

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FEBRUARY 23, 2020

From the Priests' Desks

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Sacred Heart,

Perhaps the most difficult and challenging teaching of Jesus is the doctrine of unrestricted love which appears in today's Gospel: "I say to you: Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you." The problem with this teaching, of course, is that it seems to go against the instinct for self-preservation; and so, Christians have always been at odds about its true meaning and about how it can best be lived out. Is it meant to be taken literally or as an ideal: is it realistic or the product of wishful thinking?

Certainly, in regard to unrestricted love the Old Testament does not measure up to the New. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," shouts the OT. And yet even this seemingly harsh commandment represented an advance over the morality of earlier times, which placed no limit on retribution, on getting even for an offense. The law of the ancient world permitted any measure a person might regard as necessary to restore their honor and protect their rights; and so, might be translated: "A head for an eye, and a life for a tooth."

The Old Testament insight that the punishment should suit the offense established that norm of strict justice which we take for granted today as the basis of democratic society and of all community life. And yet even the Old Testament went beyond the requirements of strict justice and called for a more benevolent and merciful approach toward others. "Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against your fellow countrymen," states today's first reading from the Book of Leviticus. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Much of what Jesus said during his own ministry, then, was drawn from the best of Jewish tradition: from the growing awareness of his people about how they were to relate to each other. What was new and unique in the teaching of Jesus was that he took the command of love for countrymen and universalized it to include not just Jews but all people. The neighbor to be forgiven, moreover, was not only my friend but my enemy as well. For the Jews of Jesus' day this meant that they could no longer use nationality as an excuse for hating foreigners: for us today it means that we cannot simply use like and dislike as a basis for how we treat others—at least, not if we take the message of Jesus seriously. We are called to let go of resentment and forget about revenge.

And the reason for forgiveness is not primarily an emotional one: "because we are all brothers and sisters" but a theological one: because this is the way that God acts. God forgives all; God loves all equally. Jesus does not reject the category of enemy. He does not deny that

we can have enemies—as individuals and as a community—rather he demands that we love and forgive them *in spite of the fact that they are enemies*. And herein precisely lays the difficulty and challenge of his message. "Love your enemies," he said, "do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; and pray for those who maltreat you." Far from being a formula for liberation, these admonitions seem to suggest that the ideal Christian should be something of a slave; that he should be passive, tolerant of abuse, and shut his eyes to injustice—in short, to become everyone's doormat. In today's violent and dangerous world, it sounds like a formula to commit suicide, or at least a guarantee of martyrdom.

And yet if one looks at the life of Jesus one finds nothing of a submissive, fearful, or timid spirit. Rather, he constantly took the initiative in criticizing the failures of his contemporaries, speaking out against the injustices of his society, and defending the rights of the poor and exploited. Was this something of a double standard, with Jesus himself playing the role of the lion, while advising his disciples to play the role of the lamb? Perhaps not. For if one looks closely at the Gospel, he will discover that its central thrust is not that the weak will inherit the earth, but rather that the generous shall inherit the earth; and this generosity is to spring not from weakness or timidity, but from strength of spirit and of character; not from fear but from self-assurance in doing what is right. It was this spirit of generosity which made Jesus willing to share all that he had, to give away everything—even his own life—so that others might be filled, so that others might be healed. It was and is this generosity which leads our God to forgive all—the just and the unjust, the good and the bad—not because he is indifferent to the way people act but because God sees all as his children, the work of his hands.

As believers in the truth of Christ's message, it is our continuing task to imitate the example of his generosity, to overcome those obstacles of selfishness and egoism that place limits and conditions on our concern for others; to stretch the boundaries of our definition of neighbor and countryman; and to ask our God continually to give us hearts that are courageous enough to forgive, and big enough to love as God himself has first loved us.

Fr. John Gruben, OAR

SHARING WHAT WE HAVE IN JESUS' NAME

6th Sunday Ordinary Time - \$11,329.

Last Year's Collection - \$11,487.

Winter Maintenance - \$4,792.

Last Year's Collection - \$4,700.

