

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

March 21st/March 22nd 2019: Fourth Sunday of Lent



1460 Pearson Avenue SW
Birmingham, Alabama 35211

Phone: (205) 785-9840

E-mail: church@myblessedsacrament.org

Website: www.myblessedsacrament.org

Pastor

Rev. Jim W. Booth

SACRAMENTS and LITURGY

~~English Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m.~~

~~English Sunday Mass: 9:00 a.m.~~

~~Traditional Latin Sunday Mass: 10:45 a.m.~~

~~English Weekday Masses: 8:30 a.m. Monday to Friday~~

~~Latin Weekday Masses: 7:00 a.m. Wednesday and Friday, 6:30 p.m. on First Friday~~

~~First Saturday Latin Mass: 8:30 a.m. with confessions beginning at 8:00 a.m.~~

Holy Day Mass: As Announced

Confessions: [See Below](#)

Baptisms: By Appointment

Marriage Arrangements must be made with the Pastor **at least 6** months before the date of the wedding. Talk to the Pastor before making any firm wedding plans. No destination weddings.

COVID-19 RESPONSE, MASS & DEVOTIONS: Per the order of the Bishop, there shall be no public Masses until at least the evening of April 4th, the vigil of Palm Sunday. Since Sunday Masses are not being offered publicly, there is no Sunday Mass obligation. All, however, are required to keep the Sabbath holy especially through prayers and devotions. Likewise, Stations and other devotions and gatherings are also forbidden during this period.

COVID-19 RESPONSE, CONFESSIONS: Until further notice, confessions will be done in the Church parking lot with Fr Booth in his car. Those wishing to confess can walk up individually maintaining a six-foot distance. Hours for confession will be from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

IN MEMORIAM: In memory of Jeremy Noblitt, the sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of his soul from March 22nd to March 28th. The sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of Eugene Mason from March 29th until April 4th.

PARISH SUPPORT: The collection for last weekend was \$7127 and \$500 were collected for the Preservation Fund.

PRAY FOR OUR SEMINARIANS: Please pray for our seminarians: Daniel Sessions, Charles Deering, Doug Hess, Matthew Gubenski, Patrick DePew, Max Gallegos, and John Gardiner. Please pray for more good men to answer God's call to the priesthood.

DATE FOR FIRST COMMUNION: First Communion is currently scheduled for Sunday, May 3rd. Opportunities for first confessions will be offered prior to First Communion.

MASS SCHEDULE AND INTENTIONS: (All Private)

Sat, Mar 21:	Special Intention for the Mathews Family (by the Juneaus) Special Intention for Rick Juneau (by the Juneaus)
Sun, Mar 22:	Pro Populo † Jennie Sciro (by the Donellan Family)
Mon, Mar 23:	† Josephine Cox (by the Hahn Family)
Tues, Mar 24:	† Tommy Priola (by the Donellan Family)
Wed, Mar 25:	Special Intention for Shannon Sykes (by the Donellan Family)
Thur, Mar 26:	Special Intention for the Crittenden Family (by the Donellan Family)
Fri, Mar 27:	Special Intention for Linda Cooper (by the Donellan Family)
Sat, Mar 28:	Special Intention for Max Cook (by Lena Donellan)
Sun, Mar 29:	Pro Populo

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND especially Lee Gaissert, Lawrence Brandley, Don Williams, Roseanne Timpa, Pete Ransom, Jerry Joiner, Natalie Karen Caraccilo, Beryl Curtis, Nicole Copeland, Laura Minjares, Linda Cooper, Lee Dinan, Mina Keasler, Isabella Auer, Levi Ray, John Minjares, Sr., Virginia Files, Danny Rohling, Kay Dorion, Krissy Chism, William Scroggins, Lamar Smith, Paul Herrmann, Debbie Zeller, Wayne Little, Maria Morin, Andrea Little, Joseph Edwards, George Dunham, Fran Costanza, Christine Cover, Thatcher Kerzie, Malcolm Perry, Koslyn Chism, Kathleen Strawmeyer, Cindy Little, Stan Trawick, David Henning, Loretta Mara, Lillie Rumore, and Stephanie Perry.

Crisis Mode

It would be impossible to say that we are in anything but a crisis. But when did this crisis start? Some would say that it began last fall in China when this virus somehow entered the human population or when the Chinese failed to contain the outbreak. Still others would regard the beginning of the crisis as when this contagion made its way to our shores. Perhaps it only became a crisis in the minds of many Alabamians when our first case of the coronavirus was announced on March 13th.

