

Sacred Heart

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Corner of E. First Avenue
& Hamlet Street

Church Mailing Address:
168 E. Lincoln Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Parish Office
(614) 294-5319

Msgr. Frank Lane, Administrator

(Territorial Parish ~ Est. 1875)

MASSES:

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.; **Sunday:** 11:00 a.m.

WEEKDAYS & HOLY DAYS:

See Mass Schedule inside the Bulletin.

PARISH OFFICE/STAFF:

Administration is done through the office of Saint John the Baptist, 168 Lincoln Street. Requests for copies of sacramental records, scheduling of Masses and other sacramental celebrations, and non-emergency needs should be made during regular office hours or email info@sjbitaliana.org.

Please notify the Parish Office of any changes such as address or telephone number, etc., by calling during regular office Hours.

MUSIC MINISTRY:

Gina M. Bishop, Music Director
John C. Huffman, Organist

PARISH MEMBERSHIP:

We welcome you into our Parish Families.
Membership in the parish consists of two parts:

Registration: Please complete the parish registration and return to Parish Office.

OFFICE STAFF

Aggie Howard, Executive Assistant, ahoward@sjbitaliana.org
Victoria Scruggs, Secretary & Bulletin Editor, vgammell@sjbitaliana.org
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

RECONCILIATION:

Saturday: 3:30 p.m.; **Sunday:** 10:30 a.m.

BAPTISM:

Preparation is required for the reception of the sacrament.
Parents are encouraged to call the office
and set up an appointment before the birth of their child.

MATRIMONY:

Arrangements should be made at least six or more months in advance.
A marriage preparation program is required.

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK:

In cases of emergencies, please call anytime.
Please notify the Parish Office for Communion calls to the sick, shut-ins.

Due to privacy laws, if parishioners wish to be visited in the hospital,
they should contact the Parish Office directly
and give the information regarding the hospitalization.

If you are scheduled for surgeries or other medical procedures,
please contact the Parish Office in advance so that a priest can administer
Anointing of the Sick prior to the procedure.

BULLETIN DEADLINE:

Announcements must be submitted in writing by Tuesday at noon.

www.sacredheartchurchcolumbus.org

SACRED HEART

Dear Friend in Christ,

EASTER TRIDUUM MASS SCHEDULE

March 28, 2024, Holy Thursday
Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper

St. John the Baptist	No Service
Sacred Heart Church	6:30 p.m.

March 29th, 2024, Good Friday
Passion of the Lord

St. John the Baptist	3:00 p.m.
Sacred Heart Church	No Service

March 30, 2024, Holy Saturday

St. John the Baptist	No Service
Sacred Heart Church	Easter Vigil 8:45 p.m.

March 31st, Easter Sunday
Resurrection of the Lord Mass

St. John the Baptist	9:30 a.m.
Sacred Heart Church	11:00 a.m.

Part-time Facilities Manager Position: Looking for a part-time Facilities Manager for both **St. John the Baptist and Sacred Heart Churches**. Duties would be to maintain and oversee both churches. This would include ordinary maintenance, cleaning, dusting, mopping floors, changing light bulbs, minor plumbing and electrical work, removal of trash, and any other things that may need to be repaired or maintained. This would be approximately **25 hours a week**. If interested in the position, please contact the office for more information at **614-294-5319**. Thank you!

Welcome to Sacred Heart

Sacred Heart is a welcoming community, rooted in the traditions, teachings, and beauty of our **Catholic** faith. We recognize that every person is on his or her own journey of faith, and we seek to meet you where you are in your journey.

At **Sacred Heart**, the beauty of the **Mass** is embraced, while maintaining a welcoming spirit for our **Italian Village** neighbors and greater **Columbus Community**.

To learn more about the Parish, please visit our website:
www.Sacredheartchurchcolumbus.org.

Thank you for choosing Sacred Heart!

If you are interested in becoming Catholic, receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, or Baptism, please contact Sacred Heart Office at 614-294-5319 for more information.

For Weddings and Funerals, please contact Aggie Howard at ahoward@sjbitaliana.org or call the office at 614-294-5319.

PLEASE SIGN UP FOR ADORATION: In celebration of the Jubilee 350th year of the apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Sacred Heart Church will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. every Thursday until the Feast of the Sacred Heart on June 27, 2025. During that time, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for Adoration, there will be Mass 6:30 p.m. followed by Confessions and Benediction until 7:30 p.m. There must be someone present throughout the entire day and help is needed! Please, sign up for an hour or half-hour of Adoration on Thursday. There are sign-up sheets at both church entrances. Your help is needed for this especially important mission! In these troubled times in the country, the Church, and the world, this is a wonderful opportunity for us to seek our own personal freedom from all darkness and to help to heal all in our world that is so broken.

