

III Sunday of Lent

Mass Intentions

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

Mon., February 29

2 Kgs 5:1-15ab; Ps 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4; Lk 4:24-30

12 pm ... ✠Ara Taylor by Sandy Powers

Tue., March 1

Dn 3:25, 34-43; Ps 25:4-5ab, 6, 7bc, 8-9; Mt 18:21-35

12 pm ... ✠Cecilia LaCasse by Lionel & Lillian Coulon

Wed., March 2

Dt 4:1, 5-9; Ps 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20; Mt 5:17-19

12 pm ... ✠Philip Therrien by Mr. & Mrs. Robert LaRoche Jr.

Thur., March 3

Saint Katharine Drexel

Jer 7:23-28; Ps 95:1-2, 6-9; Lk 11:14-23

8:30 am ... ✠Raymond C. Valcourt by Margaret-Ann Moran

Fri., March 4

Saint Casimir

Hos 14:2-10; Ps 81:6c-11ab, 14, 17; Mk 12:28-34

6 pm ... Rosemarie Gartner (living) by Anne Clark

Sat., March 5

Hos 6:1-6; Ps 51:3-4, 18-21ab; Lk 18:9-14

4 pm ... ✠Joan McGorry Dimick (2nd Anniv.) by Ellen McGorry

Sun., March 6

IV Sunday of Lent

Jos 5:9a, 10-12; Ps 34:2-7; 2 Cor 5:17-21; Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

7:30 am ... ✠Mary Marsza; by Richard Bienvenue

9:30 am ... ✠Irene T. Bedard by Diane Bolton

5 pm ... Our Parish Family



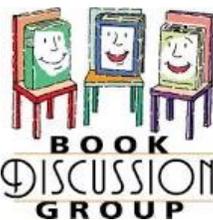
Sanctuary candle The sanctuary candle burns this week for ✠Dot, ✠Ray, and ✠Roger LaRoche by Lillian LaRoche.

Celtic Mass and dinner Purchased your tickets yet? Our annual Saint Patrick's Dinner will be **Saturday, March 5, 2016**. Doors will open at 5:15 pm. **Tickets are going fast!** We appreciate donations or monetary / gift cards 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.**



Author to speak at Bishop Guertin High School

Sister Helen Prejean will present her new book *Dead Man Walking: the Journey Continues* on Mon., March 7 at 7pm at Bishop Guertin HS in Nashua. No charge for this event; books available to purchase for \$15, or two for \$25. Great opportunity to learn more about the Church's teaching on capital punishment.

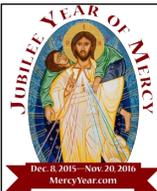


"It was the best of times": Please join the parish book discussion group as it explores the corporal and spiritual works of mercy during this Jubilee Year of Mercy. Our first selection will be Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, set during the brutality of the French Revolution. Replete with themes of sacrificial love and resurrection, this novel offers insights suitable for Lent as well. We meet **Thursday, March 31, at 7pm** upstairs in the church classroom. Please come early for refreshments! Books are available at the parish office for \$9.

HELP WANTED: Parish family in need of someone to do light housekeeping weekly. Reasonable rate of pay. Please call 533.7732 if interested.



Please pray for the repose of the soul of ✠Jillian Lescarte, who died Feb. 18, and whose funeral was celebrated last week by P. Jerome, O.S.B., pastor.



Let's have a Saint Raphael presence?! Pope Francis has called for "**24 Hours for the Lord**" on the Friday and Saturday preceding the Fourth Week of Lent. Monsignor Anthony Frontiero, rector of Saint Joseph Cathedral, invites the faithful of the Amoskeag Deanery (Manchester) to "**24 Hours for the Lord**" at the cathedral. **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** will take place in the cathedral chapel (Lowell Street), **from 3pm Fri., March 4, to 3pm Sat., March 5**. We are all are encouraged to participate in this time of prayer and penance. Reconciliation will be available at various times throughout the 24 hours. **For a complete schedule of prayer, devotion and confession times during the 24 hours, see www.stjosephcathedralnh.org. To register a commitment to serve as an adorer, please call the cathedral rectory office at 622-6404.**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sun. February 28

10:30 am ... Coffee & Donuts

Mon., February 29

6:30—8 pm ... Youth Ministry/Gr 6-12

7—8 pm ... Food Pantry

Tue. March 1

12:30 pm ... Parish Nurse

7 pm ... The Pastor's Class

Thur., March 3

6:30 pm ... Catholic War Vets / Wives

7:30—8:45 pm ... Choir Practice

Weekly Collection

February 21, 2016

Regular Offertory	\$5,290.00
Make-Up Offertory	637.00
Loose Offertory	
537.55 Online Parish Giving	
140.00 Total	\$4,485.50

Stewardship	\$
377.00 Ash Wednesday	\$
85.00	



Annual Empty Bowl Project The Friends of Quota International will again host its annual Empty Bowl Project at Saint Raphael's on Saturday, March 19, from 5:15—6:30pm in the parish hall. There is no cost, however, a good will offering will be gratefully accepted.

Donations will be shared between the NH Food Bank, as well as our own Food Pantry / Hope Chest. Checks can be made payable to either Saint Raphael Parish or to the NH Food Bank.



Saint Raphael Food Pantry On Monday, Feb 22, the food pantry served **28** families and gave out **45** bags of groceries. We need Spaghetti's, fruit, macaroni, and can always use brown paper bags! Thank you!

