

## PARISH BULLETIN

**THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT – March 12, 2023**

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT – March 19, 2023**

The schedule published herein continues to the weekend of March 26, 2023

### Saint John XXIII Roman Catholic Church

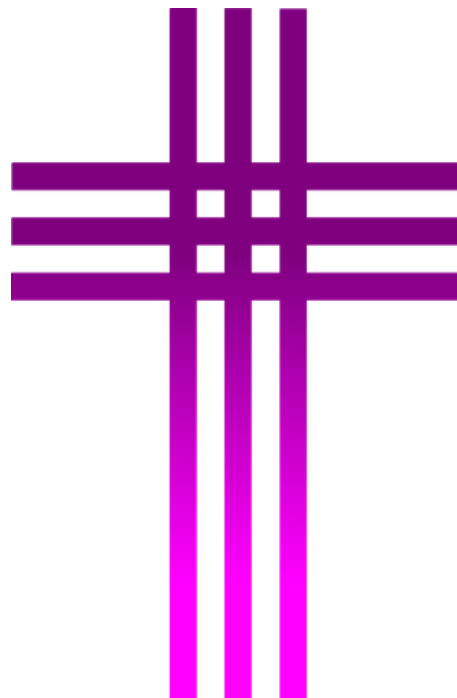
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Office Hours: On designated afternoons 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm  
and at other times for pre-arranged appointments



#### SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

##### SUNDAY LITURGIES (MASSES)

Saturday 4:00 p.m., Sunday 9:00 a.m. and 11:45 a.m.

##### WEEKDAY LITURGIES

*As announced in the schedule in this bulletin.*

##### ASSISTANCE TO THE SICK AND SHUT-IN

For emergencies, you may contact the parish office

##### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSIONS)

Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 pm to 7:30 pm

*As circumstances permit, on other Friday afternoons or by appointment*

*Other opportunities in the deanery are listed in the parish schedule and on the website*

Please continue to follow the rules of good hygiene including hand washing/sanitizing and cough etiquette.  
For the safety and comfort of all, please self-screen before coming to church. **Stay home if you are sick.**  
**Individuals may continue to use face masks based on their preference, personal risk, or other reasons.**

### PARISH PASTORAL TEAM

**Pastor: Reverend Fr. Robert Polz**

204-832-7335      [rpolz.johnxxiii@gmail.com](mailto:rpolz.johnxxiii@gmail.com)

**Pastoral Assistant: Sharon Camier**

204-832-7206      [sharon@johnxxiii.ca](mailto:sharon@johnxxiii.ca)

**Trustee: Loris Vendramelli**

204-888-8200      [lvendro8@gmail.com](mailto:lvendro8@gmail.com)

**Trustee: William Gould**

204-832-7175      [william.d.gould@gmail.com](mailto:william.d.gould@gmail.com)

**Custodian: José Barrera**

204-888-9340

**Music Ministry: Donna Vendramelli**

204-888-8200      [d\\_vendramelli@mymts.net](mailto:d_vendramelli@mymts.net)

**Building and Maintenance Chair: Brad McKay**

204-795-6788      [br.mckay@outlook.com](mailto:br.mckay@outlook.com)

**Parish Pastoral Council Facilitator: Laurette Burch**

204-885-6988      [burchd@mymts.net](mailto:burchd@mymts.net)

#### FAITH FORMATION:

Contact our Pastoral Assistant (Sharon) for further information concerning catechism materials for lessons to take place in the home setting and/or at church on Sunday mornings as circumstances permit.

**SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION (BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, EUCHARIST):** Contact our Pastoral Assistant for further information.

**SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK:** Contact the Pastor (Fr. Robert).

**SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE:** Arrangements for preparation and celebration should be made at least six months in advance.

**CELEBRATION OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS:** Contact the parish office before finalizing arrangements with funeral directors.



## LENT 2023 SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Friday, March 17, 2023

Each year, on Friday before Laetare Sunday, in St. Peter's Basilica Pope Francis presides at a Penitential Celebration opening the "24 Hours for the Lord" initiative.

