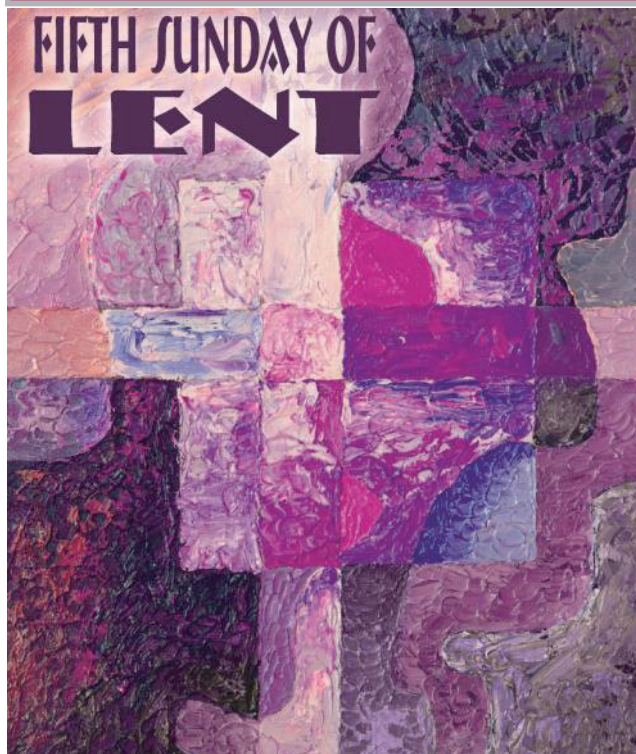


Saint Mary's Church

15164 Juniper Dr. Marne, MI 49435 / 616.677.3934 / www.saintmarysmarne.org

March 26, 2023 ~ The Fifth Sunday of Lent



Weekend Mass Schedule:

Saturday 4:30PM St Mary

Sunday 8:30AM St Michael

Sunday 10:30AM St Mary

Sunday 4:30PM St Michael

Weekday Mass Schedule:

Tuesday 9AM St Mary

Adoration begins after Mass until 2:00 pm

Wednesday 9AM - St Michael

Adoration begins after Mass until 2:00 pm

Thursday 9:00 AM St Mary

Friday 9:00 AM St Michael

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Saturday 3:30 PM—4:15PM-St Mary

Sunday 3:00PM -4:00PM St Michael

Wednesday 2:00 PM—3:00 PM St Michael

(or anytime by appt. please call parish office)

St. Mary Parish Office

Monday - 8:00AM - 4:30PM

Tuesday - 8:00AM - 4:30PM

Wednesday - 8:00AM - 11:30AM

Thursday - 8:00AM to 4:30PM

St Mary's Mission Statement: *We, the Roman Catholic community of St. Mary's, by our baptism have become the People of God, dedicated to living and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are a community built on faith and the sharing of individual talents, abilities and skills for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Empowered by the Holy Spirit and strengthened by prayer and the sacraments, we continue the mission of Jesus to reveal God's presence in all of human life.*

Pastor:

Rev. Michael Hodges / frmhodges@grpriests.org

616.677.3934

For emergency please call: 616.745.1409

Deacon:

Deacon Tom Roberts / troberts@saintmarysmarne.org

616.677.3934

Business Manager:

Todd Kline / businessmanager@saintmarysmarne.org

Parish Secretary:

Cathie VanGessel / secretary@saintmarysmarne.org

Director of Religious Education:

Rebecca Chicklon / dre@saintmarysmarne.org

616.677.5065

Youth Minister—Life Teen grades 9-12

Rebecca Chicklon / dre@saintmarysmarne.org

616.677.5065

Director of R.C.I.A: Jill Brown-616.677.3934

Maintenance/Custodian: Jim & Marian Looks: 677.3934

Liturgical Minister:

Gary Karr / 616.677.3934 / gkarr@saintmarysmarne.org

Music Director:

Dr. Bernie Stanko 616.490.3836 /

berniestanko@hotmail.com

Pastoral Council:

Sharon Davis, Becky Warners,

Vito Dolci, Geary Farrell, Doug Frantz

Finance Council:

