

Mass Intentions

Sat., March 18
4 pm ... ✠ Charles Richard by Simone Richard

Sun., March 19 **III Sunday of Lent**
7:30 am ... ✠ Mary Marszal by Richard Bienvenue
9:30 am ... ✠ Linda Paris by Bill Paris
5 pm ... ❖ Our Parish Family

Mon. March 20 **Saint Joseph**
12 pm ... ✠ Vi & Jack Welch by the Welch family

Tue., March 21 **Transitus of Saint Benedict**
12 pm ... ✠ Deceased pastors and curates of SRP & SBA
Community by P. Jerome

Wed., March 22
12 pm ... ✠ Raymond W. Burdick by P. Jerome

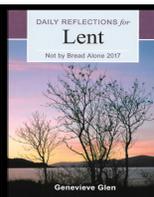
Thur., March 23 **Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo**
8:30 am ... ✠ James t. Keefe by Erin Brown

Fri., March 24 **Blessed Oscar Romero**
6 pm ... ✠ Beverly Labombard Tetreault by P. Jerome

Sat., March 25 **The Annunciation of the Lord**
4 pm ... ✠ Bob Breault by SRP Bereavement Committee

Sun., March 26 **IV Sunday of Lent**
7:30 am ... ✠ Richard & ✠ Constance Foley by Connie Raymond
9:30 am ... ✠ Edward Heroux by Bridget Heroux
5 pm ... ❖ Our Parish Family

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

 **Daily Reflections for Lent** by Genevieve Glen are available in the Nook for \$2. You may pay for the book by including it with your offertory or leave your donation in the donation box in the Nook. Thanks.

In Sympathy Please pray for the repose of the souls of ✠ **David Roche**, who died March 11, and whose funeral service was celebrated by P. Jerome last week.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF Mar. 12, 2017
Monday: Dn 9:4b-10; Ps 79:8, 9, 11, 13; Lk 6:36-38
Tuesday: Is 1:10, 16-20; Ps 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23; Mt 23:1-12
Wednesday: Jer 18:18-20; Ps 31:5-6, 14-16; Mt 20:17-28
Thursday: Jer 17:5-10; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Lk 16:19-31
Friday: Gn 37:3-4, 12-13a; 17b-28a; Ps 105:16-21; Mt 21:33-43, 45-46
Saturday: Mi 7:14-15, 18-20; Ps 103:1-4, 9-12; Lk 15:1-3, 11-32
Sunday: Ex 17:3-7; Ps 95:1-2, 6-9; Rom 5:1-2, 5-8; Jn 4:5-42 (5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42)

Weekly Collection

Weekend of March 12, 2017
Regular Offertory \$2,768.00
Make-Up Offertory 310.00
Loose Offertory 803.75
Online Parish Giving 325.00
Total Offertory \$4,206.75

Stewardship \$1,635.00
Stewardship Online 60.00
Stewardship Loose 434.00
Total Stewardship \$2,129.00

Last Year: Weekend of March 6, 2016
Total Offertory \$5,001.15

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mon., March 20
6:30 pm ... Youth Ministry
7:00 pm ... Food Pantry

Tue., March 21
12:45 pm ... Parish Nurse

Fri., March 24
6:45 pm ... Lenten Soup Supper—Parish Hall
7:30 pm ... Holy League

Sat., March 25
10:00 am ... Lenten Sunday Reading



Saint Raphael Food Pantry
On Monday, March 13, the food pantry served 15 families and gave out 25 bags of groceries.

Saint Raphael Parish Lenten Calendar of Events

Fri., March 24
6:45 pm ... Lenten Supper w/Guest Speaker

Sat., March 25
10 am ... Lenten Sunday Readings Disc.

Fri., March 31
6:45 pm ... Stations of the Cross

Sat., April 1
10 am ... Lenten Sunday Readings Disc.

Wed., April 5
7:15 pm ... Penance & Reconciliation Svce.

