

MARCH 6, 2016

Scripture Reflection

The story of the man born blind unfolds in a series of conversations: between Jesus and his disciples, Jesus and the blind man, and the Pharisees' interrogation of the blind man and his parents after the man has received his sight. Jesus' play on the words describing those who have sight as blind and those who are blind being able to see identifies the Pharisees perfectly. They have failed to see Jesus' identity ("this man is not from God"). John presents the story as another of the "I am" revelations of Jesus, this time in the context of a contrast between sight and blindness, darkness and light. Jesus is the one who dispels the darkness and gives sight to the blind, both physically and spiritually.

Although Jesus broke the connection between sickness and punishment for personal sin, some still hold onto that belief. The Pharisees would not let truth correct their blindness. They believed that they saw correctly. The man's parents' fear of rejection would not let the light of truth lead them to stand up for their son. Only the man himself was open to physical and spiritual healing. Jesus was not only a physical healer, he was the Son of Man whose touch transformed the man born blind.

In the Gospel we have a blind man who comes to see more than anyone around him, not just physically, but with the eyes of faith. Jesus is off the scene before he begins to see, but we witness this man's vision sharpening as others challenge him, until finally he confesses Jesus as the Son of Man. Faith is the gift that allows us to see Jesus for who he is. As we prepare to renew our baptismal promises on Easter, we pray for a deeper faith. All of us are blind in some way. Naming our darkness can invite God's touch to wash us clean and open our eyes like the man born blind.

• **Where have I remained blind because it has been more comfortable to be in darkness rather than light? What blindness needs to be removed in my life?**

AT HOME WITH THE WORD 2016. (C) 2015 ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO, LITURGY TRAINING PUBLICATIONS, 3949 South Racine Avenue CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60609. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION. *Living the Word*, Laurie Brink and Paul Colloton, World Library Publications, 2015, page 81. *Living the Word*, Dennis Sylva and James Wallace, World Library Publications, 2009, page 79.

Moving Forward In Faith

Our Capital Campaign

Gifts continue to be made to the Parish Capital Campaign. Our total in pledges to date is: **\$1,336,857.25**. Last fall the Cathedral Parish was gifted with the Homer Poulos Estate. The Parish received \$46,644.25; these monies have been added to the capital campaign as we needed initial funds. The goal was set at 1,200,000; and we have met the goal for the renovation of the interior and exterior of the newly purchased building on Thirteenth Avenue, the demolition of the two buildings, and the creation of a new parking lot. Additional monies help with costs associated with the campaign company and the engineering firm drawing up the specifications for the three-floor building to be submitted to the city's Code Office. Parishioners are encouraged to be part of this historic moment in our history. If you have not yet made your pledge (possible over five years), please consider your gift and submit your pledge either in the mail, the Sunday collection, or at the Parish Office. Thank you!!

Do You Have A Suggestion?

Our new building has been referred to as the Parish Activity Center. It will house parish offices, religious education classrooms, and a hall for parish gatherings (educational and social). Do you have an idea on what name to give our new site? Please place your suggestion on a piece of paper and drop in the collection or at the Parish Office.

PRAYING THE STATIONS

Stations of the Cross will be prayed this **Friday** evening at **7:00 PM** and every Friday of Lent. Bring the family and walk the Stations, if you wish. Mark your calendar for **Wednesday, March 23**, at **10:00 AM** when our parochial school students will present *Living Stations* here in the Cathedral.

Enclosure

Bishop Mark has written to all of us of the Local Church in light of the Attorney General's Report on the sexual abuse of minors by clergy. While we at Cathedral have celebrated the Second Scrutiny with John's Gospel of the man born blind, Bishop refers to the Gospel of Luke 15:1-3,11-32 (Cycle C) concerning the Prodigal Son. Please take time to read this important communication.

The last page of the enclosure repeats last week's news about **Holy Trinity Catholic School** now accepting registrations for 2016-2017.

THE CHURCH OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN

THE CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

ONE CATHEDRAL SQUARE, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16601-3315
Church Office: 814-944-4603

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

The process of formation for those seeking God through membership in the Catholic Christian community.

INFANT BAPTISM:

Arrange in advance for pre-baptismal instructions.

CONFIRMATION:

Ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students are invited to participate in the Confirmation Preparation Process.

RECONCILIATION:

Wednesday: 7:00 PM, Saturday: 12:30 PM.

Communal Penance Services: Advent and Lent.

ANOIDING OF THE SICK:

Communal celebration Easter Season.

MARRIAGE:

Arrange nine months in advance. Couples expected to participate in pre-marriage preparation program.

DEVOTIONS:

Novena of the Miraculous Medal - Monday 7:45 AM.

Rosary - Wednesday 6:00 PM.

Charismatic Prayer - Monday 7:00 PM.

Evening Prayer within Eucharistic Exposition -Advent and

Christmas, Lent and Easter Seasons - Sunday 6:30 PM.

Eucharistic Day - Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

September through April: Pre-Kindergarten thru 12.

