

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



During a synagogue service in Nazareth, the town where he grew up, Jesus takes the scroll and read aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah. Through the passage he chooses, Jesus claims he possesses the Spirit of the Lord and that the spirit is sending him to bring good news to the poor, to set captives free, and to give sight to the blind.

The reference to the Spirit of God is the key to understanding what Jesus was talking about. Many Jews believed God would send them a Messiah, military / political leader whom God would anoint with his spirit. This anointed one (that's what "Christ" means) would usher in a new era, a time when the Messiah, the champion of the poor, would heal the sick and set the captives free. By declaring that these things were already happening through him, Jesus was claiming to possess God's spirit and was thereby claiming to be the Messiah.

Jesus knew that this assertion would not go unchallenged. Those present wanted proof he was indeed who he said he was because other self-proclaimed messiahs at the time disappointed the people who put their faith in them. So we can easily understand why the Jews in the synagogue that day were a little skeptical.

Jesus says that providing proof for his claim would be useless because prophets are usually more readily accepted by strangers than by those who knew them the best. One of the greatest Jewish prophets of all time, Elijah, did not go to one of his own people during a famine in the land but helped a poor widow in Zarepath who was not Jewish. As well, there were many lepers in Israel, but Elisha (Elijah's successor) helped only Naaman the Syrian. Jesus is saying that no matter what he does, the people of Nazareth will not accept him as the Messiah. Like the prophets Elijah and Elisha, Jesus will turn to the Gentiles to manifest God's power in the world and through them he will bring good news to the poor, set captives free, and restore sight to the blind.

The people of Nazareth didn't appreciate Jesus because they knew him too well. Is there one person in our lives whom we don't appreciate as we should? Perhaps we could give thanks to God for that person!

I know that many of us have been thinking and praying about the situation in Tonga. As you may know, there was a large underwater volcanic explosion off the coast of Tonga nearly two weeks ago, news coming from this island country has been slow coming. I know that this has been heartbreaking for our Tongan community here at St. Benedict, particularly our beloved Moa family. Please keep the people of Tonga and our Moa family close to your heart and soul, as they await further news from their homeland. Because of the lack of electricity and utilities, news has been slow or nearly impossible to ascertain.

Our hearts remain heavy for parishioners who have recently lost precious loved ones over these past few weeks: Jana Hadnot, sister of Julie Hadnot; Deja Robinson, daughter of Leon and Felicia Robinson, granddaughter of Vicki Evans Robinson, great-granddaughter of the late John and Betty Evans; Jose Antonio Echevarria, brother of Carmen Echevarria Tillman; Annette

Carrier, wife of Andrew Carrier. May they all rest in the peace of the Lord's loving arms.

We give thanks to God for all the many people who are helping to make Black History Month a success. Last week's celebration of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a wonderful start to our commemoration. We had the honor, privilege and blessing of having Leonard Pete, Dorgan McDade and Romel Lucas share with us a lively and creative homily at our 4:30 PM last Saturday and at last Sunday's 8:30 AM and 11:00 AM. What a gift it was for them to share the Word and the of the life and ministry of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Over the next few weeks we will be blessed with our parish preaching team, with the help of others, who will also share what it means to be African American and Catholic.

St. Benedict begins our annual Black History Month, which extends from the beginning of February to the Lenten Season in March. We have a number of distinguished guest preachers who will be speaking as part of our series. Please come to honor and remember our African American heritage.

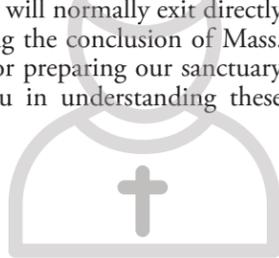
Many things taking place over the next few weeks: Martin Luther King Celebration; Black History Month, Ash Wednesday (March 2nd) and the upcoming Lenten Season, our church's annual spiritual retreat.

You may have noticed that we started mentioning the names and praying for African American Catholics who are currently in the process of seeking beautification and canonization within the Catholic Church. We pray for the following as they prepare for journey towards canonization: Venerable Pierre Toussaint; Servant of God Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange; Venerable Henriette Delille; Venerable Father Augustus Tolton; Julia Greeley; Sr. Thea Bowman, FSPA. We pray for their journey as they pray for us in ours!