Fri., April 7
6:30 pm ... Adoration of Blessed Sacrament
6:45 pm ... Lenten Supper w/Guest Speaker

Sat., April 8
10 am ... Lenten Sunday Readings Disc.



Sign up to host Vocation Chalice or Pilgrim Virgin statue
Parishioners and friends of the parish are encouraged to sign up for either or both of these opportunities for one or two-week intervals during this Lenten season. Please call the office at 623.2604 to make arrangements. This is a great opportunity to develop prayer in your home and heart, to honor Mary and to ask God for the gift of new vocations!



Benedictine Heritage Week... This coming week, Saint Anselm College observes Benedictine Heritage Week with several events open to the public, and Saint Raphael parishioners and friends are specially invited. **Monday, March 20**, talk on the Rule of Saint Benedict and the Saint John's Bible Project, Geisel Library; **Tuesday, March 21**, panel discussion at NH Institute of Politics on Benedictine charisms at work (**P. Jerome will participate**), 7 p.m.; **Wednesday, March 22**, discussion on NH role in the paper of the Saint John's Bible Project with Monadnock Paper Mills, 7 pm. Perini Lecture Hall, Goulet Science

 **Lenten Soup Suppers**
Lenten Soup Supper
Please join us on **Friday, March 24 at 6:45pm** in the parish hall, following the 6pm Mass for a Lenten soup supper. If you would like to contribute a soup or bread, please call the rectory at 623.2604. We will have a guest speaker. Please join us and bring a friend. All are

Wanted: Sacristans, lectors & altar servers
Have you ever considered serving God and your fellow parishioners as a sacristan, lector or usher? Service in these important roles is by appointment, but you can help Saint Raphael expand our roster by volunteering. If interested or if you have questions, please contact Kerri at the office at 603.623.2604.



We have an App! Download our free app for info and updates. Enter "Saint Raphael Parish" to find us in the app store.



Three great saints and a squirrel point us to a Lenten message

We had a squirrel get into the gym this past week and gnaw his way through a door to freedom. I'm sorry the critter got in, sorrier still that we'll have some repair work to do but glad the squirrel is free. His visit reminded me of something I've been intending to write for a number of Lents. That squirrel wanted a place



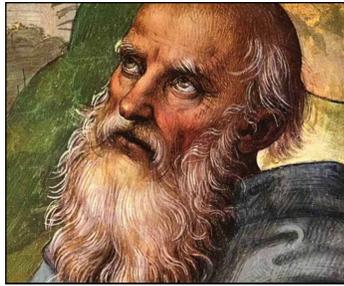
that was warm, nourishing and secure. In living out our Christian faith, we often seek the same environment. We find it life-giving. It provides us with stability. It helps us grow. Such an environment can help make us happy. We are confident that people care for us. The poor old squirrel likely thought that was what he'd find inside the gym, but unfortunately for his teeth, he only found a tough old door. We can be a little like the squirrel. We want warmth and love. We need nourishment and refreshment. We like a safe place. And we can find what we seek!

Our devotion to the saints can be such a place, for the saints comprise the Church Triumphant, that part of Christ's Mystical Body that already shares with the Head the joy and glorification of eternal life in heaven. During Lent, the saints make good models for our contemplation and emulation. Like that squirrel, who chewed his way to freedom, we can chew, so to speak, on the saints' faithful witness to our spiritual liberation.

At this point in March, the Church gives to us three important saints to celebrate and to discover. Major elements in the lives speak directly to our mission in Lent, which is conversion of heart through contrition for our sin and reform of our lives and

preparation to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Christ's dying and rising to new life. To help us achieve these twin goals of repentance and renewal, the Church has long recommended the practices of prayer, fast and abstinence and almsgiving. The three saints – Patrick, Joseph and Benedict – are personally important to me and play key roles in the life of the Church. It is impossible to think of them as not being steeped in communion with God, penitential sacrifice and generosity – another way to describe prayer, fast and abstinence and almsgiving. But each saint also manifests other spiritual gifts to enrich our Lent.

