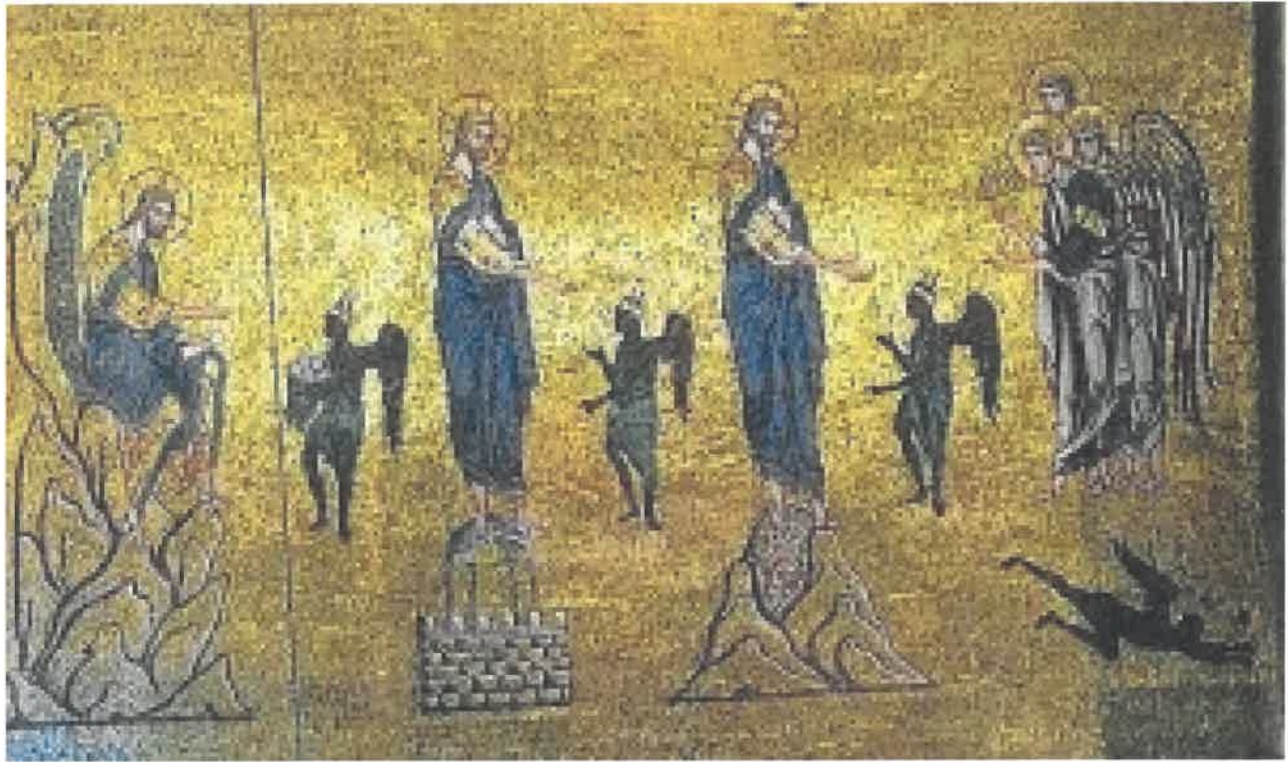


**PASTOR'S MEANDERINGS
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT (A)**

29 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH 2020



SUNDAY REFLECTION

At Eucharist we proclaim the death of the Lord, namely, His self-giving that serves as the model and standard for our daily lives. by refusing to yield to temptation, the satisfaction of our ego, we announce that we have indeed accepted Jesus' self-giving as the norm for daily living. To overcome temptation is ultimately to announce our preference for God's will, not our own.

Lord Jesus, like You we live in a world that often rejects our beliefs and values – a world that tempts us to see life in terms of the pursuit of power, money, success, pleasure and status. We are tempted to value our own and other people's lives in these worldly terms. As we unite ourselves to You today in Holy Communion may we see with Your eyes, hear with Your ears and respond to these temptations with Your clarity, determination and courage.

STEWARDSHIP: What temptations lure us from the path of discipleship? Possessions? Pride? Power? Oh Lord, create for us a clean heart and renew a steadfast spirit within us!

