



CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

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Dear Parish Family,

February 27, 2011

This week saw another unexpected funeral, this time of a young lady, Katie Collins. ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO HER O LORD, AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON HER. MAY SHE REST IN PEACE. MAY HER SOUL, AND THE SOULS OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED, THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD, REST IN PEACE.

This Saturday, roughly twenty people from our parishes went to the Youth and Family Night at Central Michigan University for a basketball game. Thank you to those who participated. It was a great time!

The video series *Boundaries* will wrap up this Wednesday March 2 at 6:45 pm in St. Mary Parish Center. Thank you to all who participated with such enthusiasm and openness. Thank you, also, to Mary Moomey who led the program and the discussion.

Lent is quickly coming upon us. The rules for Fasting and Abstinence are as follows: **FASTING** is required of those between the ages of 18 and 59 on **Ash Wednesday** and **Good Friday**. On days of fasting, one full meal and two smaller meals are permitted with **NO** eating between meals. **ABSTINENCE** is required of all those 14 years and older on **ALL Fridays of Lent**, as well as on **Ash Wednesday** and **Good Friday**. Abstinence means refraining from eating food items made of and/or from red meat (beef and pork), of animal fat, or poultry.

The Wednesdays of Lent will begin once more our Soup Suppers at St. Mary. This year, the talks will be on the Mass, it's history, structure, and spirituality. Guest speakers include Bishop Cistone and Fr. Jim Bessert. Fridays of Lent we'll have the Stations of the Cross at Mt. St. Joseph.

Coming up on Thursday, March 24 at St. Mary Church, the Cowans will be returning for a Lenten evening of prayer and praise. This will be Jim and Mary's third visit to our parishes in the past twelve months. Come and be renewed in spirit!

Beginning the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the Tuesday Mass at St. Mary will move from the morning to the evening. The hope is that those who wish to go to daily Mass but who work during the day will be able to attend. God bless you!

The Faith Explained

Fr. David

WHAT IS THE GLORIA?

"*Gloria in excelsis Deo*" (Latin for "Glory to God in the highest") is the title and beginning of a hymn known also as the Greater Doxology (as distinguished from the "Minor Doxology" or *Gloria Patri* or Glory to the Father) and the Angelic Hymn. The name is often abbreviated to *Gloria in Excelsis* or simply *Gloria*.

It is an example of the "private psalms" (i.e. compositions by individuals in imitation of the biblical Psalter) that were popular in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Other surviving examples of this lyric poetry are the *Te Deum* (i.e. "Holy God We Praise Thy Name", "God We Praise You") and the *Phos Hilaron*. (i.e. "O Radiant Light".)

The *Gloria in excelsis* begins with the words that the angels sang when the birth of Christ was announced to shepherds in Luke 2:14. Other verses were added very early, forming a doxology, which in the 4th century became part of morning prayers, and is still recited in the Byzantine Rite *Orthros* service.

By contrast, in the Roman Rite this hymn is not included in the Liturgy of the Hours, but is sung or recited in the Mass, after the *Kyrie*, on Sundays outside of Lent and Advent and on solemnities and feasts.

The Latin translation is traditionally attributed to Saint Hilary of Poitiers (c. 300-368), who may have learned it while in the East (359-360). The Vulgate Latin translation of the Bible was commissioned only in 382. The Latin hymn thus uses the word *excelsis* to translate the Greek word ὑψίστοις (the highest) in Luke 2:14, not the word *altissimis*, which Saint Jerome preferred for his translation of the Bible.

There are also many different musical settings of the translations of the Gloria in various languages.

The Gloria has encouraged the writing of popular hymns such as "Angels We Have Heard on High", "Glory to God", "Angels from the Realms of Glory", "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", and "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks".

PENANCE & REPARATION

Why Penance and Reparation?

If we ask, why penance and reparation, the first answer is: Because God wants it.

But if we press the question: Why does God want it? Then we must say, because in His mysterious wisdom, His justice requires it. We may legitimately say, without really understanding it, that He has no choice. Having given us a free will, if we abuse liberty, we must use our freedom to repay to God the love we have stolen from Him (which is penance) and repair the damage we have done (which is reparation).

Notice, all along I have been using the first person plural, “we”, because penance and reparation are owed to God not only because I have individually sinned, but because we human beings have sinned and are sinning, in our day, on a scale never before conceived in the annals of history.

We know better than Cain after he killed his brother, Abel. We are our brother’s keepers. We are mysteriously co-responsible for what other people do wrong. There is a profound sense in which all of us are somehow to do penance and make reparation, not only for our sinful misdeeds, but for the sins of our country and, indeed, for the sins of the whole human race.

We return to our question: Why penance and reparation? Because, in Christ’s words, “Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish”.

Is it any wonder that on Pentecost Sunday, after Peter preached his sermon, and rebuked the people for their sins, and they asked him, “what must we do,” his first word to the multitude was the imperative verb, “Repent!”

Is it any wonder that Our Lady of Fatima’s message to a sinful world in our day, may be summarized in the same imperative, “Do penance.”

Indeed, the calamities that we have so far seen in this present century: two world wars with more casualties than in all the previous wars of history, and the threat of a nuclear holocaust that hangs over us like a tornado cloud. All of this is God’s warning to do penance and reparation. Why? Because God is not mocked.

You do not offend God with impunity. You do not sin without retribution. You do not ignore the will of the Almighty and expect the Almighty to ignore what you do.

What bears emphasis, however, is that this retribution is either to be paid willingly, with our penance and reparation, or will be paid unwillingly within the divine punishment.

The divine logic is simple, awfully simple, and all we have to do is learn what God is telling us. Either we do penance and reparation because we want to, or we shall suffer (against our will) the consequences of our sins in this life, and in the life to come.

But remember, this penance and reparation is to be done not only for what we have personally done wrong. It is for all the pride and lust, for all the cruelty and greed, for all the envy and laziness and gluttony of a sin-laden human family. God is merciful and in fact as our Holy Father has told us, Jesus Christ is the Incarnation of divine mercy. But God’s mercy is conditional. It is conditional on our practice of penance and reparation.

How to Practice Penance and Reparation

We come to the most important part of our subject: How?

I say it is the most important because we could talk for hours about the theology of penance and reparation and end up, wiser perhaps, but not holier. We must take the next and final step, and ask ourselves, practically, what am I to do about it?

In order to come to the point immediately, let me give you what I call seven rules, three for penance and four for reparation. They can be expressed in seven words, where each word is a divine command as follows:

Pray! Share! And forgive! - for penance, to make up for our failure in loving God.

Work! Endure! Deprive! And sacrifice! - in reparation for the punishment that we and others have deserved for our sins.

Suppose we spend a moment on each of these seven rules, and ask Our Lord, to open our hearts to respond with generosity to His offended Sacred Heart.

Conclusion

As we look into our hearts we must humbly confess that truly, we have sinned, sinned often, sinned deeply, sinned willfully.

But God is good. He gives us the privilege of not only expiating what we have done wrong, but actually becoming more pleasing to Him by our penance and reparation.

It was no pious statement that St. Paul gave us when he said, “Where sin abounded, grace has even more abounded.” In other words, in God’s providence, He allows us to sin so we might repent and become saints.

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Excerpted from

“Penance and Reparation: A Lenten Meditation,”
by Father John A. Hardon S.J.