Lisa Bradley, Jose Gomez, Todd Kline,

Scott Lampe, Mel Northup

Martha League: Parish Office: 616.677.3934

(assistance with meals during illness or injury)

Prayer Line:

Parish Office 616.677.3934

or Linda at 677.3269 for evening requests

call Darlene 616.453.0157

or email: bfa1414@yahoo.com

Our Cluster Parish:

St Michael's - 17150 - 88th Avenue

Coopersville, MI 49404

616.384.4026

www.saintmichaels.us

Mass Intentions

Saturday March 25

4:30PM † Julia Karr by M/M Gary Karr.....MA

Sunday March 26

8:30AM † Anita Bouchard-Brown by M/M Kurt BouchardMI

10:30AM † Pat O'Connor by Lisa Bradley.....MA

4:30PM † Sherm Hecksel by Curt & Joan Kutchin & FamilyMI

Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:00 PM—4:00 PM - St Michael

Monday March 27 NO MASS

Tuesday March 28

9:00AM † Betty Oziemkiewicz by Knights of Columbus #11581....MA

Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—4:00 PM

Wednesday March 29

9:00AM † Sherm Hecksel by Jack & Jan Riordan.....MI

Adoration begins after Mass until 2pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation: 2:00 PM—4:00 PM

Thursday March 30 NO MORNING MASS

11:00AM † Funeral Mass for Frank LampeMA

Friday March 31

9:00AM † Bill Stegmen by Joe HitchingsMI

Saturday April 1

4:30PM † Frank Lampe by M/M Jerry MayMA

Sunday April 2 Palm Sunday of The Passion of The Lord

8:30AM † Bob & Carol Powers by David & Lisa WilburMI

10:30AM † Ruth Kasul by Kelly KasulMA

4:30PM † Bob & Carol Powers by David & Lisa WilburMI

Sacrament of Reconciliation: 3:00 PM—4:00 PM - St Michael

MA=St. Mary MI=St. Michael's

Please Note: When there is inclement weather (where Coopersville Public Schools or Kenowa Hills Public Schools are closed) The Parish Offices will be closed and all events scheduled for that day will be cancelled. Daily Mass will also be cancelled. The Mass intention for that day will be rescheduled at our earliest opportunity. Additionally, when a Funeral Mass has been scheduled, Daily Mass will be cancelled



For the Week of March 26, 2023

Sunday Fifth Sunday of Lent
Ez 37:12-14; Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45

Monday Dn 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 or 13:41c-62; Ps 23: 1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Jn 8:1-11

Tuesday Nm 21:4-9; Ps 102:2-3, 16-18, 19-21; Jn 8:21-30

Wednesday Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95; Dn 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56; Jn 8:31-42

Thursday Gn 17:3-9; Ps 105:4-5, 6-7, 8-9; Jn 8:51-59

Friday Jer 20:10-13; Ps 18:2-3a, 3bc-4, 5-6, 7; Jn 10:31-42

Saturday Ez 37:21-28; Jer 31:10; 11-12abcd, 13; Jn 11:45-56

Sunday Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion
Procession: Mt 21:1-11
At Mass: Is 50:4-7; Ps 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24; Phil 2:6-11; Mt 26:14-27:66

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

St. Michael's Liturgical Ministers

	Apr 2 / 8:30 AM	Apr 2 / 4:30 PM
Altar Servers	Clare Taylor Peter Nielsen	NEED TWO
Eucharistic Ministers	Deacon Tom Denise Parish Jennifer DeMull Zach Nelson Andrew Bonter	Ken Schwallier NEED ONE
Lector	Jeff Johnson	Joe LeMieux
CLW	NO CLW	NO CLW
Sacristan	Chris Albrecht	NEED ONE
Ushers	Dave Tronovich Deb Tronovich Wade Lindberg Joe Meerman	NEED TWO
Music	Craig Bleckley	Craig Bleckley

