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Mission Statement:

Established in the Spirit of Jesus Christ with an Afro-centric focus, Blessed Sacrament Chapel is committed to spreading the "Word" through fellowship and good works.

Sunday Mass: 10:00AM

St. Stephen Cathedral Parish Office: 270-683-6525

Pastor: Father John Thomas
jthomas@sscobo.org

Parochial Vicar: Father Shibu Cheriakunnel
moc_scheriyankunnel@sscobo.org

Parish Life Coordinator: Sr Jeannette Fennewald,
SSND pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org



February 11, 2024 6th Sunday--Ordinary Time

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. (1Cor.11:1)

First Reading:

"As long as the sore is on him he shall declare himself unclean, since he is in fact unclean. He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp." (Lv 13:8)

Psalm:

I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation. (Ps 32)

Second Reading:

Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.(1Cor 10:31)

Gospel:

Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. (Mk 1:41-42)

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001,



My Dear Parishioners: Matthew, Mark and Luke all report the incident when Jesus asked His disciples the critical question: “Who do you say that I am?” The question is also critical for you and for me. Our spiritual lives depend upon our answer to it. St. Mark answers it by emphatically stating that Jesus Christ is God the Son, the Son of God who came among us and is among us today. Mark adds to Jesus’ identity by presenting Him to us as the One who has come to bring outcasts back in to the family of faith. He has come for the outcasts, the lepers, the outsiders.

The great irony is that Jesus, the One who came for outcasts, Himself had to get out of town. Mark reports that “Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, but had to stay outside in places where nobody lived.” That’s true even today in our culture. It’s not politically correct, we are told, to talk about Jesus in public. Like a leper, He has to be kept away from us. For instance, at Christmas we’re supposed to suppress references to Him; we’re supposed to dilute the meaning of Christmas down to calling it “The Holiday Season”. We’re supposed to submerge Christmas into other reasons for it being a public celebration. Likewise, Easter is for bunnies and Halloween is for spooks. At Christmas, keep Jesus out back in the manger; don’t allow Him into the inn where everybody else is gathered together.

The One whom the Father sent for outcasts becomes Himself THE outcast. But, we must ask, just who are the outcasts? We, the ones who have been cast out from the Garden of Eden, we are the outcasts. We are the ones God the Son has come to heal from the leprosy of sin. What irony it is that we became the ones who cast Him out, crucified Him outside the walls of Jerusalem, and keep Him, like a leper, at a safe distance away so He can’t touch us. We need to take a close look at the question: Who’s “out” and who’s “in”? That question surrounds us each and every day. Think about the number of television shows that are based on that question. Think of the “survivor” shows, and the so-called reality television shows. Not too long ago there was a TV show called “Who’s HOT and who’s NOT?” It dealt with who’s sexy, and who’s somebody you have to be just like in order to be “in” with the crowd around you. Teens are terribly concerned with “who’s in and who’s not?” They have their own set of outcasts, people they don’t want to be seen with in public. And so do adults. And so do families. We all have those with whom we no longer wish to associate, even family members we don’t want to invite into our homes.

If you think religion has nothing to do with life, or that the bible has nothing to do with life, then think again. Today’s report from St. Mark speaks directly to us, to our attitudes, and to how we’re living with those around us. Is your relationship with Jesus a part of your life or not? Will Jesus be a part of what you think, say and do tomorrow? Or is He out of your life until next Sunday’s Mass? Is He “in” or “out” of the village, the community of people among whom you live? Is He “In” or “out” of your daily life? Try this little test during any regular day of this week. Bring Jesus into any conversation. Bring Him “in” from being “outside” and then observe the reactions of those around you. I’ll bet that in any number of cases He will be the leper that people will want to shun. And if you allow Him to touch you, to touch your attitudes, your heart and your ways of thinking...? Well, then, you will have contracted His “leprosy” and folks will begin to shun you. You’ll quickly become an “outsider,” you yourself will become an outcast. As for your own private relationship with Jesus, you may want to pay some attention to the part of the gospel you just heard wherein Jesus tells the leper: “go, show yourself to the priest...” As a part of your healing and re-entrance into God’s community of believers, present yourself to the priest. It’s what your religious tradition tells you to do. It’s what Jesus tells us to do when we tainted with the spiritual leprosy of sin. He tells us to go to the priest.

