

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

11 MARCH 2018

Readings for Sunday, March 11: 2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23; Ephesians 2:4-10; John 3:14-21.

God pardons and raises up those who have been unfaithful, those who have loved the darkness rather than the light. For God so loved the world that He sent His only Son to deliver the world from exile.

Readings for Sunday, March 18: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 5:7-9; John 12:20-33.

St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish Special Day of Prayer is Monday.
Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament: Monday after 9:00 A.M. Mass to 4:00 PM in the Chapel.

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

<u>Date</u>	<u>Intention</u>	<u>Requested By</u>
12 Mar. MON. 9:00 AM	Paul Peterka Jr. Family	Francis J. Czeiner Family
14 Mar. WED. 9:00 AM	Robert Norris	Tony & Theresa Vitacco
15 Mar. THU. 9:00 AM	Joy Dolhanczyk	Ronnie & Theresa Yost
16 Mar. FRI. 9:00 AM	Joseph Daniel Guarinello, Jr.	Wanda Palmieri & family
17 Mar. SAT. 4:00 PM	People of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish	
18 Mar. SUN. 9:00 AM	Marie Dellaquila	Husband & family



ETERNAL REST grant unto them, O Lord. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.
PRAY FOR THE SICK AND SUFFERING of the parish especially those in homes and hospitals.
REMEMBER OUR TROOPS: Pray that God will bless and protect our young men and women in the military.



SECOND SUNDAY HOSPITALITY on Sunday, March 11 in the social hall after the 9:00 AM Mass. Come and enjoy a cup of coffee or juice and some light pastries. Free will offering accepted.

SENIOR CITIZENS MEETING on Tuesday, March 13 at 1:30 PM in the social hall. **BUS TRIP** to Hunterdon Hills Playhouse on April 17 to see *Steel Magnolias*. Cost is \$83.00 - all inclusive. Any questions, call Shirley (610-326-1128).

THE ROSARY PRAYER GROUP leads the recitation of the Rosary every Sunday before the 9:00 AM Mass. They also pray the Rosary before the 9:00 AM weekday Masses. All are welcome to join in these special Marian devotions.

THE PARISH OFFICE will be closed on Thursday, March 15.

MINISTRY SCHEDULE - March 17/18:

4:00 PM Mass

Lector -Melanie Warzeski
 Extraordinary Ministers - Cindy Nore, John Bracaglia, Tony Vitacco, John Nester
 Altar Servers - Maeve Donnelly
 Greeters - Marie Hildebrand and Nikki Gambino

9:00 AM Mass

Lector - Sylvia Marcheskie
 Extraordinary Ministers - Kathy Bernhard, Rita Templin, Jack Bucciaglia
 Altar Server - Domenic Gerasimowicz
 Greeter - Jack and Lori Carr

REFLECTIONS FROM THE DESK OF FR. GREGORY J. HICKEY

Fourth Sunday of Lent

The gospel story of the prodigal son is a well-known parable. However, because of its familiarity, it is easy to miss the essential meaning and message of the story. The prodigal son story highlights the essential elements of what true forgiveness and reconciliation is all about. We hear about a man with two sons. One decides to take his inheritance, leave home and have a great time. When all has been spent and nothing is left and he has hit rock bottom, he decides to go back home and ask forgiveness. The twist in the story is that his father welcomes him back instantly not caring about what or how he lost everything. In fact, he does not even wait for the son to get back in the house; he goes out to him, welcomes him back, and celebrates his return. The older son was faithful but did he understand love and forgiveness?

Let's take a look at the family. The oldest son was a hard and conscientious worker. Every day, from dawn until dusk, he worked in the fields. Whatever his Dad asked him to do, he would do. The youngest was a daydreamer. He loved to sit in front of the house and watch the caravans go by to the fabulous cities in the far-east. The very thought of these cities would send the blood rushing through his veins. He was tired of the monotony of family life, the same fields, the same flocks, and the same duties. His youth was passing away and he wanted to have his fling before it was too late. Filled with self-pity he goes to his Dad and asks for his share of the inheritance. The point of the story is abundantly clear when we consider the relationship between the father and his younger son. As regards the relationship between father and the older son, Jesus leaves the conclusion open-ended. We have to reflect on what might have happened, whether the older son gave in to the father's pleading to be forgiving or whether he refused. How we end the parable will tell us a lot about ourselves.

The younger son learns quickly of a law in Economics which is the "law of diminishing returns." When you have lots of money, you can do just about anything you want. When that money runs out the friends that you have been picking up the tab for all seem to disappear and do not return the favor. The young guy then hits rock bottom and decides to come home and ask forgiveness and to reconcile with the father because he knows that he will have a roof over his head, food to eat, and clothes to wear.

