

March 29th, 2020 | 5th Sunday of Lent, Year A

St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Parish



A reflection on the Gospel of John 9:1-41

Lazarus

Maybe the most important part of this Sunday's gospel isn't Lazarus coming out of the tomb but Jesus' confession to Martha, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me shall live." To bring Lazarus back to life only to have him suffer and die all over again could be seen more as a cruel trick rather than a sign of hope, but in the light of the Resurrection Lazarus prefigures our own destinies.



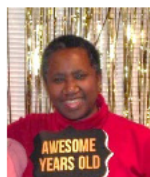
I believe the Father only gradually revealed to Jesus he was the Christ. When he confessed to Martha he was the Messiah it was because he saw the Father's great power being accomplished in him. I can identify with Jesus self-revelation because there was a time when I realized that by the Father's will I was cut out, from the beginning, to be a priest.

This was a relief but an awesome burden. I was relieved that I didn't have to speculate about whether I made the right choice. The thoughts of "What if I had gotten married? What if I had pursued a more lucrative career?" don't haunt me anymore. On the other hand, with my destiny fairly clearly revealed, I feel a scary responsibility to live up to my role in the Church and world.

Maybe, as you contemplate weeks of being at home, working from home, figuring out how to keep your children occupied and avoiding getting sick, you may feel a little like Lazarus in the tomb. Perhaps it isn't a tomb after all but a womb in which your dreams can gestate. Perhaps, this can be a time that helps you realize you're doing what God has called you to do all along or a time when God will open up his plans for you.

Let's hope we can all pray together at Easter in a celebration what the Father has revealed to us as he did through Jesus to Lazarus and Martha and as he helped Jesus see who he really was (and still is).

Our Staff:



As we endure the shelter-in-place order I want you to be aware of the many people at the parish, especially in the rectory office, who live out their vocations in service to the Saint Mary Magdalen community. Many of our staff are working from home, others live here, and still a few are coming to work each day (I see our Church is an essential service) so that we may carry on. Please keep us all in your prayers.

Full Time:

- Norah Hippolyte—our business manager, bookkeeper and "major domo." Norah works tirelessly to be sure all is in proper order and we can pay for what we do. She and I have known each other for more two decades from our work together at St. Leo's in Oakland.

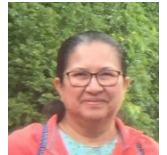
- Andy Canepa—Music Director extraordinaire. Andy has the depth and versatility to direct sixteenth-century polyphony and the Children’s Choir. Our parish is known in the Bay Area and beyond for outstanding music and a concert venue for many ensembles.
- Oscar Guillen—for over thirty years our physical plant has been under the steady stewardship of Oscar. He does everything from cutting the grass, to cleaning the facilities, to major repairs and more.

Part-time:



- Carolyn Tune—her dedication to the parish takes her from her home in San Francisco to the parish several days per week. Her duties are receptionist, keeper of records and the parish calendar. Everyone appreciates Carolyn’s hosting of coffee and donuts each Sunday.

- Ana Guillen—Oscar’s wife has a longer tenure with the parish. She keeps the rectory, office and other facilities tidy and assists at major events.



- Cathy Nielsen—oversees technology in the parish. Her experience with computers and multi-media enables us to be a parish of the twenty-first century. As leader of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) she shepherds aspirant seekers into the Catholic Church.

- Heather Skinner—is our Director of Religious Education. In addition to her duties as Assistant Principal at the School of the Madeleine, she is the liaison between the parish and the school, oversees sacramental preparation and religious education for those not attending our school. She has been at the school for over 45 years! Heather trains altar servers and assists at liturgy.



- Lottie Tidwell—has been laundering Fr. Nick’s clothes for 14 years. She agreed to continue for the priests of Saint Mary Magdalen when Fr. Nick became pastor.

Clergy:

In residence:



- Fr. Ioane—Fr. Ioane is from Samoa and is completing a degree at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in theology and the environment. He presides at mass and sacraments, visits the sick, and assists in pastoral care.

