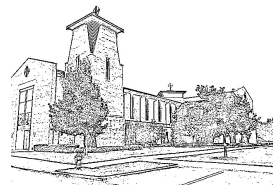


ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

Office Hours: Monday-Friday: 9:00 am-5:00 pm • Office is closed on Saturday & Sunday

Office: 972-542-4667 Fax: 972-542-4641 • 411 Paula Rd, McKinney, Texas 75069

Email: freugene@stmichaelmckinney.org • frjuancarlos@stmichaelmckinney.org
deaconjohn@stmichaelmckinney.org • deaconsid@stmichaelmckinney.org



THIRD SUNDAY OF

Lent

Jesus said,
"Destroy this temple
and in three days
I will raise it up."

John 2:19



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MARCH
4
2018

Parish Mission: As a Parish in the Catholic Diocese of Dallas

- † We Build our lives in the image of Christ through the Eucharistic Community.
- † We Evangelize by witness and action.
- † We Serve the diverse needs of our fellow parishioners and the broader community.
- † We Are Faithful Stewards, accountable to God, by thoughtfully sharing our time, talent and treasure.
- † We Foster Faith Formation by maintaining a dynamic learning environment.

Misión: Parroquia de la Diócesis Católica de Dallas

- † **Construimos** nuestras vidas a la imagen de Cristo a través de la Comunidad Eucarística.
- † **Evangelizamos** mediante el testimonio y la acción.
- † **Atendemos** las diversas necesidades de nuestros feligreses y la comunidad en general.
- † **Somos fieles mayordomos**, responsables ante Dios, al compartir cuidadosamente nuestro tiempo, talento y tesoro.
- † **Fomentamos la Formación** de Fe manteniendo un entorno de aprendizaje dinámico.

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

3/4 MARCH - THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT - MUSIC SUPPLEMENT

LITURGY OF THE WORD

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RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 95 (A)



CREED

page 20

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preface Acclamation

page 264

Memorial Acclamation

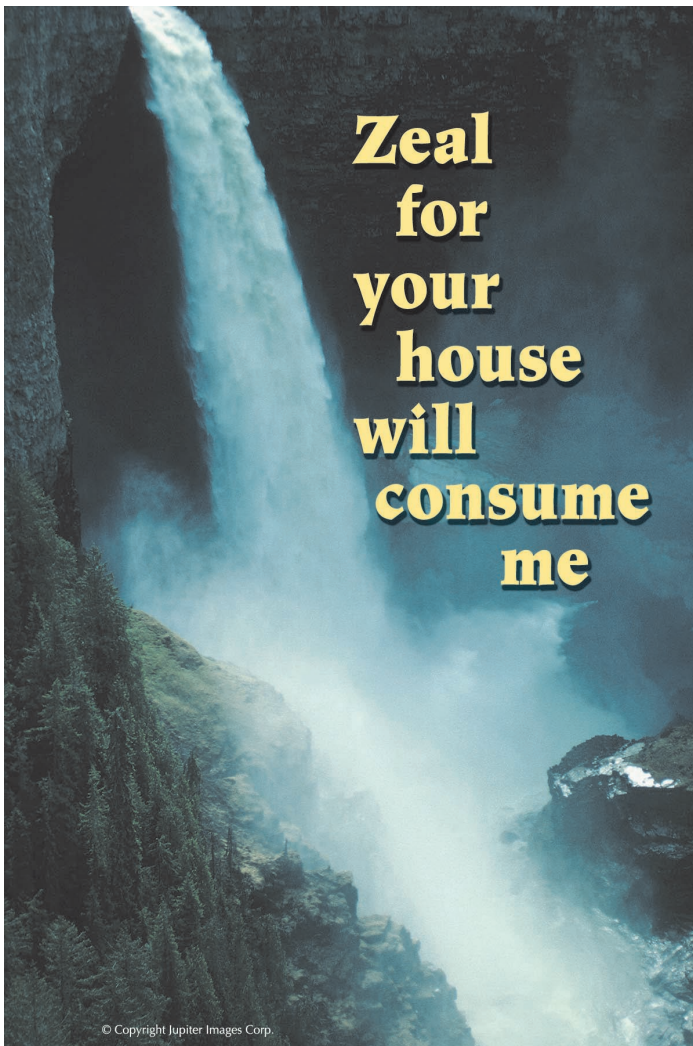
page 267

Doxology and Great Amen

CHANT

Agnus Dei

page 264



Mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us. The important thing is not to think much but to love much and so do that which best stirs you to love. Love is not great delight but desire to please God in everything.

