

St. Mary Lent and Easter Calendar

Every Friday, through March 18

6:00 p.m. **Soup Suppers**
7:00 p.m. **Stations of the Cross**

Saturday, March 5

9:00 a.m. Sacrament of Reconciliation
10:00 a.m. **Benediction and First Saturday Mass**
3:30 p.m. **Sacrament of Reconciliation**
5:00 p.m. **Vigil Mass**

Thursday, March 17

7:00 p.m. **Chrism Mass**, St. James Cathedral, Seattle

Holy Week

Holy Thursday, March 24

6:00 p.m. **Mass of the Lord's Supper**
Followed by Adoration until midnight in Room 4 of the FAC

Friday, March 25—Good Friday

3:00 p.m. **Good Friday Stations of the Cross**
3:30 p.m. **Divine Mercy Novena begins**
4:00 p.m. **Seven Sorrows Rosary**
6:00 p.m. **Veneration of the Cross with Communion**

Easter

Saturday, March 26—Easter Vigil

8:00 p.m. **Mass, Easter Vigil**
3:00 p.m. **Divine Mercy Novena**

Sunday, March 27—Easter Sunday

8:00 a.m. **Mass**
11:00 a.m. **Mass**
3:00 p.m. **Divine Mercy Novena**

March 28 through March 31: No Daily Mass

March 28 through April 3

3:00 p.m. **Divine Mercy Novena Continues**

April 1—First Friday

9:00 a.m. **Mass**
Adoration in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel

April 2

10:00 a.m. **First Saturday Benediction and Mass**
3:30 p.m. **Sacrament of Reconciliation**
5:00 p.m. **Vigil Mass**

Sunday, April 3—Divine Mercy Sunday

7:30 a.m., **Sacrament of Reconciliation**
8:00 a.m., **Mass**
9:45 a.m., **Sacrament of Reconciliation**
11:00 a.m. **Mass**

Stewardship Reflection

Jos 5: 9A, 10-12; Ps 34: 2-7; 2
Cor 5: 17-21; Lk 15: 1-3, 11-32



In our Second Reading from St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, Paul says, "So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." There are two important points intended for us in those two sentences, especially during our Lenten journeys.

LENT

First, we are to be "ambassadors on behalf of Christ." Then, as now, an ambassador was one who represented a ruler, at that time most likely a king, in dealing with others. Paul's meaning is that we are called to represent our King, the Lord, here and now in our dealings with others. We do things representing our Lord and Savior, and we need to recognize both that fact and the responsibility which goes with it. It is what being a steward means — someone who is placed in charge of gifts which come to us from God and which are to be used in God's behalf. That should be part of our Lenten efforts.

The second sentence reminds us that we need to be reconciled with God. Note that it does not say that God is to be reconciled with us. The duty lies with us and needs to be precipitated by us. At this time as Easter approaches, reconciliation-confession is important and necessary. At a recent general audience Pope Francis declared, "I can't be baptized two or three or four times, but I can go to confession often and regularly, and when I go to confession, I renew the grace of Baptism."

VOCATIONS DISCERNMENT NIGHT FOR MEN

Begins: March 9, 2016

**Continues: The Second Wednesday of every month
7:15 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Bellingham, WA

This evening is open to all men, ages 18-30, discerning the call to priesthood. There will be an opportunity for prayer, a presentation, discussion and social time. Presentations will cover a wide range of subjects helpful to men discerning a call to the ordained life.

For more information, contact Jonathan Cheever at
Jonathan.cheever@shbham.org.

ALPHA MARRIAGE PREPARATION CLASS

The Alpha Marriage Preparation Class for those contemplating marriage will begin **Monday, March 14 at 5:30 p.m. in Rooms 5 & 7 of the FAC**. Over the course of five weeks, couples will work on the topics of communication, commitment, resolving conflict, keeping their love alive, and sharing goals and values. The course is DVD-based with Scripture emphasis and the ultimate goal of keeping God at the center of our relationships. The course is free, but donations are welcome. If you can help in providing side dishes, helping in the kitchen, wish to register for the course, or for more information, please contact **Don or Pat Webster at (360) 588-1494**.



The collection for Good Leaders, Good Shepherds will be next weekend, March 12-13. Please see the insert this weekend for more information about the program. Thank you for your support.



**STARTING ON EASTER SUNDAY,
St. Mary will have a new weekend**

Mass schedule:

Saturday Vigil: 5:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning: 8:00 a.m.

Sunday Morning: 11:00 a.m.

