



**Grace Trinity
Catholic Church**

**St. Michael's
Independent Catholic Church**

**Good Shepherd Independent
Catholic Church**

St. Tobias

Good Samaritan

February 14, 2024

Greeting (Fr Luis)

Let us begin our service today in the name of ✝ God, our Creator, Jesus, the Risen Christ, and Holy Spirit, our Source of wisdom.

All: Amen.

Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad. The God who created the world and fills it with life is with you all.

R: And also with you.

St. Tobias

Good Samaritan



Introduction

In New Orleans and other places in the world, people celebrate carnival in the days before Lent with much noise and merrymaking. Often they wear masks and costumes for the occasion. But today, our journey through Lent begins, the time to pull off our masks and costumes and to turn our faces and hearts to God and to God's people.

During this season of journey, we reflect on the true meaning of our lives. Who are we, and what are we living for? Are we living for God and the community? Let us rip our masks off and turn to God, to our true selves, and to one another as God's people.

We enter the season by reflecting on how we have dimmed the light within us. May we turn our face and heart to God and to others, let us remove our masks before God and each other so that we may once again be flooded with light,

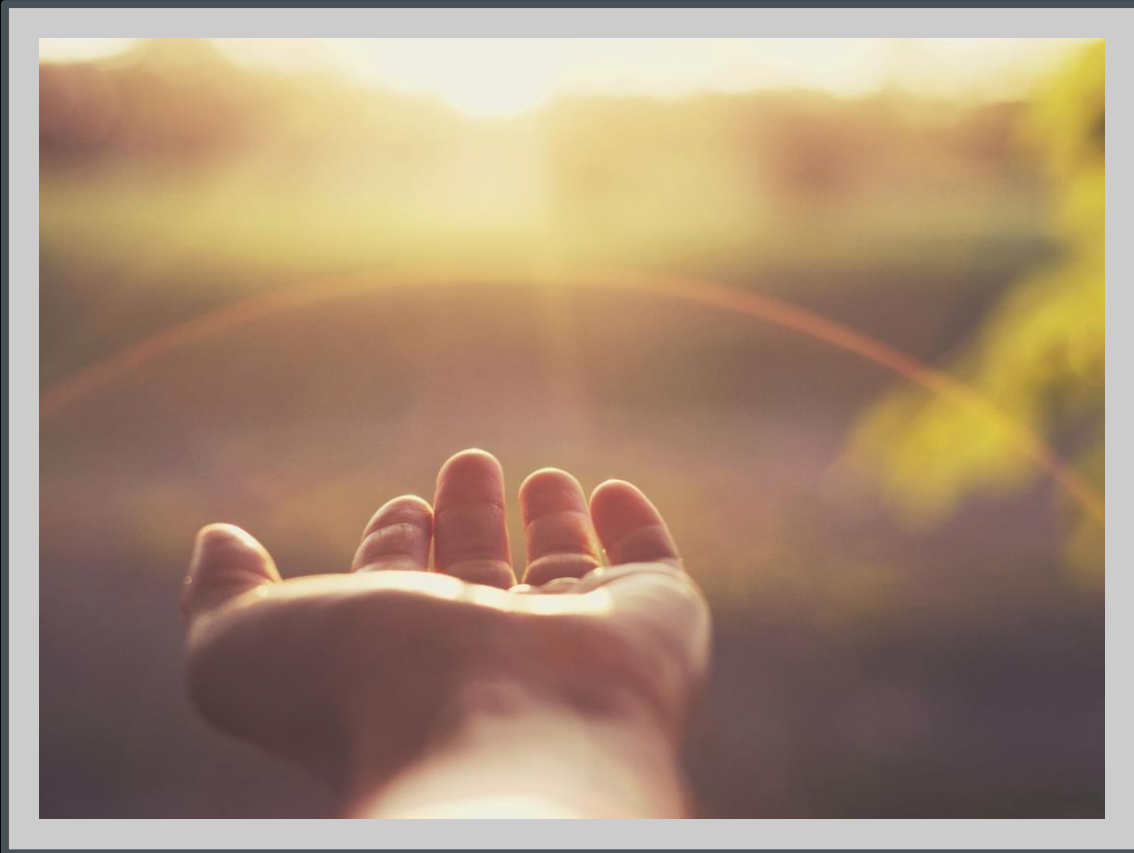
May we turn our face and heart to God and to others and search out the meaning of our lives as Moses and Jesus searched in their journeys.

May God reveal to each of us who God wants us to be.

The light is upon us and shines on us brightly. It is the light that makes our vision possible and lights our spiritual path through the dark caverns within us. The torch has been given to us to carry both within us and before us. Let us carry the torch boldly in our lives.

(Bishop Terry) This lent, you are invited not to just “give-up things”, but, like the early church, replace those behaviors with life-giving behaviors and be grateful for what we have. Let’s spend lent learning how we can use our talents and gifts for the greater glory of God and be of service to creation.

OUR CALL TO BE BLESSED BY GOD (Bishop Jeff)



Let us pray part of the Psalm 51:1-4, 10-14

R. In your compassion, heal me.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion, wipe out my offense.
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my transgressions, cleanse me.

R. In your compassion, heal me.

For I acknowledge my offense,
and they are before me always:
Against you only have I offended,
and done what is evil in your sight.”

R. In your compassion, heal me.

A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not from your presence, and your Holy Spirit take not from me.