St Theresa of Avila

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday: Vigil Mass 5:00 pm &
7:00 pm Spanish
Sunday: 8:00 am & 11:30 am English
Sunday: 9:30 am & 2:00 pm Spanish

Weekday Mass Schedule

Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 8:00 am
Tuesday & Thursday: 5:30 pm

Confessions: Thursday: 6:00-7:00 pm
Saturdays: 3:30 pm-4:30 pm

Adoration: Thursday 6:00 pm-7:00 pm

First Friday 8:30 am - 10:00 am
Spanish Mass at 7:00 pm

After Hours: Sick Call or Funeral
Requests: 469-667-7324

Funerals: Contact Valerie Stagaman
972-542-4667 ext 114.

Weddings: Contact Brenda Rivera
972-542-4667 ext: 102.

Six months prior to wedding date.

Holy Family

919 Spence Rd • P.O. Box 482

Van Alstyne, Texas 75495 • 903-482-6322

Sunday: 9:00 am English

Sunday: 12 noon Spanish

Thursday: 9:00 am English

Priests

Rev. Eugene Azorji
Rev. Juan Carlos Marin

Deacons

George Polcer, John Rapier,
Juan Jorge Hernandez,
Patrick Hayes, Sid Little

Parish Manager: Deacon John Rapier

Director of Ministry: Deacon Sid Little

Business Manager: Joe Olickan

Director of Liturgy: Valerie Stagaman

Director of Faith Formation: Ronnie Ricano

Youth Ministry: Deandria Gonzalez

Facilities: Emilio Zavala

Lenten Mission

Join Father Arthur Unachukwu for a parish Lenten mission on Thursday, March 8th at 7:00 p.m. (following the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament) and Friday, March 9th at 6:30 p.m. (after the stations of the Cross).

Misión Cuaresmal

Acompañen al diacono Guiseppe Spoto para una misión parroquial de cuaresma el jueves 15 de marzo a las 7:30 p.m. y el viernes 16 de marzo a las 7:00 p.m. (después de esta presentación tendremos el Viacrucis).

Mass Intentions Mar 3-10, 2018

Saturday, March 3

5:00 pm

Guadalupe Palacios for her birthday

† Alfonso Perez

7:00 pm

Sunday, March 4

8:00 am

Sanctity of Life

† Anita Perez

9:30 am

Rebeca Sarahi Solis Torres

Barbara Soltis

† Alfonso Perez

11:30 am

For the People

† Erwin Otto Guntermann

2:00 pm

Wendy Zelith Solis Torres

† Daniel Garcia Martinez

† Socorro Molina

Maria del Refugio Torres Mora

Monday, March 5

8:00 am

† Viola & Edward Burdelski

Tuesday, March 6

5:30 pm

† Michael J. Sullivan

Wednesday, March 7

8:00 am

All Students in our Faith Formation program and their families

Thursday, March 8

5:30 pm

† Burblis Family

Friday, March 9

8:00 am

† Al Frettoloso

Saturday, March 10

5:00 pm

† Jim Wisniewski

7:00 pm

† Carmela Villanueva

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

3/4 DE MARZO - TERCER DOMINGO DE CUARESMA - MÚSICA SUPLEMENTARIA

Renuevanos, Señor

Tom Ratto, y Armida Grajeda



1. Jesús toma nuestra mano, en séñanos a amar. Danos fuerza para vivir tu palabra.
Guíanos, Jesús con nuestros brazos abiertos para recibir al pobre sin esperanza.
2. Padre transórmanos. Abrázanos con te Espíritu. Ayúdanos a aceptarnos el uno al otro.
Rompe las cadenas de que dividen nuestros hogares, para así vivir tu santa voluntad.

