

**For The Bulletin Of
14 February 2021**



**THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN
WINTER'S ORDINARY TIME**

From Father Robert

The leprosy about which the first reading and the gospel speak today is not to be confused with contemporary Hansen's Disease, medically identified only in 1868 by the Norwegian scientist Gerhard Hansen. A number of conditions, especially those with the sign of scaly skin, swellings, and exuding bodily fluids are described as "leprosy" in this Sunday's first reading from the Book of Leviticus. Skin that flaked off, fluids that were unnaturally exuded from the body, were considered to be conditions that violated religious-cultural boundaries connected with the integrity, and therefore holiness, of the human body, and so were considered to diminish the worth of the person. People with such conditions were banished from the community, compelled to cry "Unclean!" and make themselves obviously disheveled so that others would avoid them. To be "unclean" was also regarded as a moral failing and therefore sinful. The person who came into contact with such an afflicted one was regarded as

contaminated and as ritually unclean and as adding to the moral pollution of the very gregarious Middle Eastern society.

Leprosaria and Hansen's Disease still exist in some parts of the world, but social and religious alienation because of other causes is sadly much more familiar. Who are today's "lepers," people whom some consider as "polluting" the homogeneous and often exclusive society by their differences in race, culture, social mores, or physical and intellectual disabilities? The attitudes of the Nazis to the Jews, the Hutus to the Tutsis, the second people to the first and indigenous people of a land, are bred by a "leper" mindset. What are our attitudes to those we might consider as weakening the moral fiber of society – drug addicts, HIV/AIDS sufferers, those in prison? Are we on the side of harsh, punitive justice or compassionate restorative justice? And do we consider that the pollution of our planet, by us, can be sinful?

In the gospel, Jesus is approached by a leper. He makes no attempt to move away from him. What He is moved by is compassion, the deep gut-wrenching response that identifies with the suffering of another, and His hand stretches out to touch the man and affirm His choice to heal him. How long had it been since the leper had felt the touch of another human being on his diseased flesh, had heard words of affirmation rather than insult? We should be more enlightened about the importance of touch – the holding of the hand of the seriously ill or dying person, the silent embrace of the bereaved. Yet for some people there is the almost hysterical avoidance of touch the HIV/AIDS sufferer, or of drinking from the communion chalice lest, contrary to all medical opinion, one might be infected by this. Jesus' compassion and humanity bridge the gap

between the holy and the unclean, freedom and taboos, sickness and health.

Jesus tells the man to observe the Mosaic Law by showing himself to a priest for the confirmation of his healing and to offer a public sacrifice, an act of worship from which his leprosy had excluded him. By this instruction Jesus shows that He respects the Mosaic teaching, even though He will soon clash with some of the scribes' interpretation of this. Ironically, the man now goes around publicly and freely, while Jesus must leave the town and go into the country to escape His unwanted publicity. Because He has touched the leper, according to the Law, Jesus is also regarded as unclean and excluded. He has taken upon Himself another's infirmity, in His passion and death He will be the Suffering Servant Who bears all our infirmities and transgressions for the sake of our salvation. Yet people still come to Him, caring nothing for his "infection" and everything for His miraculous power. As those who come to Jesus, what are we seeking from Him? Do we want to be infected with His compassion or with the miraculous? How does Jesus touch us – and how do we touch others?



The scriptures we hear today once again challenge our understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus, a disciple, an apostle. What questions and challenges are raised for you?

In the first reading from Leviticus we hear of people with leprosy being ostracized from the community due to fear over their disease. Which groups in our community face ostracism and isolation due to fear?

The responsorial psalm lifts up the joy to be found in the Lord, even in the midst of trouble. Where do you experience the most joy in your life at this moment?

St. Paul urges the Corinthians to “do everything for the glory of God.” How do we as a parish community live out this command?

We hear that Jesus is “moved with pity” at the plight of the leper and reaches out to touch Him, breaking the law of the time. How as Christians shall we respond when laws, rules, or regulations stand in the way of compassion?



On Wednesday, January 13th, we received a notification from The Vatican that the experience of Ash Wednesday will be different this year due to the pandemic. I share with you the article from Catholic News Service:

The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments asked priests to take special anti-COVID-19 precautions this year when distributing ashes on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, including **sprinkling ashes on the top of people's heads rather than using them to make a cross on people's foreheads.**

The congregation's note on the "distribution of ashes in time of pandemic" was published on the congregation's website Jan. 12 and directs priests to say "the prayer for blessing the ashes" and then sprinkle "the ashes with holy water, without saying anything."

"Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: 'Repent and believe in the Gospel' or 'Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.'"