The theme for this year's "24 Hours for the Lord" is:

*"God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13)*

Here at Saint John XXIII Church, during a period of Eucharistic Adoration our pastor and a few other priests from the Central Winnipeg Deanery will make themselves available for confessions from **1:00 pm to 7:30 pm** on Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup>.

The full deanery schedule for the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent is posted on the parish website and is available also on the Archdiocese of Winnipeg website.

The schedule given in this bulletin also notes the various opportunities which are available throughout the deanery during this two-week period.



## LECTIO DIVINA

Wednesday evenings during Lent  
immediately following Mass

Archdiocese of Winnipeg Synod Implementation  
Global Initiative #35: *"We encourage all the baptized to acquire familiarity with Sacred Scripture"*



This Lent, as part of the ongoing process of the implementation of our Archdiocesan Synod in our parish, we invite you to connect with family and friends in a very special way using **Lectio Divina** or **"Breaking open the Word."** This ancient method of praying with sacred texts dates to the fourth century. The four simple steps of *Lectio Divina* are READING, MEDITATION, PRAYER, and CONTEMPLATION. **During Lent here at Saint John XXIII Parish, we will hold a *Lectio Divina* small group session following Mass on Wednesday evenings in the Guadalupe Room.** We will listen together and reflect on the Gospel passage for the following Sunday. All those interested are welcome to participate!

**Come and pray the WAY OF THE CROSS in Saint John XXIII Church at 7:00 pm each Friday of Lent.**



## DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE RELIEF EFFORTS FOR TÜRKİYE AND SYRIA:

On Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, a powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake rocked southeastern Türkiye and northern Syria, toppling hundreds of buildings and killing more than 46,000 people. Another 6.4

magnitude earthquake hit the region on Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. Development and Peace is joining the Caritas Internationalis family in responding to this tragedy. Donations can be made on the Development and Peace website, by calling 1-888-664-3387, or by mailing a cheque written in favour of Development and Peace and marked "Emergency – Earthquake Türkiye/Syria".

For further information go to [www.devp.org/en/](http://www.devp.org/en/)



*The following items are available at the parish office for a very reasonable cost as noted:*

NRSV Bible – Catholic Edition, hardcover	\$20.00 per Bible	(\$40.00 for LARGE PRINT edition)
Living with Christ SUNDAY MISSAL 2022 – 2023	\$6.95 per copy	
Living with Christ Missalette – monthly edition	\$5.00 per copy	
Candles blessed on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord	\$6.00 per box	(each box contains two candles)

*"You, too, should come to Siloam, that is, to him who was sent by the Father ...  
Let Christ wash you and you will then see." — Saint Ambrose of Milan*

**SAVE THE DATE – PUBLIC WAY OF THE CROSS, April 7, 2023:** The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry announces that the Public Way of the Cross will take place this year on Good Friday, **April 7, 2023 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.** We are pleased to announce that Our Lady Victory Parish (249 Arnold Avenue) will be hosting! More details coming soon! Contact Veronica at [youth@archwinnipeg.ca](mailto:youth@archwinnipeg.ca) if you have any questions at this time.

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**ILLUMINATE:** All are invited to participate in a dynamic evening of adoration, praise & worship, reconciliation and fellowship on **Friday, March 24 at 7:30 pm** at Mary, Mother of the Church Parish 85 Kirkbridge Dr, Winnipeg, MB. Come and worship Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as part of a vibrant Catholic community. All are welcome! For more information, [www.illuminatemb.com](http://www.illuminatemb.com) or [facebook.com/illuminatemb](https://facebook.com/illuminatemb).

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**ST. CHARLES PARISH WINTER RETREAT:** Got the winter blahs? Renew your spirit this Lent at our Winter Retreat! St. Charles Parish will welcome presenter Sister Cathy Laviolette with the theme, Finding God in Our Everyday. This retreat will take place **Saturday, March 25, 9:00 am – 1:30 pm** at St. Charles Parish, 320 St. Charles Street. The cost is \$20 and includes lunch. The pre-register Deadline is Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Open to men and women. For questions and preregistrations, email [annadesilets6@gmail.com](mailto:annadesilets6@gmail.com) or call Anna 204-895-2420 or Fran 204-889-7348.

