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THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT MARCH 22, 2020

Fr. Barrow and Fr. Healey are offering private Mass daily for the Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church. In particular, we remember this week these intentions:

Saturday, March 21

Bernard St. Jean—Memorial Mary Gianardi—7th Anniversary

Sunday, March 22

Nestor Ocfemia—Memorial Frank & Eva Montaquila—Memorial Bernard & David Briggs—Memorial

Monday, March 23

Fr. Gerald W. Hussey—1st Anniversary Catherine McPhee & Michael Dellorfano—Mem.

Tuesday, March 24

Thomas Cavanagh—Birthday Remembrance Muriel McLeroy—Memorial

Wednesday, March 25

Ada Pyun—Birthday Remembrance Fr. L. Bernard LaMontagne—Memorial

Thursday, March 26

The Souls in Purgatory
John C. Cabral—Memorial

Friday, March 27

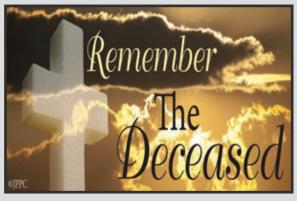
Michael & Ellen Brady—Memorial Fr. Edmond P. Prendiville—Memorial

Saturday, March 28

Elizabeth Loughlin—Memorial Thomas Ucci—Memorial

Sunday, March 29

Ava Ocemia—Memorial Andre Dayde—Birthday Remembrance Lillian E. Healey—33rd Anniversary



Mercy Musings



Dear Parishioners:

The life of our parish has changed, as have our own lives. We are now living in a state of emergency as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and it has has changed our daily lives and the life of our Church.

Bishop Tobin has mandated the public that celebration of Holy Mass be suspended until further notice. It is a difficult time and as Bishop Tobin acknowledged it was one of the most painful decisions he has ever made as a bishop. I ask you to please pray for our Bishop, as I know he is praying for you, and all the Catholics of our Diocese.

Fr. Barrow and I continue to celebrate daily Mass privately for you and your intentions. You continue to be in our prayers and we ask for your prayers for us. With such an unprecedented situation as the suspension of all Public Masses, the Church recommends an ancient practice of "spiritual communion."

It essentially consists of relating to God your desire to receive him in Holy Communion, spiritually uniting yourself to him in an intimate and personal way. Those who make a spiritual communion can receive many spiritual graces from God, strengthening them in their time of trial.

St. John Paul II praised such a practice in his encyclical, Ecclesia de Eucharistia. He writes: "It is good to cultivate in our hearts a constant desire for the sacrament of the Eucharist. This was the origin of the practice of 'spiritual communion,' which has happily been established in the Church for centuries and recommended

by saints who were masters of the spiritual life. Saint Teresa of Jesus wrote: 'When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you.'"

Many suggest that this crisis is too much hype and hysteria. However, I urge you to pray and to prepare for the worst but hope for the best. No country in the world can sustain the burden of a large outbreak of this disease, so please continue to pray for an end to the virus.

Across the globe many face possible illness and pain, possible suffering and death and grief. loss and We face restriction on our freedoms, economic hardship and probable loss of access to the sacraments for some period of time. We all watched the sufferings of China, and Wuhan in particular. Now we see what has happened to Europe, and in particular to our brothers and sisters in Italy. The Pandemic continues to move elsewhere including here in RI.

On St. Patrick's Day morning, I was praying and reading the reflections and prayers of Father Willie Doyle, SJ. He was an Irish Jesuit Priest who was a famous preacher, confessor and spiritual director in the early part of the 20th Century. He was known to have a special gift to hunt out the most hardened and neglected sinners and to bring them back with him to the church for confession.

He would serve as a Military Chaplain in World War I for nearly two years. Sadly he was killed in the Battle of Ypres in 1917. It was reported that he

was killed after having run "all day hither and thither over the battlefield like an angel of mercy." This good shepherd truly gave his life for his sheep.

What would Fr Doyle say to us if he were to speak to us today? I think he would offer this prayer he wrote during the war: "God sometimes seems to ask the impossible, a sorrow, a cross. Oh! It would crush me! How can this be! How? Lord, I do not know, but You do. I will trust you always,"

Fr Doyle lived through the terror and tragedy of the First World War. He lived with death day after day. He too had to be without the sacraments at times. Through it all he remained strong and faithful, serene and peaceful. Soldiers flocked to him, as he was a source of reassurance. Whenever he wrote about troubles he always wrote about trusting in God, and abandoning ourselves into His loving arms. God is our loving Father, and we can trust in Him.