St. Mary's Liturgical Ministers

	April 1 - 4:30PM	April 2 - 10:30AM
Sacristan	Vito Dolci	Gary Karr
Altar Servers	Kassidy Britt MaKaelyn Britt	Lauren LeMieux Ty Ricord
Host	Geary Farrell Mary Kirkwood Deb Hapon	Deacon Tom Janette Ney Christina Withers
Cup	Angie Hanks Keith Anderson Kay Willcome Need One	Jim Looks Marian Looks Margie Jirous Becky Warners
Hospitality Ministers	Matt Karr Jeff Schneider Michelle Lampe Austin Lampe	Anthony Leale Nettie Leale Rick Leale Jeanne Leale
Lector	Doug Frantz	Rita Carmody
Music	Bernie Stanko	Bernie Stanko

Liturgical Ministers are needed for Holy Week and Easter Masses.
Please call the parish office if you are able to help.

Holy Week Schedule

Holy Thursday - April 6 / Mass of The Lord's Supper

7:00PM at St. Mary (Msgr. Louis Stasker)

Followed by Night Watch until 10:00pm

7:00PM at St. Michael (Fr. Mike Hodges)

Followed by Night Watch until 10:00pm

Good Friday - April 7

3:00PM at St. Mary - (Msgr. Louis Stasker)

3:00PM at St. Michael - (Fr. Mike Hodges)

8:00PM at St. Mary - Tenebrae Service

Holy Saturday - April 8

9:00PM Easter Vigil at St. Mary (Msgr. Louis Stasker)

9:00PM Easter Vigil at St. Michael (Fr. Mike Hodges)

Easter Sunday - April 9 /

Mass of the Resurrection of the Lord

9:30AM at St. Michael (Fr. Mike Hodges)

10:30AM at St. Mary (Msgr. Louis Stasker)

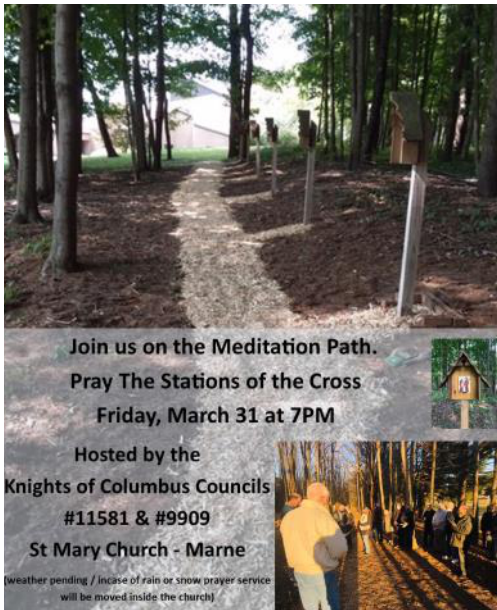
Divine Mercy Sunday - April 16 at St Michael

3:00PM-4:00PM, Confessions

4:15PM, Divine Mercy Chaplet

4:30PM, Mass

Cluster News and Community News and Events



Join us on the Meditation Path.

Pray The Stations of the Cross

Friday, March 31 at 7PM

Hosted by the

Knights of Columbus Councils

#11581 & #9909

St Mary Church - Marne

(weather pending / in case of rain or snow prayer service will be moved inside the church)

Youth Ministry

High School Youth Ministry (9-12 Grade)

Weekly gatherings: are offered and help teens grow in faith. These gatherings include, food, games, topic and activities. Friends welcome!



Middle School Youth Ministry (6-8 Grade)

Service Project: Are you interested in doing a Lenten Service Project during spring break?

Shine Rally: March 26, Check in 12:30-1 p.m. begins at 1 p.m. and ends at 6:30 p.m.

For details or to register for any of the above events please contact Rebecca.

Family Activity for Youth

Lenten Family Activity: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were a very close family. Spend some time with your family, taking turns telling each family member why you are thankful for him or her. Pray the Our Father together and thank God for the gift of one another.

Questions or comments

Please contact Rebecca Chicklon at

616-677-5065 or dre@saintmarysmarne.org

Fr. Mike's Musings



The Eucharist: Part II

The Church has always believed in the Eucharist. You can find clear teaching on the Eucharist in the Bible and in the early Church Fathers. Even so, the Church's understanding of how the bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood has developed over time. Thomas Aquinas, using categories from Aristotle, developed the term transubstantiation to describe this change.

