

# Catholic Parishes of St. Anthony and Our Lady of the Hills

March 29, 2020

5th Sunday of Lent

Issue No. 180



St. Anthony Catholic Church  
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## Office

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**Office Hours:**

**Monday-Tuesday-Thursday-Friday from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm; Closed Wednesday and holidays.**

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:**

**St Anthony: Saturday 4:45 pm to 5:15 pm or other times by appointment. Our Lady of the Hills by appointment.**

## **If you can't go to confession, take your sorrow directly to God, pope says**

People who cannot get to confession because of the coronavirus lockdown or another serious reason can go to God directly, be specific about their sins, request pardon and experience God's loving forgiveness, Pope Francis said.

"This is the right time, the opportune moment. An act of contrition done well, and our souls will become white like the snow," the pope said March 20 during his livestreamed morning Mass.

"Return to your father who is waiting for you," the pope said. "The God of tenderness will heal us; he will heal us of the many, many wounds of life and the many ugly things we have done. Each of us has our own!" God welcomes every repentant sinner with open arms, he said. "It's like going home."

Lent is a special time "to let God wash us, purify us, to let God embrace us," the pope said, and the best place for that is the confessional.

"But many people today would tell me, 'Father, where can I find a priest, a confessor, because I can't leave the house? And I want to make peace with the Lord, I want him to embrace me, I want the Father's embrace.'"

The pope said his response would be, "Do what the Catechism (of the Catholic Church) says. It is very clear: If you cannot find a priest to confess to, speak directly with God, your father, and tell him the truth. Say, 'Lord, I did this, this, this. Forgive me,' and ask for pardon with all your heart."

Make an act of contrition, the pope said, and promise God, "'I will go to confession afterward, but forgive me now.' And immediately you will return to a state of grace with God."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, N. 1452, says: "When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called 'perfect' - contrition of charity. Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible."

*(continued on page 2)*

### Prayer List for the Sick & Homebound

**St. Anthony**—Mary Canterbury, Mary Hanson, David Dodd, Nazira Joseph, Zachariah Kushner, Christina Lopez, Senaida Garcia, Michael McCallister, Maya Clark, Daniel Bishop, Robin Holly, Mike Layne

**Our Lady of the Hills**—Bert Zodorozny, Margaret Hancock, Violet Edwards, Marilyn Spencer, William Spencer, Katie Caroli, Jeanne Rollins, Steven Spencer, Jerry A. Legg, Doug Spencer

**Please call Father Tijo George at 304-342-2716, ext. 406 if you would like a visit and to receive communion or a home blessing.**



**Safe Environment**—The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is committed to the protection of its children and young people. The Diocese complies with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* by maintaining an Office of Safe Environment. To report an incidence of suspected child sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency, or you may confidentially contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families/Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, please contact one of the Bishop's designees at 888.434.6237 (toll free) or 304.233.0880: Sister Ellen Dunn, ext. 264; Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; Fr. Dennis Schuelkens, ext. 270 or call the Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. For more information on the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment, please go to [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), then click the "Diocese" tab, then click "Office of Safe Environment" under the "Offices" menu. To learn more about the Catholic Church's efforts in preventing sexual abuse of children in the United States, please visit <http://www.usccb.org>. Under "Issues and Action," click "Child and Youth Protection" from the drop down menu.

### Stewardship Report for March 20—26, 2020

#### St. Anthony

Offering	\$ 2,706.60
Donation	500.00
Catholic Relief Services	40.00
Other	35.30

#### Our Lady of the Hills

Offering	\$ 400.00
Diocesan Priests' Retire. Fund	40.00
Catholic Relief Services	40.00
Building Fund	20.00

**Thank you for your generosity! Please remember to continue to support your parish during this difficult time. May God bless you!**

**Bulletin & Mass Announcements**—The deadline this week for bulletin announcements is Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. and for Mass announcements is Friday at 9:00 a.m. Thank you!!

#### USCCB Responds to Coronavirus

Please visit <http://www.usccb.org/coronavirus> for information and resources from the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops.

#### DWC Mass Online

The Diocese is live-streaming daily Mass at 12:05 p.m. Monday—Friday and weekend Mass at 6:00 p.m. every Saturday from the Cathedral of St. Joseph at <https://dwc.org/home/mass/>.

