

SAINT CECILIA'S CHURCH

Samaritan Woman at the Well Catacombs of Via Latina, Rome



WITH THE HELP OF SAINT CECILIA PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am delighted to announce that Bishop McManus has chosen to award the Mother Theresa Pro-Life Award to our own Deacon Robert and Irene Connor. What a wonderful choice the Bishop has made. I know of no couple who has done more to defend life and live out the Gospel of Life! The award will be presented at the Bishop's Pro-Life Mass on Friday, March 24th at 10am at Saint Paul's Cathedral. I encourage as many of you as possible to be present

for this wonderful event. Congratulations, Bob and Irene!

Speaking of Congratulations, our friends at the Spanish American Cultural Center recently received a generous donation from Rollstone Bank and Trust. I was happy to join Neddy Latimer, Executive Director of SAC and some of the young people of the after-school program for the presentation. How wonderful to have the classrooms in the Parish Hall buzzing with activity every weekday afternoon and how grateful we are for the new income stream provided to the parish by this wonderful collaboration!



Lots to report on the repair of the gutters, now that April is in sight (if it will just stop snowing!) The final water testing is scheduled for the end of March, with the repairs to masonry, drains and roof surfaces to commence soon thereafter. On the next page you will see the schematics being used for pricing. I can't wait for the engineers to certify that we have definitively repaired the sources of the leaks, so we can get in to the interior repairs and restorations.

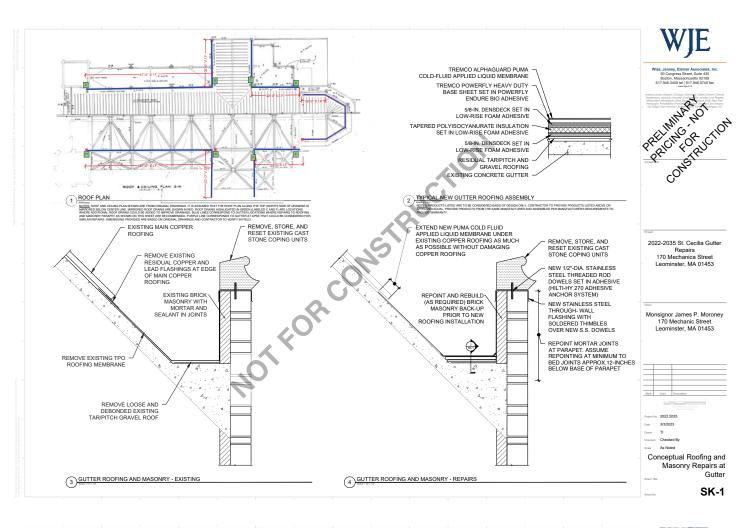
Speaking of which, within the next two weeks you will be seeing the publication of our preliminary plans for repair and restoration of Saint Cecilia's magnificent Church. We have been working with Rohn Design on everything from color schemes to liturgical enhancements, restoration of the sanctuary floor, lighting, etc. The Memorial Brochure, which should be published this month, will provide opportunities for people to donate towards various aspects of the project in memory of a deceased (or living) loved one. We will undertake each of these restorations and enhancements only once sufficient funds have been pledged.

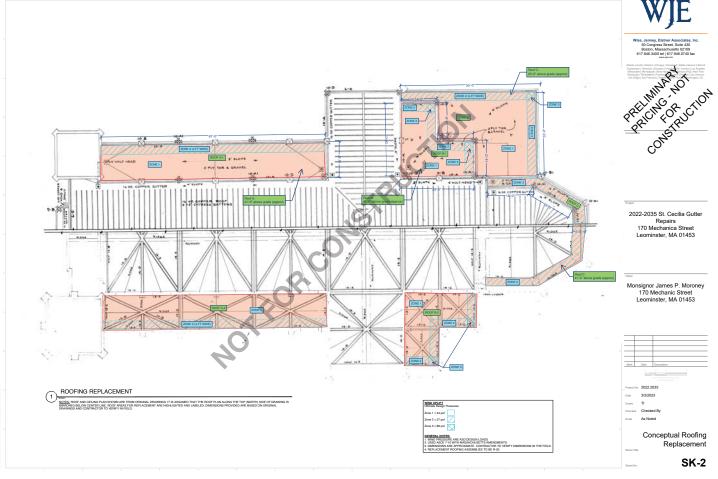
Which reminds me, the memorial plaques with the names of all the generous folks who made the Chapel of Divine Mercy and Saint Joseph possible have been mounted on the wall outside the Chapel. While we made every effort to get everything correct, if you notice any errors, we can always correct them in the future. It is my hope that these plaques will remind people for generations to come of your immense generosity.

In the Lord,

Monsignor Moroney







Please pray for those who are ill, especially:

June Roy, José Dhiogo, Jenn, Doris, Elena, Doris Maillet, Stephanie Matthews, Jeannine Reid and Dick "The Barber" Fontaine. 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.