READINGS FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

8 MAR '20

Gen. 12:1-4: Abram is called by God to leave his home and all things familiar for a distant land that God has appointed. He does not hesitate. He obeys God and sets out on the journey,

relying on God's promises. For Jews and Christians, Abram is rightly known as 'our father in faith'.

2 Tim. 1:8-10: Timothy, one of St. Paul's co-workers, is reminded that witnessing to Christ will involve hardship and suffering. It will be costly. But God's free gift of grace is available to all who 'bear hardship for the sake of the Good News'.

Mt. 17:1-9: The Transfiguration story occurs just after a turning point in Matthew's gospel. The reaction of the disciples to Jesus' prediction of His passion and death shows that they have not yet understood. But Jesus insists that anyone who wishes to follow Him must take up the Cross (16:24). Matthew specifies, 'six days later...' as if it has taken almost a week for the message of the Cross to sink in. Then Jesus invites Peter, James and John to go up 'a high mountain' with Him where He is transfigured. Moses and Elijah, long since dead, appear on the scene conversing with Jesus. A voice from heaven announces, "this is My Son, The Beloved. Listen to Him". Impetuous Peter, wanting the moment to last, offers to build three tents on the spot. But the vision vanishes under a cloud. True disciples must come down from the mountain and walk by faith.

LENTEN DISCIPLINES

Prayer: This week do something which indicates you believe that you live not by bread alone but by the word of God revealed to us in the Bible. Read each day's gospel passage.

Fasting: Sacrifice ten minutes of time you spend on something else and then use it to pray.

Almsgiving: Go to Mass one day this week to pray for someone who does not have or does not appreciate the riches of the Eucharist.

LENTEN WEEKDAY REFLECTIONS

Monday 2 March

"Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life."

Lev. 19:1-2, 11-18: The Holiness Code in Leviticus requires us to 'be holy as God is holy'.

Holiness in this passage is expressed in 'love of neighbor as yourself'..

Mt. 25:1,31-46: This is the classic last judgment account. The criterion for judgment is concrete love (or lack thereof) given to the Christ hidden in the other".

In Christian living there is the question of the relationship between love of God and human love. The readings today encourage us not to see them as separate but as expressive of each other. Indeed in the Gospel those who are saved ministered to Christ anonymously in that they asked: 'Lord, when did we see You naked....?' In a similar way, those who are lost, failed to see Christ in the needy, the poor.

Tuesday 3 March

"The Lord rescues the just in all their distress".

Is. 55:10-11: The Word of God is God Himself communicating with His people. The Scriptures are written to instruct the people and produce a favorable effect in their hearts as the rain and snow water the earth and produce the fruit expected of it. So the Word of God carries out God's will and succeeds in its mission.

Mt. 6:7-15: Here we find the classic formulation of the 'Our Father'. Added on, is a comment on the importance of forgiveness towards each other.

The Bible frequently mentions that an unforgiving heart is a serious obstacle to a spiritual relationship. Moreover, it eventually sours and destroys the grudge holder. Forgiveness is not easy but knowing how much we need to stand before God for forgiveness (and are in fact forgiven) puts our sense of being wronged in perspective and encourages us to take the initiative in the forgiveness process. Just as well God is not a jut (in the sense of exacting) God.

Wednesday 4 March

"A humbled, contrite heart, O God, You will not spurn".

Jon. 3:1-10: The prophet Jonah summons the people of Nineveh to repentance and they respond collectively, amend their ways and so God spares them the impending doom.

Lk. 11:29-32: Jesus contrasts the Ninevites responses to Jonah with the crowd's lack of attentiveness and recognition of Jesus, even though in Him they have something greater than a Johan or Solomon.

In Luke's Gospel there is a crescendo in the repeated phrase (in reference to Jesus), 'and behold there is something greater than the Queen of the South, than Solomon, than Jonah here ...' Jesus is always ever greater and more. He is both tangible and yet inexhaustibly beyond any mere labelling. To know Him is rather to be known by Him.

Thursday 5 March

"On the day I called, You answered me, O Lord."

Est. 14:17: Queen Esther, who has learned of a plot to kill her people, prays to God that He be mindful of His now threatened people and that He give courage and guile to her.

Mt. 7:7-15: Jesus, continuing the Sermon on the Mount, encourages His disciples to place before God their needs and desires. God will not pay them back with anything destructive.

