



# HOLY CROSS PARISH NEWS

## ANCHORAGE, ALASKA



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### *A Mardi Gras Prayer*

*for the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday*

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,  
for it is from your goodness that we have this day  
to celebrate on the threshold of the Season of Lent.

Tomorrow we will fast and abstain from meat.  
Today we feast.

We thank you for the abundance of gifts you shower upon us.

We thank you especially for one another.

As we give you thanks,

we are mindful of those who have so much less than we do.

As we share these wonderful gifts together,

we commit ourselves to greater generosity toward those  
who need our support.

Prepare us for tomorrow.

Tasting the fullness of what we have today,  
let us experience some hunger tomorrow.

May our fasting make us more alert

and may it heighten our consciousness

so that we might be ready to hear your Word

and respond to your Call.

As our feasting fills us with gratitude

so may our fasting and abstinence hollow out in us

a place for deeper desires

and an attentiveness to hear the cry of the poor.

May our self-denial turn our hearts to you

and give us a new freedom for generous service to others.

We ask you these graces

with our hearts full of delight

and stirring with readiness for the Lenten Journey ahead.

We ask them with confidence

in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen!



## Reconciliation



One day, when I was a seminarian, I had an argument with another seminarian during breakfast. We both became vehement and the argument got bigger and finally I stood up and shouted, “What are you looking at me for? What is your problem?” I don’t remember exactly how he responded. He must have said similar words to me. Immediately, we turned away and left the table. After that, I had a hard time talking to him. About 3 days later, we ended up in a situation where he and I had to work on something together. Of course, we worked without a word at first. But suddenly, he turned to me and said, “Brother Andrew, I am so sorry about what I said to you.” At that moment, I felt shame; my pride became nothing when he said, “I am sorry.” And then consolation and peace came into my heart. Of course, I said I was sorry, and we were friends again. This is how we feel when we reconcile with one another.

Reconciliation is the best way to correct our mistakes and recover our peaceful and genuine relationships. God also wants to reconcile with us even though we ruin our relationship with Him through sin. He wants to re-create us through the Sacrament of Penance so much that He calls to us again and again saying, “I am here for you. Please return to me.” Nevertheless, we hesitate to participate in this invitation for many reasons: pride, shame, laziness, preoccupation, fear, etc. But once we do return to God, we are consoled in peace and forgiven because He is our Father who understands our hesitation and accepts our sinfulness. He waits for us to trust God’s mercy and be a little more courageous.

Lent is a wonderful season for spiritual growth; we are invited to experience this re-creation blessing through the Sacrament of Penance. God opens His arms and waits for our return. This is the perfect time to confess our sins, “Father, I have sinned against you. Forgive me.” Let us courageously reconcile ourselves with God this Lent.

+ Peace in Christ, Fr. Andrew Lee



### **The Pope’s Monthly Intentions**

**March 2019—Recognition of the Right of Christian Communities**

That Christian communities, especially those who are persecuted, feel that they are close to Christ and have their rights respected.



## Love & Forgiveness



Lent is the annual Christian observance that precedes Easter. It has been practiced to remind us repeatedly how much love God has for us that He wanted to redeem us from the wallow of sinfulness. This has been known to all of us Christians and we believe in it. However, there are questions we should ask ourselves.

How has Jesus' death impacted on our lives? How much of our life is influenced by this redemption? How does Lent relate to our daily circumstances?

Each one of us has been dealing with life differently everyday. Situations vary from place to place and from person to person. We see life based on our own perspectives which are influenced by our faith, practices, culture, and many other factors that play important roles on how things go everyday. Reasons can be widely different, too, but one thing is certain, no one will ever be responsible for our actions but ourselves.

Whatever comes up, if it be circumstantial, intentional, or conventional, we should be responsible enough to respond accordingly. This is where the morality of our actions comes in. We know what is good and what isn't.

Given no one is perfect, flaws are highly expected. People are highly likely to commit mistakes. People can end up hurting each other. Depending on the degree of pain associated to every failing, the extent of our forgiveness also varies. Chances are, we are not ready to forgive all the time. Human as we are, forgiveness is one of our weaknesses. This is where the message of Lent sinks in.