At this midpoint in the Lenten Food Drive we offer thanks to all who faithfully contribute to its success. Your kindness makes a big difference in the lives of many in our community.

Next weekend we will be collecting: canned meats, canned tuna, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, instant potatoes, baked beans and canned vegetables.

Wednesday Lenten Soup Supper Dining In 4:00pm - 6:00pm Take Out 4:00pm - 6:30pm

This week's menu: Beef Barley



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

LEOMINSTER PARISHES

Continues this Wednesday, March 15 at 6:30pm Adoration and Benediction "Transformation in Christ" at Saint Anna Church

OPERATION RICE BOWL LENTEN MISSION 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.







The Knights of Columbus council #16479 is having an open house for new Members this Thursday, March 16 at 6:30PM in the St Leo's School conference room. The Knights of Columbus' principles of Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism serve as the basis of the Order's core values which are Integrity, Professionalism, Excellence and Respect. Here's an opportunity for you to stop in and learn more about our organization.

> **Last Weekend's Collection** was \$9,853.79. Thank You!



Diocese of Worcester Office of the Bishop 49 Elm Street Worcester, Alassachusetts 01609

DISPENSATION

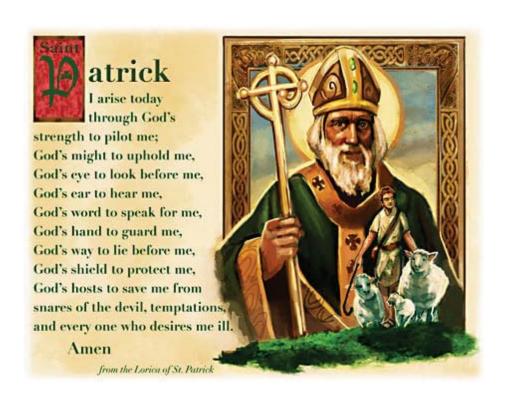
The Liturgical Commemoration of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, March 17, is observed this year, 2023 on a Friday of Lent that the Church prescribes as a Day of Abstinence from meat. In light of the importance of this feast day for many in the Diocese of Worcester, I am granting a dispensation from the rule of abstinence on Friday, March 17, 2023.

I ask that those who take advantage of this dispensation perform another act of penance in its place on that day.

Most Reverend Robert J. McMan

Bishop of Worcester.

February 27, 2023



THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

By Pope Benedict XVI

This third Sunday of Lent is characterized by the Jesus' famous conversation with the Samaritan woman, recounted by the Evangelist John. The woman went every day to draw water from an ancient well that dated back to the Patriarch Jacob and on that day she found Jesus sitting beside the well, "wearied from his journey" (Jn 4:6). St Augustine comments: "Not for nothing was Jesus tried.... The strength of Christ created you, the weakness of Christ recreated you.... With his strength he created us, with his weakness he came to seek us out" (*In Ioh*, Ev., 15, 2).

Jesus' weariness, a sign of his true humanity, can be seen as a prelude to the Passion with which he brought to fulfillment the work of our redemption. In the encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, the topic of Christ's "thirst" stands out in particular. It culminated in his cry on the Cross "I thirst" (Jn 19:28). This thirst, like his weariness, had a physical basis. Yet Jesus, as St Augustine says further, "thirsted for the faith of that woman" (In Ioh. Ev. 15,11), as he thirsted for the faith of us all.

God the Father sent him to quench our thirst for eternal life, giving us his love, but to give us this gift Jesus asks for our faith. The omnipotence of Love always respects human freedom; it knocks at the door of man's heart and waits patiently for his answer.

In the encounter with the Samaritan woman the symbol of water stands out in the foreground, alluding clearly to the sacrament of Baptism, the source of new life for faith in God's Grace. This Gospel, in fact is part of the ancient journey of the catechumen's preparation for Christian Initiation, which took place at the great Easter Vigil. "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him", Jesus said, "will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jn 4:14).

This water represents the Holy Spirit, the "gift" par excellence that Jesus came to bring on the part of God the Father.

Whoever is reborn by water and by the Holy Spirit, that is, in Baptism, enters into a real relationship with God, a filial relationship, and can worship him "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:23, 24), as Jesus went on to reveal to the Samaritan woman. Thanks to the meeting with Jesus Christ and to the gift of the Holy Spirit, the human being's faith attains fulfillment, as a response to the fullness of God's revelation.

Each one of us can identify himself with the Samaritan woman: Jesus is waiting for us, especially in this Season of Lent, to speak to our hearts, to my heart. Let us pause a moment in silence, in our room or in a church or in a separate place. Let us listen to his voice which tells us "If you knew the gift of God...". May the Virgin Mary help us not to miss this appointment, on which our true happiness depends.



