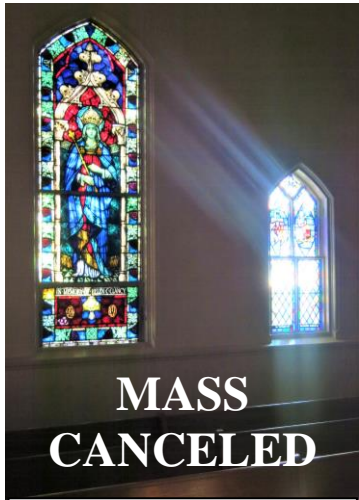


**ST. MARY'S PARISH
8 CHURCH ST.
HOLLISTON, MA 01746**

April Newsletter 2020

Non-profit
Organization
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Holliston, MA
01746
Permit no. 2



St. Mary's does not have emails for 1,000 of her 2,300 families, making it very difficult to keep connected in this unprecedented time of the COVID - 19 Pandemic.

If you have not been getting updates from St. Mary's on Mass cancellations, our livestreamed Sunday Mass, spiritual resources, etc., then we do not have your email.

PLEASE email your information to st.marys1870@gmail.com so that you will be included as we continue to reach out in support of our people. Thank you!

"Be joyful in hope, be patient in trial, be constant in prayer."

Romans 12:12

PRAYER IN TIME OF PANDEMIC

O GOD, WHOSE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON BORE THE WEIGHT OF HUMAN SUFFERING FOR OUR SALVATION,

HEAR THE PRAYERS OF YOUR CHURCH FOR OUR SICK BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND DELIVER US FROM THIS TIME OF TRIAL.

OPEN OUR EARS AND OUR HEARTS TO THE VOICE OF YOUR SON: BE NOT AFRAID, FOR I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS.

BLESS ALL DOCTORS AND NURSES, RESEARCHERS AND PUBLIC SERVANTS;

GIVE US THE WISDOM TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT AND THE FAITH TO ENDURE THIS HOUR,

THAT WE MIGHT GATHER ONCE AGAIN TO PRAISE YOUR NAME IN THE HEART OF YOUR CHURCH,

DELIVERED FROM ALL DISTRESS AND CONFIDENT IN YOUR MERCY. THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD.

AMEN.

St. Mary's Parish Newsletter

April, 2020 ~ Volume 45, Number 8

St. Mary's Parish
8 Church Street
Holliston, MA 01746

Rectory: 429-4427, 879-2322
Religious Education Center: 429-6076
Fax: 429-3324 ~ Music: 429-4427

Religious Education Email: st.marysre1870@gmail.com
Parish Email Address: st.marys1870@gmail.com
Website: www.stmarysholliston.com

Mission ~ *"To Know Christ and to make Him Known."*

Parish Clergy

Rev. Mark J. Coiro, Pastor
The Xaverian Fathers, Weekend Assistance
Rev. James Flynn, Weekend Assistance
Deacon John Barry, Permanent Deacon
Deacon Martin Breinlinger, Senior Deacon

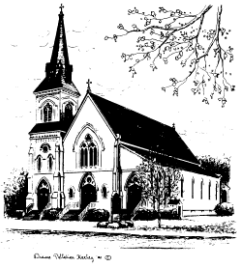
PREPARING TO BECOME CATHOLIC

On March 1, 2020, thousands of "Catholics to be" gathered at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross for the Rite of Election. Pictured below with Cardinal O'Malley are Matthew Kallas and his wife Carole. Matt is the only "catechumen" in our RCIA class, receiving all the sacraments this Easter Vigil: Baptism, First Eucharist, and Confirmation. He is the son-in-law of long-time St. Mary's parishioner Betty Murphy, who will serve as his sponsor.

Also being initiated as Catholics this year are two candidates who are Baptized but will be receiving First Communion and Confirmation. One other adult will be receiving Confirmation only at a Regional Mass.

Let us pray that the Pandemic Crisis will have eased to allow Easter Celebrations and Initiations to go forward!





Saint Mary's Parish

8 Church St. ~ Holliston, MA ~ 01746 ~ (508) 429-4427

March 29, 2020
5th Sunday of Lent

Dear Members of the St. Mary's Parish Family,

Thank you to all who helped bring about St. Mary's first ever live-streamed Mass last Sunday. These will continue each Sunday at 11:30 AM until regular Masses are allowed to resume. Due to some technical problems with YouTube, we are switching the livestream to: <https://www.facebook.com/MusicAtStMarysHolliston/> (scroll down). You do not need a Facebook account to access this page.

Even as medical necessity continues to keep us physically apart, the great prayer which is the Mass connects us spiritually. Every Mass references the saints and angels to whom the mystery of the Eucharistic Celebration unites us. We cannot see them, but the grace of the Mass makes us one with them. Just so, when we watch and pray along with the Mass remotely, we are still all spiritually united as the Body of Christ.