### If you can't go to confession, take your sorrow directly to God, pope says (continued from page 1)

"As the catechism teaches," Pope Francis said, "you can draw near to God's forgiveness without having a priest at hand. Think about it. This is the moment."

### DOES GOD FORGIVE ALL SINS?

When Jesus dined with sinners, the Pharisees asked him why. He told them, "Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners" (Lk 5: 31-32). Here we see a central theme to Jesus' ministry — the forgiveness of sins linked to a conversion of heart.

"Christ who died for all men desires that in his Church the gates of forgiveness should always be open to anyone who turns away from sin" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 982).

The Catechism goes on: "To return to communion with God after having lost it through sin is a process born of the grace of God who is rich in mercy and solicitous for the salvation of men. One must ask for this precious gift for oneself and for others. The movement of return to God, called conversion and repentance, entails sorrow for and abhorrence of sins committed, and the firm purpose of sinning no more in the future. Conversion touches the past and the future and is nourished by hope in God's mercy" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nos. 1489-90).

Jesus' very name in Hebrew means "God saves," and so, therefore, he was "made man for the universal and definitive redemption from sins" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 432). For one to recognize that he or she is a sinner is for one to recognize Jesus as Savior.

~ Michael R. Heinlein

## HOMILY (5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT)

Readings- Ez 37:12-14; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45

It feels odd to have this gospel already on the fifth Sunday of Lent, and especially while we are made anxious by the COVID-19 emergency.

This story is linked to the resurrection, but we must still plod through Lent and pass through Good Friday before we get to Easter. Have the Church's liturgical engineers given us this story too early? But in fact, this text is more about death than resurrection. After all, Lazarus still had to undergo death a second time. This story is more about our mortal condition here and now than about the hope of resurrection. We will have time enough to consider the Easter mystery when we get to Easter Sunday and the weeks following it.

In his *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius of Loyola suggests that for each Gospel story we should try to put ourselves in the place of each character in turn and imagine how we would feel in those circumstances. This can be a challenging exercise. Can I try to put myself in the place of Lazarus? Lying cold in the tomb, I am dead to everything and then I hear a voice: 'Come out, Lazarus.' There I am, swathed in bandages, surrounded by darkness. What is our equivalent to his tomb, here and now?

Imagining ourselves in the place of a Gospel character can bring us fresh insights. Putting ourselves in Lazarus's place can show up imperfections in our lifestyle and make us long for a new spiritual freedom. This story features here in Lent to help us live life to the full. A close encounter with death can shock us into appreciating life. A loss or bereavement shows again what makes life worth living. Perhaps even the oppressive nearness of COVID-19 has made us re-assess our priorities and renew our trust in divine providence.



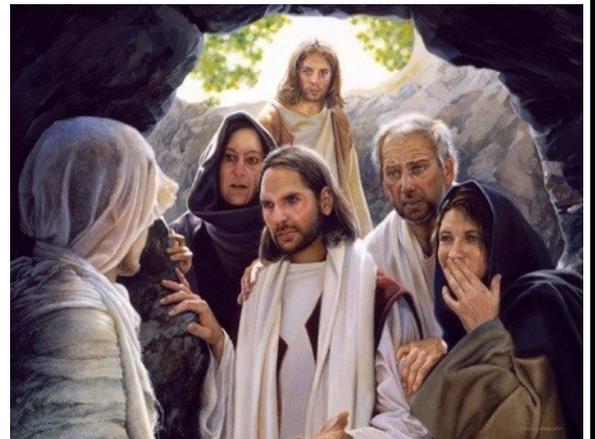
Jesus was a close friend to the two sisters and their brother. They always made him welcome in their home in Bethany, whenever he passed by on his way to Jerusalem. One day the sisters notified him, "Our brother Lazarus, your friend, is sick" but he delayed before setting out to visit them. When he got there, Lazarus was already dead. When the younger sister, Mary, saw Jesus she cried out in grief. When Jesus saw her terrible sorrow he was deeply moved and broke down in tears so that people remarked: "See how much he loved him!" He did not just cry for the death of a close friend. He shared in the anguish of everyone in the face of death.

Human beings have an insatiable will to live. Like the two sisters of Lazarus, we also wonder why do we have to die? Why isn't life happier, longer, more secure, more fulfilled? We too, like people in the time of Christ, feel in our hearts that burning question that is hardest to answer: what's going to happen when we die? What can we do in the face of death?

