

II Sunday of Lent



Mass Intentions

Sat., February 20

Dt 26:16-19; Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8; Mt 5:43-48

4 pm ... ✠ Charles Richard by Simone Richard

Sun., February 21

II Sunday of Lent

Gn 15:5-12, 17-18; Ps 27:1, 7-9, 13-14; Phil 3:17 — 4:1

[3:20 — 4:1]; Lk 9:28b-36

7:30 am ... Our Parish Family

9:30 am ... ✠ Lucille M. Kelley by the Kelley family

5 pm ... ✠ Helen Wickey by the Wickey family

Mon., February 22

Chair of St Peter the Apostle

1 Pt 5:1-4; Ps 23:1-3a, 4-6; Mt 16:13-19

12 pm ... ✠ Elmer Soderberg by Jaye Soderberg

Tue., February 23

Saint Polycarp

Is 1:10, 16-20; Ps 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23; Mt 23:1-12

12 pm ... ✠ Maureen M. Lein by P. Jerome

Wed., February 24

Jer 18:18-20; Ps 31:5-6, 14-16; Mt 20:17-28

12 pm ... ✠ Pauline Brien by Lionel & Lillian Coulon

Thur., February 25

Jer 17:5-10; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Lk 16:19-31

8:30 am ... ✠ Yvonne Pellerin by Diane Bolton

Fri., February 26

Gn 37:3-4, 12-13a; 17b-28a; Ps 105:16-21; Mt 21:33-43, 45-46

6 pm ... ✠ George Lambert by P. Jerome

Sat., February 27

Mi 7:14-15, 18-20; Ps 103:1-4, 9-12; Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

4 pm ... ✠ Ronald Robichaud by Mary Robichaud

Sun., February 28

III Sunday of Lent

Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15; Ps 103:1-4, 6-8, 11; 1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12; Lk 13:1-9

7:30 am ... ✠ Eileen Audet by Pat Tremblay

9:30 am ... ✠ Dennis Delay by Saint Raphael Parish

5 pm ... ✠ Jack North by Mary Dery



Planning is on for our annual **Saint Patrick's Dinner** on **Saturday, March 5, 2016. Tickets are going fast!** We are accepting donations or monetary / gift card donations for our raffles. **Items for children are especially needed**, and can be dropped off at the rectory M—F between 9 am and 4 pm. Tickets are \$15 each. **Please call the rectory at 623-2604 or stop in between 9am and 4pm to purchase tickets.**

Pastor's Class

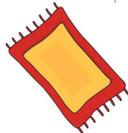


Mercy in Scripture—Class is under way, but you can still join us! Join P. Jerome, O.S.B., pastor, for the winter session of The Pastor's Class, "The Love and Mercy of God." The last two classes will be **Tuesday from 7-9 p.m. Feb. 23 and March 1**, in the parish hall classroom. The remaining parts of the course will examine the biblical concept of "chesed," or "steadfast love and mercy" in the pages of the New Testaments. The course is part of our Saint Raphael observance of the Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy in 2015-2016 called by Pope Francis. Please contact the parish office at 623-2604 if interested in attending! **Each class is free-standing, so come at any point.**



Thank you! Last Sunday's Saint Valentine's Brunch was wonderful! Thank you to **Ronnie Schlender** and her team for organizing the event and to everybody who helped out, and to you for attending!

New Turkish carpet—Have you noticed our new Turkish carpet in the sanctuary? Heartfelt thanks to parishioners **John and Becky Vinson of Manchester**, who made the gift of the carpet to the parish. They joined Fr. Jerome, O.S.B., our pastor, and others on the Footsteps of St. Paul Pilgrimage this past fall to Turkey and Greece. We are grateful for the many, many footsteps it will see in the Masses and celebrations here at Saint



CONGRATULATIONS, MADAME PRESIDENT! Saint Raphael congratulates our parish secretary and director of liturgy, **Kerri Stanley**, on her recent election as president of the Londonderry Youth Soccer Association (LYSA).



