

MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

Sunday, February 9, 2020
Fifth Sunday In Ordinary Time

4:00 PM
8:00 AM

Gathering: Holy, Holy, Holy BB 211
Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 103)

*Loving and forgiving are you, O Lord;
slow to anger, rich in kindness, loving
and forgiving are you.*

Preparation: Whatsoever You Do BB 621

Mass Parts: Mass of Creation

Communion: Bread For The World BB 343
Blest Are They BB 725

Recessional: We Are The Light Of The World BB 591

10:00 AM

Gathering: Table Of Plenty BB 311
Dismissal Rite: You Have Called Us BB 636
Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 34)

*Taste and see the goodness of the Lord,
the goodness of the Lord.*

Preparation: Christ, Be Our Light BB 587
Whatsoever You Do BB 621

Mass Parts: Mass of Creation

Communion: Blest Are They BB 725
In The Breaking Of The Bread BB 323

Recessional: Lead Me, Lord BB 726



St. Luke the Evangelist is now on Facebook! Go to www.facebook.com/stlukenh.org/ or **St. Luke the Evangelist Parish – Newton/Plaistow** and give us a Like! Please invite fellow parishioners & friends to do the same.

✠ PARISH TITHING ✠

Our Parish needs to take in \$7,000.00 each week in order to make ends meet. Thank you for your generosity to our parish! Your weekly contribution helps ensure that the parish remains a vibrant community. Please remember to submit your weekly gift even if you will be away. We depend upon your support!

February 2, 2020

Offertory \$6,851.94
Property Management \$1,665.02

PARISH GIVING

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish has engaged *Parish Giving* to provide parishioners with an opportunity to make your offertory and other contributions through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Parish Giving is a simple, secure, and convenient way to manage your stewardship without weekly envelopes and without worries. It allows you to select contribution amounts and special collections right from your own computer or smart phone. You can be a good steward for the Parish even when you are away from the area on a weekend. Parish Giving allows you to print out a report detailing your contributions for the year. This program is available to parishioners at no cost. Log on to the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish website at <http://stlukenh.org>, click on the Parish Giving logo, and follow the easy registration instructions.

UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

February 9, 2020 Catholic Schools
February 16, 2020 Fuel
February 23, 2020 No Second Collection
February 26, 2020 Aid to Churches Europe/Africa

Out of respect, please remember to
silence or turn off
your cell phones during Mass.
Thank you!



Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on Income

Annual Income	5% Commitment annually/ weekly	3% Commitment annually/ weekly
\$100,000	\$5,000/\$100	\$3,000/\$60
\$75,000	\$3,750/\$75	\$2,250/\$45
\$60,000	\$3,000/\$60	\$1,800/\$36
\$50,000	\$2,500/\$50	\$1,500/\$30
\$40,000	\$2,000/\$40	\$1,200/\$24
\$30,000	\$1,500/\$30	\$900/\$18
\$25,000	\$1,250/\$25	\$750/\$15
\$15,000	\$750/\$15	\$450/\$9

Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on a Percentage Increase

Your Current Offertory Contribution	25% Increase	30% Increase	40% Increase
\$75.00	\$93.75	\$97.50	\$105.00
\$50.00	\$62.50	\$65.00	\$70.00
\$40.00	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$56.00
\$35.00	\$43.75	\$45.50	\$49.00
\$30.00	\$37.50	\$39.00	\$42.00
\$25.00	\$31.25	\$32.50	\$35.00
\$20.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$28.00
\$15.00	\$18.75	\$19.50	\$21.00
\$10.00	\$12.50	\$13.00	\$14.00
\$5.00	\$6.25	\$6.50	\$7.00

✠ PARISH NEWS ✠

PAINT THE TOWN!

THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH

Our Parish community continues with our Capital Campaign. Our next projects include exterior painting for the church and Parish house in Newton. We'd also like to paint the interior sanctuary of the church in Newton and complete some electrical upgrades to the church.

Other possible projects include work on our Plaistow and Newton parking lots, and ramp access to the church in Plaistow.

Can you help?

Any contribution is welcome. Make checks payable to
Saint Luke the Evangelist – Capital Campaign.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

If you would like an "end of year" financial statement of your contributions to the parish for 2019, please call Jackie at the Parish Office at 382-8324. Financial Statements are issued on a request only basis.



