



In his homily last weekend Deacon Steve mentioned the three lengthy stories from the Gospel of John found at the heart of Lent: The Woman at the Well, The Man Born Blind, and the Raising of Lazarus from the Dead.

All three are about faith. The gift of faith enhances our vision. While faith enables us to see better, sin causes blindness. Lenten Penance Service will be March 12. Our second graders will be experiencing the grace of this sacrament on March 5. May we join them on the 12th so that the Lord may open our eyes too.

DAILY LITURGIES AND INTENTIONS:	
Monday, March 3	Lenten Weekday
8:00 a.m.	Liturgy of the Word with Communion
Tuesday, March 4	Lenten Weekday
8:00 a.m.	Deceased of the McLaughlin Family
Wednesday, March 5	Lenten Weekday
8:00 a.m.	Jane Rau
Thursday, March 6	Lenten Weekday
8:00 a.m.	Liturgy of the Word with Communion
Friday, March 7	Lenten Weekday
8:00 a.m.	Gerry Sack - Birthday
Saturday, March 8	Lenten Weekday
4:00 p.m.	Josephine Alexander
Sunday, March 9	Fifth Sunday of Lent
7:30 a.m.	St. Mary Community
9:00 a.m.*	Gary Harvey
10:30 a.m.	Margaret Walsh
6:30 p.m.	Living and Deceased of the Ladies Society
* Co-operative nursery available in Parish Center	

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT: Fifteen-year-old Ben Underwood of Sacramento, California, is one typical teenager. He loves skateboarding, playing basketball with his friends, and listening to music. Ben also happens to be blind after losing his sight to retinal cancer at the age of three. But thanks to a loving mother who has always told him he can do anything in life he wishes, Ben simply lives his life like his friends. "I'm not blind," he says, "I just can't see." Many of us who can see are, in fact, blind. We live our lives in the darkness of sin and despair. Today's reading from the Gospel of John illustrates that even after a lifetime of blindness, we always have the opportunity to see the light, the light of the world that is Jesus Christ. His love flowing through our hearts removes the shroud of darkness and despair, giving us hope and confidence and allowing us to find our way and to follow his greatest commandment, to love one another.

One of the greatest obstacles to true faith is the feeling of doubt. Those who challenge the existence of God, who allow themselves to express doubt, have instilled upon themselves a spiritual blindness (CCC 2088). The first commandment teaches us to always cherish and nurture our faith, protecting it to the point of rejecting any and all opposition to it. On this fourth Sunday of Lent, renew your determination to live in the light of the Lord.

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WELCOMED INTO THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Those who joined the Catholic Community through baptism on February 24, 2008 are:

Liam Edward Rylan Rebholz son of Brian and Shanna Rebholz.

CALLED HOME TO THE LORD

Robert (Bob) Burns, returned to our loving Father on February 20, 2008.

**OUR GIFT IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S GENEROSITY:
February 23-24**

\$10,203.20	276 envelopes	Flowers (78 env)	\$838.00
\$4.70	5 children	Roofing (5 env)	\$202.00

Thank you. Your dedication to the continued fiscal health of the parish is greatly appreciated. Only those who use their contribution envelopes may request a yearend statement of contributions.

THE "ELIJAH CUP" is presented to a family each weekend



at the end of Mass. The family takes the "Elijah Cup" home and uses it as a focal point while praying daily for an increase in religious vocations. Our Elijah cup is Fr. Jim's ordination chalice and paten. This week the C. Thomas family will be presented the Elijah

cup at the 9:00 a.m. Mass. The next scheduled families are:

March 9, Whiteley family at 10:30 a.m.

March 16, Duckett family at 6:30 p.m.

Call Rich Hobbs at 937-743-2485 to schedule a weekend or use the e-form at the parish website: <http://www.stmaryfranklin.org>.

ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK	
Sunday	Youth Night at 7:00 p.m.
Monday	Education Commission at 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	Craft Session at 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday	Youth at Pantry at 5:00 p.m. First Reconciliation at 7:00 p.m. KofC Board meeting at 7:30 p.m.
Thursday	RCIA at 6:30 p.m.
Friday	Church Cleaning at 8:30 a.m. Fish Fry at 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross at 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	Men's Fellowship at 7:00 a.m.
Sunday	Youth Night cancelled

Thought for today

The Lord looks into the heart. What does he see? We are given the gift of sight and insight. Look into the heart with love. (1 Samuel 16:6-13 & John 9:1-49)

WERE YOU MARRIED IN 1958 OR 1983? Couple celebrating their golden or silver wedding anniversaries during 2008 please contact the parish office at 937-746-5404 no later than **today**. The 2008 Golden Wedding Anniversary Mass will be held at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral, Saturday May 3 at 2:00 p.m. If you are celebrating **60, 70 or 75 years** of marriage we want to know that, too!