**The Healing Mercy of the Eucharist
With Fr. Augustine Valooran**

March 9-13

St. Stephen the Martyr
13055 SE 192nd St
Renton, WA 98058

Evening Mass with Adoration and Sessions each day

6:30 Mass; 7:30-9:00 Session

Saturday evening Mass with Adoration and Session

5:00 Mass; 6:45 p.m. Session

Sunday: Afternoon Adoration and

Session 2:00—3:00

Special Women's Retreat

Friday, March 11, 10am-2pm

Please register for the Women's Retreat.

Call 253-631-6175x115 or visit ststephenslife.com.

Items of interest...

The Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women makes special Mass Intention Cards available in the information kiosk in St. Mary Narthex. Intentions are remembered at a monthly Mass said by the Archbishop, and your donation raises money to offset the cost of education for our Archdiocesan Seminarians.

St. Mary has made available booklets for the Seven Sorrows Rosary, which is said after Mass on Tuesday and Friday. They are printed for reuse at each Mass. If you would like to take one home for your personal use, please stop by the office and make a donation to offset the cost of printing, etc. Thank you!

The St. Mary Parish Office has several books available for your purchase:

Be Healed, by Dr. Bob Schuchts. The book is highly recommended by Fr. Straz, and by parishioners who have already purchased it. \$17.

Two books about Our Lady of Kibeho. Proceeds from the sale of these books go toward building a basilica.

- **Our Lady of Kibeho**, \$14.

- **If Only We Had Listened**, \$19.

33 Days to Morning Glory, larger print, expanded information. Be ready for the parish consecration to Mary!

Catholic Relief Services

This weekend we will be collecting envelopes for donations to Catholic Relief Services (CRS).



Each time we encounter a suffering person, we encounter Jesus in disguise. The Catholic Relief Services Collection (CRSC) funds six Catholic agencies that serve the disguised Jesus in our suffering brothers and sisters around the world. His disguise might be that of those suffering from natural disaster, those displaced by violence or war, or those migrants searching for a better life. Your support of this collection is an opportunity to help Jesus in disguise.

Envelopes for the CRS collection are located at the end of the pews and in the narthex. If you haven't already done so, please take one home with you and prayerfully consider your donation. Thank you for your generosity.



The Anacortes Cinemas will be featuring two special films this Easter season!



RISEN

March 4 - 10

Showing daily at 1:45 p.m. /

4:05 p.m. / 6:40 p.m.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (1956)

Sunday, March 20 at 2:00 p.m.

If 20 or more people RSVP, a \$2 discount per person will be applied.



FACILITIES UPDATES

If you have a maintenance request, please fill out a request form and slide it under the door of the Maintenance Office. Request forms will be placed in the church narthex as well as outside the Maintenance Office in the FAC. You can also email your requests to facilities@stmaryanacortes.org.

PLEASE DO NOT ADJUST SETTINGS FOR TEMPERATURE, SPEAKER VOLUME, ETC. PARISH STAFF MAINTAINS THOSE SETTINGS. ADJUSTMENTS MADE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF THE SETTING PLAN CAN ALTER OR DAMAGE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE EQUIPMENT. WE ASK THAT IF THERE IS A DO NOT TOUCH SIGN PLACED ON ANYTHING, THAT IT RESPECTFULLY WILL NOT BE TOUCHED. THANK YOU!!

Dear Parishioners,

Last Week's Word: The Lord says to Moses in the First Reading to take off his shoes, for he's standing on Holy Ground. Last weekend, I was with my Mom at a family function, and she was very careful that I didn't park near the mud, so she wouldn't track icky stuff on her shoes.

We all step in 'stuff' from time to time. And the Gospel today has a few words about manure: it smells but it can help when used as fertilizer.

We can't appreciate the power of God's Mercy unless we first confess our sins. We need to clean our souls, the soul of our being, at least once a year in the Sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation. There are many obstacles to this very Catholic act of purification, but FEAR is a big one: there's fear of our sins and fear of not knowing what to do.

Fear of our sins is an irrational fear that keeps us from Confessions, whose purpose is to cleanse us of those very sins! However, for some reason we cling to the mud on our shoes: either we can't see how we can live without the mud, or we think that OUR mud is SO special that it couldn't be like anyone else's mud: not even GOD could understand the how horrible (and special) OUR mud and sins are! (Seriously?!).

Fear of not knowing the steps of Confession is easy: we just need practice. It's hard to go to confession if we only go the minimum of once a year. Just like it's hard to watch our weight if we only inventory our calorie intake once a year. We start Confession with:

'Bless me Father, for I have sinned, my last Confession was _____ weeks/months/years ago.'

Then you list your sins: start with the BIG ones and work your way on down your list. If you don't know 'the list' find a copy of the 10 Commandments, or a good Catholic Examination of Conscience.