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday: February 25	St. John the Baptist – 9:30 a.m. + Antonio (Tony) Caradonna by John & Tina DiLorenzo Sacred Heart – 11:00 a.m. + Joe Pishitelli (SJB) by Judy & Phillip Pishitelli
Monday: February 26	St. John's – 9:00 a.m. Family of Mrs. Marina Hachwa by the McCallum Family
Tuesday: February 27	St. John's – 9:00 a.m. + Rudy Biscuso by Kathleen Gillespie
Wednesday: February 28	St. John's – 6:00 p.m. + Rosemary Ghiloni by Carol Thompson
Thursday: February 29	Sacred Heart – 6:30 p.m. + Richard Dirksen by Carla Guggenbiller
Friday: March 1	No Mass
Saturday: March 2	Sacred Heart – 4:00 p.m. Living & Deceased Members of Sacred Heart
Sunday: March 3	St. John's – 9:30 a.m. + Antonio (Tony) Polletta by Domenic & Flora Valentino Sacred Heart – 11:00 a.m. + Ralph L.
Confessions:	Confession and Adoration St. John's – Sunday – 8:30 a.m. Sacred Heart – Saturday – 3:00 p.m. Sacred Heart – Thursday – 7:00 p.m.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Sacred Heart Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

“Lent is an occasion for conversion and internal renewal through listening to the Word of God, caring for brothers and sisters who need our help, and prayer, especially to obtain the grace of peace in the world.”

@Pontifex

LECTORS

Saturday, February 24, 2024, 4:00 p.m.	Joe Stefanov
Sunday, February 25, 2024, 11:00 a.m.	Bob Padberg
Saturday, March 2, 2024, 4:00 p.m.	Neil Sika
Sunday, March 3, 2024, 11:00 a.m.	Justin Pieper
Saturday, March 9, 2024, 4:00 p.m.	Joe Stefanov
Sunday, March 10, 2024, 11:00 a.m.	Mary Rykowski

If you are unable to attend Mass, please contact Bob Longstreth. Thank you!

**WEEKLY STEWARDSHIP AT SACRED HEART
February 18, 2024**

Number of Envelopes used Sunday – 13

In Env:	\$ 565.00
Loose:	\$ 1,188.00
Total	\$ 1,753.00
Less Diocesan 8% Assessment	\$ - (140.24)
	\$ 1,612.76

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference (\$)</u>
This Week:	\$ 2,800.00	\$1,753.00	- \$1,047.00

DONATION QR CODE AND WEBSITE INFORMATION



Please help Sacred Heart maintain this beautiful 100-year-old building with a donation by using the QR code. Thank you!



SH Collection Counters – Monday, February 26, 2024
David and Gilda Cottrill

SH Collection Counters – Monday, March 4, 2024
Rita Ward and Mike Padovan

CATHOLIC TIMES: Thank you to all new and returning readers of *The Catholic Times* online and in print. It's not too late to subscribe for the upcoming year for a minimum donation of \$26.00. Sign up online at catholictimescolumbus.org under the Subscribe tab. Current subscribers also will receive a paper statement in the mail that can be returned to *The Catholic Times*, Diocese of Columbus, 197 E. Gay Street with a check for \$26.00 or paid online at the website. You may also write your name and *The Catholic Times* on a plain envelope, make your check payable to the **Diocese of Columbus – Catholic Times** and drop it into the collection basket. Another option for new subscribers is to mail your \$26.00 check payable to **Diocese of Columbus – Catholic Times** to our office at 197 E. Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215. You'll find *The Catholic Times* extremely useful to keep up on **Bishop Earl Fernandez** and news throughout the diocese and the **Catholic Church**.

PRAYER: *O God, who have commanded us to listen to Your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly by Your Word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold Your glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen*

AROUND US

CATHOLIC MEN'S LUNCHEON – FRIDAY MARCH 1, 2024 – SPEAKER MICHAEL FRY. Please join us Friday, March 1 at **St. Patrick Church** in downtown Columbus for a luncheon featuring a talk by **Michael Fry** entitled "**A Visit with Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.**" If you are interested in sponsoring a luncheon, contact **Pat Foley** at foleyp513@gmail.com. **Holy Mass** (optional) begins at 11:45 a.m. followed by lunch at 12:10 p.m. and **Mr. Fry's** presentation. No reservations are necessary. \$12.00 covers the lunch and meeting. Bring a friend! **Our next luncheon is Friday, April 5, 2024, and will feature a talk by William Heyer on Sacred Architecture. Mark your calendar.**

CRS RICE BOWL: The **CRS Rice Bowl** program invites us to walk in solidarity with the poor and hungry around the world and locally. Through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we connect with our brothers and sisters in need, transforming our **Lenten** sacrifices into life-giving support through **Catholic Relief Services**, the official overseas humanitarian organization of the **U.S. Catholic Bishops**. A twenty-five percent portion of your **CRS** donation also helps with local hunger programs in our diocese. **Rice Bowls** are available at the church entrances.

