

Important message from Father Secora



St. Cecilia Catholic Church

CORONAVIRUS - COVID-19

LITURGICAL CHANGES EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

With the already confirmed incidences of individuals infected with the Coronavirus in our state and the likely hood of still more incidences occurring, in conformance with guidelines issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to all (arch)dioceses and dioceses in our country and with direction from our own Archdiocesan Pandemic Response Plan, revised March, 2020, and out of an abundance of caution, as pastor I am implementing the following procedures at Mass effective immediately.

Fundamentals:

1. As has been stated repeatedly, frequent handwashing and the use of alcohol based hand sanitizes are the best defense against colds, flu or the coronavirus. Ministers of Holy Communion (including myself) will apply hand sanitizer to our hands before and after distributing Holy Communion.
2. Out of charity for the health of other members of the parish, if you are sick or are experiencing symptoms of sickness you are not obliged to attend Mass. Please stay home. There is no need to confess this. You can watch Mass on Channel 23 at 8 a.m. on Sundays and EWTN at 7 a.m., 11 a.m. and 11 p.m. You can spend time reading and prayerfully reflecting on the Sunday Mass readings, available in many publications on line at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/index.cfm>.

Liturgical Issues:

1. The Holy Water fonts will remain empty until such time as the threat of the virus passes. You are welcome to fill personal vessels you bring from home with Holy Water from the silver reservoir located outside the ushers's room in the vestibule.
2. The Sign of Peace at Mass. Instead of a handshake, this can be any sign (wave, head nod, elbow bump, fist bump)

Holy Communion:

For Holy Communion while receiving under the fullness of the Sacramental presence of Jesus is offered, Catholic doctrine is clear that receiving Holy Communion under either species is a full communion with the Eucharistic Body and Blood of Jesus.

1. Effective immediately: We will not be offering the option of the Common Cup (the chalice) at Holy Communion until such time as it is deemed safe to do so.
2. If you regularly receive Holy Communion on the tongue, I am asking you to sincerely, for the health of others at Mass, please receive on the hand until the present threat to public health passes. This is not a mandate, but could become so if directed by the archbishop.

Thank you for your efforts to help all of us as the body of Christ to stay healthy in the face of the present situation. I appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

Fr. Jim Secora,
Pastor
11 March, 2020

Sacrifice of Praise

Third Sunday of Lent: Exodus 17:3-7 / Romans 5:1-2, 5-8 / John 4:5-42

Contrition Offers Us a Way to Approach the Lord

In today's Gospel reading, every detail of the encounter between Jesus and the woman at the well, a Samaritan woman, reveals Jesus' deep abiding love for all people.

First, let's look at the location and time of day when Jesus and the woman at the well meet. Jesus is in Samaria, home to people considered unclean by the Jews. Everything they touch, including the water in the well, would have been considered unclean. Note the time of day: It is the hottest time of the day; most of the women would have completed the task of collecting water in the cool of the morning. The Samaritan woman comes at this time to avoid others, specifically the judgment of others.

During their conversation, we can witness the progression of the woman's faith. (Perhaps you recognize yourself in her story?) Her relationship with the man seeking to have his thirst quenched is one with a stranger.

Next, Jesus reveals he knows the intimate details of her life. He gently but clearly states the truth of her current state of life, causing her to consider him a prophet. (Perhaps you, too, have experienced the Holy Spirit nudging your heart, gently revealing behaviors or choices that keep you bound and ashamed.)

After gaining her trust by showing the woman that despite all she has done or who she may be, he longs to give her the promise of salvation; she now sees him as the Messiah. Finally, accepting this invitation to be set free through the living water of his mercy and forgiveness, she proclaims him as Savior. She emerges from this encounter contrite and transformed, symbolically dropping her pot (see Jn 4:28) and with it her



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FOR REFLECTION

- Sometimes we need to ask for forgiveness; other times we need to offer it. Recall examples of each in your life. Did you experience joy from offering or receiving forgiveness?
- When have you encountered God's mercy in your life?
- When you come to pray, do you first seek God's forgiveness for your sins?

old way of life. From what situation can Jesus' mercy and love free you?

As a true disciple, the Samaritan woman, known as St. Photina in the Eastern rite, finds others with whom to share the Good News. She runs to find others with which to share her story and invites them to encounter Christ for themselves. Many became believers because of her testimony. Remarkable are the words of those who returned to the woman to report, "We no longer believe because of your word; for we have

heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world."

Jesus thirsts for each of us to encounter him, to witness our relationship evolve from strangers to believers, to proclaim him as Savior.

Embracing contrition, we can be freed from our burdens through the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Pray for and with a heart of contrition to allow Jesus to gently show who you presently are and who he longs for you to be.



Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for the invitation during Lent to take a closer look at my life, to look deeply at the places in which I may be faltering or missing opportunities to show your glory in the world. Lord, thank you for the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please strengthen my heart to make a healing, grace-filled confession before Easter.