BLESSING OF COUPLES

There will be a special blessing of couples at the conclusion of all Liturgies on the weekend of **February 11-12**. Please pray for those married among us and remember those preparing to be married as well.

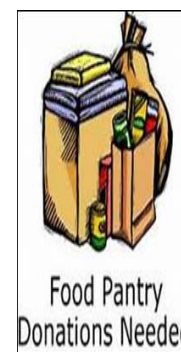
ST. LUKE'S WEBSITE! <http://stlukenh.org>

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

In observance of Presidents' Day, the Parish Office will be **closed on Monday, February 17**. The Office will re-open at 8:30 AM on Tuesday, February 18.

ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST FOOD PANTRY

Food or care items are always needed – donations can be dropped off at Church or are welcome at the Parish Office during regular business hours. Cash donations for food are always welcome – make checks payable to **St. Luke the Evangelist Food Pantry**. All donations to the Food Pantry go toward helping the needy of our communities.



AMAZON SMILE

AmazonSmile.com is the same market platform as Amazon.com, but with the added benefit of allowing customers to donate 0.5% of the price of items purchased to a charitable organization. Please register today to start shopping and donating at www.amazonsmile.com. For questions, please call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324. Be sure to choose:

St Luke the Evangelist Parish, Plaistow.

FOOD PANTRY HOURS

Wednesday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

Thursday from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Friday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

For more information, call the St. Luke Food Pantry at **603-819-4949**.

WHILE AWAY THIS WINTER...

We appreciate all of you who remember to send in your Parish Offertory during the Winter even when on vacation or visiting other parishes. Thank you for remembering that our expenses also continue through the Winter months. We invite others to consider doing the same before or even after you return home.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✠ WEEKLY CALENDAR ✠

Sunday, February 9

10:00 AM Religious Ed – PreK to 8 *Plaistow*
 11:00 AM RCIA *Plaistow*
 11:00 AM Meeting for Grade 4, 5, 6 Parents and Students *Plaistow*

Wednesday, February 12
HOLY ANGELS CHURCH OPEN
ALL DAY FOR PRAYER

Thursday, February 13

8:30 AM Adoration Begins *Newton*
 9:00 AM Intercessory Prayer *Plaistow*
 8:30 PM Adoration Ends *Newton*

Saturday, February 15

3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation *Plaistow*

Sunday, February 16
PREPARE CHURCHES FOR LENT

10:00 AM Religious Ed – PreK to 8 *Plaistow*
 11:00 AM RCIA *Plaistow*

✠ MASS INTENTIONS ✠

Saturday, February 8 ~ Vigil / 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Is 58:7-10; 1 Cor 2:1-5; Mt 5:13-16
 4:00 PM Ben and Irene Zakiewicz by Pat Zakiewicz
Plaistow

Sunday, February 9 ~ 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Is 58:7-10; 1 Cor 2:1-5; Mt 5:13-16
 8:00 AM Dolly Greene and Beryl Wright by the Madore family
Newton
 10:00 AM Jesselyn Driscoll by her family
Plaistow

Monday, February 10 ~ Scholastica, Virgin
1 Kgs 8:1-7, 9-13; Mk 6:53-56
 8:00 AM Frank Richard "Dick" Keefe by his wife, Sandra Keefe
Newton

Tuesday, February 11 ~ Our Lady of Lourdes
1 Kgs 8:22-23, 27-30; Mk 7:1-13
 8:00 AM John, Sr. and Mary Duhamel by Edward Duhamel
Plaistow

Wednesday, February 12 ~ Weekday
1 Kgs 10:1-10; Mk 7:14-23
 6:30 PM People of the Parish
Plaistow

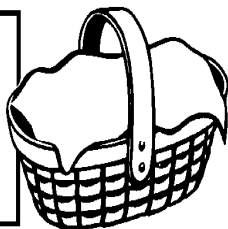
Thursday, February 13 ~ Weekday
1 Kgs 11:4-13; Mk 7:24-30
 8:00 AM For Michael and his recovery
Newton

Friday February 14 ~ Cyril, Monk, and Methodius, Bishop
1 Kgs 11:29-32, 12:19; Mk 7:31-37
No Mass

