

The Bishop's Letter

This February there are two holidays worth noting. One has its roots in Christian tradition but it is now a secular holiday — Valentine's Day. The other is clearly a Christian feast that goes back into antiquity — Ash Wednesday. Though one is not connected officially or traditionally to the other, there is upon reflection a subtle connection.

On Valentine's Day couples around the country will celebrate their romantic love. Though romantic love is not the foundation of an enduring relationship — that will require sacrificial and selfless love, the celebration of a couple's romantic love is a good thing. As a culture, we still value the life long commitment that a man and a woman make to each other. We still rejoice as young men and women find a partner and dream of a lifetime together. All of this is good and delightful.

At the same time a realistic assessment of the state of dating and marriage in Western culture tells us we are in a crisis. The divorce rate continues to be very high hurting not only the lives of millions of men and women, but also affecting the lives of millions upon millions of young children. Single mothers and children continue to make up the poorest in America. State after state is actively involved in redefining traditional marriage and courts are even overruling the will of the people and going against the law of God by declaring "same sex marriage" as most of these relationships will break up and if they do marry, they will have a higher chance of divorce. All of this is impacting the very fabric of our culture.

How does that connect with Ash Wednesday? Marriage and Family are not secular institutions but are created by God in the very beginning. (Genesis 2:24) So, any crisis in the state of mar-

riage and family is a spiritual and moral issue. When a couple finds themselves living outside of God's will it requires first and foremost repentance and a return to living out marriage and family in accordance with God's plan and purpose.

Living a life of sacrificial and selfless love is a difficult thing because we are by nature selfish and make decisions based on radical self-interest — even when it comes to marriage and family. This is at the core of what it means to be a "sinner." Though we are made in the image of God with the ability to give and receive love, we are not like God because of our sinful condition. Christ Jesus came to restore that likeness of God in each and every person.

*"I call us all to the keeping
of a Holy Lent."*

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the Church's 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting in preparation for the most significant events in the history of the world — the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. On Ash Wednesday we recall the frailty of the human condition and our bondage to selfish indulgences.

During Lent, through prayer and fasting, we prepare our lives to hear the incredible and awesome Good News that through His death for us and His victory over death — even at the grave — we are given the power of the Holy Spirit to transform us into the very dignity that

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God has planned and purposed for us.

I call us all to the keeping of a Holy Lent. We will begin on Ash Wednesday with the traditional distribution of Ashes at 7 am, 12 noon, and 7:30 pm. I encourage each of you to keep the solemn fasts of Wednesdays and Fridays — eat very light meals that do not include meat products. One might also consider fasting other times for the 40-day period (remember Sunday is not a fast day). I encourage you also to take upon yourself another spiritual discipline — increased prayer, the daily reception of communion, additional Bible reading/study, or increased times of spiritual reflection.

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Lent is a time not to grovel in self-pity or fake humility but rather it is a time to embrace

the incredible mercy and love of God who in spite of our sinfulness, continues to fill us with His transforming and life-giving love. In Christ Jesus we who are made in the image of God are being restored to His likeness that will be completed when we see Him face to face for all eternity.

Under His mercy,

Bishop



Patriarch Bishop Craig Bates and Fr. Terry Gensemer at the 2010 March for Life in Washington, D.C.

Upcoming Events

- February 3 Crave Praise and Prayer Service at 7:30 pm in the Sanctuary
- February 7 Sunday School "Meet and Greet" for teachers and parents after the 11 am service
- February 7 Men's Super Bowl Party at 5 pm in the Parish Hall, \$10 per person
- February 13 Society of St. Seraphim Prayer Meeting, 8:30 to 10 am
- February 13 W.O.W. (Women of Wisdom) Meeting at 10 am to 12 noon
- February 17 Ash Wednesday Services: 7 am, Noon, and 7:30 pm
- February 20 Women's Ministry "Be Still" Bible Study, 10 am to 12 noon
- February 27 Liturgy for the Preborn, 10 am outside of Planned Parenthood, Hempstead

A Happy Birthday to you!



