



PARISH NEWSLETTER

SHRINE OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

SPRING 2020

THE HOLY SEASON OF LENT

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Holy Season of Lent is but an intensification of the ordinary course of the Christian life. St. Raymond of Penyafort (who lived from 1175 to 1275) described it thus:

May you never be numbered among those whose house is peaceful, quiet and free from care; those on whom the Lord's chastisement does not descend; those who live out their days in prosperity, and in the twinkling of an eye will go down to hell.
(Office of Readings, Feast of St. Raymond)

“Chastisement” is not a friendly word; yet is not that the topic of the discussion for the First Sunday of Lent? Jesus was “tempted,” and so are we. It has been said that all temptations fall under the following categories: Power, Prestige, and Possessions. At the beginning of a retreat, it is good to reflect on the particular grace for which we are longing

at this time in our lives. I suggest that for each of us individually and for us as a community of faith, the answer to that question will, in some way, have to do with the above-mentioned common themes of temptation. Lest we get discouraged, the Lord reveals to us on the Second Sunday of Lent our goal in the great mystery of the Transfiguration. We all need “mountain experiences” to help give us “perspective.” The Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent provide stories of conversion with multiple levels of meaning. The progression in faith of the woman at the well (John 4), the man born blind (John 9), and the sisters of Lazarus (John 11) cause us to reflect on the development of our faith over the years. All of these gospels lead us to the ultimate test – the Passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord.

Throughout the Easter season, we will be challenged to believe the unbelievable.

Hopefully, our response will that of Thomas: “My Lord and my God” and that of Peter, who said to the Risen Lord: “You know that I love you!”

My prayer for us all during these holy weeks of Lent and Easter is that of St. Raymond:

May the God of love and peace set your hearts at rest and speed you on your journey; may He meanwhile shelter you from disturbance by others in the hidden recesses of His love, until He brings you at last into that place of complete plenitude where you will repose forever in the vision of peace, in the security of trust and in the restful enjoyment of His riches.

Blessed Lent and Easter,

Father Bill Foley
Pastor



Artwork by Kate Dunn, Sixth Grade



Artwork by Stewart Buckley, Fifth Grade



Artwork by Kieran Lucas, Sixth Grade

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Artwork: Blessed Sacrament School students under the guidance of their art teacher, Yves Clark

THE “GOSPEL” OF ART

By Tammy Flippo, Director of Adult Faith Formation

While most Catholics are aware of the monumental work produced by the Second Vatican Council, most are not aware that in December 1965, Pope Paul VI closed this council with an address to artists stating “This world in which we live needs beauty in order not to sink into despair. It is beauty, like truth, which brings joy to the heart of man and is that precious fruit which resists the wear and tear of time...”¹ More recent popes share his belief. Prior to his papacy, Karol Wojtyla was known as a poet and worked briefly as an actor before entering the priesthood. In 1999, the Vatican published a CD and video, *Abba Pater*, in which Pope John Paul II recites poetry and sings. In his book “Salt of the Earth,” Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger wrote that “Music... contains the whole tragedy of human existence.” Later, at his Vatican residence, Pope Benedict XVI gave a moving talk in which he asked “What is music?” bringing to mind Pilate’s infamous question, “What is truth?”

Pope Francis likewise shares this love of the arts and believes they play a role in evangelization. In July 2017, the Vatican released “My Idea of Art,” a documentary presenting eleven works from the Vatican’s collections that Francis cites as exalting the beauty of God’s creation. One of these works is the “Belvedere Torso,” a damaged marble figure missing the head, arms and lower legs. Michelan-

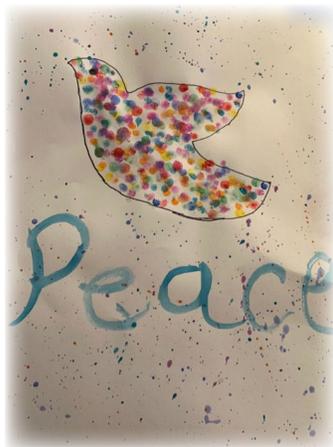
gelo was asked to repair its broken condition, but he resisted, using it instead as inspiration for the Sibyls he painted in the Sistine Chapel. Francis understands that a similar human brokenness is reflected in all of art. However, he further believes that hope is likewise portrayed, saying “The artist is a witness of the invisible and works of art are the clearest proof that the incarnation is possible.”

Two years ago in February 2018, Pope Francis met with a group of artists that included musicians, actors, poets, painters, dancers, sculptors and architects. He asked them to help people “Discover the beauty of being loved by God” and implored them to create and protect areas of beauty throughout the world.² Francis emphasized that the Sistine Chapel itself is catechesis in God’s mercy; he desires that the church use art to promote evangelization. Recognizing this desire, the Office of Adult Faith Formation offered its first speaker series on the Sacred Arts in February, 2019, which is being repeated this February (<https://www.blessedsacramentdc.org/adult-faith-formation>).

