

Pastor's Corner: Our journey towards Easter

Lent is drawing to a close; it all went so fast! It seems only yesterday that the prophets Joel and John the Baptizer and then Jesus himself **asked us to focus on the things that are of God, to fast from all kinds of behavior** (pessimism, anger, apathy, negativity, anxiety, self-concern, etc.) **and to feast on** bringing healing and justice and peace and forgiveness and reconciliation and so many other positive goodness. We may feel discouraged that we have been less than successful in developing within us the attitudes or qualities which we genuinely wanted to renew in us and which we may have written on the pieces of paper on the cross. After all, we all wish to grow spiritually, we all wish to express our sorrow for our sins, to be in solidarity with suffering people both at home and in other parts of the world, to simplify our lives so that we would be more open to others and to God. But it seems as if we are stuck, a bit like the people of Israel freed from slavery in Egypt but stuck in exile in the desert unable it seems to get to their promised homeland. Yes, our own Lenten journey is truly a journey through the desert symbolized by the sand area in front of the altar at St. Elizabeth's. We too are still in exile, far from "home", far from the person we wish to be; and as a people we are far from the world we really wish for ourselves and for our children. Our lives seem to be dry like the desert sand and, like the bucket in front of the altar, our well is empty and we yearn for life-giving water and nourishment.

Like the "prodigal" father in the parable of the prodigal son God waits for us, sees us in our exile and God knows that who we are now is not who we can be. God's compassion, mercy and tenderness bring God to do again what God has always done in the past: God calls us his people to come out of exile, to begin those difficult steps, so that we might be embraced in his loving care. We need to recognize our need for God in our lives in those first steps of conversion and open ourselves to that life-giving embrace. **God will provide the necessary nourishment and strength we need so that we don't grow discouraged. Our journey of searching will not be in vain** because, as Jeremiah assures us, our God is so close to us; yes, even within us: "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jeremiah 31:33-34)."

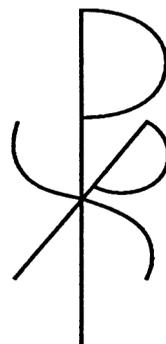
One of the characteristics of the desert is that deep within the seeming arid sand are seeds of new life, which will spring forth and bear fruit when watered. Deep within us is God's gift of life and love which will spring forth to bear fruit when nourished by the renewed waters of baptism, by the Spirit of the Risen Lord. The pieces of paper will be taken off the cross on Good Friday and used to light the new fire at the Easter Vigil which in turn will bless the new water filling the empty well. The desert area in front of the altar will become an area full of flowers signifying the new life we receive at the end of our Lenten journey as the Spirit of the Risen Lord renews the face of the earth.

In order for us to get there we need to leave our places of exile; we need to be freed from the areas of slavery to which we are attached, whatever they are: past hurts, sinful patterns, substance abuse, pride, excessive use of social media, comfortable non-involved religion, wasteful use of the earth's resources, fear, suspicion, unwillingness to forgive or to be forgiven, etc. In the Gospel of the adulterous woman whom the scribes and Pharisees wanted to be stoned (John 8: 1-11), Jesus reaches out to the accusers as well as to the woman and he invites them and the woman, he invites all of us, to a new vision, to a new beginning, to a new way of living. Jesus' last word in that Gospel rings out to all of us: "Neither do I condemn you. Go on your way; from now on do not sin again"

Jesus was able to see the seeds of renewal and redemption within all kinds of people and within all kinds of situations. He is inviting us to do the same. As we get in touch with ourselves and with the God in us we can discern the seeds of new life and of hope. With **Holy Week** let us journey with Jesus and discover both in his suffering and death as well as in the suffering and many deaths of our world and time, the seeds of the Resurrection. In the midst of adversity and suffering in our world we see people, individuals and communities, reaching out, working to change political, social and economic systems and structures that dehumanize, and sharing their resources with those in need.

We can rely on God's promise to redeem us and to never let us walk alone. We know that where God is, there can always be hope. Lent is thus for us a sacred journey, when we are reminded of our baptismal commitment to follow the path of Jesus day by day. The Gospel stories are not just about the journey of Jesus but about our own journey towards new life.

Christians are called to be Easter people, always remembering that the Resurrection came after suffering and death, and that the God who raised Jesus from the dead, is the same God whose Spirit is in us calling us to rise to new life and to raise all that is dead around us to new life. Yes, God's creative and re-creative power has been given to us not to abuse, but rather to use for the advancement of God's reign of justice and peace. We need to become ever more people who, like Jesus did two thousand years ago, bring hope, healing, true peace and justice to our world which needs these gifts more than ever.