Saturday, February 15 ~ Weekday
1 Kgs 12:26-32, 13:33-34; Mk 8:1-10 (Day)
Sir 15:15-20; 1 Cor 2:6-10; Mt 5:17-37 (Vigil)
 4:00 PM Florence and Ray Cooper by their family
Plaistow

Sunday, February 16 ~ 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sir 15:15-20; 1 Cor 2:6-10; Mt 5:17-37
 8:00 AM Isabelle Krafton by her family
Newton
 10:00 AM In Thanksgiving to St. Michael the Archangel
Plaistow

St. Vincent
de Paul
Society



Don't forget to "Drop Your Dollar" the next time you're at Mass. It may not seem like much to you, but to those we help, it makes a huge difference in their lives.

Keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we head into the colder months and food and fuel may become an issue with neighbors and friends.

Our next meeting on **Wednesday, February 19 at 7:00 PM**. We meet downstairs in the Church Hall in Plaistow. **New members are always welcome!**

If you seek assistance or need information about the St. Vincent de Paul Society, call 603-382-8324 x315.

**Hear, OH LORD, and answer me
for I am poor and needy.**

PRAYER LINE

St. Luke's offers a prayer line as a resource for those seeking prayer assistance. To submit your prayer request please call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 314 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

✠ FAITH FORMATION & PARISH INFORMATION ✠

ST. ANDREW DINNERS

Men who are considering a vocation to the priesthood or who would simply like some help hearing the Lord's call for their life, are invited to an evening of prayer, conversation with the Vocation Team, and Dinner. Please RSVP to Becky Vinson at rvinson@rcbm.org if you would like to attend.

February 21 – Young Men ages 13-18
February 28 – Men Ages 19-60

RCIA

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** is the process by which people become members of the Roman Catholic Church. If you or someone you know is interested in inquiring about becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

Are you an adult who has been Baptized and received Eucharist, but has not celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation? The adult Confirmation process is an opportunity to complete the Sacraments of Initiation. If you would like to prepare for Confirmation, or if you have questions, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

PARENTS BAPTISM PREPARATION SESSION

The monthly preparation session for infant Baptism will be held after the 10:00 AM Liturgy on **Sunday, March 1, 2020** in the Parish Office living room. All parents planning to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism are welcome. Families wishing to celebrate Baptism in the Church must be registered (according to Church Canon Law) and practicing (attending Sunday Mass) for 3 full months before a Baptism can be scheduled. The use of the envelope system is always optional; however, it does guarantee a manner of accountability. For most families, the Pastor or staff can easily verify attendance during these three months. Church Canon Law also regulates baptismal sponsors (godparents). Sponsors must be at least 16, fully initiated (having received Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation), and be practicing Catholics living Christian lives consistent with the Church's teaching. Please see Fr. Albert with questions.

ATTENTION ALL EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS, LECTORS, AND ALTAR SERVERS:

It is time to prepare Schedules for March through May. (This includes the Easter Liturgies from Palm Sunday, April 5th, to Easter Sunday, April 12th, for which Father will do sign ups after Masses.)

If there are any times at which you cannot serve or when you would really like to serve, please let me (Jeanne Sullivan) know by **February 14th**. Contact me at 382-4760 or jmsul@myfairpoint.net. Please remember to **include your ministry and Mass time in your message**.

Please let me know your availability and desires for the Easter Liturgies (even though there will be sign-ups at Church) so I won't needlessly bother you if I need to make phone calls to fill in empty slots.

Thanks, as always, for your help.

Jeanne

ADORATION

We are truly blessed to have times for Adoration of Our Lord in our Parish. This time of prayer and intercession is not only a source of great grace for the individual, but it is a great source of grace for us as a parish family, as well.

We have many who have made the commitment to spend an hour each week with our Eucharistic Lord, **but** we need more people so there will be at least two people at each hour. We are also looking for people who would be able to substitute.

Newton – Thursday
8:30 AM – 8:30 PM

If you can commit to one hour a week in Adoration of our Lord, or if you can be a substitute, please contact Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

The Church in Plaistow is open all day on Wednesdays for people to stop by and pray before the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle.