"The priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places," it said. **"The priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything."**

The usual practice would be to repeat the formula — "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return" — to each person as the ashes are sprinkled on the top of their head or rubbed onto their forehead.

Sprinkling ashes on the top of people's heads, rather than marking foreheads with ashes, is the customary practice at the Vatican and in Italy. Given the spread of the coronavirus, the practice has the advantage of not requiring the priest to touch multiple people.

The Latin, Italian, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese versions of the note also specify that the mask should cover the priests' "nose and mouth."

Here at St. Ignatius of Antioch, Father Moses and I will administer the "Sprinkling of Ashes" this coming Wednesday,

February 17th, as directed by The Vatican, at 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 12:00 Noon, 4:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. **You are invited to Walk Up to the doors of the church where you will be greeted, sanitize your hands with disinfectant, have your temperature taken, and then step forward to receive the sprinkling of ashes on your head. No words will be spoken.** Once the ashes have been sprinkled on your head, you may turn and leave by the right main entrance door. Masks must be worn and social distancing observed at all times.

For the past 16 years, our Lenten Alms have been directed to our adopted parochial school of St. Peter Martyr, Pittsburg. We will once again do this in 2021. Envelopes will be available for your contribution or you may use the envelope provided in your envelope pack. Thank you for your Lenten sacrifices that will be expressed through your financial generosity to St. Peter Martyr and our support for Catholic Education.



Lenten Fasting and Abstinence

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of universal fast and abstinence. Fasting is obligatory for all who have completed their 18th year until the beginning of their 60th year. Fasting allows a person to eat one full meal. Two smaller meals may be taken, not to equal one full meal. Abstinence (from meat) is obligatory for all who have completed their 14th year of age. If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil (on Holy Saturday night) as the "paschal fast" to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus and to prepare to share more fully and

celebrate more readily his Resurrection. Fridays in Lent are obligatory days of abstinence (from meat) for all who have completed their 14th year. As always, anyone for whom fasting or abstinence would pose a health risk is excused.



Meeting With Catechists From Faith Formation

This past Saturday afternoon, I met with the Faith Formation Catechists of our parish to discuss the future of our program. Since the retirement of Frances Rojek last year, her husband, Steve, has facilitated and supported our catechists who are preparing children for First Reconciliation, First Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation. During our meeting, I asked four questions to guide our discussion:

- What have been the strengths of our Faith Formation Program?
- What areas do you believe are in need of strengthening?
- What is your vision for Faith Formation in our parish? Children, Teens, Young Adults, Adults, Sacramental Preparation?
- Do you have recommendations for whom you would like to see as the next Director? What are the qualities and qualifications you believe that individual needs?

The discussion brought the following answers to the above questions:

The strengths of our program have been the catechists, their dedication, their commitment; support of the parents; that it has been family-oriented; provided parent-child bonding; it has taught the beginnings of outreach; the value of in-person learning; bringing in the parents.

The areas in need of improvement include: the need for workbooks for each child; age-appropriate materials; dove-tailing with the Liturgical Year; teaching the structure of the Liturgy; addressing how faith formation connects with their lives; developing greater parent involvement and participation in the Sunday liturgy.

Their vision for Faith Formation in our parish: providing continuity from sacrament to sacrament; consistency and support from the parents; encouraging discipleship beyond the reception of the sacraments; consistent and dedicated parental involvement; catechesis plus involvement for parents; possibly develop a “buddy system” where older students mentor the younger; ongoing catechesis for all catechists.

The last question on recommendations for whom they would like to see as the next Director and the qualities and qualifications necessary for this person: someone who is “team oriented,” someone who is dedicated, passionate, connected to our community, a person of strong faith; a practicing Catholic Christian; someone who knows and understands Scripture; a graduate of the Diocesan Pastoral Ministry School; someone who is dependable and available; someone who is strong in catechetics and teaching; someone who realizes that faith formation starts with parents who are the first educators of their children; someone who understand the necessity of the “re-formation” of parents; someone who is

dedicated to “keep the fire burning, to share the faith, and who has a “ripple effect” on both students and parents.

All of this information will be shared with both the members of the Pastoral Staff and Pastoral Council as we go forward with the selection process of a new Director. Once they have received this information, they will be invited to make recommendations as to how to proceed. I will continue to keep you updated as the process unfolds.



2021 Bishop's Appeal Kickoff This Weekend

This is the opening weekend for the annual Bishop's Appeal. Bishop Barber decided to continue with the theme, ***Rebuild My Church***, a phrase inspired by St. Francis of Assisi. By sharing our talent and treasure with our sisters and brothers, we are making a sacrifice and returning to God a small portion of the many gifts he has given to us.

