

4th Sunday of Easter Bulletin for St. Ambrose Parish

May 3rd, 2020



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LIVE MASS WITH FR. HENRY: I (Fr. Henry) do a live mass every Wednesday and Sunday at 9:00 am (unless there are technical difficulties and then it will be put on after it has been recorded.). The next live mass is this Sunday, streamed live from St. Ambrose Church. If you want to watch, go to our web site at www.stambroseyarmouth.ca or go to my YouTube channel www.youtube.com/channel/UC1CwQV-c8xpu57fbCsu0fLg/videos?view=57&flow=grid (Copy and paste this link into your web browser if you would like to follow along.)

Wondering what to do with your time while being isolated? Want to get connected with other people from our parish? Why not join an online group?



There is a 14-session series on the Holy Spirit that people can get involved in at St. Ambrose. The goal would be to finish by Pentecost which as you know is 50 days from Easter Sunday. How it works is you watch the video just before your group meets online, then the 4 or 5 of you will join in for a meeting together with questions you can discuss together. There can also be some sharing time about

how things are going. Click on the link to watch an ad for the series.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyhpK-X-onM&list=PLE6t-PqUvPEemaneqIWYbKUn4j8olfe9h

If you want to be a part of a group, please email us Stambrosemail@gmail.com

-Fr. Henry



QUOTE OF THE WEEK: We must fast with our whole heart, that is to say, willing, wholeheartedly, universally and entirely. -St. Francis de Sales

SUPPORTING YOUR PARISH FINANCIALLY: During this difficult time, I ask that you continue to support our Parish financially. If you want you can drop donations off at the office during office hours. Please knock on the door to be served. We now have an account on line to which you can donate to. Simply go to <http://www.stambroseyarmouth.ca/> and scroll down the page to the donate button in red and follow the directions.

OUTREACH TO PARISHIONERS: You may have recently had a phone call on behalf of Fr. Henry wondering how people are doing and that he was praying for you at this difficult time. Many numbers have been disconnected or no longer in service. Those of you who have not received a call would you please give the office a call so that information can be updated in our system. Office 902-742-7151



Our sympathy is extended to the family and friends of
Frances Anne Martin and Bernadine Louise Nickerson
Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them.

FOOD BANK: Even though we cannot hold our usual food bank collection, we would like to remind parishioners that the food bank still needs our help. The weekend of May 2nd and 3rd would normally be a food bank collection time. Please consider making a donation during the next few weeks. The food bank is only collecting donations of money at this time. You can make a donation in one of the following ways:

1. You can place your donation in an envelope marked FOOD BANK and drop it off at the Parish Centre.
2. You can mail your donation directly to the food bank treasurer, Art McPhee at 4624 Hwy 1, Woodvale NS, B5A 5B1.

DECREE OF NULLITY: "The Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth invites people with questions or concerns about the application for nullity process to contact the Marriage Tribunal Office. The office is open and ready to assist anyone who seeks additional information or guidance in how to begin the process. We can be reached by phone at 902-429-9800 ext. 321 or please visit the "Marriage Tribunal" on the Archdiocesan website www.halifaxyarmouth.org under "Pastoral Services".

REFLECTION: Grace from the Ordinary
The Fourth Sunday of Lent,

As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth...

He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" — which means Sent —. So, he went and washed, and came back able to see. [John 9:1, 6-7](#)

Who was this man? Interestingly, he does not have a name. He is only referred to as the "man blind from birth." This is significant in the Gospel of John because the lack of a name is also seen, for example, in the story of "the woman at the well." The fact that there is no name indicates that we should see ourselves in this story. "Blindness" is our inability to see the hand of God at work all around us. We struggle to see the daily miracles of God's grace alive in our lives and alive in the lives of others. So, the first thing we should do with this Scripture is strive to see our lack of sight. We should strive to realize that we so often do not see God at work. This realization will inspire us to desire a spiritual healing. It will invite us to want to see God at work.

The good news is obviously that Jesus cured this man, as He willingly cures us. To restore sight is easy for Jesus. So, the first prayer we should pray as a result of this story is simply, "Lord, I want to see!" The humble realization of our blindness will invite God's grace to work. And if we do not humbly acknowledge our blindness, we will not be in a position to seek healing.

How He heals this man is also significant. He uses His own spit to make mud and smear it on this man's eyes, which is not immediately that appealing. But it does reveal something quite significant to us. Namely, it reveals the fact that Jesus can use something exceptionally ordinary as a source of His divine grace!

