

Do You Thirst For God?

Imagine yourself getting on a bus. You look down the aisle of the bus and see that there are many empty seats, but no double seats. Consequently you will have to sit beside one of the other passengers. Your choices are an old lady, a man who is definitely poor, a drunken man, a business man smartly dressed, and a priest. Of course you make a quick decision. Which of these persons will you choose?

Actually, your choice of travel partner is not the significant issue here. The real issue is which of the possibilities did you automatically reject? Your prejudices here come into play by the way you exclude certain persons without any deliberation.

Helping us to get rid of our prejudices against certain kinds of people is one of the primary lessons Jesus teaches us. As we see in in this Sunday's reading, Jesus teaches us about prejudice both by his work and example. Someone has characterized Jesus' behavior in today's passage as one of "astonishing, even shocking inclusiveness." First of all, Jesus goes to Samaria, the land of the hated "other" to heal divisions and to bring into the covenant not just those who were ignorant of the old covenant, but those who were unfaithful to it.

Jesus approaches a Samaritan woman in a public place. It is interesting that the disciples, who had been away on a shopping trip, were more shocked to find Jesus talking to a woman than that he was associating with a Samaritan. This was one of many occasions where Jesus' association with women violated the accepted social norms of the period. Jesus' asking the woman for water and his willingness to share her cup makes his behavior even more exceptional in the context of the time.

Jesus' theological dialogue with the woman is unique in its depth and intensity. That he engages seriously in such a dialogue shows that when the fourth gospel was composed, women had a respectful and respected role in the early church.

Jesus' example of "shocking inclusiveness" has much to teach us. It is often easier than we think to approach those we have excluded from our interest and concern. How often have we avoided even incidental contact with someone whose religion, beliefs, race, political views or sexual orientation differs from our own? By refusing to take the first step, we might have missed an opportunity to learn about them.

Jesus showed respect towards this woman's religious views by his willingness to engage in a serious discussion with her. How often we deal with others in a patronizing way and lose an opportunity to enlighten them. It was obvious to both Jesus and the woman that their religious traditions divided them deeply. But even in the face of the deepest prejudices, an open mind can be effective in breaking them down.

When reflecting on our various prejudices, we should remember the words of a spiritual writer: "Whenever we can build a wall around ourselves that excludes anyone from our charity and concern, Jesus is always on the other side of the wall."



Stewardship Report:

Revenue



February 19th:	9,558.09
Faith Direct:	1,039.00
Total Offertory:	10,597.09
Last Year:	10,517.05
Poor Box:	112.00
Every Penny Counts Box:	28.12
Our Parish School Collection	9,057.51
From January 27 through February 19	

Number of Adult Envelopes: 268
Number of Children's Envelopes: 10
Number of Faith Direct donors: 31
Number of Registered Households: 670

2008 Archbishop's Appeal: Thank you to all those who participated in our In Pew campaign for this year's appeal. As always, we deeply appreciate the generosity of your support for this campaign. For those who have not had the opportunity to make a pledge or gift, please join those who have in our community support of the Archdiocesan programs. If you need information on the appeal, there are informational pamphlets and pledge envelopes in the pamphlet rack in the entry of the church. This is another way for us to share our alms with the poor during the Lenten season.

Faith Direct: Have you signed up for Faith Direct? This program is an easy way to give your contributions to the church each month through an automatic debit to a bank account or credit card. By using Faith Direct, you provide the Church with a steady and dependable source of income which is used to operate the various programs here at the Church. If you did not receive a form and would like to sign up for this service, please call the rectory office.



FORWARD IN FAITH: the Archdiocesan capital campaign has been collecting pledges for over two years. Our church receives a percentage of the funds collected to use in our parish. We received our return for October/November/December 2006 in the amount of **\$11,588.00!**

Seventh Grade Shoe Collection Drive: We have started a Lenten project that involves collecting "used but not abused" adult athletic shoes, sizes 7 and larger. The shoes will be shipped to Ghana, get refurbished there, and then be sold to street vendors. The money profited will be used to train farmers in techniques that yield more food and help protect the earth. Our goal is to collect 600 pairs of shoes with your help. Kofi, the farmer, greatly appreciates your generosity and support. "Give us the shoes you don't wear on your feet so other may eat." Shoe drop-off is in the front school office, or you may put the shoes in the large box in the church vestibule. The collection lasts throughout Lent. Thank you for your support of our class project to make a difference to others during this Lenten season!

St. Matthias School Raffle 2008

The 6th Raffle Drawing was Monday, February 18th
Debbie & Henry Wynn of Pennsauken, NJ **won \$300**
The sellers, **Morgan & Jordan Bernard**
from Bowie, MD **won \$50**

Our 2008 Lenten Schedule of Worship & Activities

Catholics and Bible Basics

Tuesday evenings of Lent from 7:00 to 8:15 PM in the School Library. In case of inclement weather, check Father Jeff's voice mail at the rectory one hour prior to the start of class.