R. In your compassion, heal me.

Give me back the joy of your salvation, and a willing spirit sustain in me.
O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

R. In your compassion, heal me.

Our transgressions are seeds of grace. Our loving God forgives us and calls us back to new life, calls us to order our life towards her, and calls us to return to her. May God forgive us and give us peace. By ordering our lives to God, we are absolved of our offenses in the name of the ✝ Creator, Emmanuel, and Guiding Spirit

All: Amen.

Opening Payer (Deacon Judy)

Let us pray that this Lenten journey may turn us to God and to one another.

God our creator, redeemer, and sustainer, you know how often we try to go our own selfish ways. Remove our masks that hide who we are, your beloved. Do not allow us to live and die for ourselves alone or to close our hearts to others. Help us to see ourselves and life as gifts from you. Make us receptive to your word and your life and make us grow in the mentality of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Sign Of God's Peace (Deacon Judy)

Christ Asks Us To Listen And To Serve, And To Bring His Peace To Others.
He Also Offers His Peace To Us Through Those We Meet.

The Peace Of The Lord Is Always With You.
R: And Also With You.

Let Us Share That Peace With One Another.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

Joel 2:12-18

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18



First Reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Joel 2:12-18

Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.”

Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.

Let them say, “Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations.

Why should it be said among the peoples,
Where is their God?””

Then the LORD was stirred to concern for his land and had compassion for his people.”

Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

R: Thanks be to God

A reading from The Holy Gospel (Bishop Terry)

The Lord be with you.

R: And also with you.

✝ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18.

Glory to you, Lord

Jesus said to his disciples, "Be careful not to make a show of your righteousness before people. If you do so, you do not gain anything from your God in heaven. When you give something to the poor, do not have it trumpeted before you, as do those who want to be seen in the synagogues and in the streets in order to be praised by the people. I assure you, they have been already paid in full.

"If you give something to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your gift remains really secret. Your Father who sees what is kept secret, will reward you.

"When you pray, do not be like those who want to be seen. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues or on street corners to be seen by everyone. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is with you in secret; and your Father who sees what is kept secret will reward you.

When you fast, do not put on a miserable face as do the hypocrites. They put on a gloomy face, so people can see they are fasting. I tell you this: they have been paid in full already. When you fast, wash your face and make yourself look cheerful, because you are not fasting for appearances or for people, but for your Father who sees beyond appearances. And your Father, who sees what is kept secret will reward you."

The Gospel of the Lord

R: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ



HOMILY

BISHOP JEFF GRAVES

Blessing of the Ashes



Blessing of the Ashes (Fr Luis)

Year to year we do not remain the same. We grow older. We have the choice to make life gray and dusty for ourselves and for others, or we can live a life of meaning. These ashes remind us to make our life matter so at the end of our physical life our ashes have meaning.

We will humbly receive these ashes as we are marked with the sign of the cross, for our hearts are willing to follow Jesus on the way of abundance and love.

Prayer of Blessing

Bless ✝ these ashes, in the name of our Father and Mother, Son and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

As we all impose these ashes on ourselves, we receive them as a symbol of transformation, of awakening to beauty and love, and to help us live more in the moment, delighting in God's creation.

All: Amen

The imposition of ashes

The imposition of ashes



PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Denise Johnston

February 14, 2024

Ash Wednesday

Sisters and brothers, one of the duties of the faithful is to pray for the world. Let us remember all those who most need our prayers.

We hear In the first reading, “*Yet, even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart,....*”

Return to me. An invitation from God, beckoning us back. As we embark on our Lenten journey, may we open up our whole heart, may we find our way back to God, who waits to welcome us with all of his heart, opened wide with unconditional love.

We pray.

In the Gospel, Jesus said to his disciples, “*When you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father.....*” During our Lenten journey, may we go into our room, deep inside our hearts, deep inside our souls. May we reflect, may we dwell, on how we can be better people, how we can have conversion of heart, how we can shine the light of God’s love in our world.
We pray.

May we take tonight’s ashes with us on our journey through Lent, letting them be a symbol of transformation, a symbol of needed change, helping to guide us closer to God, a God filled with forgiveness, with mercy, with unconditional love. May we be transformed into our best selves.
We pray.

For all prayer requests received by our church, for our families, those we love, and for the intentions we now bring before you (intentions may be spoken aloud or offered in the silence of your heart).

Loving God, hear our prayers and bring each one of us and all our concerns to the fulfillment your love intends. We pray through Jesus, our brother. Amen.

Prayer (Mother Elizabeth)

Together let us pray the prayer
that Jesus taught us:

All: Our Father/Mother in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Amen.



Final Prayer (Deacon Judy)

God of creation, through our work and prayers, may this season of Lent be transformed to your season of love. May we work for justice and be guided by the gift of love. May we illuminate the world with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love as we seek to be God's hand, feet, and voice in this world.

All: Amen

Final Blessing (Bishop Terry)

May Creator God make us whole again from our brokenness.

May Christ Jesus give us the insight to discover how often we are alienated from him, from others, even from our true selves.

May the Holy Spirit give us the strength to change our ways and to become all new.

May the blessing of the one God Almighty, who presents to us as ✝
Father and Mother, Son, and Holy Spirit, be upon you and
remain with you for ever.

All: Amen



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Sending Forth & Sign of Peace to the World (Bishop Jeff)

The celebration is ended. Take time, in the busyness of Lenten season, for quiet reflection—for the light of God's love is discernible everywhere.

All: Thanks be to God.

May the peace of Jesus be always with you.

All: And also with you.

Go in peace, delighting in God, and seeking the rebirth of creation. Let's share with each other a sign of peace.