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<div><p>Robert C. Alario Certified Public Accountants, PC</p><p>75 North Main St., Leominster, MA 01453 292 Park Ave., Worcester, MA 01609 (L) 978-534-1999 (W) 508-755-7575 Fax: (L) 978-534-0499 (W) 508-755-7599 www.robotalario.com bob@robotalario.com</p></div>		<div></div>	
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THE CHURCH OF SAINT BONIFACE

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 2, 2020



*"The Lord whom you seek and desire is coming.
But who will endure his coming?
For he is like the refiner's fire..."*

(Malachi 3, 1-3)

From the Desk of the Pastor

Sunday Reflection: February 2

Growth means coping with pain.

Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted — and you yourself a sword will pierce — so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

I would have liked to be a fly on the wall to see or get a sense of Mary and Joseph’s reaction when the old man Simeon uttered the above words. What was it like? Where they happy or sad or just stunned? I would have leaned closer, a little more to capture Mary’s individual reaction as the mother of the child when he said “and you yourself a sword will pierce — so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

What is going on, they must say? What is this?

As required of the Law, many Jews annually went up to Jerusalem to complete the rituals of purification, but this time things are strange for Mary and Joseph. The shock doesn't seem to stop ! , now Anna, a prophetess also appears from nowhere. She has lived seven years in the temple, now eighty four, but as if waiting for this moment she gives thanks to God and spoke about the child. The temple experience this time has been shockingly revealing.

The Temple (which for us might be the church) for the people of Jesus' time was everything. It was the center of life. Here they found Yahweh-God. Here he resides. They come quietly to pray, to fulfill their annual duty, to request, to desire but most of all to belong. They know that God for them is everything they are, they hope for and desire. It all starts and ends with God. And so the relationship with God comes first and foremost.

How might we today restore this attitude even more? How can we turn our hearts back to God as the center of all our activity and life? Can ‘Sunday’ take its place again in everyday living? We may be surprised at what God firms up and reveals in our lives?

Also, as we gather in the Church, we listen to the ‘word of God.’ This ‘Word’ will often times can be a challenging word (burning word). Let us not be surprised if the ‘Word of God’ is not what we want to hear. Countless times, it is not soothing, it is many times uncomfortable. It requires us like a child, ‘to grow.’ And ‘growth means coping with pain.’ Pain is the challenges and crosses we find, suffering that awaits us.

Yet in all this we are confident, because the child presented in our midst as ‘Lord,’ is our hope and strength. As the second reading reminds us “because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested” (Hebrews 2, 18). Let us never hesitate to invite Jesus into our lives, ask him help us ‘grow’ like he grew, become strong and filled wisdom and favor with God, like he did.

And suddenly there will come to the temple the LORD whom you seek, And the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. Yes, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who will endure the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appears? For he is like the refiner’s fire...

A Blessed Week in the Lord!

~ Fr. Anthony



“...for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.”

Save the Date! Renewal of Marriage Vows Saturday, February 15, 4:00 PM Mass followed by Dinner in the Parish Hall

Signup forms in the pews or on the website. (Deadline Monday, Feb.10)

Saint Boniface Church

817 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA 01462 Parish Office: 978-582-4008 email: stbonifaceparish@verizon.net

Discover St. Boniface ~ Visit our website: www.StBoniface-lunenburg.org

Parish Office Hours Monday / Wednesday / Thursday 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (closed 12:00 – 1:00 PM)

The Celebration of the Eucharist Sunday: 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM Saturday Vigil: 4:00 PM

Summer Sunday Mass schedule: 9:00 AM (Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend)

Weekday Masses: 8:00 AM, Wednesday/Thursday/Friday

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (Confession) Saturday 3:00 - 3:30 p.m. or by appointment.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM Adults are baptized at the Easter Vigil as part of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Infant and child Baptisms are by arrangement.

FIRST EUCHARIST Preparation begins in grade one and includes classes, retreats, and home instruction. Children receive First Eucharist in grade two.

