

Reflection on the Gospel

The fierce loyalty of fans for their professional sports teams is an interesting phenomenon. This loyalty is demonstrated not only by their behavior at games, but extends as to spending billions of dollars on related paraphernalia— sweatshirts, caps, jackets, posters, pictures, game items. The fierce loyalty may be difficult to understand because the loyalty is not necessarily reciprocated by the team members, who will nearly always move to another team when offered larger financial compensation. And we don't blame them for this, since the name of the game is money, as far as the players are concerned, and that's where their loyalty is.

The contracts that these professional athletes sign are contracts for services, not for persons. Contrast this with the biblical idea of a covenant. The covenant that is described in today's first reading is definitely between God and us and all of creation. God pledges divine loyalty forever and requires our loyalty in return. Our response to the covenant is to follow the "ways of the Lord" described in the responsorial psalm.

Professional sports can not satisfy the deep need that humans feel for lasting relationships. It is of no great consequence that professional athletes are not loyal to their fans, nor is it important that the loyalty of the fans fades when an athlete's performance doesn't meet their expectations. But life without enduring relationships is tragic and empty. Life without friends is wretched, and that is why no one would ever choose to live without friends. However, God assures us that we can always count on God's friendship and loyalty.

There are several significant features to the covenant that binds both God and us. It is God who makes the first move of reconciliation after the flood. Even before the survivors of the flood can demonstrate their loyalty, God pledges to be faithful to the restored and renewed creation. This pledge is made not only to all those who survived, but also to successive generations as well. It is a multi-generational covenant, signed and sealed once and for all. This is not the way contracts are usually made. Generally each of the signees has some commitment, some assurance, that the other is reliable and can be counted on to fulfill her or his obligation. Saint Peter tells us how far God was willing to go to fulfill the divine part of the covenant. God's willingness to be loyal to the covenant led to Christ's death on the cross. Our part of the covenant is to be loyal to our baptismal promises as God's people. The covenant is a commitment of persons, not services.

We are given a permanent reminder of God's loyalty in the rainbow. The gay community showed good biblical sense by taking the rainbow as its symbol for gay marriages. A political party recently used the rainbow to describe its agenda— bringing together a spectrum of political groups. But remember, the rainbow belonged to God's people, to us, first of all. Usually the rainbow that we see is only a small segment of an arc. But if you have ever seen a rainbow from a plane or high mountain, you will see that is actually a complete circle. In other words, we have only a very incomplete idea of how beautiful God's loyalty is. The circle has been regarded from ancient times as the sign of perfection and completion, a figure without beginning or end. According to tradition, rings were given at a wedding to symbolize the perfection of the couple's love for each other. So, when you see a rainbow in the sky, why not see it as the sacrament that it is?

Covenant is the theme of the Lenten season, a theme that will recur until Easter, when we renew our baptismal promises, our part of the covenant.



Stewardship Report:

Revenue



February 22:	9,031.89
Faith Direct:	1,351.25
Total Offertory:	10,383.14
Last Year:	10,499.65
Poor Box:	218.00
Every Penny Counts Box:	66.77

Number of Adult Envelopes: 196
Number of Children's Envelopes: 14
Number of Faith Direct donors: 37
Number of Registered Households: 668

Forward In Faith: Our parish recently received our Forward in Faith check in the amount of **\$11,015.00** God bless you and thank you for your continued generosity!

Building and Maintenance Fund: Our second collection *this weekend* is for our regular Building and Maintenance Fund. May we suggest an offering of \$20 per household?

The 2009 Archbishop's Appeal: Your pledge goes directly to support the various programs it provides to the community. The Archbishop's Appeal is more than an opportunity for charity, it is an opportunity to provide a source of hope to those many people who turn to Christ's Church for guidance and assistance. Please join the 140 parishes of our Archdiocese to work together in helping others. Saint Paul calls us to do everything for the glory of God. Please prayerfully consider your gift to the appeal this Lenten season. God Bless you for your continuing generosity!



SCHOOL RAFFLE WINNER



Congratulations to
Ms. Ronke Ibirogba, Winner (receiving \$300)
& Bukola Adenuga, Seller (receiving \$50)
of this week's winning raffle ticket!

Longing for
Something? 
Maybe it's God.

