

LIVING THE FAITH

Today’s reading from the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew can be very challenging for us. The first part of this passage speaks of the familiar, *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*. This is often misinterpreted to mean that if someone hurts you, you should hurt them back. The actual point of this passage is about justice, not revenge. God is a just God, which explains why, at times in the Old Testament, when it sounds like God is being mean to people, in actuality, He is keeping His word – fulfilling His promise. If God told the Israelites what they should do and what the consequence would be if they did not do it, He would provide the anticipated punishment out of justice if they did not follow His command.

In the “Love your Enemies” verses, we are given one of the most difficult tasks – to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Isn’t it true we sometimes find it much easier to do physical tasks in the name of Jesus than respond in humility to someone who offends us? It is easier to take care of the church’s flower gardens than to forgive our wayward son or daughter. It is less challenging to work at the soup kitchen than it is to love the co-worker who does not do his or her share of work, or the neighbor who is argumentative and irritating. Of course, garden and soup kitchen work are good and necessary, but loving our enemies or praying for those who persecute us is incredibly difficult to do.

Jesus tells us in today’s passage that the greatest response to any situation is love. It is a direct imitation of the way God treats us – His children – in his great mercy. When we come to realize that our worthiness is not the cause of God’s loving us – that His love and mercy are pure gift – our response should be one of gratitude, which brings about a transformation in our relationships with others. Quite simply, it may feel counter-intuitive to be kind to those who are unkind to us, but that is what we are called to do. Living out the Gospel in a radical way is essential to spreading the Good News. Of course, praying for others and treating them lovingly does not mean we have to endure disrespect or abuse from others. Rather, we are to set appropriate boundaries which shield us from abusive and disrespectful behavior on the part of others toward us.

At the end of this passage, Jesus tells us to be *perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect*. Here, He is not literally calling us to be perfect. This is impossible due to our human weakness and sin. But, we are called to perfection in the sense of striving each day to be all that God has called us to be – to love without limit, to be generous beyond measure, to show mercy to those in need. We work at these and, with the grace of God, we are transformed, and transform the world around us. Jesus did not say that doing this would be easy, but clearly, we are called to go the extra mile as we serve Him and work to build up the kingdom of God here on earth.

Ephesians 4:32 - Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon	Feb 20	Sir 1:1-10, Mk 9:14-29
Tues	Feb 21	Sir 2:1-11, Mk 9:30-37
Wed	Feb 22	1 Pt 5:1-4, Mt 16:13-19
Thur	Feb 23	Sir 5:1-8, Mk 9:41-50, Rv 2:8-11, Jn 15:18-21
Fri	Feb 24	Sir 6:5-17, Mk 10:1-12
Sat	Feb 25	Sir 17:1-15, Mk 10:13-16
Sun	Feb 26	Is 49:14-15, 1 Cor 4:1-5, Mt 6:24-34



YOUR SUNDAY TITHING AND

CONTRIBUTIONS

Regular Collections	\$ 7,997.20
Nativity Elem.	\$ 825.00
Capital Improvement	\$ 970.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 412.68
TOTAL COLLECTION	\$ 10,204.88
CASH NEEDED	\$ 14,400.00

SPECIAL APPEAL – MAINTENANCE FUNDS

TOTAL GIFTS AND PLEDGES TO DATE	\$171,842
PAYMENTS TO DATE	\$165,122
BALANCE TO COMPLETE PLEDGES	\$ 6,720

ASH WEDNESDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Masses for Ash Wednesday are as follows: 6:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., in the Cathedral. We will also have masses at noon and at 6:00 p.m., in the Cathedral.

LITURGY TEAM MEETING

As we near the liturgical season of Lent, it is important for us to prepare the various liturgies with which it is associated. The Nativity Cathedral Liturgy Committee will meet on Thursday, February 23rd at 6:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Sacred Heart Center.

CCD CLASS INFORMATION

CCD classes are held on Wednesdays, from 5:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m., in the Sacred Heart Center.

