

Reflection on the Gospel

Looking back on his life, Mark Twain made this comment about his father: "When I was sixteen I thought my father was so ignorant that I could hardly stand to have the old man around. When I got to be twenty-one, I was surprised how much he had learned in five years." Virtually everyone goes through that period in life that we call the "terrible teens." This period is characterized by rebellion against parents, teachers, rules, laws and most types of authority.

However, at some point in life we realize the necessity of laws and rules. Just imagine what chaos would result if all traffic laws were suspended for just one day! With the wisdom that come with growing up, we begin to see the purpose behind the laws. We recognize that laws are necessary for our own safety. Imagine yourself driving at night on an unfamiliar road. You welcome the highway signs that warn you that there is a blind intersection up ahead, or the road curves sharply, or that the road is slippery when wet. You appreciate signs that assure you that you are on the right road, or tell you that you are, in fact, heading in the wrong direction.

The Ten Commandments that we heard in the first reading are the highway signs God has given us for our life's journey. Since we only make this journey once, these signs save us personally, and the human family, a great deal of misery, harm and time. Perhaps we could learn their value by ourselves, but it would be at our own expense. The Ten Commandments can better be described as ten short instructions for life. They teach us what is necessary for living a full and God-fearing life. They are nothing more and nothing less than the will of God for human beings. That is why the psalmist says that the commands of the Lord are true. They are a shortcut to wisdom, a wisdom that we could not acquire by ourselves.

Reflecting on these commandments makes us aware that they all deal with our relationship with one another and with God's creation. The seriousness of observing these laws is measured by the degree of harm done to others when they are broken. In previous generations, Roman Catholics were very much aware of what offenses could be called mortal sins. Confession aids often printed in bold, capital letters those actions that were considered mortal sins.

The Roman Catholic Church was not always helpful in forming the proper moral judgment in its members. For example, eating more than two ounces of meat on a Friday was considered a mortal sin. We would have a difficult time convincing many of this today. Can you imagine a priest telling someone that eating a quarter-pounder is a mortal sin? Priests were told that it was seriously sinful to violate the rubrics of the Mass, for example, not keeping the index finger and thumb together after the consecration. Elderly priests can relate that when pious Catholics missed Sunday Mass they confessed the omission even if they were sick or had to care for someone ill. Perhaps the lax conscience that many Catholics now have is a reaction to the days of scrupulosity-understandable, but still not justifiable.

Among the gifts we thank God for in this Eucharist is the wisdom that comes with the observance of God's commandments.



Stewardship Report:



Revenue

March 8:	8,849.71
Faith Direct:	1,712.50
Total Offertory:	10,562.21
Last Year:	11,849.55
Poor Box:	423.00
Every Penny Counts Box:	345.86

Number of Adult Envelopes: 257; Number of Children's Envelopes: 15; Number of Faith Direct donors: 38; Number of Registered Households: 668

Some Expenses this Month:



Washington Gas	\$ 5,619.21
BGE Bill	\$ 3,504.51
<u>Snow Removal</u>	<u>\$ 600.00</u>
TOTAL:	\$12,723.72



School Book Drive: Please join our school in collecting new and gently used books to be donated to BOOKS FOR INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL. Bring your donations in to the Upper or Lower Library or drop them off at the school office. Collection of books will take place from March 12th through March 20th at the school. This drive is being sponsored by Krista Scanlan, a senior at Bishop McNamara High School.

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.

Recycle You Paper: Take a moment to help reduce waste while earning some extra cash for our school by bringing your recyclable paper waste to the Green and Yellow dumpster behind the church!

Thank You Letter in Response to Our Recent Special Collection for the Vietnamese Dominican Sisters:

"Dear Reverend Father Jeff: Greetings from Viet Nam! We are informed by Sr. Maria Goretti Vu Oanh, O.P., Prioress Provincial of The Immaculate Province in Houston that you have given to our congregation and The Mary Immaculate Province the donation of USD 3,694.85. On behalf of the Congregation, we thank you very much for your generosity in supporting our mission in Viet Nam. Please also extend our heartfelt gratitude to all benefactors and friends who contributed generously to this collection.

May God reward you abundant blessing and graces. Be assured of our daily prayer for you, especially in this Lental season.

With whole-hearted gratitude and appreciation, we remain."

Gratefully your in Christ,
Sr. Therese Pham Thi Bach Tuyet, OP
Prioress General
VIETNAMESE DOMINICAN SISTERS
OF ST. CATHERINE SIENA

Faith Formation

First Communion Parent Meeting: Parents of children in second grade (school and Faith Formation) who missed the Parent meeting scheduled for Monday, February 23 have another opportunity to attend this final meeting to be held on Monday, March 16, 2009 at 6:45 pm in Friendship Hall. Those parents whose children (2nd and 3rd graders only) are yet to be baptized must also attend this meeting. Also parents who have children in 4th, 5th and 6th grade who need to celebrate their First Holy Communion must attend this meeting. You should have received a letter to this effect prior to the first meeting in February. No other make-up meeting will be held and I will not be in a position to meet one on one with parents after this meeting, so do make it a point to be there.