1 st	Christine Ritigliano	14 th	Kelise Monteiro	23 rd	Daniel O'Hara
	Beth Roddin		Billy Thatcher	24 th	Paul Ammendola
3 rd	Charlie Bethany	15 th	Kevin McHugh		Rose Gonzalez
	Michele Jean-Jacques	16 th	Francis Brennan		Rosanna Nardella
	David Kinney		Jessica Janus	25 th	Christine Cرامي
	Scott Osani, Jr.	17 th	Kenneth Alfred		Taje Hamilton
4 th	Newton George		Maureen Isbister		Irene Klein
5 th	Leah Uganiza		Robert Sumner		Barbara Korycka
6 th	Ryan Klass	18 th	Joseph Ciccarello, III	26 th	Bob Babcock
	Teena Thomas		Angela Gricco		Rebecca Meigel
	Margaret Wise		Jeanne Tomaselli		Angelina Perrone
8 th	Ron Arrigo	19 th	David Hohenstein	27 th	Anthony Pappas
	Melanie Ciccarello	20 th	Peter Ledwith		Erin Webb
	Phillip Harada		Patrick Russo	28 th	William Kroner
9 th	Daniel Fowley		Stephen Tomaselli		Chris Varvaro
	Joan Haneman	21 st	Bill Kramer	29 th	Michael Carr
	Michelle Summers		Ivory Rudolph		
10 th	Michael Burger	22 nd	Faith Butler		
	Emily Gricco		Kateryna Cackett		
11 th	Joanne Haberman		Patty Fowley		
	Keegan Heaphy		Cathy Hunt		
	Fran Sotire		Mark Phillips		
12 th	Gerri Skelton		Shaun Verhine		
13 th	Bernice Kelly				

Confession: Sacred and Life-Saving

by: Eddie Pirro

Reprinted from *Intercessor* April 2004

God has given us many tools in the Christian life, but very few as valuable to me as the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If you have experienced the power of confession, like I have, you can receive the freedom identified with this sacrament.

The Christians who first taught me about Jesus had rejected the sacraments. Because of their skepticism, I wasn't sure of its importance and relevance to the process of sanctification. I would ask questions like, "Where do you find in the Bible that you have to confess your sins to a priest?"

Well, did God have an answer for me! One day when I was reading the Book of James, I was confused by an instruction given in Chapter 5. James states that if any should be sick, they should approach the eldership of the church for prayer and the anointing oil, and that the prayer of faith would save the sick, and that if there were any sins, they would be forgiven.

Why would the forgiveness of sins be so closely associated with the instruction for the sick to approach the elders for prayer? Upon further study I saw that the word "for being sick" in the Greek implied "a mental weariness and a need for spiritual healing." In this context, the penitent sinner is approaching the elder (traditionally bishop and/or priest) for spiritual release that is needed in their life. That's why it says that "the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." Although we can all pray powerfully as Christians, the righteous man of James Chapter 5 is the elder who prays for the forgiveness of our sins. So then, confession to a priest is in the Scripture. Also, the elder among us represents the whole community of believers to which we belong. And the Bible states that we are all members of one body, and that if one part of the body suffers, we all suffer. Therefore, every sin that we commit will cause harm not only to ourselves, but mystically affects the body to which we belong.

The elder, then, as a representative of the whole body of believers, is there to restore us to the community and place the spiritual blessing of forgiveness from God on display in the physical realm.

The forgiveness God grants to me in heaven is seen on earth through the person of the priest; that priest becomes the symbol of God's forgiveness.

Okay, enough Theology; here is some practical application. The Bible says that "if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just, will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And that's true, but that does not mean that keeping our sin a secret — meaning just between God and me — contains the humility necessary to accept God's

Sacrament of Confession schedule:

Confessions will be heard throughout Lent on Saturdays 9 to 11 am or, by appointment during the week. Contact the office at 599-3780 to make an appointment with a priest.

strength. A major reason for confession is to never have to do the things that we confess again, and I have found in my own life that the only way to gain this freedom is to be honest with another human being about my frailties. When my brother Nick committed suicide I was so devastated that I was tempted to reject everything that I thought I knew about God's goodness and compassion. I struggled to fight against the darkness that seemed to be winning in my life, and the only place that I could work out these issues was in the confessional.