Saanich Peninsula Parish

A ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY IN COVENANT WITH ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Parish office: 10030 Third St, Sidney

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Email: spparish@shaw.ca

Office hours: Tuesday to Friday 9:00 am - 12:00 noon

Pastor: Fr. Rolf Hasenack, O.P.

Associate Pastor: Fr. Thomas Chinnappa

Mailing address: 10030 Third St, Sidney, V8L 3B3

Rectory: 250-652-1557

Web site: www.spparish.com

Admin. Assistants: Melanie Ehrlich & Gary Koett

Parish Council Chair: Mary McGovern

SUNDAY EUCHARIST at ST. ELIZABETH'S

10030 Third Street, Sidney

Saturdays at 5 pm, Sundays at 10:30 am.

at OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION

7742 West Saanich Road, Saanichton

Sundays at 8:30 am

WEEKDAY MASSES

Daily at St. Elizabeth's: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: 9:00 am

Third Friday: 9:00 am at the Legion Manor, 7601 East Saanich Road, Saanichton

Last Friday: 11:00 am in the Chapel at Saanich Peninsula Hospital

Remaining Fridays: 9:00 am in a private home (for location see "This Week in Our Parish" ...)

RECONCILIATION at ST. ELIZABETH'S: Saturdays 4 - 4:30pm, or by appointment.



5th SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 18, 2018

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hebrews 5:7-9

John 12:20-33

PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY

MARCH 25, 2018

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Mark 14:1-15.47



VISITING EUCHARISTIC MINISTRY

If you know of someone who is house-bound or in a nursing home/hospital and would

MISSION STATEMENT

*Let us be open
accepting individuals
sensitive to change
and willing to take
Courses untraditional,
unknown to us.*

*Let us live as
examples of God's love.*

NEW TO THE PARISH? WELCOME!

Please fill out the information below so we can get to know you.
Pick up one of the blue information pamphlets next to the bulletins
in the foyer so you can get to know us.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____

Need Pre-Authorized Debit package? Yes ___ No ___

Need donation envelopes? Yes ___ No ___

**IN OUR PARISH
COLLECTIONS**

Mar. 4	\$ 4,253
Mar. 11	\$ 2,684
Pre-Authorized Debits	\$ 4,835
Monthly Target.....	\$23,000

*We offer condolences to the family and pray for the repose of the soul of **Frank Watson** who died on March 15.*

SHARE LENT SOLIDARITY SUNDAY:

This weekend is **Solidarity Sunday**. Throughout Canada a **special collection** is taken in support of the work of **Development & Peace**. Your donation will help to create a hopeful future for our sisters & brothers in need by sowing seeds of justice and peace for families and communities who suffer as a result of conflicts, natural disasters and unfair economic & political structures. This year's focus **TOGETHER FOR PEACE** highlights the **role that we all play** in making our world more peaceful & more just.

CHRISM MASS: MARCH 22

On Thursday, March 22nd at 7:00 pm, at the Cathedral, Bishop Gary Gordon will be the principal celebrant at the Chrism Mass for the blessing and consecration of the oils which will be used in all our parishes in the coming year. **All are invited to attend. A reception will follow.**

"HERE I AM LORD, IS IT I, LORD?"

Our **Parish Council** needs 'new recruits' to serve as Parish Council members. It's not too soon to start listening for your call to service. In preparation for our **Annual AGM** to be held on **April 29**, it is important that our new Parish Council be in place. If you are interested in this ministry, please contact Mary McGovern, chair, or Melanie in the office (656-7433), or Fr. Rolf.

MEN'S BREAKFAST: MAR. 24

Presentation by Fr. Dean Henderson: Sat, Mar. 24, 8 -10 am - "The Missionary Joy of The Gospel. Insights and Applications from Pope Francis" - at Victoria Horseshoe Club. To register: email us at info@mcaff.org

CATHOLIC SINGLES BRUNCH: MAR. 25

Suddenly Spring Social brunch for singles! Sun, Mar. 25, 12 noon, at Romeo's on Hillside. Ages 40 - 65. Please register by Monday, Mar. 19 by email office@holycrossvictoria.org.

