

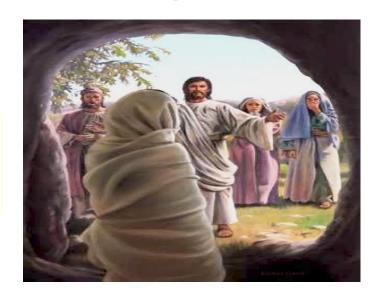
March 26, 2023

Fifth Sunday of Lent

### ST. PETER'S CHURCH

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### LIVING OUR FAITH

If you get a chance, chapter 37: 1-14 of the Book of the prophet Ezekiel, contains his vision of the field of dry bones. It is spectacular in its imagery. First, we are presented with a field of dry bones. Next, skeletons knit together in the air. Finally, sinew and flesh creeping back over the forms so that human lives are restored to the world, planted firmly on the land that God created for them. The vision ends with these passionate words about resurrection "I have promised, and I will do it." God's vow to bring life out of death for those who believe in Him.

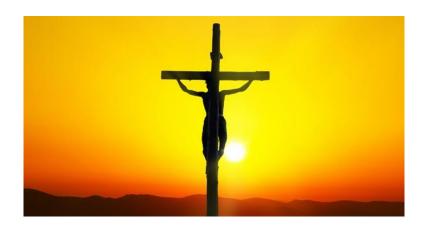
They are wonderful words, because we know them to be true. We've all been in the valley of the dry bones. Illness, grief, shame, emotional paralysis are just some of the endless ways in which people go dead in the midst of life. Our graves have been opened and we know that they will be opened again by the God who opens every door.

**Questions:** When has God called you back to life from a season of death? How did you hear the call to "rise"?

### STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Just a reminder that the Stations of the Cross are prayed every Friday evening of Lent at 6pm.

Come and join us for this beautiful Lenten devotion, as we journey with Jesus!





Does God have a gender?

It matters what metaphors, analogies, and symbols we use for God and God's gender.

### SISTER BARBARA E. REID, O.P.

The short answer to this question is no. Gender is something that belongs to humans; God is beyond gender. But because we believe in a personal God, and people are gendered, some of us can't help but envision God as having a gender.

Throughout Christian tradition, believers have leaned heavily toward depicting God as male. Lord (Ps. 6:2; 23:1), King (Ps. 10:16; 24:8), and Father (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2) are among the most dominant images. However, while there is biblical support for these images, there are also many biblical texts that envision God as female. For example, Moses warns the Israelites not to forget "the God who gave you birth" (Deut. 32:18). When Israel is being rebirthed after the Babylonian exile, the prophet Isaiah speaks of God as being like "a woman in labor" bringing the Israelites to new life (Isa. 42:14). Further, Isaiah speaks of God's tenderness toward Israel like that of a mother consoling her child (Isa. 49:15; 66:13). Both Isaiah and the psalmist portray God as a midwife, helping the renewed Israel come forth from the womb (Isa. 66:9; Ps. 22:10–11). In several gospel parables, Jesus speaks of God and himself as being like a woman who hides yeast in bread dough (Luke 13:20–21), who searches for a lost coin (Luke 15:8–10), or who confronts an unjust judge and demands justice (Luke 18:1–8).

All the language we use to speak of God is figurative and can be metaphorical, analogical, or symbolic. A metaphor compares two things that are similar yet different, by making a statement of equivalence: for example, "God is a rock" (Ps. 18:2). God is perhaps solid and dependable like a rock, but God is not literally a rock. Analogy is a comparison of two distinct things, with a focus on how they are alike. An example is a statement such as "God is good." God is not the same thing as goodness, but we can understand God through understanding goodness. Symbol (from the Greek *synballō*, "to throw together") is something that stands for something else.

It matters what metaphors, analogies, and symbols we use for God and God's gender. Because Genesis 1:27 affirms that humans are made in the image and likeness of God, our language for the divine cuts both ways. If we only use only male language for God, then we are affirming that males are more god-like than females. Yet Genesis 1:27 says that both male and female people are made in God's image. When we take to heart the female images of God in the scriptures,

that enables us to see that women as well as men are made in the divine image and likeness and that the divine is revealed equally powerfully in female experiences as in male ones.

Moreover, when we affirm that God is beyond gender, it opens the way for acceptance of all people, whatever their gender identity—be it cisgender, transgender, or anywhere on the gender spectrum—as equally made in God's image and likeness. God is not confined to any gender, and God's loving being encompasses all.



### Readings for this Weekend - March 26

Ezekiel 37: 12-14 Romans 8: 8-11 John 11: 1-45

### Readings for next Weekend – April 2 Palm Sunday

Isaiah 50:4-7 Philippians 2:6-11 Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

### **Donations for last Weekend – March 19**

Regular collection: \$2,059.00 *THANK YOU!* 

We continue to pray for peace in the troubled areas of our world, and in particular, we pray for the people of the Ukraine and all those affected by the recent violence in our schools and communities. We join our Holy Father in his prayer intentions for March 2023 - **For victims of abuse:** 

We pray for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church; may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering.

### PRAYERS FOR THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

If you would like to add a name to our prayer list, contact the Parish office.

We kindly ask that you do not request a name to be included without the express consent of the person for whom you are requesting prayer. While the request may be very well-intentioned, we want to respect people's right to privacy.