Then the priest will assign a Penance after some brief spiritual counsel.

Then you recite the Act of Contrition:

'O my God, I am heartily sorry for all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; But most of all, because I have offended Thee my God, who are all Good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.'

EVERYONE should MEMORIZE this 'Perfect' Act of Contrition, that includes the sorrow for sins 'for the love of God.' Such 'perfect' contrition will suffice for all in danger of death without access to the Sacraments.

We pray that all of us will rediscover the healing power of the Sacrament of Confession in this Year of Mercy! We all know how good it is to feel clean in our souls!

➤ ***Day of Mercy***

I hope many of you were able to take advantage of the **Worldwide Day of Mercy** this past Friday at St. Mary's. Please note that Confessions are offered frequently at St. Mary's and Eucharistic Adoration is held in the Church each month on the First Fridays from 10AM Friday-10AM Saturday.

➤ ***Stewardship of Time for God: Eucharistic Adoration.***

Thank you to our witness speakers who will be sharing with us this weekend about sharing our Time for God in this Year of Mercy, especially through Eucharistic Adoration here at St. Mary's.

➤ ***Good Leaders, Good Shepherds***

As you know I've had several extended absences this year due to my participation in the Catholic Leadership Institute course, Good Leaders, Good Shepherds. The parish staff and the Pastoral Council will be able to tell you how the skills I am learning in this course is really helping in my governing role as Pastor of St. Mary's and St. Paul's. Part of the cost of this course is expected to be paid by the parish. **Next weekend (NOT this weekend)** we will be taking a special second collection to cover the cost of this course. Any excess from the collection will be used to help pay for ongoing leadership formation both for myself and also the staff and some lead volunteers here at St. Mary's. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

➤ ***NEW! Evangelization Committee***

Last week I met with an enthusiastic group of volunteers who would like to start an **Evangelization Committee** here at St. Mary's. If you are interested in joining, please contact Sarah Marks at the Faith Formation Office, x104.

Fr. Straz

CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Good Leaders, Good Shepherds



Catholic Leadership
INSTITUTE

Good Leaders, Good Shepherds

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Pray for your priest.
2. Support the special collection for this purpose.
3. Encourage your priest with a phone call or note with your support of his commitment.
4. Be part of the "at-home" pastoral team who will make sure pastoral services continue while Pastor is at training.

A Program for Priests

GOAL: Specifically designed to help Catholic priests overcome the challenges today of a diminishing number of clergy and more complex circumstances for priestly ministry, Good Leaders, Good Shepherds is a world-class curriculum using Jesus Christ as the ultimate shepherd and model of leadership.

OUTCOME: Priests become good leaders, skilled in the art of inviting the leadership of those who can help create and build authentic, vibrant Catholic Communities. A community where the Pastor is the center point of the parish rather than its apex!

CREDENTIALS: This leadership training has already taken place in over 90 arch/dioceses across the United States and Canada, and over 2,500 priests have either graduated or are presently enrolled in GLGS. Catholic Leadership Institute has been around for 25 years and has offered Good Leaders, Good Shepherds Training for over 10 years.

IMPACT FOR OUR ARCHDIOCESE: Archbishop Sartain and the Office of Vicar for Clergy strongly support this program and have invited approximately 35 Priests to participate as the first cohort. This will be an ongoing continuing education effort for Priests in our Archdiocese.

F A Q:

Length of Program?

- 29 Sessions over 2 years
- Average about 1 day of training per month

Funding?

- In partnership with the Archdiocese, the parishes are supporting this effort. Every dollar we raise through this collection, helps us to reduce what is paid out of the parish budget and helps to lessen the impact on the Archdiocesan budget as well.

Curriculum?

- Priests learn their leadership attributes
- Priests learn where they are strong and where they need to grow
- Priests learn to be a pastor AND administrator

THE GOSPEL OF MERCY

Lenten Reflection for the Year of Mercy

The Parable of the Forgiving Father

Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32

Last week's Gospel message was repent or perish; this week's is repent and feast. Today's passage is probably one of the most familiar Scripture passages to us.

Often with this parable, we concentrate on the prodigal son or the jealous older son. Yet, the really breathtaking story is the parent who waits patiently and persistently at the gate, watching down the path for the one who is gone (probably for a year or more), who runs to greet that lost one when he returns (an appalling action at that time, for a person of authority would never run).

The forgiving father is lavish in

offering, what many would see as undeserved, forgiveness. In reality, at that time any law-abiding Jewish father would have pronounced his son *dead* when he left the faith and would not allow his return to the household in any capacity. ("Feeding the pigs" was a colloquialism of the time that meant no longer observing Jewish ways or laws — in today's language, "left the Church.")