Tom Ratto, y Armida Grajeda © 1998 Tom Ratto y Armida Grajeda
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La Gente Camina

Luis Alfredo Díaz-Britos

1. La gente camina cabizbaja y triste, los ojos perdidos en la inmensidad;
y entre tanta gente, y entre tantas voces, y entre tantas luces no le han visto a Él.
2. Él también camina entre todos ellos, un rostro radiante en la multitud;
y pocos le notan, mas cuando le notan, detienen su marcha y siguen tras Él.
3. Y así, poco a poco un pueblo se forma, que vive en el mundo pero no es de él,
que tiene problemas como todos ellos, pero no parece padecer por ello.
4. Este pueblo canta cuando el mundo llora, y cuando está en sombras este pueblo es luz,
porque todos ellos claramente han visto la luz que manaba del rostro de Cristo.

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**Yo soy el Señor, tu Dios . . .
No tendrás otros dioses fuera de mí.**

— Exodo 20:2a, 3



ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CATHOLIC CHURCH



Do you want to start the year off right?

Then come to our youth gatherings on Sundays 3-5:30 PM in St. Michaels Hall.

¿Quiere empezar el año justo?

Entonces, ven a nuestra reunión de jóvenes los domingos a las 3-5:30PM en el Salón San Miguel.



March 9 and March 23

Knights of Columbus will be offering

a Fish Fry in St Michael's Hall • 6:00 PM TO 8:00 PM

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

6:00 PM ENGLISH • 7:30 PM SPANISH

FAITH FORMATION CALENDAR CALENDARIO DE FORMACION DE FE

MARCH

12th-18th: Spring break! There will be no classes

19th: Bilingual Parent Meeting. Topic: What the world tells us about sexuality? Presenter: Todd Sluder

28-1st: Holy Week. There are no classes

MARZO

12-18: ¡Vacaciones de primavera! No habrá clases

19: Junta bilingüe de Padres. Tema: ¿Que nos dice el mundo acerca de la sexualidad? Temista: Todd Sluder

28-1º: Semana Santa. No hay clases

BAPTISMS

Baptisms: After the Baptism class, the Baptism can be scheduled by contacting the main office 972-542-4667.

Baptism **classes** are the fourth Saturday of each month, for the English, at 9:00 am in St Michael's Hall. **English Baptisms are at 9:00 am on the second Saturday of the month.**

Must register in the main office prior to attending the class.

Bautismos: Tras asistir a la clase sobre el Bautismo, puede contactar a la oficina parroquial al 972-542-4667 para fijar la fecha de su evento.

Las clases en español se llevan a cabo a las 7pm el último Lunes del mes. Los Bautismos en español se llevan a cabo a las 11am los 2do & 4to sábados del mes.

Favor de registrarse en las oficinas de la parroquia antes de asistir a la clase!

las horas para el registro del bautismo serán

Martes: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Miercoles: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

No habrá clase bautismal en marzo debido a la Semana Santa. Para bautizar en abril, debe registrarse para la clase el 26 de febrero.

Collection Totals February 25

Collection: \$ 20,941.00

Second Collection: \$ 8,558.00

Attendance: 4,021



We pray for those who need the healing touch of Christ/Oramos por aquellos necesitan el toque de Christ

Cameron Byrd, Vanessa Arnolite, Lorna Eileen Rivera, Agnes Bacalzo, Christy Lane, Emigdio Raymundo, Sam Bennett, Bertha Holley, Christy Graves, Chris Paul, Rachael Owens, Sherry Owens, Ken Le Forge, Cheryl Pushnack.

Please inform us of your loved one needing to be added to the prayer list, please call the parish office @ 972-542-4667.

Names will remain on the list for 1 month, at which time you can re-submit their names for prayers.

Para agregar o quitar a alguien de la lista de oraciones, por favor lláma a la oficina.

Baby Banks do more than help babies...



They also

Save lives

Convert hearts

Educate

Provide healing

Support families

Affect the nation

BABY BANK DONATION

Did you know that \$100 can provide learning aids for two parenting classes? \$200 can purchase a new crib. \$500 can help supply a Project Gabriel Mom with groceries for a month! Your Baby Bank donation, no matter how big or small, helps to provide these things. Please give generously!

THE LIGHT IS ON!

