



ST. ROMUALD CATHOLIC CHURCH

394 N HWY 259 · HARDINSBURG KY 40143

February 18, 2018 - First Sunday of Lent

dear Padre

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Hours: Monday - Friday

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Representatives:

Jamie Barr, Amy Flood,

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Why won't the priest hear my confession right before Mass?

Theoretically, any time is a good time for penitents to reconcile and renew their relationship with the Lord! In practice, the priest's refusal to hear your confession immediately before presiding at Mass may be as much for your benefit as his. In his preoccupation with last-minute details of leading the assembly, he may think: "How can I be more attentive to this individual and to a worthy celebration of the sacrament of penance without delaying Mass?" He might also be reacting to a penitent's mechanical understanding of the sacrament that fosters a scrupulous practice of devotional confessions—that is, confessing only minor sins in preparation for Communion.

Anyone who is conscious of serious sin is not to "receive the body of the Lord without previous sacramental confession unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess" (Code of Canon Law, 916). In this case, the person makes a sincere act of contrition, including a resolution to confess as soon as possible. "The Eucharist is not ordered to the forgiveness of mortal sins—that is proper to the sacrament of Reconciliation" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1395). Nevertheless, "the Eucharist strengthens our charity...and this living charity wipes away venial sins [and] the Eucharist preserves us from future mortal sins" (CCC 1394–95).

Catholics in a state of grace show respect for the dignity of the Eucharist, but trying to confess grave sins to a priest right before Mass may lessen the dignity given to one sacrament over another if the celebration of the sacrament of penance is rushed or the celebration of Mass begins late.

—Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR

First Sunday in





Where are we going? (I hear that completely different than a month ago?) To the Desert, we go! Today's gospel reading tells of Jesus being led into the desert by the Holy Spirit! But we also need to ask, "Where was Jesus coming from?" He had just been with John the Baptist at the Jordan River. In Jesus' baptism, these three revelations occurred of 1) heaven being opened, 2) the Spirit as a dove descended upon Jesus, and 3) an accompanying voice announced Jesus to be God's 'Beloved Son, with whom the Father was well-pleased! Any one of those things happening would

make me sit up straight and pay closer attention. Again, Jesus' baptism 1) opens the sky, 2) brings down the Spirit of God to earth and 3) stamps the life and conduct of Jesus with *divine approval* for everyone to follow. We will see this event echoed again at the Transfiguration in Mark 9:2-8 (next Sunday!), but there the Divine Voice adds, "**Listen to Him**" (v.9). So, with such an exciting event occurring, what does Jesus do immediately afterward? He retreats to the desert. But Jesus does not just meander, or hopscotch His way into the desert, the text says 'at once' **the Spirit 'drove' him there** (Mk 1:12). Both words imply urgency and seriousness. I like to point out that the word 'drove' is used again and again in Mark to describe what Jesus will do to demons that he casts out of tormented persons encounter Him (see Mark 3:15, 3:22, 9:28). Interestingly, the word 'drove' will appear in the scene of Jesus 'sending out' or 'driving out' the moneychangers and vendors from the Temple in Mark 11:15! I am just saying! But to hear the same word 'drove' in reference to Jesus and his 'going out' into the desert gives us a lot to pray about and study. Did Jesus need to distance himself, and make a clean break from John and the Jordan River Baptism movement? Did He desire to have further time alone in the desert after His own baptism to pray and prepare even more for His own new movement? Did He need to test His call? Or like a lot that Jesus does in the gospels, **is he 'being driven' out to the desert more for us**, than for Himself? Maybe He doesn't need any extra 'alone-time' with the Father and Holy Spirit, but He allows the Spirit to sweep Him up and move Him into the desert so that we can later imitate such a desert-retreat for our own saving? If so, we would be in good company, because spending time in the desert is a familiar theme from the Old Testament. Desert time was a classic case of allowing oneself to be tested, proven and made more firm in one's work and identity. Related to this period of testing is the symbolic number 40 that we find in many Old Testament stories of redemption and vindication. For example, Noah and his family endure the rain storms of forty days and forty nights (Genesis 7:12), Moses and His people wander the desert for forty years (Numbers 14:34), Elijah alone makes a forty day desert walk (1 Kings 19:8) and the Israelite People endure terrorizing taunts and challenges by Goliath for forty days straight (1 Samuel 17:6). So similarly, I think Jesus endures a testing/training period of 40 days in the desert, to prove his identity and communion with the Father. Mark described the desert as being filled with "Satan's Temptings & Wild Beasts" (1:13). That is more than a challenge, to distract or derail or even try to destroy Jesus and His mission! The devil may try, and the wild beasts may try, but Jesus will show the necessary and patient attention to remaining in 'Communion' with the Father serving only the Father's will (The Father and I are one" Jn 10:30). The Desert and the Devil don't win; Jesus overcomes His surroundings. Try as they might too, the sinister devil & harsh desert environment do not harden Jesus. That can happen to some people! Deserts can turn people against one another and against God. Imagine the riots that occur over food and water shortages. Imagine the selfishness that rises up within us when we are uncomfortable, hungry, tired or stressed. No doubt, Jesus would be under strain in the desert. And alone? Well, it might seem that Jesus is a solitary fast-er and pray-er in the desert but remember that He is Communion with the Father at all times. Notice the detail about the 'ministering angels' assisting Jesus (verse 13). Even in deprivation and want, God provides! He always shows a way. We may have to peel through layers to see, or wedge ourselves through levels to pass, but God will open a way.