Most of the time we opt to just forget that question and "get on with living." But when the end finally comes, do we want to face it stoically, in silence? Concerning our final destiny neither science nor philosophy are of much help. I like the view of one writer who said: "Concerning death, reason tells me that it is final. But then, I guess that my reason is limited."

We Christians don't literally *know* any more about the afterlife than anyone else. Like all others, we are humbled by the inevitability of death. But we trust in the goodness of God, demonstrated in the life and words of Jesus. He is the Lord whom we love, and whom we trust with our very lives. He once explained his life's work in these words: "I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10)

Like Martha, we respond with simple faith to our Lord Jesus who says: "I am the resurrection and the life." The Swiss theologian Hans Kung memorably said that for him, dying meant "resting in the mystery of God's mercy." In the meantime we are called to live our lives to the full.



## Lessons from the Stations of the Cross

Christians know the life of a disciple will not be easy. Christ did not mince words about this — telling his disciples they must take on life's sufferings as in the form of capital punishment that would later be used to take his life: "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Lk 9:23).

### **Making Sense of Suffering**

How do Christians make sense of the crosses they bear? The question of why suffering exists finds its answer in Christ's transformation of suffering through love. Christ's cross makes sense of our own, hence the universal appeal of popular devotions like the Stations of the Cross.

The Stations of the Cross finds its roots with the Franciscans who helped rebuild the Christian sites of the Holy Land following the medieval Crusades. Given the prominence of Christ's passion within Franciscan spirituality, the order encouraged pilgrims in Jerusalem to journey along Christ's way to Calvary. While it began as a pious devotion, its enduring relevance in the Christian life, however, caused the devotion to spread. Over time, the pope gave Franciscans the prerogative to erect "stations" of the cross for popular devotion in parishes the world over. Eventually, the role of the Franciscans was eliminated, and yet it is hard to find a parish building or complex that does not have the Stations of the Cross.

The universal reality of suffering makes devotions inspiring meditation on the passion and death of Jesus particularly relevant in Christian life. Such prayer forms like the Stations of the Cross are popularized particularly in the season of Lent. They should not necessarily be restricted there alone, however, since the Stations of the Cross have become a primary opportunity for the faithful to learn the purpose of their crosses.

Through fostering communal celebration of the Stations of the Cross, priests have the privilege of accompanying their flocks in this understanding. Assisted by praying with the Stations of the Cross, the faithful enter into the experience of Christ and others — such as Pilate, Mary, Simon, Veronica, the women of Jerusalem or those who crucified the Lord. In this way, devotions like the Stations of the Cross assist the faithful in appropriating the fruits of Christian suffering.

### **Suffering's Purpose**

It makes sense, then, that those who have "put on Christ," becoming members of his body through baptism — a bond renewed and strengthened in each reception of holy Communion — should expect nothing less than a share in Christ's own passion and cross. In light of Christ's passion, it likewise makes sense to understand suffering's purpose as rooted in love. "If you really want to love Jesus," St. Gemma Galgani said, "first learn to suffer, because suffering teaches you to love."

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). God is love, and love is the source of all that is. "Love is also," Pope St. John Paul II wrote in his encyclical on suffering, *Salvifici Doloris*, "the fullest source of the answer to the question of the meaning of suffering. This answer has been given by God to man in the Cross of Jesus Christ" (No. 13). Out of love, Christ gave of himself completely, even unto death — handing over his spirit out of obedience to the Father's will (see Lk 23:46).

Christ's own suffering and death has untold value and immense purpose — whereby God bought us back from the slavery of sin and death. So, too, does ours, because, as St. John Paul II described it, "each man, in his suffering, can also become a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ" (*Salvifici Doloris*, No. 19). Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen wrote: "The great tragedy of the world is not what people suffer, but how much they miss when they suffer. Nothing is quite as depressing as wasted pain, agony without an ultimate meaning or purpose." The Stations of the Cross make real every imaginable aspect of human suffering that was on full display at Christ's passion. And they teach us to see the fruit of suffering.

### **Suffering with Christ**

On his way to Calvary, Christ experienced the sufferings ordinary men and women experience every day throughout the world. He showed not only how to deal with them, but through the power of love how to transform suffering's destructive power into something life-giving. In Christ's passion and death, St. John Paul II wrote that Jesus "has taken upon himself the physical and moral sufferings of the people of all times, so that in love they may find the salvific meaning of their sorrow and valid answers to all of their questions" (*Salvifici Doloris*, No. 31).