✠ PARISH DIRECTORY ✠

Parish Office	382-8324
Parish Prayer Line	382-8324 x 314
St. Vincent de Paul Society	382-8324 x 315
St. Luke's Food Pantry	819-4949
Preschool	382-9783
Presentation of Mary Convent	382-2744

Fr. Albert Tremblay	fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net
Cathy Smith	csmith@stluketheevangelist.net
Joyce Szapa	jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net
Jackie Tremblay	jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net
Thomas Kondel	tkondel@stluketheevangelist.net
Val Barczak	mvbarczak@comcast.net
Parish Council	parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net

✠ Parish News ~ Youth News ~ Around The Diocese ✠

VITA NOVA WOMEN'S RETREAT 2020

March 13-15, 2020

As Catholics, we believe in the communion of saints, a spiritual solidarity binding together the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, and the saints in Heaven. Join us as we journey "the little way" of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and reflect on the examples of other great saints who devoted their lives to Jesus. The retreat will be held at the Barbara C. Harris Center in Greenfield, NH and will be led by Fr. Rick St. Louis on Friday evening through Sunday morning (**March 13-15, 2020**). Register early! Prices will increase by \$25 on February 21, 2020. Financial Aid is available. To register, go to www.vitanova.org.

MIRIAM DINNER

Are you looking to follow the Lord and ready to say "yes" when he calls? We would like to invite women ages 14-40 who are considering a vocation to the religious life, or who would simply like some help hearing the Lord's call in their life, to an evening of prayer, conversation, and dinner at the Joseph House (279 Cartier Street in Manchester) on **Friday, February 7 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM**. Sister Mary Thomas Lesniak, a native of New Hampshire and a member of the Felician Sisters, will be sharing her inspiring vocation story. **Please RSVP** to Becky Vinson at rvinson@rcbm.org or 663-0153 if you would like to attend.

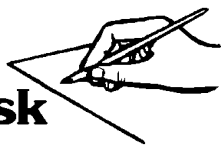
JESUS aCROSS THE BORDER

Monthly Gathering ~ February 21, 2020 ~ 7:30 PM

St. Joseph the Worker Shrine, 37 Lee Street, Lowell

Let's feast before the fast! Come celebrate Mardi Gras with us at this month's worship event. Join us in Lowell for Adoration, Confession, Praise & Worship music led by Brandon Fitts, a young adult Mass, all followed by Carnival themed games and lots of good food! It's the perfect opportunity to find a community of like minded young adults and spend a little extra time with Jesus. Please email us at Info@JESUSaCROSSTheBorder.org.

**From the
Pastor's Desk**



HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSED

Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow is closed until Spring 2020. This decision comes as result of the real dangers of snow and ice in the Cemetery and the costs to Parishioners to inter during the winter months. Please contact the Parish Office with any questions.

HELP WANTED TO PUT AWAY TREES

With Lent fast approaching, volunteers are welcome to help prepare the churches on **Sunday, February 16 following the 8:00 AM Liturgy in Newton and the 10:00 AM Liturgy in Plaistow**. Our tasks include taking down our green trees and some light clean up of the churches in preparation for the Lenten season. All are welcome to lend a hand – our work usually lasts just over an hour if we have all the help we can muster! Please contact the Parish Office for more information – or just stay after Mass!

WINTER WEATHER CLOSINGS

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Office, Holy Angels Cemetery Office, Saint Luke Food Pantry and the Parish Liturgical schedule complies with the longstanding inclement weather policy of Saint Luke Religious Education Program and Holy Angels Pre-School-Kindergarten: **If the Timberlane and/or Sanborn regional school districts close because of inclement weather, ALL Parish Offices and Parish programs will be closed or suspended. All activities by any Parish or non-Parish groups will be cancelled for that day/evening on both campuses.** In the event of a weather related closing, the scheduled weekday Liturgy will not be held and the intention (if any) will be moved to a conveniently available date. **Sunday (or Saturday evening) liturgies can never be cancelled, but all are advised to use prudence when deciding to travel to Church during winter storms.**