Thank you to all who participated in this past week's annual 40 Hours Devotion. Even scattered about the pews for social distancing, it was wonderful to see people praying in the church, including families spending an hour together with Jesus. Unlike all the other sacraments, the Eucharist does not just lead us to God, it is God Himself. By visiting the church to adore the Eucharist Exposed on the altar, we put ourselves in the very presence of the Almighty, allowing His grace to come upon us – whether visibly and quick-felt – or secretly, and unfolding only in the fullness of God's time.

Today's Gospel offers us one of Jesus' most impressive miracles – the raising of Lazarus from the dead. At first it must have seemed that Jesus did not care much for Lazarus. After all, He delayed coming for several days after receiving word that Lazarus was at death's door. Yes, Jesus could have come right away and restored the sick Lazarus to health. But by waiting, Jesus was able to offer an even greater witness to the power and love of God - releasing Lazarus from the bonds of death itself. In so doing, Jesus gave us a glimpse of the final victory over death that He would accomplish through His own death and Resurrection.

If, therefore, we feel that Jesus is being slow to reply to some urgent prayer we make of Him, let us remember Lazarus. Let us consider that in His own time Jesus may be planning to bring about a greater good even than we have asked of Him. And if in this life we still feel forgotten by Jesus, let us remember Lazarus again, who shows us that Jesus' best gifts are sometimes given to us after we have passed through death's door. In fact, Jesus wants us to look to Him first and always for that greatest of His gifts – Resurrection, and the hope of eternal life in Him.

God bless you.

Rev. Mark J. Coiro
Pastor

PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

MY JESUS, I BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE PRESENT IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.
I LOVE YOU ABOVE ALL THINGS, AND I DESIRE TO RECEIVE YOU INTO MY SOUL.
SINCE I CANNOT AT THIS MOMENT RECEIVE YOU SACRAMENTALLY,
COME AT LEAST SPIRITUALLY INTO MY HEART. I EMBRACE YOU AS IF YOU WERE ALREADY
THERE AND UNITE MYSELF WHOLLY TO YOU.
NEVER PERMIT ME TO BE SEPARATED FROM YOU.
AMEN.



TENTATIVE HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

This schedule is provided in case Pandemic Restrictions allow Masses and Services to resume in time for Holy Week.

Make sure that St. Mary's has your email address so that you receive the latest updates:
St.Marys1870@gmail.com

PALM SUNDAY

Saturday, April 4:

5 PM & 7:30 PM Masses

Palms will be blessed &

Sunday, April 5:

7:30, 9:30 & 11:30 AM Masses

the Passion read at all Masses.

HOLY THURSDAY

Thursday, April 9:

9 AM

Morning Prayer

7 PM

Mass of the Lord's Supper

The Mass of the Lord's Supper recalls the events the night before Jesus died, especially the institution of the Holy Eucharist. The ceremony of the washing of the feet reminds us of Jesus' call to serve one another. The Mass concludes with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the altar of repose in Father Haley Hall, where Adoration will continue until 10:30 PM. At Mass a collection will be taken up for the Holliston Food Pantry.

GOOD FRIDAY

Day of Fasting & Abstinence

Friday, April 10:

9 AM

Morning Prayer

12 PM

(Kindergarten – Grade 5) Younger Children's Stations of the Cross

7 PM

Celebration of the Lord's Passion

The 7:00 PM Lord's Passion Celebration is the official Good Friday Liturgy that continues the three day Triduum Celebration begun on Holy Thursday and concluding at Easter. It consists of the Liturgy of the Passion, Veneration of the Cross, and Holy Communion. The Noon Stations are designed for younger children K – Grade 5, (accompanied by parents), and utilize a living tableau and special station prayers to help young children discover Jesus' love for them in the here and now.

Good Friday is a day of fasting and abstinence from meat. In every single Catholic parish around the world this day, a collection is taken up to maintain the Shrines and struggling Christian communities in the Holy Land. This collection is taken up at both the Stations and Passion Services.

HOLY SATURDAY

Please Note: No Confessions on Holy Saturday

Saturday, April 11:

9 AM

Morning Prayer

8 PM

The Great Easter Vigil (brass quartet, adult choir)

The Great Easter Vigil is rightly called the "Mother" of all liturgies. It includes the blessing of the new Easter Candle (given this year in loving memory of James & Dorothy Lahey), the sung Exultet Prayer, and readings that capture the fullness of God's saving work for humanity. The Church rejoices in a special way to receive new members this night through the Sacraments of Initiation. All Easter collections go to support the retired priests of our Archdiocese. Please generously support these men who have given their whole lives in your service.

