

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

24 MARCH 2019

Readings for Sunday, March 24: Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15; 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12; Luke 13:1-9.

From the burning bush, Moses is called by God to lead his people out of slavery into freedom. The parable of the fig tree speaks, on the one hand, of God's patience, but of the urgency of the call to conversion, on the other. Like the Hebrews of old, we too have failed to heed God's call, thinking ourselves to be self-righteous.

Readings for Sunday, March 31: Joshua 5:9a, 10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32.

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>
25 Mar.	MON. 9:00 AM	Thomas Roberts	Fr. Gregory J. Hickey
27 Mar.	WED. 9:00 AM	Decd. Members of Burke Family	Michael J. Burke
28 Mar.	THU. 9:00 AM	Mary Calcasacco	Daughter, Jeannine
29 Mar.	FRI. 9:00 AM	Bill Rotteveel	Fr. Gregory J. Hickey
30 Mar.	SAT. 4:00 PM	People of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish	
31 Mar.	SUN. 9:00 AM	James V. Ottaviano, Sr.	Hegedus 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.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING on Monday, March 25 at 7:15 PM in the Convent building.

FINANCE COUNCIL MEETING on Thursday, March 28 at 7:15 PM in the Convent building.

SENIOR CITIZENS BUS TRIP on Tuesday, April 23 to Hunterdon Hills to see "Take Me Away." Cost - \$94.00, includes transportation, lunch and show. Call Shirley (610-326-1128) for details and reservations.

RESTAURANT GIFT CARD BASKET RAFFLE - Basket includes: \$50.00 Gift cards to Red Lobster, Cutillo's, Longhorn Steakhouse and Vincenzo's; \$50.00 Cash; \$50.00 in Lottery tickets; and a spring floral arrangement. Chances are \$5.00 each. Chances for sale after Masses on the weekend or at the parish office during regular business hours. Drawing will be held on April 15.

MINISTRY SCHEDULE - March 30/31:

4:00 PM Mass

Celebrant - Fr. Hickey
 Lector - Melanie Warzeski
 Extraordinary Ministers - Frank Durante, Sherry Durante, John Nester, John Bracaglia, George Siver
 Altar Server - Maeve Donnelly
 Greeters - Ginger Scheidt and Nikki Gambino

9:00 AM Mass

Celebrant - Fr. Hickey
 Lector - Jack Bucciaglia
 Extraordinary Ministers - Tony Vitacco, Lori Carr, Gary Huster, Debbie Huster
 Altar Server - Tommy and Madelyn Miller
 Greeters - Marie Hildebrand

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 that 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 many of our parishes, we have the first of the three Scrutinies. These Scrutinies are for those in the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation). We do not have anyone in our parish preparing for Baptism or Confirmation but I would ask you to pray for those in other parishes preparing for Baptism and Confirmation at the Easter Vigil in our area. 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, *"The Lord is kind and merciful."*

Have a good week!

Fr. Hickey

2019 MASS BOOK - There are still openings in our 2019 Mass Book. Mass stipend of \$10.00 for weekday Masses and \$15.00 for weekend Masses must be paid at the time you request the Mass Intention. Both weekend and weekday Masses are still available.

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 Marian Devotions.

Parish Support

WEEKLY BUDGET.....	\$5,000
DEPOSIT FOR MARCH 17, 2019.....	\$4,662
Regular Sunday Collection -	\$4,572
Parish Giving -	\$90
WEEKLY DEFICIT.....	(\$338)
Year to Date Budget.....	\$190,000
Year to Date Collections.....	\$164,782
Average per week Collection.....	\$4,336
Year to Date Deficit.....	(\$25,218)
Average per week Deficit.....	(\$664)

MARCH 18, 2018

Deposit.....	\$4,994
2017-2018 Deficit to Date.....	(\$21,847)
Difference from previous year.....	(\$3,371)



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

- March 11 - #852 - unsold
- March 12 - #942 - unsold
- March 13 - #455 - unsold
- March 14 - #472 - unsold
- March 15 - #890 - unsold
- March 16 - #166 - unsold
- March 17 - #676 - unsold

MASS ATTENDANCE for March 16/17:

4:00 PM Mass - 221
 9:00 AM Mass - 151
 Total Attendance - 372
 Mass Attendance for March 17/18, 2018 - 362

WINNER OF THE MONTHLY 50/50 GOLD ENVELOPE to support Religious Education:

MARCH DRAWING - Loretta Gauger - \$299.00.

“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

CHOCOLATE EASTER EGG CANDY SALE by Cindy’s Homemade Sweets (in loving memory of Cynthia Miller-Stein). All proceeds benefit Shriners Hospitals for Children®. Varieties offered: Milk and Dark Chocolate Peanut Butter; Milk and Dark Chocolate Buttercream; Milk and Dark Chocolate Coconut. \$15.00 per lb. box. Contact Terry Donnelly to place an order at 610-529-2562 or tmiller217@yahoo.com.