So when was the last time you went to confession, revealed your sins and showed the priest your own spiritual leprosy... and then received from him God’s healing power in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? If you think that going to confession isn’t important, then perhaps you’d better take a long, hard look at what Jesus had to say to us, lepers that we are, about how we get back into God’s family

And just what is the role that God has assigned for the priest? The answer to these questions isn’t facile or simple. To return to the beginning, the gospel account we just heard is at the end of St. Mark’s first chapter; it concludes Mark’s introduction of Jesus. It has several levels to it. One level deals with who Jesus is...his identity. Another level deals with who we are and the condition we are in, namely our own leprosy of sin. Yet another level deals with what will happen to Jesus at the end of His public ministry. For by reporting that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, St. Mark is suggesting that He who came from God to save outcasts, those cast out from the Garden of Eden, will Himself become THE outcast, crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem.

The beginning of Mark’s gospel hints of its ending. It’s the end of the story, however, that is the real clincher. For at the end of St. Mark’s gospel account we find Jesus, as Mary Magdalene did, in another garden, the garden of the resurrection. With Mary Magdalene and her companions we find ourselves healed, outcasts no longer, able to walk this earth the glorious freedom of the sons and daughters to God, redeemed sinners, a people healed of sin’s leprosy, victims and outcasts no longer. So the next time you find yourself talking about who’s “in” and who’s “out” maybe it would be a good idea to think about who Jesus considers to be “in” and who is “on the outs” with Him. For when it comes to God’s attitude, the only ones who are outcasts are the ones who have made themselves so. When we cast God out of our lives we ourselves become the outcasts. Blessings, Fr. John

LENT

During Lent, the Church asks us to surrender ourselves to [prayer](#) and to the reading of Scripture, to [fasting](#) and to [giving alms](#). The fasting that all do together on Fridays is but a sign of the daily Lenten discipline of individuals and households: fasting for certain periods of time, fasting from certain foods, but also fasting from other things and activities. Likewise, the giving of alms is some effort to share this world equally—not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents.

As a Catholic we are obligated to fast and abstain during Lent. **Abstinence** is not eating meat. Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays in Lent are days of abstinence. The obligation to abstain begins at the age of 14. **Fasting** means we eat only one full meal on the fast day. Two other light meals are permitted but eating between meals is not permitted. You are obliged to fast (unless excused on account of health reasons) between the ages of 18 and 60. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days when we are obliged to fast.

Here are three tips to deepen your relationship with God during the 40 days of [#Lent](#).
1) Participate in the sacraments. 2) Help those in need around you. 3) Sacrifice something that's hard for you.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 2--Nancy Bumm, Natalie Clark
- 3--Jacques Williams Sr.
- 6--Philip Moorman
- 8--Karen Terry
- 9--Beau Bisel
- 12--Dominic Campbell
- 23--Larry Allen
- 24--Yasmeen Williams
- 27--Sondra Hibbs



Meaningful Things to Give Up in Lent

- ◆ Screen tune
- ◆ Gossip
- ◆ Complaining
- ◆ Self-criticism
- ◆ Pride
- ◆ Worry
- ◆ Interrupting people
- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Fast food/soda/candy
- ◆ Netflix
- ◆ You Tube
- ◆ Games on your phone
- ◆ Television

Mass Intentions

- February 4--Charlie Winstead
- February 11--Freddie Payne
- February 14--Kenneth Higgs
- February 18--Sandra Brown
- February 25--Donald Moorman

Let us remember to pray for those who have recently died or those in the process of dying. Remember to pray for the souls in purgatory, especially for those who have no one to pray for them.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the sick: Susan Hall, Larry Allen, Charlie Brown Sr, Jim Fennwald, Karl Herzog, Steven Moorman, Rachel Mattingly, Gina Kirby, Philip Moorman, Jr., Yuri Phen, Larry Clark, Ruth Coble, Shaun Winchell, Jeeriah Cruite, Carol Hatchett, Teresa Woods, Jordan Gertisen, Buddy Adcock, Debbie Moseley, Donna Kaelin, Janice Taul, Pam Wilson, Frank & Gloria Adams, Shelby Webster, Larry Conder, Andy Evans, Gary Moorman, Wynter Keller, If you know of anyone who is in need of prayer or visitation, please notify the office.

