

Palm Sunday *March 24, 2024* **Psalm 143**



Lord, hear my prayer; in Your Faithfulness listen to my pleading; answer me in Your righteousness. Do not enter into judgment with Your servant; before You no one can be just. The enemy has pursued my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground. He has made me dwell in darkness like those long dead. My spirit is faint within me; my heart despairs. I remember the days of old; I ponder all Your deeds; the works of Your hands I recall. I stretch out my hands toward You, my soul to You like a parched land. Hasten to answer me, Lord; for my spirit fails me. Do not hide Your face from me, lest I become like those descending to the pit. In the morning let me hear of Your mercy, for in You I trust. Show me the path I should

walk, for I entrust my life to You. Rescue me, Lord, from my foes, for I seek refuge in You. Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God. May Your kind Spirit guide me on the ground that is level. For Your namesake, Lord, give me life; in Your righteousness lead my soul out of distress. In Your mercy put an end to my foes; all those who are oppressing my soul, for I am Your servant.

Living Mass Intentions for the Week

OLPH: Keith & Alice Klein, Larry & Rose Buckley,
Judy Marschang, Bob & Maureen Weber

SMA: Karen Bonnell, Richard & Lisa Studebaker

St. Patrick: Jim & Lisa Burke, Scott & Lisa Bickett

From the Gusset



We have dedicated our **Lent** this year to praying **the penitential psalms** written by **King David**. The **penitential psalms** are like **seven voices** crying to God for **mercy** and **forgiveness**; and one way to look at these psalms is as, if it is **the Catholic Church, Herself**, whose voice can be heard as **She** cries for **Her children (you and I)** to be made a part of **the Body of Christ**. **Psalm 143** does not mention a particular **sin** that **the Psalmist** is guilty of, but simply acknowledges that **no one can be just before God**. In other words, we have all **sinned** against God and **neighbor**. But more than this, **the Catholic Church** is always telling us that our real enemy is not our **neighbor** nor **the person** who **sins** against us – and it is certainly **not** God; but our real enemy is **the Evil one**. It is **Lucifer**, who is our enemy – *the one who has pursued our souls and made us dwell in darkness*. Do you see **the irony**?

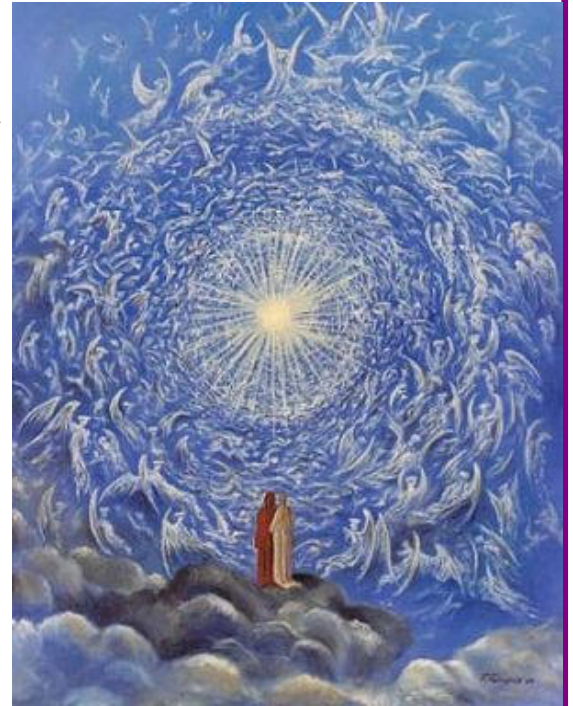
The Devil was the first **Angel** created by God and he was so **beautiful**, so **luminous** – that God named him, **Lucifer**, which means – *the one who bears light*; and yet, when **the Evil one** fell from **grace**, he became **ugly** and **dark** – **twisted** and **false**. When we **sin**, we also step into **the darkness** – when God would have us always **dwelling in His light**! **Psalm 143** is talking about the universal battle we are all engaged in – the battle not simply to keep from **sinning**; but rather, the battle to stay in **covenant** with God. In the last line of **the Psalm**, **the psalmist** expects *to triumph over his enemy*, because **“I am Your servant!”** **WOW!** Do you see that this is our **trump card**, which we play to win **the victory** over **sin** and **Satan** and the **world** – that we will win, because we are **servants** of God! Remember when **the Prodigal Son** was *dwelling in darkness* – he had lost all his father’s **inheritance**, he was **cold** because he had no clothes on his back, he was **hungry** because he had no food, he was slopping pigs, and nobody cared, if he were to die! It is then that the son hits on **the plan** that he will return to his father, and ask to be made **a servant**!! You see, the word **‘servant’** belongs to the language of **covenant**– a **servant** is in **covenant** with his Lord and the Lord swears to protect His **servant’s** life! You entered into **covenant** with God the day that you were **Baptized**! You entered into **covenant** with God on the day you received your **Confirmation Sacrament**. If you got married, you and your spouse entered into **covenant** with God when you received **the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony**. **Fr. Randy** entered into **covenant** with God on **May 21st** in the year **2005** – I was ordained by God as His **priestly servant**! You and I are in **covenant** with God in **the Sacrament of Reconciliation**, so every time we fulfill our end of the **covenant** and **confess our sins** to God – God fulfills His end of the **covenant** by **forgiving** His **servant’s sins**!! Finally, because you and I received **the Eucharist** last Sunday – we are in **covenant** with God!!! By fulfilling our end of the **covenant** of praying **the Prayers of the Mass** and believing that Jesus is present in **the Blessed Sacrament** – God fulfilled His end of the **covenant** by flooding our souls with **the Divine love** of His Son!!!! To say I am a **servant** of God–to say I am a **Catholic** means I am in **covenant** with God. I fully expect (**I have Faith**) that *I will triumph over my sins* – not because of anything I do, but because *the Lord will extend His hand to help me, if only I would seek to put my hand in His*.