In some ways, it's a wonder that people didn't reject Jesus at this point; he was preaching a love and forgiveness that was the opposite of the laws and attitudes of the time.



Karen Callaway, Shutterstock

"God waits and also God forgives. He is the God of mercy: he does not tire of forgiving us. It is we who are tired of asking for forgiveness, but he never gets tired. Seventy times seven; go forward with forgiveness."

— POPE FRANCIS, HOMILY,
MARCH 28, 2014

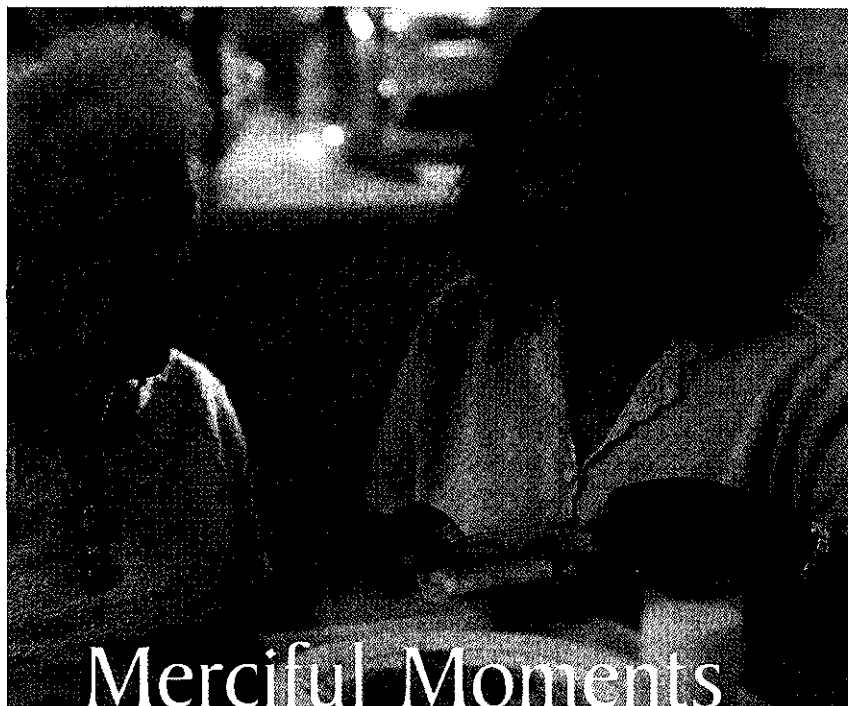
FOR REFLECTION

- › Who do I need to forgive or ask for forgiveness?
Can I forgive myself for my failings?
- › Do I put limits on my forgiveness — for example, if he changes, if she apologizes, if it doesn't happen again. Can I forgive unconditionally?
- › We believe that Jesus told us this parable to teach us that the father was a symbol of the unconditional forgiveness of God. Might he have been saying that we are called, too, to be like the father?

symbols of the season

Water

We tend to think of water as an Easter symbol, which it definitely is. At the same time, one of the main focuses of Lent is baptism — for the catechumens (unbaptized people who will be initiated into the Catholic Church) and for ourselves as we, during Lent, renew the many ways we are living our baptismal promises. The water of baptism symbolizes forgiveness and cleansing of our past failings and sins; it is a promise of and the realization of new life.



Lenten Prayer

God of lavish forgiveness, you never abandon me but constantly love, forgive, and cherish me. Open me and strengthen me, so that I will always share that same love and forgiveness with those in my life.

Faithful Family

The spiritual works of mercy call us to be like the forgiving father, especially in “forgiving all injuries.” Talk about how you, as a family, live these merciful works. Decide together on some additional, concrete things you might do. Watch, too, for examples of the spiritual works of mercy in this week’s news.



- › Experience the healing power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. *Confessing our sins with honesty and humility helps transform our hearts to more closely follow Christ’s call to compassion, mercy, and sacrificial love.*
- › Take one step toward forgiving and reconciling a hurting relationship this week.
- › Lavish God’s love and mercy on someone who is hungry for food, companionship, or acceptance.

Catechism CONNECTION

“It is impossible to keep the Lord’s commandment by imitating the divine model from outside; there has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God. Only the Spirit by whom we live can make ‘ours’ the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. Then the unity of forgiveness becomes possible and we find ourselves ‘forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave’ us.”

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2842

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

- › Admonish the sinner
- › Instruct the ignorant
- › Counsel the doubtful
- › Comfort the sorrowful
- › Bear wrongs patiently
- › Forgive all injuries
- › Pray for the living and the dead