

Fourth Sunday of Lent

“The Parable of the Loving Father”

Sisters and brothers—
with the psalmist we pray,
“**Taste and see the goodness of the Lord!**”

Imagine, St. Paul among us preaching with passion and vibrancy....**“that whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away: “behold, new things have come. And all this is from God.”**

Yet, within society there are a lot of conflicting messages as in the site of an old New England Meeting House in Enfield, Connecticut. Here, there is a historical marker that commemorates the sermon of Jonathan Edwards, a famous New England “**fire and hell preacher.**” His sermon was entitled: “**A Letter from an Angry God!**” I dare say, he and St. Paul need to have a conversation.

The timeliness of Paul’s message is quite clear for us today—“*God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*”

What about us in the 21st century Church? The message in a local church bulletin reads—“**Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed loved and forgiven.**” (words of Pope Francis) Our Holy Father is proclaiming a message that echoes loud and strong with the Gospel of Jesus. This morning, let’s take some time to unravel the “Parable of the Prodigal Son,” or more aptly called “**The Parable of the Loving Father.**” Turning to the **Gospel of Luke Chapter 15**, Jesus relays this classical story of forgiveness and of mercy. Huddled around Jesus were the tax collectors and sinners, who came to hear him preach.

Under their breadth some of the Scribes and Pharisees murmured, “*This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.*” At this, Jesus began the parable of a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father: “**give me a share of the estate that is coming to me.**”

So, the father divided up the property. Some days later this younger son collected all his belongings and went off to a distant land, where he squandered all his money...Alas, coming to his senses, he said: “How many hired hands at my father’s place have more than enough to eat, while here I am starving.” “I will break away and return to my father and say to him, **Father, I have sinned against God and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son...**”

Church—let us take a closer look at the cast of characters found in this parable. There is the **prodigal son, the older brother, and the Loving Father.** Beginning with the **prodigal**—who sought an earlier inheritance from his father’s estate, recklessly spends it while he chooses to live life in the “**fast lane.**” Then, there is the “**younger brother**” who coming to his senses begins to turn his life around. Returning home, he comes to his senses and turns his life around.

The **younger brother**, upon returning home, confesses—up to his father that he had sinned. That he was selfish! That he was wasteful! And that he had wanted to be reconciled with his Dad! Ultimately, he wanted to come home!

Shifting gears, let us take a closer look from **the heart of the Loving Father.** Even though he was a distance from home, his father saw him coming back and was deeply moved. He ran out to meet him and threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. The father’s response is one of unconditional love and compassion for his son! Showing the face of God towards his son and that is **MERCY!** (says, Pope Francis)

Overwhelmed by joy and gladness to see his son alive and at home—the father quickly tells his servants to bring out the **finest robe** and put it on him! **Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet.** Then taking a fatted calf killed it. Let us celebrate because of this son of mine was dead and has come back **to LIFE! He was lost and is found.**

The Father embodies God’s love known as **HESED!** Simply defined as **–unconditional love....with a readiness to forgive....and always showing to be merciful.** Hence, the Prodigal comes before his father in his littleness/humbled by his sinfulness, as he places his trust in His Father’s love and **unfailing mercy!**

Finally, there is one more son that demands our attention and that is **the Elder Son, who** upon returning home from work, hears the sound of dancing and music. Calling one of the servants to find out what is going on. The servant informs him that “your younger brother is home, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has him back in good health.