When God gave His only begotten Son to redeem the world, He did not choose to only forgive certain ones. Jesus died to redeem each soul from eternal damnation and He did not die easily. He underwent indescribable sufferings and pains out of His love for us. He could have just saved us without shedding His blood but His sufferings showed how much love can do. Love does not only include the lovable side of life. Love transcends feelings! May this Lent teach us the value of forgiveness in its real sense.

~ Marife Anino

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“Lent offers us all a very special opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and to deepen our commitment to a way of life, rooted in our baptism. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our patterns, to pray more deeply, experience sorrow for what we've done and failed to do, and to be generous to those in need.”

~ **Praying Lent** (Creighton University-Online Ministry)



## Baptisms

December 23, 2018

Penelope Sue Janowski

Daughter of Jordan & Tyler

February 16, 2019

Roman Wade Hannon

Son of Andrew & Elizabeth

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### *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*



On Thursday, March 28, 2018, our Parish Lenten Reconciliation Service will begin at 7 p.m.

Father Andrew and two other priests will be available for Confessions.

During Lent Saturday Confessions will be 3:30-5:00 pm.  
Exception: No Confessions on Holy Saturday.

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### *Lenten Fast and Abstinence Regulations*

Everyone 14 years of age or over is bound to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent. Everyone 18 years of age and under 59 years of age is bound to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. (The obligation of fasting ceases with the celebration of one's 59<sup>th</sup> birthday.)

On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, only one full meatless meal is allowed. Two other smaller meatless meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to each one's needs, but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted on these two days, but liquids, including milk and fruit juices are allowed. When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige.

Catholics should not lightly excuse themselves from these prescribed minimal penitential practices.



## God's Truth



Truth is the truth, especially God's truth. It can't be changed just because we dislike it or it seems too hard to live or is not accepted by society. Today relativism is pretty common among our secular world. Relativism is the belief that there's no absolute truth, only the truths that I believe. I think at one time or another all of us have found it difficult to accept a truth when confronted with it. As kids we learn to re-invent the truth as we see it so we might be popular, escape punishment or just to get our own way.

We've rapidly seen a change in the world with the definition of marriage and recently with abortion laws. No wonder Saint John Paul II called our culture, "The culture of death" in his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. If life isn't respected in the womb, what makes us think life will be respected outside the womb?

Human life is sacred because it's the creative action of God who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from beginning until natural end; no one can under any circumstances claim the right to directly destroy an innocent human life (ccc 2258). "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations (Jer. 1:5)."

Imagine no siblings, or not being born because your parents weren't born? Imagine if the great people who inspired you in your lifetime had not been allowed to live. Each life is a gift to the world, even those the world sees as not perfectly made or being a burden upon parents.

We are now entering the season of Lent, a time of prayer, fasting, alms giving and penance. So this lent let us earnestly pray for the end to abortion and the disregard our world has for life because God's truth cannot be changed. As Hebrews 13: 8 tells us, "Jesus Christ is the same today, as he was yesterday and as he will be forever."

~ Deacon Bill Tunilla

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I am only one, but still I am one.  
I cannot do everything, but still I can do something;  
And because I cannot do everything  
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

~ Edward Everett Hale



## Pray for Life!



On Good Friday, 1982, while stuck in Peoria, Illinois, due to an ice storm, and after having spent the 3 hours of Christ's Passion in church, the words of *IF ... THEN WHY NOT ...?* poured out of me in a coherent, if not horrific, fashion. I share it now with you as this is a critical time for the unborn.

