

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

4 MARCH 2018

Readings for Sunday, March 4: Exodus 20:1-17; 1 Corinthians 1:22-25; John 2:13-25.

The Law liberates and leads us to freedom. It is to be trusted for it is a source of wisdom. Jesus speaks of the ultimate freedom to be won for us by his being raised up. He is the sign of the power and wisdom of God.

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

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>
5 Mar. MON. 9:00 AM	Eva Fuga	Ron & Carol Fry
7 Mar. WED. 9:00 AM	Robert Norris	Jack & Lori Carr
8 Mar. THU. 9:00 AM	Rita Bernas	Husband, Ronald & family
9 Mar. FRI. 9:00 AM	Patricia Fiegl	Jack & Lori Carr
10 Mar. SAT. 4:00 PM	People of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish	
11 Mar. SUN. 9:00 AM	Mary & John Voychik	Barbara & Michael



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 BUS TRIP to Hunterdon Hills Playhouse on April 17 to see *Steel Magnolias*. Leave from church at 9:00 AM and return about 5:30 PM. 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 Friday, March 9.

MINISTRY SCHEDULE - March 10/11:

4:00 PM Mass

Lector - John Nester
 Extraordinary Ministers - Vincent Tamaro, Mara Tamaro, Nikki Gambino, Terry Donnelly
 Altar Servers - Maeve Donnelly
 Greeters - Maria DiMarco and Ginger Scheidt

9:00 AM Mass

Lector - Rocco D'Emilio
 Extraordinary Ministers - Gary Huster, Debbie Huster, Helen George
 Altar Server - Tommy Miller, Madelyn Miller
 Greeter - Sylvia and Tom Marcheskie

REFLECTIONS FROM THE DESK OF FR. GREGORY J. HICKEY

Third Sunday of Lent

The Psalm refrain today is: *"The Lord is kind and merciful."* It sets the theme for all of our readings for today. The first reading we hear about God's desire to bring His people from suffering into freedom. The second reading reminds us of the blessings and marvels the Lord has given to His people. The Gospel again has the same theme and gives us the parable of the fig tree. He does not expect us to take his mercy for granted. With the help of his kindness, He expects us to grow in goodness and holiness.

Recently, former parishioners told me that their daughter brought her boyfriend home to meet them. The parents could not find many good qualities about him. When the parents had the opportunity to talk to their daughter later, by herself, the girl's mother said: "Dear, he does not seem like a very nice person." "Mom," the daughter answered, "if he wasn't nice, why would he be doing 500 hours of community service?"

It is stretching things a bit to say "community service" fits into the theme of today's liturgy, but our readings remind us not to be like the fig tree in Jesus' parable today. We are to produce good works. God didn't create us just to take up space in the world. He wants more from us than that. He wants us to trust Him, to love Him, and to do good for others.

I said in my introduction that the theme for today is *"The Lord is kind and merciful."* He is kind and merciful in many ways. One of those ways is in calling us to repentance and renewal. In the book of Revelation, Jesus said: *"Whoever is dear to me, I reprove and chastise. Be earnest about it, therefore. Repent! Here I stand knocking at the door. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will enter his house and have supper with him, and he with me."* This assumes that we all have room for improvement. God asks that of us and He also gives us the help we need to be better. That is kindness to us. He would not be kind if he didn't stimulate us to keep improving ourselves. The fact the He challenges us to change comes from His love as a caring parent. The parable of the fig tree is a call to live a positive life according to the Gospel – doing good by loving God and others.

The conversation Jesus had about tragic events at the beginning of today's gospel was interesting. Sometimes people think when something bad happens to someone it is God's punishment. Jesus said that's not always true. He does not try to explain suffering here, but He is telling us not to be complacent, which can happen to all of us. We cannot think "well, if nothing bad is happening to me, it must be because I am so good." He tells us we all need to repent, i.e., to work to be better than we are.

This season of Lent keeps reminding us of our need to grow in holiness and goodness. Some people I have talked with do nothing special during Lent. They think they are good enough. Others start off Lent with a great deal of enthusiasm praying more, making sacrifices or doing good work. However, as the weeks drag on, they ease up with their good resolutions. We still have four more weeks of Lent. Our readings today are encouraging us to do what we can so we can come to Easter with minds and heart renewed.

Today in our parish, and throughout our Archdiocese of Philadelphia, we have the first of the three Scrutinies. These Scrutinies are for those in the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation). We have two people in the RCIA this year. Jim Reitz will be baptized, Confirmed, and receive First Holy Communion at the Easter Vigil. Nicole Griffin, presently is baptized Episcopalian and will come into full Communion the Sunday after Easter at the 9:00 a.m. Mass. Each of them has been on their own journey through the RCIA and we look forward to the day they will fully join us and our Eucharistic Family. My prayer for them and each of you is that they and you will continue to study and reflect deeply on all the Lord wants to share with you.

May all those preparing to come into the Church at Easter in our own Archdiocese and the neighboring Diocese of Allentown be able to live the Christian way of life in a deeper way. May we all do a better job of living up to what God calls us to be. We must remember, though, at all times, whether God is comforting us, forgiving us, healing us, blessing us, encouraging us, or correcting us, *"The Lord is kind and merciful."*

Have a good week!

