



OUR LADY

Star of the Sea

CATHOLIC CHURCH

A POWERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO GROW IN FAITH

Our Upcoming

Holy Week Retreat

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We are familiar with the parable of the sower from Matthew 13. The sower dropped seeds — some fell on a path, some on rocky ground, some among thorns, and some on good soil. Even as Jesus shares this parable with us, we may wonder just how it may apply to our lives today.

Msgr. Stephen Bosso, a full-time faculty member at the St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, will lead us through this parable and others during our Holy Week Retreat at Our Lady Star of the Sea. This retreat takes place on Monday, April 6; Tuesday, April 7; and Wednesday, April 8, in the church at 7 p.m. and during the 8:30 a.m. Masses.

"I'll be connecting what Jesus is truly saying to how the parables apply to our lives today," Msgr. Bosso says. His lessons will build on each other during the three days. However, if you can only attend one or two of the evening sessions, Msgr. Bosso says you will still walk away with valuable information.

Msgr. Bosso says we usually hear the parables during weekday or weekend Masses, and they are isolated from the others. This makes them harder to understand. When the parables are discussed in succession and with more context, we can easily connect them to our lives.

"This mission will apply to the life of a 14-year-old, a 45-year-old with a family, and everyone else," Msgr. Bosso says.





Stewardship of the Cross

The liturgical year is such a gift to us. As we turn the pages of the calendar, reflecting on the life of Christ, we have the opportunity to consider the most sublime events in the history of mankind. Of these events, perhaps none is more beautiful and worthy of contemplation than the one we are about to commemorate — Jesus' sacrifice of Himself for us on the Cross.

It is fitting and, at the same time, paradoxical. It is fitting that God should do it, because only an infinite God could rid us of the infinite debt we owed by our sin. It is paradoxical that He not only did it, but wanted to do it out of pure love for us, His lowly creatures. What is Jesus trying to show us? Even more staggering, what is He really asking when He exhorts us, in turn, to take up our cross and follow Him?

Jesus freely gave His life for the Church, and He calls us to do the same. Some of us may, in fact, give our entire lives for the Church. But for most of us, this giving takes place by a series of daily actions, both large and small, of Christ-like, sacrificial love — specifically, by giving our time, talent and treasure for the good of the Church. Yet, by joining these actions with His, we have the chance to participate in that very same sacrifice. This month, let us take the time to examine our hearts and actions in light of Jesus' as we journey with Him toward the Cross.

Jesus gave Himself unselfishly and excessively.

Consider the manner of His sacrifice — one drop of Christ's blood would have been more than sufficient to save the entire human race, and yet Our Lord Jesus chose to shed every last bit. From start to finish, Jesus showed us by His passion that He wanted to do more than what was merely sufficient. If there was more He could give, He gave it. He never stopped to count the cost or to look for what He could get in return.

Jesus made His sacrifice a supreme act of love for the Church.

Counter-cultural even to this day, Jesus actually upheld sacrifice as desirable — the most perfect way to show our love: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends” (Jn. 15:13). In His infinite wisdom, Jesus now offers this path to us as the way to holiness: “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk. 9:23).

Jesus gave Himself willingly and even joyfully.

“No one takes [My life] from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again” (Jn. 10:18). At the first Eucharist, Jesus even went so far as to say, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you” (Lk. 22:15). Needless to say, the Passover sacrifice to which Jesus referred was not a symbolic one, but was in fact His very Body and Blood He would give for us through the sacrifice of the Cross. Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts more like Yours.

A Lenten Stewardship Prayer

*“O my God, teach me to be generous:
to serve You as You deserve to be served;
to give without counting the cost;
to fight without fear of being wounded;
to work without seeking rest;
and to spend myself without expecting any reward,
but the knowledge that I am doing Your Holy will.”*

— St. Ignatius of Loyola



A Letter from Our Pastor



A Steward's Guide to LENTEN COMMITMENTS

Dear Parishioners,

Making a Lenten commitment is simple. Keeping it is the difficult part! The Lenten commitments we make ourselves are frequently a lot like New Year's resolutions — they sound good, but we don't get far into the new year before they've been broken and then abandoned.