Yet, again, why do we go into the desert for the period of Lent? I think the prophet Hosea gives a great explanation, when he speaks about God leading His people into the desert to bring about a deepened relationship, and a renewed covenantal life together: God and his People. Hosea has God say, in 2:16 "I will allure her now; I will lead her into the wilderness, and speak persuasively to her", as if

God will spend this 'alone-time' re-teaching or re-refreshing His People in the true way to walk/live. Also, Deuteronomy 8:2 states the same about the **desert as a teaching ground**, revealing the desert as a testing-ground, saying, "Remember how for these forty years the LORD, your God, has directed all your journeying in the wilderness, so as to test you by affliction, **to know what was in your heart**: that you keep his commandments, or not." Think of the desert and Lent as a period similar to an athlete's 'spring-conditioning' where each person strenuously exercises to tone up their fitness and practice or learn new plays and calls. Our time of Lent is like 'spiritual practice' or spiritual exercise to improve our faithfulness in relationship to God and to strengthen our service in His ministry. We may be pushed, but we will not be overcome, maybe tested, but not defeated. I like how St Paul describes the 'proving of our faith through trials' in 1 Corinthians 10:13 "God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but **with the trial he will also provide a way out**, so that you may be able to bear it."

Do you remember the recent news flare up about 'Pope Francis is going to change words in the 'Our Father'? At the time, I didn't pay much attention to the media hype, because nearly always it is only partial information that is being relayed, to make a 'catchy headline'. His point was to emphasize how we 'religious people' regularly use insider-phrases and take their meaning for granted. We understand them correctly, but people without a background in Christianity or Church, may hear the words in a misleading way taking an opposite meaning. We may be surprised to learn how many young people today cannot identify even a common bible figure like Noah or Jonah! So if I refer to the weather 'raining forty days and forty nights', or that someone is 'caught up in the belly of a whale', that may mean nothing to them. So, Pope Francis raised the question about what 'outsiders' hear us pray in the 'Our Father' when we ask God to 'Lead us not into temptation'. They may reject God based on thinking He is a tyrant intentionally playing and arbitrarily tempting us. Pope Francis pointed out that we believers **know** that God is not the one 'tempting' us. Refer to Matthew 4:3 that identifies the Devil as '**The** tempter'. We know that the world is fallen & wounded, with the possibility of sin being everywhere and temptation simply part of all the landscape. Jesus prays with/for us in John 17:15-16 when he says, "Father, I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world." So when we pray 'Lead us not into temptation', we are praying to be that God will lead us away from, out of or strengthen us to pass quickly through the world's temptation to withstand and overcome it. God does not intentionally 'endanger' us by creating and tossing a temptation our way, but rather God provides the grace or way around a temptation that is already out there. Pope Francis is sensitive to making sure that others do not think we are saying 'God purposely would lead us into tribulation'. Outsiders would understandably reject such a notion of God as cruel and untrustworthy. Pope Francis asks us to spread the good word that God always provides the grace and tools to navigate through this sin-filled mess of a world. I think it is just like when we pray for grace going through some trial or ordeal, "God, please take this heavy burden away, or take me out of it or strengthen my back to carry and withstand it." This whole Pope Francis-Media episode teaches me to pay more attention to my prayer words!

Here are some daily questions to consider in our prayer time!

Sunday: What did God tell me at Mass in prayer today?

Monday: Am I keeping my Sunday Spirit alive moving into this new week back to school or work?