If we look at this in a symbolic way we can come to some profound conclusions. Too often we look for God's action in the extraordinary. But He so often is present to us in that which is ordinary. Perhaps we will be tempted to think that God only works His grace through heroic acts of love or sacrifice. Perhaps we are tempted to think that God is not able to use our daily ordinary activities to perform His miracles. But this is not true. It is precisely those ordinary actions of life where God is present. He is present while washing the dishes, doing chores, driving a child to school, playing a game with a family member, carrying on a casual conversation or

offering a helping hand. In fact, the more ordinary the activity, the more we should strive to see God at work. And when we do “see” Him at work in the ordinary activities of life, we will be healed of our spiritual blindness.

Reflect, today, upon this act of Jesus and allow our Lord to smear His spit and dirt on your eyes. Allow Him to give you the gift of spiritual sight. And as you begin to see His presence in your life, you will be amazed at the beauty you behold.

Lord, I want to see. Help me to be healed of my blindness. Help me to see You at work in every ordinary activity of my life. Help me to see Your divine grace in the smallest events of my day. And as I see You alive and active, fill my heart with gratitude for this vision. Jesus, I trust in You.

An Interesting Miracle

Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent

Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe.” The royal official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” Jesus said to him, “You may go; your son will live.” [John 4:48-50](#) Indeed, the child does live and the royal official is overjoyed when he returns home to find that his child was healed. This healing took place at the same time that Jesus said he would be healed.

One interesting thing to note about this passage is the contrast of Jesus’ words. At first, it almost sounds as if Jesus is angry when He says, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe.” But then He immediately heals the boy telling the man, “Your son will live.” Why this apparent contrast in Jesus’ words and action?

We should note that Jesus’ initial words are not so much a criticism; rather, they are simply words of truth. He is aware of the fact that many people lack faith, or are at least weak in faith. He is also aware of the fact that “signs and wonders” are beneficial for people at times so as to help them come to believe. Though this need to see “signs and wonders” is far from ideal, Jesus works with it. He uses this desire for a miracle as a way of offering faith.

What’s important to understand is that the ultimate goal of Jesus was not the physical healing, even though this was an act of great love; rather, His ultimate goal was to increase the faith of this father by offering him the gift of his son’s healing. This is important to understand because everything we experience in life from our Lord will have as its goal a deepening of our faith. Sometimes that takes on the form of “signs and wonders” while at other times it may be His sustaining presence in the midst of a trial without any visible sign or wonder. The goal we must strive for is *faith* by allowing whatever our Lord does in our lives to become the source of our faith’s increase.

Reflect, today, upon your own level of faith and trust. And work to discern the actions of God in your life so that those actions produce greater faith. Cling to Him, believe He loves you, know that He holds the answer you need and seek Him in all things. He will never let you down.

Lord, please increase my faith. Help me to see You acting in my life and to discover Your perfect love in all things. As I see You at work in my life, help me to know, with greater certainty, Your perfect love. Jesus, I trust in You.

Paralyzed by Sin

Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent

Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your mat, and walk.” Immediately the man became well, took up his mat, and walked. [John 5:8-9](#)

Let’s look at one of the clear symbolic meanings of this passage above. The man Jesus healed was paralyzed, being unable to walk and take care of himself. Others neglected him as he sat there by the pool, hoping for kindness and attention. Jesus sees him and gives him His full attention. After a short dialogue, Jesus cures him and tells him to rise and walk.

One clear symbolic message is that his physical paralysis is an image of the result of sin in our lives. When we sin, we “paralyze” ourselves? Sin has grave consequences on our lives and the clearest consequence is that we

are left unable to rise and then walk in the ways of God. Grave sin, especially, renders us powerless to love and live in true freedom. It leaves us trapped and unable to care for our own spiritual lives or for others in any way. It's important to see the consequences of sin. Even minor sins hinder our abilities, strip us of energy, and leave us spiritually crippled to one extent or another.

Hopefully you know this and it is not a new revelation to you. But what must be new to you is the honest admission of your current guilt. You must see yourself in this story. Jesus did not heal this man only for the good of this one man. He healed him, in part, to tell you that He sees you in your broken state as you experience the consequences of your sin. He sees you in need, looks at you and calls you to rise and walk. Do not underestimate the importance of allowing Him to perform a healing in your life. Do not neglect to identify even the smallest sin which imposes its consequences upon you. Look at your sin, allow Jesus to see it, and listen to Him speak words of healing and freedom.

