



REKINDLE *the fire*



B L E S S E D T R I N I T Y P A R I S H

Easter Season - A Time to Rekindle Prayer A LETTER FROM FATHER JOE

This edition of our parish newsletter reflects many amazing strategies when it comes to "prayer." When you hear this word, what are you thinking? Many "spiritual giants" (and not so giants) have formulated their own definitions of prayer. All of them contain some meritorious ideas.

There is one definition of prayer that I actually remember from my seminary days (way back when): "Prayer is an invitation to enter into a relationship with Jesus, which we are free to either accept or reject." What do you think of this definition? Have you ever thought about prayer in these terms?

Prayer need not be an overly complicated and cluttered reality – there have been times in my own prayer life when I have thought that I must do many loving things and utter many eloquent words. NOT SO!!! Jesus knows what I need and want long before I even ask!

Prayer is more about "being" than "doing." We are "human beings" NOT "human doings." Prayer is more about creating space and time simply (or not so simply) to listen to God. Am I a good listener? After all, what I have to say to God is important; but what God has to say to me is even more important.

As an Easter people, we are invited to place ourselves in the presence of the Risen Christ who has given us so much for which to hope. If Jesus is not risen from the dead, our faith is useless and there is no hope.

The Oblate Priest, Fr. Bob Michel, has written the following reflection in one of his works. It speaks to how powerfully and personally God wants to address us. How blessed are we who really allow these words to penetrate the ventricles of our hearts:

"You must try to pray so that, in your prayer, you open yourself in such a way that sometimes – perhaps not today, but sometime – you are able to hear God say to you, 'I love you.' These words, addressed to you by God, are the most important words you will ever hear because, before you hear them, nothing is ever completely right with you, but after you hear them, something will be right in your life at a very deep level."

As an Easter people, we are invited to live on a very deep level with the Lord and one another. Don't lose this personal invitation. Send back your "RSVP" now!!

Blessed Easter Everyone!!!,

Fr. Joe

Ministry Highlight - Praying at Blessed Trinity Parish

Prayer, at its root, is communication with God. But there are so many ways to communicate, aren't there? This is a gift - it allows us to be persistent in prayer, using whatever methods work best at any given time.

Now is a great season to explore new avenues of prayer and reflection. We are blessed to have three Ministries at Blessed Trinity Parish that focus solely on prayer: The Rosary Ministry, Eucharistic Adoration, and the Prayer Ministry. We highlight these here and invite you to explore these channels. You can access detailed articles about the Rosary and Eucharistic Adoration Ministries on the website at www.BlessedTrinityCatholic.org/Devotions and for the Prayer Ministry, www.BlessedTrinityCatholic.org/prayer-ministry.

ROSARY MINISTRY



For **John Miller**, one of the **Rosary Ministry coordinators**, "praying can be at times a very personal conversation between God and an individual." For him, the Rosary is an easy and powerful way to pray.

This devotion has two predominate prayers: the Our Father and Hail Mary. There are four sets of Mysteries that center on the events of Christ's life: Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and the Luminous. The rosary beads help us stay on track. The gentle repetition of the words helps us to enter into the silence of our hearts, where Christ's spirit dwells. Whether simply contemplating the mysteries, or praying with a specific intention in mind, it is a great way to slow down and connect with God. John shares, "I have relaxed from an otherwise tough day by lying in bed and praying a Rosary. The Holy Rosary is an easy and powerful way to pray."

The Rosary Ministry meets at St. Catherine Church - All are always welcome!

- **Wednesday evenings at 6:15pm & Saturday mornings at 8:00am.** People bring special petitions that all gathered bring to prayer. (Coordinated by John Miller.)
- **1st Friday of the month, right after the 8:00am Mass:** with prayers for those suffering from mental health issues and addictions. (Coordinated by Kathy McGourty)

For more information, please contact John Miller at (978) 692-7651 or Kathy McGourty at mcgourtykathy@comcast.net.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Deacon Bill Dwyer, one of the **ministry coordinators**, describes Eucharistic Adoration: "Very simply put, (it) is making and taking time, from our busy days, to spend time in silent prayer with Jesus before the Blessed Sacrament....During time in prayer, we might have a personal conversation with Jesus, write in our prayer journal, pray the Rosary, read scripture, or pray for our family, friends or maybe someone who hurt us. Maybe one of these or all may happen – as we listen to what Jesus may be asking at the moment. Usually, our personal time in Adoration should last about an hour; however, Jesus invites us to spend any time we have available – whether 5, 10, 20 or more minutes – knowing each minute is precious being with Jesus."

Time spent in adoration helps us to become more acutely aware of Jesus' sacrifice, that He gave His life for us, so that we may live and have the promise of eternal life.