EASTER SUNDAY

Sunday, April 12:

7:30 AM

Church Mass

(organ, cantor)

9:30 AM

Center Hall Mass

(contemporary music)

9:30 AM

Church Mass

(youth choirs, organ, trumpet)

11:30 AM

Church Mass

(adult choir, brass quartet, organ)

COMPLIMENTARY MAGNIFICAT

During these difficult times, we all continue to look for ways to remain close to Jesus, his Blessed Mother, and his Church.

MAGNIFICAT is now offering complimentary access to its online edition, as well as iOS and Android Apps, throughout May. To register for free access in English, visit

www.magnificat.com/free.

For free access in Spanish, visit and register at

www.magnificat.com/gratis.

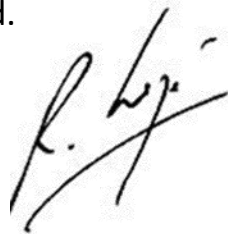
We are also happy to make available complimentary access to MagnifiKid. Visit www.magnifikid.com/free to view and download each weekly booklet of our colorful Sunday missalette for children ages 6 through 12. While so many children are missing formal religious instruction and are unable to attend Mass, MagnifiKid! can be their special guide, accompanying them through each week as they prepare to attend Mass or watch it at home.

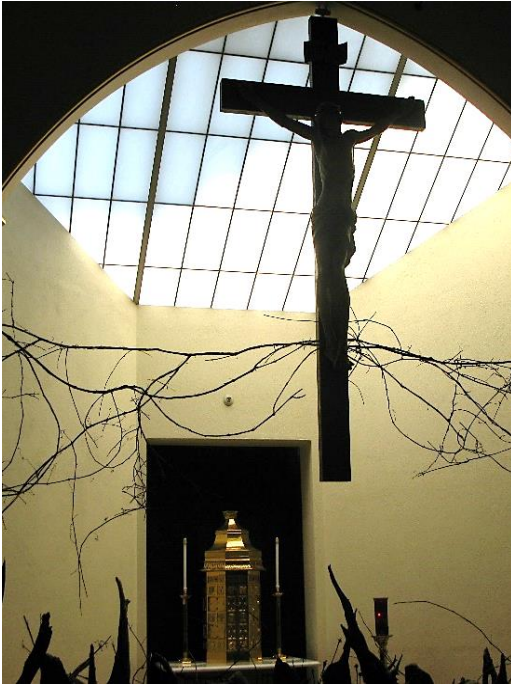
It is our hope that everyone will take this opportunity to pray with MAGNIFICAT in union with the Church each Sunday and weekday.

Please pray with us for a speedy and safe end to this time of difficulty in our world.

Sincerely in Christ,

Romain Lizé
President





MASS IS CANCELED ... BUT YOUR PARISH STILL NEEDS YOUR WEEKLY SUPPORT!

Dear St. Mary's Parishioners,

As you know, in order to make payroll and keep up with her bills, St. Mary's weekly offertory need is \$15,000. For the most part, we have reached this weekly need since last spring. Due to the Mass shutdown, however, St. Mary's has now lost her Mass collection income entirely.

Our March 14/15 Offertory was as follows:

From the Saturday/Sunday Masses - \$0.00

From Offertory Envelopes dropped off/mailed to the office - \$2,866.00

From Automatic Giving - \$4,063.00

WeShare from Monday, March 9 through March 15 - \$1,747.73

Total Week's Offertory - \$8,676.73

Offertory Shortfall: \$6,323.27

Our March 21/22 Offertory was as follows:

From the Saturday/Sunday Masses - \$0.00

From Offertory Envelopes dropped off/mailed to the office - \$2,733.00

From Automatic Giving - \$2,331.50

WeShare from Monday, March 16 through March 22 - \$ 740.96

Total Week's Offertory - \$5,805.46

Offertory Shortfall: \$9,194.54

If these large weekly shortfalls continue, it will only be a short time before St. Mary's will be unable to make payroll and pay her bills. In order to make sure that this does not happen, it is **CRITICAL** that those parishioners not currently using Automatic Giving or WeShare, please sign up for one of those services right away.

Full details on how to do so are provided on the St. Mary's Website under the HOW TO GIVE tab: <https://stmarysholliston.com/how-to-give/>.

We recommend setting up the WeShare option, which can be done right now on your computer by clicking here: <https://stmarysholliston.weshareonline.org/>.

If you are unable to do Automatic Giving or WeShare, then it is essential that you drop off or mail in your parish offertory support every week until you can place it in the basket at Mass again.

None of us knows how long the current COVID-19 Crisis, and subsequent shutting down of Masses, will continue. But we all want to make sure that St. Mary's remains strong and healthy throughout, able to pay her hardworking staff, maintain her buildings, and continue serving her people in love.

Thank you and God bless you.