CONFIRMATION Our Confirmation program begins in the 9th grade; students are confirmed in the spring of the 10th grade. For young adults who have been baptized but not yet confirmed, contact the parish office.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY It is the policy of the Diocese of Worcester that a couple should contact the parish at least one year prior to the anticipated date of their wedding to allow sufficient time to carry out the various steps of the marriage preparation process. It is important that arrangements be made with the church before plans are made with reception halls, caterers, etc.

ANNOINTING OF THE SICK Please call the parish office 978-582-4008 or email Fr. Anthony at stbonifaceparish@verizon.net or Nancy Cieri 978-582-6983 nancycieri@comcast.net to arrange these visits.

PRAYER LINE MINISTRY If you or someone you know needs prayers or if you would like to be a part of this ministry of those who pray for the needs of neighbors, please contact Sue Cote 978-582-0404 sj33@msn.com.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL #16480 In Service to One. In Service to all. The members meet in the Parish Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 PM. Any Catholic men over 18 who are interested in joining the Knights should contact Grand Knight James Dijak (978-534-7956) or Deputy Grand Knight Peter Bak (978-403-5119), or you can email the Council at kofc16480@gmail.com.

PARISH STAFF:

Rev. Anthony Mpagi, Pastor	978-582-4008	stbonifaceparish@verizon.net
Jo-Anne Poirier, Administrative Assistant	978-582-4008	stbonifaceparish@verizon.net
Lucy Marcil, Religious Education Coordinator	978-502-7993	lmarcil419@gmail.com
Claire Garrity Neas, Music Ministry	617-823-4237	
Louise Nadeau, Sacristan		
Ministry Schedule	978-582-4008	stbonifaceparish@verizon.net
Nina Charpentier, Dir. Early Childhood/PreK	978-582-7110	

Newcomers to St. Boniface are invited and encouraged to formally register as members of the parish so that so that we can stay in touch with you via email with faith formation news, notice of special events, volunteer opportunities, and more. Registration forms are available at the doors of the church or on our website.

Please note that you must be registered for at least six months before we can issue any verification of your status as a parishioner for godparent or sponsor letters.

MASS INTENTIONS			
Wed	Feb 5	8:00 am	Jeanne Alves (4 th Anniversary) by her family
Sat	Feb 8	4:00 pm	Michael Brisson (6 th Anniversary) by his mother, Louise Nadeau
Sun	Feb 9	8:00 am 10:30 am	Our Parish Family Michael Horgan, by the Dionne family

ANOINTING OF THE SICK will take place at all Masses on the weekend of February 8/9, as we recognize the World Day of the Sick on February 11, 2020. We pray for those who suffer from illness and for their caregivers.

RENEWAL OF MARRIAGE VOWS will take place at the 4 PM Mass on Saturday, February 15. A dinner reception will follow in the parish hall. Please signup if you plan to attend. You will find forms in the pews which may be placed directly into the collection baskets, or you may sign up on the parish website.

IT IS THAT TIME AGAIN — our week at North Star Family Services (formerly MIHN):

Please take a heart from the back of the church to help us gather supplies and food for our next rotation at North Star Family Services (formerly MIHN). This is a family shelter in Leominster that makes it possible for families to stay together when homeless. Our next week begins February 16th.

DID YOU KNOW?

Our parish website now has a section listing all videos posted on the site by subject. The videos are posted throughout the internal pages, but now a user can go to one location on the website and look for a video based on a specific topic, for example “Prayers and Devotions.” There are many inspirational and educational videos — take a few minutes and have a look! Here’s the link: **www.stboniface-lunenburg.org/videos**. It’s in the "Communications" section on the website.

2019 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS: Please contact the parish office if you would like a statement mailed to you.

Attention: ACH Contributors! Did you know there are special donation cards *just for you* to use for Mass collections? You will find the cards on the tables at church entrances. When you attend Mass we invite you to take one for the regular collection and any second collection and place them in the basket as your offering for the day.