Today I can say without reservation, that the sacrament of reconciliation saved my life; for without being able to hear that God forgives me in my darkest hour of need, I would not have endured that process of learning. I currently go to confession every 1 or 2 months, as I have seen the freedom and personal renewal that God has to offer through this act of humility. "His mercy endures forever."

1-2-3 Witness

By: Dn. Rick Zepernick and Sarah, a 1-2-3 Witness participant from a recent Seminar.

Sarah saves lives. She recalls, “I had been training to become an advocate at a crisis pregnancy center and was finally having solo sessions with scared young women with unexpected pregnancies.”

Many of the pregnant girls she sees feel alone and abandoned, insignificant and worthless, but the Lord was about to take Sarah’s own pain and turn it into blessing for herself and for others.

Sarah’s story began in April of 2009 in Lakeland, FL. “I attended a 1-2-3 Witness Seminar, hesitant and nervous. I worried about feeling exposed. Vulnerability was not my strong suit. I began to work through the process, keeping two witnesses going, one on “worthlessness” and the other on “finances”. At the end of the seminar I planned to share my financial witness because it was less personal and emotional.”

“My small group was amazing. When the time came to share my witness, through their support and love, I shared both of the witnesses.”

“Pastor Rick Zepernick ended his workshop with a prayer for divine opportunities to share our witnesses. I was scared. Over the next month, God gave me many small, seemingly insignificant opportunities to share my witness. It was difficult to share in the beginning. However, over time it slowly became less difficult and only brought me joy to share. This simple, powerful tool has helped me become both confident and concise in sharing the wonderful hope and love that is found in Christ.”

“I found that I began to use my witness more frequently at the crisis pregnancy center to bridge the discussion with young women from

Upcoming 1-2-3 Witness Classes in March at Intercessor



Sarah, the young woman from the Crisis Pregnancy Center, who shares her witness.

their scary life situations to the hope of the Gospel. I would share how I felt insignificant, worthless, and that I had nothing to offer. Then, I would tell how God showed me that He had given me good gifts and that He loved me. And, that if I would trust Him, He would use me!”

“I look and listen to the girls at the center, watching for something positive in their lives, so I can identify and affirm their gifts and strengths. Many of these girls have never been told that they have something to offer — that they have unique gifts, personalities, and circumstances that make them invaluable. Often, tears fall from their eyes as I encourage them and point out their positive, God-given gifts. Through my witness, God’s encouragement, and the offer of true hope in Jesus, many of these girls leave the office with a new hope in Christ and confidence rather than fear.”

Sarah’s story demonstrates how even a simple witness can touch lives, save generations and have an eternal impact in Christ Jesus.

Pray for the Sick

Donna Ammano
Gage Armenio
Bob Babcock
Michael Bromley
Christina Cirami
Mary Fisher
Bishop Halloway
John Klein
Antoinette Kramer
Annette Lazevnick
Brian MacGillvary
Adele Miller
Louis Paolillo, Sr.
Shirley Rollinson
Gail Tengelsen
June Weeks

Pray for those Pregnant

Jessica (Horbert) Cruz
Barbara Korycka
Jamie LeGrand
Katie Melanson
Kristen (Tanza) Sanchez

“He gently leads those who have young.”

Isaiah 40:11



Congratulations to grandparents Fr. Joe and Vicky Barlin as they welcome Samantha Grace Ferrara into their family! Proud parents, Anthony and Mary Ferrara, had Samantha on January 21, 2010, weighing 6 lbs. 5 oz. and 18" long. Samantha joins big sister Jessica. Praise be to God for another precious baby!