Mary Sanning
Business Manager

P.S. A number of people have called asking about their Blue In Pew Catholic Appeal Envelopes. These may be dropped off at St. Mary's anytime and will be credited toward our St. Mary's "In Pew Count" when the new Catholic Appeal Launch Weekend is announced.

LOOK UP AND SEE THE LORD!

With the churches now closed, St. Mary's has placed the Blessed Sacrament in the 3rd floor rectory window facing the Town Hall.

Now people can park on Washington Street, look up, and pray before the Holy Eucharist in safety.

Please help spread the word!



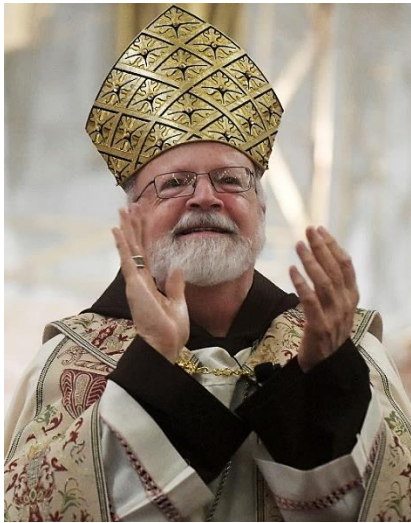
(Photo – the 3rd Floor Rectory Window at 8 Church Street)

1870-2020 Celebrating 150 years!



ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

1870 to 2020. Those 150 years represent untold moments of ministry and grace that have blessed generations of Catholics in Holliston and the surrounding communities. We give thanks to God for this beautiful family of faith and ask Him to watch over and guide us into the future. There will be many special events to mark this Anniversary, including a new History of St. Mary's Book, the commissioning of an original St. Mary's Hymn, and Children's Activities. Additionally:



Pandemic Permitting, on Sunday, May 10, at 11:30 AM, our Archbishop, Cardinal Sean O'Malley, will celebrate Sunday Mass at St. Mary's in Holliston for the first time, joining us to mark our 150th year as a Parish Family. We are honored to welcome His Eminence. Save the date for this highlight of our Anniversary Celebrations!

On Friday, May 22, come enjoy our Anniversary Concert, "Sing of Mary," a night of the greatest music written in honor of Our Lady. St. Mary's Adult, Youth and Children's Choirs will perform, accompanied by Orchestra.

On Saturday, October 10 - Sunday, October 11, St. Mary's parishioners are invited to take part in a Retreat at Miramar Retreat Center in Duxbury, MA. <https://miramarretreat.org/wp/>

Saturday, November 14, is the date of St. Mary's 150th Anniversary Gala in the Regency Ballroom, DoubleTree Inn, Milford. There will be dinner, dancing, a silent auction and a Keynote Address by His Excellency, Robert P. Reed, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Boston and President of Boston Catholic Television. Join us!

March 12-21, 2021: Due to the Pandemic, the Parish Pilgrimage to the Holy Land has been rescheduled from March 2020 to these new dates. Anyone interested in "adding on" should contact Cara Camden at 206 Tours, cara@206tours.com. The items already collected for our sister parish, Our Lady of Fatima in Beit Sahour, will be shipped over. The prayer intentions collected at Mass are being faithfully prayed each day of Lent by the pilgrims to whom they were entrusted.

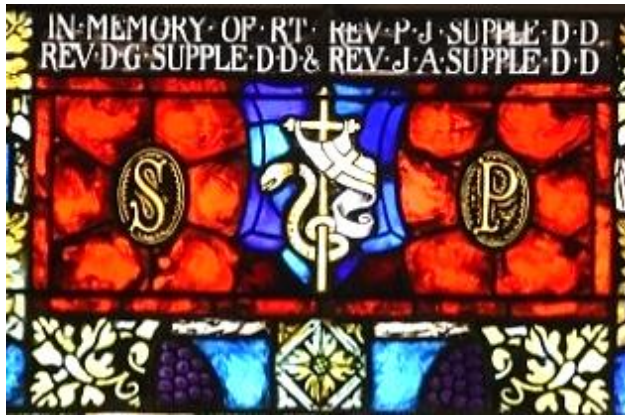


1870-2020 Celebrating 150 years!



ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Did You Know? This April Newsletter continues the series of 'Did You Know' articles with tantalizing tidbits from the research that's been done for the new History of St. Mary's book. A different story will appear in each Monthly Newsletter during 2020.



Did You Know? In the new history of St. Mary's book, we hope to include short biographies of the parishioners memorialized on the stained glass windows. Here is a sample.

The three Supple brothers were sons of David Supple and Honora Bray Supple. David and Honora emigrated from Ireland in 1849 and settled on Mechanic Street. David was a boot maker as were two of his sons. His sons Patrick (P.J.), David and James all had distinguished careers as priests in the Boston Archdiocese.

