

# SAINT CECILIA'S CHURCH

Genesis, by Johann Wenzel Pete



### WITH THE HELP OF SAINT CECILIA PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Dear brothers and sisters,

As Lent begins, we read about how God created the world, which reminds me how new beginnings are always in God's plan for us. That's why he gives us Lent.

Perhaps it's been a while since you've been to confession? How about beginning again? Confessions are on Thursday night at 6:30pm, Saturday morning at 9:30am and Saturday afternoon at 3:00pm. There's an examination of conscience in this week's bulletin that can help you to prepare for that!

Perhaps it's been a while since you went to Mass during the week? We've added a 4:00pm Mass on Wednesdays for Lent, so you can go Monday or Tuesday at 6:30am, Wednesdays at 6:30am or 4:00pm, Thursdays at 9:00am or 6:00pm, or Friday or Saturday at 9:00am. So many choices!

Perhaps there's someone you have been meaning to forgive or to help? Maybe that woman at work or your aunt or the old man who just went into the nursing home who has no family? Now's the time!

God provides us with all kinds of new beginnings, just as we have been preparing for the renewal and restoration of our beloved Church. While I have been teaching an Introduction to Gothic Architecture in our incomparable Church, we have been making plans for how best to preserve and renew it for the next chapter of the Church on French Hill.

As soon as the threat of snow and frost abates, you will see scaffolding towers appear so that we can execute the careful plans which the engineers and contractors have formulated to make us fully leak-proof. Then, a couple of months later, scaffolding and paint brushes will appear on the inside of the Church. More on those plans a little later in Lent.

By the way, we made an incredible discovery this week....wonderful news! Under the poor old yellow carpet we discovered a seemingly intact slate floor! We polished a small section outside the sanctuary door to the Chapel and it looks like it is in great shape. That means that all we have to do is restore what we already have and we will, once again, have a beautiful stone floor on the sanctuary.

But I get ahead of myself. So much more to come in this regard. Until then, please know of my prayers for a Blessed Lent!

In the Lord,

Monsignor Moroney



#### Please pray for those who are ill, especially:

Jenn, Doris, Elena, Doris Maillet, Stephanie Matthews, Jeannine Reid, Dick "The Barber" Fontaine, Terri Cote and David DiGeronimo, If you know

someone who needs prayers, call the rectory or email us at office@stceciliachurch.net and we will add them to our list for a month or so.



Thanks to all who picked up a flyer and plan to participate in this year's Lenten Food Drive. Catholic Charities reports an increased need due to effects of the pandemic, the ever rising food prices, and the high cost of rent in our area. Next weekend will be be collecting: canned spaghetti sauce, canned or boxed pasta and rice, boxed macaroni and cheese, coffee (instant and ground), tea, and iced tea mix.



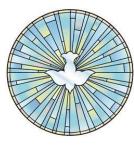
#### Wednesday Lenten Soup Supper Serving 4:30pm - 6:30pm

This week's menu: Chicken Fricot



Free will offerings will be accepted for the benefit of the St. Vincent de Paul

#### **CONFIRMATION CLASSES FOR ADULTS**



Confirmation is the completion of Baptism, the giving of the full power of a Christian. "Confirmation" means a strengthening – this sacrament strengthens and increases what we receive at Baptism, particularly the power of bearing witness to Christ. If you or someone you know has not received the Sacrament of Confirmation, classes will begin on Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-7:30 PM in the Parish Center. Adults must be over the age of 18, baptized and have made First Communion to attend this class. Please contact Pat Secino at the Rectory 978-537-6541 to register for these classes.

#### **BIBLE STUDY**



We will begin our Bible Study on Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:00am in the Parish Center on the **Study of Exodus Part II**. Beginning with the insecurity of the desert wanderings, to encountering God on Mt. Sinai and the construction of the tent dwelling, God's people will learn what it means to be part of the covenant with the one who liberates and also gives the law to guide and direct them. Please contact Pat Secino at the Rectory 978-537-6541 for more information.