### IF ... THEN WHY NOT ...?

(A Story of DEATH and LIFE)

- IF** I can be **ABORTED** in the early stages of my existence,  
**THEN WHY NOT** in the latter stages because I am unwanted?
- IF** I can be **DESTROYED** the instant before I am born,  
**THEN WHY NOT** just after birth because I am malformed?
- IF** I can be **MURDERED** as an infant,  
**THEN WHY NOT** as a young child when I upset my parents?
- IF** I can be **BEATEN TO DEATH** as a youngster,  
**THEN WHY NOT** when I am a defiant teenager?
- IF** I can be **KILLED** in the prime of my life,  
**THEN WHY NOT** when I am old & become a burden to society?
- IF** I can be **DONE AWAY WITH** when I am healthy,  
**THEN WHY NOT** when I am sick or terminally ill?
- IF** I can be **HELPED TO DIE** because I am physically disabled,  
**THEN WHY NOT** because I am retarded or mentally ill?
- IF** I can be **ELIMINATED** because of my state of mind,  
**THEN WHY NOT** for my religious or political views?
- IF** this is what awaits me in the world outside this womb,  
**THEN WHY** do I want to be born?

Because **I am a person in the image of God;**

Because **I have a Right to Life;**

And

Because maybe, just maybe, **I CAN CHANGE THE WORLD!**

As we begin yet another Lenten Season, I am asking you to pray for two specific prayer requests. First, I am asking you to pray for the unborn. Second, I ask that you pray for Catholic politicians in America, for adherence to the teachings of the Church, to Defend the Right to Life.

~ Deacon Bill Finnegan



## *Praised Be The Most Blessed Sacrament!*



*By Sandon Broek, Consecrated Adorer, Feb 2019*

On February 19, 1789, in a vision, Blessed Maria Magdalene of the Incarnation, the foundress of the Perpetual Adoration Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, saw the Sacred Eucharist in exposition on a throne of grace, surrounded by ethereal glory and angels in white robes, wearing a large red scapular. The angels of the highest order – the Seraphim – were adoring Our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament. There, the Lord gave her the task of founding an Order of perpetual adoration so that the sacrament of the altar would be worshiped night and day. The sisters of the Order would imitate the attire of the angels in her vision; white robes as a symbol of spiritual royalty; red scapular to signify their total consecration to Love; a black veil as a reminder of how Love is fed by sacrifice.

The women who accept this call of devoting their entire life to adoring Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament, do so with one mission in mind: adore Jesus in the Eucharist for those who will not; worship The Lord in the Bread of Life in reparation for the sins of the world; perpetually adore Jesus Christ for those who need Him most – that is, adore Him for you. That's right, the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, adore Our Lord day and night for you and have been doing this for years! When greeting one another, they say “Praised be the Most Blessed Sacrament!”; when greeted with such a powerful salutation, their response is “Now and forever”!



Dear Holy Cross Parishioners, the Chapel of Eucharistic Adoration is within walking distance of our Church. Christ is there, exposed in beautiful glory, waiting for you. Go to Him. Thank Him for the unending prayers offered for you by these truly holy women. Pray for the sisters, that their numbers grow and grow and grow. And make it a habit – a holy habit - of regularly joining their prayers of adoration by spending time in peaceful silence before Our Lord at the Monastery. The Chapel is open to you every day from 6 a.m. until 8:30 P.M. with Adoration beginning after Holy Mass.

Christ is waiting for you – walking distance away.



**The Blessed Sacrament Monastery**  
Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

<https://blessedsacramentmonastery.org/>  
(907) 344-3330 2645 E. 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave, Anchorage, AK 99507



## *Youth Ministry Update*



In December I attended the National Conference of Catholic Youth Ministers to network and get fresh ideas about youth ministry for our parish. The decline of young people attending youth gatherings, such as local youth nights, social events, conferences and retreats has declined in our parish and I came to find out that this is not just a Holy Cross Parish issue, or even an Archdiocese of Anchorage issue, but... a nation-wide epidemic. Young people from the ages of 11 to 13 are disaffiliating themselves with the church and are not encouraged or empowered to have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Teens have set themselves several priorities in life: personally with education, job and future, internally with friends, social status and family, psychologically with fame, romantic love and ego. So where does God fall into this picture?