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### 2023 CARITAS AWARD DINNER

Join the Catholic Foundation of Manitoba for their annual Caritas Award Dinner on **April 27, 2023** at Petrus Hall, 2624 Inkster Boulevard. Reception begins at 6:00 pm and dinner and official program will begin at 7:00 pm. This year's theme is A PATH HEALING & RECONCILIATION: Creating Healthy Relationships, One Conversation at a Time. The Caritas Award recipients are Janelle Delorme & Norma McDonald, CSC. The Service Award will go to Most Reverend Murray Chatlain, Archbishop of Keewatin-The Pas. Keynote Speaker is Lisa Raven. Performer is Don Amero. The event will support this year's charity of choice: Returning to Spirit. **Tickets available for purchase online at [www.catholicfoundation.mb.ca](http://www.catholicfoundation.mb.ca).**



THE CATHOLIC  
FOUNDATION  
of MANITOBA

LA FONDATION  
CATHOLIQUE  
du MANITOBA

КАТОЛИЧКА  
ФУНДАЦІЯ  
МАНІТОБИ

*Supporting Catholic Values - Always*

**ST. MARY'S ACADEMY FOUNDATION MARIAN AWARDS GALA:** St. Mary's Academy Foundation is delighted to host its Marian Awards Gala on **Friday, May 5, 2023** at the RBC Convention Centre. Join them to honour the Legacy of Women at St. Mary's Academy who continue to Hold High the Torch. Recipient(s) will be announced in the coming months. Funds raised will directly support school programs which open doors for young women such as the Academy's new Tartan Technology & Innovation Centre. Find out more details, purchase tickets and see **Sponsorship Opportunities** at [www.smamb.ca/events/marian-awards](http://www.smamb.ca/events/marian-awards). Anyone with questions is asked to reach out to Kaylene Kessler, Advancement Manager, at [kkessler@smamb.ca](mailto:kkessler@smamb.ca) or 204-478-6031.

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**For other news and events in and around the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, go to the website: [www.archwinnipeg.ca](http://www.archwinnipeg.ca)**

**ST. JAMES ASSINIBOIA CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE:** The next **CWL General Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday March 28, 2023** at St. Charles Catholic Church opening with Mass at 2:00 pm followed by the meeting. We will be looking for ladies to make casseroles and cookies for Immaculate Conception Drop-in Centre for April 30<sup>th</sup>. Our CWL Ladies will be leading the **Stations of the Cross** on **Friday March 24, 2023** at 7:00 pm at St. Charles Catholic Church. All ladies are welcome so we are looking forward to seeing as many members and guests out as possible. Elsie Rosler – CWL President.

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**HARVEST MANITOBA:** If you are able to help in the ongoing food drive for Harvest Manitoba, please donate by placing food items in our parish's Harvest donation box located under the pamphlet rack at the south church entrance. Dry food donations may be deposited there when you come to church for liturgies. Please be sure to follow safe protocols. Alternatively, food donations may be placed in Harvest donation bins found at local food retailers: e.g. Save on Foods, Sobeys, and Safeway. **THANK YOU to parishioners of Saint John XXIII for your continued support of Harvest Manitoba. Your generosity is most appreciated!**

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**KNITTING GROUP:** The next gathering of the Knitting Group will be held on **Tuesday, March 14, 2023 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm** downstairs in Room 8. We have been creating "welcome baby" layettes to support mothers and babies assisted by [www.beverlyhewitt.ca](http://www.beverlyhewitt.ca) Community Support Circle and sometimes for other worthwhile causes. For further information, you may contact Beverly Hewitt at 204-885-1202 or [bevhe Witt@mymts.net](mailto:bevhe Witt@mymts.net)

# SCHEDULE FOR MARCH 12 – 26, 2023

*As circumstances suggest, the schedule published here may be subject to change.*