**ASH WEDNESDAY
AND LENTEN OBSERVANCES**

ASH WEDNESDAY – FEBRUARY 26

Masses with Ashes: 7:00am
9:00am
12:10pm
7:30pm

Prayer Service with Ashes: 4:00pm

LENTEN EVENING OF REFLECTION

March 2 at 7:30PM

RECONCILIATION MONDAY CONFESSIONS

April 6th / 3pm to 9pm

LENTEN MASSES

FRIDAYS AT 7:00PM

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

FRIDAYS at 7:30pm

February 28, March 6th 13th, 20th, 27th

April 3rd, 10th

April 3rd First Friday (Holy Hour 6:00pm to 7:00pm)

CARDINAL'S APPEAL 2020

To date we have raised \$19,130 towards our goal of \$122,500. This year's Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal, Teach, Serve and Sanctify brings to life the important work the Archdiocese of New York does. Please consider donating.

SACRED HEART PARISH

25TH AND 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATION MAY 17, 2020

On May 17, 2020 our parish will honor all those celebrating these milestone anniversaries at the 10:00am Mass followed by a reception. If you are celebrating your 25th or 50th Wedding Anniversary anytime this year, please contact the Rectory Office and let us know. 845-357-0035. We will need the date and place of your wedding in a Catholic Church.

KNIGHT AT THE RACES

Join us on Saturday, Feb 29 as the Knights of Columbus host a Knight at the Races at 7pm at the Council Hall (20 Washington Ave, Suffern). The cost is \$5 at the door (includes food) and \$2/race. Additional refreshments will be sold. All are welcome. Visit kofc1177.com for more info.

ANUNCIOS

El Grupo de Oración en Español tiene lugar habitualmente los miércoles, a las 8 de la noche en la cafetería.

Los próximos bautizos en español tendrán lugar el 21 de marzo 2020 a la 1pm. Contactar en la oficina 357- 0035.

PARISH CALENDAR

Sunday, February 23

CYO Clinic – 1:30pm in the Gym

Monday, February 24

Rel. Ed. Grade 6 –4:30pm to 6:00pm

Rel Ed. Grade 7 – 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Hispanic RCIA – 7pm in the rectory

Novena – 7:15pm

Tuesday, February 25

Rel. Ed. Grades 3 – 5 – 4:30pm

Rel. Ed. Grade 8 – 7:00pm

Choir Practice – 7:00pm

Prayer Group – 7:30pm in the Rectory Chapel

Wednesday, February 26 Ash Wednesday

See schedule for Mass Times for Ashes

St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry – 2:00pm to 4:00pm

Thursday, February 26

CYO – 5:00pm to 9:00pm

Friday, February 27

CYO – 5:30pm to 9:00pm – Gym

Saturday, February 28

St. Joseph Group – 7:30am in the Rectory

Rel Ed. Grades 1 & 2 – 9:30am to 11:00am

Sunday, February 29

CYO Clinic – 1:30pm in the Gym

**JOIN THE SISTERS OF SAINT DOMINIC AT
THEIR ANNUAL WOMEN'S CELTIC TEA**

The Sisters of Saint Dominic of Blauvelt, New York will host their Annual Women's Celtic Tea on Sunday, March 8th at 2 PM at St. Dominic Convent in Blauvelt. Enjoy festive entertainment, food and company, as well as preaching by Sr. Kathleen Sullivan, OP. Cost is \$20 per person. Reservations are necessary as space is limited. To RSVP, contact Cathy Carroll at 845-580-8600 or ccarroll@opblauvelt.org by February 27th.

Day of Prayer and Reflection for Liturgical Ministers

Saturday, March 7, 2020

10 a.m. – 3 p.m. St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Lectors, Ushers and Parish Musicians are invited to gather together to reflect on the meaning of the Easter Triduum and discover its deep meaning for their lives, their ministry and their parish communities. This day of prayer and reflection will include presentations by Dr. Donna Eschenauer, associate dean and associate professor of pastoral theology at St. Joseph's Seminary, and author of "A Journey Through the Three Days: Theological Reflections on the Paschal Triduum." Registration Fee: \$30 (includes lunch) Register at: nyliturgy.org/dayofprayer More information: liturgy@archny.org or 914-968-6200, x8177.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

