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# Blessed Sacrament

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[www.blessedsacramentchapel.org](http://www.blessedsacramentchapel.org) or email at [pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org](mailto:pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org)

## 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](mailto:jthomas@sscobo.org)

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**Parish Life Coordinator:** Sr Jeannette Fennewald,  
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**February 25, 2024 (2nd Sunday of Lent)**

**If God is for us, who can be against us?**

Romans 8:31

## First Reading:

"I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son." (Gn 22:12)

## Psalm:

I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living. (Ps 116)

## Second Reading:

He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? (Rom 8:32)

## Gospel:

Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." (Mk 9:7)

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001,



My Dear Parishioners:

I'm going to slowly give you some words and after each one give you a moment to bring to mind your associations with those words – trial – anguish – suffering – loss. Now consider – faith – hope – change. Let me suggest to you that we can take all of our associations with those words and see them in the light that today's readings cast upon them.

Much of life is dealing with loss and the pain of loss. All of us have faced loss and will face more of loss. Many whom we know, and perhaps some of us here today, have suffered the loss of their homes, their jobs, the value of their homes, their businesses, their careers, and their hopes and dreams for their futures. We are all being tested these days in one way or another. Two of the most profound losses that weigh the heaviest on us are the loss of someone we love and the ultimate loss, loss of life itself. When someone we dearly love chooses to walk away from us we grieve terribly. When someone we love dies, the grief we suffer can be nearly unbearable. Will we give in to despair? Will we lose faith in ourselves? Will we lose faith in God?

Abraham's response gives us a model for our own response to life's trials. Abraham's faith gives us a preview of Christ's faith. Abraham's faith was stupendous. Christ's faith is the greatest ever known. The closest parallel we have to Christ's faith is Abraham's faith. That is the reason for what was asked of him; that is the hidden plan God had in mind when He asked Abraham to give Him his son Isaac's life. We do not have the time here to delve into all in Abraham's life that brought him to this point. To sum it all up we can only give attention to the fact that to an immeasurable degree he loved his son Isaac. To sacrifice his son and not only that but to be his father and the one who would put his son to death, carried with it a loss and a pain that we cannot imagine. There was a depth of faith in Abraham that words cannot plumb. The crushing truth is that he was willing to do so because God asked him to. A staggering truth now hits us. Isaac, Abraham's dearest and beloved son, was spared. God's only begotten Son was not. God prevented Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac; God allowed His own Son to be sacrificed. God did not protect Himself from pain. God takes all of our own losses, pain, and suffering and makes it His own.

We will never be able to unravel the mystery of evil, along with the mystery of anguish, suffering, and loss. We can only face their realities while entering into the faith of Jesus. We have a gift God has given us, a gift not given to Abraham. Today's gospel account allows us to see that gift, namely the gift of Christ risen into transfigured glory after having experienced the worst of trial, anguish, suffering, and loss. While we may never unravel the mystery of evil, we have within us the power to respond to trial, anguish, suffering, and loss. Some folks chose to respond using the blame game. God, they say, is to blame. They ask why God would allow bad things to happen; asking questions that are not really questions, they are instead accusations. These things, they say, are all God's fault. They overlook the fact that God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise not to suffer, but to be happy.

Suffering was not in God's purpose when He created us. Suffering results from human choices, not God's. It is not God's will that a husband cheat on his wife; it is not God's will that a wife should walk out on her husband; it is not God's choice that corporate executives of financial institutions should indulge themselves in greed and concoct schemes to make exorbitant amounts of money; it is not God's will that we say and do things that bring hurt, pain, and loss into other people's lives. If we fall into the blame game we do nothing to alleviate our pain, we only assign blame... and accomplish nothing thereby.