By embracing ***Rebuild My Church***, you are contributing greatly to building up the Kingdom of God here in the East Bay. Please pray for our fellow parishioners, clergy, leadership, and those served by the ministries offered by the Church, and for the success of the 2021 Bishop's Appeal. Our parish's fundraising goal is **\$34,900**. Remember, all gifts to the Appeal are equally important. All of us are asked to make a sacrificial, proportionate and thoughtful gift. Those who are blessed with

more are challenged to give more, but everyone is asked to respond.

While parishes rely on the financial support of parishioners through weekly offertory collections, the diocese also relies on these same parishioners to make possible the many services it provides each year. The Bishop's Appeal provides funds to help offset some of the following programmatic expenses:

- Parishes & Schools in Need,
- Clergy Formation & Support,
- Religious Education & Faith Formation,
- Pastoral Ministries & Services and
- Priest Retirement & Care.

It's important to note that the funds collected go directly to the services provided by the diocese to the church community. None of the funds are used for debt payments or legal affairs.

In the coming weeks, the Diocese will mail a direct appeal package to those who participated in this effort in prior years. It will include a personal letter of appeal from the Bishop, a brochure explaining in detail where the proceeds will go, and a personalized pledge card with return envelope.

If you don't receive an appeal in the mail, pledge cards and brochures will be available during walk up Holy Communion on Sundays or from the office.

We have designated March 6-7 as commitment weekend. ***We are also pointing to Sunday March 7 to resuming in-person liturgies in the parking lot.*** Please bring your Bishop Appeal donations to the Sunday liturgy, the walkup Holy Communion, or drop them off at the church or rectory.

A couple of reminders:

- Please make your checks payable to “Bishop’s Appeal” (not St. Ignatius of Antioch). All Bishop’s Appeal pledges are forwarded directly to the diocese.
- When you complete the pledge card, be sure to list St. Ignatius of Antioch as your parish.

Additional information will be provided as this effort progresses. Please prayerfully reflect on responding to this appeal. A link to the Bishop’s video message is posted on our website.

support for caregivers



Nourish for Caregivers is a ministry created specifically to offer support to the unique challenges of in-home caregivers. This Christ-centered program brings resources and support to family caregivers who carry both the blessing and burden of providing comfort and healing to people who are ill, suffering, and need special care. Caregivers can join local and/or national Zoom calls for support by contacting:

Mimi Streett
Coordinator, Office of Marriage & Family Life
[510-267-8392](tel:510-267-8392)
MStreett@oakdiocese.org



The Sanctuary Lamp burns to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Alfredo and Elina Avelar from their daughter, Terry Pedras.

Opposition to Francis rooted in opposition to Vatican II

8 February 2021

by [Michael Sean Winters](#)

Theology



A cross is seen as Pope Francis celebrates Christmas Eve Mass, which was not open to the public, in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican 24 December 2020. (CNS/Vatican Media)

At the end of January, Pope Francis delivered an important [address](#) to participants in a meeting of the National

Catechetical Office of the Italian Bishops conference. It warrants attention from all the local churches because it shows, I think, why the opposition to Francis is rooted in the desire to put the Vatican II toothpaste back into a pre-conciliar tube.

In the address, the pope presented an understanding of catechesis that is so far from the dry appeals to chapter and verse that tend to characterize a certain kind of apologetical, conservative Christianity. "Thanks to the narration of catechesis, Sacred Scripture becomes the 'environment' in which we feel part of the same salvation history, encountering the first witnesses of faith," Francis said. "Catechesis is taking others by the hand and accompanying them in this history. It inspires up a journey, in which each person finds his or her own rhythm, because Christian life does not even out or standardize, but rather enhances the uniqueness of each child of God."

Contrast that approach with an essay by then Archbishop, later Cardinal, Raymond Burke regarding Canon 915 and denying Communion to pro-choice politicians, posted at the EWTN online library. He writes that "the question regarding the objective state of Catholic politicians who knowingly and willingly hold opinions contrary to the natural moral law would hardly seem to change from place to place."

In Burke's world, it is easy to tell the sheep from the goats, there is no grey, no ambiguity, and no sense of the mysterious workings of grace that, sometimes, take a lifetime to come to fruition. Who needs pastors? Just distribute the catechism, which is apparently self-explanatory. Burke is not a Protestant preaching "Scripture alone," but a Catholic preaching "Catechism alone." Francis could not be more different.