We ask for prayer for Charles Thomas and his ministry, Betty and Robert Friedland, Brian and Maria Cosgrove, Richard Rakin, Andrew Mikulski, Rod Baumert, Todd Conklin, Jean Van Lowe, John Fitzsimmons

### PRAYERS FOR THE DEARLY DEPARTED

We lovingly remember in prayer all our deceased family members, friends, and parishioners and in particular:

Gary Tempel, Jim Jensen, Bridget Hinkle, Det. Sgt. Frank Gualdino, Pope Benedict XVI, Arianna Toscano, Maureen Stiene, Louis Halvas, Kathryn Jones, Sister Kevin John Shields, OP, Anne Ferro, Stanley Brian Stewart



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### PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

SATURDAY, APRIL 1: 7PM (SPANISH) SUNDAY, APRIL 2: 10AM & 4PM

### RECONCILIATION MONDAY

APRIL 3RD
CONFESSIONS WILL BE HEARD IN THE CHURCH FROM
9-11AM & 3-5PM
(OR ANYTIME BY APPOINTMENT)

## MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER WITH WASHING OF FEET

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 6: 7PM ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT UNTIL 9PM

### COMMEMORATION OF THE LORD'S PASSION WITH VENERATION OF THE CROSS AND HOLY COMMUNION GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 7: 3PM

STATIONS OF THE CROSS 5PM

COMMEMORATION OF THE LORD'S PASSION WITH VENERATION OF THE CROSS AND HOLY COMMUNION: 7PM (SPANISH)

EASTER VIGIL HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 8: 7PM (SPANISH)

MASS OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 9: 10AM & 4PM

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#### **PARISH HAPPENINGS**

Bhuel, bhí sé sin spraoi!

This past Sunday we were treated to an "An Afternoon of Celtic Spirituality", facilitated by the one and only Sister Peggy Murphy. What a wonderful afternoon!

Thank you to everyone who joined us!

Thank you, Sister Peggy, for such a fun, informative and spiritually nourishing time. (Here you see Sister and Father Bader sharing one of many laughs!)



During the time in Irish history when Catholics could be persecuted for openly practicing their faith, priests celebrated Mass with the faithful in secret under the cover of night.

Here you see one of the actual small chalices and patens used by priests during that time. The chalice and paten had to be small enough to fit in the priest's pocket. The small crucifix had to be altered in size to secretly fit under the priest's sleeve.



### **DONUTS WITH DAD**

Last Sunday morning, our Religious Education Program celebrated "Donuts with Dad". In honor of the feast day of St. Joseph, the earthly father of our Lord and Savior, all students in the program were invited to ask their father, or another special man, to join them for class.

We had a wonderful turn out! Thank you to all of the special men who joined us! Here are a couple of photos from Mrs. Constant and Mrs. Ramos' Pre-K/K class. You can see children and fathers wearing their "hard hats" as they constructed something – just as Jesus and St. Joseph did together!



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# Praying with Chant

A Gathering to Inspire and Renew a Life of Prayer



Date: Sunday April 30, 2023

Time: 1:00-2:30pm

Place: Saint Peter Catholic Church 262 North Main Street, Liberty, NY

"Chant deepens the very nature of prayer. It becomes the beat of the heart, the hope of the seeker. It is the etching of the Presence of God on the mind. It is the daily memory and promise of God's presence that clasps two souls to one another: I in God, God in me." ~ From *The Monastic Heart* by Sr Joan Chittister.

**Praying with Chant,** allows you to enter the monastery of your own heart and rest in the presence of the Divine.

The chants you will learn are musically simple, using only 3 to 4 tones. They are made accessible for the beginner and the untrained voice. Taught in a step-by-step manner, listen, and then repeat, chanting as a group, not alone and all in English.

During our time together there will be repetition of chants interspersed with periods of silence to experience chant as prayer, as meditation.

Each participant will receive (at no charge) the CD, *Doorway to Devotion A Contemplative Entry into Christian Prayer* by Jim Reale.

### About the teacher:

Jim Reale has been teaching and composing chant for more than two decades. He has presented at national conferences with Fr Richard Rohr and Fr Thomas Keating.

"This [Doorway to Devotion] is the aid and the *practice* that we teachers of contemplative prayer need! For some wonderful reason, it often takes *sound* to lead us to the *Soundless*." Fr Richard Rohr, O.F.M.

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### **UPCOMING CARDINAL'S APPEAL**

If you are able to donate to the Cardinal's Appeal this year, we would be most grateful.

Last year we received \$23,609 back from the Appeal to help support the Parish.

### 2023 CARDINAL'S ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP APPEAL:

Formation of New Parish Priests



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Our priests are the foundation of our Church, bringing us the sacraments and walking with us in our journey. Your gift to the *Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal* supports our seminarians who desire to sacrifice their lives for the sanctity of the Church.

Please consider supporting our future parish priests with a gift to the *Appeal*!

Visit www.cardinalsappeal.org/donate to make your gift today!





## OUR REGULAR WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE:

Saturday evenings at 7 PM: Mass in Spanish

Sunday mornings at 10 AM: Mass in English \*\*

Sunday evenings at 4:00 PM: *Mass in English* 

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 8:30 AM: (Mass in English)

\*\*We will continue to livestream our Sunday morning Mass on Facebook.