How to Make a Good Confession

Has it been a while since you've been to the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Lent is the perfect time to rectify that. Here is a quick refresher:

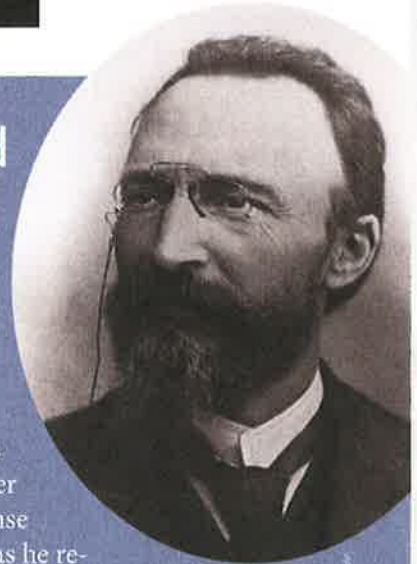
- Examination of Conscience. Spend some time in prayer recalling your sins.
- Confession begins with, "Forgive me, Father, it has been X amount of time since my last confession." If you are nervous or unsure how to proceed, this is a good time to ask for assistance.
- Share your transgressions, listen to the priest's response, and receive your penance.
- Conclude with the Act of Contrition. Feel free to bring it written down if you don't have one memorized.
- Upon leaving the confessional, spend a few moments completing (if possible) the penance the priest has assigned you.

That's it. You are now a new creation in Christ. Allow the grace of this sacrament to guide your prayer, almsgiving, and fasting for the remainder of your Lenten season.

The Great Mercy of God

Bartolo Longo was a priest of Satan before his conversion to Catholicism. He feared, "As the priesthood of Christ is for eternity, so also the priesthood of Satan is for eternity. So, despite my repentance, I thought that I was still consecrated to Satan, and I am still his slave and property as he awaits me in hell. As I pondered over my condition, I experienced a deep sense of despair." Consolation came to him as he recalled this promise from the Blessed Virgin Mary, "One who propagates my Rosary shall be saved," and he recounted, "Falling to my knees, I exclaimed: 'If your words are true that he who propagates your Rosary will be saved, I shall reach salvation because I shall not leave this earth without propagating your Rosary.'"

Blessed Bartolo spent his life promoting the Rosary; in fact, it was from his writings that Pope St. John Paul II based the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, also known as the Mysteries of Light. If Blessed Bartolo's life could be used for such a splendid purpose, imagine what amazing things God can do with you?



Lucas Cranach

Lord Jesus, let my heart never rest until it finds You, who are its center, its love, and its happiness. By the wound in Your heart pardon the sins that I have committed whether out of malice or out of evil desires.

— ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE





2020 Parish Elections Nominations

Pastoral Council

Faith Formation Commission

St. Cecilia Catholic School Board

Nominations for Pastoral Council, Faith Formation Commission and Catholic School Board

Nominations will be accepted through Monday, April 20 at 4pm. To nominate yourself or another parishioner, complete the nomination form found in the narthex (to the right as you enter) and place in the gold nomination box. Please take time to think of fellow parishioners who would provide good leadership for the Parish.

Pastoral Council-The Council is the vehicle for dialog about the life and activities of the parish; a forum for planning and evaluation. The role of the Pastoral Council is, through ongoing pastoral planning, to maintain the integrity of the parish mission and the goals and objectives related to it. The pastor seeks collaborative relationship with the Pastoral Council, considering its guidance and active involvement in reaching consensus. The council meets monthly and members are elected to serve a 3-year term.

Faith Formation Commission-The Faith Formation Commission determines goals and objectives to meet the educational and faith formation needs of the total parish community, which include: the religious education program, youth and child ministry, spiritual growth opportunities, adult and family education, and sacramental preparation. Members are elected to serve a 3-year term.

St. Cecilia Catholic School Board-This board is a permanent standing committee of the Faith Formation Commission specifically charged with governance of Saint Cecilia School subject to the policies and regulations that proceed from the Archdiocesan Catholic School Board, the Archdiocesan Office and Faith Formation and Education, and in conformity with verification standards of the State of Iowa. Members are elected to serve a 3-year term.

Nominations will be accepted through Monday, April 20 at 4pm

2020 Elections Nomination Form

For Pastoral Council, Catholic School Board & Faith Formation Commission

Deadline for nominations is Monday, April 20 at 4pm. Completed nomination forms can be placed in the Gold Box in the Narthex, placed in the collection basket or submitted to the parish office.

Parish Elections are May 16 & 17 (Absentee ballots are available in the parish office May 11-15. Absentee ballots may only be completed in the parish office)

Please take time to think of fellow parishioners who would provide good leadership for the Parish.

You may also nominate yourself (if so, please write "self-nominated" next to your name).

Pastoral Council—3 Vacancies to be filled

Name	Phone/cell number
1.	
2.	
3.	

Catholic School Board—2 Vacancies to be filled

Name	Phone/cell number
1.	
2.	
3.	

Faith Formation Commission—2 Vacancies to be filled

Name	Phone/cell number
1.	
2.	
3.	