Last Weekend's Collection was \$6,894.29. Thank You!

#### **OPERATION RICE BOWL**

Pick up your "Rice Bowl" to benefit the poor and the hungry. Seventy-five percent of the proceeds will be distributed by Catholic Relief Services to support life-saving programs in

over one hundred countries. Twenty-five percent of your donations will be used in programs to alleviate hunger and poverty in the Diocese of Worcester.



## **Discovering Christ**



### **An Inquiry and Meditation**

With Monsignor Francis Kelly

TUESDAY NIGHTS FEBRUARY 28<sup>th,</sup> MARCH 7<sup>th</sup> and MARCH 14<sup>th</sup> FROM 7:00-8:30pm at Saint Cecilia Parish in Leominster

Prepare for Holy Week by this prayerful reflection on the mission and mystery of Jesus, including a study of the Passion and Resurrection. The course is based on Monsignor Kelly's book, *Discovering Christ: An Inquiry and Meditation,* a copy of which will be provided to all participants. If you would like to join us live or by Zoom, send an email today to tempio@aol.com. Pre-registration is required and a donation of \$25 is requested, although not required.



Monsignor Francis Kelly, a priest of Diocese of Worcester for fifty-nine years, is a Canon emeritus of Saint Peter's Basilica, former Rector of Pope Saint John XXIII Seminary in Brighton and former Director of Religious Education for the Diocese of Worcester. He also served with then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger on the Committee which prepared the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for publication.



#### First Sunday of Lent February 26, 2023 RECEIVING THE BODY OF CHRIST

Today we hear about the beginning. God breathes life into the clay of the ground and creates man. Then, in the fulness of time, the Word through whom man was created, becomes man, incarnate of the Virgin Mary, for our salvation. In the words of the Fourth Evangelist: "...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son of the Father."<sup>1</sup>

The Devil, in today's Gospel, tempts the Word made Flesh to turn stones into bread, presumably to quench the human hunger he feels after forty days in the desert. But the Lord's response is intriguing:

One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

Simple bread, the Lord tells the devil, will never quench human hungers. Only the Word which comes from the mouth of God. Jesus is the Word of God, who will, ironically, give us the *bread from heaven*, which will quench every human hunger and without which no man can truly live.

The Lord's next words, taken in this Eucharistic context, are even more remarkable, as he tells the devil:

The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.

For only the Word made Flesh is worthy of worship. Our beloved Pope Emeritus has reminded us that in the "perpetual and living heritage" of the Eucharist the consecrated species is exposed to view in Eucharistic adoration "so that each one may encounter *Jesus who passes* as happened on the roads of Galilee, Samaria and Judea; in order that each one, in receiving it, may be healed and renewed by the power of his love."<sup>2</sup>

The same Body of the Word Made Flesh that walked "the roads of Galilee, Samaria and Judea" in his Body and Blood, soul and divinity. May we cherish so great a mystery.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> John 1:14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, 7 June 2007.



## Catholic Considerations for Our Earthly Passing

We know earthly death is not the end, but rather the door through which we must pass to gain eternal life. Because of our belief and hope in the Resurrection, we can face death not with fear, but with preparation. Although certainly not comprehensive, the following considerations are provided as starting points for understanding and preparing for this transition, whether it is imminent or not.

#### NOW AND AT THE HOUR OF OUR DEATH<sup>1</sup>

We prepare for eternal life by choosing to love and follow God now, in our daily lives and decisions. For example, through prayer and regular reception of the sacraments, especially Confession and the Eucharist, we obtain grace to live in everdeeper communion with God and with one another in lives of faith, charity, and justice.<sup>2</sup> We ask for Our Blessed Mother's help now, and we entrust ourselves to her further as we "surrender 'the hour of our death' wholly to her care."<sup>3</sup>

#### FORMING OUR CONSCIENCES.....

Our journey with Christ naturally includes equipping our consciences to make morally good judgments and acting accordingly.<sup>4</sup> Learning about the dignity of human life and the indispensable respect for it,<sup>5</sup> as well as applicable principles for medical care, is particularly important in preparing for our eventual passing.