Today's second reading taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans is instructive. Said he: If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? It is God who brings good out of evil, order out of chaos, meaning out of absurdity, and life out of death. It is God who refused to allow Abraham's son, Isaac, to be sacrificed but allowed His own Son to be sacrificed, who allowed Himself to enter into our loss, pain, and suffering and thereby transfigure it, transform it, and in doing so give us hope and eventual victory over all that evil would use to tear us away from Him and His love. Abraham is our father in faith. God is the source of our faith. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life of our faith. What we hope for is real, not an illusory dream or wish. God's promise is based on His performance, a performance that allows us to realize our hope. Our hope is found in the glorified Christ, God's own Son who suffered and endured all that it means to be human, the God who gives us in Christ the power to overcome all that life hurls at us. God gives us the power to choose, to choose life at its best, to choose life that leads to peace, truth, love, beauty, and true happiness. 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

23--Larry Allen  
24--Yasmeen Williams  
27--Sondra Hibbs

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

2-- Marsha Allen  
6-- Alizabeth Hatchett, Jax Malone  
7--Britney Carmona  
18--Jean Higgs  
24--Clint Campbell



## LOOKING FOR WAYS TO FAST?

- ◆ **Fast from hurting words and say kind words**
- ◆ **Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude**
- ◆ **Fast from anger and be filled with patience**
- ◆ **Fast from worries and have trust in God**
- ◆ **Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity**
- ◆ **Fast from bitterness and be filled with joy**
- ◆ **Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others**
- ◆ **Fast from grudges and be reconciled.**

## Mass Intentions

February 14--Kenneth Higgs  
February 18--Sandra Brown  
February 25--Donald Moorman  
March 3--Hugh Moorman  
March 10--Freddy Payne

*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, Dana and Danny Maloney, Steven Moorman, Rachel Mattingly, Philip Moorman, Jr., Sheila Thomson, Larry Clark, Ruth Coble, Shaun Winchell, Jeeriah Cruite, Carol Hatchett, Teresa Woods, Jordan Gertisen, Buddy Adcock, 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.**

## IMP—Kroger

Thank you to everyone who has designated Blessed Sacrament as your community reward partner. We have 39 households that designate Blessed Sacrament as their community partner. Our last donation was \$152.22. If you do not have a community reward partner, please designate Blessed Sacrament. Blessed Sacrament's # is WX799. Go to [krogercommunityrewards.com](http://krogercommunityrewards.com) to register. Thanks to each of you for your support.

## Coming Events



### Blessed Sacrament Chapel

- March 1--Fish Fry--St. Stephen 5-7 pm
- March 8--Scripture 10:45
- March 22--Fish Fry--BSC 5-7 pm
- March 26--Chrism Mass 6:30 pm Sports Center
- March 28--Holy Thursday 7 pm Mass
- March 29--Good Friday service 6 pm



Feb. 18--\$764

Budget--\$1094

MTD Collection--NA

MTD Budget--NA

YTD Collection--NA

YTD Budget--NA

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

As a college student, my prized possession was an after-market car stereo. It was my pride and joy: glorious audio, eye-catching display screen, and multi-disc CD changer. It drained my hard-earned dollars, but it was totally worth it. It drenched me in music everywhere I drove. On Ash Wednesday of my senior year of college, Father Tom, the Jesuit priest at my university said, "Pray for God to tell you what he wants you to sacrifice for Lent." I did. In my heart, the answer came: "Give up listening to your car stereo for forty days." I winced. Not possible, I thought. Can't do it. I made other plans. The next morning, I was stunned to find that my car had been broken into, and my fancy stereo ripped out and stolen.

God's command to sacrifice what we love is no joke. This week in Genesis 22, God says: "**Abraham!**" "**Here I am,**" he replied. **Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love — Isaac — and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."** Believe me, I know. We like to be in control. It chaffs us that *God sets the terms* of what we must sacrifice, and how. But this is no impersonal, tyrannical process. Remember that God uses their names, Abraham and Isaac. God knows each one of us and the precious gifts He commands us to offer. Finally, our sacrifices are for our own good. Do we trust this enough to do what Father Tom asked me to do?

**Lenten challenge:** This week, I dare you to ask God: "What do you want me to give up?" He may ask for that which you love most. It will be something precious to you: time, money, a relationship, a dream, an opportunity. What matters is we trust Him and act sacrificially in line with His command. Whatever we sacrifice will of course come back to us as surely as the Risen Jesus — but that doesn't make it easy.