A NOTE TO OUR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES, THEIR PARENTS AND SPONSORS: The final class in preparation for the reception of the sacrament will take place this evening, March 2 at 7:15 p.m. Practice for Confirmation will take place at St. John Chapel in Middletown on Saturday, March 8 from 9:00-10:00 a.m. The celebration of the sacrament will take place as part of Mass on Sunday, March 9 at 2:30 p.m. at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral in Cincinnati.

REMINDER TO THE PARENTS OF OUR SECOND GRADERS RECEIVING FIRST RECONCILIATION: This Wednesday, March 5 at 7:00 p.m., we will celebrate First Reconciliation with you and your children. Don't forget to turn in the Reconciliation certificate found in the back of your child's workbook to Deacon Steve **today**.

A COLLECTION FOR THE NEEDY AMONG US: On Sunday, March 16, the Parish School of Religion will be collecting items for the clients of St. Vincent de Paul. Items to be collected include shampoo, conditioner, soap (body and hand), razors, shaving cream, tissues, 4-pack toilet paper, paper towels, lotion, deodorant, tooth paste, tooth brushes, and mouthwashes. Please bring your items to the Parish Center after all Masses and help support those in need.

OPERATION RICE BOWL: DIGNITY OF WORK AND RIGHTS OF WORKERS: Jean Denis and Francois are neighbors in Coteaux, Haiti. For years they barely supported their families through subsistence farming. In 2002, they joined an agricultural cooperative organized by Catholic Relief Services and began to see change. They received and planted better seed, diversified their crops, found better techniques for raising livestock, learned to combat erosion, and generated surplus crops to take to market. Now their families no longer face hunger or malnutrition. As Jesus transformed the life of the blind man, so CRS transforms the lives of rural farmers. By giving through Operation Rice Bowl and purchasing Fair Trade products, you support the dignity of workers by ensuring just wages and economic self-sufficiency. **A reminder that when returning your Rice Bowl contributions at the end of Lent, please use the envelope provided and write a check payable to St. Mary Church. The parish will then make a single contribution to Catholic Relief Services.**

RCIA THE SCRUTINIES: RITES OF HEALING FOR THE ELECT. This Sunday, we will celebrate the second scrutiny with our elect at the 9:00 a.m. Mass. The Scrutinies are rites for self-searching and repentance and are meant to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, #141*). As we celebrate the Scrutinies with those traveling on the road to the Easter sacraments, we are reminded of our own need for healing and to support the elect with our prayers.

OUR SIGHT IS A PRECIOUS THING! And the ability to see Jesus as our Lord and Savior is an even more wondrous gift. Like the man born blind, we are called to see Christ as one who transforms our lives. Explore this aspect of our faith by coming to the next RCIA session on **Thursday, March 6, at 6:30 p.m. in the Youth Ministry Center**. The RCIA is for everyone in the parish – so why don't more of you come?

DID YOU KNOW? In the Bible, blindness is sometimes used as a metaphor to indicate an interior disposition to spiritual hard-heartedness or a willed lack of sensitivity to the works and the wishes of God.

ST. MARY'S ST. VINCENT DE PAUL Expresses our appreciation to Bernie and Mary Eichholz on the completion of their official service to SVdP. Bernie, with Father Joe, was one of the founders of our SVdP. Without Bernie and Mary's continuous support of SVdP, the organization would not have grown in the service to the needy in our area. There are not enough words to express our sincere thanks to the Eichholz as they retire from SVdP.

On a sad note, we lost our spiritual adviser and number one cheerleader. Bob Burns passed away last week and our organization will feel a real loss not having Bob to keep us on track and remind us of our duties to the needy in our area. We know Bob's prayers many times lead us to make decisions that we struggle with as we do the work of St. Vincent de Paul. With Bob gone we need your prayers even more. Thank you for your support of SVdP.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS: Did you know our Council name is now the Father Charles Mentrup Council 144400, aka the Fr. Chuck Council? Father Chuck was a Knight of Columbus. He made quite an impact during his short time here at St. Mary, and our mission is to carry on his enthusiasm, supporting our pastor Father Jim, and carryout charitable works for the Church, Family, Community, and Youth of our parish. We are gearing up for a membership drive in March, we call the March Blitz. We welcome the men of our parish, 18 years or older, to join the Knights here and help us continue our mission. Look for membership information on the radiators, or call Jeff Rohde 937-748-0836 or George Spears 937-477-9834. From the Fish Fry, we have raised \$100 for Warren County Right-to-Life, and our weekly 50/50 drawing has raised \$280 so far for Vocations. There are 3 more Fish Fry Friday's left. Thanks for your support.



