



SAINT BARBARA CATHOLIC CHURCH



Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 25 - 26, 2017

“Do not worry about tomorrow.”

| | |
|--|------------------|
| PASTOR: | Rev. Brian Cline |
| SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: | Matthew Creamer |
| DIR. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: | Mollie Luginski |
| CHURCH SECRETARY: | Judy Wellin |
| YOUTH MINISTER, PR, MARKETING, PLC: | Amy Davis |
| PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON: | Bob Otte |
| FINANCE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON: | Tony Spitale |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| CHURCH OFFICE: | Phone: (330) 833-6898 |
| | Fax: (330) 833-5164 |
| | E-mail: StBarbMassillon@aol.com |
| ST. BARBARA SCHOOL: | Phone: (330) 833-9510 |
| | E-mail: StBarbaraElem@YoungstownDiocese.org |
| PARISH LIFE CENTER: | Phone: (330) 832-4773 |



OUR MISSION STATEMENT: *We, the Christian Community of St. Barbara Parish are united in our solid Catholic faith and tradition. We strive to live out our baptismal call through service to our members and God’s people.*

SCHEDULE OF MASSES:

SATURDAY

4:30 p.m.

SUNDAY

8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:30 p.m.

HOLIDAY

Vigil ~ 7:00 p.m.

9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

WEEKDAY

9:00 a.m.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

SATURDAY 3:30 p.m.

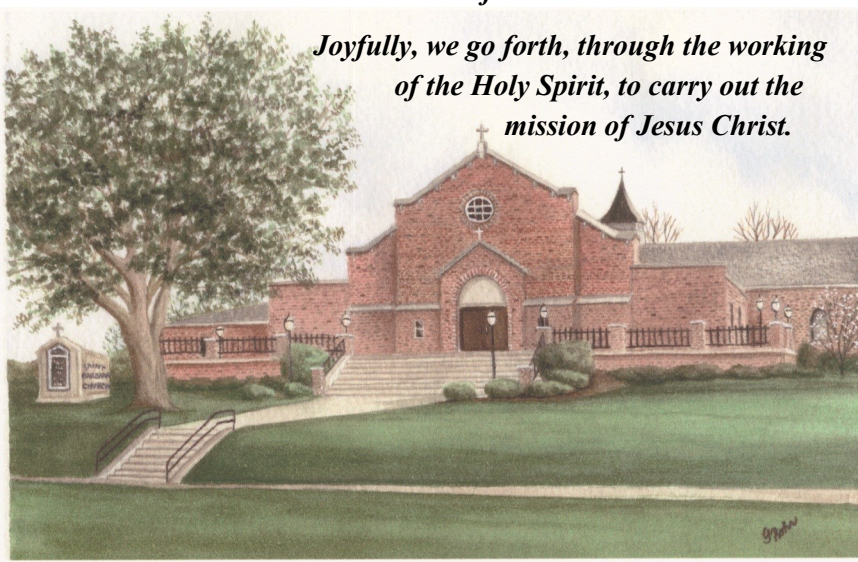
PARISH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday—Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

BINGO: Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. (PLC)

Through support and education, we shall nurture spiritual growth, at all ages, while promoting a strong foundation for our values and beliefs.

Joyfully, we go forth, through the working of the Holy Spirit, to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ.



2813 LINCOLN WAY NW, MASSILLON, OHIO 44647

WWW.SAINTBARBARAPARISH.COM

BAPTISM

Mandatory Baptism Preparation Sessions are held quarterly:
February / May / August / November
Baptisms are held the fourth Sunday of the month.

REGISTRATION

New families should register by phone or by coming to the Rectory. Every wage earner should make a real effort to support the parish with Christian generosity.

RCIA (RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS)

The RCIA is the ancient and currently renewed process for initiating adults into the Catholic Church. It is for those desiring full membership through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. We invite newcomers who are seeking membership to join us! Call the church office for information.

MARRIAGE

Arrange six months in advance.