Blessed Trinity Parish offers adoration many times during the month:

- St. Anne Church: 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 8:30-10am
- St. Catherine Church - Mezzanine every Thursday from 3pm-7pm.
- Seasonally, 24-Hour Adoration is offered

For more information, please contact the coordinators of this ministry: Deacon Bill Dwyer at deaconbilldwyer@gmail.com or Jackie Butterfield at jjbviolin@comcast.net.

PRAYER MINISTRY

The Prayer Ministry is an intercessory prayer team who (confidentially) prays for those who request prayers via our prayer line. Karen Smith started this ministry at St. Anne in 1997 when seeking prayers for a sick relative and found no such ministry existed. Her passion and devotion for prayer caught on and the ministry continued to grow. In 2011, a similar prayer line was begun at St. Catherine Parish by Mary Collins and a group of prayerful parishioners. Now united as one ministry there are 60 members committed to praying for the needs of the Blessed Trinity Parish community. Those members receive the prayer requests via email and pray on their own time for those needs.

The Prayer Ministry welcomes ALL who wish to pray and is especially suited for those who, for any reason, are homebound. Though a quiet ministry, it is active and brings comfort and hope in troubled times. Members serve with compassion, sensitivity, and confidentiality. Often, people who requested prayers have shared that they felt comforted, knowing prayers were being said for their intention.

To request prayers or to join the team of pray-ers, email Prayers@BlessedTrinityCatholic.org, or call the Parish Office at 978-320-4220 and leave a message for the Prayer Ministry.



Pope Francis has launched the Synod on Synodality, an ambitious two-year global process of listening to the faithful of Catholic Church. Your participation is incredibly important for its success!

Synods bring Church leaders together to discuss and act on important topics related to the life of faith. Traditionally, synods were assemblies of bishops gathered to discuss and advise the pope on issues of importance for the life of the Church. Once receiving and reviewing the document from the bishops, he then wrote his own response, an encyclical, to shed new light on what was discussed and help spread it throughout the Church.

This synod's topic is about the Synod process itself. Rather than being limited to a one-month discussion with just bishops, it is a two year process which includes all the People of God - no one is to be excluded. Pope Francis reminds us that we are all called to discern what the Holy Spirit wants for the Church. He wants to open up this process of discernment and discussion to all levels of Church life - to put synodality into practice from now onwards, in every diocese, parish, and country across the whole world.

It's time to act, with two easy steps: 1. **PRAY** for the Holy Spirit's guidance of this new process, and 2. Complete the simple survey at <https://www.bostoncatholic.org/synod-synodality>. For more information and resources, please check out our webpage dedicated to the Synod: www.blessedtrinitycatholic.org/synod.

Let Us Pray - What exactly IS intercessory prayer?

by Debbie Rhodes

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us: "Intercession is a prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all men, especially sinners." (CCC2634) and that "intercession – asking on behalf of another has been characteristic of a heart attuned to God's mercy." (CCC 2635) Sounds a bit lofty...so what's the bottom line? **Quite simply, intercessory prayer, or intercession, is the act of praying on behalf of others.**

Why pray for others? **Praying for others helps us to think beyond ourselves and to grow in compassion.** Praying for others is an unselfish expression of love. Because intercessory prayer reflects God's own outpouring of love and mercy.

At Mass, we participate in the General Intercessions (also called the Prayer of the Faithful or the Universal Prayer). These prayers are the final portion of the Liturgy of the Word where

we come together with one voice to pray to God for a variety of intentions. These are designed to include intentions for the needs of the Church, the whole world, those suffering or burdened in some way, and the local community. We join our hearts and voices and respond to each petition, usually with the invocation, "Lord, hear our prayer."

Pope Francis says, "The first way to pray for someone is to speak to God about that person. If we do this frequently, each day, our hearts are not closed but open to others. **Praying for other people is the first way to love them and be close to them in a concrete way.**"

Intercessory prayer is a powerful form of prayer and will be included as a part of our "Easter – a Journey of Joy" (see back cover). **We are asking everyone to join their voices in prayer with these specific intentions for each of the weeks of the Easter season.**



Let Us Pray!

Week of April 17-23	For those who have shared the joy of their faith with us.
Week of April 24-30	That all people will come to know God's Mercy.
Week of May 1-7	For those receiving their sacraments this Spring.
Week of May 8-14	For our mothers – and those who have been like mothers to us.
Week of May 15-21	For those who are called to make their whole lives a prayer in solitude, silence, and community.
Week of May 22-28	That we nurture and share the gifts we have been given by the Holy Spirit.
Week of May 29-June 4	For those who have died in service to our country.
June 5	For the Church on Pentecost Sunday.