Young Adults Ministry (Bible Study Group): There are over 100 young adults in this parish and yet up to date only 10% of this group have availed themselves of the opportunity to get together with their peers for this ministry. What does Sacred Scripture tell us? Our hearts are where our treasure is... Life is difficult as it is already. Why not make it less stressful with useful tips from the sacred book, which as Catholics should be our guiding light anyway? You will be amazed how much fun it is to share with people in your age group. Come on in and find out some more! We meet in the School Faculty Lounge every other Monday. For further information you may contact Dorothy Mensah-Aggrey at x 205.

Baptism Preparatory Seminar: The next seminar will be held in May since there will be no baptisms in Lent. Parents make sure that you are registered parishioners of St. Matthias before calling to make an appointment for Baptism. Merely "attending" church here without any record of registration does not qualify one to be a registered member. Please help us to help you.

RCIA/RCIC: Continue to pray for the Elect and Candidates as they prepare for the Easter sacraments. We will celebrate the "Scrutinies" during the next three Sundays at the 9:30 am mass. Participating in the liturgies and praying for them is great. But what is even greater is approaching them and offering a welcome handshake to make them feel at home here at Saint Matthias the Apostle Church.

Other Items of Note

Flower Bulb Sale: Think Spring! Now that winter's snows are melting away, plan your spring and summer garden and support our parish! With the help of van Bourgondien, seller of flower bulbs and perennials for more than 100 years, we will hold a spring fundraiser which will yield a profit of 50% of all sales made directly to our parish. Flyers and order forms are available in the church entryway. Please see the insert in this week's bulletin for additional information!

School Children's Artwork In the Church: Please take a moment to view the artwork our school children have created depicting the various Stations of the Cross.

Virtus Training: The school is hosting a Virtus Training session on March 24th at 6:00pm in Friendship Hall. Any person wishing to volunteer with children in the school must complete a Virtus session. Please contact the school office for more information.

2009 Annual Jubilarian Mass: The annual Jubilarian celebration of marriage honoring couple married 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50 and 50+ years will be held Sunday June 7, 2009, 2:00pm at the National Shrine. Archbishop Wuerl will be the celebrant. To register, please contact Tara in the rectory at 301-459-4814 or by email at tguevara@stmatthias.org. All names must be submitted by **APRIL 20TH** in order to be included.

Votive Candles: Please take note that votive candles will be available again beginning on April 5, 2009, and are available to burn for special intentions of the living or in memory of the deceased. The cost is \$5 per candle and candles are available at the Sacred Heart or Blessed Mother Statues on our parish grounds.



Mass Intentions for the Third Week of Lent

Monday, March 16:

8:30 am Maria Phung T. Mai

Tuesday, March 17:

8:30 am Christine P. Prieto

Wednesday, March 18: Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop, doctor

8:30 am Mary Ford

Thursday, March 19: Joseph, husband of Mary

8:30 am Nkemleke Tazanu and Lekealem Kingsley
Fuatabreh

Friday, March 20: Lenten Day of Abstinence

8:30 am Vincent Compas

7:30 pm Stations of the Cross

Sat., March 21: Vigil— Fourth Sunday of Lent

3:30 pm to 4:30pm—Confessions

5:00 pm Ray Degraff

Sunday, March 22: Fourth Sunday of Lent

8:00 am Mary J. Troup (living)

9:30 am Mamie Barbera

11:30am Roger and Tara Guevara (living)

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

Phil Ates; Virgie Azarcon; 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; Bud Jones; Father Keene; Robyn Kirby; Laura Elaine Kiessling; Ray Krok; Nancy Maimone; Joe Makowski; Mary McGrail; Willie (Bill) Moore; Rosemarie Nardozi; Mary Nelson; David Obi; Peter O'Neill; Alice Parker; Dawn Pearson; Irma Perez; June Provini; Rohland Reich; Joe Sico; Concepcion Soberanis; Walter Stewart; Margaret Zanin; Ryan Zawada **†For the Deceased:** Louis Stinnett **†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.**

SCHOOL RAFFLE WINNER



Congratulations to

**Sharon Winslow (receiving \$300)
AND Lori Roane Seller (receiving \$50)**
of this week's winning raffle ticket!

THE LORD'S LAUGHTER

After a four year old girl's grandfather passed away, every time it would rain, she would go to the window, pull the curtains closed and exclaim:



"Nobody look up in the sky...
Grandpa is taking a shower!"

