

March 23, 2025

Third Sunday of Lent

Repent,
the
kingdom
of
heaven
is
at hand



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MID-LENT CHECK-IN

God says to Moses, “This is what you shall tell the Israelites: I AM sent me to you . . . The LORD, the God of your [ancestors], the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:14, 15). As Jesus would later say, God is not a God of the dead, but of the living, and so we believe that the dead will one day rise. At this midpoint of Lent, we pause to consider how our repentance is leading us to the Resurrection, to our reunion with the great “I AM.” Part of our repentance involves working to secure justice for all and helping our neighbor to live in God’s ways. We encourage each other and nurture each other, like the compassionate gardener of today’s Gospel, who tells the owner of the orchard that he will nurture the tree, fertilize it, and perhaps it will bear fruit.

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TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

Hollywood has given us an image of Moses slipping off his shoes before a burning bush. God has just called Moses by name, and so that Moses doesn’t miss the meaning of this breakthrough in human history, God requires that all barriers to the experience be eliminated. If you’ve ever tried to maneuver barefoot across hot sand, or pick your way along a rocky beach, you know how sensitive feet can be.

Within the Church, there are religious orders with a custom of going barefoot, not merely to show poverty, but to be an outward sign of a desire for connection with creation, a desire to go through life alert to what God is doing. In early days, when reconciliation was a once in a lifetime possibility, penitents often went barefoot for a long period of time as a sign of their conversion. Even today, people follow an ancient practice of slipping off their shoes to walk in the procession to the cross on Good Friday. It is striking that the first use of our newly scrubbed feet from Holy Thursday night is to walk resolutely in the footsteps of Christ to the cross.

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REFLECTING ON GOD’S WORD

One morning in 1888, Alfred Nobel, the man who invented dynamite, picked up the morning newspaper and, to his shock, read an account of his death. The reporter had made a mistake; it was his cousin, not he, who had died.

In reading his own obituary, Alfred Nobel realized just how he would be recognized and remembered should he die. He would be the “dynamite king,” a merchant of death. This so disturbed and upset Nobel that he decided

to give his life a new direction. He became involved in the work of peace and justice and made it a point to ensure that money was set aside so an annual award could be given to those engaged in that important work.

So when Alfred Nobel died, his obituary made no mention of his being a merchant of death. He was hailed instead for his humanitarian deeds, especially the establishment of the Nobel Peace Prize. You could say that the mistake in 1888 gave Alfred Nobel a second chance at life. As a result, the world was awarded a wonderful legacy.

—Rev. Richard Zajac

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Living God’s Word

The Gospel today unfolds the parable of the fig tree, often described as the parable of the second chance. The owner of the vineyard wants it cut down. The vinedresser pleads that it be given a second chance. Great and wonderful results can often accompany a second chance.

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READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 2 Kgs 5:1-15ab; Ps 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4; Lk 4:24-30
Tuesday: Is 7:10-14, 8:10; Ps 40:7-11; Heb 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38
Wednesday: Dt 4:1, 5-9; Ps 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20; Mt 5:17-19
Thursday: Jer 7:23-28; Ps 95:1-2, 6-9; Lk 11:14-23
Friday: Hos 14:2-10; Ps 81:6c-11ab, 14, 17; Mk 12:28-34
Saturday: Hos 6:1-6; Ps 51:3-4, 18-21ab; Lk 18:9-14
Sunday: Jos 5:9a, 10-12; Ps 34:2-7; 2 Cor 5:17-21; Lk 15:1-3, 11-32
Alternate readings (Year A):
1 Sm 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Ps 23:1-6;
Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-41[1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38]

REVEAL CHRIST’S LOVE – Next week our parish will take up the Catholic Relief Services Collection. Funds from this collection provide food to the hungry, support displaced refugees, and bring Christ’s love and mercy to vulnerable people here and abroad. Next week, please give generously to the collection and reveal Christ’s love to those most in need. Learn more about the collection at www.usccb.org/catholic/relief.

