

## Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 22, 2009

*Jesus said to Nicodemus: God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish, but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. ...* John 3: 14-21

### The Empty Bowl

Imagine a potter at his wheel. He spends many hours creating a beautiful bowl—the most beautiful bowl he has ever made. It is an important piece—but it will not be sold at any price. He is making this bowl for his beloved. And every morning the potter fills the bowl with something precious: fruits and vegetables from the garden, clear water from the spring, beautiful flowers from the fields.

The potter's beloved cherishes the bowl. She keeps it in the center of the table. Its beautiful color and near-perfect shape are the gift of the potter's skill. Even empty, the bowl is the symbol of a couple's trust, the vessel of their hope, the repository of their love.

Our lives are empty bowls created by God. In every moment of our lives, God fills our "bowls" with whatever we need to live, to grow, to discover, to love, to become the people God formed us to be.

In today's Gospel, Jesus challenges the image of God as cosmic judge or universal tyrant who relishes punishing us for our sins. No, Jesus tells Nicodemus, God creates us out of a love too perfect and limitless for us to understand, a love he seeks to share with us and for us to share with one another. Jesus invites us to approach God with lives empty of all artifice and self-absorption, to seek our joy and fulfillment in the goodness with which God fills our lives, and, with grateful hearts and generous spirits, share the gift of our lives with all.

### Scripture Readings for the Week

Monday: Is. 65: 17-21 Jn 4: 43-54  
Tuesday: Ez47: 1-9,12 Jn5: 1-16  
Wednesday: Is 7: 10-14, 8:10Heb 10: 4-10Lk1: 26-38  
Thursday: Ex 32: 7-14 Jn 5: 31-47  
Friday: Wis 2:1a, 12-22 Jn 7: 1-2, 10, 25-30  
Saturday: Jer 11: 18-20Jn 7: 40-53  
Sunday: Jer 3: 31-34 Heb 5: 7-9 Jn12: 20-33

### Financial News

Last Sunday: \$8264.53

### Offertory Contributions

Year Ago: \$8066.50

### Mass Intentions for the Week

Sunday: March 22 Fourth Sunday of Lent

9:00AM:

11:00AM: Martha Cutler

Monday: March 23 St. Toribio of Mogrovejo

5:15 PM:

Tuesday: March 24 Lenten Weekday

8:00 AM:

Wednesday: March 25 Annunciation of the Lord

5:15 PM:

Thursday: March 26 Lenten Weekday

8:00 AM:

Friday: March 27 Lenten Weekday

5:15 PM: Michael Prusak

6:00PM: Stations of the Cross

Saturday: March 28 Lenten Weekday

8:00 AM: Angelo + Augustine Cammarato

5:15 PM:

Unexpected changes in the schedule may cause Masses to be cancelled and Mass Intentions to be moved to the first available date open. We apologize for any inconvenience. To schedule a Mass Intention call 216-226-5116



### Now What?

We survived. Where do we go from here?

First we recognize that many of our brothers and sisters are going through the stages of grief—anger, sadness, despair, disbelief, and ultimately, perhaps acceptance. No one wanted the downsizing (or “rightsizing” as it has been called) of the Diocese. But given the reality of the population shift of Catholics, the dwindling number of active priests, and the harsh economic and financial realities everyone is facing, it had to happen so that we can more effectively minister and evangelize in the future.

Bishop Lennon continued the process of Vibrant Parish Life that had begun years ago underneath Bishop Pilla. The outcome of phase II of VPL should not have surprised us. If clergy had educated their parishioners and we had taken our blinders off we would have known and expected the eventuality of this day.

We are saddened about the closing/merging of parishes that have baptized and married us—about churches that we have received our sacraments—about sacred buildings that have nurtured us and buried members of our families. But that is exactly what they are—buildings, not Church.

We are the Church—you and I, and we have been called to effectively minister to each other. Some say that we are abandoning the gospel message to assist the poor and those in need. That is not true. We are restructuring so that we can more effectively meet their needs with our limited resources and personnel. The poor and needy no longer solely exist within the urban confines of Cleveland.

What is next? Prayer, and lots of it. While transition teams begin to form within the clusters they have to make sure that their vision and development is better than what was before. We have to earn the sacrifice that is being asked of our brothers and sisters. We have to make sure their pain results in a stronger, more vibrant Church that effectively evangelizes all peoples and ministers to all. We have to develop a stronger liturgical life that transcends the walls of the sacred buildings and reaches into the streets and neighborhoods of our cities. And, we still need to realize that Christ is still with us—watching over us, protecting us, guiding us, and caring for us as we navigate through these muddy waters. We are Church with Christ as our head. Trust, believe and we will not only survive but begin to thrive once again.

*Fr. John*

### Communal Lenten Penance Service

The Catholic Parishes of our Cluster will gather together to have a Community Penance Service. All Catholics are invited to participate. Priests from all our Cluster Parishes will be on hand to hear confessions Tues. Mar. 31, at 7PM at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church.

Pot of Gold Winners: March 16-21-Bill Maskal, Orest Kalyn, Jerome Hansinger, Marilyn Martau, Roland Miranda, and Wilma Kinkoff.

The Tribunal of the Diocese of Cleveland will be presenting a new program for beginning the annulment process. The Quick Start Program is meant to provide individuals with a simplified method for the initial presentation of a case to the Tribunal. The program will consist of two sessions. The first meeting will be a general overview of marriage as understood by the Catholic Church and an explanation of the Tribunal process. This meeting is also open to anyone who would be interested in deepening his/her knowledge of marriage in the Catholic Church and the annulment process. Individuals who would like to begin the Quick Start Program will be given the appropriate materials at the conclusion of the meeting. The second meeting will be an individual meeting, by appointment only, for the purpose of presenting the completed materials. Meetings will be held at St. Raphael Church, Bay Village, on April 14 at 7PM and April 28 by appointment in the school lunchroom; at Holy Martyrs, Medina, on April 23 at 7:30PM and May 7 by appointment in the Pfeiffer Room, and Immaculate Conception Church, Willoughby, on May 16 at 7:30PM and April 30, by appointment in the gym. Pre-registration for the first meeting is not necessary. If you have questions, please call Lynette Tait at the Tribunal, 216-696-6525 or 800-869-6525, ext. 4000.

**St. Clement Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast** will be held on April 5 from 9 AM to 1PM. Price includes pancakes, eggs, sausage, and beverage. Adults \$6, Children 10 & under \$5, Seniors 65 & over \$5. Family of 4 \$20. Tickets will be available at the door. There will be donuts for sale, basket raffles, and a 50/50 raffle. For more information or to volunteer or donate prizes please call Mary @ 216-226-5116

The Catholic Bible Study Group continues with its 5 week series on Thurs. evenings, 7-8:30PM in St. Clement Church gathering area though April 2. It is open to everyone and there is no fee. The teachers are members of Our Lady of Guadalupe Bible College. For more info call Ed or Mary Lamparyk @216-898-1440

The Gentle Woman Fellowship will meet on April 3 at St. Clarence Church in N. Olmsted, 9:45AM to 12PM with Rosary, Mass, and two distinguished speakers.

The Department for Marriage & Family Ministry and the Office for Worship are pleased to announce the 50th Wedding Anniversary Celebration. The Mass will be held on July 26, 2009 at 2:30PM at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist with Bishop Richard Lennon as celebrant. Please watch your bulletin for more info or go to [www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/mfm](http://www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/mfm). If you have questions contact Jason Lewis @216-334-2974

Congratulations!!