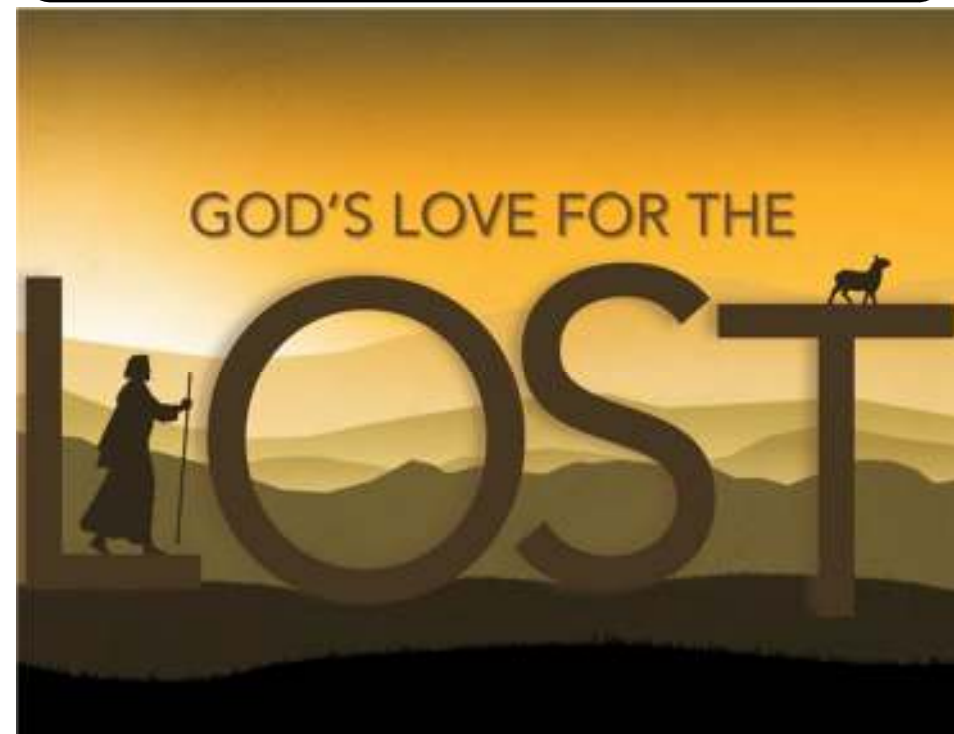
The Elder Son reacts in anger as his Father tries to plead with him to enter his home. He says—“for years now, I have slaved for you. I never disobeyed one of your orders, yet you never gave me so much as a kid goat to celebrate and rejoice! This brother of your was dead and has come back to life. **He was lost and is found!**

Taking a closer look at the Parable of the Loving Father, note that Jesus leaves the end of the parable wide open....Questions persist.....????? Did the older son get over his anger at his father’s generous love and forgiveness of his younger brother? Was the older brother or sister/reluctant to be moved by the amazing grace of God’s love? Where do you find yourself in this parable?

Church, **the Parable of the Loving Father** is our story. It speaks well of how our God wants us to know the depth and the breadth of his love for all of us. You see, there is nothing that we can do that will get God to stop loving or forgiving us. **God has no difficulty in “waiting for us to come to our senses and return home.”** The Parable of the Loving Father is our story and God’s invitation **to experience and to encounter His Divine Mercy!**

What are we waiting for? Our Father is already on the way to meet us in loving reconciliation!

St. Benedict the Moor Church



Our Mission

St. Benedict the Moor is a Catholic Christian Community that celebrates its African-American heritage and welcomes cultural diversity. Join us at the Table of the Eucharist as sisters and brothers in the Lord. We are committed to grow and diversify the Church through the new evangelization, family, catechesis, young adult ministry and outreach to the poor. In the spirit of the prophet Joshua, we can say:

“As for me and my household; we will serve the Lord.”

March 27, 2022

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

“Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.”

St Benedict the Moor Parish

Sunday Mass: 10:30 am
Daily Masses: Mon.,Wed.,Fri. 12:00
Tues.,Thurs. 11:00am
Saturday: 9 am

Holy Days of Obligation:
Mass: 12 noon & 6:30 pm
(Exceptions will be posted)
Sacrament of Penance: Divine Mercy
Room Saturday 9:30am
or by Appointment

Emergencies:
call Fr.Noel: 410-818-8149
Office: 706- 323-8300

Communications
Address: St. Benedict the Moor
2935 9th Street
Columbus, Georgia 31906

Pastor

Fr. Noel Danielewicz, OFM Conv.
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410-818-8149

Staff

Administrative Assistant
Deborah Thompson

Director of Religious Education
Gail Buffong
706-536-8468

Director of Outreach
Beverly Casimier

Music Ministry
Mary Beth Kozee/Joe Saulsbury

Office Hours:

Pastor: Monday-Friday 10-11:30 am
1:00-3:00 pm
Secretary: Monday-Tuesday 10-2 pm
Wednesday-Thursday 10-4 pm

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Church

2930 Thomas Street
Columbus, GA 31906

Community Hall/Office

2935 9th St.
Columbus GA 31906

Pastoral Concern

Pastoral Council Meeting

St. Benedict the Moor Pastoral Council met on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. The Council working together with Fr. Noel has approved the following schedule for Holy Week 2022.



1. **Palm Sunday of the Passion— April 10th 10:30 a.m.** will begin with an outdoor gathering before the Church. Palms will be blessed and the community will join in the opening procession into the Church.
2. **Chrism Mass—April 12th at 11:00 a.m. Cathedral—Basilica of St. John the Baptist in Savannah, Georgia.**
Blessing of Oils—
Oil of Catechumens
Oil of Chrism
Oil of the Sick
Renewal of Commitment of
Service to the Priesthood
3. **Mass of the Lord’s Supper— Holy Thursday— April 14th at 5:00 p.m.**
Washing of Hands
Institution of the Eucharist
Call to Service
Procession to the Altar of Repose
Adoration until 9:00 p.m.

