MARCH 7TH, 2021

St. Thomas More Parish with St. Bernadette Mission



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PASTOR: FR. ADTODIO BAROL

PLEASE PRAY FOR...

Those who are sick, especially: Erica Perk/Shirley Kloepfer/Josef and Hermie Jandristis,

And those who have died, especially Bernadette Durand

MASS SCHEDULE: MARCH 10TH - 14TH

WEDNESDAY: 5PM, THURSDAY 9AM (CHAPEL)

ST. THOMAS MORE CHURCH
FRIDAY: 5PM—STATIONS OF THE CROSS
FOLLOWED BY MASS
SATURDAY 4:00PM
SUNDAY 9:00AM.

ST. BERNADETTE, NESTLETON
SUNDAY 11:00AM

(MAX ATTENDANCE IN THE CHURCH - 37)

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FR. ADTODIO BAROL'S MESSAGE - THE 3RD SUDDAY ID LEDT

Sisters/brothers, parishioners of St. Thomas More and St. Bernadette,

Greeting to you in the Lord Jesus and our mass entrance antiphon from prophet Ezekiel says, "When I prove my holiness among you, I will gather you from all the foreign lands, and I will pour clean water upon you and cleanse you from all your impurities, and I will give you a new spirit, says the Lord." I hope and pray that you are well and in the best of health.

Last week we focused on listening and one of the blessings that comes out of this pandemic is we have more time to be alone and to listen to God's voice. It does not mean His voice thundering from the sky, speaking to us but through people whom he sent to guide us in our journey. In this time we are given this modern media whereby we can listen through our gadgets, such as YouTube and other means which I am not very expert but I can open my YouTube. The CCCB (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops) has "Journey through Lent" where they produce a series of talks given by Bishop Bergie of St. Catherine Diocese. Every Sunday Bishop Bergie has a short talk about how we should journey in Lent. Bishop Barron also has a YouTube channel that he designed to help us in our Lenten journey. Or you might find some other links on the internet. The important thing is we take time to listen and nourish our spiritual journey in Lent. Try to spend some time to listen and as the psalmist would say, "O, that today if you listen to God's voice harden not your hearts."

In this third Sunday of Lent there is a call from God, a call to Holiness which actually is permanent call to all of us as Jesus said, "Be holy as my Father in heaven is holy." Our life's journey, not only during Lent, but our whole life is towards holiness, for we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven unless we are holy. How do we journey life towards holiness? From our first reading of the Book of Exodus, God told his messenger Moses about God's wonderful works of redemption of the chosen people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. God asked them to follow the commandments that he gave to Moses as a guide of the people towards holiness. The Ten Commandments were rules of life for holiness from their relationship with God and to their neighbor.

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Life is about relationship with God and with others. We know from scripture that this so called chosen people were rebellious in nature, complaining and grumbling about any inconvenience they encountered in their journey. If you think the distance between Egypt and Cana is not really very far, but it took them 40 years in the desert. The length of time in the desert was meant to purify the people so that a new generation with a repentant and renewed heart will be the one to enter the land promised to them. Even Moses himself was not able to enter the Promised Land and died before crossing the Jordan; he only saw the land from a distance. In this Lent we are given the opportunity and the time forty days to reflect and to do some adjustments in life in order to continue our life's journey of holiness. First we have to listen to God's voice through our leaders and do the discipline of lent suggested to us by the church, like the three important Lenten acts of prayer, fasting and works of charity. Therefore in Lent we are called to contemplation (prayer) and action. It should be a combination of the two not just one aspect of life. In the second reading, St. Paul pointed out the need to follow the footsteps of Jesus that is the invitation of Jesus to carry our cross. Jesus said, "If you want to follow me, you must take up your cross and follow me daily." We know that the cross has two symbols, a symbol of death and after Jesus' death on the cross, it is now a symbol of victory over death for those who believe. St. Paul explained that for those who do not believe, it is foolishness. We know that God can make good things from bad things in life. Only God can turn a mess into a message, a trial into a triumph, a test into a testimony, a victim into a victory. Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Let us not forget that God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Our journey to holiness means to trust God in everything in all things and believe that he is still in control and knows what He is doing for the good of all. Faith is trusting God when you do not understand his plan. When the disciples knew that Jesus was going to Jerusalem to suffer and die, they did not understand his plan but Jesus knew and at the transfiguration He revealed his glory, but even then still they were not ready to accept death as the means to attain victory. They were inside the box thinking that death is the end and a messiah who dies without fighting for freedom was a failure, but they were wrong and Jesus proved that death was a part towards victory. Proclaiming Christ crucified was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power and the wisdom of God."

The gospel story is about Jesus' action towards those who were desecrating the Temple of God which was supposed to be a holy place and should be treated with respect and care. Jesus now arrived in Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish religious activities, and since it was during a huge Jewish feast of the Passover, people from all over came to pray and to offer their yearly devotion of sacrificial offering of a lamb or some pigeons as thanksgiving or for some atonement for sins. At Passover, many people were coming to the temple. Some individuals saw this as a business opportunity and ignored the holiness of the temple setting up shop there for few days like a market. The gospel described the confrontation of Jesus with these individuals who might have thought themselves as religious, but who were choosing their personal gain over God. Maybe they had the go ahead from the priests and the religious leaders for it meant also more money will go to the temple. This incident in Jesus' life invites us to journey deeper into Lent, examining the consistency between our faith, our intentions and our actions. Our Lenten journey is a journey to action and to act according to the faith we have, because faith without action is dead and we remember St. James challenging his audience who believed that faith is the only thing needed and there is no need for action. He said, "So it is with faith, if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead" (James 2:17). Bishop Barron in his Lenten series, said about prayer, we believe in prayer and if we do not put it into action then what good is that? The best start of prayer is just do it, meaning find time for prayer, this is basic. Find a time to pray and if you already are doing it and if you want to advance in this season of Lent, then go another mile, add a little more time in prayer and we know that the mass is the number one prayer and if you are only a Sunday goer, maybe in Lent you might consider attending one of the weekday masses, especially the Friday one that we also added the devotion of the stations of the cross. Try to get special graces and blessings during Lent and maybe make it a point to pray the Holy Rosary daily if you have not done it regularly. If you are already praying the Holy Rosary, then add one more mystery for the day.

Quote of the week: "Before prayer, endeavor to realize whose presence you are approaching and to whom you are about to speak." (St. Teresa of Avila)

Thank you and God Bless, Fr. Tony

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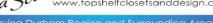
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