February 2010 Daily Bible Readings

Date	Psalm	OT	Epistle	Gospel
Mon 1-Feb	am: 56, 57, 58 pm: 64, 65	Gen 19:1-29	Heb 11:1-12	John 6:27-40
Tue 2-Feb	am: 61, 62 pm: 68	Gen 21:1-21	Heb 11:13-22	John 6:41-51
Wed 3-Feb	am: 72 pm: 119:73-96	Gen 22:1-18	Heb 11:23-31	John 6:52-59
Thur 4-Feb	am: 70, 71 pm: 74	Gen 23:1-20	Heb 11:32-12:2	John 6:60-71
Fri 5-Feb	am: 69 pm: 73	Gen 24:1-27	Heb 12:3-11	John 7:1-13
Sat 6-Feb	am: 75, 76 pm: 23, 27	Gen 24:28-38, 49-51	Heb 12:12-29	John 7:14-36
Sun 5 7-Feb	am: 93, 96 pm: 34	Gen 24:50-67	2 Tim 2:14-21	Mark 10:13-22
Mon 8-Feb	am: 80 pm: 77, 79	Gen 25:19-34	Heb 13:1-16	John 7:37-52
Tue 9-Feb	am: 78:1-39 pm: 78:40-72	Gen 26:1-6, 12-33	Heb 13:17-25	John 7:53-8:11
Wed 10-Feb	am: 119:97-120 pm: 81, 82	Gen 27:1-29	Rom 12:1-8	John 8:12-20
Thur 11-Feb	am: 146, 147 pm: 83, 85, 86	Gen 27:30-45	Rom 12:9-21	John 8:21-32
Fri 12-Feb	am: 88 pm: 91, 92	Gen 27:46-28:4, 10-22	Rom 13:1-14	John 8:33-47
Sat 13-Feb	am: 87, 90 pm: 136	Gen 29:1-20	Rom 14:1-23	John 8:47-59
Sun 14-Feb	am: 148, 149, 150 pm: 114, 115	Prov 26:1-23	2 Cor 3:7-18	Luke 9:18-27
Mon 15-Feb	am: 25 pm: 9, 15	Prov 27:1-6, 10-12	Phil 2:1-13	John 18:15-18, 25-27
Tues 16-Feb	am: 26, 28 pm: 36, 39	Prov 30:1-4, 24-33	Phil 3:1-11	John 18:28-38
Wed 17-Feb	am: 95, 32, 143 pm: 102, 130	Amos 5:6-15	Heb 12:1-14	Luke 18:9-14
Thur 18-Feb	am: 37:1-18 pm: 37:19-42	Hab 3:1-18	Phil 3:12-21	John 17:1-8
Fri 19-Feb	am: 95, 31 pm: 35	Eze 18:1-4, 25-32	Phil 4:1-9	John 17:9-19
Sat 20-Feb	am: 30, 32 pm: 42, 43	Eze 39:21-29	Phil 4:10-20	John 17:20-26
Sun 1 21-Feb	am: 63, 98 pm: 103	Dan 9:3-10	Heb 2:10-18	John 12:44-50
Mon 22-Feb	am: 41, 52 pm: 44	Gen 37:1-11	1 Cor 1:1-19	Mark 1:1-13
Tues 23-Feb	am: 45 pm: 47, 48	Gen 37:12-24	1 Cor 1:20-31	Mark 1:14-28
Wed Feb 24	am: 119:49-72 pm: 49, 53	Gen 37:25-36	1 Cor 2:1-13	Mark 1:29-45
Thur Feb 25	am: 50, 59, 60 pm: 19, 46	Gen 39:1-23	1 Cor 2:14-3:15	Mark 2:1-12
Fri 26-Feb	am: 40, 54 pm: 51	Gen 40:1-23	1 Cor 3:16-23	Mark 2:13-22
Sat 27-Feb	am: 55 pm: 138, 139	Gen 41:1-13	1 Cor 4:1-7	Mark 2:23-3:6
Sun 2 28-Feb	am: 24, 29 pm: 8, 84	Gen 41:14-45	Rom 6:3-14	John 5:19-24

New Format for Newsletter

There will be a new format for the *Intercessor* starting next month.

At the beginning of next month we will be distributing the Newsletter on Sunday in the Church bulletin.

Because there is a desire to maintain a “hard copy” of the Newsletter, the *Intercessor* will be distributed at Church. Incorporating the *Intercessor* into the bulletin is the best use of our resources and a good vehicle for distribution. We hope this strikes the right balance between “copies-in-hand” and gaining information online.

Online copies can also be read via Intercessorchurch.com. If you do not already received e-mails from this site, give your e-mail address to the office, so the Newsletter and other communications can be directly sent to your e-mail address.



Where are the Daily Readings?

**The Daily Office Prayer List can be found in the
Church Lobby and on the Church website:
Intercessorchurch.com**