Editor’s Note: In addition to a master’s degree in theology and in teaching, Tammy holds a degree in architecture. She has been a life-long oil painter, beginning her training at age six.

¹ “Closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.” Address of Pope Paul VI to Artists. 8 December 1965. From the web: www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19651208_epilogo-concilio-artisti.html. Accessed 13 January 2020.

² Wooden, Cindy. “Artists can help people discover beauty of God’s love, pope says.” Catholic News Service. 27 February 2018. From the web: www.cruznw.com/vatican/2018/02/artists-can-help-people-discover-beauty-gods-love-pope-says/. Accessed 12 January 2020.



Artwork by Bianca Ahlhorn, Fourth Grade



Artwork by Nathan Bahiru, Fourth Grade



Artwork by Brisa Storm, Fourth Grade

CARE FOR CREATION MINISTRY

By Janet Chap

Pope Francis has declared an eighth work of mercy, one that is both corporal and spiritual: care for our common home. Gratitude for God's world is a spiritual mercy, and daily behaviors to protect the world are a corporal mercy. "We received the earth as a garden-home from the Creator," Francis said. "Let us not pass it on to future generations as a wilderness."

This past Christmas eve while many of us celebrated with family and friends and perhaps evening Mass at Blessed Sacrament, Typhoon Phanfone struck the mostly Catholic nation of the Philippines, disrupting travel and forcing thousands to evacuate their homes and flee to shelters. Fifty people died,

. . . the results of the best scientific research available today."

On June 14, 2019 Pope Francis met at the Vatican with 70 executives from the energy industry and investors to declare that "a radical energy transition is needed to save our common home." In *Laudato Si'*, his encyclical on the environment, Francis calls upon all of us to make changes in our lives to lessen environmental damage. This is not a political issue; it is an issue of faith and social justice. *Laudato Si'* explains the intensified effects of environmental degradation on the poor.

In our own country, Alaska faces calamitous effects from climate change. At the Alaska

opportunities for our parish to care for our common home. Our mission statement:

We as the people and parish of Blessed Sacrament strive to:

- Cultivate love of Creation, learning to see the natural world with the compassionate attention of Christ, through intentional and sustained engagement with this place entrusted to our care;
- Pattern our daily lives as caretakers of Creation, encouraging one another through the sharing of ideas, resources, and experiences, and seeking Christ's healing of our blindness to



Artwork by Gianna Cicotello, Fourth Grade



Artwork by Jack Burman, Fourth Grade



Artwork by Lukas Girmay, Fourth Grade

mercifully a loss far smaller than the 6,340 who perished during Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. The vulnerability of the Philippine archipelago to typhoons and the high rate of poverty in that country have prompted the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines to issue several pastoral letters about environmental destruction that include specific recommended actions. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) research indicates that hurricanes and typhoons are increasing in strength and total rainfall due to anthropogenic (human caused) global warming from greenhouse gas emissions. Regarding climate change, Pope Francis urges us to "listen to science,

Federation of Natives October 2019 Convention in Fairbanks, seventeen-year-old Quannah Chasing Horse testified, "We shouldn't have to tell people in charge that we want to survive. It should be our number-one right. We should not have to fight for this . . . We do not want to stop our ways of life. That's why we're here." NOAA issues an annual Arctic report card which indicates the Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet with devastating consequences for the people and animals of that region.

The Care for Creation Ministry at Blessed Sacrament was formed by a group of parishioners to discern and pursue meaningful

and complicity with the powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God;

- Minimize the environmental footprint of our parish, honoring the land and practicing mindful stewardship of our planet and its resources, that generations yet to come may continue to know and enjoy God's bounty;
- Broaden our perspective and participation by joining others, and inviting others to join us, in shared advocacy and work to protect and renew the earth and its communities.

(Continued on next page)

CREATION (Continued from previous page)

The Care for Creation Ministry is focused on putting the eighth work of mercy into practice. We ask the community of Blessed Sacrament to join us in thinking and praying about our daily actions as they affect the environment. Greenhouse gases result not only from energy use from vehicles and in our homes, but also from the production, packaging and shipping of the many consumer products we purchase. Providing safe drinking water requires energy use. Can we challenge ourselves to drive less, use less, buy less and think carefully about the products we buy? Palm oil is an ingredient in many food items we purchase, but rainforests are cut and burned to clear land for palm oil plantations. Deforestation is the second largest human cause of carbon dioxide, after fossil fuel burning.

As Catholics we are blessed to receive the guidance of Pope Francis in caring for creation and caring for the poor: "In today's world, hunger, violence and poverty cannot be understood apart from the changes and degradation affecting the environment." The Care for Creation Ministry is open to all who wish to attend our meetings. We also hope all parishioners will pray for those affected by environmental deterioration and pray for the wisdom and selflessness to minimize our own effects on the environment. Let us practice this eighth work of mercy as Pope Francis has called us to do.

For more information, contact Rick Chap: rickchap@hotmail.com.