HUNT FOR EASTER EGG TREATS

Our **Religious Education** program is having an Easter Egg Hunt for all children in the parish after 10:30 Easter Sunday Mass. **If you would like to contribute some treats for this occasion**, please drop off your donation in the foyer of St. Elizabeth's. **Look for the WHITE RABBIT** with a basket for your donation. **Thank You.**

STARFIELDS, A FESTIVAL OF HOPE

Together with other faith groups, this festival of hope takes place **April 13 - 15** at various worship and other spaces in Victoria. In a time of turmoil and upheaval, this inter-faith festival tries to stimulate hope, both in reflection and in social justice action through poetry, music and discussion workshops. All Sunday April 15th events are free to attend and partake. For Friday April 13th and Saturday April 14th workshops, you can purchase tickets at Munro's 382-2264 or at Ivy's 598-2713 or www.starfields.ticketleap.com. More info is available on the bulletin board.

DIOCESAN YOUTH CONFERENCE

All youth grades 8 - 12 are invited to the "THRIVE" youth conference at St. Andrew's High School on May 25-27th. "Slip and Slide/Praise and Worship/Soccer Game/Dance Party/Adoration/Great Food!" While it can be difficult for teens to step into unfamiliar space, rest assured that teens who attended this diocesan youth conference in past years say that it is a great opportunity to meet other youth with faith based values in a environment where "strangers are friends that you haven't yet met". Register now at rcdvictoria.org.

NEED TO STAND UP!

You may have heard that the Fraser Health Authority has ordered non-religious health care facilities, including hospices and palliative care, to participate in **MAID** (Medical Assistance In Dying). All staff must participate, they are not allowed to opt out! We believe that **institutional conscience rights for healthcare workers includes their right not to participate in acts they consider wrong**. "Providing euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide is not in accordance with palliative care which affirms life and regards dying as a normal process..." Let our health authorities hear your views!

MARCH 19 - 23 IN OUR PARISH

MONDAY, MAR. 19
1:00 pm Faith Reflection
7:00 pm Stations of the Cross

TUESDAY, MAR. 20
9:00 am Mass at St. Elizabeth's
11:30 am Friendly Hours Soup Luncheon
7:00 pm K of C Rosary
7:30 pm K of C General Meeting

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 21
9:00 am Mass at St. Elizabeth's
10:00 am Taiji Qigong

THURSDAY, MARCH 22
9:00 am Mass at St. Elizabeth's
11:30 am Friendly Hours Soup Luncheon
2:00 pm Prayer Group
6:00 pm Taiji Qigong

FRIDAY, MARCH 23
9:00 am Mass at St. Elizabeth's followed by Eucharistic Adoration
11:00 am Mass at Saanich Peninsula Hosp.

For the latest schedule see tinyurl.com/sppcal

MINISTRIES' SCHEDULE FOR MARCH 26 TO 30

Mar. 26: Faith Reflection: cancelled
Mar. 27: Friendly Hours as scheduled 11:30 am
Mar. 29: Holy Thursday: Friendly Hours, Prayer Group, Taiji Qigong - all cancelled

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: MAY 5

Tickets are now on sale for the **2018 Bishop's Gala**, May 5, 2018. Over the past two years \$117,818 has been raised to support our First Nations ministry. This year, the Ahousaht community, with Bishop Gary, has exciting plans that will be unveiled at the Gala! Tickets are \$100 per person, available through EventBrite (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-bishops-gala-tickets-42924482282>), or by phoning the Pastoral Centre at (250) 479-1331. **If you are interested in joining fellow parishioners at our 'parish table', please contact the parish office a.s.a.p.**

Holy Week Schedule

SATURDAY, March 24
3:30 pm - Confessions; 5:00 pm - Mass

PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY, March 25
8:30 am - Mass at Our Lady of Assumption
10:30 am - Mass at St. Elizabeth's

Monday, March 26
7:00 pm - Stations of the Cross

Tuesday, March 27, 9:00 am - Mass

Wednesday, March 28 9:00 am - Mass

HOLY THURSDAY, March 29
No 9:00 am Mass
7:00 pm - Mass of Lord's Supper
Bring bells & flowers;
Collection for the poor.
Eucharistic Adoration after Mass

GOOD FRIDAY, March 30
10:00 am Stations of the Cross walk from St. Stephen's Anglican to Our Lady of the Assumption
3:00 pm - Passion of our Lord at St. Elizabeth's

HOLY SATURDAY, March 31
3:30 pm - Confessions; No 5:00 pm Mass
8:00 pm - Easter Vigil
Bring bells and a snack to share

EASTER SUNDAY, April 1
8:30 am - Mass at Our Lady of Assumption
10:30 am - Mass at St. Elizabeth's

EASTER MONDAY, April 2 - 9 am - Mass

Easter Flowers



Please bring potted flowers early in the week or by Holy Thursday or make a donation. Place your donation in an envelope marked "FLOWERS".