If you are like me, you approached Ash Wednesday with the intention of doing better than you did last year. But as Lent continues, our enthusiasm may wane, and it seems harder and harder to keep our commitment. And then we begin to wonder, "What's the point?"

Often, we realize we've already broken our commitment in some way — perhaps we decided we'd pray a decade of the Rosary every evening, but we were too tired one night or simply forgot. Maybe we slipped up and ate a cheeseburger on the first Friday in Lent, even though we know that all Fridays in Lent are days of abstinence from meat. So we conclude that we just can't keep a good Lenten commitment and give up trying to make it a special season in any way.

If you're tempted to give up, **don't do it!** Just pick up where you left off, ask God for forgiveness, and begin again. Our Lenten commitments should challenge us, and we can grow spiritually. We can even benefit from

our failures if they help us better realize how much we need God's grace.

After all, nothing worthwhile is accomplished without discipline and structure. Whether it's a football player in training, a musician practicing or a medical student mastering the intricacies of the human body, hard work, discipline and even frustration will be part of the process. Only those who keep at it will master the skills those activities demand.

The spiritual life follows the same principles. Spiritual growth requires hard work, discipline and practice. Making our wills conform to God's will is the result of repeated efforts over a period of years.

It is true that sometimes we must reevaluate our Lenten commitments. If we are aware we're consistently failing in some way, we may need to modify how we approach our commitment. Above all, the key to success is our steady, day-to-day observance of prayer, fasting and almsgiving all through the season.

But when we do fail, we should remember the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). He had failed miserably. Suppose he had concluded, "I've blown it. I rejected my father and my home. There's no way I can go back." He'd have given up in despair. But "coming to his senses," he decides to return home in



penitence, to be a servant. When he arrives home, he is welcomed with joy and restored to his position.

This parable sets forth the pattern we should follow when we fail in our Lenten commitments. Begin our observance again, and keep up our Lenten journey, eventually arriving at the joys of Easter. God our Father will welcome us. Then we will indeed be ready to celebrate.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Keith Brennan
Pastor



Diocese of St. Augustine Celebrates Its

“SO THAT THEY

On Jan. 5, Bishop Felipe Estévez proclaimed 2020 the 150th anniversary year of the Diocese of St. Augustine. Throughout this year, our diocese will offer many opportunities for parishioners to come together to celebrate and commemorate this milestone as one family in faith. The year's theme, “So That They May All Be One,” is a reflection of the diverse cultures and gifts that have made our diocese a strong and vibrant home for the Catholic faith over the last century and a half.

As Kathleen Bagg, Director of Communications for the Diocese of St. Augustine, points out, the theme of unity in diversity is a particularly meaningful one in 2020.

“I think in today's society, we can sometimes forget the fact that we are all one people, one community, trying to serve our families, our loved ones and community,” Kathleen says.

“We're not a Church of one color and we're not a Church of one nation. We're part of a mosaic when we all come together and bring our own talents and treasure and willingness to serve, no matter where that service takes us.”

During this milestone year in the history of our diocese, we are invited to reflect on the many people who worked together to create a thriving Catholic community in Florida. When the Diocese of St. Augustine was first established in 1870, it encompassed almost the entire state. With Bishop Augustin Verot at the helm, the diocese had only three missionary priests to serve an extensive geographical area, meaning that some Catholic communities might only see a priest once every month or so. As a result, parishioners stepped up to help build their local churches — both metaphorically and literally. For

example, when St. Ambrose Catholic Church was built in Jacksonville in 1875, each parish family was asked to provide both manual labor and five pine trees for the cause!

This year, parishioners looking for ways to honor this history by engaging in the anniversary celebrations have many opportunities for spiritual growth and connection. The diocesan Eucharistic Congress will take place in May and feature a long list of well-known motivational speakers, including Dr. Scott Hahn, Sister Bethany Madonna and Javier Iván Díaz, among others.