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

ST JUDE COUNCIL # 6617

GIVE YOUR PARISH COMMUNITY

1 HOUR A MONTH

The Knights of Columbus are a vital and vibrant part of the St Luke the Evangelist Parish. We welcome any practicing Catholic man 18 or older to join the Knights, whose main purpose is charitable works in support of our parish and community. Joining is simple – talk to a brother Knight or you can now join on-line. Go to www.kofc.org/joinus. Your Council is involved in many activities from collecting money for people with intellectual disabilities through the Tootsie Roll Drive to the annual St Jude Golf Open which raises money for parish families in need. The list is as long as you want it to be. Do you have a certain passion you would like to get involved in? Come join us and make it a reality! We are Catholic men. We live by principles informed by faith. We are sons, fathers, husbands, and grandfathers. Join us on life's greatest adventure to discover the man God calls you to be. Feel free to call Dan Sullivan at 603-770-4803, email him at dans49@comcast.net, or catch him at the 8:00 AM Sunday Mass in Newton. For more information about the Knights, go to www.kofc.org/un/en/todays-knights/what-we-do.html

Do Something for Lent. Renew your faith.

What is the **Lenten Journey** all about? Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are called the “three pillars” of the Christian way of life. They help support a full and healthy life. During Lent we try to repair and strengthen these three pillars, which also are called the “three disciplines” because they help people become better disciples of the Lord.

What to do?

Today we continue to welcome sign-ups for small group Scripture sharing during Lent.

We continue to pray together as our 2020 Lenten Journey gets underway. Ask for the Spirit’s guidance as you consider your involvement; pray that our Parish’s Lenten Journey be blessed.



Join a small group! Groups meet six times during the Lenten season to discuss the Lenten Sunday Lectionary readings. You will learn more about Scripture through the resource book provided, participate in interesting discussions, meet some wonderful people, and have the opportunity to build up the Body of Christ.

Take the opportunity to sign-up by filling out the registration form on the back and dropping it in the collection basket next week, drop it off at the parish office, or call the Parish Offices at 382-8324.

**FAMILY @ TEEN DOWNLOADS:
www.disciplesonthejourney.org**

**Groups begin meeting the week of
February 23**

DISCIPLES ON THE JOURNEY REGISTRATION FORM



Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-Mail _____ Cell Phone _____

Please check the time and day you prefer

Wednesday Evenings at 7:00 p.m. ____
(February 26 – April 1)

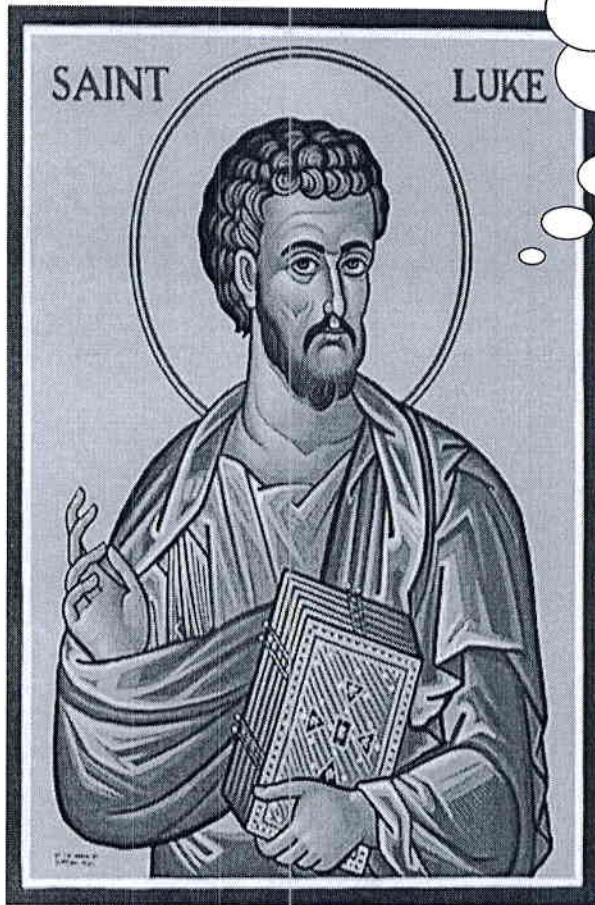
Thursday Afternoons at 1:30 p.m. ____
(February 27 – April 2)

Check if you are willing to be a group leader _____

**GROUP MEETINGS BEGIN
THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 23**

**GROUPS WILL MEET IN ROOM 8 IN THE
CHURCH HALL**

**(Please return this form in the collection basket or bring
to the parish office)**



*Our patron saint is
thinking about
electronic giving...*

Why don't you think about it too?