Everything has a substance, what it is in its nature and essence, and accidents, the traits that go along with it. A human being has a substance: you are the same person as an embryo, a toddler, a teenager, and an elderly person. Yet your accidents change: you grow, increase in understanding, cut your hair, develop wrinkles, etc. At the age of 80, no one might be able to recognize you as the same person you were at 18, but you are the same person.

Bread and wine have a substance, that makes them bread and wine. It also has accidents: the taste, touch, smell, and sight of bread and wine. When the priest consecrates the Eucharist, the accidents of the bread and wine remain the same (with rare exceptions occurring in Eucharistic miracles). Yet the substance of the bread and wine have been transformed into the substance of Jesus Christ, in His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

Thomas Aquinas describes this in a spiritual sense by saying that in the Eucharist, all of our senses are deceived except for hearing. We see, touch, taste, and smell bread and wine, but we hear the words of Christ telling us the truth of his presence in the Eucharist.

So, we have a physical and spiritual explanation of what constitutes the being of the Eucharistic matter in our world, but it still leaves us to wonder about terminology. Why is the Eucharist sometimes called Communion? Essentially, the Eucharist augments our union with Christ; we are joined in a union with Christ and his Church through the Eucharist.

Also, Holy Communion separates us from sin, wipes away venial sins, and preserves us from future mortal sins. Sometimes people feel a deep sense of peace when they receive the Eucharist. This is a gift from God, too. However, a lack of emotion when you receive the Eucharist does not mean that you are doing something wrong or that you are not receiving the fruits of Holy Communion. Because the Eucharist is so important, the Church teaches that there are certain requirements someone must meet to be able to receive the Eucharist at Mass.

- The person must be baptized Catholic (Eastern Orthodox are also allowed to receive).
- The person must be in a state of grace and has been through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (i.e. not be aware of any unconfessed mortal sins).
- The person must have fasted for at least one hour before receiving the Eucharist. Drinking water is okay, but for anything else to be acceptable, it must be medically necessary.

The Eucharist is a great gift that allows us an unparalleled union with Jesus Christ. However, another element of the communion in the Eucharist is communion with the Church. When we receive the Eucharist, we are saying, "I am in communion with the Church that has been entrusted with this Eucharist."

Please Pray for our Engaged Couple

Marissa McDonald & Christopher Barczak

October 7, 2023 (St Mary)

Lord God, the source of all love, the wise plan of your providence has brought these young people together. As they prepare themselves for the sacrament of marriage and pray for your grace, grant that, strengthened by your blessing, they may grow in their respect for one another and cherish each other with a sincere love. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen



March 26, 2023 ~ The Fifth Sunday of Lent

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

St. Mary's Parish News

Religious Education

Annual Easter Egg Hunt:

Candy donations needed. Please consider dropping off Easter candy to the box in the Narthex. Thank you!

The Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Easter Sunday following the 10:30 a.m. Mass. Is your family interested in participating? If so, please contact Rebecca to sign up.



Children's Liturgy of the Word:

Dismisses and meets during 10:30 a.m. Mass. There will be no Children's Liturgy of the Word on April 2 and 9 due to Spring Break. Children's Liturgy will resume on April 16



This Sunday's Gospel Reflection:

Jesus risks his life to visit his friends Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Their village is only one hill away from Jerusalem. The news that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead travels fast to Jerusalem, and the priests and elders grow eager to stop Jesus. By raising Lazarus to life, Jesus puts his own life on the line. His action leads to his arrest, suffering, and death. Raising Lazarus gives us a hint about Jesus' even greater future. When Jesus gives his life for us, God raises him up to new life. The Risen Jesus promises Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and all of us who believe in him that he will give us life with God forever. Jesus says, "I am the Resurrection and the life." Like Jesus' friend Martha, we believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world.



Question of the Week:

How do you show your friends and family members that you love them?

Family Lenten Activity: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were a very close family. Spend some time with your family, taking turns telling each family member why you are thankful for him or her. Pray the Our Father together and thank God for the gift of one another.