What you don't ask for, you don't get! The Scriptures, especially the Hebrew ones, are not shy about badgering their God for requests that we might find offensive. Esther asks for the destruction of her people's enemies. But on the whole the Biblical honesty is refreshing. Just ask, and if God concurs, it will happen. In any event God is ultimately free and will not be manipulated.

Friday 6 March

"if You, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive?"

Ezek. 18:21-28: The context of the Ezekiel passage is the issue of retribution. Good or bad deeds were seen to have a knock on effect extending even to later generations. Ezekiel responds that no one can cash in from an inherited store of good or bad deeds. This assertion

of individual, personal responsibility is met with cries of 'The Lord is unfair'. But the focus on responsibility allows the freedom for the wicked to become virtuous, and vice versa.

Mt. 5:20-26: Jesus urges the tempering of anger and abuse in favor of reconciliation. A pragmatic motive is offered – don't risk not settling now, because later on you may pay expensively.

Both readings emphasize individual responsibility. But this is not to deny the clear social implications of personal action or inaction. Action or inaction does effect the community and often there may be a long-term negative or positive outcome. We are indeed our sisters and brothers keepers.

Saturday 7 March

"The are happy who follow God's law."

Deut. 26:16-19: This reading ratifies the covenant between God and the people. If the people keep their side of the agreement (by keeping especially monotheism and love of fellow Jew), God will continue to hold them as a people special to Him.

Mt. 5:43-48: Jesus here extends the love commandment. The measure of Christian love is now love of enemy; the standard of perfection is that of God Himself.

The Gospel text essentially universalizes the scope of the first covenant. Here God has no favorites but all can be God's special people. The social aspect of the covenant – radical as it was in its context by proposing an equalitarian society with special concern for the vulnerable – is now extended beyond concern just for the well being of one's own group or clan to its ultimate range – one's enemy.

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT FORTY DAYS AND A TEMPTATION? OR THE SHORT OF IT: WHAT IS THE MEANING OF FORTY DAYS, OF FASTING AND TEMPTATION

FIRST In the English language, the special season before Easter is called "Lent." The word comes from the "lengthening" of daylight hours as we progress from the darkness of winter to the new light of spring. But other languages, such as Spanish, have a name for this season that is derived from the word for forty. It is the season of the forty days.

SECOND Scripture speaks of 40 days of temptation in the wilderness. We do penance for forty days because Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness. But did you ever wonder why He was out there for forty days rather than seven or ten or fifty?

If we think back to what we have learned from the Old Testament an answer may be found. Noah and the passengers in the Ark watched rain fall for 40 days and 40 nights. Moses was up on Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments for 40 days. The Israelites wandered around the desert for 40 years.

THIRD So why all these forties? Probably because it is forty weeks that a woman carries her developing baby before a new life can come forth from the womb.

All these "forties" are a necessary and not-so-comfortable prelude for something new. In Noah's case, it's the rebirth of a sinful world that had been cleansed by raging flood waters. In

Moses' case, it was the birth of the people of the covenant. For the nomadic Israelites, it was the start of a new, settled existence in the Promised Land.

What do Jesus' forty days in the wilderness signify? The imminent birth of a new Israel liberated from sin, reconciled to God, and governed by the law of the Spirit rather than a law chiseled in stone.

FOURTH Liberation is resisted by the pharaonic power, the slave master.

Recall the story of Moses and the Israelites. There was someone who did not want them to go out into the desert to offer sacrifice to their God. Pharaoh would not accept the loss of his cheap labor force. When Jesus begins His mission of liberation, there is another slave master who is no more willing than Pharaoh to let his minions go without a fight.

Since the 1960's, it has been fashionable in some quarters to dismiss the devil as a relic of ancient mythology or medieval fantasy. The guy with the pointy tail, horns and a pitchfork comes in handy in cartoons and costume parties, but how can we take such an image seriously? In the Bible, they say, let's read "Satan" merely as a symbol of human evil.

Such a view is clearly at odds with Scripture, Tradition, and recent teaching of the Magisterium. Our battle is not against flesh and blood, says St. Paul. If you don't know your enemy and his tactics, you are bound to lose.

The temptation of Christ in the desert shows us the tactics of the "Dark Lord." Bread, a symbol for all that sustains our physical life, is a great blessing. But Satan tries to make material things the ultimate, distracting us from a deeper hunger and a more enduring food.