Yours on the Path **Fr. Randy**

FINAL RCIA MEETING OF THE SEASON

March 26th, 6:30pm in the Hall in Sublette

The Divine Comedy by **Dante Alighieri** is about the state of **the human soul** in **eternity**. What will the souls in **hell** suffer? How will the souls in **purgatory** be cleansed of their **sins**? What does God's **love** look like when He gives it to His **Saints** in **Heaven**? **The poem** is about **eternity**, but it is also about **the present**. **The poem** is **100 cantos long**, but it takes place within the context of a **week's worth of time** – from **Good Friday** through **Easter week**; and when **Dante** is finished with his **pilgrimage**, he will be back in **Florence** in the year **1300** in the middle of this life. And so, just like, **Ebenezer Scrooge** upon waking from his **Christmas Eve dreams**; now, has a chance to live his life **differently** after having been visited by those **ghosts** of **Christmas past, present, and future**; one of **the fruits** of **the poem** is to help, you and I live our **vocations** here and now, with an eye towards **eternity**. How will we live in the next life – **suffering** the pains of **hell** or experiencing **the glory of Heaven**? When we read **the Divine Comedy**, we are given a **perspective on life** that is reliable and helpful – because it is so easy to **lose perspective** in this life or have a **skewed perspective** on life; and so, we need an **eternal perspective** on the **soul**, on **freedom**, on **love**, and (most of all) on God. That is what **Dante** gives us! – and isn't that really **the greatest gift** any teacher could give to his students, any artist to his audience, or any **priest** to his **parishioners**? – the gift of being able to help us live better **Catholic lives** for **the glory of God!**



Make a donation for an **Easter flower** to **memorialize** a **loved one** for whom you worked a **Plenary Indulgence** for during **Lent** or whom you plan to work a **Plenary Indulgence** for on **Divine Mercy Sunday!**

Holy Thursday will see us celebrating our last two Masses until the Easter Vigil. March 28th at 11:00am will find us at the Chrism Mass in Rockford's Cathedral Church of St. Peter. This is where Fr. Randy and all the priests of the Rockford Diocese renew our Priestly vows to Bishop Malloy and the holy oils are picked up for use at our 3 Churches in the coming year. In the evening, we celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:00pm at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. This is where we have the foot washing, and celebrate our Lord teaching His disciples how to consecrate the Eucharist. After a procession of the Eucharist through the Church, our Lord is reposed in the Tabernacle until midnight—at which time to signify our Lord's capture in the garden of Gethsemane and His being taken into prison, before His trial before Pilate on Good Friday—the Eucharist will be taken from us. We are encouraged to watch and pray with Jesus up until midnight. Remember there is no Mass on Good Friday—only adoration of the Cross and a Communion service.

The Art and Architecture of our Catholic Churches

How is it that the Catholic Church where one worships God—can be so influential on one's Faith!