Tuesday: What will I offer as my soul-purifying sacrifice this Lent?

Wednesday: Do my ashes remind me to remain humble, lowly and to serve others before myself?

Thursday: Did I or can I start a new daily devotional or meditation time for Lent?

Friday: Come pray the Stations of the Cross every Friday in Lent. Offer a penance in thanks for Jesus' sacrifice of the Cross.

Saturday: For what am I thanking God for this weekend? What do I seek?

Peace and Prayers, Fr Brian Johnson

PARISH NEWS & EVENTS



Are you or someone you know interested in knowing more about the Catholic faith or considering becoming a Catholic???

If yes, please contact Fr. Brian, Deacon Mike, Deacon Tony or Marie Rose at 756-2356 anytime throughout the year!

RCIA Rite of Sending 2018

We are blessed here at St. Romuald to be sending two young people for the Rite of Election/Call to Continuing Conversion with Bishop Medley to be held at St. Stephens Cathedral the afternoon of February 18. Please keep them in your prayers and let them know of your support.



Natalie Hockenberry is the daughter of Brad and Shannon Hockenberry. She is a 6th grade student at BCMS. Natalie's sponsor is her grandmother Rosa Hockenberry.



Austin Harris is the son of Shannon Raney and Terry Harris, Jr. He is a freshman at BCHS. Austin's sponsor is his grandmother Kay Harris

You are invited to Rosary, Benediction and Stations of the Cross with the school children on Wednesdays at 12:00 noon.



Special Collection: Next weekend Feb 24th & 25th we will have a special collection for the Good Samaritan Center. These funds will be used to repair their leaky roof and repair the bricks in the exterior wall. Many of the churches in our county are contributing. This is another good way to give back to the community with our alms during Lent.

If you have a family member or friend in the hospital who would like Holy Communion brought to them, please call the office at 270-756-2356.

Children's Liturgy is in desperate need of teachers for the classroom. We are now down to four and we really need at least six more to make this very important ministry successful. I urge parents with children in the program to please step forward and help us out. You don't have to be a parent to volunteer, but all volunteers must go through Safe Environment training and have a background check. You must be at least 21 years of age to teach and at least 13 to be a classroom helper. PLEASE don't let this ministry go away, we need help and we need it now. Call the office if you have any questions 270-756-2356 or contact Rosa Hockenberry at 270-863-0117 for more information.

Youth Mark your Calendars: Youth 2000 Conference March 9-11, 2008 Brescia University Campus

Passion Play: We will begin rehearsals for the passion play on Mondays at 6:00 pm in the church starting February 26th. Middle school through adult who would like to participate for the Good Friday service. Contact Deacon Tony 270-617-8032 or Patty Curran 270-945-8155.

This Week at St. Romuald

Mon	1:00 pm	Blue Army Rosary
	7:00 pm	Al-Anon
Tues	10:00 am	Lenten Group & Senior Day
	1:00 pm	Mass (Extended Care)
	4:00 pm	Rosary
	6:00 pm	Lenten Group
Wed	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Mass
Thur	9:30 am	Mass (Medco)
	6:00 pm	Family Holy Hour & Confessions
Fri	9:00 am	School Mass
	4:00 pm	SRIS Fish Fry
	6:00 pm	Stations of the Cross

Upcoming

Feb 27 6:00 pm Pastoral Council

PRAYER AND SPIRITUALITY

A Word from Pope Francis:

Pope Francis recently adapted the famous Prayer of St Francis to address the problem of distrustful and hateful communication, false profiles and manipulative propaganda. Here is his modern prayer: Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Help us to recognize the evil within communication that does not build up or encourage others. Let us awaken trust. Help us to remove the venom from our judgements. Help us to speak about others as our brothers and sisters. Help us address you in every one we speak to. You are faithful and trustworthy; may our words be seeds of goodness for the world:

where there is shouting, let us practice listening;
where there is confusion, let us inspire harmony;
where there is ambiguity, let us bring clarity;
where there is exclusion, let us offer solidarity;
where there is sensationalism, let us use sobriety;
where there is superficiality, let us raise real questions;

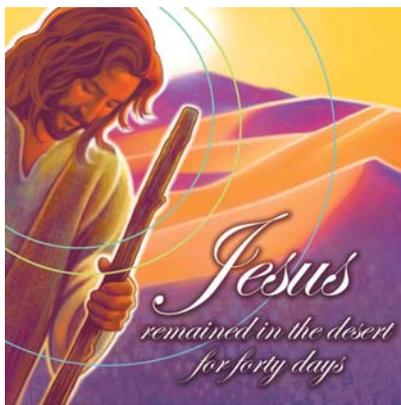
where there is prejudice & hostility, let us bring respect;

where there is falsehood, let us bring truth. Amen.