Artwork by Ellie Lamond, Kindergarten

STUDENT WRITINGS AND ARTWORK IN THE NEWS

The writings and artwork of a number of Blessed Sacrament School fourth graders have been published in the Junior Saints section of the Catholic Standard since September 2019. The students' work is done monthly as part of their religion class. We congratulate them on their published contribution and invite you to view their works at: <https://cathstan.org/content/filter/latest/news/all/junior-saints>. Below are the submissions that were published in the February 2020 issue.

Theme for the February Issue: Our Lenten Sacrifices

Lent is a time to get closer to God. One of the ways that I plan to do that is fast. A way that I will fast is by not having any sweets during Lent. Another thing that I'll do is to pray not just every night, but also every morning when I wake up. The last thing that I'll do is to alms give. To do this I will give money to a poor person next time I see one. I look forward to doing all these things during Lent. —Annie Meyers, fourth grade

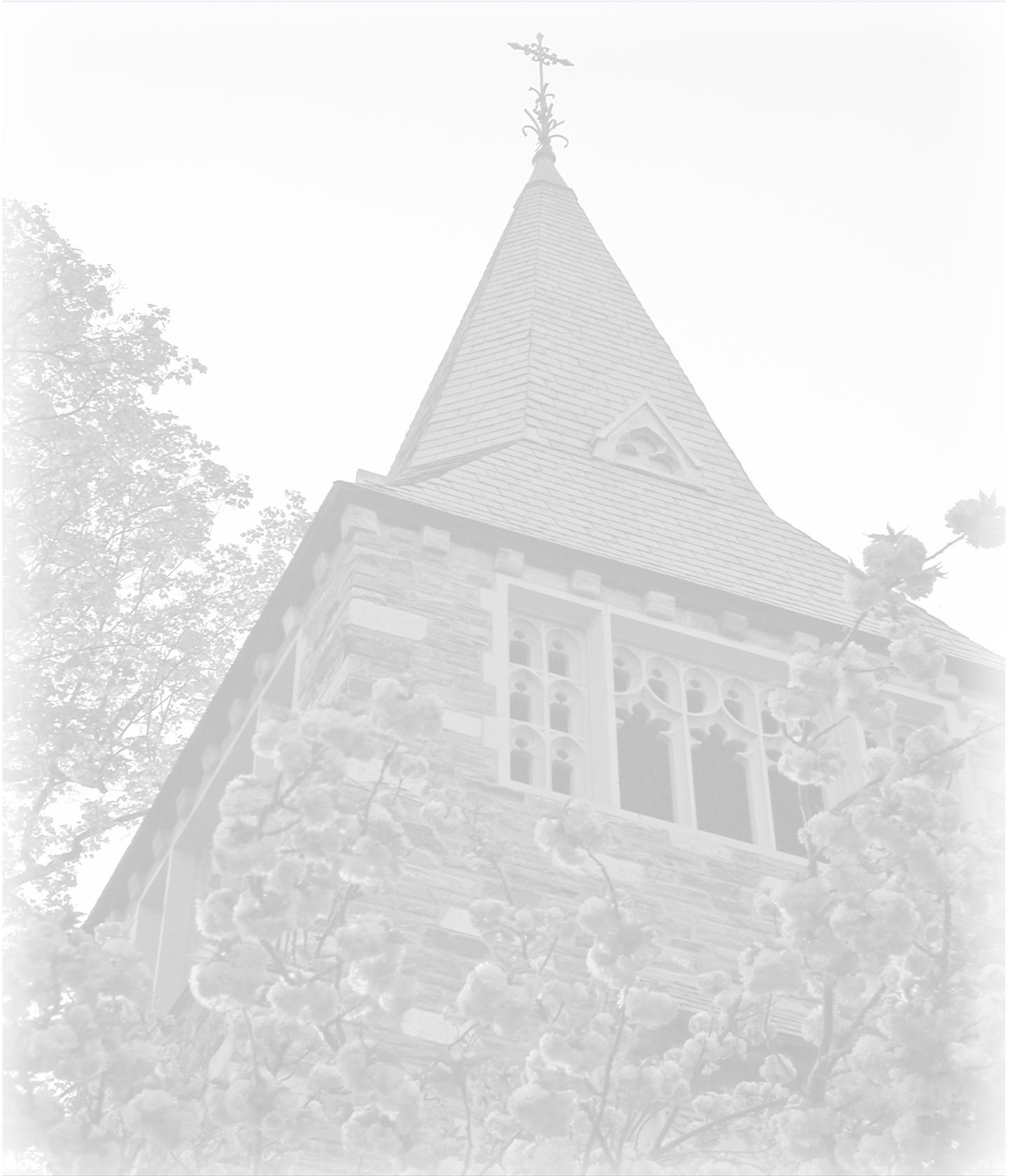


Artwork by Annie Meyers

What I must give up for lent is complaining. Complaining is rude and really ungrateful. I have got to practice at least for all of Lent, to not complain. It shows how picky, selfish, and rude you are, and I don't want to be that type of person at all. I'm going to try and have an anti-complaining lent. —Tilly Cissna, fourth grade



Artwork by Tilly Cissna



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