"COME AND SEE" WEEKEND AT THE PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM: The **Pontifical College Josephinum**, in Columbus, Ohio, has scheduled a "Come and See" Live-in weekend for **March 7-10, 2024**. The weekend has been set aside to allow young men (high school juniors, seniors, and college-age students) to visit the seminary for a few days. There is no charge to participate. For more information, contact the **Vocations Office** at 614-221-5565, or email vocations@columbuscatholic.org.

40 DAYS OF ADORATION: The **Diocese of Columbus** will have **40 Days of Adoration** this year from **Ash Wednesday through Palm Sunday**. Everyone is encouraged to visit **Jesus** in **Eucharistic Adoration** at parishes throughout the diocese. Reconciliation is **Monday, March 25**.

CHURCH REGULATIONS REGARDING FASTING AND ABSTINENCE DURING LENT: Abstinence from meat (beast or fowl) is to be observed by all **Catholics** fourteen years and older on **Ash Wednesday** and on all **Fridays of Lent**. This obligation prohibits the eating of meat, but not eggs, milk products or condiments of any kind, even though made from animal fat. The law of fasting on **Ash Wednesday and Good Friday** applies to all **Catholics from age 18 through age 59**. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. Those who are ill or pregnant may be dispensed from their obligation.



Lectio Divina

SCRIPTURE READING + MEDITATION + PRAYER + CONTEMPLATION

“What page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life?” ~Saint Benedict, from the *Rule of Saint Benedict* (73:3)

The month of February is dedicated to the Holy Family.

“The purpose of Lent is not only expiation, to satisfy the divine justice, but above all a preparation to rejoice in His love. And this preparation consists in receiving the gift of His mercy—a gift which we receive insofar as we open our hearts to it, casting out what cannot remain in the same room with mercy. Now one of the things we must cast out first of all is fear. Fear narrows the little entrance to our heart. It shrinks up our capacity to love. It freezes up our power to give ourselves. If we were terrified of God as an inexorable judge, we would not confidently await His mercy, or approach Him trustfully in prayer. Our peace and our joy in Lent are a guarantee of grace.” ~FATHER THOMAS MERTON, OCSO

Monday, February 26 ~ Second Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Luke 6:36-38 Jesus said to his disciples: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. “Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

Meditation: God seeks our highest good and teaches us to seek the greatest good of others, even those who hate and abuse us. Our love for others, even those who are ungrateful and selfish towards us, must be marked by the same kindness and mercy which God has shown to us. It is easier to show kindness and mercy when we can expect to benefit from doing so. How much harder when we can expect nothing in return. Our prayer for those who do us ill both breaks the power of revenge and releases the power of love to do good in the face of evil. How can we possibly love those who cause us harm, ill-will, and grief? With God all things are possible. He gives power and grace to those who know his love and who ask for the gift and help of the Holy Spirit. Paul the Apostle reminds us that "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Romans 5:5) God's love conquers all, even our hurts, fears, prejudices and grief. Only the cross of Jesus Christ and his victory over sin can free us from the tyranny of malice, hatred, revenge, and resentment, and give us the courage to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).

Prayer: O God, who have taught us to chasten our bodies for the healing of our souls, enable us, we pray, to abstain from all sins, and strengthen our hearts to carry out your loving commands. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: What makes Christians different and what makes Christianity distinct from any other religion? It is grace – treating others, not as they deserve, but as God wishes them to be treated – with loving-kindness and mercy. Do you pray for mercy and forgive those who wrong you? When we are confronted with our sinful condition and failings we experience guilt and shame. This can often either lead us to cast off pride and make-belief or it can lead us to lose our inhibitions and fall into more shameless deeds! If we are utterly honest and humble before God, we will admit our sins and ask for his mercy and forgiveness. Do you know the joy and freedom of repentance, forgiveness, and a clean heart?