MINISTRY OF CARE

For visits to shut-ins or the homebound, call:
Tess Simonetti- (330) 832-0597
and Julie Turkal- (330) 832-7868

BULLETIN SUBMISSIONS

Bulletin submissions are due to the rectory by Tuesday at noon. Inserts should be sent in electronic form whenever possible.



Dear Parishioners,

This weekend our parish is joining with parishes throughout the Diocese of Youngstown in making a commitment to the **2017 Bishop's Appeal for Catholic Charities and Church**. This year's goal is **\$4 million**. The Appeal is the primary funding source for Catholic Charities in our six-county diocese. There continues to be an ever-increasing number of needy persons coming to Catholic Charities for help and they depend on our support of the Bishop's Appeal. The Bishop's Appeal also helps to subsidize traditional Church ministries. Bishop Murry is counting on our support of the 2017 Bishop's Appeal. It is his fervent hope that every parish will reach their goal. Our parish goal, though down from last year, is still **\$73,210.08**. This weekend, we ask that you prayerfully make a gift to the Annual Appeal, using the envelope in your pew or the response card mailed to your home (no need to complete both). Thank you in advance for your reflection and generous sacrificial response to the Bishop's Appeal.

God Bless,

Lu Brian

Scripture Readings for the Week 02/26/17-03/05/17

Sun, - Is 49: 14-15; 1Cor 4:1-5; Mt 6: 24 34

Mon. - Sir 17: 20-24; Mk 10: 17-27

Tues - Sir 35: 1-12; Mk 10: 28-31

Wed. - Jl 2:12-18; 2Cor5: 20; 2Cor 6: 2; Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

Thurs - Dt 30: 15-20; Lk 9: 22-25

Fri. - Is 58: 1-9a; Mt 9: 14-15

Sat.- Is 58: 9b-14; Lk 5: 27-32

Sun.- Gn 2: 7-9, Gn 3 1-7; Rm 5: 12-19; Mt 4: 1-11

40 Days for Life March 1st - April 9th - it's a time

of fasting and a peaceful, prayerful vigil to end abortion. Pray at Church; pray in your homes; pray at your work; pray in your car. Join us in vigil and prayer in front of Planned Parenthood at 2663 Cleveland Ave (across from the Post Office) - The vigil will be held daily from 8AM to 8PM. **Please consider joining the vigil for one hour as part of your Lenten offering.** Better yet...please consider joining the vigil one hour **per week!**

Contact Linda Warren 330-826-1885

fortydayscanton@gmail.com.

MINISTRIES AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Youth Ministry: | Amy Davis | (330) 833-6898 |
| Music Ministry: | Ken Boyce | (330) 575-1561 |
| Parish Council : | Bob Otte | (330) 833-7690 |
| Finance Council: | Tony Spitale | (330) 209-8454 |
| Prayer Circle: | Vincent & Lois Drouhard | (330) 833-9790 |
| Social Club: | Joe Pape | (330) 832-2824 |
| Liturgy Committee: | Ken Boyce | (330) 833-6898 |
| Eucharistic Ministers: | LaDonna Kraus | (330) 837-3669 |
| Lectors: | Judy Wellin | (330) 833-8879 |
| Adult Servers: | Joel Fichter | (330) 830-9301 |
| Child Servers: | Ken Boyce | (330) 833-6898 |
| Ushers: | Thomas Kraus | (330) 837-3669 |
| Gift Bearers: | Julie Turkal | (330) 832-7868 |
| Greeters: | Joan Galant | (330) 830-5311 |
| Sacristans: | Paulette Martin | (330) 704-1706 |
| Caring Stitchers: | Mary Sirgo | (330) 837-4588 |
| Faith in Action: | Arlene Nussbaum | (330) 837-2705 |
| | <i>Church Coordinator</i> | |
| P.T.O.: | Jennifer Doney | (330) 904-2599 |
| School Secretary: | Rhonda Annen | (330) 833-9510 |



Saturday – February 25

4:30 p.m. – Chris Ruegg (Margaret Carrothers)