The Diocese of Dallas will once again offer *The Light is On for You*, two special evenings set aside for a diocesan-wide celebration of the sacrament. On **Wednesday, March 21st and Wednesday, March 28th**, parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Dallas will have their “*Lights On*” for the diocesan-wide evenings for Reconciliation.

LEGEND

Legend has it that Simon of Cyrene, a stranger who was forced to help Jesus carry his cross (Mark 15:21), became a follower of Christ, then a bishop in the early church, and eventually a saint. We are told that he suffered martyrdom for his faith. Of course, we can't be sure of that, but we do know that his two sons, Alexander and Rufus, became Christians, because Saint Mark mentions them by name in his gospel. How proud they must have been to know that their father actually carried the cross of Jesus. How singularly blessed his sons must have felt that their father actually walked in the Master's footsteps, the dream of every true disciple.

IGLESIA CATÓLICA SAN MIGUEL ARCÁNGEL

Registration

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Emergency Contact

Name _____

Number _____

Food Allergies or Special
Accommodations

Do you have an air mattress?

Yes No



Christ
Renews
His Parish



St. Michael the Archangel
Catholic Church

411 Paula Rd.
McKinney, TX 75069

Sign Up Online:
<http://stmichaelmckinney.org/christ-renews-his-parish-form>



Christ Renews His
Parish Retreat
Weekend

Women's Weekend: April 7 - 8,
2018

Christ Renews

What is CRHP?

Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) is a process designed to bring members of a parish together in Christ. It emphasizes continued growth in your Christian life and in your daily contact with others. The weekend offers an excellent opportunity to move away from regular activities and commitments to be spiritually and personally enriched in a friendly, relaxing, yet highly stimulating environment.



About the Weekend

Overview

The weekend is an opportunity to hear presentations of personal stories and discuss how Catholics function in our modern, complex, and fast-paced society. The renewal weekend provides an opportunity for individual and spiritual growth through prayer and personal reflection. You'll share conversation and thoughts (as much or as little as you desire) with others in the parish who are challenged as you are with the many demands of everyday life. Each CRHP weekend is conducted at the parish by a team of parishioners who attended a previous weekend. The weekend begins at 7:00am on Saturday and ends at 4:45pm on Sunday.

Sleeping Arrangements

Sleeping accommodations are in the classroom building. You are asked to bring your own air mattress or cot, sleeping bag and pillow, or other bedding. You will also need to bring your own towel, soap and other toiletries.

Meals

The St. Michael community provides meals. There are also regular breaks for coffee, soft drinks, and snacks. If there are special dietary needs please let us know. We will do our best to accommodate.

Cost

Nothing! However, donations are Welcomed to help defray the cost of the weekend.

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

Parish Calendar for the week of March 5, 2018.

Monday, March 5

8 am - Mass - Chapel
 10 am - Prayers & Squares, Holy Family Room
 7 pm - Faith Formation - Reconciliation - Church
 7 pm - CRHP Women - Class Room 3
 7 pm - 6 pm - CRSP Mujeres - St. Michael Hall
 7 pm - Jovenes para Cristo - St. Rose Hall
 7 pm - Legion of Mary - North Drake
 7 pm - CRSP Continuation Formation - South Drake

Tuesday, March 6

10 am - Talleres De Oracion Y Vida - Classroom 5
 2:00 pm - St. Vincent DePaul Food Distribution - Holy Family Room
 5:30 pm - Mass - Chapel
 7:00 pm - Knights of Columbus - St. Michael Hall
 7:00 pm - Grupo Emanuel - Church
 7:00 pm - Junta Mesa Directiva MFC - North & South Drake
 7:00 pm - Talleres De Oracion Y Vida - Classroom 5

Wednesday, March 7

8:00 am - Mass - Church
 10:00 am - Women's Bible Study - Classroom 3
 4:00 pm - Children's Choir Rehearsal - St. Rose Hall & Holy Family Room
 7:00 pm - Adult Choir Rehearsal - Church Choir Loft
 7:00 pm - Faith Formation - Confirmation - All Classrooms

Thursday, March 8

2:00 pm - St. Vincent DePaul Food Distribution
 5:30 pm - Mass, Adoration and Confessions - Church
 MISSION Fr Arthur in the Church
 7:00 pm - Clase de RICA - North and South Drake
 7:00 pm - RCIA Class - St. Michael Hall
 7:00 pm - CRSP - Hombres - St. Rose Hall