The second section of the talk deals with the nature of receiving Vatican II, and it is a barnburner. The Holy Father quoted his predecessor, St. Pope Paul VI, who in 1971 addressed the first International Catechetical Congress, saying: "It is a task that is constantly being reborn and constantly renewed for catechesis to understand these problems that arise from the heart of man, in order to lead them back to their hidden source: the gift of love that creates and saves." Francis adds, "Therefore, catechesis inspired by the Council is continually listening to the heart of man, always with an attentive ear, always seeking to renew itself."

Renewal is not reinvention. The council did not plop out of the sky. The reforms were built upon the *ressourcement*, the return to the sources of Christian doctrine, the Scripture first and foremost and secondly the writings of the church fathers. You can spot a follower of the council, irrespective of their ideology, quite easily: They, like those early Christians, display wonderment at the amazing claim at the heart of our faith, the Crucified lives, the tomb is empty. That is why Francis is so appealing, is it not? He talks and acts like one who believes the tomb is empty.

Francis continues, and I cite this paragraph in its entirety:

This is magisterium: the Council is the magisterium of the Church. Either you are with the Church and therefore you follow the Council, and if you do not follow the Council or you interpret it in your own way, as you wish, you are not with the Church. We must be demanding and strict on this point. The Council should not be negotiated in order to have more of these... No, the Council is as it is. And this problem that we are

experiencing, of selectivity with respect to the Council, has been repeated throughout history with other Councils.

It is imperative that all of us, not only the catechists, think ecclesially, think with the church, and that means drinking deeply in the theological wells of Vatican II. There is no other path forward that keeps the church together and keeps it true to itself.

In the immediate post-conciliar period in the U.S. it was the Catholic left that ran amok, exercising "selectivity with respect to the Council," and often being punished by ecclesiastical authority for it.

Now, it is conservative Catholics who not only find themselves in dissent from the teachings of the council, but who openly disparage it or reject it outright. Last year, disgraced former nuncio Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò [made it clear in an open letter](#) that his difficulties were as much with Vatican II — he calls it at one point "the coup d'etat of Vatican II" — as with Francis. Viganò's rantings are published and celebrated on a variety of conservative media outlets from LifeSiteNews to EWTN, bypassing pastoral relationships and normal ecclesial channels of communication.

This we must remember: Behind the opposition to Francis is opposition to Vatican II. The church in Latin America from which the pope came has been the locus of the most fertile theology since the council. The bishops there have received the council in ways we in the north have not, and it is time for us to listen and to learn. They have never stopped posing the question: What does it mean to exercise a preferential option for the poor?

In the third and final section of his talk, the pope highlights the need for community. It

is a beautiful reflection, and I encourage you to read it.

All three sections really point the way forward for Catholics: We need to continue the process of receiving Vatican II and find genuine renewal and reform in dialogical, synodal, faithful reflection upon those texts. In church history class, they taught us that it takes about 100 years to receive a council, so we are only about halfway there. We have had some detours already. It is time to get back to work appropriating those magnificent texts and making them our own.



Join Dan Schutte on a self-directed virtual Lenten retreat and make the journey from ashes to glory.

Includes:

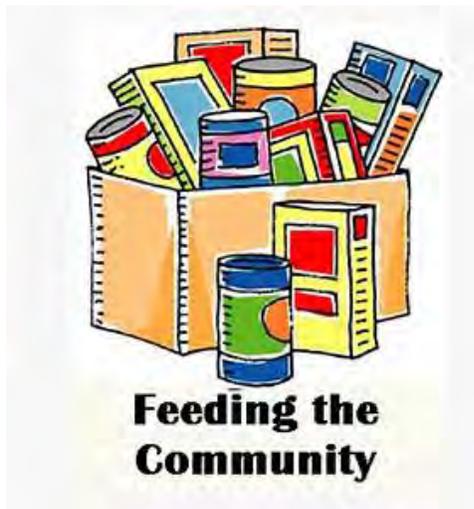
- Eighteen video presentations by Dan
- Accessible from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday
- Each presentation concludes with a song for prayer
- Downloadable retreat workbook/journal
- Retreat concludes with live ZOOM conversation with Dan

- Consider giving a virtual retreat to a friend or loved one



I pray this retreat will be a time of hope and renewal for you.

For more information and to register, go to NCRONLINE.org



From Werner Hoch

I just received a wonderful thank you letter from the food bank. They thanked us for all the help we have given to the food distribution here at St. Ignatius of Antioch Parish.

I am very proud of all the dedicated helpers that come to support the food bank of Contra Costa-Solano Counties and help with the distribution of fruit and various vegetables that are on the truck every 1st and 3rd Friday. Thank you for what you do. It is truly incredible to see so many volunteers arrive regularly to serve the needy families in our community. The food bank could not be this successful without all the wonderful dedicated volunteers.