Third Sunday of Lent

March 12, 2023

OUENCHING OUR HUNGER AND THIRST



How thirsty we are! Like the Chosen People wandering in the desert,¹ we grumble that we are thirsty. Perhaps we are thirsty for love or for justice or for peace. But, nonetheless, we thirst.

God heard the prayer of the Chosen People, and through the action of Moses brought water from a rock. So too, God quenches our thirst with the Precious Blood of his Son, flowing from his wounded side, having been offered for us on the altar of the Cross. This is what the Lord means when he says, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink."²

This reality is at the heart of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. She comes to believe that Jesus can give her living water that will ever satisfy her thirst. For he has told her that he is the "spring of water welling up to eternal life."

We are reminded of his words after the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

Or, as the Preface for the Feast of the Precious Blood reminds us,

...raised up high on the Cross, he gave himself up for us with a wonderful love and poured out blood and water from his pierced side, the wellspring of the Church's Sacraments, so that, won over to the open heart of the Savior, all might draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.⁵

¹ Cf. Exodus 17:3-7.

² John 7:37.

³ John 4:14.

⁴ John 6:35.

⁵ Roman Missal, Preface for the Precious Blood.

THIS WEEK AT SAINT CECILIA



Saturday March 11 Vigil Breaking Bread, page 77

3:00pm Confessions (Church)

4:00pm Mass for Thomas Tuttle (9th anniv.), by his wife, Carol (Church)

March 12 Third Sunday of Lent Sunday Breaking Bread, page 77

7:00am Mass for Roland Lortie (2nd anniv.), by friend, Larry Gladding (Church)

9:45am Mass for Anna Laverdiere, by her children (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 Paul Roy (4th anniv.), by Jeannette & Lesley (Church)

Monday March 13 Lenten Weekday

6:30am Mass for Jeannette Brow, by last will (Chapel)

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

7:00pm - 8:00pm Reconciliation & Adoration Grades Seventh thru Tenth Religious Education (Church)

Tuesday March 14 Lenten Weekday

6:30am Mass for Gladys Pedroza, by her family (Chapel)

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

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

7:00pm - Discovering Christ: An Inquiry and Meditation, with Monsignor Kelly (Rectory)

Wednesday March 15 Lenten Weekday

6:30am Mass for Joan Uschold, by her son, Bert (Chapel)

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

4:00pm Mass for Father Richard Roger (Chapel)

6:30pm - Leominster Parish Mission - Adoration and Benediction (Saint Anna Church)

6:30pm - 7:30pm Adult Confirmation Class (Parish Center)

7:00pm Rosary (Chapel)

Thursday March 16 Lenten Weekday

9:00am Mass for Lena Albert, by Karen Albert, Kyla Kenney & Jane Burgoyne (Chapel)

9:30am - 11:00am Bible Study - Exodus II (Parish Center)

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

6:00pm Mass for The Bilodeau family, by Priscilla Gates (Chapel)

6:30pm Confessions (Church)

Friday March 17 Saint Patrick

9:00am Mass for The Richard family, by Ken & Jeannie Richard (Chapel)

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament follows Mass

Noon Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament (Chapel)

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

6:00pm Stations of the Cross (Church)

6:30pm BINGO (Parish Center) Doors open 4pm; Game starts 6:30pm

Saturday March 18 Lenten Weekday

9:00am Mass for Marguerite (Maggie) Cormier, by Germaine Doiron (Chapel)

9:30am Confessions (Church)

9:00am-10:30am Sacramental Prep Class B (Parish Center)

Saturday March 18 Vigil Breaking Bread, page 80

3:00pm Confessions (Church)

4:00pm Mass for Doris Constant (5th anniv.), by Joyce & Paul Latuga (Church)

Sunday March 19 Fourth Sunday of Lent

Breaking Bread, page 80

7:00am Mass for Irene Cristofono (20th anniv.), by the family (Church) **9:45am Mass** for Robert Kurt Allan (1st anniv.), by his mother (Church)

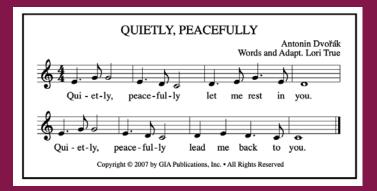
9:30am-11:00am RCIA Group (Rectory)

9:45am-11:00am Catechist of the Good Shepherd, and other classes through (Parish Center)

11:15am Mass for Robert & Loretta Corda (anniv.) by Priscilla Gates (Church)

12:30pm Baptism of Kane & Kaia Emma

A NEW SONG FOR LENT



This weekend, Maysoon Khair of Star of Bethlehem handicrafts will be in the vestibule with carved olive wood religious handicrafts made by the students of the School of Joy, a school for children with learning difficulties located just outside Bethlehem. Whatever you purchase will go directly to helping Christian families in Bethlehem and the important work of the school. Thank you for your generosity!



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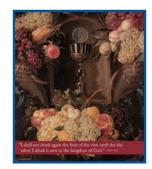
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1 John 4:8

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