Security surveillance will be in place. After Mass, there will be a light snack available for those coming from work.

Adoration List

6:15—7:00 p.m. Servers & Ushers
7:00—7:45 p.m. Lectors & Eucharistic Min.
7:45—8:30 p.m. Hospitality & Choir
8:30—9:00 p.m. All others.

4. **Good Friday of the Passion Service— April 15th at 3:00 p.m.**
Service of the Word (includes Stations)
Veneration of the Cross
Collection for the Shrines of the Holy Land
Communion Service

5. **Holy Saturday/The Easter Vigil April 16th at 6:30 p.m.**
Practice for the Easter Vigil at 11 a.m.

Service of the Word
Blessing of the New Fire
Easter Proclamation
Blessing of Holy Water
Renewal of Baptismal Vows
Liturgy of the Eucharist

Security Surveillance will be in place.

6. **Easter Sunday—The Mass of the Resurrection April 17th at 10:30 a.m.**

Renewal of Baptismal Vows
Light outdoor Reception

Ministry for Healthier Living

The next gathering of the ministry for healthier living will be on Friday, May 13th at 12 noon with Mass. It will incorporate exercise, lunch and games. Feel free to invite a friend.

ACA: Annual Catholic Appeal

The importance of contributing to the needs of the Church extends to being part of the Diocese of Savannah. This year’s GOAL for St. Benedict the Moor is \$14,605. To date we have already pledged: \$7,600 and have paid \$2,720. For those who have pledged and paid, we thank—you and for those who have not please do your share in meeting our goal. God bless your generosity!

Special Collection

This week we take up *The Catholic Relief Services Collection to reveal God’s love to our brothers and sisters in need.* This collection helps six Catholic agencies to provide relief and support for struggling communities and to work for peace and reconciliation among our marginalized brothers and sisters here and around the world. Please prayerfully consider how you can support the collection. Learn more about the collection at www.usccb.org/catholic-relief.

Worship and Pastoral Schedule

- Sunday, March 27, 2002 10:30 a.m.
Fourth Sunday of Lent “Laetare Sunday”
Church Family of St. Benedict the Moor
& Fran P. Danielewicz
- Monday, March 28, 2002 12:00 Noon
Lenten Weekday
+William Neely
- Tuesday, March 29, 2002 11:00a.m.
Lenten Weekday
for the health of Amanda Cole
Outreach Ministry 12 Noon
- Wednesday, March 30, 2002 12 Noon
Lenten Weekday
+Sister Thea Bowman, FSPA
- Thursday, March 31, 2002 11:00 a.m.
Lenten Weekday
+Virginia Leighton
Outreach Ministry 12 Noon
- Friday, April 1, 2002 12 Noon
Lenten Weekday
+Mary Pearson
Stations of the Cross 12:40 p.m.
- Saturday, April 2, 2002 9:00 a.m.
Lenten Weekday
+Alice Murphy
Sacrament of Penance/Confessions 9:30

Stewardship

Weekly Finance Report: March 20, 2022
Offertory: \$935.00 (online \$396.00)
Utilities: (online \$25.00)
Building Fund: \$120.00
Easter Flowers: \$215
Annual Catholic Appeal: (online \$100.00)

Our stewardship is an act of thanksgiving for everything we have and are. It is an act of personal response to our Baptismal call: to live in a faith community committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and committed to serve each other’s needs.

In Our Prayers

- Fr. Noel Danielewicz
Valentina Nejfelt
Helen Bell
Beverly Casimier
Amanda Cole
Mik Cole
Robert Cole
LaKeith Collier
Paul Danielewicz
Robert Dozier
Carl English
Carlos Gaslin
Yvonne Gilberti
Elizabeth Grey
Sarah Hicks
Ginnette Hughes
Lillian Humber
Cecelia Hyams
Sabrina Jackson
Clarence Johnson
Albertine Jones
Brittany Jones
Cecil Jones
Donald Julien
Earl King
Elvia King
- Veronica Mary Koleser
Lenny Korona
Richie LaBorde
Mittie Lewis
Brenda Malone
Delores McLeod
Ruben Meinhofer & Fam.
Denvey Nelson
Major Nettles
Cordell Parker
Gwendolyn Parker
Debra Pough
Evelyn Pough
Joe Ravalese
Joan Rogala
Adryonna Rutherford
David Savoy
Elaine Shorty
Lydia Sliva
Madeline Smith
Fannie Square
Friar Jude Surowiec
Emi Talbert
Dorothy Washington
Mamie Wooden