All three priest brothers graduated with high honors from Holliston High School and excelled at Boston College. They are all remembered as eloquent orators who were much beloved by their parishioners. P.J. was elevated to monsignor in 1911 and, for a time, was editor of *The Pilot* newspaper, where his editorials were quoted frequently. He was an ardent champion of Catholic education and ended his priestly career as rector of St. John's Church in Roxbury. Rev. David Supple was noted for his academic scholarship, receiving Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Divinity degrees from the American College in Rome. He was assigned to Immaculate Conception Church in Malden, but his religious career was tragically cut short by kidney disease. He died at 38. Rev. James A. Supple was regarded as one of the most brilliant students of Catholic theology. After serving in several Archdiocesan parishes, he became pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Stoneham. All three are buried in St. Mary's Cemetery along with other members of the Supple family.

David and Honora's other children, Annie, Mary, and Leo were active members of St. Mary's, taking leadership roles in the bazaars, fairs and field days held for the benefit of the parish and open to the enjoyment of Holliston and surrounding towns.

St. Mary's Anniversary Video Series: The Parish Buildings video should now be playing in the Religious Education Center lobby. Don't worry if you haven't had a chance to watch them yet. Each segment will be repeated in the Fall.

Thank you to the parishioners who have donated photos to be used in the video series. The Parish Life segment will not be shown until May 2020, so there is still plenty of time to donate photos. I would love photos from the 125th Anniversary, Nativity Pageants, Mr. and Mrs. Club, the various St. Mary's ministries, and our church with the images of the Litany of Mary prior to the 1995 renovation and wings addition. I need all the Litany images if possible! Contact Betty Febo, 508- 429-7190 or betty.febo@gmail.com.



St. Mary's Parish Middle School Youth Group

Open to all 6th, 7th, & 8th Graders. Faith, Friendship, Service, Fun!

Due to the COVID - 19 Pandemic, all Middle School Youth Group Activities scheduled for March and April are cancelled. Activities will resume as soon as safety allows. Members will be kept informed by email. All Summer Events are still a GO at this time:

SUMMER
2020

Kennebec Rafting, Thurs., June 25 - Friday, June 26
Brownstone Quarry Park, CT, Tuesday, July 28
Deerfield Rafting, Friday, August 14



St. Mary's 2020 VBS ~ Rocky Railway!

Climb aboard for mountains of fun at Rocky Railway! On this faith-filled adventure, kids discover that trusting Jesus pulls them through life's ups and downs. Each day opens and closes with prayer as well as high energy music, dancing, and skits. A daily Bible point will be heard throughout the day as crews visit 5 activity stations.

At Chew Chew Snacks, they'll enjoy a creative snack along with prayer and lively conversation. In *Bible Adventures*, they'll travel back in time to truly experience a Bible story. In *Loco Motion Games*, everyone will get outside and have a blast with our Youth Minister playing team building games. In *KidVid Cinema*, they'll watch a film about real kids living out their faith in really cool ways. In *Imagination Station*, they will use their creativity for crafts.



Registration is open to children entering Kindergarten through 6th grade. Those entering Grades 7-12 are invited to volunteer. Adults are needed too - your child's registration fee is waived, and childcare is provided for volunteer's children under 5 years old.

If you have any questions or are interested in helping with the planning process, email stmarysvbsholliston@gmail.com.

Registration opens April 1, 2020.

Registrations will be mailed out by April 1, or can be picked up from the Religious Education Office.

St. Mary's
EPIC
High School Youth Ministry

EPIC General Meetings

May 3 and May 31
7:15 – 8:45 PM
In FHH - \$5 Dues



In March, 39 EPIC Teens Made 85 "Blessings Bags" full of snacks, toiletries, socks, and other items which were distributed to homeless people in Boston!



In February, EPIC held the second annual St. Mary's Games, an intense Red Team vs. Blue Team Competition that featured gaga ball, a relay race, team cheers, and more! Teen captain Danny and the Red Team prevailed over teen captain Nolan and the Blue Team in a hard fought battle. To close out the night, Seminarian Andrew Rondelli spoke on sportsmanship and prayer, while emphasizing that win or lose, our identity is in Christ.

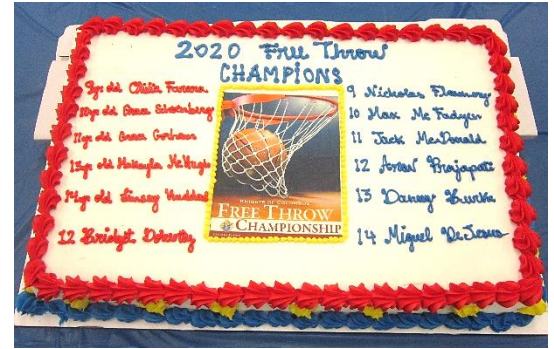


All High School Students Welcome!
For more information, speak to Youth Minister Jake Thiringer – stmarysym1870@gmail.com.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