Q What does the healing of the blind man in John's Gospel have to do with Lenten baptismal preparation and renewal?

A Lent is primarily a baptismal preparation and renewal season for all who desire to accept or renew their commitment to Christ. The third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent are called Scrutiny Sundays during which all pray over the catechumens, asking that God will give them courage to remain steadfast in their desire to take on the mind and heart of Jesus. In Lectionary year A, the Gospel readings for these Sundays are from John and all have a strong baptismal focus. The Gospel for the fourth Sunday of Lent is the healing of the blind man from John 9. The narrative relates a tale of coming to faith as one moves from darkness to light, both physically and spiritually through contact with Christ, the light of the world. It speaks directly to the Lenten journey of all catechumens as they continue to clarify their journey in faith. It also challenges the already baptized to recommit themselves to Christ.

John's narrative highlights the reality that Jesus is the one who brings God's light to all. The blind man is asked to wash in the pool of Siloam, a strong baptismal allusion, resulting in his illumination and sight. By identifying with the blind man's passage from darkness to light, catechumens and baptized also affirm their acceptance of and belief in Jesus as the light that illumines life's darkness.

Reflect on how Christ brings illumination in the darkness of your life.

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CLEANING OUR WORSHIP SPACE. A group comes together every First Friday to dust and scrub out church. New members are always welcome. Come this Friday at 8:30 a.m. and help shine up our church building.



On Sunday, March 9, all scouts and leaders are invited to wear your uniform to the 9:00 a.m. Mass. Join other scouting parishioners and receive a special blessing.

ST. MARY LENTEN FISH FRYS sponsored by the **Knights of Columbus** features fish prepared by the chef from **The Pub at the Greene**. The All-You-Can-Eat Fish



Buffet complete with drinks and desserts (donated by Kroger) is served every Friday in Lent, except Good Friday, from 5-8 p.m. with carryout available. Choice of baked or fried fish and multiple sides. All proceeds benefit K of C charities and

St. Vincent de Paul Society. Cost is adult \$10.00, seniors (60+) \$ 7.00, children (11 and younger) \$ 5.00, take-out \$7.00, family eat-in maximum \$30.00.

50/50 raffle tickets are available at each Fish Fry. So far, all money has been paid out. Total raised is \$250.00. We are half way to sponsoring a seminarian. Raffle tickets for a white afghan to be raffled on March 14.

If you can help, call Rocky at 937-743-0226.

MARCH IS THE MONTH OF THE IRISH and we are



All Irish in March. Come and join us for the annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration on Sunday, March 9 from 11:00 to 2:00 in the Parish Center. We are planning a wonderful meal - ham, au gratin potatoes, a veggie, roll and beverage - and your contribution of your **special** salad or dessert to add to our world famous salad and dessert bars. Bring your favorite dish to the Parish Center on Saturday March 9 from 9 to 4 or on Sunday after the morning Masses. Tickets are \$8.00 for adults and \$3.50 for children. Once again we have a lovely afghan to raffle and a silent auction for a reconditioned Singer sewing machine. **Tickets** are available after all Masses this weekend. There will also be a **free** children's raffle and a balloon pop with fun prizes.

Come and be Irish for a day

CHRISTMAS CRAFTERS will meet on Tuesday March 4



at 10:00 a.m. in the Parish Center. We are making yardstick / ruler holders. You will only need to bring a 12 inch ruler. All other supplies have been generously donated.. Questions call Diane at 937-746-6958. **Come join the fun.**



IT'S FOOD PANTRY WEDNESDAY: During this season of prayer and almsgiving, it's important to remember those who are less fortunate. We encourage you to take time to help our Youth Ministry group at the Franklin Food Pantry on Wednesday, March 5. All youth in grades 7-12 and their parents are encouraged to participate. We meet in the parking lot in back of the Food Pantry at **5:00 p.m.** and return there after pizza at **7:30 p.m.** Adult volunteers are needed.