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Coming Events



Blessed Sacrament Chapel

- February 14--Ash Wednesday
6 pm Mass
- February 24--Italian Dinner 6:30 pm
- March 1--Fish Fry--St. Stephen 5-7 pm
- March 22--Fish Fry--BSC 5-7 pm
- March 26--Chrism Mass 6:30 pm
Sports Center



- Feb. 4--\$1963
- Budget--\$1094
- MTD Collection--\$1963
- MTD Budget--\$1094
- YTD Collection--\$44,108.34
- YTD Budget--\$34,978

May each give according to what the Lord has blessed us with.

Thanks to everyone who practices stewardship on a regular basis. An active parishioner attends Mass regularly and practices stewardship (time, talent, treasure).

GOSPEL MEDITATION

Recently I had a skin rash, and it was awful. (Please don't tell anyone.) I am embarrassed to admit that I didn't handle it well. Complaining, whining, begging for sympathy, and crying were my responses to the merciless itching and burning. In the aftermath, a silver lining emerged. I feel a new heartfelt sympathy for all those vexed with chronic skin problems. If you've ever had a seemingly unending skin problem, you know how that sympathy flows up from deep inside.

This gut-level compassion is something like what the Gospel describes in Jesus when the sore-covered leper says, **"If you will it, you can make me clean."** At this, just before the healing, Jesus was **"moved with compassion."** The Greek word used here is strong and earthy, closer to "his bowels and guts trembled with the deepest emotions of sadness, pity, and love." In Jesus, God heals our infirmities not from a divine distance but by learning what it *feels like* to be us. He acquires first-hand experience of what it costs us to be afflicted and still be faithful to God. He sympathizes with the burning, itching, and blistering of human existence in the deepest, first-hand way. To discover that is to touch Jesus' heart.

What in your life, right now, is breaking out like diseased skin? What is getting worse the more you try to soothe it? Perhaps only you feel it. Or maybe it's exposed to all. A bad habit, broken relationship, loneliness, fear of failure, self-hatred? Name it, and then find a way to bring it confidently to Jesus who will *feel what we are feeling*, and thereby heal us.

— Father John Muir

MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Lectors

<u>February 11</u>	Jacques Williams, Misty Sanford
<u>February 18</u>	Layson Brooks, Alexis Hatchett
<u>February 25:</u>	Greg Gough, Sarah Malone

Eucharistic Ministers

<u>February 11:</u>	Barbara Bisel, Charlene Meadows, Misty Sanford
<u>February 18:</u>	Greg Gough, Janet Clark, Katie Goins,
<u>February 25:</u>	Rita Moorman, Denise Richardson, Vivian Higgs

Collection & Gifts

<u>February 11:</u>	Kelly, Holly, Samuel Hollis
<u>February 18</u>	Cindy Clark, Michelle Jones
<u>February 25</u>	Alexis, Alizabeth Hatchett

LENTEN PENANCE SERVICES

March 4	St. Pius X	6:30 pm
March 10	Blessed Mother	2 pm
March 13	Sts. Joseph and Paul	6 pm
March 17	Lourdes	2 pm
March 18	Immaculate	6 pm
March 24	St. Stephen Cath	2 pm
???	Precious Blood	
Every Wed.	Sorgho	5 pm

40 DAYS

In Genesis, the flood that destroyed the earth was brought on by 40 days and 40 nights of rain

The Israelites spent 40 years in the desert

Moses fasted for 40 days before receiving the Commandments.

Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness

Sin and Loneliness

When I was in high school, we read “The Metamorphosis” by Franz Kafka. It’s a depressing little novella about a man who (spoiler alert!) turns into a cockroach and dies of neglect, his family gradually ceasing to recognize the creature he has become.

“Never underestimate how badly human beings need touch,” our teacher told us. “Without each other, we curl up and die.”