Friday, March 9

8:30 - Mass and First Friday Adoration - Chapel
 6 pm - Stations of the Cross - English - Church
 MISSION Fr Arthur In the Church
 7 pm - Ensayo Coro - de la 9:30 Misa - Holy Family Rm
 7:00 - Junta de Acomodadores - St. Michael Hall
 7:30 pm - Stations of the Cross - Spanish - Church

Saturday, March 10

9:00 am - Baptisms - English - Church
 11:00 am - Baptisms - Spanish - Church
 10:00 am - 5 pm - Faith Formation - Grades 1-6 - All Class Rooms
 4:30 - 5:30 pm - Confessions - Church
 5:00 pm - Mass - Church
 7 pm - Mass - Spanish - Church

Sunday, March 11

8:00 am - Mass - Church
 9:00 am - 11:00 - Coffee & Donut Fellowship - St. Michael Hall
 9:15 am - Adult Faith Formation, English - Classroom 3
 9:30 am - Mass, Spanish - Church
 11:30 am - Mass - Church
 2:00 pm - Mass, Spanish - Church
 3:00 pm - 5:30 Youth Ministry - St. Michael & St. Rose Halls
 6:00 pm - High School Confirmation Classes

LOS DESIGNIOS DE DIOS

En uno de los pasajes más escuetos y poéticos en su carta a los corintios, Pablo anuncia que “predicamos a Cristo crucificado... [porque] para los llamados... Cristo es la fuerza y la sabiduría de Dios” (1 Corintios 1:23, 24). Los designios de Dios parecen irrazonables para los que quieren un dios falso y valores mundanos. Pero Cristo, en su crucifixión, desconcierta el razonamiento tanto de los hambrientos de poder como de los que creen que lo saben todo.

En una contundente denuncia de la estrechez de sus escuchas, hoy Jesús desbarata sus planes literal y figurativamente. En su reverencia por la casa de Dios, les deja saber claramente que lo que están haciendo es vulgar e insulta a Dios. Luego intenta abrirles sus débiles mentes con su comprensión del poder y la sabiduría de Dios que es la cruz. Para ellos parece debilidad y estupidez. Pero el generoso sacrificio de Jesús es exactamente lo que completa la alianza que simboliza el templo. El nuevo Templo es el propio cuerpo y sangre de Cristo.



The White Rose Women's Center is in its 33rd year of serving pregnant women in crisis in the Dallas Diocese. In 2017 we had more than 4200 client visits at our three locations.

We are in need of counselors to meet this demand. We need you! For more information about training classes, please call 214-824-5942.

El Centro para mujeres White Rose lleva 33 años: sirviendo a mujeres embarazadas en crisis en la Diócesis de Dallas. En 2017, tuvimos más de 4200 visitas de clientes en nuestras tres ubicaciones.

Necesitamos consejeros para satisfacer esta demanda. ¡Te necesitamos!

Para obtener más información acerca de las clases de capacitación, llame al 214-824-5942.

The sacred deposit of truth must be safeguarded. It is absolutely vital that the Church never for an instant lose sight of the holy patrimony of truth inherited from the Fathers ... This is the certain and unchangeable doctrine to which the faithful owe obedience.

Pope John XXIII

IGLESIA CATÓLICA SAN MIGUEL ARCÁNGEL

NEED A JOB? CAREER ALLIANCE CAN HELP!!!

Mission Critical Job--Week #3 Targeted Search/Touch Points by Greg Mechler

9:15 to 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 7 at St. Jude Career Alliance, 1515 N. Greenville, Allen, TX.

Open to all and free. For details contact
jbick@stjudeparish.com
Or www.stjudecareeralliance.net.