I truly believe that the greatest tragedy of any life is the failure to become a saint. So how do we as a parish instill that into our young people? We let them know that God is the ultimate priority! That if you put God first, everything else will fall into place. We must welcome, encourage and thank the young people of our parish who are present and here actively doing ministry. But we can't stop there... we need to step up. Do more ourselves. We need more adults and young adults to help mentor the youth by volunteering at youth nights, participating in mission and assisting in youth ministry at the parish and archdiocesan level. Service to our young people and to the greater community needs to increase and it starts here at home.

Recently we took 41 young people from our Archdiocese to Costa Rica for a Mission trip to serve the vulnerable and poor of a small mountain village in Coopevega. These people had nothing... dirt floors in their homes, dilapidated aluminum siding for walls and wild chickens and dogs roaming about where they live. They are out of work but look every day for any little thing they can do just to feed their children. Yet each and every family we visited and ministered to were happy and welcoming. We prayed with them, we visited with them and they just made us feel closer to God by actually doing His ministry here on earth.

In November we will take another group of our young people to NCYC in Indiana and in the summer of 2020 we will travel with another group to Peru on a Mission trip. Plus, we have several scholarships available for ACYC in June and the Just 5 days Junior High Mission in late June-both here in Alaska. Please join me in showing the youth of our parish that God is alive in us and that a relationship with Him truly matters!

~ Theresa Austin,  
Dir. Of Youth and Young Adult Ministry



## WYD Mission Trip

*By Toni Duran*

Being a teenager living in the faith is hard. You find yourself surrounded by sin and temptation that take you farther and farther away from where you want to be. I've always admired the idea of unconditional love, agape. God has you engulfed in His love through everything good in your life. The warm sun coming down on you, a hug, a friendly smile, the way the breeze runs through your fingers as you stick them out of a moving vehicle. I was reminded of God's unconditional love through World Youth Day. Going on this trip, I hoped to find forgiveness and inner peace. I hoped to have a stronger connection with my faith. That is exactly what I did.

The fact that I was missing my friends and missing college, I was beyond stressed and my first few days were difficult. I couldn't find that connection and I couldn't feel God inside me. It felt like this trip was going to be all for nothing. We had to write testimonies to share in front of the group and when I heard this, I laughed because at the time I thought there was no way I could ever share mine to these strangers. However, the more testimonies I heard, the more my heart grew heavy. I had something I needed to get off my chest and free myself. Those strangers became my friends and they encouraged me and lifted me up which gave me the courage to share. I finally felt that inner peace and that connection that I had been longing to have. I haven't stopped smiling since.

When you come from a place where you are given everything you need, it's easy to take those things for granted. A home, a family, food, clothes on your back and shoes on your feet. For some reason I was never satisfied. Until I met this one woman in Coopevega. She had come from Nicaragua to get away from her husband and left her family there. She was heartbroken, but because she had so much faith in God, she knew that they would be ok. Her house was no more than a floor and panels, but she still welcomed us in with open arms and a huge smile. One of the younger boys asked if it was hard to live with very little and she said "when you have something as big as our Savior, the little things in life are blessings. God's strength will give me exactly what I need". Seeing these people who appear to have nothing and yet they look to be the happiest people in the world, you realize they actually have everything. It's such a beautiful feeling when you finally have this realization of how great God's love is as it shines through experiences like this one.



## Reaching Out



Sometimes when I am in the grocery store, someone will offer to help me with lifting a heavy purchase. I am grateful but wonder if I look somewhat helpless. And when we are flying, someone may ask Deacon Bill, “Can I put that up in the overhead for you”? He asked me if he really looked that old? It is nice to know that, as we are aging, people are willing to help us. Are we willing to accept that help?

I asked a friend who has vision problems, if she wanted to take my arm while we were walking. She said that she can still walk and was offended. I don’t want to stop offering and I have been trying to understand the reaction. The loss of one’s independence is a very difficult thing to accept. People resist hearing aides and walkers. Carrying oxygen around may embarrass someone so they never go out. It is a slow admission that we can’t do the things that we used to do.