The oldest son is not very happy when the brother returns and grows angry and jealous. The father responds that all I have is yours and invites him to join in the festivities. Isn't the sin of the oldest brother far greater than all of the sins of the younger brother? He couldn't forgive his own brother. I think you as parents can relate to this story with your own children. I think we all can identify also with the oldest son. How many times have we been jealous, envious, and angry because God gave someone else what we thought was due to us?

The parable is not about either one of these sons. It is all about the father. It is more about the father's unconditional love than the sins of the sons. It is really about our heavenly Father who loves each of us unconditionally with a love we can never be worthy of. Who loves us not because of what we are but because of Who He is. It is all about fidelity of the love of God. It is all about Divine Mercy.

I am sure that each one of us can relate to one of these two brothers in several ways or can tell each of us a modern day parable based upon either our own family or a family we know. The psychic glue of this relationship was the father who knew well the mind of each of his children and gave each of them the benefit of the doubt. He forgave both of them from his heart and never turned back. That's what true forgiveness is all about. Forgiveness is one thing. Forgetting is another issue. Our Father in heaven not only forgives us but forgets our failings. Each day is a new day. It is a lesson that He invites each of us to try.

Have a good week!

Fr. Hickey

Parish Support

WEEKLY BUDGET.....	\$5,000
DEPOSIT FOR MARCH 4, 2018.....	\$4,516
Regular Sunday Collection -	\$4,426
Parish Giving -	\$90
WEEKLY DEFICIT.....	(\$484)
Year to Date Budget.....	\$180,000
Year to Date Collections.....	\$159,384
Average per week Collection.....	\$4,427
Year to Date Deficit.....	(\$20,616)
Average per week Deficit.....	(\$573)
MARCH 5, 2017	
Deposit.....	\$4,818
2016-2017 Deficit to Date.....	(\$22,039)
Difference from previous year.....	\$1,423



PARISH LOTTERY RAFFLE TICKET based on the PA Pick 3 Evening Number. Winning ticket number must be the exact number drawn for the PA Pick 3 Evening

Number. Tickets are \$5.00 each and are sold on a monthly basis. The prize for the winning ticket is \$50.00 on weekdays and \$100.00 on Sundays and one specially-designated weekday. Tickets are available after the Masses on weekends and at the parish office on weekdays. **This is our major fund raiser for the parish. We encourage each family to purchase at least one ticket each month. Your support is greatly appreciated.**

LOTTERY CALENDAR RAFFLE TICKET WINNERS

- February 26 - #659 - Cathy Keck - \$50.00
- February 27 - #710 - Phyllis Villano - \$50.00
- February 28 - #816 - unsold
- FEBRUARY FIGURES: 396 tickets sold - \$1,980.00. Payout to winners - \$800.00. Printing of tickets - \$100.00. February profit - \$1,080.00. Thank you for your support!
- March 1 - #752 - unsold
- March 2 - #082 - unsold
- March 3 - #891 - unsold
- March 4 - #913 - Peter Monfort - \$100.00

MASS ATTENDANCE for March 3/4:

- 4:00 PM Mass - 217
- 9:00 AM Mass - 142
- Total Attendance - 359
- Mass Attendance for March 4/5, 2017 - 374

“CONSIDER REMEMBERING YOUR PARISH IN YOUR WILL!” For further information, please call the parish office.

WOMEN’S SOCIETY NEWS

March 23 - Pizza & Game Night in the social after the 5:00 PM Stations of the Cross. Pizza \$1.00/slice; soda 50 cents. Bring your board games, cards, etc. or use ours. Sign up after Mass until March 18 so we have enough pizza.

March 27 - Visit Padre Pio Center for Stations of the Cross and Rosary. Meet in church parking lot at 10:30 AM. All parishioners invited.

April 7 - Parish “Yard Sale” in social hall. Tables \$5.00. Doors open 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Set up 7:00 AM. Will offer various unused items from church for sale (oak chairs, organ, bingo equipment, kitchen items, etc.) PLUS will offer 8 ft. tables and chairs for FREE. Payment to church office by April 6 to reserve tables.

April 29 - Ladies Springtime Tea at 1:00 PM in the social hall. Tickets \$10.00 - on sale beginning April 7 after Masses. Must have ticket to attend. Ticket sales continue until April 22.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS during Lent on Wednesday, March 14 and 28 at 1:30 PM. Also on Friday, March 23 at 5:00 PM.

FAST & ABSTINENCE DURING LENT - All persons who are 14 years of age and older are bound to abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, on all the Fridays of Lent and Good Friday. All persons 18 years of age and older, up to and including their 59th birthday, are bound to fast by limiting themselves to a single full meal on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, while the other two meals on those days are to be light.