<b>Sunday, March 12</b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT</b>
<b>4:00 pm</b> Saturday	<b>MASS</b> – Matt and Emily Bostwick+, requested by Bev and Steve Hewitt
2:00 am > 3:00 am	N.B.: Remember to “Spring Forward” clocks tonight to Daylight Saving Time
<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>MASS (livestreamed)</b> – “Pro populo” / Intentions of parishioners
<b>10:15 am</b>	<b>Sacramental Preparation for First Eucharist</b> (parish hall)
<b>11:45 am</b>	<b>MASS</b> – Deacon John MacKenzie+, requested by Sharon and John Camier
<b>Monday, March 13</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
	Mass (offered in private) – Glen Harper+, requested by Mona Harper
<b>Tuesday, March 14</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
12:00 pm	Praying of the Angelus
<b>12:10 pm</b>	<b>MASS</b> – For my family to be reunited as soon as possible, requested by Leon Shang
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	<b>Office Hours</b> – call or ring door buzzer for assistance
<del>1:00 pm – 3:00 pm</del>	<del>Knitting Group (downstairs in room 8)</del> N.B.: Knitting group CANCELLED this month due to illness
6:30 pm	Sacrament of Reconciliation at St. Mary’s Cathedral
<b>Wednesday, March 15</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
6:30 pm	Sacrament of Reconciliation at St. Paul the Apostle Church
<b>6:45 pm</b>	<b>OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP DEVOTIONS</b>
<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>MASS</b> – Fr. Robert Polz (birthday), requested by parishioners
<b>7:40 pm approx.</b>	<b>LECTIO DIVINA or “Breaking Open the Word”</b> (ALL WELCOME – in the Guadalupe Room)
<b>Thursday, March 16</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
	Mass (offered in private) – Lori Thompson (birthday March 12 <sup>th</sup> ), requested by Mona Harper
<b>Friday, March 17</b>	<b>FERIAL – “24 HOURS FOR THE LORD”</b>
12:00 pm	Praying of the Angelus
<b>12:10 pm</b>	<b>MASS</b> – Ferdinand Reesink+ (Birthday March 18 <sup>th</sup> ), requested by Reesink family
12:45 pm – 3:45 pm	<b>Adoration Time</b> (monstrance on altar in main worship space) – ring door buzzer for access
<b>1:00 pm – 7:30 pm</b>	<b>SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION at Saint John XXIII Church</b> Fr. Robert Polz and two or three other priests of the deanery will be available to hear confessions
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Office Hours – call or ring door buzzer for assistance
3:00 pm	Recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy
6:45 pm	Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament
<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>WAY OF THE CROSS led by our confirmation candidates</b> – All welcome to take part!
<b>7:40 pm</b>	<b>Movie: THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST</b> Discussion and prayers to follow with confirmation candidates and other participants
<b>Saturday, March 18</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>MASS for Sunday</b> – Sally Fernandez+ & Evelyn Parañaque+, requested by Pauline Arquillano
<b>Sunday, March 19</b>	<b>FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT – “LAETARE SUNDAY”</b>
<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>MASS (livestreamed)</b> – “Pro populo” / Intentions of parishioners
<b>11:45 am</b>	<b>MASS</b> – Amy Magbag (birthday March 20 <sup>th</sup> ), requested by Brad McKay
<b>1:15 pm</b>	<b>Confirmation Preparation Session</b> (parish hall)
<b>Monday, March 20</b>	<b>SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY</b>
5:30 pm	Mass (offered in private) – Monica Bird (health), requested by Wally and Janet Williams Fr. Robert is scheduled to participate in a meeting of the board of the Manitoba Multifaith Council
<b>Tuesday, March 21</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
12:00 pm	Praying of the Angelus

**12:10 pm** **MASS** – Monica Bird (health), requested by Wally and Janet Williams  
**1:00 pm – 4:00 pm** **Office Hours** – call or ring door buzzer for assistance  
**7:30 pm** Parish Finance Council Meeting (tentative date, alternate date is March 28<sup>th</sup>)

