

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

From the Pastor's Desk

Today we are celebrating the Third Sunday of Lent. If you recall, it was last year on this Sunday that we were together for the last time before the lockdown for the virus. It is almost one year since the obligation to attend Sunday Mass was lifted. Many of our parishioners have not been in church since the initial lockdown. It is sad not seeing so many for so long. It is my sincere hope that we will all be back together for our Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. Just the same, I do pray for my parishioners every day asking God's blessings upon all of you.

This Sunday our first reading is from the Book of Exodus: The Ten Commandments. In the course of their history, the children of Abraham have grown into a rather large nation. We are familiar with the story of how they ended up in Egypt with the story of Joseph. After years of prospering in Egypt they were eventually put under oppression and slavery. God led them out of the land of Egypt through his faithful servant Moses. If you are not familiar with the story you should read and even reread the end of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus. With this rescued nation God is now preparing to make a covenant with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. After the great display of the power over Pharaoh and Egypt God brings them to Mt. Sinai, the place where the Covenant is made. In the covenant God promises his love and faithfulness to the descendants of Abraham. They are God's Chosen People. They will also discover their place in God's plan. "I will be your God. You will be my people."

The sign of the covenant is the Ten Commandments. It is not just having the tablets on which the commandments are written, more importantly it involves living the Ten Commandments. In this way the people will be the sign to the world that they are a God's Chosen people. They will be a light to the world. All nations will find in them a blessing and all will come to know the Lord God. This is the fulfillment of the prophecy spoken to Abraham.

The Ten Commandments are more than a rule for behaviors. Like the Word of God in all cases, this Word must take root in the heart and soul. It is not enough just to know the Commandments; one must also put faith in them as they are lived. Satan knows them. Satan does not follow them! In fact, he undermines them. Beware!

There are many reflections we can have on the Ten Commandments. It is good to consider several angles in approaching them. One that stands out for me is to realize that the Israelites were slaves for so long. Slavery became their identity. It was in every fabric of their lives. They lived, acted, thought, and related to one another and the world as slaves. How does one change that all-encompassing worldview to being a free people? This is a daunting and difficult task. It requires a radical change. It is so difficult that it is easier to fall back onto the old familiar ways of a slave, especially in uncertain and difficult times. Slaves have a very difficult time with trusting: the only thing they trust is that they will be beaten for disobedience. They do not believe that they are loved, and someone is looking out for their greater good. This is difficult for free persons as well; so much so that many will give up their freedom for the security of not being responsible for their freedom. (That is a topic for another time.)

God called this people and God provided them with all the "tools" they needed to be His Chosen People: The Law and the Prophets pointing the way to goodness. Our focus currently is about the role of the Ten Commandments in transforming their lives. True, the Law of God addresses their behavior. That is a good place to start. But the Law is so much more. Human beings, at a certain time get tired of doing things just for the sake

of doing things. Human beings want to know the "why" behind the things we do. This speaks to meaningful activity. There must be something more. Pressing into the commandments in the search for the "why" points us into the direction of meaning. We are to discover what God is revealing about Himself through the Ten Commandments. The Commandments are about our relationship with God and our neighbor as God's Chosen People. God's Chosen People are different than the rest of the nations. Like God's Chosen people we find our true meaning from the one who created us: The Author of life. We are created in His image and likeness and that is very good as Genesis tells us. God desires for us to live in that goodness. God wants us to know his goodness and to be good. Because of original sin we are blinded to the authentic goodness of God and to be good, thus it is necessary for us to have help: The Ten Commandments. Serious reflection on the Ten Commandments leads us to discover the goodness of God, the wisdom of God and God's desire for His Chosen People and all humanity; to live in His goodness; His Love.

When God entered a covenant relationship with the Israelites, he also gave them the law to help them with their part of the covenant relationship. The Ten Commandments are intended to assist God's Chosen people to live their part in this covenant relationship. For God's part He is loving and faithful to His people. In a sinful, imperfect world the Israelites are to respond in kind with love and faithfulness to God. The Ten Commandments help the Israelites as a first step to in their relationship with God.

