

# ***Forming Good Stewards***

***Good stewards are formed by other good stewards!***

*Please make sure this is distributed to the **pastor**, to the other **priest** and **deacons** in the parish, and to the **person who produces the bulletin**.*

## Bulletin Bites

**March 4, 2018**

**Third Sunday of Lent**

**John 2:13-25**

Option 1

**“Take these out of here and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.”**

Before this visit to the Jerusalem Jesus had already attracted the scrutiny of the Jewish and Roman rulers. They saw him as a challenge to their authority and power. When Jesus arrived at the Temple he saw the corrupt profiteers who, in collaboration with Jewish leaders, charged poor pilgrims a high percentage to change Roman coins into the Jewish coins they needed to pay the Temple tax and the cost of doves or lambs for sacrifice. He was justifiably angry. He could have politely asked them to take their coins and tables and leave. He probable had done that on other occasions. But this time he acted forcefully to condemn what he knew was not what God intended. Lent is a time for us to reflect on our lives and observe the world in which we live; note the silly, stupid, senseless and sinful things in our life and in the lives of others in our world; and be justifiably angry with ourselves and others. Jesus challenges us to change ourselves and to call other to change.

Option 2

**“Take these out of here and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.”**

Jesus did not live in Jerusalem. He was taken there as an infant and his family traveled to the city for a Passover as a young boy. He visited the city as an adult and celebrated a Passover meal with his friends. He was then arrested, beaten, crucified, died, was buried and rose from the dead in Jerusalem. The Temple in Jerusalem housed the Ark of the Covenant and was considered to be the place where God resided and was to be worshiped. But some had turned the Temple precincts into a for-profit enterprise. Jesus drove them out. As a result of the Incarnation, Birth, Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, and our own Baptism, we are Temples of the Holy Spirit. How do we treat our Temple? Have we bought into the “Meism” and “He who dies with the most things wins” mentality of our culture and turned our Temple into a marketplace? Lent is a time to reflect on what we have done with our Temple. When we see Jesus will he approach us with open arms or will he be swinging a handful of cords?

**March 11, 2018**  
**Fourth Sunday of Lent**  
**John 3:14-21**

Option 1

**“Whoever believes in the Son of God will not be condemned,  
but he who does not believe has already been condemned.”**

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a group of Jews who studied the Law of Moses and the prophets and believed in the resurrection of the dead. Nicodemus was interested in Jesus because of what he did and what he taught. But because he was a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jews, he met with Jesus in secret. He wanted to learn from Jesus, but he did not have the courage to openly associate with him. That did not stop Jesus from meeting with him to help him grow in his understanding and love of God, and to reveal his mission to die and rise from the dead as a guarantee of life eternal with God who loves us. Are we sometimes reluctant to be associated with Jesus? Do we “Go along to get along!” rather than proclaim the beliefs and values of our Catholic faith? Or do we proclaim our faith in Jesus in the face of those who ridicule, reject and abuse us because of our Catholic faith? Lent is a good time for us to reflect on whether we are like Nicodemus, or are we a bold follower of Jesus?

Option 2

**“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.”**

Throughout history there have been reports of people who have sacrificed their life to save a relative or comrade at arms. But God sent his only begotten Son. Imagine a parent sending a child to certain death to save others. How would we react to such a sacrifice by both parent and child? Gratitude? How would we express such gratitude? Would we realize that every day of the rest of our life; everything we have to enjoy in life; the time we have with our loved ones; everything we can accomplish with our talents, abilities and gifts, we owe to that child of the parent who saved our life? Would we feel an obligation to share all that we have and all that we do with others? Such was the unconditional love of God for us. How should we react and respond to such love? Lent is a good time for us to contemplate God’s great love for us. How have we responded; how are we responding; how can we respond in the future. The answer seems cleat: with GRATITUDE!!!

**March 18, 2018**  
**Fifth Sunday of Lent**  
**John 12:20-33**

Option 1

**“Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies,  
it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.”**

Most students educated in the United States, and probably many other places in the world, can remember an assignment to plant some seeds in cups and bring them to school when they had

leaves or flowers. Today the exercise may include using artificial light or hydroponics with minerals in solution. We learned that a seed cannot remain a seed and be completely productive. It has to grow, and growth involves change. Jesus knew he had to grow and change and that we all need to grow and change. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to endure the consequences of his repeated call for change. It is time for everyone, and that includes us, to recognize the silly, stupid, senseless and sinful behavior in their lives and to GROW - to CHANGE - to be PRODUCTIVE - to become ALL THAT GOD CREATED THEM TO BE. Lent is a time for us to examine our lives to determine if we are Growing, Changing, Producing Good, and Becoming All that God Created Us to Be?

Option 2

**“Whoever loves his life loses it, whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.”**

Jesus is explaining why he must die and rise from the dead. Jesus knew that a seed that takes root in the ground loses its appearance and becomes a plant with flowers, leaves and new seeds that can provide food for man and beast, along with other seeds that fall to the ground to repeat the life generating process. In order to save, sanctify, and teach us how to live, Jesus must die and rise from the dead. Jesus was teaching us that we must die to our self; to our self-centeredness; to our selfishness, in order to grow to be the person God created us to be - for ourselves and for others. Jesus did not die for his own benefit. As we approach the end of Lent we can prepare for the celebration of the Triduum [Holy Thursday through the beginning of the Easter Vigil] and the Joy of the Resurrection by prayerfully contemplating how we can die to the person we have been and grow to be a person for others. For an example, we can look to Jesus.

**March 25, 2018**  
**Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord**  
**Mk 14:1 - 15:47**

Option 1

**Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.”**  
In today’s Gospel passage from St. Mark we read about the Last Supper and the last events and moments in the earthly life of Jesus. We learn about the pride and wrath of the chief priest and scribes; the envy and lack of understanding of people about why Jesus was so loved; the betrayal of a close friend; the wisdom and counsel of Jesus for his close friends; the lack of courage and fortitude of beloved followers; and the lust for power and brutality of the Roman authorities. We also learn of the love of Jesus for those who hated him, who lost faith in him, who killed him and for all of us. It is a story we have heard many times. It is a story that has been repeated over and over again since the Resurrection of Jesus. Before we are quick to condemn all involved in the story, we must ask if it is a story that has played out, to some extent, in each of our lives? These last few days of Lent and the celebration of the Triduum [Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil] are a good time to ask “Have I, in some way, betrayed Jesus?”

Option 2

**“Why has there been this waste of perfumed oil? It could have been sold for more than three hundred days' wages and the money given to the poor.”**

The Passion begins with the intriguing story of the woman who pours a costly jar of perfumed oil on the head of Jesus in gratitude that Jesus had freed her of her sin. Some present were indignant at the waste of money that could have been “given to the *poor*.” Their concern seems noble. But their admission that there are *poor* among them raises the question: Would there be any *poor* if everyone loved their neighbor as they love themselves as God commanded the Israelites through Moses, and Jesus constantly reminds us. The Passion reminds us of the great love of Jesus for all of us, rich and poor. He suffered and died because he constantly challenged the wealthy and powerful to serve everyone until there are no *poor* among us. Is the presence of *poor* among us today, locally and around the world, evidence that we have *not* “loved our neighbor as we love ourselves.” Is that why Jesus knew “The *poor* you will always have with you. . .”?