COLLECTION REPORT WEEKEND OF JANUARY 26, 2020	
SUNDAY ORDINARY:	\$2,537.00
MAINTENANCE/FUEL:	205.00
CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS :	5.00
Total Contributions:	\$2,747.00
<i>Thank you for your continued support!</i>	

GRAND ANNUAL APPEAL:
To date, 72 families have pledged a total of \$48,020 toward our goal of \$50,000.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD REMINDS US OF THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

Today we celebrate Jesus’ presentation at the temple. This event is recorded only in the Gospel of Luke and is rooted in the Jewish practices of purification of a mother after childbirth and the offering of the firstborn son. While the event centers on Mary, Joseph and Jesus, two community members support the Holy Family during this celebration.



The tradition described in Luke has its roots in Leviticus 12, which prescribes rules of purification and presentation. In ancient Judaism, after childbirth women were required to be purified before interacting with people and sacred objects. Giving birth to Jesus made Mary ceremonially unclean for 40 days (Lv 12:2-4). For the first seven days, she would avoid contact with people. For an additional 33 days, she would avoid contact with holy objects and the sanctuary. Though this may sound peculiar, it is important to remember that although childbirth was considered a divine blessing, purity regulations like these developed out of concerns and taboos regarding bodily fluids and their relation to religious activities.

At the end of the purification period, Mary and Joseph offered a sacrifice of two pigeons, which was expected from people who could not afford to offer a sheep (Lv 12:8).The parents also present Jesus at the temple, as was customary for all firstborn male children (Ex 13:2). The first and second readings complement this event, as Malachi prophesies about a messenger of the covenant at the temple, and the Letter to the Hebrews recognizes Jesus’ participation in Jewish rituals.

When Mary and Joseph present Jesus, they encounter two prophetic figures, Simeon and Anna, both of whom recognize the significance of Jesus. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Simeon had received a divine message that he would see the Messiah before his death. Recognizing the Messiah, Simeon takes Jesus into his arms and affirms that he can die having seen the Christ. Simeon asserts that Jesus is “a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory for your people Israel” (Lk 2:32). Jesus is the Messiah for both Gentiles and Jews. Mary and Joseph are surprised that this relative stranger recognizes who Jesus is. Simeon blesses the parents and offers a message specifically to Mary that despite his importance, Jesus would be rejected by many.

We also hear about a woman prophet, Anna. Anna’s piety is highlighted, as she regularly worships, prays and fasts at the temple. Although there is no quoted speech from Anna, we are told that at the presentation she offers praise and thanksgiving to God and speaks about Jesus to all who were looking for redemption (Lk 2:38).

Although the Holy Family is central to this feast of the Presentation, Simeon and Anna play vital roles. Simeon publicly confirms Jesus’ identity and future ministry, and Anna shares Jesus with the world, proclaiming him to the Gentiles and Jews mentioned in Simeon’s prophecy. These community members affirm the significance of Jesus to the world.

This article also appeared in print, under the headline “The Importance of Community,” in the January 20, 2020, issue of *America*.



THE BOOK OF MALACHI

This short book may have been written before Nehemiah’s first return to Jerusalem in 445 B.C.; it is also possible that it was written while Nehemiah was there, or even later. What seems to be the author’s name, mal’ākî, is found in 1:1 (“the word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi”), but many believe that this is a pseudonym based on mal’ākî, “my messenger,” in 3:1 and that the author’s real name is unknown. In any case, he shows us attitudes and behaviors characteristic of the Jewish community a few generations after the end of the Babylonian exile, and describes God’s response.

God loves Israel (1:2–5), but the people return that love poorly. Taking advantage of the negligent attitude of the priests, they withhold tithes and sacrificial contributions (3:6–11) and cheat God by providing defective goods for sacrifice (1:6–14). People divorce their spouses and marry worshipers of other gods (2:10–16). Sorcerers, adulterers, perjurers, and people who take advantage of workers and the needy abound (3:5). Priests, who could strengthen discipline by their instruction, connive with the people, telling them what they want to hear (2:1–9). Underlying all this is a weary attitude, a cynical notion that nothing is to be gained by doing what God wants and that wrongdoers prosper (2:17; 3:14–15). God condemns the wrongdoing and the underlying attitude, issuing a challenge to immediate reform (3:10–12), but also announcing a general reckoning at a future moment (3:16–21).