All of you have noticed how we removed **the Holy Water** from the fountains after **Fat Tuesday**. For all of **Lent**, we have **not** been singing **the Gloria**, we have replaced our **joyful** Gospel Acclamation with **“Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory,” Fr. Randy** doesn't get to use his beloved **incense** to symbolize your prayers rising to God as **a sweet oblation**, and we have switched over to praying **the Apostles Creed**. Then with **the fifth Sunday of Lent**, we have placed **purple** drapes over our statues and crucifixes. By doing this, we are fasting with our **eyes, ears, nose, mouths, and fingers**, because one of the dimensions of **Lent** is to **fast** – to offer up a small **sacrifice** to show our Lord our great **love** for Him. When we enter into **Holy Week**, our Churches take on an even more **stark** or I would say a **drastic** appearance, especially during **the Triduum** (the three days of **Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday**. Following **the**

Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday night, we will strip our altars bare, and this would be a good time to see your Churches' **Altar stone**. If you come to your Church to pray (although **the Blessed Sacrament** will not be in **the Tabernacle** (you will see **the Tabernacle** doors open and **the Sanctuary light** extinguished)) - yet you will see the moveable **Altar stone** cut into the altar! An **Altar stone** is a rock – typically marble – upon which **the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass** is celebrated. This is the spot where **Fr. Randy** places **the chalice** and **the bread** of the sacrifice of **the Mass** for consecration. Consecrated by a **Bishop**, the **Altar stone** is anointed in five places, which are incised with five **Crosses** to symbolize the five wounds of Christ on **the Cross**: two wounds in the hands and two wounds in the feet of Christ, and a fifth wound in the Lord's side – where **the Roman soldier** stabbed Jesus with his spear to see, if the Lord was dead. There is also a tiny cavity, called **the sepulcher**, where relics are placed. **Pre-Vatican II**, one of the relics had to be that of a **martyr**, and interestingly enough, they use to add a few grains of **incense** to **the sepulcher**. This is because of that curious line in the book of **Revelation (6:9)**: ... **I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the witness they bore to the Word of God. St. Ambrose** said, “if He who **suffered** for us all is upon the altar (Jesus); beneath the altar are they who by His sufferings were redeemed – **the martyrs** are entitled to this resting place closest to their Lord!” You would of course be able to see the **Altar stone** at other times of the year; by simply, lifting up **the Altar clothes**; but for a few days, you may directly behold the **Altar stone** and perhaps touch the stone with **a kiss**, to thank Jesus for laying down His **Life** to **ransom** yours!



Mass Intentions

Saturday, March 23rd

(+) Gerald & (+) Janet Hornung/ Fr. Randy & (+) Fidelis & (+) Recheal Ezenagu/ DDL
4:00 pm, **OLPH** (+) Arthur Prendergast/ Family &

(+) Carol Bonnell/ Mr. & Mrs. Greg Henkel

5:30 pm, **SMA** (+) Quin & Josephine Torri/ Torri Family

Sunday, March 24th Palm Sunday

8:00 am, **St. Patrick** (+) Thomas Sharkey/ Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Blaine

10:30 am, **OLPH** Pro Populo/ Fr. Randy

Monday, March 25th

(+) Dennis McCoy/ Mr. & Mrs. Michael Vaessen

Tuesday, March 26th

7:30 am, **SMA** (+) Sr. Callista Ekwe & (+) Sr. Petra Chukwudike/ DDL

Wednesday, March 27th

8:00 am, **OLPH** (+) Henrietta Klein/ Marilyn Bonnell & Tim Bonnell

Thursday, March 28th Holy Thursday

11:00 am, **St. Peter's Cathedral in Rockford** Chrism Mass (+) Msgr Donovan &
(+) Msgr. Mahowald/ Fr. Randy

7:00 pm, **OLPH Mass of the Lord's Supper** (+) Carol Bonnell/ Mary Kuebel

Friday, March 29th Good Friday

1:00 pm, **SMA** Veneration of the Cross

Saturday, March 30th Holy Saturday

8:00 pm, **St. Patrick Easter Vigil** Pro Populo/ Fr. Randy

Sunday, March 31st Easter Sunday

8:00 am, **SMA** (+) Gilbert Haub/ Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Bresson

10:00 am, **OLPH** (+) Betty Prendergast/ Family & (+) Faye Leffelman/ Shawn Leffelman

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Financial Officer: Donna Stephenitch

CCD Director: Teresa Machen