**Parish Giving is a simple,
secure and convenient way to
manage your stewardship
without weekly envelopes and
without worries.**

- Parish Giving allows you to select contribution amounts and special collections right from your own computer or smartphone
- You can be a good steward for the Parish even when you are away from the area on a weekend
- Parish Giving allows you to print out a report detailing your contributions for the year.
- Log on to the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish website <http://stlukenh.org>, click on the Parish Giving logo and follow the easy registration instructions.

Parish Giving

The Gospel at Home

This Week's Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus commissions his followers to be “the salt of the earth” and “light to the world.” Salt and light are just as important to us today as they were to people in Jesus’ time. Jesus’ image of salt challenges us to bring out the best in others as salt brings out the best flavors in food. The image of light challenges us to warm and brighten others’ lives like sunlight. It challenges us to live as Jesus did so that our actions shine forth like a lamp on a stand.

Exploring the Gospel Message

Seeds (Preschool): Young children love to be noticed. “Watch me!” they demand. They love to “shine.” Ask your child to tell you what the class learned about what Jesus said about the lamp. Talk together about how the whole family can shine God’s light on all they meet.

Promise (Grades K-1): Your child has learned in class that the little things can make a big difference. Jesus calls us to be the light and salt—two little things that make a very big difference. Ask your child to share the story of the little mouse who performed an act of kindness to help the lion. Talk about how each member of the family can make a difference in the home and in the world. Remember that the little things count.

Good News (Grades 2-3): Ask your child to share with the family the story of the Princess Stella and the salt shaker. The class learned that Jesus told his followers they were the salt of the earth. Explore ways your family is already salt for the world, and how you can do more to make the world a better place.

Venture (Grades 4-6): Your child’s class discovered what it means to be salt and light for others. Ask your child to share the story of how Kai used his gifts to shed light on issues in his community. Acknowledge the gifts that you see in your child, and brainstorm ways that your child can share these gifts with the world. Ask your child to share the dilemmas they discussed in class, and talk about how your child would respond if they found themselves in any similar situations. Also invite your child to share what the class learned about the Liturgy of the Eucharist at Mass.

Visions (Grades 7-8): This week’s class invited the students to take the words of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount to heart by discovering ways to shine as Christians. They learned that working for social justice adds both salt and light to the lives of others. Ask your child to share the story of Boy Scout Griffin Burchard and how he was a light to others. The class also took time to identify problems, make choices, and evaluate their choices in the light of the Gospel. Together, talk about problems that your family may face and discover how you can bring salt and light to the ways you face them.

Pray Together

At a family meal, pray together that your family may truly be salt for the earth by making a difference. Pass a salt shaker around the table. While holding the salt shaker, each person can pray in his or her own words for God’s help in truly making a difference in the life of your family and in the world as well.



Bringing Home the Word

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

February 9, 2020

Humble Bright Lights

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Saint Paul says he came to the Corinthians in weakness and that he didn't use eloquent or persuasive words; rather he evangelized them in humility and with signs of the power of God. He doesn't claim to be a powerful or influential preacher. He was a humble and convinced apostle. Thus, when he evangelized, the power of God was at work in him.

Of course, Paul's humility doesn't mean he didn't make the best case possible for the faith. On the contrary, we

are all called to profess and witness to the truth and to develop and use all our gifts and talents. Paul is simply stating that what is most important is that we remain open to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit within us and maintain our confidence in God and not in our own qualities or abilities.

If we are humble servants of the truth, then God's power will be shown. Isaiah prophesies that if we live charity in a real way—offering food to the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked—then our light will shine its strongest. Not only that, but our own personal wounds, whatever they are, will be healed. Truly, loving others is the best way to heal our own soul.

Isaiah proclaims further that if we live this way, God will have our backs. In biblical terms, "the glory of the LORD shall be [our] rear guard" (Isaiah 58:8). The Lord is a soldier who walks behind us, covers our blind spots, curtails our weaknesses, and protects and defends us. If God is for us, who can be against us? Let your light shine! +

Isaiah proclaims that if we live charitably, God will have our backs.