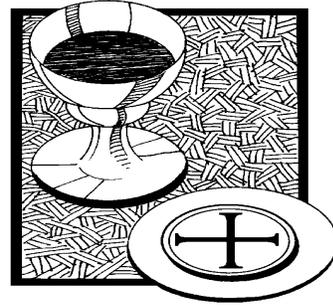
We welcome into the Roman Catholic Church and our Parish Community the following children who were recently baptized at Sacred Heart:

AMY HERNANDEZ RIVERA

Daughter of Erika and Julio

JACQUELYN DIAZ

Daughter of Anibal and Janet



Please pray for those who are ill and have asked us to pray for them: Keith Alanis, Jenna Applebaum, Theresa Anselmi, Michael Brady, Pat Brady, Annette Burbridge, Robert Conly, Comerford Family, Teresa & Tom Consolo, Gail Curtin, Joe Davey, Anthony DeFrancesco III, Matthew DeMayo, Cledha Desir, Mary Discini, John Duffy, David Eckert, Sr., Ginny Figula, Stefanie Gaudelli, Arlene Gentile, Mark Goldman, Debra Gravina, Senan Halpin, Roy Harris, Clement Hayes, Mr. Harris, Domenic & Anthony Iannaccone, Rob Incognoli, Bob Janson, Fran Janson, Susan Jarkiewicz, Anna Kasperska, Eileen Kennedy, Fred Lemoine, Elizabeth Lempka, Vasily Lockhart, Roberta Lynch, Laura Mack, Rosemarie Manthey, Matthew Luludis, Marie Marasuilo, Thomas Mathai, Jeanne Matera, Richard McCarthy, Rosemary McCormick, Rich McDowell, Debra McGovern, Catherine McMenemy, John McLoughlin, Jacob Mendelsohn, Ken Meyer, Florence Mohan, Joseph Mikulka, Barbara Neilson, Robert Nunes, Thomas O'Connor, Jennifer O'Hara, Pat O'Neill, Nancy Overend, Shace Paljusevic, Peter Princi, Etta Rooney, Claudia Spallanzani, Joseph Pasculli, (Baby Ty) Reilly, Frank Salveggi, Janet Schwartz, Ruth Schwetz, Michael Shumway, Jean Simons, Roberto Sorgo, Maureen Starke, Shaun Stein, Richard Vanadio, Barbara Veraldo Strano, Phyllis Varacalli, Kali Villela, Robert Vogt, Fr. Wing, and Vladimir Zaslavsky.

FOR OUR ARMED FORCES

We pray for all the men and women serving our country in the armed forces especially the sons and daughters, grandchildren and loved ones of our parishioners.

ALTAR MEMORIALS

FEBRUARY 23, 2020

Sanctuary Lamp in Memory of

THE STAFF OF SACRED HEART



Let us pray for our deceased parishioners, and family members and loved ones:

Especially: Ann Murphy, Barbara Mortillaro, Grace Grande, Anna Gambino, John Gattuso and Neil Schouten.

SCHEDULE OF MASSES

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22

SATURDAY, VIGIL MASS

5:30pm – Catherine Greeley

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

7:00am – All Parishioners

8:30am – Dianne Messina

10:00am – Doris McCarthy

11:30am – Saverio Stillo

1:00pm – Carrin Holborn

5:30pm – Parish Memorial Society

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24

7:00am – Special Intentions Mackenzie Family

9:00am – The Gagliano Family

7:15pm – Novena

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

7:00am – Grace Grande

9:00am – Andrew Louis Kravic

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26 ASH WEDNESDAY

7:00am – Neil Schouten

9:00am – Caterina Dominijanni

12:10pm – MaryLou Torlucci

4:00pm – Prayer Service

7:30pm – Andrew Statham

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27

7:00am – Ann Murphy

9:00am – Thomas Howard

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28

7:00am – John Gattuso

9:00am – Domenic Tondo

7:00pm – Lenten Mass

7:30pm – Stations of the Cross

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29

9:00am – Anne Marie Nappo

SATURDAY, VIGIL MASS

5:30pm – Catherine Greeley

SUNDAY, MARCH 1

7:00am – All Parishioners

8:30am – Special Intentions of the Village of Suffern Police Department

10:00am – Dr. Leo Greco

11:30am – Paula Panico

1:00pm – Veronica Orth

5:30pm – Parish Memorial Society

BOOSTER CLUB
WEEK 1–Anne O'Rourke