To trust in God we must get to know God, and to do this we must pray. If we have spent more time preparing physically, by gathering food and supplies, than we have by preparing spiritually through prayer and "stockpiling" grace, we may need to reorient ourselves a little. Prepare with prayer! Keep the faith! Trust in God!! Know you are remembered at Holy Mass each day. Be well. Do Good! God Bless. Our Lady of Mercy, intercede for us.

Father Healey



Loving Jesus in the Eucharist

The Catholic faithful in the Diocese of Providence and throughout many dioceses of the United States have received unprecedented news this week: the suspension of all public Masses and other liturgical services. Previously in a communication dated March 12, 2020 Bishop Tobin dispensed Catholics in the Diocese of Providence from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass beginning immediately and continuing through Sunday, March 29, 2020. Such a suspension of public Mass is a new phenomenon in the lives of Catholics. What are we to do?

In our spiritual lives we are meant to train ourselves to love and desire Jesus Christ. Concretely this means learning to love Him in the Eucharist at Mass. We become spiritually mature when we look at the Mass not simply as an obligation, but as the source and summit of our lives. Unfortunately, situations may arise in which we cannot attend the Mass. This may be due to sickness, old age, a lack of priests, political turmoil, and so on. Throughout history there have been periods when the Catholic faithful have gone without the Mass. Even our Lord warned us that the bridegroom may be taken away from us.

In these times we remember that the Mass and the Eucharist are a supreme gift from God that we should not take for granted. How we view our absence from Mass indicates our love for it. Hopefully, we look forward to the day when we can once again go to Mass and receive our Lord. Until then, we ask our Lord to increase our desire for Him in the Mass and not to let this be a time when our love decreases. We pray like in Psalm 63: "O God, you are my God—it is you I seek! For you my body yearns; for you my soul thirsts; like a dry, weary land without water."

As St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans: "What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us." I encourage the faithful to watch the Mass, continue one's prayers, read the scriptures for the day, and to make an "Act of Spiritual Communion".



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Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You have already come, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Mass canceled? The Church is still at prayer!

By Fr. Patrick Briscoe, OP www.aleteia.org

Church officials are in the best interest of public health.

But what does this say about Christian hope? What do

we. we who believers—the very body of Christ—make of our situation? Remember the Church is still at prayer.

Closed doors don't mean "cessation of worship." Abbeys of monks and nuns are carrying on their unabated rhythms of prayers. Raising their hearts and minds to



God in the psalms and Holy Mass, the Church's contemplatives the U.S. Bishops' website). continue their exalted vocation of interceding for the faithful.

on behalf of his people. Even if his church is closed, your priest Sinner's Guide, or On Loving God. These are readily will be there, standing as mediator between God and his parish. available online. Then offer petitions, saying out loud your He will also continue, insofar as he is able, to administer the prayers for the Church, remembering especially those affected sacraments to the sick and dying.

The treasure of cycles of prayer that mark the the Sign of the Cross. changing of times and seasons will persist, unwavering until the days, and stand it will. Even though churches may cease holding public Masses, many will remain open. Make visits to the been identified Blessed Sacrament, joining the Church in prayer through your private devotion.

homebound. Many dioceses also offer local broadcasts of Mass. suffering!

Further, in light of the COVID-19 crisis, many priests Sunday homilies, online. Check your diocesan and parish websites to see what your priests may be offering. Some chapels even provide live streams of Eucharistic adoration. If you are in the habit of visiting an adoration chapel, make your have hope! typical visit online! Check the website for some possibilities. take advantage of them!

you are living in a place where the bishop has, for the time conquers all things to shine ever victorious.

The bishops of major U.S. cities dioceses have being, halted public Masses, make a spiritual communion. suspended public worship until further notice. Other diocesan What is a spiritual communion? It is the act of drawing on the bishops have dispensed Catholics from the obligation to attend real graces conferred by your baptism to unite you to God. God Sunday Mass. With a mind to protecting those who are dwells in our hearts; we believe, by baptism, that the Holy especially vulnerable to COVID-19, the measures taken by Trinity abides in us. Making a spiritual communion, then, is the calling upon that reality.