<b>Wednesday, March 22</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
10:00 am	Sacrament of Reconciliation for St. Charles School at St. Charles Church
6:45 pm	<b>OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP DEVOTIONS</b>
7:00 pm	<b>MASS</b> – Jecinta Patrick+ and Suzanna Paul+, requested by Croning family
7:40 pm approx.	<b>LECTIO DIVINA</b> or “ <b>Breaking Open the Word</b> ” (ALL WELCOME – in the Guadalupe Room)
<b>Thursday, March 23</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
	Mass (offered in private) – Monica Bird (health), requested by Wally and Janet Williams
1:30 pm	Fr. Robert is scheduled to participate in a meeting of the Western Diocesan and Eparchial Coordinators of Ecumenism (WDECE)
1:30 pm	Sharon Camier is scheduled to chair a Church Governance Synod Implementation Committee meeting
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Sacrament of Reconciliation at St. François Xavier Church
6:30 pm	Sacrament of Reconciliation at St. Patrick’s Church
<b>Friday, March 24</b>	<b>FERIAL</b>
10:30 am – 11:30 am	Sacrament of Reconciliation at Good Shepherd Church, Portage la Prairie
10:45 am	<b>MASS at Sturgeon Creek I Retirement Residence</b> , 10 Hallonquist Drive – Monica Bird (health), requested by Wally and Janet Williams
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	<b>Office Hours</b> – call or ring door buzzer for assistance
3:00 pm	<b>Recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy</b>
6:00 pm	Sacrament of Reconciliation at Blessed Sacrament Church, Elie
7:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Sacrament of Reconciliation at Good Shepherd Church, Portage la Prairie
7:00 pm	<b>WAY OF THE CROSS</b> at Saint John XXIII Church
<b>Saturday, March 25</b>	<b>SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD</b>
10:30 am – 2:30 pm	Synod Implementation Orientation Gathering, Good Shepherd Church, Portage la Prairie
4:00 pm	<b>MASS for Sunday</b> – John Mangin+, requested by Mangin family
<b>Sunday, March 26</b>	<b>FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT – “SOLIDARITY SUNDAY”</b>
9:00 am	<b>MASS (livestreamed)</b> – “Pro populo” / Intentions of parishioners
11:45 am	<b>MASS</b> – Zonia Patson (health), requested by Henrietta Zhanel

***Please pray for the loved ones of our community in need of healing and comfort:***

Dora Auger, Gladys Barton, Annette and Maynard Bates, Monica Bird, George Bonnefoy, Freda Broughton, Barry and Sharon Burke, Ken Burke, Donna Burns, Alan and Cathleen Critchley, René Defries, John and Marina Foucart, René Gobeil, Helen Hallack, Darryn Hellofs, Bev and Steve Hewitt, Angela Krassie, Violet Lebedeff, Marie Mangin, Norman Mangin, Tim Mangin, Frances Mijker, Zonia Patson, Shirley Payment, Owen Robertson, Carol Ann Robinson, Jerome Strachan, Joe and Maria Wallack, and Helen Yankoski.



**TABERNACLE LAMP OFFERING**

**March 12 – 18, 2023** **Sharon and John Camier (35<sup>th</sup> anniv. marr. Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>), requested by Henrietta Zhanel**

**March 19 – 25, 2023** **Benjamin Gendive (health), requested by Alfred and Marietta Gendive**

*If you wish to have the Tabernacle Lamp in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of Saint John XXIII Church burn in memory of a loved one, to honour a special occasion, or for a particular intention, you may make arrangements through the Parish Office.*



**CALLING VOLUNTEERS TO SERVICE:** Every baptized person is endowed with indispensable gifts for the service of the Church and the world. Especially as we emerge from the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is time for us to rebuild participation in the liturgical and other ministries of Saint John XXIII Parish. As described in detail in previous recent bulletins, this includes Altar Servers, Communion Ministers, Hospitality Ministers (Ushers), Music Ministers, Readers (Lectors), Sacristans and others who assist in liturgical art and environment. Please prayerfully consider your participation as a full member in the life of our parish. **If you are willing to help in any of the liturgical or other ministries of the parish, please contact our pastor, Father Robert Polz, and/or our parish pastoral assistant, Sharon Camier, or any other member of our parish pastoral team.**