In Saint Patrick, whose feast is March 17, we find a man whose entire adult life was an act of forgiveness and reconciliation. When the young Patrick was seized by Irish pirates and dragged off to Ireland early in the 5th century, it was not a tourist's trip. He was carried off as a slave and forced to tend flocks of sheep in the wild with little shelter and protection. But his task became a symbol of what he would do in earnest for the Irish. After he escaped and became a monk and priest in the south of France, he returned to



Saint Benedict of Nursia

people who stole his youth, separated him from his family for years and denied his freedom.

That Patrick was a lover of Christ and his Church, that he was zealous and courageous in spreading the Gospel and that he was brilliant in finding ways to show the Irish how some of their ancient Druid ways could be baptized in the Light of Christ, most of us know pretty well. But that Patrick is one of the great models of forgiveness we sometimes forget. If, during Lent, we wish to receive God's pardon for our own transgressions, we must be ready to forgive those who trespass against us.



Saint Joseph, whose feast is

March 19, is the strong, noble husband of Mary and foster father of her divine Son. He is the patron of the whole Catholic Church around the world. Just as lifted up and protected Jesus as a babe, so Joseph now protects Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, with his prayerful intercession. The 1st century carpenter who lived in Nazareth and whose family came from Bethlehem, the saint

descended from the royal line of King David, offers us two Lenten perspectives.

The first is a readiness to do God's will. The summons to reform our lives is easy enough to hear; it can be exceptionally difficult to choose and undertake. Scripture describes Joseph as a "just man," that is to say a man who turned away from sin, endeavored to obey the Law of Moses and who loved God. Nonetheless, Joseph was asked to change his mental perspectives, his plans and even his deepest hopes in favor of God's plan of salvation in Christ. He loved Mary as a woman and desired her as a wife and the mother of his children. But God had chosen her before time began, and Joseph was asked to step back from his natural and legal rights so that Mary could conceive of the Holy Spirit and bear the Son of God. Joseph's initial plan to put Mary away for seeming infidelity was turned on its head, and he welcomed her into his home. He journeyed with her into the hill country of Judea to visit her kinswoman Elizabeth, who was carrying John the Baptist. He guided Mary and the child through the desert into the relative safety of Egypt. Joseph

journeyed like Abraham, a stranger in a strange land, and made a new home as an alien, as a refugee. Joseph's second gift to us is his silence. We find no record of Joseph's words; all we hear is his silence. His silence is a balm of tranquil faith in the story of Christ and a seedbed for contemplation and prayer. Amid distractions in an increasingly noisy world, we need Joseph's silence to encounter the Christ he lifted up in his strong arms!



Finally, Saint Benedict, whose feast is March 21, is our third saint. The feast, called the Transitus of Our Holy Father Benedict in the monastic world, commemorates the death of our

patron and the writer of the famous Rule for Monasteries. Benedict structures his rule to emphasize the need for silence and the necessity of forgiveness, but here I would like to highlight his taste for prayer. Everything a monk does in the course of a day and over a lifetime is meant to be praise and communion with the Lord, which is the heart of prayer. When the soul opens itself to God, in work, in communal life with the brothers, in the Eucharist and other forms of

liturgy, including the chanting of the Divine Office, in all the ordinary tasks of the monastery, each activity can become genuine prayer.

The 6th Century world around Benedict could be violent and chaotic, but if the monk, or any Christian, was in communication with Christ, listening for him and expressing himself to Christ, then the possibility of genuine communion was real. All the practices of Lent are important, but prayer is essential precisely because it acknowledges an interpersonal relationship between each one of us and the God who loves us. To undertake Lent without a spirit and practice of prayer is like, well, visiting Grandpa and Grandma at Thanksgiving, wolfing down dinner, watching the game on TV and leaving without ever spending some time speaking with them and sharing something of life with them.

To conclude, these three feasts lead us to March 25, the Solemnity of the Annunciation, when we celebrate Mary's acceptance of the Father's invitation to bear Christ — the foundation of our life and hope!

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