The two speakers Kathleen is most excited about seeing at our Eucharistic Congress both have deep roots in the diocese of St. Augustine.

“Having Bishop Baker and Bishop Nguyen come home is something I will really enjoy,” she says. “Bishop Baker was a pastor at the cathedral before going to the

“I think in today's society, we can sometimes forget the fact that we are all one people, one community, trying to serve our families, our loved ones and community. We're not a Church of one color and we're not a Church of one nation. We're part of a mosaic when we all come together and bring our own talents and treasure and willingness to serve, no matter where that service takes us.”

— Kathleen Bagg, Director of Communications for the Diocese of St. Augustine



150th Anniversary

MAY ALL BE ONE”

Diocese of Birmingham. Bishop Nguyen at St. Joseph but is now in the Diocese of Orange, where the largest Vietnamese population resides. I'm looking forward to them coming home because they will have personal stories to share about our diocese.”

Bishop Estévez first began holding an annual Eucharistic Congress in the diocese several years ago. Born of a desire for people to come to deeply know the beauty of the Eucharist and how we live it out in our daily lives, these gatherings combine inspirational speakers with vibrant liturgies and inspiring music. Participants will be able to break into tracks offered in English and Spanish and two different age groups for children — there will truly be something for everyone!

Another extraordinary opportunity for celebrating as a diocese this year will take place on Oct. 11 with the papal coronation of the Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche. Last September, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops granted Our Lady of La Leche the status of

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St. Augustine
Celebrating 150 Years
So That They May All Be One

national shrine. Bishop Estévez then petitioned Rome for a feast day in honor of Our Lady of La Leche, which is now celebrated on Oct. 11. This year's canonical coronation will confer to the image universal importance in the Catholic Church. On the same occasion, Bishop Estévez will consecrate our diocese to Jesus through Mary.

Through the many special events offered throughout the year, Bishop Estévez hopes to see the parishioners in our diocese become even more united than ever — a family of believers bringing their diverse

experiences and talents to serve the Lord together.

“The bishop wants to see the diocese come out as one family,” Kathleen says. “We are stronger as a family than we are as individuals. He appreciates all the gifts that people bring to the Church and the sacrifices they have made. It's a celebration of our diversity. Helping Catholics know their faith better, helping them see where they can serve and use their gifts, walking with them on their faith journey — it is all linked to the mission, ‘So That They May All Be One.’”

We encourage all parishioners to prayerfully consider attending the special events and liturgies that have been planned for the 150th Anniversary of the Diocese of St. Augustine. More info is available by visiting the 150th Anniversary section of the diocesan website at www.150years.dosafl.com. You can also visit the following link for a full calendar of events — www.tinyurl.com/yx5ylyb6



CARRYING ON THE LEGACY OF FAITH AND PRAYER:

The Divine Mercy PRAYER GROUP

The Divine Mercy devotion holds a special meaning for parishioner Barbara Conway, who has been fervently spreading its powerful message since the 1990s. This love was first fostered by her husband, Jim, who was a great champion of the Divine Mercy apostolate during his lifetime.

“He just thought this devotion was so incredible and wanted to make sure it was shared with the community,” Barbara says. “He was always very diligent in praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. And even now, a lot of people still remember Jim and how he would sing the Divine Mercy Chaplet in a kind of Gregorian chant. It was just beautiful.”

Barbara says that both she and her husband were in awe of the Divine Mercy message, which is one of unconditional love and mercy. This message — which has been part of Catholicism since its foundation — was further spread through St. Maria Faustina. Born in Poland during the early 1900s, St. Faustina was a humble nun that our Lord used as His messenger of mercy. Her Diary, which she was instructed by Christ to keep, details her experiences about Christ and His mercy.

An important part of this devotion is the Divine Mercy Chaplet, a prayer which is particularly powerful when prayed during the three o'clock hour of mercy or at the bedside of the dying. Using the beads of the rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet walks us through a meditation on Christ's passion and death, beseeching His mercy “for the sake of His sorrowful Passion.” There are several powerful promises associated with the chaplet, including a peaceful death.