Fr. Hickey

Parish Support

WEEKLY BUDGET.....	\$5,000
DEPOSIT FOR FEBRUARY 25, 2018.....	\$4,403
Regular Sunday Collection -	\$3,457
Parish Giving -	\$90
St. Gabriel Feast Day Collection -	\$856
WEEKLY DEFICIT.....	(\$597)
Year to Date Budget.....	\$175,000
Year to Date Collections.....	\$154,868
Average per week Collection.....	\$4,425
Year to Date Deficit.....	(\$20,132)
Average per week Deficit.....	(\$575)
 <i>FEBRUARY 26, 2017</i>	
Deposit.....	\$4,513
2016-2017 Deficit to Date.....	(\$21,857)
Difference from previous year.....	\$1,725

MASS ATTENDANCE for February 24/25:

4:00 PM Mass - 187
 9:00 AM Mass - 143
 Total Attendance - 330
 Mass Attendance for February 25/26, 2017 - 376



Raffle Drawing

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 19 - #478 - Bob Steiniger - \$50.00
 February 20 - #133 - unsold
 February 21 - #230 - unsold
 February 22 - #915 - Mary Gacura - \$50.00
 February 23 - #615 - Judie Perlstein - \$50.00
 February 24 - #973 - unsold
 February 25 - #659 - Cathy Keck - \$100.00

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Catholics in Latin America and the Caribbean face many challenges when it comes to sharing their faith; yet the light always shines through and hope arises. For example, in rural Peru, like in many other countries, opportunities for the faithful to celebrate even the basic rituals of our Catholic faith are often few and far between. Frequently, children cannot receive the Sacraments of Initiation, and Mass cannot be held regularly. Without missionaries and catechists, the people living there cannot learn about, experience and share the beauty of our Catholic way of life.

Your support to the Collection for the Church in Latin America has helped the Siervas del Plan de Dios (Servants of the Plan of God) train lay people to become Catholic missionaries and catechists in parishes. The sisters have set up a missionary formation program as a step toward enlivening and sustaining the Catholic faith.

In northeastern Ecuador, in the Amazon jungle, hundreds of thousands of people live. Many of these people are Catholic and have a strong indigenous culture, and most speak only their native language, Quechua. The first missionaries arrived to this area many years ago and provided basic materials for evangelization. Through the Church in Latin America Collection, an updated devotional book was produced and adapted to the Quechua culture based on feedback provided by the indigenous people. Because of your support, it was possible for adolescents, adults, and elders living in the Ecuadorian jungle to deepen their faith and grow in love of Christ.

Our Archdiocese will take up this collection the weekend of March 10 and 11, 2018. Please be generous and take this opportunity to share your faith with the families of Latin America and the Caribbean. Your support will truly make a difference. Thank you and God bless you.

Sincerely in Christ,
 Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M.Cap.
 Archbishop of Philadelphia

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

“ADVERTISER OF THE WEEK”

MORGAN BASEMENT WATERPROOFING
 610-696-0100

STATIONS OF THE CROSS during Lent on Wednesday, March 7, 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. Collection boxes are also at the entrances of church.

MSGR. JOSEPH MURRAY, who resided at St. Gabriel Parish from 1975 to 1978 now lives at Regina Nursing Center. Anyone wishing to send Msgr. Murray a card can send it to him at 550 E. Fornance Street, Norristown, PA 19401.

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.

BUS TRIP TO MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE in Washington, DC on Saturday, April 14. Sponsored by St. Philip Neri Catholic Family Life Center. Cost is \$57 which includes ticket and transportation. On-site café to enjoy lunch; stop for dinner on the way back (lunch and dinner not included in cost). Call 215-579-2237 for details and registration. Registration deadline is March 30.

CROSS & LIGHT - Don't miss the international, critically acclaimed musical and video surround experience of Christ's Passion, Death, Resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost at St. John Bosco Parish, Hatboro. Show times & Dates: March 8 - 10 AM & 7 PM; March 9 - 10 AM & 7 PM; March 10 - 1 PM & 7 PM. Purchase your tickets by calling 267-803-9930 or at www.CrossAndLight.org/StJohnBosco.

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>.

POST-ABORTION HEALING RETREAT on March 9-11 in Malvern. This retreat is designed to help you experience the mercy and compassion of God. It will help you focus on the buried emotions of the past and begin healing in a non-judgmental, safe, loving, and confidential environment. For information call Lauren (215-720-5828) or Priscilla (215-906-6337).

Congratulations Our parish received notification of the performance of our high school students attending Pope John Paul II High School on the First Semester Report. MADISON MC NAMARA achieved First Honors.

WINNER OF THE MONTHLY 50/50 GOLD ENVELOPE DRAWING to support Religious Education:
FEBRUARY DRAWING - M/M Stephen Pasko - \$308.00.

ST. GABRIEL OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER PARISH MEMORIAL FUND DONATIONS received in memory of: **SANDRA SMITH** from Mary Lenhardt, Kathy & Ron Bernhard, St. Gabriel Women's Society, Pete & Lori LaRosa, Anna Nester & John;
SISTER M. ELECTA BARLOK from Monica Bauer, St. Gabriel Church Rosary Guild, Kathy & Ron Bernhard.

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.

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.