has given himself to us. God has taken the initiative. When we receive the Eucharist in faith, we respond to that initiative, saying yes: “Amen.”

The Eucharist anchors us each week, or even daily if that is our practice, in what is most important in life: our relationship with the Risen Lord. He continually seeks us. Despite our sins, he longs to “enter our house” and dwell with us. It says in the Book of Revelation: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). And when we leave Mass strengthened in faith, we have confidence that the Spirit of the Risen Lord, whom we have encountered in the Eucharist, will continue to guide and strengthen us each day of the week.

REFLECT

What moment in the liturgy do you find most prayerful? When you say “Amen” to the body and blood of Christ, what does that mean to you?

ACT

Take a few moments to pray before and after Mass. By preparing to celebrate Eucharist, we allow the celebration to blossom. After Mass, take a moment to be thankful for the ways you have experienced Christ’s presence in the liturgy.

PRAY

Loving God, thank you for giving us the Eucharist to anchor all our prayer in the gift of Jesus. Open my heart to a deeper relationship with him. Help us, through the Holy Spirit, to experience your nearness and say “Amen” to the life you alone can give.

AUTHOR ■ Rita Ferrone is an award-winning writer and speaker in the areas of liturgy, catechesis, and renewal in the Roman Catholic Church.

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