

## *~From the Administrator~*

Dear Parish Family,

March 14, 2010

This week's Day of Reflection on Wednesday saw several classes of students from our school, and many parishioners throughout the day. Between the confessional, the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the altar, and the video talks by Fr. Raymond Gawronski, I hope that those who were able to attend found 'meat' for their Lenten journey.

Please welcome Fr. Nick Coffaro at the Saturday 5:00pm Mass. Fr. Nick is in residence at St. Brigid of Kildare parish in Midland. He also heard confessions last Wednesday for us. Father was one year ahead of me at seminary, and has been generous in his fraternal support of another young priest (me.)

As we near the end of our Lenten time of penance, I encourage you to renew your efforts at prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Let us continue to pray for each other as we move forward into Easter.

God bless you!

*Fr. David*

# The Fifth Week of Lent

**This week is filled with drama. We continue to prepare ourselves to be open to God's graces. We continue to try to choose Lent, to act Lent, in very concrete ways. We are examining our patterns and realigning our priorities. Our hearts are being renewed, as we experience God's reconciling love and beg for the gift of healing.**

**All this is wonderfully supported by the drama of the daily liturgies. During the week, we have powerful stories about the accusation against Susanna, a healing image lifted up in the desert, the three faithful witnesses who survive the fiery furnace, the account of God's covenant with Abram, Jeremiah's fearful trust in the midst of the plot against him, and Ezekiel's incredible vision of restoration of the nation - that God will make a new and everlasting covenant.**

**Each of these readings is matched with a gospel from John. We hear about witnesses and testimony and judgment, about his being lifted up (on the cross and in glory), about the freedom and liberation he has come to bring, about himself as the fulfillment of God's covenant, the new and everlasting covenant. And, we can feel the opposition rising against him. And we grow in devotion, and grace, as we realize that it is all "for me."**

# The Scrutinies: Celebrated during the 3rd, 4th, 5th weeks of Lent

*These very special rites are celebrated on the last three Sundays of Lent, at liturgies where the Elect are present. The Elect are those in our midst who are preparing for Baptism. Part of their journey to the font is that they have been received among us, the Rite of Acceptance, and they have been enrolled in the Book of the Elect in the Rite of Election.*

*Even if these rites are not celebrated at the liturgy we attend, or not celebrated in our parish or congregation at all, it can be wonderful to reflect upon the journey these Elect are making during Lent, as an inspiration and source of renewal for us in our journey.*

*These are ancient rites and they may, at first, seem strange to us. But they are profoundly rooted in our human experience. We need to examine (scrutinize) how we are, the areas of our lives where we are tempted, or seriously sin - in what we do and what we fail to do. We really need healing and the strength that can come from the support of our sisters and brothers.*

## ***Invitation to Silent Prayer***

*One of the most powerful moments of the Scrutinies is how they begin. After the homily, the Elect are invited to come forward with their sponsors and to kneel down. Then, the whole assembly is invited to pray for them in silence. It is a very solemn moment. This community has cared for these elect for some months now on their journey. We have sent them to reflect more and more deeply on the Word of God, and expressed to them our longing for the day on which they would join us at the table of the Lord. Now we pray for them in this sacred silence, deeply asking God to protect them and heal them in the weeks ahead.*

## ***Intercessions for the Elect***

*We then pray out loud together for the Elect.*

## ***Prayer of Exorcism***

*Then, we pray that they might be freed from the power of the Evil One and protected on their journey.*

## ***The Laying On of Hands***

*In a silent ritual deliberately reminiscent of the rite used for ordination in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the priest or deacon lays his hands for a brief moment on the head of each of the Elect. It is a solemn act of calling down the Spirit of Jesus to be with them and protect them.*