Political power and all leadership is intended by God for the sake of serving the common good; Satan twists things to make leaders self-seeking, oppressive tyrants like himself. The lust for power and fame ironically leads not to dominion but to slavery to the Dark Lord (remember what happened to the Nazgoul in the Lord of the Rings).

Ten there's religious temptation, the trickiest of them all – Manipulating God for our own glory, using His gifts to make people look at us rather than at Him. Sounds a lot like the Pharisees.

FIFTH Jesus triumphs in this first wrestling match. He shows us how to keep from being pinned. Fasting breaks undue attachments to material blessings and stimulates our spiritual appetite. Humble service breaks the stranglehold of pride. The reverent worship of authentic faith breaks the full Nelson of superstition, magic, and all arrogant religion. And the word of God is shown as the sword of the Spirit, the secret weapon that slashes through the enemy's lies.

SIXTH So the forty days of this Sacred Season of Lent is the appropriated time to assess ourselves and the needed areas of change. It provides the opportunity to use the tactics modeled by Christ, our shepherd, and break the strongholds. Prayer, fasting, humble service. The heavenly bread of the Eucharist and the Word of God. If we make use of them diligently during this season, pregnant with possibilities, we can enter into greater freedom. Darkness can give way to increasing light. Something new and wonderful can be born in us.

CHURCH DESIGN AND FURNISHINGS Continued

Sanctuary and Choir (Chancel)

I have skipped the Transept, Crossing and the Choir. These were common in churches of an earlier period and are still to be found in the large cathedrals, monastic churches and definitely

in the historic churches found in Europe. However they have been pretty much eliminated in the majority of Catholic church buildings in the States.

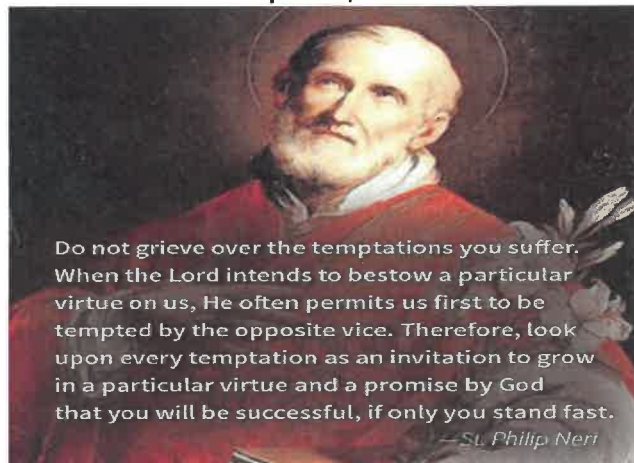
If you looked at an overhead view of a traditional church, such as Notre Dame, it has the form of a cross. The two arms are the transepts and where they intersect the main body of the building this is the crossing. The choir was/is the space occupied by the members of the religious community or in many English churches where the actual choir sits facing each other across the main aisle.

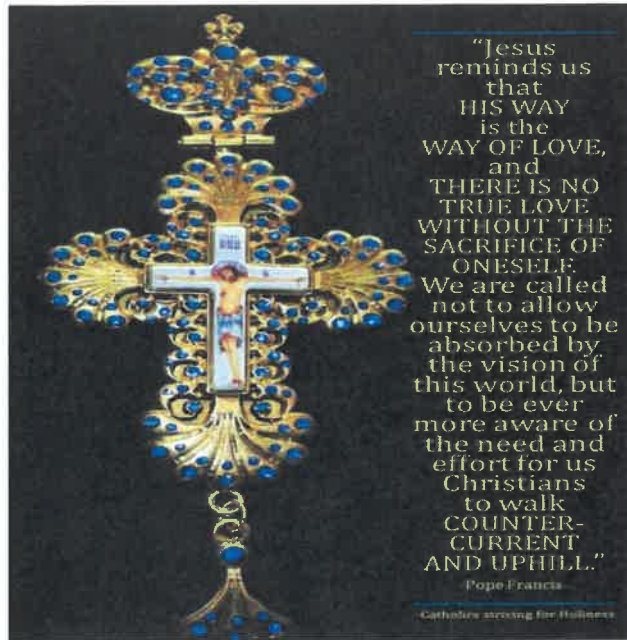
The word "**chancel**" comes from the word *cancelli*, meaning "lattice work," once used to rail off the choir, where the religious would sit on long benches to sing the responses at Mass and chant the Divine Office, from the nave, where the people sit.