Invite Someone back!: This Lent, people across the Archdiocese of Washington are extending a special invitation to those who may have drifted away from their faith to come back to church, prayer and Mass. Faith is a shared experience and our family of faith feels incomplete when someone is missing! Many people have a hard time returning to church because they feel they have never been missed. Let them know they have been missed by extending to them an invitation to come back. Look for special invitation cards in the back of the church and be sure to visit the following website for details: www.maybe-its-God.org.

Our 2009 Lenten Schedule Of Worship & Activities

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 25th) and all Fridays of Lent, including Good Friday (April 10th). 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 or abstinence. The Lenten observance of our time 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 Saturday from 3:30pm to 4:30pm
Good Friday (April 10th) from 10:00am to 11:00am
or by appointment with a parish priest

Lenten Coin Folders

These colorful and simple tools are available for those who wish to have a practical way to give alms to the poor during Lent. Add a quarter or fifty-cents a day to your coin folder and donate the proceeds during Holy Week to the Poor Box.

Lenten Spiritual Reading

Please use the attached envelope for the following titles and place in the Every Penny Counts box or collection basket:

- The Word Among Us (Daily Meditations for Lent 2009): \$4.00
- The Magnificat Lenten Companion (offered at a nominal fee)
- The following titles are available for \$1.00 each:
- Bring Lent Home
- God's Blessing for You
- Blessings of the Cross

Lenten Spiritual Reading: Pamphlets

Please consider a free will gift to the Poor Box for any materials you take.

- How Catholics Worship— What We Do and Why We Do It
- The Rite of Penance: Guide to the Ritual of the Sacraments
- Seeds of Hope: The Way of the Cross, Minute Mediations



Mass Intentions for the First Week of Lent

Monday, March 2:

8:30 am Margaret Cuthbert

Tuesday, March 3: Katharine Drexel

8:30 am Al & Virginia Craig (Wedding Anniversary)

Wednesday, March 4: Casimir

8:30 am Bob Cross

Thursday, March 5:

8:30 am Anthony Kosloski

Friday, March 6: Lenten Day of Fast & Abstinence

8:30 am Carl Leveck

First Friday: Litany to the Sacred Heart of Jesus during Mass

7:30 pm Stations of the Cross

Sat., March 7: Vigil— Second Sunday of Lent

3:30 pm to 4:30pm—Confessions

5:00 pm Ray DeGraff

Sunday, March 8: Second Sunday of Lent

8:00 am Bernard L. Campbell, Jr.

9:30 am James & Caroline Curran

11:30am Charles Stewart

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

Phil Ates; Virgie Azarcon; Carla Baez Gonzalez; Ann Benson; Leslie Berkey; Barbara Brink; Margaret Carr; Fidel dela Cuesta; Don and Muriel Delaney; Eleanor DeMarco; Lisa Farland; Dennis George; Cristin Green; Francis Greenfield; Leslie Hand; Joseph Harrison; Jim Hennessy; Charles Henry; Lena Jacobs; Father Keene; Robyn Kirby; Laura Elaine Kiessling; Ray Krok; Nancy Maimone; Joe Makowski; Mary McGrail; Willie (Bill) Moore; Rosemarie Nardoizzi; Mary Nelson; David Obi; Peter O'Neill; Alice Parker; Dawn Pearson; Irma Perez; June Provini; Rohland Reich; Joe Sico; Walter Stewart; Margaret Zanin; Ryan Zawada **†For the Deceased:** Kathleen Nolan; Oscar Ray Gaskin **†Names will be placed on our prayer list for three weeks. To add a name or to request continuing prayers, contact Tara Guevara by phone at 301-459-4814 or email tguevara@stmatthias.org.**

Faith Formation

Faith Formation Calendar: Parents take note that we have a two-week break coming up. There will be no classes on Monday March 16th and 23rd due to Easter preparation and celebration. I trust you will teach your children the faith by bringing them to participate in the Easter Triduum. Our next session will be held on Monday, March 30, 2008.

RCIA: Continue to pray for our Elect who are almost at the end of the first phase of their journey. Being received into full communion with the Church or completing one's sacraments of Initiation are just the beginning steps to a more fulfilling relationship with the Lord.

Youth Group

70s/80s Retro Talent Showcase: Planning and rehearsals continue for this wonderful parish wide event sponsored by the Saint Matthias Youth Group. Please watch the bulletin for more details to follow soon!