

A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

February 23, 2020

Love God and Neighbor

“The Lord himself reminds us: ‘Whoever loves me will keep my commandments. And this is my commandment: that you love one another (John 14:21).’ So the man who does not love his neighbor does not obey God’s command. But one who does not obey his command cannot love God. A man is blessed if he can love all men equally. Moreover, if he truly loves God, he must love his neighbor absolutely. Such a man cannot hoard his wealth. Rather, like God himself, he generously gives from his own resources to each man according to his needs (St. Maximus the Confessor).” The love of God and neighbor go hand in hand. The Lord speaks to Moses and has the two-fold message of “Be holy,” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Moses delivers this message to the people of Israel and they receive the truth that holiness of life is directly related to loving God and one another. Jesus in this week’s Gospel challenges us to love others at a deeper level, “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun to rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have (Matthew 5:44-46).” Loving those closest to us should be more natural and come about with greater ease. However, we know that sometimes as sinful and selfish people we can cause great wounds to those who are the ones we should love the most. Scripture seems to point to a truth that we should strive to love those who we spend the most time with, and if we achieve this goal of selfless love we would naturally be loving God. For to love God would be to then love others with that same unhindered love. The challenge put forward by Jesus leads us to a deeper understanding of God’s love. If you love God, then naturally you should love those you know well and like in this life, then go and love the people who hurt and reject you then-and-only-then will you begin to love as God loves. As you look at your relationships, who are the people that are the easiest to love? How will you continue to love them? Who are the people that you avoid and withhold love? How is God inviting you to love them? In what ways have you received the love of God? How do you express you love for God?

Ash Wednesday

The beginning of Lent is on February 26, 2020. As Catholics we start the 40 day Lenten pilgrimage of 40 days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Ash Wednesday is a day of fast and abstinence. Catholics are to refrain from eating meat and should fast as a way of calling to mind the sacrificial nature of Our Lord’s preparation for His Passion.



During the Mass when you come forward to receive ashes the words will be said, “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” Know that this simple cross of ashes on your forehead is a reminder of death and repentance. Lent is a time to be purified of our sinful ways by

expressing our sorrow for sins, doing penance to atone for our sins, and renewing our love for Jesus who died for our sins.

Stations of the Cross

Lent is a powerful time to grow in our love for Jesus. Setting aside our selfish ways and taking time to reflect upon the profound love of Jesus Christ as found in his carrying of the cross, crucifixion, death and burial, draws each Christian to the heart of this sacred season. Opportunities to pray the Stations of the Cross will be available each Lenten Tuesday at 8 am at St. Patrick – Shieldsville and each Lenten Friday at 8 am at Most Holy Redeemer – Montgomery. Also on Wednesday evenings as part of our faith formation Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 7 pm; at St. Patrick – Shieldsville on March 4 & 25, at St. Canice – Kilkenny on March 11 & April 1 and at Most Holy Redeemer – Montgomery on March 18 & April 8. Take some time to honor the sacrifice of Our Savior Jesus Christ.

Pastoral Council Voting

At the last Most Holy Redeemer/St. Canice Parish Council meeting on February 18, 2020 it was recommended to begin the process of nomination of candidates. Nominations will be accepted from now until March 8 for the two seats being vacated by outgoing members Kevin Barnett & Tim Rosival. Simply contact via email, phone or written note to the Most Holy Redeemer office with your nominations for Parish Pastoral Council. One must be a Confirmed Catholic, in good standing who desires to assist the Parish Priest in the outreach taking place in our communities for furthering the faith in Jesus Christ. Any new council member would be expected to attend 6 meetings a year on the third Tuesday of every other month.

Free Stuff at St. Patrick

Reminder that all the books in the coat room and all the items on the tables in the gathering space are free for the taking until March 1, 2020. After that day, all items will find a new home. This effort is all part of the “de-cluttering” of St. Patrick as we prepare for hosting major events over the next three months. Thank you for helping us with this special project!

God bless you!

Fr. Tom Niehaus