Questions or comments:

Please contact Rebecca Chicklon at adre@saintmarysmarne.org or 616-677-5065



High School Youth Ministry

SEE CLUSTER PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS

St Mary Parish Prayer Line

If you would like to request a prayer for our parish prayer line please contact the parish office or Linda at 677.3269. For evening requests call Darlene 453.0157 or email: bfa1414@yahoo.com Please continue to pray for all of our sick, hospitalized & homebound parishioners and all of the personal intentions that St Mary's Parish parishioners hold close to their hearts.

Parish Office Closed Monday March 27

Please Note:

The parish office will be closed on Mon March 27.

We will resume normal office hours on Tuesday, March 28.

Knights of Columbus #11581 News

Upcoming Events:

March 31 - 7PM - Stations of the Cross on the Outside Meditation Path

April 1 & April 2 - Tootsie Roll Drive after all Masses - The donations are helping to recognize the dignity of every person and helps provide people with intellectual and physical disabilities in our community more resources to live a happy life.

April 13 - Monthly Meeting 7PM-Parish Hall

PLEASE NOTE: DATE CHANGE

October 8 - Community Breakfast and Blood Drive Register here:

https://donate.michigan.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/149333

For more info please contact Grand Knight Rob Rander: roblander82@gmail.com or visit:

<https://www.saintmarysmarne.org/knights-of-columbus>



Look For Our Upcoming Raffle

Ticket sales start after Easter Drawing to be held June 1st



Proceeds to help fund our council's charitable giving



and more

Thank You

My sincerest thank you to St. Mary's Parish, especially Deacon Tom for his kindness and wonderful service, Gary for doing the readings, and the wonderful funeral luncheon Kay and the women provided. We are very grateful to everyone! Family of Robert Wetherbee



Meal Train for Fr Mike

The office has received many requests to provide Fr Mike a homecooked meal, (Don't worry, he is not sick or have an accident) we have created an online MEAL TRAIN to coordinate this effort. If you would like to cook a meal for Fr Mike, please sign up here:

<https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/8vv97n> (or call the parish office)

This is great opportunity to show our appreciation to Fr Mike for all he does for our Parish Cluster.



Save the Dates

March 27	To Light A Fire On Earth- Lenten Parish Cluster Presentation 6:30PM to 8:30PM St Michael Family Center
March 31	OUTSIDE Stations of the Cross at The St Mary Meditation Path Hosted by the Knights of Columbus Councils #11581 & 9909)

Giving Back to God

	March 18/19
Regular Contributions	\$4520.00
Capital Improvement	\$250.00
Online Contributions	\$300.00
Children's Contributions	\$7.55
Catholic Relief Services	\$860.00
Total	\$5937.55

Thank you for your continued support and generosity!

St. Mary's Sponsor of the Week

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THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR BULLETIN!

Welcome to the Cluster Parishes of St. Mary and St. Michael

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

St. Michael's Parish News



Scrip News— Thank you to our 9 families that purchased Scrip this week. Our total profit was \$54.61.

St. Michael's Ladies' Tea Party —

for women of all ages. Saturday, April 22th 10:30-12:30pm in the Family Center. Come for brunch, entertainment and some Spiritual tea. Seating is limited. Pre-registration is required no later than April 18. Contact the parish office to register.



Help Wanted — St. Michael's is looking for someone interested in a part-time general/preventive maintenance position. Duties include light general/preventative maintenance, basic repair and the coordination of outside contractor support. The hours would be approximately 5-10 hours per week, as needed. The schedule could be 2-3 hours a day, 2-3 days a week. This would be a great job for a retired person. Please call the parish office if interested.

CSA 2023 — Thank you for your gifts to 2023 Catholic Services Appeal! Your generous support funds essential diocesan ministries that strengthen us in Christ. Our parish goal for 2023 is \$59,280.00 and 100% participation, which means every parishioner should return their pledge card. To date, we have pledged \$17,310.00 (or 29.2%) toward our goal. Please continue to pray for the success of this important effort.