MAGNIFICAT SUBSCRIPTION

It is time to renew our Magnificat subscription for 2017. For those of you who subscribe through Nativity, please call or email Jackie Hewitt at the rectory to renew or cancel. jhewitt@nativitybvm.org. **This order will be placed at the beginning of March, so please respond as soon as possible.**

BINGO MANIA

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday. The following families are scheduled for February 21st. Theobald (Scott & Brooke), Walli (John), Wilson (Baboone & Wilson), Byers (Robert & Jennifer), Davis (Warren & Susie), Hunstiger (Candace) and Jackson (Betsy Boney). **REMEMBER!** If you are unable to attend, it is your responsibility to secure a replacement.

WOMEN’S ACT RETREAT

Thursday-Sunday, 9th through the 12th of March, 2017 and sponsored by Our Lady of Fatima Parrish. Cost is \$125.00 and includes all food and lodging. Held at Paul B. Johnson State Park in Hattiesburg Ms. Please contact director Lisa Jones-228-806-0778/ljwhitnuts3@aol.com or Lisa Ladner 228-297-2204/lladner239@yahoo.com, or Renee Klein 228-990-6983. Hope to see you there!

SCHEDULED LAY MINISTERS FOR NEXT WEEKEND

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS	LECTORS	ALTAR SERVERS
Feb 25 4:00 pm 1. Gerrie Weldon 2. Ann Kavanagh 3. Rhonda Clark 4. Kalin Lloyd 5. Andrea Gilich Feb 26 7:00 am 1. Marcia Mayfield 2. Dale Dorcik 3. Jim Compton 9:00 am 1. Maggie Landry 2. Belinda Corley 3. Barry Gilmore 4. Linda Bourgeois 5. Bobby Weaver 11:00 am 1. Deacon Ben 2. Susan Toche 3. Edward Warner 4. Sondra Williams 5. Johnny Williams 5:30 pm 1. Annette Luther 2. Teresa Ballinger 3. Kristy Arguelles	Feb 25 4:00 pm Julie Capuano Feb 26 7:00 am Joe Koonce 9:00 am Liz Wilkinson 11:00 am Daliance Kirkland-Ross 5:30 pm Jim Shuggart CANTORS Feb 25 4:00 p.m Nicholas Radolfich Feb 26 9:00 a.m. Nate Hettinger 11:00 am Choir	Feb 25 4:00 pm Carlo Ashton Brinden Butterfield Feb 26 7:00 am Makayla Pfarrer Wyeth Stewart 9:00 am Justin Useforge Jamey Useforge Army Gollott, IV McKinzy Mathis 11:00 am Michael Pfarrer Greysen Ross McRay ross Aidan Tarrant 5:30 pm Samantha Sharpton Breanna Smith Chaz Byers

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb 20 Women of Mary, 5:30 p.m.
 Feb 21 - Men of St. Joseph, 7:00 a.m. – SHC
 - RCIA at 6:00 p.m., SHC
 - BINGO Mania, 5:30 p.m. - Bingo Hall
 Feb 22 - **Cleaning Team “C”**
 Mass at Seashore Retirement Home, 3:00 p.m.
 CCD Classes at 5:30 p.m.
 Feb 23 Mass at nativity School 9:00 a.m.
 Mass at Greenbriar Nursing Home, 10:00 a.m.
 Liturgy Committee Meeting at 6:00 p.m., SHC

R.C.I.A.

This week the RCIA class will be learning about the Sixth Commandment with Father Dennis, and Summer Canon will be leading our Prayer Service. Please pray for the Catechumens, Candidates and Sponsors as we approach the Easter Sacraments and as they continue their journey of faith together. If you would like further information, please contact Greg or Penny Payne 228-365-6348

COMMUNION VISITATION

Jesus says of you and me, “You are the salt of the earth”. No one should be deprived of the Most Holy Eucharist because they are homebound, elderly, have no means of getting to Mass and/or sick in their home. Sister Jackie Tarrant, RSM will gladly bring the Eucharist to you in your home. Together we can be “salt of the earth”. Sister can be reached at 228-223-8129 or the rectory at 228-374-1717.