## Solidarity Sunday *Share Lent* Collection, March 26, 2023

The Fifth Sunday of Lent is a special time for Development and Peace – Caritas Canada as parishes across Canada hold a collection in support of our mission of building a world of justice. Development and Peace — Caritas Canada is beginning a new campaign cycle this year. Taking off from our Orientation Assembly in June 2022 and inspired by Pope Francis’s October 2021 address to the World Meeting of Popular Movements, we have chosen Create Hope as our guiding theme for the next five years. To create hope in this first year, we will Stand for the Land in solidarity with our sisters and brothers who are defending their territories in the Global South by protecting their lands and waters, the environment and human life. Do join this Share Lent campaign! **To donate here in the parish, please use the yellow coloured “Share Lent” envelope found in your regular Sunday Offering Envelopes box and make cheques payable to the parish.** Alternatively, you may make a direct donation to Development and Peace online by going to the website [devp.org/give](http://devp.org/give). Have questions on Share Lent 2023? Do not hesitate to contact Jason Cegayle, Regional Animator for Development and Peace - Manitoba and Thunder Bay at [jcegayle@devp.org](mailto:jcegayle@devp.org) or at 204-231-2848. Or go online to [www.devp.org](http://www.devp.org)

### Saint John XXIII Parish Stewardship of Treasure

*Your assistance is very much appreciated – every gift, great or small, helps!*

**PARISH OFFERINGS:** You may place your offering envelopes in the COLLECTION BASKET passed by the ushers to those sitting in the pews during Sunday liturgies. Or you may mail your contribution to the parish via CANADA POST. Or you may leave a message with the parish office to make arrangements with one of our parish staff to drop off your offertory donations at a safe drop off location. For donations to the parish, please make cheques payable to “St. John XXIII Parish”. **In this New Year 2023, please use 2023 envelopes only. Thank you.**

**PAD OPTION:** Alternatively, we encourage parishioners to consider being an “intentional giver” by registering for PRE-AUTHORIZED DEBIT. Please leave a message at the parish office and someone will contact you and assist you.

**ONLINE OPTIONS:** If you wish to donate to the parish ONLINE, a link to CanadaHelps.org can be found on our website. Go to [www.johnxxiii.ca](http://www.johnxxiii.ca) and click on the DONATE NOW tab at the top of the Links column on the home page. Alternatively, you may donate to St. John XXIII Parish via the **Archdiocese of Winnipeg Mobile APP** on your mobile device. Go to the Apple APP Store or Google Play Store to download the Archdiocese of Winnipeg Mobile APP.

**New parishioners are encouraged to contact the parish office to register with the parish and to arrange for pre-authorized debit or a box of regular offering envelopes.**

### Third Sunday of Lent March 12, 2023

#### Exodus 17:3-7

In the desert, the people grumble about the God who ignores their thirst.

#### Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7ab, 7c-9

God is the Rock of salvation from which flows living water.

#### Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

Jesus did not die for a just people, but for sinners.

#### John 4:5-42

Jesus offers living water to a woman who dares to ask a few questions.

EXPLORING THE WORD



## Living water for the asking

The Israelites are grumbling again. What is their problem? No matter what God does for them, they are never satisfied. A nation out of a childless couple? Check. A land for a race of wanderers to call their own? No problem. Rescue from famine into the abundance of Egypt? You got it. Rescue *from* Egypt when a good deal goes sour? Sure thing. A sea parted when helpful, and restored to its vigor just in time? Absolutely. A divine law to guide them? God is on it. The divine presence indwelling in their community? God is happy to come along for the ride.