St. Michael's Faith Formation

Children's Liturgy of the Word: Our program is offered during Sunday morning Mass. Children 3-9 years old are welcome to join us each week as we pray, read and explore the Sunday Gospel from a child's viewpoint. We include the Gospel Acclamation so children understand the importance of preparing our mind and heart for the Gospel reading. **We will not have CLW on April 2 and 9th due to Spring Break. CLW will resume on April 16th.**

Elementary Faith Formation: This program is for students in grades 1-5. We meet on Wednesdays from 6:15- 7:30 pm. **We will not have class on April 5th due to Spring Break. Have a fun and safe time! Faith Formation will resume on April 12th.**

Middle School Faith Formation: Grades 6, 7 and 8 will meet on Sundays after the 8:30am Mass, from 9:45 to 11:15 in the Youth Room. The 8th Grade students will also receive Confirmation Preparation during that time. **We will not have class on March 26. Eighth grade Confirmation students are to attend The Shine Youth Rally on Sunday, March 26 from 12:30-6:30 PM. We will not have class on April 2 and 9th due to Spring Break. Class will resume on April 16th.**

St. Michael's Parish Family

Remembers in Their Prayers: Kevin Johnson, Anne Pols, Alexandria Gordon, George Langlois, Brooke Campbell, Linda Abel-Carroll, Jackie May, Marvin Hecksel, Dennis Goosen, Jean Mayse, Ken Heflin, Winnie Spencer, Alice Goll, the victims of abortion, & the men and women in the military.



St. Michael's Sanctuary Lamp

for +Mary Jo Busman
by Dave Busman & Family

Attention — As part of the Eucharistic Revival, all extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are expected to be trained in updated diocesan norms for this ministry. Our nearest training session will be offered at Saint Mary's/Spring Lake on Saturday, April 29 at 10:00am. If you are unable to attend on this date a full schedule of trainings from which you can choose are available on the webpage of the diocesan Office for Worship at (copy & paste) <https://grdiocese.org/ministries/worship-3/>. Whether you serve during Mass or minister to the sick, we are all asked to register at that website for the session you plan to attend. If you are not yet a Eucharistic Minister but are being led to this ministry, this session will be an excellent introductory training. Contact Kevin in the parish office for more details or with help registering.

St. Michael's Preschool

Have you considered St. Michael's Preschool for your child or grandchild? If not, you should! Come see what a great experience St. Michael's Preschool can provide. Come meet our Director/Teacher, Cindy Lindberg! Preschool meets on MWF from 8:45—11:45 am (Mon. 8:45am-2:30pm for 4-year-olds). For more info, call the Parish Office at 616-384-4026.

Knights of Columbus News

Thank you for Fish Fry desserts — The Knights of Columbus would like to thank everyone who donated desserts for the Lenten Fish Fries. Your "sweet treats" were a great way for our Fish Fry customers (and workers) to end the evening. These desserts were truly appreciated by all.

Stations of the Cross — Friday, March 31, please come to St. Mary's for the Stations of the Cross (outside, weather permitting).

Bunny Business is Back in Business! We will be stuffing Easter baskets for Coopersville Cares today in the Family Center, after the 8:30 Mass. With your help, the Knights of Columbus hope to stuff 100 baskets!

Giving Back to God

March 19, 2023

Adult Envelopes	\$3,181.00
Loose Cash	\$269.00
Children's Envelopes	\$32.10
Total	\$3,482.10
Building Fund	\$115.00
Endowment Fund	\$50.00
Catholic Relief Services	\$619.00

Thank you for your continued support!

March 26, 2023 ~ 5th Sunday of Lent

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

"Lord, If You Had Been Here..."

Where Jesus is, there life is; where he is not, sin has power to wound and to kill. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." How many people can say today: "Lord, if you had been here, the war that killed my brother would never have happened; the driver who killed my sister would not have been drinking; the hunger and disease that kill children every day would not have been ignored"? How many deaths are due to human cruelty? When we exclude God from our world, from our thoughts and our decision-making processes, we invite selfishness, cruel indifference, destructive greed and violence.

It is not just physical death we are talking about. How many times can we say, "Lord, if you had been here, if you had been speaking through these people, acting in this community, our brothers and our sisters would not have turned away from love or given up hope. They would not have lost faith in themselves, in other people, in the Church, in God. Something in them would not have died."