(Communication Day Message 1-24-18)

Called by Name Program: Every young Catholic man should consider all vocations, including whether or not God is calling him to priesthood. However, if not invited or encouraged to think about priesthood, it may never be considered. Many young men may have the burning question within of God calling them to priesthood, but they may be waiting for a confirmation from someone else, to nudge them into seriously pursuing God's priestly call for them. Do you know a faithful young man who may have a vocation to the priesthood? We believe that our future priests will come from our own parishes and schools, but we need your help to identify them. We're looking for high school students and older. Any man you recommend will receive good information from the Vocation Office about discerning his vocation, as well as invitations to discernment retreats and other events. Tell Fr Brian, Deacon Mike or Deacon Tony, to approach them or to invite the vocation director to reach out to them.

Al-Anon Meeting: Mondays 7:00 pm St Romuald Parish Hall. Come find support and understanding to recover a sense of serenity in your life.



Readings for the Week

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Lv 19:1-2, 11-18; Ps 19:8-10, 15; Mt 25:31-46

Tuesday: Is 55:10-11; Ps 34:4-7, 16-19; Mt 6:7-15

Wednesday: Jon 3:1-10; Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19; Lk 11:29-32

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

Friday: Ez 18:21-28; Ps 130:1-8; Mt 5:20-26

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

Sunday: Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Ps 116:10, 15-19; Rom 8:31b-34; Mk 9:2-10

New Missalettes With Mass Prayers in Front Cover:

Please note that the missalettes now contain on the inside front cover the longer prayers we offer at Mass, similar to the old Mass cards that were in the pew holders. The company beginning to offer those prayers in a more accessible place conveniently replaces now those older cards that were showing so much wear and tear. But like a good Rosary, Bible or Prayer Book that shows tattered edges and wearing, it is a good sign of them being used so much! More Prayer, More Grace, More Good!

Knights of Columbus News

Basketball Slam Sweepstake Tickets:

Parishioners: the Knights of Columbus are selling Basketball Slam Sweepstake tickets. They are \$10.00 each (buy two and get the third one free). By purchasing two tickets you get a FREE ticket online! Go to www.basketball.com/free to redeem. Free tickets will be emailed to you. TEAMS: There are 24 teams, the ticket holder scratches off the box on front of the ticket to reveal their four teams for the entire tournament. Team codes are listed on back of the ticket. If any team(s) do not make it into the tournament, alternate teams will be assigned and posted on www.basketballsweeps.com by March 15, 2018. PRIZES; \$2600 Total Cash Prizes will be awarded. Prizes are based on the total cumulative score of each 4-team combination. HIGHEST and LOWEST 4-Team totals win prizes! In case of ties, prizes are combined and split. WINNERS are posted after the tournament and prizes are mailed out to the winners. It makes no difference on how many games your 4-teams play, or whether teams win or lose. Go to the website to check results starting April 4th. Ticket sale monies support the Knights of Columbus Disaster Relief Program. Deadline for ticket sales are **Mar 1st**. Contact me at 1-270-617-0754 for ticket purchases and more info. Pat O'Reilly, Grand Knight

PRAYER REQUESTS

We Pray For:

Gilbert Abel, Frank Adkins, Don Alexander, Baby Barr, Roy Bennett, Pat Bland, Becky Brown, Ava Bruner, Juanita Burch, Kathy Burns, Mike Clark, Anna Carrico, Donnie Claycomb, Debbie Dubree, Davye Duggins, Sammy Duggins, Glenda Farris, Tessa Farris, Ginny Flood, Dorothy Greenwell, Linda Greenwood, JoAnn Henning, Patricia Miller Henning, Kitty Himmelhaver, Bill Hinton, Robert Jackey, Virginia Jeffries, Mary Ann Johnson, Ashley Jones, Louise Kennedy, Jimmy Mattingly, Walter Manning, Bevan Michael Miller, Richard Miller, Jenny Moorman, Barry Nottingham, Joe Oelze, Janet O'Reilly, Peggy Phillips, Joan & Tom Powers, Joe Priest, Robert Priest, Mary Jo Rankin, Rita Roach, Kimberly Rolan, Suzanne Rose, Max Sharp, Bob Smith, Pam Sturgeon, Adalee Taul, Gina Thornsberry, Rufus Tivitt, Leona Whitworth, Mary Rita Whitworth, Robert D. Wilson, Anne Wolfe. **Serving in the Armed Forces:** Mandie Adams, Kevin Arnold, Fred Barham, Austin Brown, Timothy Cashen, Ryan Critchelow, Cody Garst, Parker Findlay, James Hanor, Christian Hansen, Jack Hayes, James Howard, Charles Kuhlman, Bradford O'Reilly, Jordan Pate, Lane D. Taul, Liana Tindle, Chase Upchurch, Garrett Wadsworth