Last week, we had a low turnout as only 27 families came for the free fruits and vegetables. Usually, we serve between 37 and 50 families. The hope is that people are going back to work. We realize these are very challenging times, however, all of us will be there as long as we are needed to distribute the free food for the food bank and we are looking forward to the next Friday when we can help others who are not as fortunate.

Hopefully, everyone can get back on their feet soon. Until then, we hope you will all stay healthy and safe.

Werner



'Who you become is more important'

11 February 2021

by Judith Best

Ministry Social Justice



School Sisters of Notre Dame who are involved in criminal justice ministry shared reflections on their experience, including, from left: Srs. Mildred Loddeke, Geraldine Neier, Sharon Rose Terbrock, Carleen Reck and Elaine AuBuchon. Not pictured from the discussion is Sr. Rose Huelsmann. (Judith Best)

Sitting outside in masked, pandemic style, I recently asked some of my sisters involved in criminal justice ministry to share reflections on their experience.

All had backgrounds in education and administration before they had chosen to work with those transitioning from prison. Accompaniment of those who had been incarcerated was the context of our sharing.

In our faith sharing, we focused more on how this ministry called them to change, rather than on what they had done. This perspective became the focus of our conversation.

School Sister of Notre Dame, Mary Margaret Johanning had once welcomed me to a new ministry by saying:

"Who you become here is more important than what you do here."

Here are a few ideas from the six sisters responding.

Rose (15 years in that ministry) said: "When I listened to stories of the crimes an inmate suffered before committing a crime himself, I began to understand how hurt begets hurt. And I am careful of the hurt I've received, knowing my hurt can beget hurt."

Carleen (17 years) shared: "I wasn't sure my claustrophobia would allow me to visit prisoners. To test my strength, I asked to visit the St. Louis Work House to see if I could handle the clanging of gates and waiting for the next one and being caged in."

Meeting inmates and learning from their hope, she conquered some of her fears and spent 17 years in criminal justice ministry, where she initiated hiring ex-convicts as case workers. When a case worker sat down to interview a new client and the man said, "You don't know what it's like to be leaving prison," the caseworker surprised him by sharing his story.

Geraldine (11 years) told of meeting someone who needed a bus ticket to Columbia, Missouri, and when he received it, his comment was: "I've got to make it right this time."

"Sometimes the simple gift of a backpack, with a toothbrush, and other essential items, valued at \$10, was a lifeline for a few days. Knowing that he could find help in the midst of transitioning from prison life meant much."

"It's all about the mission of Jesus," Geraldine said with conviction. "*Visit prisoners, clothe the naked and feed the hungry ... this is what we do.*"

In her recognition of hearing loss in herself, she said, "We all have a limited time to carry out the mission of Jesus. So make the most of the time we have by helping others get a second chance at life."

As our faith-sharing continued Elaine (17 years) said she was "awakened" to a whole new world and gave these examples:

- "I didn't know people that didn't eat every day."
- "When taking a woman shopping for kitchen supplies, I suggested a new coffee pot; later I realized the woman didn't have enough money to buy coffee."
- "I kept in touch with this single mom who now has raised two boys and has a full-time job with health benefits."
- "I felt humbled by the woman's patience as I recognized her reality."
- She rejoiced with Ron who has recently been told he will be released from prison after serving 33 years; he had been convicted as a juvenile. His desire to change his life was evident, and she noted he had been in her meditation class for five years. Millie (6 years) said: "My journey with people in prison began with participation in Residents Encounter Christ retreats for both men and women." Tears accompanied her sharing of memories as she recalled some of her family members who would make racial comments when she was a child. Later she recognized the institutional racism of her small town.

Eventually she became a receptionist at Criminal Justice Ministry, a re-entry nonprofit in St. Louis, and, even though an introvert, learned to accept and trust those

she met. As she grew in her respect for others, she felt joy in meeting them. "I often learned from listening to former inmates who would mentor one another. One comment touched me deeply: 'I made up my mind never to go to prison again.' "

Recalling our original focus, Sharon (7 years) said, "Who I've become because of volunteering at Criminal Justice Ministry includes:

- Becoming a better listener; talking less and listening more.
- Allowing myself to be touched by those who share their vulnerability so honestly.
- Recognizing that our basic needs are the same: a desire for respect, love and forgiveness.
- Saying with deep feeling, "There, but for the grace of God go I."

"One day I had a little basket on my desk; one York mint was left and I offered it to a client who had just been released from prison. He enjoyed it and then with tears in his eyes said, 'I had forgotten people could be kind.' "

Sharon continued: "Another man newly released from prison was waiting in the courtyard, sitting at a table. When she asked how she could help, he responded, "I'm looking at the trees. How wonderful to see trees and feel the breeze!"

