

Finding God in Ash Wednesday

by Julianne B. McCullagh

The black ash is wet and cold. A practiced thumb stamps us with two intersecting lines of burnt palms from last year. Those gathered at Mass walk back up the aisle to their places as we await the dismissal. Looking around, I see so many faces: young, old, teens, mothers, fathers, and single people. Some faces I recognize from Sunday Mass; some faces I don't recognize. We join in singing the recessional hymn as Father progresses slowly toward the doors of the church.

Then we go out into the morning air to start our day, marked with the sign of Christ. School and work will begin now that this liturgy is over, and the black marks on our foreheads will be a cause for discussion, for double takes, and for witness.

So Lent begins.

Every year in the middle of a week in late winter we go to Church and have the ashes smudged upon our clean foreheads. Every year the churches are filled to overflowing with the regulars and the not-so-regulars. Why do we still undergo this ritual of ashes that is centuries old, as old as the prophets who pleaded with God's people to turn back from sin and toward God? We go because we need to go, because at least once a year we need to be reminded that our deepest hunger is the hunger for God.

Lent is a gift that the Church in her wisdom celebrates every year. It is a gift of time, a gift of contemplation, and a gift of quiet so that we may listen to the Word, who whispers to us to come back to the God who created us. It encourages us to turn away from the noise and over-indulged appetites so that we may understand the hunger that can be filled—with the grace of God—only by prayer, fasting, and giving to the poor.

So we go to our parish churches once a year to have crosses signed upon our faces. It is in this same manner that, when the Gospel is proclaimed, we take our right thumbs, trace three crosses, and pray: may the word of God be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart. The prayer of the whole Church, the Body of Christ, is that each year the sign of the cross penetrates a little deeper and moves us toward fuller conversion toward the light of Christ.

Holy Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do you, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.



ST. MONICA PARISH

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March 3, 2019

8th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The author of Sirach gives the example of a sieve to show how good fruit is separated from its shell. Tribulation and difficulties are sieves in our own lives and they are shaken, they reveal who we are in our speech and action.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the second reading, St Paul reminds us that Christ has defeated death – it no longer has power over us. Jesus, in the Gospel, uses the parable of the blind leading the blind to show there is a difference between what is good and what is evil.

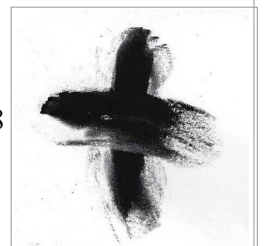
Today's Readings:

1st: Sirach 27.4-7

Psalm: 92

2nd: 1 Corinthians 15.54-58

Gospel: Luke 6.39-45



PASTOR: **Rev. Robert Wong, SJ**

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday

9:30 am – 1 pm / 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

MASS SCHEDULES

WEEKDAYS: **9:00 am**

SATURDAYS: **9:30 am & 5:00 pm**

SUNDAYS: **9:00 am & 11:00 am**

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

SATURDAYS: **4:30 pm – 4:55 pm**

CONFESSIONS: 10 MINUTES BEFORE DAILY

MASS OR BY REQUEST AT OTHER TIMES

NOVENA TO

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

WEDNESDAYS: **7:00 pm**

MASS FOLLOWED BY NOVENA
& BENEDICTION

BAPTISM COURSE

EVERY 2ND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT **6 pm**

BAPTISMS

4th SATURDAY AFTER 9:30 am MASS

HOUSE BLESSINGS

PLEASE CALL THE PARISH OFFICE

PARISH UPDATES

2018 Tax-Receipts – Please collect your receipts from the Parish and Archdiocese’s Project Advance. May God bless you for your generosity!

Parish Pastoral Council Meeting – Tuesday, March 5, at 7:30pm is our next meeting. Representatives of our parish ministries are asked to attend accordingly. Parishioners, please keep us in your prayers.

Ash Wednesday – There are two Masses, 9am and 7pm, where ashes will be distributed. There will be no Novena and Benediction on Ash Wednesday. This is also a day of fasting and abstinence from meat. “Fasting” applies to those from 18 to 59 years of age.

Christian fasting obtains its full meaning when we deprive ourselves of food in order to be more open to prayer, to share more in the suffering of those who are starving and to save money to give to the poor. It is also intended to open our hearts to God and others, a witness of the depth of our faith.

A Special Collection will be taken during our two Ash Wednesday masses, 9am & 7pm.

Marriage Encounter – Representatives from the ME team will be inviting potential married couples to participate in a weekend of marriage renewal.

Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.
Psalm 92

Pennies for Heavens – Our Knights of Columbus Council’s Vocation program welcomes your support for its fundraising appeal this weekend by putting your loose change or any bill denomination in the wheelbarrow provided. The collected funds support our young boys for a weekend retreat at Westminster Abbey in Mission and for the girls to attend a day trip at the Poor Clares’ monastery. It helps them to experience and discern the way of religious life.

Development and Peace -- Caritas Canada encourages us to reach out to forcibly displaced persons and to share their journey by supporting their Share Lent appeal and becoming aware of its ministry. For more info visit, www.devp.org

Save a date – Our Lenten Mission will be introduced at all the weekend Masses on March 16 & 17. The Mission itself is on March 18, 19 & 20 at 7:00pm. Fr. Pierre LeBlond, OP will be the presenter. Mark your calendar!

Parish Website – We have put our art glass windows on our parish website www.stmonicaparish.ca You can enjoy them in the tag, “About/St Monica”. Check it out!

Reminder: Next week-end, March 10, 2019, Daylight Saving Time begins. Please do not forget to turn your clock one hour forward.

ARCHDIOCESAN EVENTS

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Training

Join us for CGS Training: Level I – Part 1. March 25-30, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at St. Patrick’s Elementary, 2850 Quebec Street, Vancouver. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a Christian formation for children ages 3 through 12. The Level I course is the foundation for all three levels of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. It aims to prepare the adults to work, to listen, to learn with children. The participants will be prepared to develop and facilitate in CGS. For more info or to register, visit <https://rcav.org/catechesis-of-the-good-shepherd>

Registration for this event opens this Friday, March 1.

Celebrate your Milestone Anniversary with us! - This Mother’s Day, Archbishop Miller will be honouring couples celebrating their 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th, 55th & 60th+ years of marriage. Register your anniversary with us today at rcav.org/marriage-anniversary. Mass will be on Sunday, May 12, at 3:30 p.m. at St. Paul Parish, Richmond. Reception to follow in St. Paul Parish Centre. All are welcome to witness and celebrate the milestone anniversaries of others!

Lenten Observance - Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence from meat, but Catholics may substitute acts of charity or piety on this day.

Stewardship Reflection

All of today’s readings remind us that our works reflect what is in our hearts. Do my words and actions reveal a heart that is grateful for — and generous in sharing — the abundance God has poured into my life?

Mass Intentions Mar 3 - 9, 2019

Mon, Mar 4 -	Erlinda Papilla Rosario (RIP)
Tue, Mar 5 -	Estrella Mendoza-Casino (RIP)
Wed, Mar 6 -	9am, Pete & Angeli Capitulo (TG) 7pm, Patrick (RIP)
Thu, Mar 7 -	L Nicolas (TG)
Fri, Mar 8 -	Mater Martinez (TG)
Sat, Mar 9 -	9:30am, Lorenzo Laureta (RIP) 5pm, Pascal Fernandes (RIP)



WAY OF THE CROSS - During Lent, we will make the Way of the Cross on FRIDAYS after the morning Mass.