Please pray for the eternal rest and peace for Sandy Priest, who passed away last week. Please keep all of the family in your prayers, too, for their comfort and strength.

Catholic Faith Information: Please check out and pick up any of the free pamphlets and booklets in the back of church about Catholic teaching and practices. They are excellent resources from the Knights of Columbus about our faith beliefs!

A Lenten Journey: Journey with Dr. Lawrence V. McCrobie, Catholic Liturgist and Religious Educator as he leads us on a journey through Bishop Robert Barron's program in exploration of the lasting influences of these *Pivotal Players*. CATHOLICISM: *The Pivotal Players* showcases a handful of saints, artists, mystics, and scholars who not only shape the life of the Church but changed the course of western civilization. Our parish journey begins on Tuesday, February 13th at 10:00 am and at 6:00 pm, and for the next five Tuesdays during Lent. No charge for this 6 week program, you must fill out a registration form. For more information please contact Rosa Hockenberry at 270-863-0117 or stop by the parish office for registration forms. All forms must be turned in no later than Monday, February 5th to ensure ordering of materials. Thank you!



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AROUND AND ABOUT

Scripture Lecture Series: feature Frank Runyeon, Emmy nominated actor with a degree in Religion from Princeton University. Join us Thursday, March 15, 7:00 PM/ Signs: The Gospel of John; Friday, March 16, 7:00 PM / Sermon on the Mount; and Saturday, March 17, 10:00 AM/ Hollywood vs Faith. A reception will follow each performance. This event is free. Donations are welcome to help cover expenses. Blessed Mother Parish Owensboro, 601 E 23rd St, Owensboro, For more information contact Cyndi 270-683-8444 - bmcgo2@outlook.com.

The Office of Marriage and Family Life has started a monthly Family Life Newsletter that includes information on events, articles, dates, and activities pertaining to families in the Diocese of Owensboro as well as couples preparing for marriage. The link to subscribe to the newsletter is on our webpage: owensborodiocese.org/family-life.

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (CLI):

Would you like to learn how to be a BETTER LEADER? Young people (who have completed their freshman year of high school or who just graduated), The Diocesan Youth Ministry Office is sponsoring Christian Leadership Institute, June 10-15, 2018 at the Mount St. Joseph Retreat Center. If you: are or would like to be, a youth leader; would like to serve on a retreat team; are a class officer or student council member, CLI is for you. You will learn and use skills in leadership, communication, planning and decision-making through the lens of missionary discipleship. You will also help plan prayer and liturgical celebrations. For registration information contact your youth minister/youth ministry leader or campus minister today. Registration deadline is May 14th. Registrations after May 14th will cost \$10 more. Contact your Youth Minister or your Parish priest if you are interested or email robin.tomes@pastoral.com for more information.

Pray to end abortion: Join other Catholics and those from other faiths that gather each Saturday at 2nd and Market in Louisville from 7:00-8:00 am (EST) to pray for families entering the abortion clinic. Many children have been saved and mothers spared future grief by this prayer action and support. With God, all things are possible! Archbishop Kurtz is known to show up and pray with everyone too!

Abortion Update: Last week 83 women went into EMW Clinic for abortions at 2nd and Market Street in Louisville. **Please pray to end abortion.**

DRF Update for St. Romuald, Hardinsburg:

Thank you for your generosity toward our parish goal target: as of **1/22/2018**
St Romuald Parish Target Amount: \$12,069.67
Pledged for year: \$9,617
Paid Contributions so far: \$6,497



Sunday, Feb 18, 2018

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Get outside your comfort zone this Lent

The desert's a great place to encounter the Holy, as a long tradition of desert fathers and mothers attests. But the desert's a traditional place to make intimate acquaintance with your demons as well—which is another reason Jesus, and

generations of his followers, made friends with cacti. It's also why we symbolically enter the Lenten desert each year, fasting, praying, and giving alms. We allow the normal lifestyle padding to wear a little thinner and feel our vulnerable spots with more clarity. Make a commitment this Lent to explore your limits. Bring an extra supply of humility!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 9:8-15; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:12-15 (23). "The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained [there] . . . tempted by Satan."*