— Father John Muir

## MINISTRY SCHEDULE

### Lectors

February 25: Greg Gough, Sarah Malone  
March 3: Wayne Stephens, Barbara Bisel  
March 11: Katie Goins, Misty Sanford

### Eucharistic Ministers

February 25: Rita Moorman, Denise Richardson, Vivian Higgs  
March 3: Cindy Clark, Holly Hollis, Sarah Malone  
March 11: Greg Richardson, Charlene Meadows, Janet Clark

### Collection & Gifts

February 25: Alexis, Alizabeth Hatchett  
March 3: Kathi Skidd, Emma Latta  
March 11: Fain Family

## 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 19	Precious Blood	6 pm
March 24	St. Stephen Cath	2 pm
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

## On the Mountain

Why climb a mountain? "Because it's there," George Mallory famously said, before perishing in an attempt to scale Mount Everest.

God is an event planner; every detail matters, and the location is most crucial of all. On the mountain, God demanded the sacrifice of Isaac. On the mountain, he restored Isaac to his father. On the mountain, Jesus was transfigured, revealed in all his mystifying glory as the beloved Son of God, the sacrifice which would finally balance the scale. These things happened on a mountain because they could only happen on a mountain. The mountain is where the reckoning happens. It is where God takes, where He gives back, where He hands down.

In Lent, we encounter the mountain. We are removed from the distractions of ordinary life and placed outside the confines of our everyday habits. We find silence and mystery, pain and truth. We struggle and we become tired, and there is always a moment when we wonder if, perhaps, it would have been easier not to climb. There is always a moment when others look at us and think: "Why climb a mountain?"

I confess, I am not much of an outdoorswoman. Hiking, in my family, is any walking you do on a trail that is not paved, so I am far from qualified to comment on whether or not the view from the summit was worth George Mallory's life. But I do know a thing or two about struggling through a difficult experience. I know the strange peace that exists in the moment after it's all over and you catch your breath and realize you are a better, stronger, wiser person for the pain.

The mountain is there. Let's climb it.  
*"God put Abraham to the test. He called to him, 'Abraham!' 'Here I am!' he replied." — Genesis 22:1*  
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## Readings for the Week

Monday: Dn 9:4b-10/Ps 79:8, 9, 11 and 13/Lk 6:36-38  
Tuesday: Is 1:10, 16-20/Ps 50:8-9, 16-17, 21 and 23/Mt 23:1-12  
Wednesday: Jer 18:18-20/Ps 31:5-6, 14, 15 -16/Mt 20:17-28  
Thursday: Jer 17:5-10/Ps 1:1-4 and 6/Lk 16:19-31  
Friday: Gn 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28/Ps 105:16-21/Mt 21:33-46  
Saturday: Mi 7:14-15, 18-20/Ps 103:1-4, 9-12/Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

## Observances of Week of February 25

Tuesday: St. Gregory of Narek, Abbot and Doctor of the Church

## Pew Moving Day



Thanks to Greg and Ethan Gough (and their forklift), Michael Lyon, Father Shibu, Father Sinoj, Father Suneesh, Father Thomas Santhosh, Father Joseph Jojoy, the pews got loaded and are finding a new home in the Newman Center at Murray University.



## HISTORY OF SALVATION

The first reading today continues the "history of salvation" narrative that we hear throughout Lent this year. Today's story was among the best loved in the Jewish tradition (surely Joseph told the story to young Jesus as he formed him in the ways of their faith); the early fathers of the Church were very fond of it as a means of explaining the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The overall tone of the first reading, psalm, and second reading seems a little incongruous with the dazzling Gospel, until we remember that the Transfiguration was placed as the Gospel for this Sunday precisely to remind us of the glory that awaits those who live faithfully and obediently to the will of God. In the life of Jesus, it is a glimpse of the destiny of those who continue, as we heard in last week's Gospel, to repent and believe in the Good News.

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## Scripture Reflection

On our website, you can find a link to [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org). This website has links to many Christian sites--movies, talks, reflection on Eucharist (Daily Bread), saints. One link that might be one that feeds you spiritually during Lent is Daily Reflections. Dr. Tim Gray gives about a 3 minute reflection on the Scripture readings of the day. Easy to listen to, short. Check out the site and see what it has to offer.

## Prayer of Trust

Dear Lord,

Your ways confuse me sometimes. Often, I don't fully understand what You are doing. But I believe that You are working in a way that will one day make sense. Until then, keep me close to You, trusting blindly in the ways You lead me. Amen.