

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

29 MARCH 2020

Readings for Sunday, March 29: Ezekiel 37:12-14; Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45.

Jesus is our resurrection and our life. Because he has given us of the Spirit, we are no longer dead because of sin, but alive. In Jesus is the fullness of redemption.

Readings for Sunday, April 5: Isaiah 50:4-7; Philippians 2:6-11; Matthew 26:14-27:66.

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.
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is cancelled until further notice.

<u>Date</u>			<u>MASSES FOR THE WEEK</u>	<u>Intention</u>	<u>Requested By</u>
30 Mar.	MON.	No public Mass		Mary Calcasacco	Daughter, Jeannine
1 Apr.	WED.	No public Mass		Elsie Norton	John Dori
2 Apr.	THU.	No public Mass		Agnes Slaby	Jim & Anna Baldasano
3 Apr.	FRI.	No public Mass		Roger Villano	Wife & Children
4 Apr.	SAT.	No public Mass		People of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish	
5 Apr.	SUN.	No public Mass		Those Enrolled in St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish Memorial Fund	

Fr. Hickey will have a private Mass each day to fulfill the Mass Intentions for Masses previously scheduled.
The Chapel will be open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM for private prayer.



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.

CANCELLATIONS AND POSTPONEMENTS DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC:

PREP CLASSES are cancelled - will resume on Sunday, April 19.

CHOIR PRACTICE is cancelled until further notice.

LADIES ROYAL TEA scheduled for April 19 has been postponed - will be rescheduled at a later date.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT is cancelled until further notice.

THE PARISH OFFICE IS OPEN! However, due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic, for the safety of our parishioners and staff, all parish business will be conducted by phone (610-326-5127) or email (contact@sgsm62.org).

MAGNIFICAT BOOKS - Those who purchased the Magnificat can pick up their APRIL issue at the parish office. **Please call the office prior to stopping for your book.**

ST. GABRIEL OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER PARISH MEMORIAL FUND DONATION received in memory of: **THOMAS FREESE** from Steve, Maria & Tyler Boyer.

WOMEN'S SOCIETY MEETING scheduled for Thursday, April 2 has been postponed. New tentative date for the meeting is Thursday, April 16.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE DESK OF FR. GREGORY J. HICKEY

5th Sunday of Lent

The 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent in Year A all come from St. John's Gospel. All three deal with a gradual coming to know the Lord through a period of conversion that leads to transformation. All three gospels deal with a personal relationship with the Lord that leads to an intimacy in personal prayer. The 3rd Sunday's theme is life-giving water that reminds us of our Baptism and our call to discipleship. The 4th Sunday's theme is both physical and spiritual blindness that keeps us from recognizing Our Lord and those to whom we are called to serve. This weekend is the 5th Sunday in Lent and the theme of the Gospel is the raising of Lazarus, which prefigures the Resurrection of Jesus and our own resurrection and those whom we love and I will spend time on that theme in my homily. For this reflection, I want to go back to the 3rd Sunday of Lent and reflect on life-giving water.

Samaria was located between Galilee and Jerusalem. It was 1,400 square miles so you can see how really large it is. Montgomery County is 487 square miles and Chester County is 720 square miles. It puts it in perspective. The trip would have taken approximately three full days on foot if the journey went through Samaria, but because of the animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans, travelers often went around Samaria so the trip would take much longer. Jesus and his disciples took the shorter route, and they were about half way through Samaria when the events in that gospel took place. It was around noon and probably getting warm. Jesus sat down to rest.

Most of the women in the area would have been at the well early in the morning to get the water they needed for the day. Perhaps the woman in today's gospel came to draw water at noon in order to avoid nasty looks or comments from the other women who may have looked down their noses at her because of her current unmarried situation. For any number of reasons, Jesus could have easily slipped away when she arrived. In addition to her unconventional living arrangement, she was a woman and a Samaritan. Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans and men usually did not speak with women in public. Rabbis would not even talk with their wives in public. However, Jesus did not walk away; He asked her for a drink.

Water is a major theme for the 3rd Sunday of Lent. Jesus asked for a drink and then offered the woman living water. The term was deliberately ambiguous. Ordinary people, of course, did not have running water in their homes. That's why they all came to a well nearby to draw water. The woman interpreted the term "living water" to mean a fountain or a spring. She had no idea that the living water Jesus was talking about was water that would lead to eternal life. Life, as we all know, depends on water. Recently in the news they have been talking about whether water existed on the planet Mars. The main issue is if water were there at one time, then life could have existed there too. There is no life without water. Similarly, we Christians see our own beginning in the life of grace starting with the water, the waters of Baptism.

Another feature of this gospel is to notice this woman gradually came to know Jesus in a fuller and deeper way. She initially addresses Jesus as "Sir," a polite title, then she recognizes him as a prophet, then she begins to believe that he is the Christ, that is, the Messiah. In her excitement, she forgot about the water she came to get (St. John tells us she left the water jar at the well) and she ran into town to tell everyone about him. The town itself concluded that he was even more than the Jewish Messiah, the Savior of the Jews, but he was the Savior of the world. It is a journey parallel to the journey taken by those in the RCIA (the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) as they seek to know more and more about Jesus on their way to entering the Church at Easter.

It might be worth noting that historically, after the Resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles at Pentecost, the Samaritans were very receptive to the preaching of the Apostles. Perhaps the events narrated in today's gospel paved the way for their conversion.