Believers can continue to gather "spiritually." Why not

continue to pray the prayers and readings of the Mass at the very time you typically attend? Believers can then be joined, knowing they are still praying together.

Begin by making the Sign of the Cross. Then read the readings aloud with your family (these found can be in publications like Magnificat, the dailv Roman Missal or online at

In place of a homily, read a few pages from a Your parish priest, too, will continue to offer Masses spiritual classic, such as The Imitation of Christ, The by COVID-19. Conclude by praying the Our Father and making

The recurring temptation in any serious crisis is to last days. Christ instituted the Church to stand through the last allow the selfish instincts of survival to overtake Christian prudence and charity. The reality is that Christians have always

If you are healthy and able, volunteer for those at risk. Seek out people in your local parish who may be in need. As Tune in to Mass online, on television, and on the large-scale operations are likely to be put to the test radio. Many tremendous resources exist to join the Church at responding to this outbreak, grassroots charity will be more prayer. National networks like EWTN and CatholicTV will make powerful. The reality is that Christians have always been it possible for Catholics to participate in Holy Mass while identified by their love for the sick, not their indifference to

Far from being simple activism, the love shown in are making efforts to stream their celebrations of Mass or their times of crisis mirrors the very love God has for his sons and daughters. Christians cannot ever be alone. No disease, illness or crisis has the power to separate us from the love of Christ, which alone sustains us. We are a people who will continue to

The current public health epidemic is part of the cross Real graces are being offered through these different media, so we will carry this Lent. Under its weight, let us not stumble, nor falter. Embracing the penitential aspects of this particular Actualize your participation in the Mystical Body. If Lenten season will purify us all, allowing the love of Christ that

TELEVISED MASSES



<u>CatholicTV:</u> Offers DAILY Online Mass at watchthemass.com

Diocesan Television Mass: The Fall River Diocese sponsors a televised Mass each Sunday at 11 a.m. on WLNE-TV, ABC Channel 6, New Bedford-Providence. The Mass is reaired at 12:30 p.m. on Comcast cable channel 95 in Fall River.

Eternal Word Television Network Masses:

On Cox Channel 22 and Verizon FiOS 285 Schedule at ewtn.com/tv/schedule

Word on Fire/Bishop Barron:

www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass.

PRAY for the SICK

Please pray for the sick & those that care for them



FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 22

Monday: Is 65:17-21; Ps 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12a and 13b; Jn 4:43-54 Tuesday: Ez 47:1-9, 12; Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9; Jn 5:1-16

Wednesday: Is 7:10-14; 8:10; Ps 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 11; Heb 10:4-

10; Lk 1:26-38

Thursday: Ex 32:7-14; Ps 106:19-20, 21-22, 23; Jn 5:31-47 Friday: Wis 2:1a, 12-22; Ps 34:17-18, 19-20, 21 and 23; Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Saturday: Jer 11:18-20; Ps 7:2-3, 9bc-10, 11-12; Jn 7:40-53 Sunday: Ez 37:12-14; Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; Rom 8:8-11; Jn

11:1-45 or Jn 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45

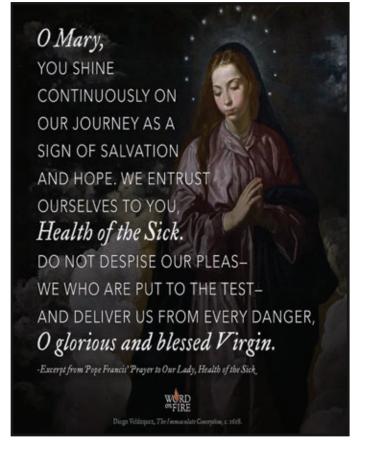
4th Sunday of Lent



he traditional name for the Fourth Sunday of Lent is Laetare Sunday. This title comes from *Laetare Jerusalem*, "Rejoice, Jerusalem," the first words of today's entrance antiphon (brief scriptural text that is usually replaced with a gathering song).

As we have reached the midpoint of Lent, we anticipate the joy of Easter with several options for softening our worship environment: rose-colored vestments, extra music, some floral enhancement.

These are not requirements, however, and many parishes choose to stick with purple vesture and a spare atmosphere.



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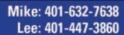
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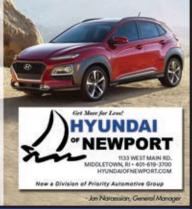


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