NOTE: MASS CHANGES –

- Beginning Sunday, June 22, 2025, the 8:30AM Spanish Mass will be moved up to 8:00AM
- Mass will be celebrated @ Holy Family beginning June 22nd and every 3rd Sunday of the month thereafter, @9:30am.
- No Sunday morning confessions on the 3rd Sunday of the month. Same schedule for the other weekend Masses.

Saturday, March 22nd



5:00PM-IHM – +Maria Morales & Carlos Guerrero & Rodolfo Morales; For the health and well being of Johnathan Garcia



Sunday, March 23rd

8:30AM - Por la gente de Nolan County

11:00AM – +Aurelia Garza; In

Thanksgiving for Ema Patricia Acevedo’s birthday

Tuesday, March 25th 9:00AM – HF

Si & Gloria Acuña

Wednesday, March 26th 6:00PM-IHM

Communion Service

Thursday, March 27th 9:00AM-HF

For the health and well-being of Johnathan Garcia

Friday, March 28th 9:00AM-HF

In thanksgiving for Abe Saenz’s birthday

Saturday, March 29th

5:00PM-IHM – +Gloria Castro, Delia Sparkman, Rudy Torres, Nellie, Dolores, Francisco, Frank, Jr., Velia, Juana, Tony & Patricia Gomez; +Ruben Gutierrez

4th Sunday of Lent, March 30th

8:30AM - +Rodrigo DeLoera; +Epifania Mercado, Juan Mora & Juventino Resendes

11:00AM – For the People of Nolan County

PENANCE SERVICES in the surrounding area:

* All Penance Services begin at 6:30pm.

- March 26 – Sacred Heart, Abilene
- 27 – St. Ann’s, Colorado City
- April 02 – Sacred Heart, Coleman
- 03 – St. Vincent, Abilene
- 08 – St. Mary’s, Brownwood
- 10 – St. Francis, Abilene
- 16 – **Holy Spirit, Sweetwater**

HOLY SPIRIT CLEANING SCHEDULE

March 29–Youth Group April 5 –Parish Council

A Prayer for the Health of Pope Francis

Lord God, shepherd and guide of all the faithful, look kindly upon your servant Pope Francis, whom you willed to preside over the Church as her shepherd.

May he bear this illness in union with the obedient suffering of your Son Jesus for the salvation of the world. Guide the doctors and nurses who are caring for him. By your divine grace, restore him to health. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen
The Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo



**Prayer
Fasting
Almsgiving**

SCHOLARSHIP FUND RAFFLE – The Guadalupana members will be selling Raffle tickets after the Masses for the next few weekends. Proceeds will go to the Scholarship Fund. Applications are available in the parish office. Deadline is May 2nd.

MANUEL & REFUJIA HEREDIA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP – Applications are available in the parish office. You must be a 2025 Graduating High School Senior and a member of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Sweetwater, Texas to apply. Deadline is April 25, 2025 by 6:00 p.m.

CCD Spring Break – No Sunday Classes: March 23rd
Classes resume: next Sunday, March 30th.
Wednesday Classes resume Wednesday, March 26th.

WHY AM I CATHOLIC? Deacon Bill’s sharing session is Tuesday at his home, @6pm. All are invited!

WEDNESDAY – Communion Service at 6:00pm followed by Adoration until 7:30pm @IHM.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS - Via Crucis - all Fridays during Lent, 6:00pm @Immaculate Heart, followed by a light meal and reflection in the parish hall.

YOUTH GROUP meets this Sunday, March 23rd, at 6:30pm, @Holy Family Hall.

LENTEN PENANCE SERVICE – Our Parish Penance Service is scheduled for Wednesday, April 16th, 6:30pm

ULTREYA – Meets Monday, March 24th,7:00pm at Immaculate Heart Hall. You don’t have to be a cursillista to attend. All are welcome!