ACTS OF PENANCE FOR LENT - All the faithful are encouraged, when possible, to participate at Mass and to receive the Holy Eucharist daily, to celebrate frequently the Sacrament of Penance, to undertake spiritual reading, especially the study of the Sacred Scriptures, and to participate in parish Lenten devotions as well as Lenten education programs. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is especially recommended.

OPERATION RICE BOWL - All are encouraged to participate in Operation Rice Bowl which has aided countless hungry persons here in the Archdiocese as well as throughout our nation and our world. Rice Bowls are available at the entrances of church.

Dear Parishioners,

Metanoia Young Adults is a group of young adults in their 20s and 30s in Montgomery County who want to delve into their faith on a deeper level than just Sunday Mass. Any parishioner in this age group from our parish is welcome to join. Recently, I sent them a donation to support their ministry in the amount of \$100.00. The following is a thank you I received from their President.

Dear Father Hickey,

Thank you so much for the very generous gift your parish has given to **Metanoia Young Adults**. We thank you for your support of our young adult ministry. With your financial support, we are able to hold our monthly Bible studies, host Theology on Tap events with dynamic Catholic speakers, pray together at our monthly Holy Hour, and enjoy deepening our fellowship through social activities. Your gift also allows us to hold our annual retreat that is always a highlight of our ministry. Your generosity allows us to further the mission of **Metanoia Young Adults** to grow in faith, fellowship and communion.

Thank you once again for your support of our ministry and God Bless!

Sincerely,

Erin L. Trautmann

President of **Metanoia Young Adults**

“ADVERTISER OF THE WEEK”

O'DONNELL, WEISS & MATTEI, P.C.

610-323-2800

LENTEN DINNERS at the Knights of Columbus Hall, Stowe on Fridays during Lent from 5:00-8:00 PM. Various seafood offered (crab cakes every week). Cost is \$20.00. All are welcome!

FR. BALLY COUNCIL #1192 ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT on Saturday, March 24 at Council Home - gather in the Upstairs Hall at 11:00 AM - Rain or shine. Open to any child, grandchild, niece or nephew of a Fr. Bally Council, Ladies Aux., Archbishop Fulton Sheen Assembly, or Casey Club member.

ST. ALOYSIUS PARISH SCHOOL Grades PreK3 thru 8th Grade Registration now open to new families. To schedule a guided tour call the school main office (610-326-6167). For more information about St. Aloysius Parish School visit www.saintaloyssiusschool.com. Registration is on a first come, first served basis.

CONCERT AT THE CATHEDRAL - March 18 at 2:30 PM - **Beethoven's Ode to Joy**. The Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia and Symphony C join forces to perform Beethoven's epic Symphony No. 9.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES NIGHT WITH THE PHILADELPHIA 76ers on March 19 at 7:00 PM. 76ers vs. Charlotte Hornets. A portion of all tickets sold will directly benefit Catholic Charities Appeal programs which provide support to the homeless, special needs students, food cupboards, after-school programs and so much more. To purchase tickets: <https://groupmatics.events/event/CCA76ers>.

ST. CHARLES BORROMEO SEMINARY LECTURE SERIES: March 19 at 7:00 PM in St. John Vianney Auditorium - Presenter is Dr. Mary Hirschfield. Topic: Creation and Transcendence: Laudato Si's Challenge to the Technocratic Paradigm. For more details visit www.scs.edu/Lectures.

ANNUAL ARCHDIOCESAN MASS honoring the gifts of persons with disabilities, the deaf community, family, friends and care givers on Saturday, March 24 at 10:30 AM at the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul, Philadelphia. Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. will be the principal celebrant and homilist. Reception following Mass featuring entertainment by Santino Dragon New Year Brigade. RSVP at www.opdarchphilly.org or call 215-587-3530.

FLAME OF LOVE LENTEN RETREAT on Saturday, March 24 at Annunciation BVM Parish, Havertown. Speaker/Homilist is Monsignor John Esseff. Times: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Bring your own lunch. Free of charge. Visit www.flameoflove.us.

METANOIA YOUNG ADULTS is an active community of Catholic young adults in western Montgomery County in their 20s and 30s who are looking to deepen their faith and meet fellow Catholics in the area. March events: March 13 - Bible Study at St. Rose of Lima Parish, North Wales at 7:30 PM; March 18 - Service Project at Manna on Main St. - Mass at St. Stans at 9:00 AM; March 20 - Theology on Tap at Appalachian Brewing Co., Colledgeville - Doors open at 7:00 PM, Talk starts at 7:30 PM; March 27 - Holy Hour at Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Parish, North Wales at 7:30 PM. Contact metanoiayoungadults@gmail.com for more information.

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER RETREAT on April 6-8 at Marianist Family Retreat Center, Cape May Point, NJ. Cost is \$135/pp. For more details call 609-884-3829.