Originally, when I had asked one of our sisters for an interview, she said, "We're not into systemic change. We just do the little things that make folks know they're human."

According to their website, Criminal Justice Ministry (CJM) "has become one of the leaders in re-entry services in the community drastically lowering recidivism rate of the formerly incarcerated from 66%

nationally to 22% as a CJM program graduate." Through a variety of programs and speakers, an anger management class, and personal support from staff and volunteers, folks are given a second chance at life.

According to their [website](#), CJM has offered 40 years of service and "is the whole package for re-entry," providing financial assistance as well as food, clothing, transportation and housing along with emotional support and encouragement. "If you are returning from a period of incarceration, make an appointment." And the website makes this point:

"We do not base our neighbor's worth on past actions. Instead we systematically assess their current needs and provide service that will positively impact the individual as well as community."



Sr. Rose Huelsmann

Sitting among my sisters and hearing their stories was inspiring to me.

Rose had been asked by a client-friend to be present with his family at his execution, an experience she will never forget.

Carleen had been executive director and had one colleague call her the "[Spitfire Sister](#)" for her dedication to those incarcerated. In her farewell address after spending 17 years working for those imprisoned, she told a story.

"When I was 4 years old, my mother sent me to our neighborhood grocery for a loaf of bread. I picked up the loaf of bread and while waiting to be checked out — tried to read anything I could — not knowing any hard words but could recognize the word 'free,' on a small box of raisins, so I put the box in my pocket and paid for the bread."

"By the time I reached home, the grocer had phoned my mother, saying that I had stolen raisins. When I pulled out the box and showed her the word 'free,' that's when she taught me the next word, 'recipes,' followed by an address to request free recipes. Fortunately, I could return the raisins, explaining my reading limitations, and that was the end."

Carleen continued, "It was my first offense, but some people are remembered for the worst thing they've done and never remembered for anything they did right."

And she concluded by saying, "Working with others we try to "reflect another's worth to them, to help them reach their full potential."

This is the meaning of education to School Sisters of Notre Dame; it is our small gift to those incarcerated, and recalls our original

focus: "Who" we've become is one who realizes our shared humanity with the incarcerated body of Christ.



Judith Best

Judith Best, a member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, is coordinator of SturdyRoots.org and gives presentations on the heritage of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She is also exploring evolution as the bridge between science and religion.

Justice Corner by Carolyn Krantz, Pastoral Associate

As we enter more fully into Lent, we are invited by the scriptures to go deeper into what it means to have faith. "Faith is the capacity of the heart that allows us to draw close to the present and find there the underlying thread connecting the moment's experience to the fabric of all life. It opens us to the bigger sense of who we are and what we are capable of doing."(1)

St. Paul invites us to "Do everything for the glory of God." That means that we get up in the morning praising Him for the beauty of the rising sun. It means that we greet everyone we encounter as an opportunity to know that they are loved. It means that we do our menial tasks without complaint. It means that we are always seeking to improve our understanding of God's life within and around us.

Lent is a time that we examine our lives

more closely and discern where we can do more. St. Ignatius of Loyola not only sought to do all for the glory of God, but he was always looking for the "Magis," the more we can do to become like Christ, and to see Christ in the least of our brethren.

We are at the beginning of a new administration and the beginning of the end of our struggle with the pandemic. What ideas do you have for these beginnings? Will you write your politicians about immigration or equity in wages? Will you try to do a new project with a relative whom you disagree with? Will you choose to walk with a struggling family member? Will you seek to become an ally with a person of color? Will you visit the sick or imprisoned? Go into the desert places that Jesus sought out in the Gospel and see what new callings come to mind. Here are some resources to pursue:

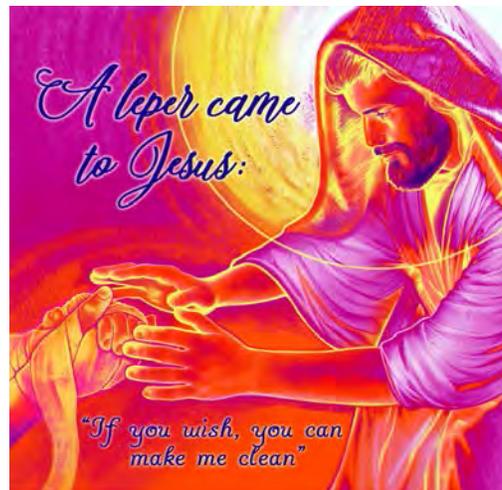
On immigration, look up the Kino Border Initiative or the American Immigration Council. On resources to help others, look up the recommendations of ICARE in the I4C website. If you want to help hunger, look up the Contra Costa/Solano Food bank or Feeding America. Most of all, hold your desire before God and let His Spirit direct you to how you can make a difference.