Medieval churches often had "rood screens" ("rood" means "cross") separating the Sanctuary and choir from the body of the nave. The rood screen had the rood -- the Crucifix -- often flanked by images of the Virgin and St. John and by oil lamps. This screen totally separated the sanctuary from the place the people sat so that the sanctuary was truly treated as the Holy of Holies. (In Eastern Catholic churches and in Orthodox churches, the sanctuary is separated from the congregation by a beautiful iconostasis -- a screen or wall with at least two icons (some are covered with them). The iconostasis has three doors: the Door of the Proskomide (preparation for Liturgy) on the left; the Royal Door in the middle which leads directly to the altar; and the Deacon's Door at the right (from the parishioner's point of view).

The rise of Renaissance architecture saw the disappearance of the choir area, the bringing forward of the sanctuary, and the general disappearance of the rood screens. The sanctuary was, instead, separated from the nave by altar rails at which communicants would kneel to receive the Eucharist. These were found in all Catholic churches till Vatican II, after which they pretty much disappeared. For those who are wedded to the concept of the "Spirit of Vatican II" which was used to justify many of the changes which followed on the Council, hate to rock your boat but the altar rails are making a gradual come-back.

Aside from being the place of the Altar, the sanctuary is the place where the Tabernacle, which holds the Blessed Sacrament, is kept and over which there should always be burning a tabernacle light. The other place where the Tabernacle might be kept is a separate, conspicuous, well-adorned side chapel in churches in which the Altar area is used for the solemn conduct of the Divine Office or for Pontifical ceremonies. When we see the Tabernacle, we genuflect. If the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, we kneel on both knees.





PRAYERS

Prayer Before a Crucifix

My good and dear Jesus,
I kneel before You,
asking You most earnestly
to engrave upon my heart
a deep and lively faith, hope, and charity,
with true repentance for my sins,
and a firm resolve to make amends.
As I reflect upon Your five wounds,
and dwell upon them
with deep compassion and grief,
I recall, good Jesus,
the words the Prophet David spoke
long ago concerning Yourself:
“They pierced My hands and My feet;
they have numbered all My bones.”

PASTOR'S SCHEDULE EVENTS WEEK OF 29 FEB - 8 MAR

Saturday 29 Feb

- 8:30 a.m. Mass
- 9:00 a.m. Meeting
- 1:30 p.m. Confession
- 5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass 1st Sunday of Lent

Sunday 1 Mar 1st Sunday of Lent

7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 1:30 a.m. Masses
5:00 p.m. Youth Stations of the Cross and Benediction
8:00 p.m. Mass Brig

Monday 24 Feb Day Off

6:30 a.m. Mass
7:00 a.m. Confession
8:30 a.m. Mass
11:00 a.m. Funeral James Mayo Inturnment at Horton Vet. Cem

Tuesday 3 Mar

6:30 a.m. Mass
7:00 a.m. Confession
8:30 a.m. Mass
9:30 a.m. Meeting
1:00 p.m. Last Rites and Viaticum
5:00 p.m. Bishop
7:00 p.m. Confirmation

Wednesday 4 Mar

6:30 a.m. Mass
7:00 a.m. Confession
8:30 a.m. Mass
11:00 a.m. Mass Amazing Grays
5:30 p.m. Indian Creek Mass

Thursday 5 Mar

6:30 a.m. Mass
7:00 a.m. Confession
8:30 a.m. Mass
10:00 a.m. Meeting
5:00 p.m. Confessions
6:30 p.m. Mass
7:00 p.m. RCIA

Friday 6 Mar First Friday

6:30 a.m. Mass
7:00 a.m. Confession
8:30 a.m. Mass
9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Adoration
6:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

Saturday 7 Mar

8:30 a.m. Mass
9:00 a.m. Pvt celebrations
1:30 -4:30 p.m. Confessions
5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass Second Sunday of Lent

Sunday 8 Mar Second Sunday of Lent

7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. Masses 8:00 p.m. Brig Mass