Some bishops offer guides applying moral principles to local legal options.<sup>6</sup> Parish and online resources are also widely available for careful and prayerful study, and the *Ethical and Religious Directives* from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops give direction for health care services to those who are seriously ill or dying.<sup>7</sup>

#### A NOTE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES......

No summary can substitute for thorough catechesis, but some general principles are clear. We are entrusted by God with the gift of life, and in response, we care for our lives and health in obedience and gratitude to our Creator.

This obliges us to make use of appropriate, effective medical care. However, even effective treatments may at times impose such a great burden that we, in good conscience, may forgo or discontinue them. This applies even to life-sustaining treatments. Of course, nothing should be done or deliberately omitted to hasten death.<sup>8</sup>

The Church affirms the inviolable dignity of every person, regardless of the duration or extent of the person's incapacity or dependency. Nothing diminishes the unchangeable dignity and sanctity of a person's life, or the obligation to protect and care for it. In principle, assisted feeding and hydration should be provided unless it cannot sustain life or is unduly burdensome to the patient, or if death is imminent whether it is provided or not.

Moreover, no one should choose suicide, nor counsel or assist another to take his or her own life.

#### DISCERNING TREATMENT OPTIONS......

Judging the effect and burden of treatments can be difficult, especially as death draws near. To understand health facts and treatment options, we need professional medical advice. To understand Catholic moral teaching, we need to consult Church teaching and those who can faithfully explain it.

#### SPEAKING WITH LOVED ONES.....

After informing our consciences, we need to inform our families. If we are unable to make decisions, they most often have legal authority to make surrogate decisions on our behalf. Or we may designate a health care agent by a durable power of attorney.

Though it is often helpful to also have written, signed documentation, no living will "check box" can ever replace clear conversations about our faith-guided principles. The best option is to choose an agent who will make medical decisions on our behalf in accord with our Catholic faith and Church teaching. We should also inform family of our pastoral care preferences, and make clear that after death, we desire prayer, funeral rites, and Christian burial.<sup>9</sup>

#### ACCOMPANIMENT BEFORE AND AFTER DEATH<sup>10</sup> .....

Those who are sick should not be alone, as multiple popes have reminded us in messages for the annual World Day of the Sick. Patients who have serious or life-threatening illnesses, as well as their families, can be provided with physical, psychological, and spiritual care through team-based palliative care.<sup>11</sup> Hospice care can provide similar integrated care for those nearing death and for their families.

Pastoral care is integral to both palliative and hospice care, and includes making available the Eucharist, Confession, Anointing of the Sick, and Viaticum.<sup>12</sup> It also includes supportive

1 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed., 2012 ff.

- 2 See Pope Francis, General Audience, 27 November 2013 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana), https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/ documents/papa-francesco\_20131127\_udienza-generale.html.
- 3 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2677.
- 4 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1776 ff. United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006), pg. 314.
- 5 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1701 ff., 2258 ff.
- 6 Many state conferences of Catholic Bishops have published materials which may help you with decisions about advance directives. To find these and other resources, contact your local diocesan Respect Life office. A directory is available at www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/ diocesan-pro-life-offices.cfm.
- 7 Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 5th ed, (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2009), http://www.usccb.org/about/doctrine/ethical-and-religious-directives/. (See especially Part 5.)
- 8 See Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), 15.
- 9 A summary is found here: http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/ bereavement-and-funerals/overview-of-catholic-funeral-rites.cfm.

prayer<sup>13</sup> and support for decision makers. It may be helpful to familiarize ourselves with local services available in preparation for our own passing or that of loved ones.

Even after death, accompaniment continues. Our prayers can help those who are being purified in Purgatory, so it is a spiritual work of mercy to pray for those who have died.<sup>14</sup>

#### HOPE IN THE RESURRECTION.....

Those who die in God's grace and friendship live forever with Christ. Heaven is not an abstract idea, but a true and lasting relationship with God that is beyond all earthly description and understanding. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and everlasting life by preparing now, in hope, for our passage from this life into eternal life.