St. Mary's Council #14224 April, 2020



Grand Knight: Albert Scaramella
Deputy Grand Knight: Tom Anguish

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS 12TH ANNUAL CHARITY RAFFLE: Ask a Knight for tickets. On April, May and June weekends, the Council will be selling raffle tickets at Superette and Fiske's downtown as well as at various shopping centers in adjacent towns. From raffle proceeds, the Council has donated over \$200,000 to local charities and veterans charities. These include the Holliston Pantry Shelf, Holliston Senior Center, local Habitat for Humanity projects, Homes for our Troops and other veteran's charities. The Drawing will take place at Celebrate Holliston on September 26. Raffle co-chairmen are Knights Tom Anguish, Bill Heuer, Aaron Pyman and Grand Knight Al Scaramella.

ANNUAL FREE THROW CONTEST: The Council free throw winners were feted to a trophy presentation with cake and ice cream on February 19. (See photos.) The Council winners were also invited to participate in the District Free Throw Contest on February 22 at the Holliston Middle School. At the Districts, we had three Holliston winners: Jack McDonald-11 year old boys; Makayla McHugh-13 year old girls; and Lindsey Haddad-14 year old girls. They will participate in the K of C State Championship to be held at Boston College.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY COUNCIL VOLUNTEER DAY: The Council will help with remodeling the Habitat home on Concord Street on Friday, April 3. Knight Michael Michielli is organizing the day.

NEW EXEMPLIFICATION FOR NEW MEMBERS: Supreme Knight Carl Anderson has announced the new Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity. New members joining our Council will become Third Degree Knights after the new Exemplification. Quoting from the Supreme Council Ceremonials Department, "The future of the Order depends upon growth...by providing an entry path that is inviting and accessible to prospective members and their families." In creating the new combined ceremony, the Supreme Council, "...focused on removing the barriers of secrecy and commitment of time that inhibited so many from joining our ranks....It is designed to be held in a parish with families and friends seated in the pews. All can now witness firsthand the organization their loved ones are joining, its principles and values, and why it matters." The Council will announce its first Exemplification after Council training is completed.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE FOR 2020: All good St. Mary's men eighteen and older are invited to join our Council. The Knights of Columbus is the largest Catholic men's lay organization in the world. Our Council respects members' limited time but needs new members to share our faith journey as Catholic men. For membership information contact Grand Knight Albert Scaramella at 508-561-0584 OR ajscaramella@comcast.net OR you can now join ON-LINE by going to the Supreme K of C website kofc.org. On-line membership allows you to obtain all K of C benefits including outstanding insurance plans and optional membership in our St. Mary's Council.



women in
WINGS
God's spirit

Spring 2020 –
Recognizing God's Grace In our Lives

Due to the Pandemic, WINGS is cancelled at least through April 6. Please check the online bulletin for further updates: <https://stmarysholliston.com/weekly-bulletins/> Thank you.



April 8 – Thomas Slick: God's Grace Leads us from Despair. Tom will share how his life experiences have led him to a place where he is uniquely meeting the needs of the underserved. His work evolved from an accomplished sales career to serving in non-profit leadership roles at World Vision and Straight Ahead Ministries. He is the Founder and President of Provision Ministry Inc., an organization that connects corporations, churches and individuals to non-profits who serve those most in need. Tom holds a degree in Marketing and is a Black Belt in Tai Kwon Do.



April 15 – Kim Lisbon: God's Grace is Sufficient. Kim places her trust in Jesus. She will share how His presence sustained her during a recent battle with cancer, allowing her to live and love through this unexpected journey. Kim has been married 34 years and loves traveling with her husband, Art. She holds a BA in Elementary Education from Annhurst College, has worked as a teacher in Human Resource Management and, in the Catholic Church. She earned a Catechetical Certificate from St. John's Seminary and is active in the Catholic Charismatic renewal. She shares her musical talent at two local parishes and her prayer group, the Vision of Peace.

