

A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

March 8, 2020



Bright Lights

“Rise, and do not be afraid (Matthew 17:7).” Jesus went up the high mountain with Peter, James and John and was transfigured in their presence. Enveloped in a dazzling light and seen in a brightness eyes had never before gazed upon, those disciples beheld the glory of the Lord who appeared to them along with Moses and Elijah. In the presence of glory they trembled and pondered a scene so magnificent yet terrifying that it left them stammering and in awe. Bathed in the light of God those chosen apostles had to reconcile the truth of who Jesus is. Having given everything up to follow Jesus, the apostles had been with Him for all the key moments of his teaching, preaching, healing and casting out evil. If their faith was wavering about the mission of Jesus to reconcile humanity to God, then perhaps this solidified their understanding that Jesus was the Son of God who had come to save sinners and set captive humanity free. As the exhilarating moment concluded there was no one left but Jesus. With the intensity of the encounter of the transfiguration complete, the apostles who had fallen to the ground in fear were once again alone with Jesus. He beckoned them simply and compassionately to rise and set aside their fears. Part of our Lenten pilgrimage is to pay attention to Jesus through prayer and let Him reveal the mysteries of faith to us in ways that we could never do on our own. Rather than fearing the unknown graces, challenges and opportunities for growth that would hold us down in the mediocre practice of the faith, we peer with courage upon the life of Jesus and follow His command to get up and intrepidly follow where He leads. The scriptural account of the Transfiguration should bring the grace of renewed strength and confidence in God’s love for us as we go further in our spiritual observances of this forty day season of Lent.

Fast and Abstinence

The season of Lent is a great opportunity for Catholics of all ages to enter deeply into the time honored disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. As Catholics we are to adhere to the Lenten disciplines of fasting and abstinence as governed by the following points of universal Catholic Church Law: 1). Catholics in good health ages 18 to 59 are required to fast and to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday; 2). Fasting consists of eating only one meal, with the possibility of eating two smaller snacks that do not add up to a single full meal; 3). Catholics age 14 and older are to abstain from meat on all Fridays in Lent.

Cold and Flu Season

Once again it is cold and flu season in Minnesota. With the increased number of sick people in our area it is important that in our parishes and schools that we take steps to promote an atmosphere that prevents the spread of cold and flu, continue our regular practice of the faith, and relate a reasonable rather than paranoid set of guidelines for communal worship. The following guidelines will be followed here At Most Holy Redeemer/St. Canice and St. Patrick: 1). Stay home if you feel sick or have flu-like symptoms. The Sunday Mass can be viewed on TV or online at EWTN or on local stations; 2). The sign of peace until further notice will be a smile, bow or simple hand wave i.e. the handshake will be suspended until further notice; 3). Communion from the chalice will not be offered to the community until further notice; 4) Hand-Holding with other people during the Our Father is suspended until further notice; 5) Parishioners and guests are encouraged to use hand sanitizer before and after Mass; 6) Holy Water fonts will remain filled to give people the option to sign themselves with the exercised water that casts out disease according to the prayer of the Church used in the blessing and exorcism of water.

Birthday Blessings

We are very blessed to have Fr. George Grafsky living at Most Holy Redeemer in Montgomery, MN and so willing to help out at Most Holy Redeemer/St. Canice and St. Patrick. I have come to admire the selfless service of Fr. George and I see the deep care he has for our people especially for the men and women who serve our communities in the police, fire, rescue, EMT, ambulance and first responder roles. Though he will be away on March 10, 2020 I encourage you to shower Fr. George with cards before or after that day as he turns 75! Happy Birthday Fr. George! You are loved by all of us who make up your spiritual family! Ad Multos Annos!

Lenten Blessings!

Fr. Tom Niehaus