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday mornings
at 10:00 am
in Classroom 3 in St Michael's
Fr Eugene presents a
Bible Study
all women of the parish
are invited



St. Vincent de Paul Distribución de Comestibles

Martes y Jueves de las 2PM a 4PM
2do Sábado del mes de las
8:30AM a 9:45AM

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Tuesday and Thursday • 2:00 pm-4:00 pm
2nd Saturday of the month • 8:30 am -9:45 am

Helpline: 214-314-5698 •
Thrift Store Pick up: 214-373-7837



ST MICHAEL'S GOLF TOURNAMENT

Please save the date as the
2nd Annual St. Michael's Golf
Tournament will be held from
8 am to 3 pm on May 14th
2018 at the beautiful Stone-
bridge Country Club on the
Pete Dye course with their

new MiniVerde UltraDwarf Bermuda Greens!!

More information on singles, foursomes, spon-
sorship and the days events will be following. We
look forward to another great event with your
participation which is being hosted by St. Mi-
chael's Community Development Ministry of St.
Michael's Church.

SUNDAY ADULT STUDY

9:10 to 10:30 am

St Michael's Hall Classroom 3

*St Michael's has a group of adults seeking a deeper
insight into their faith and the journey of the truths
of the faith.*

ALL ARE WELCOME!

We are studying the 35 Church Doctors
The discussions are lively and informative.

Have a cup of coffee after the 8:00 am Mass and
before the 11:30 am Mass and join us!



☞ *The St. Michael Women's Guild* ☞

**Tuesday, March 13th, at 6:45 PM
St. Michael Hall.**

All the ladies of the parish are invited
to come and join our group. We pray
together, socialize, and work together
for our Catholic community.

✦ *Come join us!* ✦

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

MINISTRY TO THE HOMEBOUND

This beautiful ministry to the special ones who cannot attend Mass with us, is an act of the corporal works of mercy. We need ministers to be trained in this ministry. Please send your request to deaconsid@stmichaelmckinney.org or call 972-542-4667 ext 101

LECTURAS DE HOY

Primera lectura — Dios entrega los mandamientos al pueblo por medio de Moisés (Éxodo 20:1-17 [1-3, 7-8, 12-17]) o *Éxodo 17:3-7*.

Salmo — Señor, tú tienes palabras de vida eterna (Salmo 19 [18]) o *Salmo 95 (94)*.

Segunda lectura — Pablo proclama a Cristo crucificado; Cristo es el poder y la sabiduría de Dios (1 Corintios 1:22-25) o *Romanos 5:1-2, 5-8*.

Evangelio — Jesús echa a los mercaderes del templo y predice su resurrección (Juan 2:13-25) o *Juan 4:5-42 [5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42]*.

MÁS SABIO QUE NUESTRA SABIDURÍA

Hoy, es fácil leer esta historia literalmente y condenar la estupidez de los allí descritos. Pero cuando tenemos miedo, ¿reaccionamos con el amor de Dios ante los que tememos o sucumbimos a la tentación de la violencia y el poder? Cuando nos encontramos con los que no estamos de acuerdo, los catalogamos de “malos” para justificar cualquier maldad que consideramos oportuna para descargar en ellos en nombre de nuestros “derechos”? Para ser honestos, debemos admitir que a todos nos cuesta ver cómo se aplica en nuestra vida diaria la verdad de Dios en esta historia.

Si sólo la interpretamos literalmente, nunca entenderemos lo que Dios nos está diciendo. Necesitamos escuchar con oídos diferentes la sabiduría de Dios y ver con nuevos ojos el poder de Dios que nos parecerá, aun en nuestra época, que es estupidez y debilidad. Aún luchamos con el mismo deseo mundano de poder y sabiduría como lo hicieron nuestros antepasados. ¿Podemos quedarnos quietos este domingo y dejar que Cristo nos llene con el poder y la sabiduría de Dios?

A great safeguard is the entire faith, the true faith, in which neither anything whatever can be added by anyone nor anything taken away; for, unless faith be one, it is not the faith.

Pope St. Leo the Great

KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH

There's no better way to deepen our Lenten practice than to review the Ten Commandments. The first three, having to do with our right relationship to God, get the most ink. The one we busy people probably have the most problem with is keeping holy the Sabbath.

If we take this commandment literally, babies will go undiapered and dishes will stay on the table, or perhaps meals will not be served. The sick will go unattended and nothing that has anything to do with physical labor will be done. Is mental labor really work? How about changing that dirty diaper (poor baby!)?