This will take time. Shaking off the shackles of slavery and living as a free people. This freedom also means being responsible for themselves. As slaves they only had to obey or be punished. Force and fear controlled their lives. Now they are to obey to Word of God. Their fear must be about offending a loving faithful God by not being faithful and loving to God in return. The fear of slaves is about literal obedience without any internal reflection. The fear of a free person is about an internal reflection on the loving relationship. The fear of a slave is all external. The fear of a free person is internal: it is about the relationship with the other.

There is great wisdom in the Law of God. This wisdom is knowable. This wisdom is all about genuine good. This wisdom is truth. In knowing and loving the Law of God is righteousness: being right with God. However, righteousness is not salvation. That alone comes from Christ. Salvation is a gift from God through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the truly righteous one. The Righteous one also laid down his life in faithful self-sacrificing love for the Father. In his self-sacrificing faithful love for the Father he also lived it for all humanity for our salvation. Without merit on our part (which can be a temptation hidden in righteousness) we receive the gift of salvation. It is precisely in being followers of Jesus Christ in his righteousness that we discover the ultimate importance in living the Law of God for the salvation of the world. The righteousness of Jesus leads to selfless sacrifice for the sake of others. Seeking deeper meaning in the Ten Commandments we learn that living the Law of God demands faithful love: for God and for others. In this we become a light for the world. In this the promise made to Abraham comes to greater fulfillment: "All nations will find in you a blessing." All nations will come streaming to the mountain of the Lord: The Kingdom of God. All people will come to know God and His goodness. The meaning of life... "To know, love and serve God in this world so that we may be happy with God in the next."

Have a blessed Third Week of Lent.

Father Ralko

**This week we pray Week III of the
Liturgy of the hours.**

Church Support

February 28, 2021	
OFFERTORY	\$14,919.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$11,030.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	<u>\$(890.00)</u>
Other Income	<u>\$1,855.00</u>
Weekly surplus	\$4,170.00

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

K of C Fish Fry

The K of C will be offering fish fries once again every Friday throughout Lent. The hall opens at 5:00 p.m. Wednesday- Friday and 11:00 a.m. Saturday. Stop in and enjoy a meal with your fellow members

Council 505 is forming a Golf League on Wednesday evenings at Jaycees Golf Course. It will be a 2-man scramble format and is open to men, women, and non-members. The total number of teams will be 22. The league will start in the last two weeks of April and run through September. If you would like more information, contact Mark Hill at 740-607-5477 or mapco60@gmail.com

Sacramentals Did you know that the Palms are sacramentals? Rosaries, medals, and anything blessed and used for prayer including crucifixes, statues and icons are also sacramentals. Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church to prepare us to receive the fruit of the sacraments and to sanctify different circumstances of our lives. When sacramentals no longer serve a purpose or are broken and can no longer be used, they cannot be thrown in the trash, they must be disposed of reverently. The proper way is to burn them and bury the ashes, or simply bury them in the ground. To aid in the disposal of palms from years past and other sacramentals, a collection station has been placed in the vestibule. Sacramentals may be placed in the box found on the table near the steps to the choir loft. After Easter, they will be buried at Mt. Olive Cemetery.

Pre-Jordan Class

Due to Holy week the **Pre-Jordan class** for March has been moved to **Tuesday, March 23rd at 7:00 p.m.** in the Parish Office building. The Class is for parents and sponsors of infants and small children who are to be baptized. Please call 453-0597 to register for the class.

Eucharistic Adoration - Friday, March 19th (In honor of St. Joseph, guardian and faithful spouse of Mary, foster father of Jesus)". Begins after the 8:00 a.m. Mass and end at 4:00 p.m.

This is a great devotion for families, marrieds, singles, young and old alike. All are encouraged to participate in Eucharistic Adoration. "Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament has His hands full of graces, and He is ready to bestow them on anyone who asks for them." St Peter of Alcantara

Please take the survey! Saint Nicholas Parish is participating in a parish survey about discipleship. The Survey is LIVE and will be open until March 21, 2021. To take the survey, please visit <https://portal.catholicleaders.org/dmi/survey/kk68bk2685> . If you prefer a paper copy, you may pick it up after daily and Sunday Masses. They can be found vestibule and on the front pews. To submit the completed paper survey, please drop it in the Sunday collection basket, hand deliver it to the parish office or mail it to the parish office at 955 E. Main Street, Zanesville Ohio 43701. To make special arrangements for getting a paper copy, please contact the parish office at (740) 453-0597. We really need your help in making this a success, so please participate!