Sunday morning 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Pre-Kindergarten thru 8.

Sunday evening 6:15 PM - 8:30 PM

Grades 9 thru 12.

WEB: WWW.ALTOONACATHEDRAL.ORG

FAX: 814-942-4337

E-MAIL: ALT.CATHEDRAL@DIOCESEAJ.ORG

EUCCHARIST:

Sunday: 5:00 PM (Vigil)
8:00 AM
10:00 AM
12:00 Noon
5:00 PM

Holyday: 5:30 PM (Vigil)
8:00 AM
12:00 Noon
5:30 PM

Weekday: 6:45 AM
8:00 AM
12:00 Noon
Saturday: 8:00 AM
12:00 Noon

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Robert C. Mazur, Rector

Reverend Father Dennis M. Kurdziel, Parochial Vicar

Deacon Michael A. Anna

Deacon John J. Szwarc, Senior Deacon

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 944-4603

ALTOONA CENTRAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Web: www.altoonacentralcatholic.com

Elementary - Pre-K thru Grade 5 - 381-7011

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 944-4014

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 8 - 946-3475

Jean Koury - 9 thru 12 - 949-2777

Religious Education Office: Sundays - 943-7424

MUSIC MINISTRY

Nina M. Tedeschi

Choir Director and Head Organist - 944-2044

Kevin J. Luke - E-mail: kluke@dioceseaj.org

Administrative Duties and Organist - 944-2044

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE CITY OF ALTOONA SINCE 1851

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 6, 2016

Readings: 1 Sm 16:1,6-7,10-13; Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-41

MASS INTENTIONS

March 7, Monday: Saints Perpetua and Felicity, Martyrs

Readings: Is 65:17-21; Jn 4:43-54

6:45 AM Erin Luciano (Cathedral Parish)
8:00 AM M. Virginia Jones (Carol and Vincent Bobetich)
12:00 PM Paul Koegler (Wife, Joyce)

March 8, Tuesday: Saint John of God, Religious

Readings: Ez 47:1-9,12; Jn 5:1-16

6:45 AM Bill Crouse (Gary and Janet Roesch)
8:00 AM Brian and Barry Elmers (Skip Cowan)
12:00 PM Tom Byrne (Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Galant)

March 9, Wednesday: St. Frances of Rome, Religious

Readings: Is 49:8-15; Jn 5:17-30

6:45 AM Clementine Katowski (Betty & Rupert Burger)
8:00 AM Patricia Rabine (Greg & Ange Martynuska)
12:00 PM Isabell Murphy (Ron and Jean Sheehan)

March 10, Thursday: Lenten Weekday

Readings: Ex 32:7-14; Jn 5:31-47

6:45 AM Alfred Rutolo (Daughter and Family)
8:00 AM Francis Lytle (Joe and Jude Nocito)
12:00 PM Moose Plutko (Mr. and Mrs. Pete Rodgers)

March 11, Friday: Lenten Weekday

Readings: Wis 2:1,12-22; Jn 7:1-2,10,25-30

6:45 AM Joseph A. Moffa, Anniversary (Estate)
8:00 AM David Conrad (Barbara Kyle)
12:00 PM Michael Friedenberger (Family)

Lenten Lunch: 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM

7:00 PM Stations of the Cross

March 12, Saturday: Lenten Weekday

Readings: Jer 11:18-20; Jn 7:40-53

8:00 AM Herb Kutruff (Larry and Kathy Knott)
12:00 PM Joe Tomlinson (Tom Byrne)

Vigil: Fifth Sunday of Lent

Readings: Ez 37:12-14; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45

5:00 PM Barbara Dively (F.I.R.E. Class)

Lenten Evening Prayer

Every Sunday in Lent the Cathedral Parish gathers at 6:30 PM for Evening Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in exposition. This Liturgy concludes with Benediction. All are invited to participate in this Lenten prayer this evening.

Rest In Peace Please remember in prayer our parishioner, Patty Geis, who died and was buried from the Cathedral this past week. May she rest in peace and may her family be comforted in the faith.

SECOND SCRUTINY

Continuing this Sunday at the 10:00 AM Mass, the Church will celebrate the second of the three scrutinies with our Elect and Candidates. On the Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 6, the Gospel tells of the man born blind who received his sight; and on the Fifth Sunday of Lent, March 13, the Gospel will proclaim the story of Lazarus called from his grave into life. The scrutinies are not only for our Elect and Candidates, but also for us, the fully initiated. We are to look deeply and seriously at our lives these Lenten days and see what needs to be cleansed of sin and what calls us closer to our God. We are to name our blindness. Sometimes God is right in front of us, and we miss his presence. Sometimes we are so focused on the daily routine that we miss the Lord as our companion on the journey of life. We pray to be healed of any spiritual blindness. **NOTE:** For the 4th and 5th Sundays of Lent, the scriptural readings will be from Cycle A.

CATHEDRAL PARISH MARCH MEETINGS

All-Staff Meeting - Tuesday, March 8 in the Saint John Room at 12:45 PM.