Sanctuary candle

The sanctuary candle burns this week for ✠ **Ronald Robichaud.**

Weekly Collection

February 14, 2016

Regular Offertory	\$3,686.00
Make-Up Offertory	117.00
Loose Offertory	522.30
Online Parish Giving	160.00
Total	\$4,485.30
Stewardship	\$1,296.00
Stewardship Loose	217.00
Stewardship OPG	60.00
Total Stewardship	\$1,573.00
Ash Wednesday	\$
625.00 Ash Wednesday Loose	
259.00 Total Ash Wednesday	\$



Please pray for the repose of the soul of ✠ **Robert F. Lucci**, who died Feb. 12, and whose funeral was celebrated Saturday by P. Jerome, O.S.B., pastor. Bob was the husband of Elaine (Ladieu) Lucci, who served as parish secretary for more than 22 years, retiring in 2012.



During the season of Lent, we plan to have several Lenten suppers. Our next supper will be **Friday, Feb. 26 at 6:45pm** in the parish hall, and will be followed by a movie. Please join us! If you would like to make a Lenten supper dish, please contact Kerri Stanley at 623.2604.



Saint Raphael Food Pantry On Monday, Feb 15, the food pantry served **13** families and gave out **20** bags of groceries. We need Spaghetti's, fruit, macaroni, and can always use brown paper bags! Thank you!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sun. February 21

10:30 am ... Coffee & Donuts

Mon., February 22

7—8 pm ... Food Pantry

Tue. February 23

12:30 pm ... Parish Nurse

7 pm ... The Pastor's Class

Thur., February 24

7:30—8:45 pm ... Choir Practice

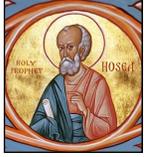
Friday, February 25

6:45 pm ... Holy League Group

6:45 pm ... Lenten Supper & Movie

Discovering 'mercy' in Scripture: Covenant and evolution in the OT

You don't have to tell an English teacher that **words matter**. Words are our stock in trade. We make our living by them, with them and about them. Writers, journalists, preachers, monks, even public relations specialists agree, so it looks like I'm convicted on every score.



This month, the truth of the proposition that words matter has washed over me in a rather lovely way. The word is "mercy," and during this **Extraordinary Holy Year of**

Mercy I've been making an effort to consider mercy in its radiant and never-ending richness. In some ways, mercy is the beauty we see when looking through **the kaleidoscope of life with God**.

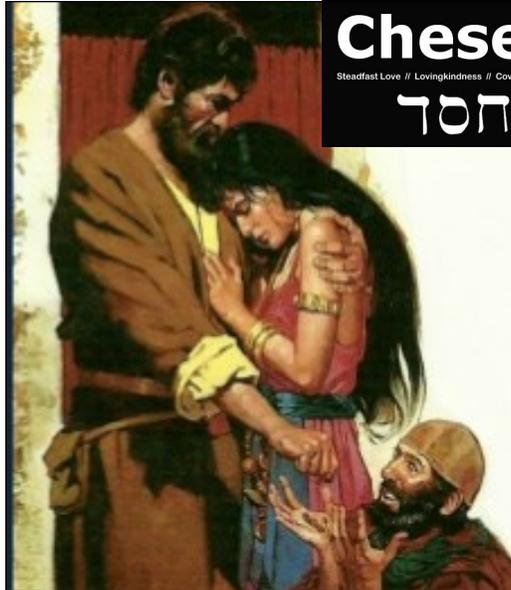
The winter session of The Pastor's Class this year is devoted to "**Mercy in Scripture**," so we are examining the way mercy has been expressed and understood in the Bible. The sacred writers in the Old Testament rely on the Hebrew word "**chesed**" to express the unified concept of compassion, commitment and commitment. With the Hebrew word "**emmeth**," which indicates truth, whole and entire, the sacred writers in the Torah, or in its Greek name Pentateuch, in the historical books, in the Prophets and in the Psalms give us foundational terms for understanding who God is and how he relates to us. God, in other words, is **the standard** by which we come to recognize and undertake mercy and truth.

I think I annoyed participants in our first class because we began by reading a passage from Judith 10:11-13:20, which recounts the story of the **heroic Jewish woman Judith** who defends her people Israel. The Assyrian general Holofernes is moving ever closer to his attack on Jerusalem. Judith is arrested, brought to **Holofernes** and discovers that she is treated well. The big bad enemy turns out to be a rather nice guy! But that doesn't save the general, who reveals an interest in the beautiful Judith that is more than platonic.