Tuesday, February 27 ~ Second Week in the Season of Lent

Optional Memorial + Saint Gregory of Narek, Abbott and Doctor of the Church

Holy Gospel: Matthew 23:1-12 Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They

tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.' As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Meditation: Jesus seemed to be warning both his disciples and the religious leaders about the temptation to seek titles and honors to increase one's reputation and admiration by others. The scriptures give ample warning about the danger of self-seeking pride: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6; Proverbs 3:24). Respect for God and his ways inclines us to Godly humility and simplicity of heart. Why should we embrace true humility? True humility is not feeling bad about yourself, or having a low opinion of yourself. True humility frees us from preoccupation with ourselves, whereas a low self-opinion tends to focus our attention on ourselves. Humility is truth in self-understanding and truth in action. Viewing ourselves truthfully, with sober judgment, means seeing ourselves the way God sees us (Psalm 139:1-4). A humble person makes a realistic assessment of oneself without illusion or pretense to be something one is not. A truly humble person regards oneself neither smaller nor larger than one truly is. True humility frees us to be ourselves as God sees us and to avoid despair and pride. A humble person does not wear a mask or put on a facade in order to look good to others. Such a person is not swayed by fame, reputation, success, or failure. Do you know the joy of Christ-like humility and simplicity of heart?

Prayer: Guard your Church, we pray, O Lord, in your unceasing mercy, and, since without you mortal humanity is sure to fall, and directed to all that brings salvation. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer ~ Saint Gregory of Narek: Almighty and eternal God, who gave your holy Church blessed Gregory as Doctor, grant that what he taught when moved by the divine Spirit may always stay firm in our hearts; and, as by your gift we embrace him as our patron, may we also have him as our defender to entreat your mercy. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Humility serves as the foundation of all the other virtues because humility enables us to see and judge correctly, the way God sees. Humility helps us to be teachable so we can acquire true knowledge, wisdom, and an honest view of reality. It directs our energy, zeal, and ambition to give ourselves to something greater than ourselves. Humility frees us to love and serve others selflessly, for their sake, rather than our own. Saint Paul the Apostle gives us the greatest example and model of humility in the person of Jesus Christ, who emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and ...who humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:7-8). Do you want to be a servant as Jesus served and loved others? The Lord gives grace to those who humbly seek him.

About Saint Gregory of Narek: St. Gregory was born in the city of Narek about 950 A.D. He was a monk, poet, mystical philosopher, and theologian, born into a family of writers. He became a priest at the age of 25 and dedicated himself to God completely, always searching for the truth. Most of his life he lived in the monasteries of Narek where he taught at the monastic school. He launched his writings with a commentary on the "Song of Songs;" he also wrote a number of famous letters, sharagans, treasures, odes, melodies, and church writings. However, his masterpiece is considered to be his Book of Lamentations, commonly called "Narek," in which his genius is displayed. Considered the greatest poet of the Armenian nation, Saint Gregory of Narek was canonized and proclaimed a Doctor of the Universal Church on April 12, 2015 by Pope Francis.

Wednesday, March 28 ~ Second Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Matthew 20:17-28 As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the Twelve disciples aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day." Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached Jesus with her sons and did him homage, wishing to ask him for something. He said to her, "What do you wish?" She answered him, "Command that these two sons of mine sit, one at your right and the other at your left, in your kingdom." Jesus said in reply, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the chalice that I am going to drink?" They said to him, "We can." He replied, "My chalice you will indeed drink, but to sit at my right and at my left,

this is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus summoned them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Meditation: Have you ever given any thought as to who or what takes first place in your life? Selfish ambition drives us to get ahead of others. When two of Jesus' disciples tried to get ahead, Jesus did the unthinkable by telling them that the path to glory would be through suffering and the cross. And he wedded authority with selfless-service and with sacrifice – the willing offering of one's life for the sake of another. Jesus used stark language to explain what kind of sacrifice he had in mind. His disciples must drink his cup if they expect to reign with him in his kingdom. The cup he had in mind was a bitter one involving crucifixion. What kind of cup does the Lord have in mind for us? For some disciples such a cup entails physical suffering and the painful struggle of "martyrdom" in one form or another. This entails the long routine of the Christian life, with all its daily sacrifices, disappointments, set-backs, struggles, and temptations. A disciple must be ready to lay down his or her life in martyrdom and be ready to lay it down each and every day in the little and big sacrifices required. An early church father summed up Jesus' teaching with the expression: to serve is to reign with Christ. We share in God's reign by laying down our lives in humble service of one another as Jesus did for our sake. Are you up to this call?

Prayer: Keep your family, O Lord, schooled always in good works, and so comfort them with your protection here as to lead them graciously to gifts on high. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Jesus paid the price for our redemption with his blood. Slavery to sin is to want the wrong things and to be in bondage to destructive desires. The ransom Jesus paid sets us free from the worst tyranny possible – the tyranny of sin and the fear of death. Jesus' victory did not end with death but triumphed over the tomb. Jesus defeated the powers of death through his resurrection. Do you want the greatest freedom possible – that is, the freedom to live as God truly meant us to live as his sons and daughters? Embrace his laws, his teachings, and his will, and true and lasting freedom will be yours!