The Perspective of Justice

Presenting Jesus

They bring Jesus to the temple to be “presented to the Lord,” for he is “the Anointed of the Lord.” One way of responding to this event is to reflect on our own ‘presentation of the Lord.’

How do we present Jesus Christ to others? Is the Jesus we present to others a convenient cover for a life of personal misbehavior and social indifference, or is he “the king of glory” whose person and teachings should govern us individually and collectively? Do we present Jesus to others on such a pedestal that people can dismiss his example as unreasonable expectation, or is he “like his brothers in every way,” one of us, a brother human whose love of justice and peace can and should be imitated? Is the Jesus we present to others an indictment of them, or is he God’s “saving deed displayed for all the peoples to see,” the Messiah who rescues us from our personal and social sinfulness?

Is the Jesus we present to others a support for our dealings with death, our wars, abortions, and death penalties, or is he “a lamb without blemish (offered) for the life of the world”? Is the Jesus we present others a special ‘god’ for the privileged, or is he “the light of all peoples,” including people who are weak and outcast?

God’s Word, through whom all things were made, was himself made flesh and dwelt on man’s earth. Thus he entered the world’s history as a perfect man, taking that history up into himself and summarizing it. He himself revealed to us that ‘God is love’ (1 John 4:8) and at the same time taught us that the new command of love was the basic law of human perfection and hence of the world’s transformation. To those, therefore, who believe in divine love, he gives assurance that the way of love lies open to men and that the effort to establish a universal brotherhood is not a hopeless one.

Vatican II, Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1965: 38

GERALD DARRING

SAINTS OF THE DAY January 3 – 8

Saint Blaise

February 3. Popularly known as the saint who protects from ailments of the throat, Saint Blaise was a bishop and martyr of the fourth century. We know little else about him, except that he suffered persecution, even after the Edict of Toleration was to have freed the Roman world for worship.

Orta – Basilica San Giulio, Piedmont | photo by Wolfgang Sauber

Saint Blaise is a patron saint of throat ailments and English wool combers.



Saint Joseph of Leonissa

February 4. Saint Joseph of Leonissa was known for his austerity of life and single-minded commitment to preaching. Arrested and warned to change his ways, Saint Joseph returned to his former behavior and was re-arrested and condemned to die. He escaped, however, and continued a life of preaching.

Saint Saint Fidelis of Sigmarigen and Saint Joseph of Leonessa | Giovanni Battista Tiepolo

Saint Agatha

February 5. One of the four virgin martyrs celebrated in the Catholic calendar of saints, Saint Agatha was arrested during the persecution of Decius in 251. Tortured for her beauty and tempted to violate her chastity, Agatha was eventually martyred.

Saint Agatha | Ink drawing | Tommaso Minardi

Saint Agatha is a patron saint of diseases of the breast and nurses.



Saint Paul Miki and Companions

February 6. A Jesuit Brother and native of Japan, Saint Paul Miki was crucified, along with 25 other Catholics, for preaching his belief in Jesus. Proving that the faith is lived and died for in many lands, the Japanese martyrs take their place along with men and women of many nations.

Martyrdom of Paul Miki S.J., Jacob Kisai S.J., John Goto S.J. and P. Petrus Battista in Japan in 1596 / Engraving after A. van Diepenbeec

Saint Colette

February 7. Saint Colette is known as a reformer of the Poor Clares. Known as the Colettine Poor Clares, these nuns follow a more primitive rule of Saint Clare and are known for their austerity.

Statue of Saint Colette of Corbie, along the road between Corbie and Albert, France | photo by Paul Hermans



Saint Josephine Bakhita

February 8. Kidnapped at the age of nine and being too terrified to remember her name, Josephine acquired the name “Bakhit” which means “fortunate one.” Her most "fortunate blessing" came when she was bought by an Italian consul which led eventually to her conversion and freedom. She joined the Canossian Sisters and ministered in Italy.

Stained Glass of St. Josephine Bakhita, Saint John Paul II Chapel, Mundelein | photo by Fr. Gaurav Shroff