While Holofernes sleeps, Judith creeps into his tent, seizes his sword and **beheads him**. She then takes the head and makes her escape back behind Israelite lines.

The passage, gruesome as it is to our sensibilities, reveals that for ancient Israel, those who raised their hand against **God's Chosen People** did not merit mercy. They were beyond the pale. To be "eligible" for mercy from either God or his people, certain conditions had to be met. One had to be in **relationship with God through the covenant** he established with Israel. There had to be some kind of connection, and the mercy had to manifest God's glory. Finally, the one to whom mercy was granted had to have genuine need.

The brutal story of Holofernes and Judith helps illustrate, **in a negative way**, the



Chesed

Steadfast Love // Lovingkindness // Covenant Loyalty

חסד

preconditions for mercy in ancient Israel's understanding of how God acts. Happily, plenty of examples of divine mercy can be found in the Old Testament.

Over and over again, **Scripture reveals examples of God's desire to establish a covenant** with his wayward sons and daughters, a covenant that will lead to their eventual salvation. Adam and Eve fail, but they are given a promise of future redemption. Noah and his family take to the ark when the rains come, but the rest of humanity is lost. The rainbow becomes a sign of divine fidelity and promise. Abraham is challenged to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, and at the last moment, God spares him and points mankind to the **actual sacrifice of an only son, a God-Man**, who will redeem mankind from sin in every age and person.

At the center of this covenant relationship, the biblical reader finds "**chesed**" cited some 245 times in the Old Testament, not counting nearly 130 times more in more than 50 psalms! When Greek-speaking Jews translated their Sacred Scriptures into Greek, they used the word "**eleos**," which is connected to the term "eleison" used often in the Mass: **Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison!** In the Latin Old Testament, Saint Jerome uses "**misericordia**" for "mercy."

Two examples of such divine mercy might help explain how Israel and later the Church, the New Israel, came to understand this most gracious gift of God. In **Exodus 34:1-7**, God invites Moses to ascend Mount Sinai for the renewal of the covenant in a second chance at reception of the Law. The first time Moses received **the tablets of the Law** with the Ten Commandments, he discovered Israel dancing

around a golden calf, delighting in a pagan idol – the very antithesis of the relationship God desired with his people. Enraged, Moses smashed the tablets. But God does not abandon his people. In his mercy, they receive a punishment – and second chance.

"The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and **rich in kindness and fidelity** continuing his kindness for a thousand generations, and forgiving wickedness and crime and sin; yet not declaring the guilty guiltless, but punishing children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation for their fathers' wickedness!" The language the Lord uses is intense, and scholars tell us we should not mistake personal hostility toward the children of sinners on the God's part, but rather recognize that **the consequences of sin can sometimes linger** in human relationships for a long time. Clearly, the idea God communicates is mercy for Israel if she is faithful to the covenant.

The Prophet Hosea (*inset, column 1*) in **Hosea 2:10-24** describes the way God lures back faithless Israel to the covenant. Israel is cast as a slave girl purchased at great price, cleansed, healed and even espoused by the Lord. He will be her **loving husband** and she is **beloved wife**. This is the nuptial imagery that we as Christians see applied to Christ and his Church in Ephesians.

Israel, however, is more interested in her illicit lovers, the pagan nations and their false gods, often depicted in highly sexualized terms, surrounding her. Hosea writes that Israel has become **a harlot, a whore, a slut**. And yet God, in his loving mercy, declares, "I will allure her, I will lead her into the desert and speak to her heart. From there I will

give her the vineyards she had and the valley of Achor as a door of hope."

From the beginning, God's mercy has been **radiant, vibrant and vital** in the pages of the Old Testament. Human understanding of divine mercy begins close to the tent and campfire. "It's for me, for us, for our clan, not for them, whoever they are!" But time and repeated instruction by God will reveal that **mercy lies at the heart of who God is**, and human understanding of divine mercy must **grow and evolve** even to attempt comprehending it. © Rev. Jerome Joseph Day, O.S.B.