Thank you to those of you who were able to join us for Friday night's Ceasefire Walk from here at St. Benedict. We continue to do our part in helping to reduce the scourge of gun violence in our streets. Ceasefire Walks are part of a larger, city-wide strategy that Ceasefires encompasses that looks at direct services to those most affected by the violence, with the hope that through such actions, there will be a decrease in these tragedies.

With the increased COVID 19 Omnicron variant on the rise and the mandatory indoor masks requirements instituted by our health officials, we are asking that all those attending Mass here at St. Benedict adhere to the requirements. As you have noticed, we have reestablished distance protocols within our St. Benedict seating space. We will also discourage folks from gathering after Mass, so the presider will normally exit directly to the sacristy immediately following the conclusion of Mass. Thank you again to Leonard Pete for preparing our sanctuary space (once again), and for all you in understanding these health protocols.

God bless,
Fr. Jayson



ANNOUNCEMENTS

ATTENTION!

Due to health concerns, the cups of the Blood of Christ will not be available until further notice.

SUPERBOWL TV RAFFLE 2022

Presented by The Knights of St. Peter Claver
Fr. Jay Matthews Council #336

Sunday, February 6, 2022 immediately following 11:00am Mass at Fr. Jay Matthews Hall. For tickets: See any KPC336 member. Donation: \$3 per ticket or (2) tickets for \$5. This is for our Scholarship 2022 Funds. Be the Winner of a Philips 65" Class 4K Ultra (2160p) Smart LED TV w/ Google Assistant... just in time for Superbowl.

PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN US

Next month, the month of February, as we celebrate Black History Month. We are rejoicing and looking forward to this celebration. In this new year we're trying to move forward in light, love, and strength and we're grateful that we will have powerful words and affirmation brought to us on how we get to this point. Is it our cultural history and our faith? Come and find out. Trust me, you Do Not want to miss this. Stay tuned.

HITTING THE FLOOR RUNNING

Is what our newly formed Pastoral Council is doing. We had our first meeting of this new year, held on the first Thursday of this month. Our new Pastoral Council Chair, David Krashna facilitated the meeting which was both in person and by zoom, in order to accommodate all members. There is much to discuss and discern as this new Council begins to come together to formulate ideas for the good of our community in accordance with the St. Benedict Church's Mission Statement. Please pray for them and support them throughout this journey. The next meeting of the Pastoral Council is scheduled for Thursday, February 4th.

REMINDER!

One of the decisions that came out of the Pastoral Council meeting was, due to the current status of the COVID reports, we have reinstated the use of pew markings in order to meet required distancing. We respectfully ask that everyone adhere to the signage displayed. In those areas where we rely on each of you to protect yourselves and the Church family, i.e. sanitizing, wearing masks, and distancing during communion and bringing up offerings, we ask you to please be conscientious and cautious about this. We love you all and want to keep everyone safe, and we want to keep our Church doors open. Thank You!

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

If anyone has an announcement to be published in our weekly parish bulletin, it is due to the parish office on Wednesdays before 4:00 pm. Please submit your announcement to the parish office at this email address: saintbenedictcrh@aol.com. Thank you.

WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Is Spirit calling you to a ministry? St. Benedict Church family invites you to explore our ministries: Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Choir Voices, Knights, Ladies, St. Vincent de Paul Volunteers, Environment Committee, Altar Servers, or you may even start a new ministry. We anxiously look forward to you offering your expertise. Contact any member of the Church's Pastoral Council members. Call the office, leave a message and someone will contact you.

ATTENTION ST. BENEDICT PARISHIONERS!

Important Information about St. Benedict's Electronic Newsletter. Have you been receiving emails from St. Benedict Parish? If not, we want to be sure we have your correct and current email address so that you don't miss out on current Parish news and activities. When you have a moment we'd appreciate your sending a quick email to SaintBenedictCrh@aol.com with your full name and email address. Also, be sure to check your SPAM folder just in case the messages have been going there instead of your INBOX. The St. Benedict Communications Team thanks you for your attention to this matter.

PLEASE JOIN US

If you are looking for a Church home, we would love to have you as a part of our Church family. Please fill out the registration form located on the back of this bulletin and drop it into the offertory basket. Someone will contact you at the address provided. Thank you. God loves you and so do we.

REST IN PEACE

Please pray for the happy repose of the souls of:

- Annette Carrier
- Jose Antonio Echevarria
- Jana Hadnot
- Deja Robinson
- Tyrone Smith

Please remember their families in your prayers.