Easter Season - A Time to Rekindle Prayer

by Diahne Goodwin

We have made our way through Lent preparing ourselves for the Glory of Easter. Alleluia, He is Risen! It is time to celebrate! The Easter season is now upon us.

This joyful season spans 50 days—from Christ's triumphant rising from the dead on Easter to the

outpouring of the Holy Spirit and birth of the Church on Pentecost. The 50 days of celebration provides an opportunity for us to recommit to living our lives as an Easter people.

What does that mean, in real terms? Just how can we do that? Especially in today's world, where we can feel pushed and pulled in so many directions.

I like to begin from a place of hope that comes from remembering the first Easter Season. What was given that first Easter was given to us all, for all time. We know the outcome! We don't need to wait for three or fifty days. To be an Easter People is to remember the gift of the resurrection and the power of the Holy Spirit given to all as a result of that first Pentecost. This gives us a reason for our joy.

Next, I try to give myself a break and no matter how I feel I might've missed the mark up until now, it's a time to start afresh. Instead of a New Year's resolution in January, I like to look at it as an opportunity

for a new life resolution during the Easter Season. It's a time to recall and reclaim the gift of the Holy Spirit I have been given and try to live that out in my daily life. I know, this is way easier said than done!

However, it is possible, with help. One of the only ways I can seem to make any headway is to anchor the season in a new commitment to prayer. Whatever our experience of prayer is, we can take this time to start, rekindle or grow in practice. It is a time to reach out to God and also a time to make space for God to reach out to us.

I grew up learning about prayer as something we recited to God. It was very one directional—me talking to God, but not doing a lot of listening. Every evening my parents would line the seven of us children up, kneeling in a row down the length of the living room couch, to say our evening prayers: the Our Father and Hail Mary and the God Bless so-and-sos...Grace at dinner and church on Sundays completed our routine. If I had any questions or personal thoughts I might want to share with God, I kept them to myself. It wasn't until my teen years and a retreat experience that I discovered that Jesus was a person with whom I could have a personal relationship, that the Holy Spirit was real and there for me and, best of all, God is always reaching out for me in love, even when I don't notice or respond.

WALKING TO EMMAUS

Lord, of all Your
Remaining 11 apostles, of
All Your hundreds of
Disciples who faithfully
Followed You throughout
Galilee and Judea
And beyond, what was
It about Cleopas and
His traveling companion
That made You single
Them out on the Road to
Emmaus on the very
Day of Your resurrection?
In the Book of Isaiah
It is said, "For My thoughts
Are not your thoughts,
Neither are your
Ways My ways."
So, what was it about
Them, Lord, which
Made You accompany
Them? And what
More afterwards, Lord,
For them to exclaim,
"Wasn't it like a
Fire burning in us,
When He talked to us!"
O Lord, before even
Pentecost, You let Cleopas
And his companion
Hear and bear the Holy
Spirit's flame!

Leo Carroll
Westford, Massachusetts

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Anointing of the Sick - By Rich Chenell

Many people have heard of the sacrament, the Anointing on the Sick, but a lot of those that have, aren't exactly sure what it is. Some confuse it with Last Rites. Some don't know how or why it is used, or when to request an Anointing of the Sick.

To help us all to better understand this beautiful sacrament, I spoke with Father Peter because it is a sacrament that is dear to him, and one that he would like our Blessed Trinity family of faith to know more about, and to participate in more. But first, I will start with a little general information about the holy oils used for the various sacraments throughout the year.

During the Lenten season, parishes receive their year's supply of the three holy oils from the Archdiocese of Boston. One of them is The Oil of the Sick. The other two are The Holy Chrism Oil and The Oil of the Catechumens.

The Oil of the Catechumens and the Oil of the Sick are blessed, and the Holy Chrism Oil is consecrated by Cardinal Seán O'Malley at the annual Chrism Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston.

What is each oil used for?

The Holy Chrism Oil is used during each Sacrament that consecrates someone into God's service through the Sacrament of Confirmation, during the

Sacrament of Holy Orders, which is the ordination of priests and deacons, and also during the Sacrament of Baptism when, after the child is baptized, the priest or deacon traces a cross on the top of the child's head.

The Oil of the Catechumens



is used prior to baptism for children, and also for those in the RCIA program, which is the Rite of Christian Initiation program for candidates joining the Catholic Church as adults. For both children and adults going through the baptismal process, this anointing is to help ward off evil and to help those that are going to be baptized to remain strong in faith as they prepare for a life in Christ.

The Oil of the Sick is used during the Sacrament of the



Anointing of the Sick. Many people consider this sacrament only when a person is near death, but the Anointing of the Sick is much more than that.

Following are the questions I posed to Father Peter.

- Many people confuse the Anointing of the Sick with Last Rites. What would you say to them to clarify the misunderstanding?