In the book of Leviticus, God is instructing Moses and Aaron on how to deal with lepers. He says they must cry out "Unclean, unclean." The problem is that we are all lepers, that is, sinners before the beauty of God. When it comes to doing our part to bring Christ into the world, we can all say we have not done enough. We can all cry, "Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am a sinner., I have missed opportunities to put love into the world." We can ask for healing this Lent. We can ask where God wants us to act.

I can hear you saying, “I am too busy,” or worse yet, “I don’t want to be with those people.” This Lent ask the Lord where He wants you to be. Where does He want you to bring His love? Then act! Don’t let this Lent go by without doing some act of love in your neighborhood or community. If you find yourself complaining about the government, look up Common Cause and see if you can help on the political scene.

Some people say that faith and politics don’t mix, but if we do not bring our faith to what is going on around us, we end up with bad leaders. We want to be persons of integrity and hope and we must encourage others to put their faith to work so we can be governed with integrity and equity. On this Valentine’s Day, let us resolve to put love into the world in whatever way God calls us to do it. We must draw close to the present and be open to the bigger sense of mission we have been given.

(1) Sharon Salzberg, *Faith*: New York, Random Press, 2012, p.80.



ASH WEDNESDAY



Even Now

O God,
you show yourself throughout the ages
as gracious, merciful, slow to anger,
abounding in steadfast love.
You give us not what we deserve but turn
your face toward us
and rain down your blessings upon us.
Even now you call us to return to you.

Help us to answer you.
Give us the strength that we need
to look at a broken world and respond,
that in loving one another we can love
as you love,
boundlessly and with compassion.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday, February 17, 2021 Called Together for a Broken World



Today's readings: Joel 2:12–18; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 12–13, 14 and 17; 2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18. As the Church begins a period marked by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we hear Jesus teach us how we are to fast. Jesus tells us that our observance should be hidden, and that it will be seen by our Father, who sees what is hidden. And yet we wear our penitence marked upon our foreheads for all to see.

Jesus mentions that the “hypocrites” look gloomy and neglect their appearance because they seek social affirmation of their holiness. It is easy to judge these people of long ago and even easier to judge people we know. Is what they do so foreign to us? All of us desire to belong, to be embraced, to be part of a community.

The prophet Joel calls us to the kind of community we seek; rather than running after superficial approval, he calls all to a communal work, the great fast. When we look at the world around us, just like Joel, we see that everything is not as it should be. We recognize that the world is in dire need of God’s mercy, love, and forgiveness. Joel calls us to rend our hearts. Let us blow the horn and gather the people to ask for God’s mercy and forgiveness on behalf of a broken world. Marked with the sign of ashes, together we go into the world to be a sign of its impending redemption.

How is God calling you to respond to the world’s brokenness this Lent?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, February 15

Prayer

We know that relationships cannot thrive without the gifts of time and attention. When we pray, we give this same time and attention to our most important relationship. Prayer is talking, but also listening. Determine a space in your day to carve out additional time and attention for prayer this Lent. *Today's readings: Genesis 4:1–15, 25; Psalm 50:1 and 8, 16bc–17, 20–21; Mark 8:11–13.*

Tuesday, February 16

Almsgiving

What does the world need? It can be a pretty overwhelming list. We know that we live in a world where many things are not as they should be. When you look at the world around you, what breaks your heart? What makes you outraged? These feelings can be a way that God calls you to live out the call you received at your baptism. Pay attention to what you feel passionately about, and then respond by being God's love in the world. *Today's readings: Genesis 6:5–8; 7:1–5, 10; Psalm 29:1a and 2, 3ac–4, 3b and 9c–10; Mark 8:14–21.*

Wednesday, February 17

Fasting

When discussing the found sheep with a group of children, the topic of the ninety-nine left in the wilderness came up. One child said, "They have to fast from the Shepherd's presence in order for the flock to be whole again." Another child chimed in, "But they don't mind! They are glad to do it! That's how much they want everyone to be together." When the Church fasts together, we do so because we live in an in-between time: Jesus has ascended to the Father, he has not yet come again. We fast in anticipation of Jesus' arrival, when there will be no more sorrow, tears, and pain. We fast willingly because we want our broken world to be whole. *Today's readings: Joel 2:12–18; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 12–13, 14 and 17; 2 Corinthians 5:20–6:2; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18.*