- Fr. Laurent—is from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He’s working on his doctorate in Scripture Study at GTU. Like Fr. Ioane he presides at liturgy and sacraments and cares for the needs of the parish.



Pastor:



- Fr. Nick—As pastor for the last two-and-a-half years I do everything from locking the gates to plotting the future of the parish. I particularly enjoy preaching, Adult Sunday School, working with our children at the School of the Madeleine and having a cocktail with the parishioners.

Deacons:

- Stanley Goh, S.J.—is from Singapore by way of the Jesuit School of Theology where he working on a Licentiate degree in Systematic Theology. Stanley works tirelessly with our RCIA, Liturgy Committee, as well as, preaching. He is always ready to pitch in when needed. Stanley will be ordained to the priesthood in January.
- Jeff Burns—is our long-distance staff member. Jeff and I worked together at Saint Lawrence so I was particularly gratified when he accepted my offer to work with us. He holds a PhD in church history. Currently he is a professor at the University of San Diego. When he retires he will return to the Bay Area and take on a greater role at Saint Mary Magdalen.

There are many volunteers whom we rely on for essential work that I will introduce at another time.

A Locomotive Story:

In the depths of the Depression the Norfolk and Western Railroad built several magnificent locomotives in their shops. The most unusual thing about the steam engines was they were not needed. Aware they had a talented and dedicated workforce they did not want to lay off their employees and have them drift away from the railroad. The class Y-5 Mallet locomotives were built to keep their shop force's skills sharp so they would be ready when the need came. During World War II, a few years later, it proved a wise decision.



Clearly, I didn't introduce our staff at this time for want of other news. I want you to know how many people are engaged in operating the parish. In addition to their deep commitment to the Church, all of us on the payroll depend on the parish for our livelihood. Even our volunteers require some expense from us so they can supply our needs. Our monthly payroll is \$22,500. Without your weekly contributions we cannot pay our dedicated staff for long.

There are two ways you can help us retain our dedicated staff: First, if you haven't already signed up consider Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)—it's how I give my offering to the parish. A set amount is deducted from your checking account or credit card at an interval you determine. Even if you choose this option only temporarily it will help us through this crisis. We would like to increase our present EFT giving from 30% to at least 50%. Second, if your uncomfortable with EFT, you can still send your contribution through the mail or drop it by the rectory.

We realize everybody is taking a financial hit while we're under quarantine. We especially appreciate your sacrifice to insure your parish will thrive.

As always and especially now, you are in my prayers,

Fr. Nick

Please pray for Elizabeth de Vogelaere who died last week. Her burial is March 31, 2020. May the eternal light shine upon her.



Last Thursday, we celebrated the Solemnity of Saint Joseph. As patron of families it seems fitting we ask his intercession during the pandemic. Below is a prayer from the Novena of Saint Joseph I have adapted for us:

Saint Joseph, you are the faithful protector and intercessor of all who love and venerate you. You know that we have confidence in you and that, after Jesus and Mary, we come to you as an example for holiness, for you are especially close with God. Therefore, we humbly commend ourselves, with all who are dear to us and all that belongs to us, to your intercession. We beg you, by your love for Jesus and Mary, to assist us during life and to support us at the hour of death.

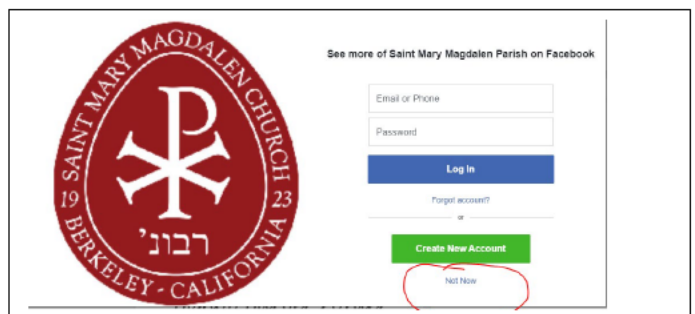
Glorious Saint Joseph, spouse of the Immaculate Virgin, pray for us to have pure, humble, charitable minds, and perfect resignation to the divine Will. Be our guide and model through life that we may die as you did in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

Loving Saint Joseph, faithful follower of Jesus Christ, we raise our hearts to you to implore your powerful intercession in obtaining from the divine Heart of Jesus all the graces necessary for our spiritual and temporal welfare, particularly the grace of a happy death, and the special grace we now implore, a swift end to the plague ravaging our world.