GRUPO MISIONERO - Meets on Thursdays, at 7:00pm at Immaculate Heart Hall.

PARISH MOVIE GROUP – meets at Holy Family Hall, this Sunday, March 23rd, from 4:00pm - 6:00pm.

BAPTISM – To schedule, please call the office

March 15/16, 2025 COLLECTION DATA

ENVELOPES/CHECKS.....	\$5265.00
LOOSE PLATE.....	1322.00
BUILDING FUND.....	1259.00
TOTAL COLLECTION.....	\$7846.00

Thank you for your generosity

NEXT weekend, St. Vincent Pallott parishioners from Abilene, will be in our parish selling raffle tickets for their Cinco de Mayo fundraiser. 1st Prize is a \$5,000.00 Mastercard plus many other great prizes. Tickets sell for \$20 each or 6 tickets for \$100. Let us support each other!

#21 – Sign of Peace

Most of the Mass is addressed to God the Father, but this part is addressed directly to Jesus. The peace that Jesus gives to the apostles is not peace from this world. It is peace directly from God in heaven. When we allow Christ into our lives, we remain at peace no matter what may happen to us or those around us. We also recognize that we need to be reconciled with those around us so that that peace may reign in our hearts. We cannot be in communion with Jesus if we are not at peace with our brothers and sisters around us. We hear, “If anyone says, ‘I love God’ but hates his brother, he is a liar.” (1 John 4:20).

It is a moment of self-reflection as well. We should ask ourselves, “am I ready to approach the altar of God?” We acknowledge any failures to love those around us and ask for God’s peace to heal the wounds caused by sin. The sign of peace is not a break from the structure of Mass. Rather than having a conversation or waving and giving high fives, we humbly ask pardon for any ways that we have offended those around us.

The rite of peace can be seen as connecting the Our Father with the reception of Holy Communion. In the Our Father, we called God our Father together, thus declaring that we are all brothers and sisters. And in the sign of peace, we now turn to our brothers and sisters and offer forgiveness and peace. This action is so that the peace of Christ fills this Church, moving in the hearts of every person present here.

#21 – Señal de Paz

La mayor parte de la Misa está dirigida a Dios Padre, pero esta parte está dirigida directamente a Jesús. La paz que Jesús da a los apóstoles no es una paz de este mundo. Es una paz que viene directamente de Dios en el cielo. Cuando permitimos que Cristo entre en nuestras vidas, permanecemos en paz sin importar lo que nos pueda pasar a nosotros o a quienes nos rodean. También reconocemos que necesitamos reconciliarnos con quienes nos rodean para que esa paz reine en nuestros corazones. No podemos estar en comunión con Jesús si no estamos en paz con nuestros hermanos y hermanas que nos rodean. Escuchamos, “Si alguien dice: ‘Yo amo a Dios’, pero odia a su hermano, es un mentiroso” (1 Juan 4:20).

También es un momento de autorreflexión. Deberíamos preguntarnos, “¿Estoy listo para acercarme al altar de Dios?” Reconocemos cualquier falla en amar a quienes nos rodean y pedimos la paz de Dios para sanar las heridas causadas por el pecado. El signo de la paz no es una ruptura con la estructura de la Misa. En lugar de tener una conversación o saludar y chocar las manos, pedimos humildemente perdón por cualquier forma en que hayamos ofendido a quienes nos rodean.

El rito de la paz puede verse como la conexión del Padrenuestro con la recepción de la Sagrada Comunión. En el Padrenuestro, juntos llamamos Padre a Dios, declarando así que todos somos hermanos y hermanas. Y en el signo de la paz, ahora nos dirigimos a nuestros hermanos y hermanas y ofrecemos perdón y paz. Esta acción es para que la paz de Cristo llene esta Iglesia, moviéndose en los corazones de cada persona aquí presente.