Jesus is "the resurrection and the life." But he is this not only in himself but also in his Body on earth. He acts through us. The woundedness we see around us need not "lead to death." We can respond to sin and to sickness of heart in such a way that "the Son of God may be glorified." Jesus' risen presence in the world can be revealed and his power made manifest through the life-giving, healing love we show to all in need—to victims and violators alike.

When Jesus said, "Let us go to Lazarus," the apostle Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with

MARCH 26, 2023

5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Ezekiel 37:12-14; Romans 8:8-11;
John 11:1-45

*We can give life
only if we die
with Jesus in order
that others may live.*

him." Thomas spoke as a prophet; Jesus indeed gave life to the world by dying. And we can give life only if we die with him in order that others may live. The dying we must accept is giving our flesh for the life of the world as Jesus did. And this means to give expression in the flesh to truth, to hope, to love.

Jesus came as the Word made flesh. He was the truth of God expressed visibly on earth. In his teaching God's words were "made flesh" in the physical sounds of his voice. In his life-style the values of God were literally embodied. He was killed for bearing witness to the truth. And on the cross, more important than the pain he suffered was the love he expressed through it.

To express ourselves is to be vulnerable. We are afraid to drop all the masks we hide behind, to be ourselves, to reveal ourselves, to express ourselves. Just as we use clothes to hide our bodies, we often use our bodies to hide our emotions and thoughts. We don't want the "word" of our souls to be "made flesh" in nakedness, even to give life to those around us.



This is what our baptismal priesthood is all about: We were anointed at Baptism to share in the priesthood of Jesus. But a priest has no function except as a minister within a community. To accept our baptismal consecration as priests is to accept our role of *active ministry in the community of the Church*. And this means *giving expression* to the truth and love within us by grace. Saint Paul writes, “You are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you.” God is revealed through our words and actions so that no one will ever have to say, “Lord, if you had been here....” Every member of Christ has “the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (see 1 Corinthians 12:7). This is the fulfillment of God’s promise made to Ezekiel, “I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves.... I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live.” When we surrender ourselves to let God express his truth, his love through us, Jesus can empower us as a community of priests to “roll away the stone” that keeps others in their tombs, and can say to us, “Unbind them and let them go free.”

REFLECTING ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPELS

Fifth Week of Lent

***Pray daily:** Father, help us to be like Christ your Son, who loved the world and died for our salvation. Inspire us by his love and guide us by his example. Amen.*

Monday: John 8:1-11. “The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery... making her stand before all of them.” People are frequently exposed in their sinfulness. Are you ready to “stand before” your friends expressing your faith? Do you respond and sing at liturgy? Do you express your faith at work, home and in your social life?

Tuesday: John 8:21-30. Jesus said, “[T]he one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” Are you willing to tell the world that what you have learned from Jesus in the Church is true? How do you feel when unpopular truths are criticized? To whom are you sent to speak about Jesus?

Wednesday: John 8:31-42. Jesus said, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” Are you confident that you can make people free by sharing with them Jesus’ teaching? Do you do it?

Thursday: John 8:51-59. Jesus said, “I know [the Father], and if I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word.” How do you show publicly your love for the Father, for Jesus, for Mary? Are you willing to share your experiences of God? With whom?

Friday: John 10:31-42. Many came to Jesus and said, “John performed no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.” Do you realize and accept the power you have to bring others to Jesus through the witness of your own faith and life-style? What do people see in your life that indicates that you take Jesus and your faith seriously?

Saturday: John 11:45-57. Caiaphas, the high priest, said, “[I]t is better...to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed.” Is it better that you should suffer for speaking the truth, or that little by little, through everyone’s silence, whole nation or culture should accept many falsehoods, prejudices and wrong values?

SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR LENT

Prayer: Try praying with someone this week—at home, at work, on a date—anything from just saying the Our Father together or talking over a Scripture passage.

Fasting: Is there anything in your life you could stop doing (or stop not doing!) just because it doesn’t express your real values and beliefs?

Almsgiving: How could you give someone a gift out of the riches of your faith and religion? What do you have as a Catholic that others may not have but might like to know about? How can you make a gift to others by expressing your devotion in liturgy?

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