Sunday February 26 - Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00 a.m. LIVING M/M Fagler* (M.A. Settle)

10:30 a.m. – Casimer Eaglowski (Daughters)

5:30 p.m. – People of Our Parish

Monday – February 27

9:00 a.m. – St. Barb’s All Souls’ Intentions

Tuesday – February 28

9:00 a.m. – LIVING- Father Brian (Staff)

Eucharistic Adoration begins after Mass

Wednesday – March 1 – ASH WEDNESDAY

9:00 a.m. - Judy Heimann

7:00 p.m. – Anna Cicchinelli (Judy Wellin)

Thursday – March 2

8:45 am – Devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help

9:00 am - Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion

Friday – March 3

9:00 a.m. – Priests in Purgatory* (Margeric Dus)

7:00 p.m. – STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Saturday – March 4 – St. Casimir

4:30 p.m. - Jim Bowman (Bells of St. Mary’s)

Sunday – March 5 - First Sunday of Lent

8:00 a.m. – George Jurkovich (Dennis & Collee Kelliher)

10:30 a.m. – People of Our Parish

5:30 p.m. – Vocations to the Priesthood

* *Saint Dymphna Shrine Offering*

Flowers on the Altar are in Memory of Soupie Campbell with love from his wife Pauline.



February 28th- Happy Birthday Father Brian!

May God bless you in a special way on your day!

SCHEDULES FOR 2/27/17-3/5/17

WEEKDAY Server –

9AM Masses 2/27,28, 3/3 - JT Brown

Ash Wednesday- 3/1

9:00am -SCHOOL MASS– JT Brown, J. Brown, D. Carbone

7:00pm- E., A., and A. Spitale

SATURDAY/SUNDAY MASSES - SERVERS

4:30 pm – 3/4 – E. Doney, M. Arnold, N. Watkins

8:00 am – 3/5 – J. Fichter, T./C. Fichter, J. Hauser

10:30 am – 3/5 – J. Majors, C. Majors, D. Carbone

5:30 pm – 3/5 - J. Sebolt

LECTORS:

Ash Wednesday- 3/1- 9:00 am- School Children

7:00 pm- C. Giltz, M. Soehnlen

4:30 pm – 3/4 – J. Shrider, P. Renier

8:00 am – 3/5 – MJ Malich, C. Anderson

10:30 am – 3/5 – R. Bossler, B. Kracker

5:30 pm – 3/5– T. Baumgartner

SACRISTANS:

Ash Wednesday- 3/1- 9 am and 7 pm- P. Martin

4:30 pm – 3/4 – M. Carrothers

8:00 am – 3/5 – K. Mitchell, S. Brenner

10:30 am – 3/5– B. Fath, P. Martin

5:30 pm – 3/5- P. Martin, J. Sebolt

OFFERING FOR FEBRUARY 19, 2017

Weekly Budget \$ 12,621.00

Needy \$ 428.36

Regular Collection \$ 7,962.37

On-line \$ 155.00

Total \$ 8,117.37

Deficit (\$ 4,503.62)

523 Total: 4:30p – 174; 8:00a – 104; 10:30- 211; 5:30p- 34

201 Envelopes

Capital Campaign \$ 799,299.00

Collected to date \$ 434,561.14

Gift Bearers This Weekend

4:30 p.m. – Margaret Carrothers

8:00 a.m. – Chalmer and Cindy Smith

10:30 a.m. – Becky and Bruce Brown

5:30 p.m. – Ushers

The Sanctuary (Tabernacle) Candle is lit this week in memory of Dave Kennedy with love from Agie. Please, dear parishioners, pray for him all week. Thank you.

Sanctuary (Tabernacle) Candle

Would you like to remember a special loved one in your prayers and have our parish family remember them in their prayers as well? Consider having the Sanctuary Candle nearest the tabernacle lit for a week for \$10 for your intentions. Call Judy at the rectory 330-833-6898 to schedule it. The week that you schedule will be listed in the bulletin for all to pray.

There is also the "tree" of candles that you can light for \$4.00 each as well.