And still they grumble, these ungrateful hoards, sounding so much like . . . like us, sometimes. Now it's water; next it's bread; later it's meat. And pretty soon they'll be whining about after-dinner mints. Now, I realize that bread and water are rather basic things and life is a dicey proposition without them for long. The people have a right to be concerned, and you and I would be first in line to wail if our own supply were uncertain. It's just that *this* nation in *this* particular generation ought to know better than to doubt that they are provided for. God has just proven a cosmic interest in their fate. God has taken more than mere interest: The Lord has taken up residence in the Tent of Presence and is right on board day after day. All they have to do is ask: Give us this day our daily bread. And it's done. Don't they know that?

Thirteen hundred years later, Jesus will be teaching that prayer to his disciples, who evidently still don't know that daily bread is one of God's routine commitments. It's there for the asking. Yet we don't ask. We choose to grumble.

### ***Is the Lord in our midst or not?***

It's not about stuff. And it's not necessarily about miracles, although I don't mind when human need is met in inexplicable ways. The matter with the Israelites—and the woman at the well—and us while we're on the subject—is trust. God has been as clear as daylight about being concerned for, compassionate toward, and close to the human situation. For the Israelites, God was in the Tent. In the time of Jesus, God was in the Man. For Catholics, God is in the word and sacrament, indwelling in the Tabernacle and in the Body of Christ the Church, and in the believer through the power of the Holy Spirit. God is also in the face of human need, in the neighbor and the stranger. You want to stand in the presence of God? I would say it's the easiest thing in the world. The hardest thing is to hide from the presence of God. And yet that's what we pretend to do all the time, ostrich-like, talking and acting like God's not in earshot. So we grumble about what God's not doing, instead of asking for what we need like genuine believers.

"Is the Lord in our midst or not?" the Israelites asked at Massah and Meribah. God might have replied, "You tell me!" God might say the same to us. God dwells with us; that's been the promise right along. Whether or not we buy that idea is up to us.

### ***God: the shell game***

Who's got God: the Jews or the Samaritans? And where is God, in the Temple of Jerusalem or the one on Mt. Gerizim? The Samaritans, people of the Book just as the Jews are, built the Temple on Gerizim after they were barred from the one in Jerusalem. Gerizim was the site of the prophetic blessings Moses commanded to be uttered before taking possession of the Promised Land. It seemed like a good choice for a holy place. Even though the temple on Mt. Gerizim was destroyed in 128 B.C.E., the Samaritans continued to worship there faithfully, just as the Jewish community continues to revere the one remaining wall of the Temple at Jerusalem, likewise destroyed in 70 C.E.

God is not simply the God of this people or that, or situated in one place or another. Even we Christians have to be careful in locating God too precisely, as if the Omnipresent were in any way limited. Temples and churches, shrines and holy places are helpful tools for incarnate folks, but that's not where God uniquely resides. The woman who finds herself in the company of Jesus at the well would not have mistaken him for a tangible aspect of the divinity, that's for sure. For one thing, he was a Jew, the enemy of her people. For another, he was a man, and she'd known a number of men. And yet this very worldly and world-weary woman is able to sense the divine spirit in a most unexpected place for two reasons: First, she asks the right questions, and second, she listens to the answers. The first response puts her in a rare category, and the other puts her above most of Jesus' own disciples.

It's instructive to note that even after participating in miracles, healings, and years of teaching, it took an event like the Transfiguration for the disciples to suspect that Jesus was more than he seemed. The Samaritan woman intuited this in a short conversation. Jesus didn't miraculously fill her bucket or take the pain out of her much-used heart. He didn't even forgive her sins. He just talks to her. He talks about things that are directly relevant to her: water, relationships, God, and truth. He reveals his identity to her because she, as it turns out, has been seeking him all along. Jesus rarely meets anyone willing to look beyond religion to encounter its true purpose.