Sometimes older people become angry and bitter and we don’t know why they are never smiling. An aunt of mine explained it by saying she just wanted her old life back. When family members take the car keys away, that is the ultimate loss of freedom. Relying on others for everything, makes us feel so helpless. There may come a time when family and friends meet with us to tell us that we can no longer live alone, even as a couple. It is a hard decision for the family to make and still harder for the parties to accept. But sometimes people wait too long and can not get into a facility that has total care they may need. We have friends who just sold their house and went into assisted living because they realized they needed the extra help. Is it any wonder why some of these people are not happy? Add a little pain to the equation and we can really understand.

Our challenge is to continue to reach out to family and friends who need our help. Even if we are rejected, we have to keep trying. More challenging, perhaps, is for us to accept help when offered to us.

~ Diane Finnegan

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As we “mature” in our life we meet new challenges... and the adjustment does not happen “overnight”. I have received help from all ages while shopping- from the elderly gentleman with a longer reaching cane than mine all the way down to preschoolers. A few years ago a preschooler crawled into a bottom shelf to help me. At the checkout I told her mother how much I appreciated it. She said: “She told me she helped an old lady”. My response-with a smile-was “Yes ... she did”.

~ Sister Joan



## "The Now of God"



You, dear young people, are not the future. We like to say, "you are the future". No, you are the present. You are not the future of God, but you are the *now of God*. .... (do not think) as if being young were a kind of waiting room, where we sit around until we are called

(Jesus) invites you and calls you in your communities and cities to go out and find your grandparents, your elders; to stand up and with them to speak out and realize the dream that the Lord has dreamed for you.

...dear young people, a big "thank you". Your faith and joy have made Panama, America and the entire world shake! As we have heard ... in the song of this World Youth Day: "As your pilgrim people we are gathered here today ". We are on a journey, keep walking, keep living the faith and sharing the faith. Do not forget that you are not the tomorrow, you are not the "meantime"; you are the *now of God*.

I ask you not to let the fervour of these days grow cold. Go back to your parishes and communities, to your families and your friends, and share what you have lived, so that others can resonate with the strength and concrete enthusiasm that is yours. And with Mary, keep saying "yes" to the dream that God has sown in you.

And, please, do not forget to pray for me.

~ Pope Francis January 27, 2019 Panama

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### The Editor's Corner



As I read the completed articles the words "intergenerational possibility" kept coming up and came fully alive for me in the final homily of Pope Francis at WYD in Panama. Our writers have given us much to consider as individuals and in "groups", no matter what the age: child, youth, adult, senior. Special thanks to our writers and Ivy for the use of their Gifts from God. We will truly be blessed as together we "walk" forward on our Lenten Journey.

~ Sister Joan

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"No matter what our job, especially in our world today, we are called to be tikkun olam 'repairers of creation'. Thank you for whatever you do, wherever you are, to bring joy, light, hope, faith, pardon, and love to your neighbor and to yourself."

~ Mr. Roger's Neighborhood



## Doing Lent - As a Family



No two families are the same. We differ in age, size, preferences, comfort levels, spiritual experience. Yet, we are a family. Whether we work at it or not, we will experience Lent as a family – even if there are just two of us or a large group of us. So, why not talk about what we are each planning to do? The key is to believe that the Lord who inspires us to try something like this will surely bless it. We don't have to do it perfectly. We just do the best we can.

A family experience of Lent is a deeper step from each of us giving up candy or beer or whatever. It is an opportunity for each of us to grow, to be more self-sacrificing, to be more loving. And, from this opening to grace, it will be easier, as we keep talking and keep growing deeper, to help each other pray better, offer ourselves to help each other more genuinely, experience more compassion and forgiveness. It will change the way we can celebrate the Eucharist together, how we'll celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation together, and how we might get to the topic of what we – as a family – might do in terms of Almsgiving, or at least offering something in solidarity and support for those who are much needier than we are.

When we get to the final days of preparation for Easter, we'll enter into the Foot-washing on Holy Thursday much more deeply. We will look up at the Cross on Good Friday more gratefully, and we will celebrate the new life of renewing our Baptism at the Vigil or at Easter Sunday more joyfully.

~ **Praying Lent** (Creighton University-Online Ministry)

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*Spend a few minutes each day of Lent with your children in the Holy Heroes Lenten Adventure.*