Thank You – I would like to thank everyone who has been praying for my recovery. I'm finally back in my apartment and am working on regaining my strength.

During the most difficult times, it lifted my spirit to have your cards read to me and now I am touched by your kind deeds. What a blessing to be a part of this St. Barbara parish community.

Sincerely, Betty Baumgartner

St. Barbara Social Club Meeting – Sunday, February 26th at 6:00 pm in the PLC



SPECIAL BINGO NIGHTS TO BENEFIT SCHOOL TRIP TO CHICAGO!

in the St. Barbara Parish Life Center

Special THURSDAY Bingo Nights

March 2nd, 16th & 30th

April 27th

May 4th

Doors Open @ **4:30pm** Bingo Starts @ **6:30pm**

Raffles * 50/50 * Special Meals

Hot Dogs, Cones, Deli Sandwiches, Nachos,
Desserts, Beverages And More Available



the Music Box



This Week's Schedule:

YOUTH CHOIR Practice is

Tuesday, February 28th from 3-4pm

In the School Music Room

(Short) **BELL CHOIR Practice** is

Wednesday, March 1st from 5:30-6:30pm

In the Worship Space

(Short) **CHOIR Practice** is

Wednesday, March 1st from 8-9pm

(After the Ash Wednesday Mass)

In the Worship Space

No FOLK GROUP Practice this week

**ALL GROUPS ARE ALWAYS
WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS!**

Next Week Mass Schedule at a Glance:

Saturday, March 4th: 4:30pm– Cantor

Sunday, March 5th: 8:00am– Cantor

10:30am– CHOIR

5:30pm– Cantor

Contact Ken Boyce at 330-575-1561 or

KBoyce@SaintBarbaraParish.com for more details!

Let's make a joyful noise together!

SCHOOL NEWS

Tuesday, February 28th – DQ Family Night Out - 5:00-8:00 pm at the DQ or Lincoln Way West . They donate 20% of the proceeds back to St. Barbara (including the drive-thru).

**Wednesday, March 1st – School Mass – 9:00 am
ASH WEDNESDAY**

Thursday, March 2nd - Special BINGO - doors open at 4:30 pm – Bingo starts at 6:30 pm. Proceeds for the trip to Chicago.



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION is Tuesday, 2/28

and will begin after the 9:00am Mass

If you can't make your appointed time, please call one of the substitutes:

Verla Lorenz, 330-833-1125;

Judi Frank, 330-828-8343;

Sue Ehmer, 330-704-0965

and Bob Kracker 330-833-1885.

If they are not available, then call the rectory. Please remember: do not leave until the next person arrives, as we should never leave our Lord unattended.

YOUTH MINISTRY NOTES**Upcoming Events:****February 26 - 6:30-8:00 pm** in the Community Room

- We will begin to prepare for Lent by discussing our Lenten practices and coming up with an individual plan for Lent. We will also be planning our March service project.

February 27 - 4:30-5:30 pm in the Church -

Hour of Prayer (ALL are welcome!)

March 5 - 6:30-8:00 pm in the Community Room -

Regular Meeting

****Please mark April 1-2 on your calendars for our Spring retreat at Camp Y-Noah! More details to come!**

LENTEN BOOK CLUB

Lent is a time of increased prayer and growth in our faith. One way to do that is to spend some extra time reading and reflecting on Catholic books. Please consider joining our St. Barbara Book Club this Lent. We will be reading the book *Everybody Needs to Forgive Somebody*, by Dr. Allen Hunt. The book features 12 real-life short stories of the grace that comes from forgiving. Sessions will involve prayer and small group discussion in a friendly, non-intimidating environment. Participants can share as much as they are comfortable during discussions. The book includes a study guide with discussion questions for participants to think about before each session. A morning session will be offered at 10:00AM on Mondays beginning Monday, March 6 through Monday April 10. An evening session will be offered at 6:00PM on Thursdays beginning Thursday, March 2 through Thursday, April 6. Sessions are expected to last an hour. Books will be provided. Sign-up sheets will be at both church entrances following all masses. Please contact **Amy** with any questions at **330-284-9257**.



www.catholiccartoonblog.blogspot.com

LENT*Save the Dates***ASH****WEDNESDAY**March 1st - Masses at

9:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Stations of the Cross begins on Friday, March 3rd at 7:00 p.m. and *all* Fridays during Lent.