LADIES SPRINGTIME TEA on Sunday, April 28 from 1:00-3:00 PM. Adults - \$10, ages 5-12 - \$5, under 5 free. Tickets available in the vestibule after Masses or at the church office. Pre-purchased tickets only. No tickets sold at the door. No assigned seating. Come early for best seating.

Donations being accepted for door prizes for Ladies Tea on April 28. We had some very lovely, new donated items last year and are asking again for your generosity. New items can be dropped off at the church office.

PIZZA & GAME NIGHT on Friday, April 12 starting at 5:00 PM in the social hall. Please sign up in the vestibule so we have enough pizza. This is always a fun night with a reasonable meat free lenten meal. \$2.00 for a slice of pizza and a soda. Then, take a little time to stop by the Bags and Baubles sale.

BAGS AND BAUBLES SALE on Friday, April 12 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM in the social hall. There have been some amazing items donated to this sale. It would be a shame to miss out on the bargains. Everything will be reasonably priced. Come and chose a new bag or necklace and earrings for Easter to support your Women’s Society. Make sure to sign up for pizza and stay for the evening if you like. It will be a fun night and don’t forget to bring some friends. **Last day for bag and jewelry donations is March 31.**

LENT

Stations of the Cross on Friday, March 29 at 1:30 PM in the Church.

Fast and Abstinence - All persons who are fourteen years of age and older are bound to abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, all the Fridays of Lent and Good Friday.

All persons eighteen years of age and older, up to and including their fifty-ninth 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 - 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. 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. Collections boxes are at the entrances to Church.

MAGNIFICAT - Those who purchased the Magnificat can pick up their APRIL issue at the parish office.

PHISHING SCAM

A phishing scam has been affecting a small number of parishes within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. This scam involves parishioners receiving a text message, email, or robotic call from a source alleging to be the pastor of the local parish. These messages contain a request for parishioners to purchase gift cards for a parish fundraiser and then send the gift card numbers back to the scammer claiming to be the pastor. If you should receive a communication like this, please report it to our local law enforcement. Any requests for donations for our Parish are made by bulletin announcements, announcements made at Masses or via parish mailings.

A BABY'S BREATH RUN FOR LIFE 2019 on Saturday, April 13 at Norristown Farm Park. 9:00 AM, Fun Run; 9:30 AM, 5K Run; 10:30 AM, Awards. Pre-register at www.ababysbreath.org/events/NOR_RFL.html. For more info call Dorothy Swedkowski (610-316-6281).

CATHOLIC CHARITIES NIGHT WITH THE SIXERS on Wednesday, April 10. Join us and watch the Philadelphia 76ers take on the Chicago Bulls. A portion of all tickets sold will directly benefit the Catholic Charities Appeal Programs. To purchase tickets, please visit www.fevo.com/edp/Catholic-Charities-Appeal-Night-ur9A3a6.

LENTEN PROGRAMS AT OUR LADY'S MISSIONARIES OF THE EUCHARIST, BIRDSBORO: Father Terry & Brother Shawn on Wednesday, April 3 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Includes 2 conferences, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Eucharistic Adoration and Mass. Father James Blount on Wednesday, April 10 - 9:00 AM to Noon and 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Morning Session includes Conference, Eucharistic Adoration, Sacrament of Reconciliation and Healing Mass. Evening Session includes Liturgy of the Hours, Conference, Individual Blessings. Sacrament of Reconciliation begins at 5:30 PM. To register for these events: olme@olme.org, 610-582-3333 or www.olme.org.

METANOIA is an active community of Catholic young adults in western Montgomery County who support Catholics in their 20s and 30s looking to deepen their faith and meet fellow Catholics in the area. Tuesday, March 26 - Holy Hour at Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Parish, North Wales. Visit www.metanoiayoungadults.org for more details.

MASS HONORING THE GIFTS OF PERSON WITH DISABILITIES, THE DEAF COMMUNITY, FAMILY, FRIENDS AND CAREGIVERS on Saturday, March 30 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 immediately following the Mass. RSVP at www.opdarchphilly.org or call 215-587-3530 with the number attending.

LECTURE on Monday, April 8 at 7:00 PM in the Vianney Hall Auditorium at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. "When Peter and Paul Disagree: Living in Faithfulness and Charity Amid Public Controversy" - speaker Rev. Msgr. Michael Magee. Contact Sharon Presta (spresta@scs.edu or 610-785-6287) for more details.

ARE YOU CALLED TO BE A DEACON? Permanent Diaconate Information Night on Thursday, April 11 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary Vianney Auditorium. For Catholic men (and their wives if married) between the ages of 29 and 55. Registration required. Email name, address, age, parish, email, marital status, if married, wife's name to Laura Nimmons (lnimmons@archphila.org).