Reflect, today, upon this powerful encounter this crippled man had with Jesus. Put yourself into the scene and know that this healing is also done for you. If you have not done so already this Lent, go to Confession and discover Jesus' healing in that Sacrament. Confession is the answer to the freedom that awaits you, especially when it is entered into honestly and thoroughly.

Lord, please forgive me for my sins. I desire to see them and to acknowledge the consequences they impose upon me. I know that You desire to free me from these burdens and to heal them at the source. Lord, give me courage to confess my sins to You, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Jesus, I trust in You.

Unity with God

Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Lent

Jesus answered the Jews: "My Father is at work until now, so I am at work." For this reason, they tried all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but he also called God his own father, making himself equal to God. [John 5:17-18](#)

Jesus was clearly guilty of grave sins in the opinion of those who sought to put Him to death. He did not follow their Sabbath laws in the way they thought He should and He revealed that He was equal to the Father. This would be a serious sin on Jesus' part if He was wrong, but obviously He wasn't.

At the heart of this passage is the unity of the Father and the Son. The verses following this passage reveal even more clearly that the Father and the Son are one and that Jesus' whole life is caught up in the fulfillment of the will of the Father. It is precisely this oneness of will that brings about their unity.

This reveals much to us about the relationship of the Father and the Son, and it also reveals much to us about our own relationship with the Father and the Son. First of all, the Father and the Son are distinct Persons, each possessing a perfect intellect and will. However, their oneness came about through the fact that their minds were in perfect harmony, knowing all things equally, and perfectly believing what they know. As a result of their perfect shared knowledge, they both embraced every detail of the plan of the Father as it was laid out from the foundation of the world.

As for us, we can take from this understanding of the unity of the Father and the Son, the glorious lesson on how we enter into unity with God. This happens first by seeking the mind of God. We must probe the glorious mysteries contained therein and must make them our own knowledge. Second, we must believe what we come to know through an act of our will. As we discover the truth, we must choose it for our lives. The challenge is that there are numerous competing voices vying for our attention. As we sort through them, choosing only that which God reveals, we naturally become attracted to the mind and will of God and make them our own. In this act we also become one with God.

Reflect, today, upon the unity you are called to live with the Father and the Son. It is this unity that brings fulfillment to your life. It's what you were made for. Seeking, believing and embracing anything else is simply living by a lie. Seek the mind and will of God in all things and your whole being will be drawn into greater unity with God.

Father in Heaven, I thank You for the gift of Jesus Your Son and I thank You for the unity that you both shares. Draw me into that glorious unity established by Your minds and wills. Make me one with You so that You also are my Father. Father in Heaven, Jesus the Son, I trust in You.

The Testimony of the Works of God **Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent**

“The works that the Father gave me to accomplish, these works that I perform testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me.” [John 5:36](#)

works performed by Jesus offer *testimony* to His *mission* given Him by the Father in Heaven. Understanding this will help us to embrace our own mission in life.

First of all, let’s look at the fact that Jesus’ works offered *testimony*. In other words, His works spoke a message to others about who He was. The witness of His actions revealed His very essence and His union with the will of the Father.

So, this begs the question, “Which works offered this testimony?” One might immediately conclude that the works Jesus was speaking of were His miracles. When people witnessed the miracles, He performed they would have been convinced that He was sent from the Father in Heaven. Right? Not really. The fact of the matter is that there were many who saw Jesus perform miracles and remained stubborn, refusing to accept His miracles as proof of His divinity.

Though His miracles were extraordinary and were signs to those who were willing to believe, the most profound “work” that He performed was that of His humble and genuine love. Jesus was genuine, honest and pure of heart. He exuded every virtue one could have. Therefore, the testimony that His ordinary actions of love, care, concern and teaching gave were what would have won over many hearts first and foremost. In fact, for those who were open, His miracles were, in a sense, only icing on the cake. The “cake” was His genuine presence revealing the mercy of the Father.

You cannot perform miracles from God (unless you were given an extraordinary charism to do so), but you can act as a witness to the Truth and share the Heart of the Father in Heaven if you humbly seek to be pure of heart and allow the Heart of the Father in Heaven to shine through you in your daily actions. Even the smallest action of genuine love speaks volumes to others.

Reflect, today, upon your call to give testimony to the Father in Heaven. You are called to share the love of the Father with everyone you meet. If you embrace this mission, in great and small ways, the Gospel will be made manifest to others through you, and the will of the Father will be more fully accomplished in our world.