World Day of Prayer is Friday, March 3rd



Fish Fry-days will run from 4:30-7:30pm every Friday during Lent. Volunteer form and Menu on p.7!

April 1st - Treasures of the Church- Exposition of Sacred Relics here at St. Barbara Church and in the PLC! See information on page 6 of this bulletin!

Lenten Mission is in a different format this year. All five Western Stark County churches are participating in a joint mission, in conjunction with Lenten Penance Services. Each church will host part of this traveling mission, followed immediately by the sacrament of reconciliation. More mission details soon!

Monday, **April 4th**- Holy Family
 Tuesday, **April 5th**- Ss. Phillip & James
 Wednesday, **April 6th**- St. Marys
 Thursday, **April 7th**- St. Joseph Parish
 Friday, **April 8th**- St. Barbara Parish

EXPOSITION OF SACRED RELICS

Treasures of the Church



St. Barbara Parish presents a teaching and exposition of Sacred Relics on Saturday, April 1st at 6:00pm.

Father Carlos Martins of the Companions of the Cross will be here with his very special ministry to teach about these holy objects. He will bring with him over 150 relics, some as old as 2000 years.

Among the treasures will be relics of *St. Maria Goretti*, *St. Therese of Lisieux* (the “Little Flower”), *St. Francis of Assisi*, *St. Anthony of Padua*, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, and *St. Faustina Kowalska*. In addition, there will also be present a portion of the *veil of Our Lady*, as well as one of the largest remaining pieces of the *True Cross* in the world. Those in attendance will be able to examine and venerate each relic.

In the Church’s history, many miracles and healings have been worked in the presence of relics, and many have been healed through this ministry. **Please do not miss this opportunity.** You are encouraged to bring your articles of devotion (such as rosaries, holy cards, etc.) and pictures of ill friends/family members which you will be able to touch to the reliquaries as a means of intercession.

Join St. Barbara for

Family STEM Day

[Open to the public, families with children from preschool through 8th grade are invited.]

FREE FAMILY EVENT!

Two Sessions:

Thursday, March 9 from 9am-11am and 6pm-8pm



Use your imagination to build at the Legos & Robotics stations, navigate problem-based learning stations, and perform science projects at the experiment stations! Come learn about our STEM partnerships with Seifert Technology, Aultman, Bricks 4 Kidz, and Marathon Petroleum.



Call 330.833.9510 or visit www.sbsmassillon.com for additional details



**ST. BARBARA 2017
FISH FRY-DAY MENU**

FRIDAYS DURING LENT ^{IN THE PLC}
March 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st, and April 7th

**** DINE-IN or CARRY OUT ****

4:30 p.m. ~ 7:30 p.m.

St. Barbara Parish Life Center
2813 Lincoln Way NW
Massillon, OH 44647
330-832-4773

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 pc. Fried Fish Dinner | \$7. ⁰⁰ |
| 2 pc. Fried Fish Dinner | \$10. ⁰⁰ |
| 3 pc. Fried Fish Dinner | \$12. ⁰⁰ |
| 2 pc. Baked Fish Dinner | \$10. ⁰⁰ |
| Clam Strip Dinner | \$10. ⁰⁰ |
| Mac & Cheese Dinner | \$7. ⁰⁰ |
| Childs Dinner* (1 pc. Fish, 1 side) | \$5. ⁰⁰ |
| <i>À La Carte:</i> | |
| 1 pc. Fish or Fried Clam Strips | \$3. ⁰⁰ |
| <i>Sides:</i> | |
| Fresh-cut French Fries | \$2. ⁰⁰ |
| Mac & Cheese | \$2. ⁰⁰ |
| Green Beans or Cole Slaw | \$2. ⁰⁰ |
| Applesauce | \$1. ⁰⁰ |

DINNERS INCLUDE 2 SIDES,
Roll & Butter, Soft Drinks and Dessert
(* Children under 3 eat FREE)

FISH FRY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Anyone interested in volunteering to help please fill out this schedule and either put into the collection basket or drop it off at the rectory. Please X the dates and services for which you are available.

