

3rd Sunday of Lent
March 7th 2021



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Opening

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

And also, with you.

Sentence

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3.16

Collect

Father of mercy, alone we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves. When we are discouraged by our weakness, strengthen us to follow Christ, our pattern and our hope; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Readings

EXODUS 20:1-17;

PSALM 19;

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25;

JOHN 2:13-22

Reflection for third Sunday of Lent

When things begin to look desperate for our communities and our churches, it's our tendency to look for signs of life.

Most of these things are fairly clear cut, common sense sorts of things.

Last year, as Canada's economy began to slip, the signs were obvious. People lost their jobs. Businesses closed. At the same time, because of the pandemic, our churches, began to suffer. We were kept from the people we loved. Church doors were closed. People stayed home. People stopped gathering, they stopped touching. These were all signs of the times, and they were not signs of life.

As the pandemic drew on, we began looking for good things like the reopening of our churches, new reasons to gather, haircuts. Were these the signs of life we sought? These are the sorts of things you look for when things appear desperate. These are signs that things are going well—heading in the right direction. Good signs mean good things. That's what we know. It's what we expect. And, most of the time, we're not wrong. So, when Paul the Apostle began preaching the Gospel of the *cross*, the good news of Jesus' *death*, people were understandably confused.

The cross, a symbol of the unyielding and violent power of Rome, was an object designed to torture its victims and paralyze its audience. It was not a sign of life.

But it was the wisdom of God and the power of God. To some, Paul says the wisdom of God is foolishness. How can God accomplish eternal life, salvation, through the torturous death of Jesus? That is the wisdom of God, though. For others, the cross is a stumbling block. How can the death of Jesus on the Roman cross be a sign of life? Because the cross is the power of God.

And we don't just hear this from Saint Paul. This comes straight from the mouth of Jesus. In the gospel of John, Jesus is asked again for a sign. And here's the sign he gives—tear down this temple and I will rebuild it in three days. And John tells us that the temple he was referring to what is not a building, but Jesus' own body. The sign he would give was his own death and resurrection. And that sign, the death of God, the crucifixion of Christ, was the sign of life. Because, in the Christian economy, suffering for another, enduring death, things that don't appear good at all, are the signs of life. Because Christian hope is not in some abstract uprising or some lossless, costless battle. It's in Resurrection. And Resurrection is the only gift that one needs to die in order to receive—there is no resurrection without death.

Take a look around you, then. What do you see? I'm tempted to see the desperation of it all, and I wouldn't be wrong. I'm not at all inclined to see signs of life. And, to be perfectly clear, there is nothing good about the suffering and loss of this past year. People are dying, people are suffering, there has been and will be much more loss. But that does not mean the death of the gospel. It does not mean the death of hope. It does not mean that we Christians have nothing to say. Our hope has always come at the end of suffering, as salvation from suffering, as peace in the middle of suffering, and as the hope of resurrection. Service and sacrifice witness to God's goodness when all around is dark. These are acts of light that pierce an overwhelming darkness. And, in the Christian economy, darkness and death are always overcome, if only in the end, by light and resurrection.

And so, in answer to the question, "where is God in all of this?" I propose the same answer to another question; "where is the wisdom of the cross?" Our salvation was not accomplished by some detached celestial act. Resurrection came through the death of God. We are not a people who witness to the goodness of a God ignorant to the depth of sorrow that defines quite a lot of the human experience. Sin is real and we feel it. Death is real and we suffer it. Pandemics tend to remind us of our own vulnerabilities. But God is the saviour of the vulnerable. He is the healer of the sick. He is the forgiver of the sinful. God took on our vulnerability, entered our humanity, endured our death, and brought us with him through to the other side. When every sign is dire, when there is nothing good and wise, when we see no signs of life, let's look to the God of resurrection, to the God who walks with humanity, who became human, who offers hope to humanity as he finds it. Let look to the God who offers hope for the journey and goodness on the other side. We have something to say. We have a God who saves. And now is the best time to witness to God's wisdom and God's power, to do it through service to others, and to witness to a living hope in the midst of suffering and to a coming resurrection.

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Prayers of the People for the 3rd Sunday of Lent – from Juanita Kynoch - bjkynoch@hotmail.com

Jesus, Cleanser of the temples and souls, at this mid point in our Lenten journey, look deep within our hearts and our lives, and clear away all that holds us back.

We come before you asking prayers for those who lead our nations, cities and our churches.

