

The Work of the People
The Fifth Sunday of Lent

Traditionally this Fifth Sunday of Lent was called The First Sunday of the Passion since it is with this Sunday that the focus of Lent changes from our individual preparation through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to the conflict with the Jewish religious officials that led to Jesus' suffering and death. In a sense, we are in a more proximate preparation for the events of the Triduum.

The first reading for this Sunday is from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah. After calling the people back to God, Jeremiah shifts his tone and offers a message of hope. In contrast to the routing up and tearing down of the first chapter, the prophet now speaks of building. God is not only offering a renewed covenant, but a new covenant written on the hearts of the people.

The Letter to the Hebrews tells us that to obey is one thing; to obey to the point of death is obedience of an almost unfathomable magnitude. In this chapter, the writer compares Christ to the high priest Melchizedek. The passage contrasts the total humanity of Christ with his divinity, through which eternal salvation is achieved for all people of all time.

In today's Gospel, Jesus has entered Jerusalem in jubilant glory, welcomed as a king. Now he must convey to his companions the destiny that is ahead of him. Now the time has come, and it is to death that he must travel. The path to true eternal life is going to involve giving up earthly life. The agricultural metaphor of the seed that dies in order to produce fruit conveys the sense that there cannot be a harvest without the action of dying. Notice that the conversion of the Greeks is mentioned at the outset. This message comes not only to the Jews, but to all people. A powerful voice underscores the truth of what Jesus is saying, but not all can hear it clearly.

The reflection for this Sunday is from Sr. Melanie Svoboda who is a Sister of Notre Dame of Chardon, Ohio and who writes and gives talks and retreats nationally.

How does a grain of wheat feel as it is planted in the soil? To answer that, I imagine interviewing a stalk of wheat, for every stalk was once a grain. Here is what the stalk might say . . .

"I liked being a grain of wheat. I was proud of who I was: Golden. Smooth. Perfectly intact. But then some farmer dug a hole and tossed me into it. 'What's going on?' I asked. But my question was met with silence. Then the dirt came pouring down upon me. I protested, 'Hey! You're burying me alive! Stop!' But no one heard me.

"I sat in total darkness. Afraid. Then I felt something. Moisture. At first I thought, 'Good. I won't die of thirst.' But soon I began to get soggy. I sensed my

golden color was fading. My smooth exterior became wrinkly. My intactness was breached as I was split asunder. I whimpered, 'I'm dying . . . This is the end of me.'

"Then something amazing happened. Out of my shriveled, broken, dying self, two shoots emerged. One began pushing upward, the other downward—both powered by a force within and beyond me. As my root went down, my shoot went up until it broke through the soil and into the brightness of the sun. I was no longer a grain of wheat—but something better: a stalk of wheat. From me would come forth many, many grains of wheat that would help feed the people of the world."

In closing, the stalk said: "Trust the Farmer . . . Befriend silence and darkness . . . Embrace transformation . . . Willingly relinquish your intactness . . . Believe . . . For the Ending is really the Beginning."

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Is. 65:17-21/Jn. 4:43-54
Tuesday: Ez. 47:1-9, 12/Jn. 5:1-16
Wednesday: Is. 49:8-15/Jn. 5:17-30
Thursday: Ex. 32:7-14/Jn. 5:31-47
Friday: Wis. 3:1a, 12-22/Jn. 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
Saturday: Jer. 11:18-20/Jn. 7:40-53
Sunday: Jer. 31:31-34/Heb. 5:7-9/Jn. 12:20-33

LENTEN DEVOTIONS

Stations of the Cross and Benediction
6:00 pm

St. Anthony of Padua
Tuesday, March 19

St. Bernadette Mission
Tuesday, March 26

WHEN GOD MOVES

Join the Diocese of Erie on a pilgrimage to the National Eucharistic Congress in July. Deadline to register is April 17th. Please check both bulletin boards for information regarding registration. Questions call Jo at 724 699-3340.

MY PARISH APP

At St. Anthony of Padua we are pursuing new opportunities to foster a stronger parish life and better engage the New Evangelization. As a part of these efforts we are happy to announce that St. Anthony of Padua now has its own app for Apple and Android phones as well as tablets. Be sure to download the app today by visiting myparishapp.com or searching for myparish on your phone's app store, and stay connected with us all week long.

WORSHIP

Monday, March 18
8:00 am + James Rasavage (Carol Rasavage)

Tuesday, March 19
8:00 am + Claudia Geroni (Kathleen Lipkovich)

Wednesday, March 20
8:00 am + AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
Bud Peters (Kay Weagraff)

Thursday, March 21
8:00 am + Liv. & Dec. Members of
David & Christine Ochs Family

Friday, March 22
8:00 am + Liv. & Dec. Member of PNA Lodge 1540

Saturday, March 23
4:30 pm + Stella & Andrew Bialobocki (Harriet Dine)

Sunday, March 24
8:00 am + AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
Richard Baker (Pauline Baker)
9:30 am + AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
Liv. & Dec. Member of St. Anthony & St. Bernadette

PARISH EVENTS CALENDAR

Monday, March 18
5:00 pm - Doors open for BINGO

Tuesday, March 19
After Mass - St. Anthony Novena
AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
5 pm - 5:45 pm - Confession
6:00 pm - Station of the Cross & Benediction of
The Blessed Sacrament

Thursday, March 21
9 am - 10 am - Bible Study

Saturday, March 23
3:30 - 4:15 pm - Confession

Sunday, March 24
AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
Before Mass - Confession
AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
After Mass - Confession

LENTEN LUNCHES

*All are on Wednesday and begin
at 12:00 Noon*

— Cambridge Springs —

*March 20 - First Church of God
March 27 - First Baptist Church*

— Saegertown —

March 20 - Twelve Apostles Church

ST. BERNADETTE MISSION STEWARDSHIP

Offertory	\$457.00
Maintenance	60.00
Easter Flowers	60.00
Easter	30.00
Good Friday	30.00
Center Rental	50.00
Candles	15.00
TOTAL	\$702.00

SOUP BUFFET At March 18th Bingo

A variety of soups will be served in the Parish Center on March 18, 2024 starting at 5:00 pm until sold out. Cost is \$5 and all are welcome.

EASTER ROLLS

Orders can be placed at both entrances to the church for Nut, Apricot and Raspberry Rolls. The cost is \$15/roll and can be picked up the week-end of March 23 & 24.

PONTIFICAL COLLECTION FOR THE HOLY LAND

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Between Palm Sunday and Divine Mercy Sunday, parishes in the Diocese of Erie are asked to give generously to the Pontifical Collection for the Holy Land.

This collection is the most important source of support for Christians in the Holy Land. Christians continue to be hit especially hard with the war between Hamas and Israel. The money collected helps the Franciscans and others to minister in parishes, provide Catholic education, and aid the Catholic community with housing, food, health care and employment.

Christians in the Holy Land have great need to your prayers and financial help. The wars, unrest and instability there have been especially hard on them. Please take this opportunity to reach out to those Christians who suffer persecution and hardship in the very land where Jesus lived.

I wish you and yours a blessed and joyful celebration of the Easter Triduum.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
Bishop of Erie

*"Lord Jesus,
I praise you for a mercy
that is new every morning."*

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA STEWARDSHIP

Offertory	\$1,156.00
Maintenance	367.00
Candles	16.00
Altar Flowers	250.00
Good Friday	25.00
Easter	25.00
CSA	1,285.00
TOTAL	\$3,124.00
Catholic Services Appeal	
Pledged: \$30,655	Paid: \$16,501

CHURCH NAME: ST. ANTONY OF PADUA

CHURCH NO.:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