We can't do this without you!!

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|
| Thursday Early SET-UP 4-7pm | March 2 | March 9 | March 16 | March 23 | March 30 | April 6 |
| Friday SET-UP 2-4:30pm | March 3 | March 10 | March 17 | March 24 | March 31 | April 7 |
| Friday SERVE 4:30-7:30pm | March 3 | March 10 | March 17 | March 24 | March 31 | April 7 |
| Friday CLEAN-UP 7:00-??? | March 3 | March 10 | March 17 | March 24 | March 31 | April 7 |

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please return by Monday, February 27th

Any questions please contact Ken Boyce at the rectory at 330-833-6898 or by email at:
KBoyce@SaintBarbaraParish.com

Catholic Charities Serving Portage & Stark Counties

In 2016 in Stark County

Executive Director:

Mr. George Garchar

george.garchar@catholiccharitiesps.org

www.ccdoy.org

Stark County Locations:

800 Market Avenue North

Canton, Ohio 44702

Phone: 330-491-0896

Fax: 330-1298

Adult Day Services

2308 Reno Drive

Louisville, Ohio 44641

Phone: 330-875-7979

Fax: 330-875-3006

Portage County Location:

206 West Main Street

Ravenna, Ohio 44266

Phone: 330-297-7745

Fax: 330-297-7763

- 6,276 food packages (several days' supply) were provided to food insecure households.
- 1,664 people received utility assistance.
- 722 people received assistance with rent to avoid eviction and/or homelessness.
- 965 low-income households received material assistance and case management services through the First Step program for pregnant women and families with children ages 0-3.
- ♦ 98 people participated in "Cooking Matters at the Store," a program that empowers families to stretch their food budgets so their children get healthy meals at home.
- 73 older adults with memory loss or dementia accessed 5,084 days of care at Adult Day Services.
- 667 people received assistance with winter clothing, bus passes, household items donated to the agency, and other basic needs.
- 134 women received assistance from the agency's "Women's Professional Closet," which provides clothing for low-income women entering or re-entering the workforce.

Catholic Charities Serving Portage & Stark Counties

served 9,577 people in Stark County in 2016

List above does not detail all of the services provided by Catholic Charities Serving Portage and Stark Counties



Catholic Charities
Diocese of Youngstown



The mission of Catholic Charities Serving Portage and Stark Counties is to provide service to people in need, to advocate for justice in social structures, and to call the entire Church and other people of good will to do the same. Catholic Charities Serving Portage and Stark Counties is devoted to helping meet basic human needs, strengthening families, building communities, and empowering low-income people.

A LENTEN MESSAGE FROM POPE FRANCIS



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to the certain goal of Easter, Christ's victory over death. This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God "with all their hearts" (Joel 2:12), to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord. Jesus is the faithful friend who never abandons us. Even when we sin, he patiently awaits our return; by that patient expectation, he shows us his readiness to forgive (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lent is a favorable season for deepening our spiritual life through the means of sanctification offered us by the Church: fasting, prayer and almsgiving. At the basis of everything is the word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply. I would now like to consider the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Lk 16:19-31). Let us find inspiration in this meaningful story, for it provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life. It exhorts us to sincere conversion.

1. The other person is a gift

The parable begins by presenting its two main characters. The poor man is described in greater detail: he is wretched and lacks the strength even to stand. Lying before the door of the rich man, he fed on the crumbs falling from his table. His body is full of sores and dogs come to lick his wounds (cf. vv. 20-21). The picture is one of great misery; it portrays a man disgraced and pitiful.