We pray for our homes and families,

For parents juggling with responsibilities of work and family,

For husbands and wives, whose marriages are breaking down,

For children struggling with school and online learning,

For seniors who long for visits and hugs from family.

We pray for all who yearn for health, the handicapped, for those in mental anguish or spiritual turmoil, for the incurably ill and all who remember and care for them.

We pray for this Parish of Long Point Bay, that during this holy season God's grace may produce in us the fruit God seeks.

Loving God, hear the prayers of your faithful people, and guide our thoughts and actions that your will may be done and your name glorified, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We pray for: - Todd our Bishop, Anne our Metropolitan, Linda our Primate, Mark National Indigenous Archbishop, Marinez Bishop of Amazonia. AD Rick Jones, Rev. Enrique Martinez, Rev. Jack Cox

For the week beginning g Sunday March 7, 2021, we will be praying for the **Rev. Paul Sherwood** and the people of **Trinity, Simcoe**.

We pray for our shut-ins at home, hospital and in local nursing homes. We especially remember: June, Shirley, Iris, Julie, David, John, Anna and Jack B.

We pray for the ones who have asked for your healing touch upon their lives: Betty F., Don G., Franz and Elaine Z., Steven K., Rebecca M., Trista P., Bill MC., Dwayne M. and Andrea B., Susan A., Olivia H., Karen M., Delores B., Dale & David F, Rose G, Eric, Julie, Janice S., Barbara S., Cindy L. and anyone known to you. Amen.



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It is important that we keep the prayer list and shut-in list up to date. If you know of any changes to these lists can you please email Anne at lpbparishsecretary@gmail.com or Enrique at enrique6921@hotmail.com

If you know of anyone that has asked you to pray for them during this pandemic, we will put on the prayer list for a month.

Prayer of Confession

Search us O God and know our hearts today
Try us and know our anxious thoughts,
see if there are any hurtful ways in us
and lead us in your loving and life-giving Way

Words of Assurance

God knows our secret fears, ignorance & selfish ways.
God forgives, forgive yourself, forgive others
Amen

Closing Prayer

God our strength and salvation, receive all we offer you today, and grant that we who have confessed your name, and received new life in baptism, may live in the joy of the resurrection, through Jesus Christ the Lord, Amen

Doxology

Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.
Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever.
Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please note that due to the fact that we are moving into the orange zone in Norfolk County. All Church services have been suspended until further notice

If you have anything you would like to contribute or comment on, regarding the newsletter, please do not hesitate to let Rev Enrique or myself know.

Any birthdays in March – Let me know for the newspaper. We can celebrate you and add some facts that happened on that day in history. I don't need your year of birth, just the month and date. Of course, if you have a special age birthday and want to celebrate it just let me know. If you are interested in the birthday section please send me details.

Please click on the link to watch this week's video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIZlccOG6t8>

Sing along to this morning's hymns

Hymn Texts – Sunday, March 7, 2021

631 – The Kingdom of God Is Justice and Joy

1. The kingdom of God is justice and joy,
For Jesus restores what sin would destroy.
God's power and glory in Jesus we know,
And here and here after the kingdom shall grow.
2. The kingdom of God is mercy and grace;
The captives are freed, the sinners find place.
The outcasts are welcomed God's banquet to share,
And hope is awakened in place of despair.
3. The kingdom of God is challenge and choice:
Believe the good news, repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners brought Christ to his cross,
Our crisis of judgement for gain and for loss.
4. God's kingdom is come, the gift and the goal,
In Jesus begun, in heaven made whole.
The heirs of the kingdom shall answer his call,
And all things cry "Glory!" to God All in All.

537 – In the Cross of Christ I Glory

1. In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime.
2. When the woes of life o'er take me, hopes deceive, and fears annoy.
Never shall the cross forsake me: lo, it glows with peace and joy.
3. When the sun of bliss is beaming light and love upon my way,
From the cross the radiance streaming adds more lustre to the day.
4. Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, by the cross are sanctified;

Peace is there that knows no measure, joys that through all time abide.

5. In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

At this extraordinary time if you wish a telephone visit please call Enrique. If you have any other announcements or news contact Anne Halls at the contacts below.

Enrique Martinez can be contacted by email at enrique6921@hotmail.com or by phone at 519 586 3401 – Please note that Enrique's day off will be Fridays

Our parish assistant Anne Halls can be contacted by email at lpparishsecretary@gmail.com or by phone @ 519-586-7034

Please visit our website parishoflongpointbay.com and Facebook page