“Together, we were just in awe of the promises that Jesus gave to St. Faustina as to the benefits and the promises of saying the chaplet, especially with someone who is dying,” Barbara says. “The promise in particular that Jesus Himself will come and stand with the person before the



Members of the Divine Mercy Prayer Group

Father — not as a just judge, but as compassionate Savior — is just mind boggling.”

Though the chaplet can be prayed privately at any time, our Lord tells us plainly in Scripture, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). That's why Barbara and her fellow Divine Mercy Prayer Group members continue to gather every Friday following the 8:30 a.m. Mass to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet as a community.

“There is something just powerful about us gathering together in prayer like that — a special kind of grace that we receive,” Barbara says.

Each year, the group also comes together daily for the Divine Mercy novena, which begins on Good Friday and culminates the Sunday after Easter, now officially known as Divine Mercy Sunday.

“On Mercy Sunday, we always gather for a celebration at 3:00 in the afternoon — the hour of mercy — which includes adoration, a homily, followed by the blessing of images and benediction.”

Barbara feels blessed to continue spreading the message of Divine Mercy here at the parish, providing novena pamphlets each year, coordinating the prayer group, and praying the

continued on page 7



The Divine Mercy Prayer Group *continued from page 6*

Divine Mercy Chaplet with the sick and dying she encounters when bringing Holy Communion to the sick and homebound. Not only does it continue to strengthen her own personal relationship with Christ, but it has also been a special way to carry on her husband's legacy here at the parish.

"It's very heartening for me to say the chaplet every day as I do for a variety of people and situations, to know that the Lord is listening," Barbara says. "And of course, it's in His time and not mine that prayers are answered. After every chaplet, we ask St. Faustina to pray for us and then recite 'Jesus, I trust in you' three times. You just have to believe it when you say those words."

If you would like more information about the Divine Mercy Prayer Group and this powerful devotional, please contact Barbara Conway at 904-495-5176 or Conwaybarbara86@yahoo.com.

L E N T E N S C H E D U L E

Stations of the Cross – Every Friday at 7 p.m. in the church

Penitential Service – Wednesday, March 25 at 7 p.m.

"Live" Stations of the Cross – Friday, April 10 at 7 p.m.

Parish Mission – Monday, April 6 to Wednesday, April 8

Easter Egg Hunt – Saturday, April 11 at 9 a.m. (Pre-School Playground)

Holy Thursday – Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7 p.m.

Good Friday – The Passion of the Lord at 3 p.m.

Easter Vigil – Saturday Night at 8:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday Masses – *7 a.m.; 9 a.m.; *11:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

**Note time change*

He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. — 1 Peter 2:24



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Holy Week Retreat continued from front cover

As we draw closer to our Lord and to prepare our hearts for Holy Week and Easter, Msgr. Bosso calls this a “special spiritual time,” and says a retreat or mission is a great way to grow in faith, and he looks forward to spending time with us for the mission. Since his ministry is teaching, he says he enjoys the opportunity to be with parishioners.

“This gives me a chance to get into a parish, and I really like that,” Msgr. Bosso says.

Typically, Our Lady Star of the Sea organizes a parish mission every other year during Holy Week. This year’s retreat will be a beautiful chance to learn more about the parables, attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and grow in faith together with our parish families.

Pastoral Associate Sister Lucy Clynes, DW invites all to attend.

“Msgr. Bosso has an excellent reputation as a presenter, advisor and overall good person and priest,” she says.

As an introduction to the retreat, Msgr. Bosso will be at the Palm Sunday weekend Masses. No registration is required. Please attend the 8:30 a.m. Masses for an extended liturgy and/or at 7 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, April 6–8 in the church. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered on one of the evenings.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil - 5:30 p.m. | Sunday - 7:30 a.m.; 9:00 a.m.; 11:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Daily (Monday to Saturday) - 8:30 a.m. | Wednesday - 7:00 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Wednesdays from 6:00-6:45 p.m.

Saturdays from 4:00-5:00 p.m.