The scene is even more dramatic if we consider that the poor man is called Lazarus: a name full of promise, which literally means "God helps". This character is not anonymous. His features are clearly delineated and he appears as an individual with his own story. While practically invisible to the rich man, we see and know him as someone familiar. He becomes a face, and as such, a gift, a priceless treasure, a human being whom God loves and cares for, despite his concrete condition as an outcast (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lazarus teaches us that other persons are a gift. A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value. Even the poor person at the door of the rich is not a nuisance, but a summons to conversion and to change. The parable first invites us to open the doors of our heart to others because each person is a gift, whether it be our neighbor or an anonymous pauper. Lent is a favorable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ. Each of us meets people like this every day. Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable. But in order to do this, we have to take seriously what the Gospel tells us about the rich man.

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2. Sin blinds us

The parable is unsparing in its description of the contradictions associated with the rich man (cf. v. 19). Unlike poor Lazarus, he does not have a name; he is simply called "a rich man". His opulence was seen in his extravagant and expensive robes. Purple cloth was even more precious than silver and gold, and was thus reserved to divinities (cf. Jer 10:9) and kings (cf. Jg 8:26), while fine linen gave one an almost sacred character. The man was clearly ostentatious about his wealth, and in the habit of displaying it daily: "He feasted sumptuously every day" (v. 19). In him we can catch a dramatic glimpse of the corruption of sin, which progresses in three successive stages: love of money, vanity and pride (cf. Homily, 20 September 2013).

The Apostle Paul tells us that "the love of money is the root of all evils" (1 Tim 6:10). It is the main cause of corruption and a source of envy, strife and suspicion. Money can come to dominate us, even to the point of becoming a tyrannical idol (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 55). Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity towards others, money can chain us and the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace.

The parable then shows that the rich man's greed makes him vain. His personality finds expression in appearances, in showing others what he can do. But his appearance masks an interior emptiness. His life is a prisoner to outward appearances, to the most superficial and fleeting aspects of existence (cf. *ibid.*, 62).

The lowest rung of this moral degradation is pride. The rich man dresses like a king and acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal. For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door.

Looking at this character, we can understand why the Gospel so bluntly condemns the love of money: "No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money" (Mt 6:24).

3. The Word is a gift

The Gospel of the rich man and Lazarus helps us to make a good preparation for the approach of Easter. The liturgy of Ash Wednesday invites us to an experience quite similar to that of the rich man. When the priest imposes the ashes on our heads, he repeats the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return". As it turned out, the rich man and the poor man both died, and the greater part of the parable takes place in the afterlife. The two characters suddenly discover that "we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it" (1 Tim 6:7).

We too see what happens in the afterlife. There the rich man speaks at length with Abraham, whom he calls "father" (Lk 16:24.27), as a sign that he belongs to God's people. This detail makes his life appear all the more contradictory, for until this moment there had been no mention of his relation to God. In fact, there was no place for God in his life. His only god was himself.

The rich man recognizes Lazarus only amid the torments of the afterlife. He wants the poor man to alleviate his suffering with a drop of water. What he asks of Lazarus is similar to what he could have done but never did. Abraham tells him: "During your life you had your fill of good things, just as Lazarus had his fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony" (v. 25). In the afterlife, a kind of fairness is restored and life's evils are balanced by good.

The parable goes on to offer a message for all Christians. The rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, who are still alive. But Abraham answers: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to

them” (v. 29). Countering the rich man’s objections, he adds: "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead” (v. 31).

The rich man’s real problem thus comes to the fore. At the root of all his ills was the failure to heed God’s word. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbor. The word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God. When we close our heart to the gift of God’s word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.

Dear friends, Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor. The Lord, who overcame the deceptions of the Tempter during the forty days in the desert, shows us the path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God’s word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need. I encourage all the faithful to express this spiritual renewal also by sharing in the Lenten Campaigns promoted by many Church organizations in different parts of the world, and thus to favor the culture of encounter in our one human family. Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor. Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter.

From the Vatican, 18 October 2016

Feast of Saint Luke the Evangelist

FRANCIS

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