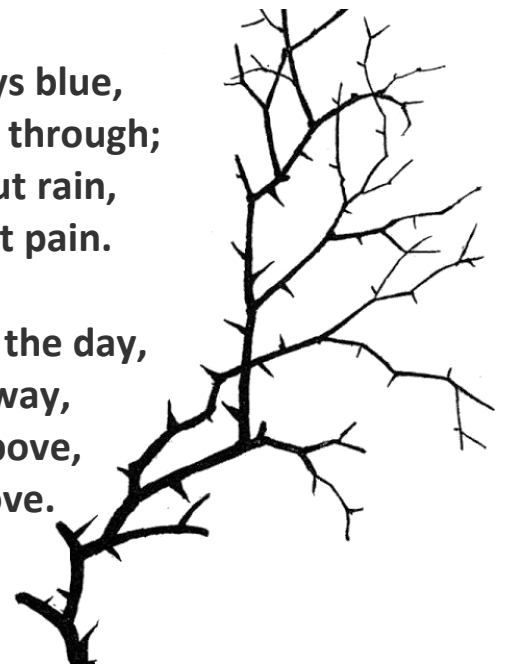
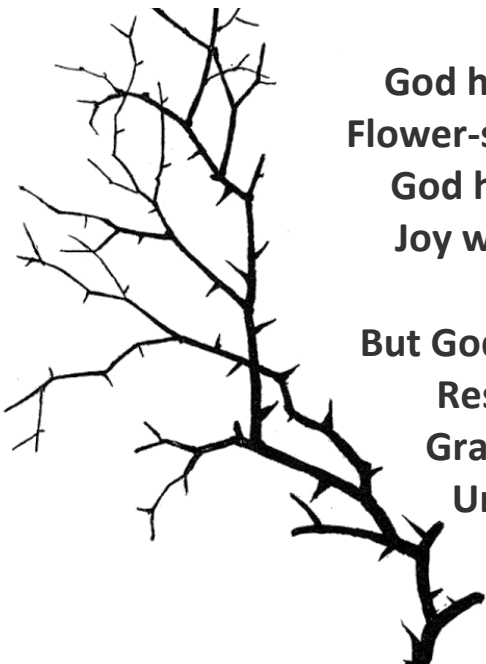
April 22 – School Vacation – No WINGS



April 29 – Robert LeBlanc: Great Adventures. Did you know that God's grace is for everyone? Robert will share life stories that show how great things can be accomplished through the gift of grace. Born in New Orleans, Robert grew up in Biloxi, Mississippi. At the age of 15 he turned his life over to God and began studying the Bible. He has witnessed and experienced many miracles during his life's journey. Several years ago, he wrote *Where Will You Plant Your Seed?* - inspirational stories of how God has worked in his life as well as others.

God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through;
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

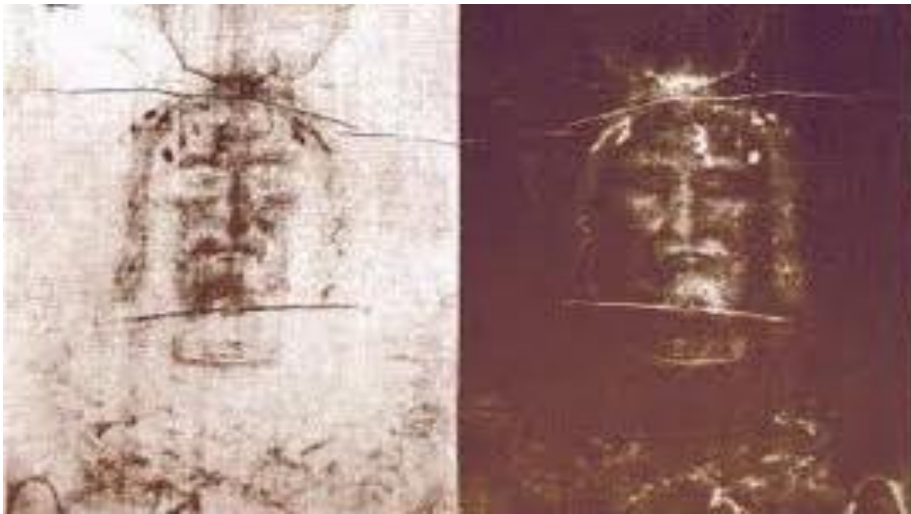
But God hath promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.



"Do Not Be Afraid, I Am With You!"

In the midst of all the fear and paranoia surrounding the coronavirus, these words from the prophet Jeremiah (1:8) are just the kind of reassurance that we need from the Lord today. Fear of the virus closed many of the religious sites in Jerusalem, and kept our pilgrims, including myself, from visiting the Holy Land this year. Rather than to return to life as normal, though, I decided to take a few of the days that became open on my calendar to educate myself about the Shroud of Turin.

The Shroud is thought by many to be the burial cloth of Jesus. It is a long held treasure of the Church, passed down through the centuries. Preserved carefully in a church in northern Italy, the Shroud still remains a mystery to the world. Studied and tested by a team of scientists in 1978, the Shroud was reported by the national media in the mid-eighties *not* to be the authentic burial cloth of Jesus. So why was I interested in learning more about the Shroud?