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 58:7-10

If you lavish your food on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then your light shall rise in the darkness.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive (words of) wisdom.

Matthew 5:13-16

You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.

A Word from Pope Francis

Christian life has to be a life that must blossom in works of charity, in doing what is good. But if you have no roots, you cannot blossom, and who is the root? Jesus!... "What blossoms a tree bears come from what lies underneath it." Never cut off Jesus' roots.

—General Audience, March 21, 2018



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How do I live out God's love at home? In my workplace? In public?
- How can my light shine even brighter this week?

Why Do We Suffer?

By Fr. Michael D. Guinan, OFM

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Wildfires in California. The Indian Ocean tsunami. Accidents, mass shootings, disease, and death. Natural disasters and those produced by humans bring with them so much suffering. Ancient literature from Egypt and Mesopotamia attests that even then people called out, “Why?” In Psalm 10:1, the psalmist cries out, “Why, LORD?” Our voices join an age-old chorus!

The problem of suffering is difficult. How can we understand a benevolent, just God in the face of such human experiences?

Perhaps the best biblical example of this struggle is found in the Book of Job. Job suffers the loss of possessions and family and is afflicted with a terrible disease. Friends hear of his plight and come to console him. After Job’s cry of pain, the discussion begins.

Why is Job suffering? One easy answer that surfaces immediately is that Job deserves it; he is suffering because of his sins. When Job rejects this, his friends counter, in effect, “Don’t give us that! All humans are rotten sinners!” For them, all suffering is somehow a punishment for sin. Sad to say, Job’s friends have vocal descendants even now. While it is true that our sinful actions have consequences, as an

all-purpose explanation, this one is too simplistic.

Problem or Mystery?

Even within the Book of Job, the situation is more complicated. As readers, we know from the start that his friends are wrong. Job is righteous, and his suffering is allowed by God to test his virtue. Other answers also appear in the book. Like any good ancient Near Eastern father, God disciplines us through suffering to make us better (5:17–18, 36:15). Or, suffering is mysterious, so who are we to understand God’s ways? (11:7–10, 15:8–9).



Although these responses may give temporary relief, ultimately they are not satisfactory answers to the meaning of suffering. While we seek understanding, perhaps this is not the best approach to the problem. In fact, maybe the problem with suffering is that it is not really a “problem” at all but a mystery.

What is the difference? A problem is something “out there.” We can see all the pieces, survey its dimensions. The question is, how do we put it together? How do we solve it? Problems are solved intellectually. A mystery is different. It is a situation in which I am so immersed that I can never get far enough away to see it all “out there.” Love and death are mysteries. So is suffering.

Mysteries involve us on the deepest levels of our relationships with ourselves,

others, the natural world, and with God. To be human is to be enmeshed in these relationships. When they grow into greater wholeness (through love) or come apart (through suffering), we are in the presence of mystery. We will never solve the meaning of suffering any more than the meaning of love.

“I Am with You”

At the heart of Christianity is the affirmation that, through the Incarnation, Jesus entered into these relationships too. Jesus fully shared in the human condition. When he faced suffering and death, he also called out, “Why?” The Book of Mark quotes these as his last words from the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). We know that God did not forsake Jesus but raised him to everlasting life.

Nowhere in Scripture do we read, “Have faith in me, and you will understand everything, including suffering!” But we do read, whatever the suffering, “Do not be afraid, for I am with you.” We do not suffer alone. Together, we survive all suffering—even death itself! +



Lord, you have blessed the world with goodness and love. Help me to use my gifts and talents in accordance with your will.

—From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

February 10–15

Monday, St. Scholastica:
1 Kgs 8:1–7, 9–13 / Mk 6:53–56


Tuesday, Weekday:
1 Kgs 8:22–23, 27–30 / Mk 7:1–13

Wednesday, Weekday:
1 Kgs 10:1–10 / Mk 7:14–23

Thursday, Weekday:
1 Kgs 11:4–13 / Mk 7:24–30

Friday, Sts. Cyril and Methodius:
1 Kgs 11:29–32; 12:19 / Mk 7:31–37

Saturday, Weekday:
1 Kgs 12:26–32; 13:33–34 / Mk 8:1–10

Bringing Home
the **Word** 

February 9, 2020

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