Thursday, February 29 ~ Second Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Luke 16:19-31 Jesus said to the Pharisees: "There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.' Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.' He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.' But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.' He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'"

Meditation: The name "Lazarus" means "God is my help." Despite a life of misfortune and suffering, Lazarus did not lose hope in God. His eyes were set on a treasure stored up for him in heaven. The rich man, however, could not see beyond his material wealth and possessions. He not only had every thing he needed, he selfishly spent all he had on himself. He was too absorbed in what he possessed to notice the needs of those around him. He lost sight of God and the treasure of heaven because he was preoccupied with seeking happiness in material things. He served wealth rather than God. In the end the rich man became a beggar! Do you know the joy and freedom of possessing God as your true and lasting treasure? Those who put their hope and security in heaven will not be disappointed (see Hebrews 6:19)?

Prayer: O God, who delight in innocence and restore it, direct the hearts of your servants to yourself, that, caught up in the fire of your Spirit, we may be found steadfast in faith and effective in works.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Jesus' parable about the afflictions of the poor man Lazarus brings home a very important lesson for us to think about during Lent, and to change the way we choose to help or not help those in need. In this story Jesus paints a dramatic scene of contrasts – riches and poverty, heaven and hell, compassion and indifference, inclusion and exclusion. We also see an abrupt and dramatic reversal of fortune. Lazarus was not only poor, but sick and unable to lift himself. He was “laid” at the gates of the rich man’s house. The dogs which licked his sores probably also stole the little bread he got for himself. Dogs in the ancient world symbolized contempt. Enduring the torment of these savage dogs only added to the poor man’s miseries and sufferings. The rich man treated the beggar with contempt and indifference, until he found his fortunes reversed at the end of his life! In God's economy, those who hold on possessively to what they have, lose it all in the end, while those who share generously receive back many times more than they gave away.

Friday, March 1 ~ Second Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46 Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people: “Hear another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey. When vintage time drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to obtain his produce. But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat, another they killed, and a third they stoned. Again he sent other servants, more numerous than the first ones, but they treated them in the same way. Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.' They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes? They answered him, He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper times.” Jesus said to them, Did you never read in the Scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes? Therefore, I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he was speaking about them. And although they were attempting to arrest him, they feared the crowds, for they regarded him as a prophet.

Meditation: What is the message of the parable of the vineyard? Jesus’ story about an absentee landlord and his not-so-good tenants would have made sense to his audience. The hills of Galilee were lined with numerous vineyards, and it was quite common for the owners to let out their estates to tenants. Many did it for the sole purpose of collecting rent. So why did Jesus' story about wicked tenants cause offense to the scribes and Pharisees? It contained both a prophetic message and a warning. Isaiah had spoken of the house of Israel as “the vineyard of the Lord” (Isaiah 5:7). Jesus' listeners would likely understand this parable as referring to God's dealing with a stubborn and rebellious people; this parable speaks to us today as well, as it conveys important truths about God and the way he deals with his people. God trusts us enough to give us freedom to run life as we choose, but “free will” can be dangerous if we do not follow the path of Christ – choices have consequences. Not once, but many times he forgives the tenants their debts, but while the tenants take advantage of the owner's patience, his judgment and justice prevail.

Prayer: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, purifying us by the sacred practice of penance, you may lead us in sincerity of heart to attain the holy things to come. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Jesus foretold both his death and his ultimate triumph. He knew he would be rejected and be killed, but he also knew that would not be the end. After rejection would come glory – the glory of resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father. The Lord blesses his people today with the gift of his kingdom. And he promises that we will bear much fruit if we abide in him (ref. John 15:1-11). He entrusts his gifts and grace to each of us and he gives us work to do in his vineyard – the body of Christ. He promises that our labor will not be in vain if we persevere with faith to the end (ref. 1 Corinthians 15:58). We can expect trials and even persecution. But in the end we will see triumph. Do you do any labor for the Lord? Do you do so with joyful hope and with confidence in his victory?

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Daily meditations and contemplations adapted from the Irish Jesuits’ *Sacred Space* web page and *Biblical Medications for Lent* by Rev. Carroll Stuhlmuehler, C.P.; prayers are from *The Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing, 2011; information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of the Catholic Culture web site.

Tony's
ITALIAN RISTORANTE

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Fri:4-10:30 pm; Sat: 5-10:30 pm

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