NEPTUNE AT NATIVITY- Our Third Annual *Neptune at Nativity* cathedral parish Mardi Gras celebration. On February 25th, after the 4:00 p.m. Mass, our parish family will gather in front of the cathedral and rectory to watch the Neptune Parade. Our Men’s Club will serve hamburgers and hotdogs. There will be an open house in the rectory with bathrooms available. Be sure to bring your drinks and a chair!

Mass Intentions			
	6:30 a.m.		8:00 a.m.
Mon	Feb 20	Jo Coughlin	Jean Kridle
Tue	Feb 21	Gary Michiels.	Boise Ray “Skip” Butterfield, Jr.
Wed	Feb 22	Deceased Husband & Son	Chester Balius Fly.
Thur	Feb 23	Students/Staff at Nativity Elem. (S.I.)	Collins-Sims Fly.
Fri	Feb 24	Glenn/Joyce Pisarich	Helen Ross
Sat	Feb 25	8 – Thomas Duston	4 Josephine Esposito Allen
Sun	Feb 26	7 –Helen Ross.	9 - For the Parishioners
		11 – Boise Ray “Skip” Butterfield, Jr.	5:30 - Gary Michiels

PLEASE KEEP OUR SICK IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Tiffany Whitehead, Lena Marchioni, Anna Jo Wentzell, Kay Lawson, Jeanie Harbison, Mickey Roberts, Holly Hill, Georgia Bellais Dominick, Maxine Kiddinger, Marie Manning, Lisa Walker Kirkman, Raymond Egers, Betty Hilton, Walter Blessey, Mary Lancaster, Joe Powell, Patsy Smolcich, Danny Boney, Sr., Kathleen Hebert, Mickey Bradley, Cheryl Terry, Gwen Gollotte and Greg Hotaling.

MASS AT NATIVITY SCHOOL

Come and join the fun with our Children at Nativity Elementary when we celebrate a school Mass on Thursday, February 23, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

NATIVITY BVM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*The Second Annual Disney Raffle is once again taking place. Tickets cost \$75 and provide the winner with a \$4,000 Disney gift card and \$1,000 spending money. Only 335 tickets will be sold with the drawing taking place on Thursday, February 23rd at 2:00 p.m. For more information please visit the school’s website, www.nativitybvm.org, or call the school office, 432-2269. *All are invited to attend Nativity School’s annual Mardi Gras parade on Friday, February 24th at 10:30 a.m. on the school ground. The parade, led by the preschool and kindergarten students, will again feature the King and Queen of Neptune. King Cake will be served following the parade, thanks to our Grandparent Club members. *We congratulate the Nativity Students who will be participating in the Regional Science Fair on Friday, February 24th at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Coliseum. We are so very proud of you! *Nativity Students will again participate in the State Robotics Competition which will be held in Vicksburg on Saturday, February 25th. Team Thunderclouds, led by Mrs. Amy Riojas, is composed of ten 4th, 5th and 6th graders who advanced to this competition by **placing first overall in the December Regional Competition.** How proud we are! *Our Nativity Boy Scouts will celebrate a year of accomplishments at their annual Blue and Gold Banquet on Wednesday, February 22nd at 5:30 p.m. Our thanks to the adult leaders for all their hard work in mentoring these young men. *Registration for the 2017-2018 school year will begin on Monday, February 13th for families with children currently enrolled in Nativity School. Registration for new families registered at Nativity, Blessed Seelos, Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Michael and Church of the Vietnamese Martyrs parishes will take place on **March 6th through March 8th** from 8:30-5:00. Open registration for all other new families begins on Thursday, March 9th until all openings are filled. Nativity School provides a well rounded, Catholic education for children in prek 3 through 6th grade.