Lord, I pray that I act as a witness to the love flowing from Your Heart. Give me the grace to be real, genuine and sincere. Help me to become a pure instrument of Your merciful Heart so that all my works will give testimony to Your mercy. Jesus, I trust in You.

The Temptation with Familiarity **Friday of the Fourth Week of Lent**

Jesus cried out in the temple area as he was teaching and said, “You know me and also know where I am from. Yet I did not come on my own, but the one who sent me, whom you do not know, is true.” [John 7:28](#)

Sometimes the more familiar we are with someone the harder it is to actually see their goodness and the presence of God in their lives. Often, we are tempted to look at them and presume we “know all about them.” As a result, what we can often do is simply highlight their faults and weaknesses in our minds and see them only through the lens of these faults and weaknesses.

This is what happened with Jesus. When Jesus went up to the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, there were some there who knew Him. They probably knew Him as this ordinary son of a carpenter. Perhaps they were even from His home town. As a result of this familiarity with Jesus they immediately doubted He could be the Messiah. But they were, of course, very mistaken.

This presents a great lesson for us. It's the lesson of being judgmental and overly critical of others we know well. The more we know about someone the more we will be aware of their faults and weaknesses. And if we are not careful, we will focus in on those qualities rather than on the good qualities God wants us to see.

This is what happened with Jesus. No, He did not have any actual bad qualities. He was perfect. But there were most likely many parts of His life that invited the false judgment and criticism of others. His self-confidence, the authority He manifested in His teaching, the extraordinary compassion He had toward sinners, etc., were all exceptional qualities that some could not understand. And, as a result, they chose to be critical. "We know where He is from," they said. In other words, they did not think that someone they knew could be filled with greatness.

What do you think about those around you? What do you think about those closest to you? Are you able to see beyond any apparent weakness they have and see the hand of God at work? Are you able to see beyond the surface and see the value and dignity of their lives? When you can see the goodness of others, point it out, and be grateful for it, you will actually be seeing and loving the manifest goodness of God. God is alive and active in every soul around you. It is your responsibility to see that goodness and love it. This takes true humility on your part but, in the end, it's a way of loving God in your midst.

Reflect, today, upon how you look at those who are closest to you and spend some time trying to ponder the ways that God is alive in their lives. If you do this, you will be loving God in your very midst.

Lord, I do love You. Help me to see and love You in others. And help me to shed any temptation I have toward being judgmental and humbly be drawn into the goodness of all Your sons and daughters. I love You, dear Lord, may I also love You in others. Jesus, I trust in You.

In Awe of Jesus

Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent

The guards answered, "Never before has anyone spoken like this man." [John 7:46](#)

The guards and many others were in awe of Jesus, amazed at the words He spoke. These guards were sent to arrest Jesus at the order of the chief priests and Pharisees, but the guards couldn't bring themselves to arrest Him. They were rendered powerless in the face of the "awe factor" Jesus enjoyed.

When Jesus taught, there was something communicated beyond His words. Yes, His words were powerful and transforming, but it was also the in which He spoke. It was hard to explain but it's clear that, when He spoke, He also communicated a power, a calm, a conviction, and a presence. He communicated His Divine Presence and it was unmistakable. People just this man Jesus was different than all the rest and they hung on His every word.

God still communicates to us this way. Jesus still speaks to us with this "awe factor." We simply need to be attentive to it. We should strive to be attentive to the ways that God speaks in a clear and convincing way, with authority, clarity and conviction. It may be something someone says, or it may be an action of another that touches us. It may be a book we read, or a sermon we listen to. Whatever the case may be, we should look for this awe factor because it is there, we will find Jesus Himself.

Interestingly, this awe factor also invited extreme criticism. Those with a simple and honest faith responded well, but those who were self-centered and self-righteous responded with condemnation and anger. They were clearly jealous. They even criticized the guards and others who were impressed by Jesus.

Reflect, today, upon the ways that God has left you in awe of His message and His love. Seek out His voice of conviction and clarity. Tune into the way God is trying to communicate and pay no attention to the ridicule and criticism you may experience when you do seek to follow His Voice. His Voice must win out and draw you in so that you can savor everything He wishes to say.

Lord, may I be attentive to Your unmistakable Voice and to the authority with which You speak. May I be amazed at all You wish to say. And as I listen to You, dear Lord, give me the courage to respond with faith regardless of the reaction of others. I love You, dear Lord, and desire to be transfixed upon Your every Word, listening with wonder and awe. Jesus, I trust in You.