Monday, Feb 19, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Root yourself in solidarity

Jesus' core message—that we are one—is surely one of the great mysteries of existence. This truth is so hard to accept because our senses tell a different story: We are separate, different, and alone. We need an image to help us realize what our senses cannot. Picture the giant redwood trees of California: Did you know they only grow in groves? Moreover, each tree's roots extend and grasp the roots of the surrounding trees, forming a strong, interconnecting network that serves to nourish and sustain all of them equally. The next time you are tempted to think of someone as "the other," remember the redwood trees and their invisible, interlocking roots.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18; Matthew 25:31-46 (224). "Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me."*

Tuesday, Feb 20, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Turn it over

One of the many advantages of memorized prayers such as the "Our Father" is that we can say them when we have no words of our own; we don't have to think. That's also one of their disadvantages: We don't have to think. In fact, we may have forgotten exactly what we are saying when we pray the "Our Father." For example, do we really mean, "Thy will be done?" or are there unspoken conditions attached: "Thy will be done—as long as it doesn't interfere with my carefully laid plans for my life"? To turn everything over to God is truly the only way to live without fear. It's what Jesus did; it's what we are called to do as well.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 55:10-11; Matthew 6:7-15 (225). "This is how you are to pray: 'Our Father who art in heaven.'"*

Wednesday, Feb 21, 2018

MEMORIAL OF PETER DAMIEN, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Stick with what is priceless

Peter Damien (1007-72) was a generous giver. But simony—the practice of buying spiritual offices or spiritual authority—was one kind of giving he detested. The activity was widespread in the medieval church and did great damage to the church's moral standing, so much so that Dante condemned those who practiced simony to the eighth circle of hell. Perhaps the venue largely has shifted from church to state—where we find corporate lobbyists and other influence-peddlers with lots of cash—but the sin remains the same. Damien would not be amused to see simony persist in any

form, and neither should we.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jonah 3:1-10; Luke 11:29-32 (226). "Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation."*

Thursday, Feb 22, 2018

FEAST OF THE CHAIR OF PETER THE APOSTLE

Pull up a seat

The Latin word for "chair" is *cathedra*, and a cathedra—you see where this is going—is the "seat" of a bishop, thus making the bishop's church a *cathedral*. Today's feast, however, commemorates a particular "chair": that of Saint Peter and the authority Jesus gave him to be the primary leader of the early church. Peter was martyred in Rome, and so the "see" (*sedes*—"a place to sit") of Peter became the Holy See, the seat of the pope as the first among bishops and the leader of the Roman Catholic Church. As the Liturgy of the Hours says, the Feast of the Chair of Peter the Apostle is a day to celebrate the "unity of the church founded upon that apostle."

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Peter 5:1-4; Matthew 16:13-19 (535). "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."*

Friday, Feb 23, 2018

MEMORIAL OF POLYCARP, BISHOP AND MARTYR; DAY OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE

Be fruitful in faith

Polycarp died around the year 155 at the age of 87, so he was a very early Christian who lived while some of the original apostles were still alive. The apostle John appointed Polycarp bishop of the city of Smyrna (now Izmir in Turkey), where Polycarp faced many challenges during his long years in office. Christians were a persecuted minority, while most of the population still worshipped the Roman gods. During one persecution, Polycarp was captured and, even though very advanced in age, sentenced to be burned at the stake. But tradition has it that the flames would not burn him, so he was stabbed to death. His remains are entombed with honor in the church of St. Ambrose in Rome, and his long life of service to the early church is remembered each year on this day. The name Polycarp means "many fruits." May all of our lives be as fruitful!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Ezekiel 18:21-28; Matthew 5:20-26 (228). "Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court."*

Saturday, Feb 24, 2018

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Less is more

The phrase "less is more" catches our attention because at first glance it seems illogical. How can less be more? They're opposites, and of the two, "more" is often regarded as better. But taken in a different light, the phrase makes good sense. Maybe we exercise restraint during a tense meeting with a coworker, saying only what is needed instead of saying something further in order to "win" an argument. Maybe we forgive someone who has hurt us with a lie instead of reminding them over and over that our pain is their fault. With less, we become more—more peaceful, more caring, more Christ-like.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Matthew 5:43-48 (229). "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."*

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