Father Jeff will offer a five week course on Bible Basics covering how Catholics read, reflect upon, and interpret the Holy Scriptures; a simple, practical guide to enhance and encourage greater reading and usage of the Bible in everyday Catholic spirituality. Teens, young adults and adults are welcomed. Please, no small children. A limited quantity of study bibles will be available to those participating in the Bible Basics course for a nominal fee.

Lenten Regulations for Catholics

In preparation for the paschal mysteries of Easter, Catholics are reminded of the following regulations for the forty days of Lent: **All Catholics over fourteen years of age must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday (February 6th) and all Fridays of Lent, including Good Friday (March 21st). On both Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, Catholics between the ages of eighteen and fifty-nine should fast.** This means only one full meal that day. Other meals on those days should be of small portion. Snacking should be avoided. One is excused from the obligation if his/her health or work would be seriously affected by this fast and/or abstinence. The Lenten observance of our day places emphasis on prayer, the liturgy, good works, self-denial, and the giving of alms to the poor.

Daily Rosary

Recited at 8:00am Monday through Friday

Lenten Weekday Mass

Monday through Friday at 8:30am

Stations of the Cross

Each Friday of Lent at 7:30pm

Confessions

Every Wednesday of Lent starting February 13th
From 7:00pm to 8:00pm
Every Saturday from 3:30pm to 4:30pm
Good Friday (March 21st) from 10:00am to 11:00am
Or by appointment with a parish priest



"The Light Is On For You" is an archdiocesan initiative to allow all Catholics to avail themselves of the sacrament of reconciliation. Confession is a

wonderful opportunity to set aside our sinful ways and to draw closer to our Lord. Confessions will be held every Wednesday during Lent from 6:30pm to 8:00pm in every Catholic church in the Archdiocese of Washington. If you have been reluctant to come to the sacrament, have been away for some time or just found it difficult to get to a Saturday afternoon confession time, this is a wonderful opportunity to re-connect with Christ and His Church.

Lenten Spiritual Literature

There are several titles available in the pamphlet rack in the church to assist you in your Lenten Journey. Many of the titles are free, although we ask that you make a free will gift to the Poor Box for any of those materials you take. Other more substantial titles are available for a small fee which we ask you to give to the Poor Box or place in the Offertory Basket at Mass. Those titles have envelopes attached with instructions for your convenience.



Mass Intentions for the Third Week of Lent

Monday, February 25

8:30 am Jane Defayette (Living- Birthday)

Tuesday, February 26

8:30 am Dora Defayette

7:00 pm Catholics and Bible Basics Class with Father Jeff

Wednesday, February 27

8:30 am Guadalupe Manlapaz

7:00 pm Confessions until 8pm in the church

Thursday, February 28:

8:30 am Hugh McGarvey

Friday, February 29:

8:30 am Virginia Craig

7:30pm Stations of the Cross

Saturday, March 1-Vigil: Fourth Sunday of Lent

3:30 pm to 4:30pm—Confessions Fr. Stan

5:00 pm Pasquale Ciccone Fr. Stan

Sunday, March 2: Fourth Sunday of Lent

8:00 am Adamma Ugoh (Living) Fr. Bob

9:30 am Betty Moriarty Fr. Bob

11:30am Genevieve Ibe Fr. Stan

Please Pray for: †The Sick and Homebound In Our Parish:

Fr. Augustine Kizito Abizi; Pearl Aitcheson; Sue Babbie; Ann Benson; Audrey Brown; Vicky Calizo; Arlene Case; Marco J. Clark; Fidel dela Cuesta; Eleanor DeMarco; Anne Diemer; Tom Donohue; Bob Drake; Mary Ennis; Ferris (Bo) George; Fr. Charles Green; Andrea Guiang; Gabriel Guzman; Joseph Harrison; Robert Hoke; Charles Jones; Robyn Kirby; Msgr. Peter Long; Msgr. John Madigan; Nancy Maimone; Carol McDonagh; Bill Moore; Larry Murphy; Michael Nardozi; Joseph Sico; Anna Stewart; Veronica Verna; Phil Vullo; †For Our Military Serving in Afghanistan or Iraq: Brian A. Densmore; Ryan A. Morgan † For Our Deceased: Virginia Craig; Betty Barry *Names will be placed on our prayer list for three weeks. To add a name or to request continuing prayers, call Tara Guevara at 301-459-4814 or email tguevara@stmatthias.org.*

Easter Items:

Easter Duty: The Easter Duty is more properly called the Paschal Precept. This states that all the faithful, after they have been initiated into the Eucharist, are obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled between the First Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday. Those in serious sin are also bound to go to confession at least once a year, preferably in this time. (Canons 920 and 989)

Easter Flowers: The Easter mailing will soon arrive in your mailbox. Please be sure to fill out your Easter Flower offering in advance and enclose the names of those you wish to remember and honor prior to March 16th.

Other Items of Note:

Lit for Little Ones: The Catholic Standard is collecting gently used books and computer software for distribution at Catholic Elementary Schools of Washington, D.C., the Center City Consortium and Fiesta D.C.! Please contact Laurie Enceneat at 202-281-2409 for more information. Donations can be dropped off at the rectory between 8:30am and 3:00pm during the work week.