We need not fear. Christ is with us.

- 10 Pope Francis uses the term "accompaniment" often; see its many occurrences in *Evangelii gaudium*.
- 11 Pope Francis, "Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants in the Plenary of the Pontifical Academy for Life" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/ march/documents/papa-francesco\_20150305\_pontificia-accademia-vita. html.
- 12 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1499–1532. See also Pope Benedict XVI, "Message of the Holy Father on the Occasion of the Twentieth World Day of the Sick" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012), https://w2.vatican. va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/sick/documents/hf\_ben-xvi\_ mes\_20111120\_world-day-of-the-sick-2012.html.
- 13 See for example these prayers at the time of dying and death http:// www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/bereavement-and-funerals/prayersfor-death-and-dying.cfm.
- 14 Pope Francis, General Audience, 30 November 2016, (Libreria Editrice Vaticana), https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2016/ documents/papa-francesco\_20161130\_udienza-generale.html

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#### **FEBRUARY 26, 2023**

### THIS WEEK AT SAINT CECILIA

Vigil



Saturday February 25

3:00pm Confessions (Church)

**4:00pm Mass** for Deceased members of Leger & Poirier family, friends and neighbors, by Marcel and Annette (Church)

Sunday February 26 First Sunday of Lent

7:00am Mass for James A. Ziegler, by the Connor family (Church)

9:45am Mass for Alice Arsenault (1<sup>st</sup> anniv.), by the Arsenault family (Church)

9:30am-11:00am RCIA Group (Rectory)

9:45am-11:00am Catechist of the Good Shepherd, and other classes through Grade six (Parish Center) **11:15am Mass** for Arthur J. Cormier (29<sup>th</sup> anniv.), by Jan & Wayne Doucet (Church)

Monday February 27 Lenten Weekday

**6:30am Mass** for Parishioners of St. Cecilia's Parish (Chapel) 3:00pm Rosary and Divine Mercy Novena (Chapel)

7:00pm - 8:15pm Grades Seventh thru Tenth Religious Education (Parish Center)

Tuesday February 28 Lenten Weekday

6:30am Mass for Dorothy Grazioso, by Yvonne Richard (Chapel)

3:00pm Rosary and Divine Mercy Novena (Chapel)

4:00pm 5:30pm Sacramental Prep Class A (Parish Center)

6:30pm - Discovering Christ: An Inquiry and Meditation, with Monsignor Kelly (Rectory)

Wednesday March 1 Lenten Weekday

6:30am Mass for Moe Giardano, by Theresa Gaffney (Chapel)

3:00pm Rosary and Divine Mercy Novena (Chapel)

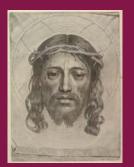
4:00pm Mass for Sister Clemence Croteau, DHS (30th day) (Chapel)

6:30pm - Leominster Parish Mission - Evening Prayer (Our Lady of the Lake Church)

7:00pm Rosary (Chapel)

Thursday March 2 Lenten Weekday

**9:00am Mass** for Lena Albert, by Anita Leger & Jeannette Wiseman & family (Chapel) 3:00pm Rosary and Divine Mercy Novena (Chapel) **6:00pm Mass** for Guillermina Aurora Santana Mejia, by her grandson (Chapel)