Building Committee Meeting - Wednesday, March 9 at 4:30 PM, in the Saint John Room.

Christian Mothers Meeting - Wednesday, March 9 at 6:30 PM in the Saint John Room. All ladies of the parish are welcome to attend.

Liturgy Committee Meeting - Thursday, March 10 at 12:45 PM in the Seton Suite.

Basket Bingo Meeting - Thursday, March 10 at 6:30 PM in the Parish Hall.

LONGABERGER/VERA BRADLEY

BASKET BINGO - Sunday April 24, 2016

Please note the change in date. Proceeds will assist our children in Catholic Schools, our Religious Education Program and Youth Activities. Want to help? The Committee is in need of theme items (baby items, picnic items, tea time, bath time, play time, car care, etc.) The committee will put together the baskets; we need the fillers. Items can be dropped off at the Parish Office during the week. Gift cards or monetary donations may be placed in the collection basket with envelopes marked Basket Bingo. If you would like items picked up call Paula Truby at 931-2838 or Roberta Burns at 946-0238. Items need to be collected by April 5. **Tickets will be sold after all weekend Masses in March and April.**

OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Sunday, February 28, 2016 - \$10,598.00

Daily Lenten Collection

A basket is located on the table at the cross aisle for daily collections at the 6:45 AM and 8:00 AM daily Masses. A collection is taken up at the Noon Mass throughout Lent. Thus far we have collected almost \$3,000.00. All monies will go to help the needy of our community and our partner parish, St. Margaret Mary, in Lionel Town, Jamaica. The bright yellow envelope that appears in our March packet is also for our sister parish.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism - Our preparation class is scheduled for this **Tuesday, March 8** at **7:00 PM** in the Seton Suite.

First Eucharist - Our final First Communion preparation session is scheduled for this **Wednesday, March 9** at 6:30 PM in the Seton Suite. All students should attend with a parent.

CATHEDRAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Sunday, March 13 - No Class for PreK- Grade 8 .
Sunday, March 20 - Seder Meal Class beginning at 11:00 AM in the Church Hall. All family members are encouraged to join in this prayerful experience. Parents are asked to donate individually wrapped candies to be used for Easter treats for children. please drop off donations by March 20th.

F.I.R.E. CLASSES for March

March 6 - 6:15 PM - 8:30 PM in Cathedral Hall.

March 20 - 6:15 PM - 8:30 PM in Cathedral Hall.

Year of Mercy: Bible Study

You are invited to join the group of parishioners meeting on **Tuesdays, March 15 and April 19**, from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM in the Seton Suite, to break open the Word of God and reflect on God's mercy.

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL 2016

Many parishioners have received their letter for this year's Annual Appeal. As discussed at our meetings in the midst of our Capital Campaign, it was stated that the Diocese will take off 30% of the usual goal for one year. So the 2016 goal for the Cathedral Parish is **\$43,522.00** (this reflects a one-third reduction of \$21,728.00 from the original goal of \$65,250.00). It is important that our Parish participate and meet our 2016 goal. Thus far we have raised **\$13,125.00** with **53** individuals/families pledging.

A sincere word of appreciation for our impressive and generous response to the Capital Campaign must be stated. With this historic project happening at this time, parishioners are asked to be as generous as possible with this year's Annual Catholic Appeal.

PENANCE SERVICE NEXT WEDNESDAY!

You are invited to join Bishop Mark Bartchak with a dozen of his priests in the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Lent is the Church's season to remind the faithful of our need to turn from sin and seek God's mercy. We seek reconciliation with God and our neighbor. Gather with all who identify themselves as sinners joyfully proclaiming the love and forgiveness of God. A Lenten Communal Penance Service will be celebrated on **Wednesday, March 16** at **6:30 PM** here in the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. This public gathering of believers is a great preparation for the celebration of the Easter mysteries. Plan to gather for this hour of prayer celebrating God's mercy.

Lenten Lunch This Friday At Cathedral

Cathedral Social Committee is serving Lenten Lunches on the Fridays of Lent from 11:00 AM until 1:30 PM. The menu includes a fish sandwich with macaroni & cheese or french fries for \$6.50. Please note: there will be no Lunch served on Good Friday.

Liturgical Reflection ...

JUBILEE

YEAR OF

MERCY

Throughout the weeks of Lent in this Jubilee of Mercy, the Diocese is reflecting on the Corporal Works of Mercy. On the fourth week of Lent to **care for the sick** is highlighted. If someone you know is injured or seriously sick, take the time to stop at his or her home or send a note. A visit to grandma or grandpa who hasn't been feeling well can create a treasured memory. A letter or card is nice, but a personal appearance has more impact. Make a phone call to check up on someone you haven't seen for a while. This is the season when many are under the weather with colds and fevers. When someone is sick it is appropriate to ask if there is anything you can do or get for them. God's mercy shines forth when we take the time to assure the sick of our concern.

2016, Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Liturgy Office, 925 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania 16648.