Amen.

You do not need to create Facebook Account to view our videos.

Collection for March 22nd, 2020			
Sunday	Actual	Budget	Difference
3/22/2020	\$5,362.60	-\$8,829.00	-\$3,466.40
Year-to-Date	\$97,556.10	-\$105,948.00	-\$8,391.90
"Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment." - Matthew 10:8			



Mass Intentions		
Saturday	5:30	For the People of the Parish
Sunday	8:00	Helen Rendon RIP
	9:30	Intentions of Clare Kelly
	11:30	Antoinette Pietras RIP
Monday	8:30	Intentions of Larry Whalen
	5:30	Marie Convoy-Salbi RIP
Tuesday	8:30	Julius Feranil RIP
	5:30	Intentions of Erika Mateo
Wednesday	8:30	Giovanna Cau RIP
	5:30	Joseph McWalters RIP
Thursday	8:30	Helen Rendon RIP
	5:30	Intentions of Alejandra Zimmerman
Friday	8:30	Giovanna Cau RIP
	5:30	Intentions of Kate Ubillus
Saturday	8:30	Intentions of Ari Jason

Scripture Readings for the Week	
29 th	5 th SUNDAY OF LENT Ezekiel 37:12-14/Romans 8:8-11/John 11:1-45
30 th	Lenten Weekday Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62/John 8:1-11
31 st	Lenten Weekday Numbers 21:4-9/John 8:21-30
April	
1 st	Lenten Weekday Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95/John 8:31-42
2 nd	Lenten Weekday [St. Francis of Paola, Hermit] Genesis 17:3-9/John 8:51-59
3 rd	Lenten Weekday Jeremiah 20:10-13/John 10:31-42
4 th	Lenten Weekday [St. Isadore, Bishop & Doctor] Ezekiel 37:21-28/John 11:45-56

The Mass will once again be live streamed this weekend at 9:30AM. During this Mass, the doors will be closed and no one will be allowed to enter. It is **not necessary to log into Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/SaintMaryMagdalenParish/>**

Fr. Nick's weekly - March 29, 2020

Reconciliation

Psychiatrists say if people went to Confession—the Sacrament of Reconciliation—regularly, they'd be out of business! We live in a world wherein we rationalize all our behavior. We can find an excuse for just about everything. As children were told constantly that we were special. As adults we are told if we are clever we can avoid just about any pain or inconvenience. It's easy to begin thinking we are victims and our bad behavior is only a response to the environment.

This thinking may let us out of some immediate pain but it contributes to an attitude that ultimately turns our lives sour. How many people do you know who do nothing but complain about everything from their children to the government? Could it be that this malaise is at least partly our own fault? By ducking responsibility for what is wrong in our world we contribute to sense of disquiet that drags us down as well as those around us.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the Church's way to right our wrongs. It does so without drugs and is free for the asking. Being truthful to God, the Church and yourself is a clear means to better emotional health but it doesn't stop there. It is also a means to spiritual health that last beyond this life. Hearing a formal pronouncement of forgiveness (absolution) puts your sins and failings behind you and lets you face challenges and dilemmas honestly equipping you to make better choices in the future.



I want to emphasize that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is not a substitute for counseling or psychiatric help. On the other hand, it can contribute to your well-being so that you may not need those services or compliment them so that feel better sooner.

It is with terrible regret that I may not offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Easter this year. When the quarantine is over we will celebrate the sacrament along with a liturgy of thanksgiving for God's presence to us through the crisis.

Fr. Nick