"The Anointing of the Sick, since Vatican II, has benefitted from a renewed understanding of the Sacrament that focuses on the healing graces bestowed upon the sick and hospitalized who receive it. Last Rites, also called Last Blessing (Extreme Unction), was celebrated primarily for those on their immediate way home to God."

- If someone is terminally ill but death is not expected imminently, when do you suggest the Anointing to be done?

"If the person is terminally ill the priest should be called as soon as that diagnosis is identified to the individual and the family".

- Can you do the Anointing of the Sick more than once for the same person?

"Anointing can be celebrated every few months for anyone facing chronic or long term illness".

• The Sunday before my wife was scheduled for surgery, you called her up during Mass for an Anointing. It was a very powerful moment and we were both very moved to have so many people raise their hands over her for a blessing. But, some people aren't comfortable with being in front of a large gathering, or for others to know that they are having a medical issue or procedure. What can you say to help people feel more comfortable with being Anointed at Mass?

"The reason for celebrating in front of the people of God at Mass is a way of educating the people on the beauty and graces of the Sacrament which, unfortunately, very few understand or appreciate.

If a person is uncomfortable being anointed in front of others (say at Mass) they would simply identify themselves and ask the priest to anoint them privately."

• Anything else you'd like to add?

"Please spread the word to others that the power and grace of the Lord's spirit is here for any and all that are facing illness, stress, or anxiety. God's desire for all of us is to know that we are not alone when facing our health concerns. The Lord desires to walk with us and supports us with His healing presence and power in this Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, and through the Holy Eucharist".

****Note**** – It is now easy to receive this healing sacrament with no appointment necessary! At the end of every Mass on the 2nd Sunday of each month, anyone who desires an anointing will be invited to come forward. If you would like to receive this sacrament at another time, or if you have a friend, family member or co-worker that would be interested, simply call the Blessed Trinity Parish office at 978-320-4220 to make individual arrangements.



Easter Season - continued from page 5

Prayer felt real for the first time. I grew to discover so many ways to connect with God and also began to learn to listen back as well. Even in this new understanding I find myself often in need of a reboot, to again become more intentional about prayer.

This Easter season can be a time to slow down and reconnect with God in prayer, giving time both to talk to God, but also time to listen. If you are feeling stuck, maybe it is a time to try something new, or simply seek ways to experience God's presence.

Thankfully God knows each of us personally and will speak to

each of us in ways that we can understand. For some, a walk in nature, pausing to really notice the complexity and beauty of creation is a powerful way to notice God's amazing involvement in this world. Creating or experiencing music and the arts often have a transforming effect and can help to focus a thought or prayer or simply help point toward God's presence. Some find journaling helpful as a way to both talk to God, and as a tool to reflect on how that is going and how one has seen God in action. Some find recommitting to our traditional prayers in a new way powerful, praying them with new intentionality and taking time to meditate with them. Committing

to spending more time in the Bible with God's Word is a pathway that is great for anyone to explore. Others find a great first step is committing to intentional times of silence and contemplation, to open themselves up to really experience how God may be moving within them.

The bottom line is that now is a great time to do something, whatever that next step is that will work for you that will help you grow. I may not be kneeling by the couch anymore, but I now know how much I need prayer. I am going to recommit to prayer this Easter season. How about you?



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Littleton, MA 01460

Saint Catherine Church
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Westford, MA 01886

CURRENT MASS SCHEDULE:

Weekend Schedule:

Saturday 4:00 pm – St. Catherine Church (live streamed)

Sunday 8:30 am – St. Anne Church

Sunday 10:30 am – St. Catherine Church

Weekday Schedule:

Mon & Tues 8:00 am – St. Anne Church

Thu & Fri 8:00 am – St. Catherine Church

Reconciliation:

Saturday 3:00 pm or by appointment

St. Catherine Church

Fr. Peter Quinn 978-320-4201

Father Joe Rossi 978-320-4202

You're invited! **Easter—a Journey of Joy!**

"The Easter season...is a time for rejoicing and for always seeking out the risen Christ." Pope Francis

Let's join each other in celebrating the Good News of the resurrection by growing together in prayer and commitment to **WALKING WITH JESUS.**

Each week from Easter Sunday to Pentecost (April 17 - June 5th) we will focus on a different theme.

Based on the theme, there will be either a type of prayer highlighted for that week, a suggested act of service, an opportunity to attend a workshop or event... and more! We encourage everyone to participate in at least one of these opportunities each week of the Easter Season.

We will update the webpage weekly with full details and suggestions for celebrating all 50 days of Easter: www.BlessedTrinityCatholic.org/journey

"God made us for joy. God is joy and the joy of living reflects the original joy that God felt in creating us." St. John Paul II