Our need for communion with each other is written into our biology — breathing and heart rate of newborns regulates when they lie against the skin of their mothers, and we instinctively reach out to embrace someone who has been wounded. But it is also written into our souls. Consider the early days of the pandemic, and the emotional starvation we all experienced, prevented from gathering in groups to worship, to celebrate and to mourn. And when we did encounter other people, we kept a mutual distance. “I feel like a leper,” we grumbled to our families when we returned home, because we finally understood it: the real tragedy of leprosy is not pain and disfigurement. The real tragedy of leprosy is loneliness.

“If you wish, you can make me clean,” begged the leper as he knelt before Christ (Mark 1:40). He wasn’t begging for deliverance from pain and disfigurement. He was begging for deliverance from isolation.

“If you wish, you can make me clean,” we beg God in confession, not because we are physically withering and dying but because we are so desperate to once again be held in His embrace.

“Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, ‘I do will it. Be made clean.’” — Mark 1:41

By Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Readings for the Week

Monday:	Jas 1:1-11/Ps 119:67-68, 71-72, 75-76/Mk 8:11-13
Tuesday:	Jas 1:12-18/Ps 94:12-15, 18-19/Mk 8:14-21
Wednesday:	Jl 2:12-18/2 Cor 5:20—6:2/Ps 51:3-6,12-14,/Mt 6:1-6, 16-18
Thursday:	Dt 30:15-20/Ps 1:1-4 and 6/Lk 9:22-25
Friday:	Is 58:1-9/Ps 51:3-6, 18-19/Mt 9:14-15
Saturday:	Is 58:9-14/Ps 86:1-6/Lk 5:27-32

Observances of Week of February 11

Wednesday:	Ash Wednesday; Valentine
Saturday:	The Seven Holy Founders

Saint Vs. Blessed

Question: What is the difference between a “Saint” and a “Blessed”?

Answer:

The process of proclaiming someone as a saint in the Catholic Church has evolved over the course of many centuries. In the beginning, those honored as saints were almost exclusively biblical figures or martyrs. However, after the legalization of Christianity, new holy women and men came to be honored as saints, and this was often done by popular acclaim or by the local bishop. It was Pope Gregory IX who officially proclaimed that only the pope had the authority to add someone to the official list (the “canon”) of saints. This is the meaning of the word “canonization.” Today, the saint-making process includes several steps, including detailed studies of the person’s life and a recognition that they died as a martyr or lived a life of “heroic virtue.” Once someone is recognized as a martyr or if a miracle is attributed to their intercession, they will be beatified and honored as “Blessed.” This means that they can be celebrated by Catholics in a particular country or region or by the members of certain religious community. If another miracle occurs and is approved, then the “Blessed” is canonized and honored with the title “Saint,” meaning that they are now officially recognized as a universal model of holiness and an intercessor.

Jesus’ way

Today’s reading present a contrast between “Jesus’ way and the “old way.” an example of the old way is the law given to Moses and Aaron about leprosy: the leper was unclean and cast out of the community. Jesus’ way is the opposite: the leper is reached out to, touched, and finally cured.

Nor ought we think of the “old way” as restricted to the days of Moses and Aaron, or even to the “old” testament. The difference between the old way and Jesus’ way arises in our own lives. We still choose, every day, to live in our old way or in Jesus’ way.

Jesus dared to touch a leper, disregarding the old way. The leper then was changed forever. He felt a calling. He couldn’t keep himself from proclaiming that he had been touched by Jesus (even though Jesus told him not to!). Once Jesus touches us, we are called to proclaim his way.

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Super Bowl Sunday

A guy wins a ticket to the Super Bowl and so he’s very excited. However, he’s not so excited when he get there and realizes his seat is in the back of the stadium.

So he looks around for a better seat and to his surprise he finds an empty seat right next to the field. He approaches the older guy who is sitting in the seat next to the empty one and asks if the seat is taken.

“No” replies the man. The young guy is very surprised to hear this and asks, “How could someone pass up a seat like this?”

The older guy replies, “It’s my wife’s seat. We’ve been to every Super Bowl together since we’ve been married but she passed away.”

“Oh, how sad, the guy says taken aback. “I’m sorry to hear that, but couldn’t you find a friend or relative to come with you?”

“No,” the man replies, “They are all at the funeral.”