We need to depend on God to discern how to observe real Sabbath time in our lives. The point of this commandment is that God has given us a great gift: one whole day per week when we are free to rest, worship God, sing, feast, love, and rejoice. As Psalm 19 proclaims: “The law of the LORD is perfect, / refreshing the soul” (19:8). Our Sabbath rest is a great gift, to be received from God with joy, not with nitpicking.

TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading — God gives the law through Moses (Exodus 20:1-17 [1-3, 7-8, 12-17]) or Exodus 17:3-7.

Psalm — Lord, you have the words of everlasting life (Psalm 19) or Psalm 95.

Second Reading — We proclaim Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:22-25) or Romans 5:1-2, 5-8.

Gospel — Many began to believe in Jesus' name when they saw the signs he was doing (John 2:13-25) or John 4:5-42 [5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42].

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 2 Kgs 5:1-15b; Ps 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4; Lk 4:24-30

Tuesday: Dn 3:25, 34-43; Ps 25:4-5ab, 6-7bc, 8-9; Mt 18:21-35

Wednesday: Dt 4:1, 5-9; Ps 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20; Mt 5:17-19

Thursday: Jer 7:23-28; Ps 95:1-2, 6-9; Lk 11:14-23

Friday: Hos 14:2-10; Ps 81:6c-11ab, 14, 17; Mk 12:28-34

Saturday: Hos 6:1-6; Ps 51:3-4, 18-21ab; Lk 18:9-14

Sunday: 2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23; Ps 137:1-6;

Eph 2:4-10; Jn 3:14-21

Alternate readings (Year A):

1 Sm 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Ps 23:1-6;

Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-41 [1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38]

If words come out of the heart, they will enter the heart, but if they come from the tongue, they will not pass beyond the ears.

IGLESIA CATÓLICA SAN MIGUEL ARCÁNGEL

DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

Darkness is a good and necessary teacher. It is not to be avoided, denied, run from, or explained away. First, like Ezekiel the prophet, we must eat the scroll that is “lamentation, wailing, and moaning” in our belly, and only eventually becomes sweet as honey (see Ezekiel 2:9-10; 3:1-3).

By the time most people reach middle age, they’ve had days where life has lost its meaning, they no longer connect with an inner sense of motivation or joy. Sometimes this manifests as clinical depression and requires a therapist’s skilled care and medication. But even if we don’t experience depression, most of us go through a period of darkness, doubt, and malaise at some point in our lives.

There’s a darkness that we are led into by our own stupidity, sin (the illusion of separation), and selfishness (living out of the false self). We have to work our way out of this kind of darkness by brutal honesty, confession, surrender, forgiveness, apology, and restitution. It may feel simultaneously like dying and being liberated. We resist going through the darkness and facing our shadow, so we usually need help, as the Twelve Steps wisely identify. An accountability partner, spiritual director, or counselor can help us navigate this difficult, ego-humiliating process.

There’s another darkness that we’re led into by God, grace, and the nature of life itself. In many ways, the loss of meaning, motivation, purpose, and direction might feel even greater here. The saints and mystics called it “the dark night of the soul.” But even while we

feel alone and that God has abandoned us, we sense that we have been led here intentionally. We know we are in “liminal space,” betwixt and between, on the threshold—and we have to stay here until we have learned something essential. It is still no fun and filled with doubt and “demons” of every sort. But it is the darkness of being held closely by God without our awareness. This is where transformation happens.

The darkness that we get ourselves into by our own “sinful” choices can also become the darkness of God. Regardless of the cause, the dark night is an opportunity to look for and find God—in different forms and ways than we’ve become accustomed. Even if we don’t feel like praying, staying committed to contemplative practice is particularly important.

Sometimes it may be tempting to remain in the darkness—it becomes familiar and we rebel against the light; the paralysis and self-pity has a strange attraction. We may feel an inner restlessness, as if we’re aimlessly pacing back and forth on the same path. Allowing periods of this seemingly fruitless darkness may be part of deconstructing our false self so that we can rebuild on the foundation of our True Self. We must lose our old image of God and our old ways of experiencing God’s presence to discover the absolute reality beneath all of our egoic fantasies and fears.

Fr Richard Rohr, Center for Contemplation.

I AM USING ALL OF MY 11.5 PAGES THIS WEEK