## **APPLYING THE WORD**

### ***Hope does not disappoint***

What are we looking for this Lent? To get closer to God? To clean up our act? To feel more religious? Or just to lose a few pounds? We have to be frank about our objective, because we're bound to find what we seek. The right answer may also

not be what we think it is. We don't *have* to get closer to God. We can't: God's right here. God dwells in us. Getting closer to God's will might be a better goal, because that alignment is often very far off. If we find ourselves complaining that Lent's not working, that the magic of feeling our religion isn't happening this year, then maybe the answer is to practice a new consciousness. Spend one hour aware of God in every person you meet and every place you go. Keep searching with your eyes, your mind, your heart. If we practice believing what we profess—that God is in our midst—we may encounter Jesus at the well ourselves.

— Alice Camille

Alice Camille is a religious educator, scripture commentator, and author of many books including **This Transforming Word** and other titles found at [alicecamille.com](http://alicecamille.com)  
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## Fourth Sunday of Lent March 19, 2023

### 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13

Seeing as God sees requires a shake-up in our secular values.

### Psalms 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

The dark valley may seem fearful, but the Lord is our shepherd.

### Ephesians 5:8-14

Darkness is in our past, but the Lord of light is our future.

### John 9:1-41

Born blind? We all are. But there's hope for a cure in Jesus.

## SPIRITUALITY OF THE READINGS

### The Simple Eye

Most spiritualities say something like the following, and Ignatian Spirituality is no different: see more deeply. Feel more deeply. Pay attention to the quiet movements inside yourself and you will know more about what is outside you. Deepen yourself and you will learn to see.

Sometimes we are told "quit spending time on yourself and go get some work done" or "go help someone." But you can't see very well through a window if it is dirty, or if you have furniture piled up in front of it. In Lent we do housekeeping so that we can see clearly, without our usual prejudices pulled in front of the windows of our soul.

Take the Pharisees in the Gospel. They could not see clearly. When they asked the blind man how his sight had been restored, the man replied simply, "He put mud on my eyes, I washed it off, and now I can see." WHAT? screamed the Pharisees. THAT MAN "CANNOT BE FROM GOD BECAUSE HE DOES NOT KEEP THE SABBATH." *He is therefore a sinner! He could not have cured you.* (With these words, one high piece of furniture is shoved in front of the window).

These Pharisees run and get the man's parents, who will surely know what really happened. But the parents say an arch reply: "he is a grown man, he can speak for himself."

Back to the blind man. He explains, "It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man [Jesus] were not from God, he would not be able to do anything." (Piece of furniture number two will now rumble in front of the window of their eyes, as follows: WHAT? YOU ARE LECTURING US ABOUT MEN OF GOD AND YOU ARE STEEPED IN SIN FROM YOUR VERY BIRTH? GET OUT OF HERE!)

The man born blind sees well. The Pharisees are the ones who refuse to see. If they were physically blind this would be understandable. But the truth is hidden by their own need to control others, their love of being in charge. What if they had looked the man through eyes unclouded by sin? They could have beheld a miracle, with wonder and awe.

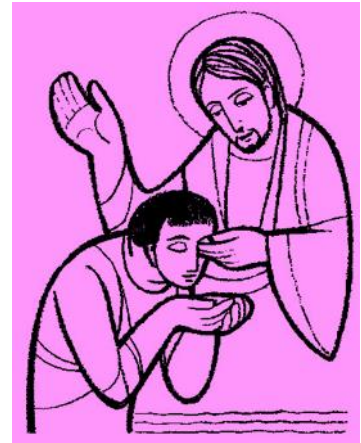
Much later in time, Ignatius called this way of seeing "the simple eye." It is what we are trying to move toward during Lent. To have the simple eye is to see with the eyes of faith. It is to let the Holy Spirit have a peaceful home within us and to help us clean house. Jesus gives the man this deeper sight. He says "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" The blind man says yes. He is simply no longer blind.

The same question faces each of us as we get ready for Holy Week. "Do you believe in the Son of Man" (the name Jesus used for himself)? Can you live in the light of the Lord (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)? Can you let the Lord be your Shepherd (Responsorial Psalm)? You can if you let go of your own prejudices and opinions, hard as that may be.

Let's ask Jesus to give us the simple eye.

— John Foley, SJ

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**"God does not fit in an occupied heart." — Saint John of the Cross**