Psalm 51 offers one of OT's most beautiful moments of 'mercy'

To discuss “chesed,” the Hebrew word for “mercy,” in the Old Testament is to see a concept emerge, establish itself and evolve in the collective mind of Israel. The Pentateuch, or Torah, the first five books of the Jewish Scriptures; the historical books; wisdom literature; and the Prophets, all reflect this evolution in understanding. God’s mercy, or **loving kindness, or faithful compassion**, is meant to respond to human need, reveal God’s glory and draw Israel ever more deeply into her covenant with the Lord. **The Psalms**, however, hold a particularly important place in Old Testament thinking about mercy.

The 150 psalms, **beautifully poetic reflections** of the nature of God, his actions toward Israel, his relationship with the individual and that individual’s response to him, provide the Church with her daily and weekly round of prayer in the **Liturgy of the Hours**, or **Divine Office**. Every priest and monk, as well as many religious, are obliged to pray selections from psalms several times each day. Lay people likewise are encouraged to turn to the beauty of the psalms as often as possible. At Mass, during the Liturgy of the Word, worshippers routinely chant the responsorial psalm. They reflect all the purposes of prayer: **praise, lament, petition and thanksgiving**.

Perhaps the most beautiful reason for chanting the psalms lies in the fact that these are prayers that **Jesus of Nazareth** himself recited in the synagogue, in the Temple of Jerusalem and throughout his life, including at the moment of his death on the Cross. Traditionally, the Church has understood the psalms to be the work of ancient Israel’s **King David**, with some ascribed to his son, King Solomon. Scripture scholars note that many psalms were likely composed by priests in the Temple, while others may derive from periods of exile. The icon at right shows the Prophet Nathan chastising David for his sin with Bathsheba and David’s subsequent contrition.

The psalms lie at the center of an understanding of Christ, and many may be understood as Christ speaking to his Eternal Father and the Father responding to him. **Pope Francis** has described “**mercy as the beating heart of Christ**,” and one of the privileged places to hear and feel that heart is in the words, cadence, imagery, rhythm and music of the psalms.

One of the most beautiful of these works is Psalm 51, which the Church places at the head of the Office of Lauds each Friday. Often called the “**Miserere**,” meaning “Have mercy,” this psalm has attracted commentators throughout the centuries. To leave a discussion of mercy in the Old Testament without a special visit to Psalm 51



would be like visiting Rome and ignoring Saint Peter’s Basilica or the Trevi Fountain! Many musical artists, poets and artists turn to Psalm 51 for inspiration. For example,

Gregorio Allegri’s (1582-1652) *Miserere* is played in the Vatican’s Sistine Chapel every Good Friday.

The psalm opens with a **plea for mercy** and invokes God’s characteristic “merciful love” and “abundant compassion.” The speaker wants his **transgressions to “blotted out, covered over and “washed away.”** He asks for cleansing because he cannot escape his sin; it “is always before me.” This recognition of fault and awareness of guilt are necessary pre-conditions for God’s mercy in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Christ will assume human fault and guilt, even though he himself is sinless and pure, and even though many men and women remain in their sin.

The speaker in Psalm 51, the most famous of the **seven “penitential psalms,”** recognizes that whatever his sin, however many it may affect, it ultimately offends God himself:

“against you, you alone have I sinned / I have done what is evil in your sight.” He acknowledges his history of sin: “Behold, I was born in guilt, / in sin my mother conceived me.” The psalm speaks to the universal swamp of sin that ensnares every human being.

By line 8, the speaker begins to move out of his lament for sin and into a **space of hope**. He asks that the Lord “teach me wisdom” and “cleanse me with hyssop, that I may be pure; / wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.” The imagery of the psalm is arresting in its clarity and freshness. Crushed by **the weight of his sin and its consequences**, the speaker prays, “You will let me hear gladness and joy; the bones you have crushed will rejoice.” This is a spiritual change so penetrating that the speaker experiences it viscerally.

As the psalm progresses, the speaker asks

God to turn away from his sins and instead “a clean heart create for me, God; renew within me a steadfast spirit.” The desire for outward cleansing falls away to become a **yearning for inner renewal**: “steadfast” and “holy spirit,” “willing spirit” and “the gladness of your salvation.” So great is the transformation that the speaker proclaims his readiness **to be an agent of conversion himself**. He will “teach the wicked your ways,” his “tongue will sing joyfully of your justice,” and his “mouth will proclaim your praise.” What began as a plea for outer washing has become a hymn to inner renewal and transformation.

The speaker also knows that God does not relish “sacrifice” or “burnt offering” absent “a contrite, humbled heart” from the penitent. But when such sorrow is present, the speaker knows that the Lord “will not scorn” the sacrifice of a “contrite heart.”

Interestingly, the psalm moves to its conclusion by proclaiming that with such a transformed heart, he and all Israel indeed can offer “the sacrifices of the just, burnt offering and whole offerings, ... young bulls on your altar,” the traditional rites of the Temple.

Moreover, the individual, who began so concerned about **his personal circumstances**, can regain his place in the household of faith, Israel herself, by pleading now, “Treat Zion kindly, according to your good will; build up the walls of Jerusalem.” He has come to see that the consequences of his sin not only offend God and harm himself, but **also weaken and undermine the nation, his own people**.

The same format for mercy that can be seen early in Old Testament experience – human need, glory to God and a return to the covenant – applies to Psalm 51, but in deeper and wider ways. Interior contrition replaces exterior ritual but the penitent still must submit to the demands of justice. Here, once that happens, mercy overwhelms justice and lifts up the penitent whole, clean, strong and new. In Christ, of course, justice is fulfilled on the Cross for all mankind and the renewal within this life opens up to eternal life.

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