COME PRAY WITH US! The Youth Ministry group will be presenting the Stations of the Cross this Friday in church. Stations begin at 7:00 p.m. This is part of our Lenten devotion to prayer.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: The Annual St. Patrick's Dinner is coming up on Sunday, March 9; we're looking for more teens to help out with serving, cleaning and helping to seat people. Please call Janet Huelsman at 937-746-8709 if you would like to volunteer. Help is needed from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

MARCH INTO ACTION

- ☺ March 2 – High School Youth Night 7:15
- ☺ March 5 – Volunteer at Food Pantry 5-7
- ☺ March 7 – Stations of the Cross – 7:00
- ☺ March 9 – St. Patrick's Dinner – Volunteer 11-2 pm
High School Youth Night cancelled

BEYOND THE PARISH

THE DAYTON SEPARATED, WIDOWED AND DIVORCED SUPPORT GROUP meets Sunday evening at Incarnation's Parish Center located behind the church. All are welcome. Doors open at 7:00 pm. The program begins at 7:30. For more information call Roger Bardsley at 937-291-2040.

PRECIOUS BLOOD SISTERS invite women 18-45 to "A Lenten Vocation Discernment Retreat" March 7-9 at Maria Stein Spiritual Center, Maria Stein, Ohio. The retreat begins on Friday at 5 p.m. with the evening meal at the Spiritual Center and ends after lunch and Eucharistic Devotions at 1 p.m. Sunday at St. Charles Center.

INCARNATION CHURCH, Centerville is holding a spiritual and prayerful **Healing Service for the Loss of an Unborn Child** Tuesday March 4 at 7:00 p.m. This service will minister to families who have experienced the loss of a child through miscarriage or abortion. All are welcome to attend. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available. Contact Tina Smith for any questions regarding this service, 937-885-9914.

COLLEGE AGE MEN AND OLDER: you have a first-rate opportunity to see if the priesthood is for you. If you have ever thought about being a priest, if you desire to be a force for the Lord as a priest, to spend your life for the salvation of souls, you are invited to an informative **Welcome Weekend** at Mount St. Mary's Seminary. The weekend will give you an excellent sampling of what it would be like for you to be in training for the priesthood. The date is Friday, March 8 and Saturday March 29 2009. To get more information and to make your reservation, please call the Vocation Office at 513-421-331 or register online at www.cincinnati vocations.org/fm03282008.php by March 13

JOHN XXIII CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL is still accepting registrations for the 2008-2009 school year. Registration forms can be picked up in the school office, 3806 Manchester Rd., Middletown from 7:30-3:30. New families must provide: birth certificate, baptismal certificate, social security card, current picture and previous 2 years report cards. Questions, call the school office at 513-424-1196.

LENT LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Regular weekday and Sunday Mass, Liturgy and confession Schedules
Mass every Wednesday of February and Wednesday, March 19 at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 5 First Reconciliation 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 12 Parish Communal Penance Service 7:00 p.m.
Way of the Cross every Friday of Lent 7:00 p.m.

NEXT WEEK'S MINISTRY SCHEDULES:

March 8-9	4:00 p.m. Sat.	7:30 a.m. Sun.	9:00 a.m. Sun.	10:30 Sun.	6:30 p.m.
Servers	Casie McCurley	Allison Moore	Julie Brockman Becca Erwin	Patrick Avellano Hunter Cone	Amanda Koslow Sam Mahle
Eucharistic Ministers	Marlene Hartsfield Pat Monnin Norm Pfeifer Karen Streit	Larry Strimpfel Gary Mathes Amy Mathes	Pat Brazie Greg Buchholz Mary Buchholz Carolyn Cusumano	Cindy Brazie Richard Hobe Theresa Hobe Martha Ilg	K Fish Debbie Fish Ed Koslow Greg Mahle
Lectors	Melanie Ledbetter	Paul Puffenberger	Jan Scaglione	Gordon Sauerbrun	Jeff Gross
Gift Bearers		Williams			Gast

Readings for the Week of March 2, 2008

Sunday: 1 Sm 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a/Eph 5:8-14/Jn 9:1-41
Monday: Is 65:17-21/Jn 4:43-54
Tuesday: Ez 47:1-9, 12/Jn 5:1-16
Wednesday: Is 49:8-15/Jn 5:17-30
Thursday: Ex 32:7-14/Jn 5:31-47
Friday: Wis 2:1a, 12-22/Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
Saturday: Jer 11:18-20/Jn 7:40-53
Next Sunday: Ez 37:12-14/Rom 8:8-11/Jn 11:1-45

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Rocky Adams 937-743-0226
Eileen Avellano 937-748-0043
Dan Darragh 937-746-1914
Dan Fedders 937-746-4123
Mark Fields 937-743-9077
Roger Lorelle 937-885-1230
Ron Onderko 937-748-4281
Don Quigley 937-748-5362
Roger Stebelton 937-855-6897



OUR DOORS ARE OPEN: No matter what your present status in the Catholic Church, no matter what your current family and marital situation, no matter what your personal history, age, background, race, etc., no matter what your own self-image; you are invited, welcomed, accepted, loved and respected here at St. Mary Parish.