The headlines of the eighties indicated that, according to carbon data analysis, the Shroud was likely created sometime during the Middle Ages. But those were only the headlines. Buried further in those articles were facts that told a different story. The carbon data testing analysis, the reporters relied on in their headlines, was taken from a very small sample found along the hem of the fabric (an area that had been handled frequently throughout the Shroud's history) and was wrought with uncertainties.¹

And, although scientists could not determine how the image was

imprinted on the fabric, they found no paint pigment, dyes, or stains (other than blood) that would indicate that the product was a forgery. The only thing the scientists were able to confirm with certainty, was that the fabric was, in fact, the burial shroud of a crucified man. How the image of the human form appears on the fabric has remained unsolved.²

What are the chances that the Shroud of Turin is actually the burial cloth of Jesus? Well, for one, the Shroud is a linen cloth with a herringbone pattern consistent with manufacturing methods of First Century Palestine. The fact that it still exists is unique enough; but the fact that it bears the image of a crucified man make it truly unique. Not all criminals who were crucified were given a proper burial; this is the only burial cloth that has survived the centuries; why? Furthermore, the wounds on the Shroud correspond EXACTLY with the Gospel accounts of Jesus' suffering and death. Professor Alan Adler, a Jewish blood investigator on the Shroud of Turin Research Project, stated in his analysis, *Clearly the scientific data will not be inconsistent with, in fact, this being Christ's burial shroud. That's the best that science can ever say!*³

After reading more closely what others, many of whom are not Catholic, had to say about the Shroud's authenticity, I felt that the chances the Shroud is authentic had gone from one in perhaps a thousand to only one real possibility: this MUST be Jesus' burial sheet! For a deeper understanding of the significance of the Shroud, I spent two days visiting with the leading American expert on the Shroud. Russ Breault is a researcher who has been studying and lecturing on the Shroud of Turin for over 30 years, and his analysis of the Shroud is compelling evidence - not only

¹ Damon, P.E. & others: Radio Carbon Dating of the Shroud, <https://www.shroud.com/nature.htm>

² Shroud of Turin Research Project's Final Report; October, 1981

³ <https://www.ancient-origins.net/artifacts-other-artifacts/blood-shroud-interview-blood-investigator-shroud-turin-research-project-021841>

with regard to the crucifixion of Jesus - but, more importantly, to Jesus' Resurrection, and to His Real Presence among us today. Russ told me that to him, what's most amazing about the image of the man on the Shroud isn't how it verifies the Gospel accounts of Jesus' Passion and death, but how it verifies His Resurrection. Recent scientific studies indicate that, while the image of the man's torture are recorded in verifiable blood stains, the image of the man himself are most likely caused by a burst of light and energy. We recalled in the Resurrection accounts that Matthew says, "His appearance was like lightning" (28:3), and in the Gospel of John, Jesus refers to himself as Light: "You are going to have the Light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the Light, before darkness overtakes you." (12:35). The image on the Shroud of a man cast in Light, is the image of hope to a world in the dark about its future.

Both of the images found on the Shroud, those of the suffering man formed by blood, and of the glorified body formed by a blast of light, are evidence of Jesus' love and promise to each of us. That promise is reaffirmed every time we receive Him at Mass. The blood type found on the Shroud has been scientifically determined to be of Type AB. This blood type is perfectly consistent with the forensic studies of both the Sudarium of Oviedo (believed to be the linen placed over the face of Jesus before burial) and two Eucharistic miracles (Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1999 & Lanciano, Italy in the 8th Century).⁴ The Shroud of Turin, the Sudarium of Ovieta, and the many miracles that validate the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist (one of which I am a personal witness to)⁵ are reassurances to us amid the fear and paranoia that permeate the news. The coronavirus may be a perfect storm to captivate the attention of the world, but the message written in the fibers of the Shroud is a true message from Jesus. It is meant to strengthen us in times of trial; just as He did with his disciples thousands of years ago when he stepped up in the middle of their storm and said: "Be still...I AM THE LIVING GOD, do not be afraid!"



Examining a full-sized replica of the Shroud with Russ Breault and a parishioner of St. Roch's

⁴ <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/kearse.pdf>

⁵ In July of 2014, I was a firsthand witness to the Miracle of Santarem, Portugal. Although the miracle occurred in 1266 (see http://www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/mir/english_pdf/Santarem1.pdf), Diane and I witnessed firsthand His Living Presence in the Host before us.



EARTH DAY

Earth Day is 50 years old. The first Earth Day was April 22, 1970 and the societal mobilization it spawned is credited with launching the modern environmental movement. This year's theme is climate action and the Earth Day website states that *"climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable."*

You can go to <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2020/> for more information about Earth Day itself and climate change. If you would like to attend a local Earth Day event, consider going to the 10th Annual Framingham Earth Day Festival which will be held on Saturday, April 25 from 11 AM – 4 PM on the Framingham Center Common (Edgell Road at Route 9 in Framingham).

Last year's event had speakers, vendors, children's activities and more. Check the festival's website, <http://www.framinghamearthday.org/>, for updates on this year's event.

"What need does the earth have of us? It is no longer enough, then, simply to state that we should be concerned for future generations. We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn." - Pope Francis, Laudato Si