Thursday, February 18

In Surrender, Freedom

When we surrender our will to the will of God, we find freedom. It is a paradox that denying ourselves makes us free. Yet very often, we want what is not good for us. In our striving, we can gain the whole world and lose ourselves. Copy these words: take up your cross and follow me. As you look at the statement, ask yourself what crosses you face. How would your life change if you embraced your crosses rather than avoided them? *Today's readings: Deuteronomy 30:15–20; Psalm 1:1–2, 3, 4 and 6; Luke 9:22–25.*

Friday, February 19

Act with Justice

The words of Isaiah direct our fast to the service of justice. We hear that the fast pleasing to the Lord is one that sets the oppressed free, feeds the hungry, brings homeless people into our homes, and clothes the naked. Think about one issue of justice that particularly touches your heart and get involved. You could serve at a soup kitchen, work at a homeless shelter, or host a baby shower for a local pregnant woman in need. This fast prepares us for the heavenly feast, where God shall wipe every tear from our eyes and his kingdom will have no end. *Today's readings: Isaiah 58:1–9a; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 18–19; Matthew 9:14–15.*

Saturday, February 20

Follow Me

When Jesus told Levi "Follow me," Levi's response was clear: "leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him." Levi was probably no stranger to the judgments of the holy people of his day since tax collectors were reviled for collaborating with the Romans. Judgment never called Levi to a new way of living. What did? An encounter with a person who offered relationship and love. What joy Levi must have felt to offer a banquet at his home for Jesus, to be forgiven. Spend time in prayer thinking about what you must leave behind in order to respond to the call to follow Jesus. *Isaiah 58:9b–14; Psalm 86:1–2, 3–4, 5–6; Luke 5:27–32.*



Expansion Project Update

Current Status Briefly

Tentative start date: April 2021.

- Construction bid of \$1,545,315 accepted January 2021. Does not include other costs associated with construction (e.g. inspections, architect fees, change orders, etc.) or replacing the tile roof.
- City of Antioch Building Permit issued January 2021.
- Parish has requested that Diocese approve and sign the construction contract. Will have a firm start date once construction contract is signed.

Project Scope Summary

- Existing cabinets in the parish hall will remain and the restroom will be converted to storage.
- Remove all the appliances, fixtures, equipment and cabinets in the existing kitchen.
- Remove the wall that separates the existing kitchen and the parish hall. The capacity of the hall will increase approximately by the area of the existing kitchen.
- Reuse as much as possible all the existing kitchen cabinetry in the newly constructed storeroom and a new storage area in the existing hall.
- Construct an entirely new kitchen and storeroom located where the existing patio stands. See appliance list on reverse. Install a janitor's closet with chemical storage and mop sink.
- Installation of a monitored fire alarm system that will also include the sanctuary.
- Bury the existing "V" ditch and expand existing concrete walkway to accommodate the new kitchen. Replace and relocate the existing wooden retaining wall with a keystone wall.
- Construct a new trash enclosure at the north side of the vacant field.
- The roof (not part of this project) will be replaced concurrently with the expansion construction using our reserve funds and an alternative roofing contractor.
- The scope of the project is limited by available funds in order to obtain the necessary approval to move forward. It does not include upgrades to the parish hall flooring, interior lighting or new furnishings (e.g. tables, chairs, dishes, silverware or kitchen pots and pans).



Kitchen Equipment Summary

- Two six burner Wolf ranges with ovens.
- Two pot filler faucets located at the ranges.
- 24” Wolf griddle with stainless steel stand.
- Vulcan Fryer - will use our existing fryer.
- 16’3” Gaylord exhaust ventilator including an Ansel fire suppression system.
- Two large stainless steel food preparation areas with a sinks.
- Enclosed dry storage area with shelving.
- Manitowoc ice maker—will use our existing ice maker.
- Beverage Air walk-in cooler with Westpac shelving.
- Beverage Air reach-in freezer with adjustable tray slide racks.
- Stero Model dishwasher with clean dish drying shelving.
- One 3 compartment stainless steel sink with drain boards.
- Grease removal system, including a below ground grease interceptor.
- Gaylord condensation removal hood located at the dishwasher.
- Appropriate sinks dedicated solely for handwashing.
- Mop sink, mop holder and chemical storage cabinet (located in the new storage room outside the kitchen area).



Finances

As noted in the Annual Pastoral Report for 2020, the parish committed \$60,000 from parish operating funds to move this project forward. If you have any experience with construction or even home remodeling, you know that it is likely that additional funds will be required in order to complete the project as described above. **Your on going commitment to your campaign pledge is critical. 250 families pledged to this project. If you haven't pledged but are able to do so, please contact the parish office for the necessary forms. EFT and credit card options are available.**