*(continued on page 5)*

## **Lessons from the Stations of the Cross** *(continued from page 4)*

Meditating on the Stations of the Cross exposes Christ's suffering heart — "sorrowful even to death" (Mk 14:34). In his condemnation to death, Christ teaches that we have the freedom to accept life's sorrows. He does not let condemnation be levied upon him, but rather he chooses it out of love. Taking up his cross, Christ models how to accept suffering as an act of love in obedience to God's will.

Christ falls three times on the way to Calvary. The sufferings due to sin in our lives continually cause failure. In falling himself, Christ shows that, despite suffering's tendency to bring us down, discouragement can be overcome by dependence on God's grace. Christ teaches us how to persevere through the failure and exhaustion through which our suffering inevitably leads and be of one heart and mind in pursuit of the Father's will. Such is redemptive suffering — as the old saying goes, "no pain, no gain."

Christ's way to Calvary illustrates, too, how God graces us with models of love in the midst of our suffering. But like Christ, we must be attentive and receptive to them. The compassion, cooperation and generosity of others — such as Christ experienced in the fourth, fifth and sixth stations — are examples of how love is returned to love. And when unburdened by our own sufferings, through love, each of us can be channels of God's love through service, like Mary, Simon and Veronica. "In the face of evil, suffering and sin, the only response possible for a disciple of Jesus is the gift of self, even of one's own life, in imitation of Christ; it is the attitude of service," Pope Francis said during World Youth Day in Poland in 2016.

Since life's road must pass by way of Calvary, this journey of love ultimately entails that we strip ourselves of all that keeps us from God and his will. At the end of his road to Calvary, Christ shows that abandoning ourselves to the hands of providence comes with detachment from all earthly power, pleasure, wealth and honor. The Christian must be unhesitant to cast aside anything necessary to advance the kingdom of God. In this way suffering is a gift that enables us to focus on the new life in Christ that awaits believers. Through the pain of suffering we gain the joy of heaven itself — eternal happiness with God — the gates to which Christ opened for "the many."

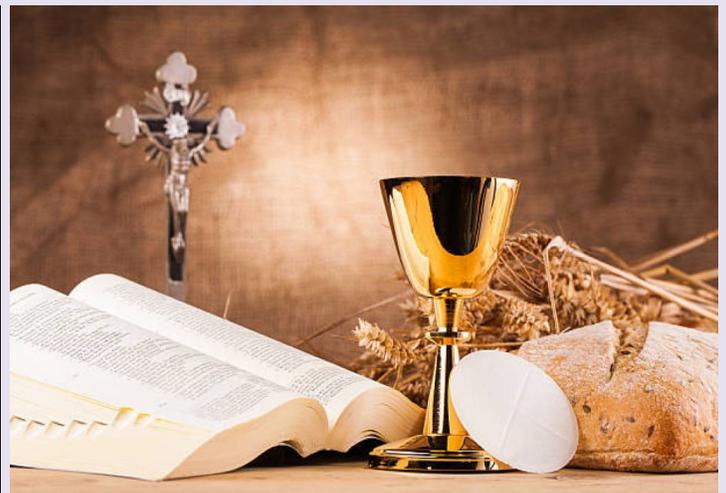
### **Rooted in Love**

In meditating on Christ's passion and death, through devotions like the Stations of the Cross, comes the realization that life's sufferings can be joined to Christ's — by which one learns that love forms suffering's foundation. "The road is narrow," St. John of the Cross said. "He who wishes to travel it more easily must cast off all things and use the cross as his cane. In other words, he must be truly resolved to suffer willingly for the love of God in all things."

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, weeks before he was elected pope following the death of Pope John Paul II, referenced this when he said that Jesus not only taught us how to pray the Stations of the Cross, but also their meaning. "The Way of the Cross is the path of losing ourselves," he said, "the path of true love." Suffering expresses love's total self-emptying required of the disciple. "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Lk 9:24).

### ***Act of Spiritual Communion***

***My Jesus,  
I believe that You  
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love You above all things,  
and I desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment  
receive You sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there and  
unite myself wholly to You.  
Never permit me to be separated from You.  
Amen.***



**"If you find it hard to pray, don't give up. Be still; make space for God to come in; let Him look at you, and He will fill you with His peace."**

*~ Pope Tweet 03/26/2020*