Everything in today's gospel started with a conversation between Jesus and the woman. That is what impresses me the most. We will never get to know Jesus unless we spend time with him. He does not show up in radiant light or thunder and lightning. He comes in ordinary ways, in the guise of a friend or even an adversary, in the words from a book, especially The Book which we call by its Greek name, the Bible. He shows up in an assembly of believers and in simple things as water, bread, and wine. The important thing is to make time to listen, to respond, to have a conversation, to do more than just tell him what we want him to do for us. We never get to know anyone in life without spending time with them. If the Lord is important to us, we need to set time aside to spend with him too.

We run to the Lord when we are in trouble, when we are having medical tests or in times of other problems in our lives. He never says "NO" to us. Perhaps, tomorrow, take a few minutes to stop and talk to him in private adoration and get reacquainted when there is no crisis. It will amaze you what He might say to you.

I would suggest for your Holy Week spiritual reading that you take the time to reflect on the gospels from the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays in Lent and open your hearts to what St. John tells us on the journey of faith that each of us must take to have a personal relationship with Jesus. Remember the themes are Water, Blindness, and Resurrection.

Have a good week!

Fr. Hickey

Parish Support

WEEKLY BUDGET.....	\$5,000
DEPOSIT FOR MARCH 22, 2020.....	\$1,290
Regular Sunday Collection -	\$1,200
Parish Giving -	\$90
WEEKLY DEFICIT.....	(\$3,710)
Year to Date Budget.....	\$190,000
Year to Date Collections.....	\$162,850
Average per week Collection.....	\$4,286
Year to Date Deficit.....	(\$27,150)
Average per week Deficit.....	(\$714)

MARCH 17, 2019

Deposit.....	\$4,662
2018-2019 Deficit to Date.....	(\$25,218)
Difference from previous year.....	(\$1,932)

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY AND REFLECTION has been cancelled.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS have been cancelled.

FAST & ABSTINENCE AND OTHER ACTS OF PENANCE

FOR LENT - The Bishops of the United States prescribe, as minimal obligation, that all persons who are fourteen years of age and older are bound to abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, on all the Fridays of Lent and Good Friday. Further, 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 on Good Friday, while the other two meals on those days are to be light.

All the faithful are encouraged to undertake spiritual reading, especially the study of the Sacred Scriptures during Lent.



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.**

APRIL LOTTERY TICKETS ARE ON SALE THROUGH THE PARISH OFFICE. PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO PICK UP TICKETS.

LOTTERY CALENDAR RAFFLE TICKET WINNERS

- March 16 - #970 - unsold
- March 17 - #858 - Kristin Vitacco - \$100.00
- March 18 - #521 - Cliff & Barb Keller - \$50.00
- March 19 - #194 - unsold
- March 20 - #632 - unsold
- March 21 - #454 - unsold
- March 22 - #374 - unsold

Prayer to Our Lady of Prompt Succor

O, Mary, Mother of God, who, amidst the tribulations of the world, watches over us and over the Church of your Son, be to us and to the Church truly Our Lady of Prompt Succor, make haste to help us in all our necessities, that in this fleeting life you may be our succor, and obtain for us an end to epidemics and pandemics and all other afflictions. Help us to gain life everlasting through the merits of Jesus, as we ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

March 29, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

My heart aches because, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we are unable to celebrate Eucharist together for what I hope will be a brief time. Please be assured that I will continue to remember you and your family in the private Masses that I will be offering. During these difficult days, we cannot congregate to celebrate Eucharist, it seems to me that the Lord is inviting us to be Eucharist to one another.

If you remember in the Gospel for the Third Sunday of Lent, in the conversation with the Samaritan woman, when she said that they, the Samaritans, worshiped on the mountain, while Jews saw Jerusalem as the place to worship. Jesus responded, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem" ...the hour is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth, and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.

Now is the time. We, who are blessed to be a Eucharistic people, are now called to be Eucharist to one another. There are many ways to do this.

1. Praying together in the sanctuary of our homes for all who are sick and ministering to the sick. May I recommend for your consideration the Family Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, or Prayer of the Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
2. Calling up elderly relatives, friends, and neighbors, offering to shop for them or pick up medicines or other necessities for them.
3. Preparing meals for families suddenly faced with unemployment.

These are just a few ways in which we can show ourselves to be the Eucharistic people we claim to be. I am sure you, in your own creative ways, can think of myriad other ways in which you might serve others, and thereby "worship the Father in Spirit and in truth."

While this is indeed a health crisis that effects all of us, it is also a financial crisis for many. Many of our people are finding themselves suddenly unemployed and are experiencing financial distress. To the extent that we are able, we need to help where we can.

It is also my pastoral responsibility to make you aware that our parish is also experiencing financial distress. As you are aware, we are totally dependent on your generosity in our weekly Offertory to meet our financial obligations. Without that income we cannot pay utility and other maintenance bills; pay our staff who are needed to keep the parish operating. Therefore, I have to plead with you to please continue to support your parish by mailing in your weekly offering or setting up electronic giving. Directions are on our website. To give you an idea in the last week, we have received a total of 21 envelopes, totaling \$1,200 and have received \$90 in Parish Giving. Without your continued support, the parish cannot support itself. I had to withdraw \$25,000 from our reserve to meet current bills. We cannot keep drawing from our reserves because if we do, we will eventually run out of reserves.

With God's help, the Lord's love for His Church, our Blessed Mother's constant intercession on your behalf, and the Holy Spirit's encouragement of your generous hearts, I am confident that we will continue to grow as the Eucharistic People of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish. Please know that I love you and constantly am praying for you and your family.

Your brother in Christ,
Fr. Gregory J. Hickey
Pastor