The Divine Face, by Claude Mellan, 1649

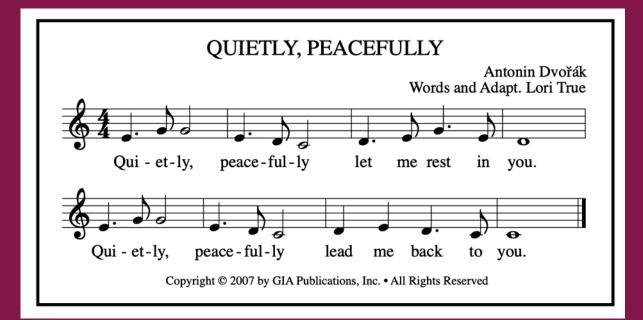


Breaking Bread, page 73

Friday	March 3	Lenten Weekday	
<ul> <li>9:00am Mass for Souls in Purgatory (Chapel) Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament follows Mass</li> <li>Noon Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament (Chapel)</li> <li>3:00pm Rosary and Divine Mercy Novena (Chapel)</li> <li>6:00pm Stations of the Cross (Church)</li> <li>6:30pm BINGO (Parish Center) Doors open 4pm; Game starts 6:30pm</li> </ul>			
Saturday	March 4	Lenten Weekday	
9:00am Mass for Therese Hamel (14 <sup>th</sup> anniv.), by the family (Chapel) 9:00am - 10:30am Sacramental Prep Class B (Parish Center) 9:30am Confessions (Church) 10:00am - Noon: Exploring Gothic Architecture (Church - pre-registration required)			
Saturday	March 4	Vigil	Breaking Bread, page 76
3:00pm Confessions (Church) <b>4:00pm Mass</b> for Herve Poirier, by Yvette Richard (Church)			
Sunday	March 5	Second Sunday of Lent	Breaking Bread, page 76
7:00am Mass for Rita M. Daigle, by Marie-Germaine & Richard (Church) 9:45am Mass for Jeanne Morrissey, by Patrick & Janice Goguen (Church) 9:30am-11:00am RCIA Group (Rectory)			

9:45am-11:00am Catechist of the Good Shepherd, and other classes through Grade six (Parish Center) **11:15am Mass** for Rita, Ben and George, by the family (Church)

### A NEW SONG FOR LENT





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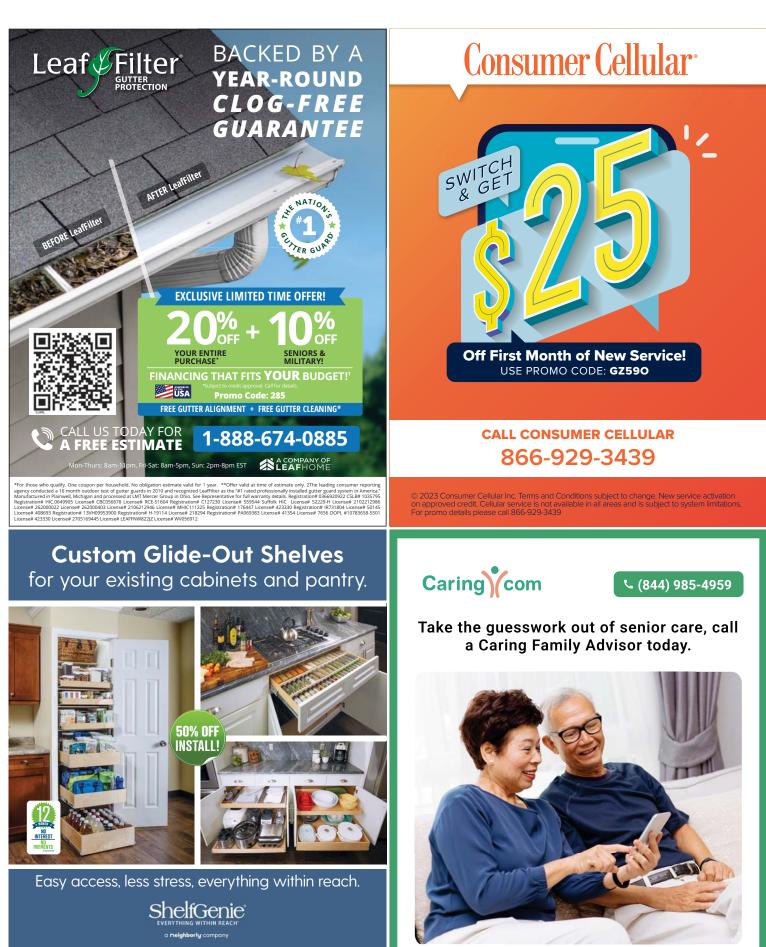
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