Men of The East –

Traveling Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration with Reflection

St. Nicholas Catholic Church will host the Men of The East for a traveling Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration with Reflection on Thursday, March 11 at 7:00 p.m. in the Church. All men of the twelve-parish consortium are invited and encouraged to participate in these once a month Holy Hours.

Men of The East is a Catholic Men's Laity Ministry comprised of all practicing Catholic men who attend one of the 12 parishes in Knox, Licking, or Muskingum Counties. Men of The East exists to support, strengthen, and help maximize the spiritual growth of men of the Catholic Church. Men of The East is a part of the larger Catholic Men's Laity Ministry for the Columbus Ohio Diocese.

LENTEN GREETING CARD PROJECT

Seasonal cards are sent throughout the year to all Catholics living in area nursing homes and to homebound parishioners. Birthday cards are sent to all senior parishioners. This year's we need cards for Easter (with a religious message), summer and fall, Valentine's Day, and St. Patrick's Day. Volunteers will add appropriate greetings to blank cards. A basket has been placed in the church vestibule for your donations. Monetary donations may be placed in an envelope identified for Lenten Greeting Card Project and placed in the collection basket. Thank you for helping to keep those who cannot join us at Mass feel connected to our parish community. If a member of your family is homebound and you have not notified the parish office, please do so as soon as possible.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Mt. Olive Cemetery has a part time position available. Duties would include mowing, weed eating, helping to open and close graves, help pouring footers for headstones and snow removal. If interested, please call the Parish Office at 453-0597.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS

St. Nicholas Church has a convenient way to make your regular offerings. With our electronic giving program, you can easily set up a recurring giving schedule. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. Even when something prevents you from attending services, our church will continue to receive your contributions on an uninterrupted basis. To become an electronic giver, call or visit the church office or our website: stnickparish.org.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with those serving our country currently and with their loved ones at home. We pray for a safe homecoming and that the world may one day be at peace.

PLEASE REMEMBER ST. NICHOLAS PARISH IN YOUR WILL. CALL THE PARISH OFFICE AT 453-0597 FOR MORE DETAILS.

Please join us each Monday at The St. Nicholas Parish Office Chapel at 2:00 p.m. as we gather to pray the Rosary asking Our Lady's Intercession or the many needs of our nation, community, and parish.

Cantor Schedule

March 13 & 14

5:15 p.m. Kevin McCarthy

8:15 a.m. Janet Moses

10:45 a.m. Sr. Bernadette

INCOME TAX

If you would like to have a record of your donations to the Church for tax purposes, please fill in your envelope number, name and address or email and place it in the collection basket. A statement will be sent to you.

Envelope No. _____

Name _____

Address _____ or

Email address _____

What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, March 8, St. John of God

8:00 a.m., Mass: Lorraine Kolo, Church

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

2:00 p.m., Rosary: Parish Office

7:00 p.m., Mercy Bible Study, Parish Office

TUESDAY, March 9, St. Frances of Rome

9:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

WEDNESDAY, March 10

9:00 a.m., School Mass: Sally Fleeer, Church

6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

THURSDAY, March 11

8:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

7:00 p.m., Adult Children of Alcoholics Meeting, Church Basement

FRIDAY, March 12

8:00 a.m., Mass: Margaret Paul, Church

10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Confessions, Church

5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m., Confessions, Church

7:00 p.m., Stations of the Cross, Church.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

SATURDAY, March 13

11:00-12:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church

5:15 p.m., Mass: Clarence Hupp, birthday, Church

SUNDAY, March 14

8:15 a.m., Mass: Margaret Paul, Church

9:15 a.m., Sunday School, Parish Office

10:45 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church

Readings for Week of March 8

Mon.	2 Kgs 5:1-15b	Lk 4:24-30
Tues.	Dn 3:25, 34-43	Mt 18:21-35
Wed	Dt 4:1, 5-9	Mt 5:17-19
Thurs.	Jer 7:23-28	Lk 11:14-23
Fri.	Hos 14:2-10	Mk 12:28-34
Sat.	Hos 6:1-6	Lk 18:9-14
Sun	2 Chr 36:14- 16, 19-23	Jn 3:14-21

LENT

Pray + Fast + Give