In many respects, all of these dates are wrong. The current crisis in which we find ourselves transcends the arrival of coronavirus in China, Seattle, or Alabama. Spiritually speaking, the crisis is much older. It is clear, or at least it ought to be clear, that the world has turned further and further from God. This can be measured in any number of ways. The easiest metric of our spiritual health and wellbeing is the Sunday Mass attendance rate. In some 'Catholic' countries, that figure is appallingly low, often less than 10%. Single-digit Mass attendance rates are not unknown in parts of our own country, especially in the northeast and northwest, but Sunday Mass attendance stands nationally somewhere between 20 and 25%. So, only one in five or perhaps one in four Catholics can find an hour on Sunday to spend worshipping the Lord? Certainly, when it became apparent that the coronavirus was going to turn into a pandemic, way back in January, we should have seen a significant up-tic in Mass attendance, but that does not seem to have happened. Hoarding hand sanitizer, toilet paper, and other supplies was the American response to the current crisis. Turning to God has been, at best, an afterthought.

Another measure of the longstanding nature of this crisis can be seen in our politicians' response. While government cannot be the answer to many of our problems, even though we increasingly seem to think that the government is the solution, we can see how the political response shows forth the depth of the moral and spiritual crisis we face. Many have shamefully sought to politicize the current crisis in order to score cheap political points. Many were profoundly disappointed with the news that the president or the pope had tested negative for the coronavirus. Many of our politicians have unnecessarily stoked fear for political gain. But the most egregious political reaction was to propose, as a specific response to the epidemic, more funding for abortions. More abortions is the answer? Such a vile, sinister, and monstrous response shows how far we have turned from God. It is as if many of our politicians, even those who pretend to be Catholics, see human sacrifice as the answer to our problems. From the perspective of faith it is hard to see it any other way.

Our politicians and American industry have managed to magnify the current crisis by sending more and more of our production overseas. Absurdly high corporate tax rates, misguided and over-reaching environmental statutes, general over-regulation, and corporate greed have pushed so much of our manufacturing base overseas. Now we cannot even make sufficient medical supplies and medicines domestically. Much of what we have and much of what we need comes from a communist country, often made through the use of slave labor, and produced with little regard for human dignity, human rights, human life, or environmental concerns. We are propping up a nation that aborts ten million children annually, forcibly sterilizes almost every woman, persecutes people of faith, and turns a blind eye to the scourge of human trafficking. We don't seem to mind or care as long as we can buy ever-cheaper and ever-larger TVs. Having to live with a 19-inch TV would be a true crisis for many Americans.

The Church herself has been in crisis for some time. The priest scandal, which never seems to go away, is only a part of the crisis. But even before the scandal became widely known, we have seen a collapse of priestly vocations since the 1970s, making for priests that are fewer than what we currently need with an average age that is probably older than at any other time in history. Again, beginning in the 1970s the teaching and preaching of priests strayed from the Gospel to an impoverished Gospel-lite that focused on us more than on God, that increasingly saw personal feelings and emotions elevated above the basic message of the Gospel, to repent and believe. It is no longer a matter of being reconciled to God and being in a state of grace but about being affirmed. Indeed, to hurt someone's

feelings or to have failed to recycle an aluminum can are the new mortal sins while fornication, cohabitation, pornography, self-abuse, contraception, abortion, calumny, open hatred, unforgiveness, greed, gossip, taking the Lord's name in vain, rampant theft, drug abuse, disrespect for proper authority, violating the Sabbath, and a slew of other true sins have become the new normal, just a part of life.

Being in crisis, the Church's response to the epidemic has been tepid at best. For example, the men of Fraternus, prompted by Fr Jerabek, held a Eucharistic Procession in Times of Epidemic and Plague at the Cathedral of St Paul on March 11th. This made local and to some degree national news, but primarily as an oddity or a curiosity. Perhaps I am wrong, but it seems that few bishops and priests followed suit. We should have seen such responses long ago before quarantines and social distancing rules became the norm. We likewise have not been preaching an essential aspect of the faith: the grace of final perseverance. Final perseverance is the grace to remain reconciled to God until death. Catholics, in response to Jesus' teaching in Mt 10:22, "*But he who endures to the end will be saved,*" once understood the need to pray for a happy death or against a sudden and unprovided death. Thus,

Prayer For a Happy Death

O Jesus, while I remember Your dying breath, I beg You to receive mine. Since I do not know whether I shall have command of my senses when I depart from this world, I offer You now my last sufferings and all the sorrows of my passing. I give my soul into Your hands for You are the Lover of Humanity, my Lord and my Savior. Grant that the last beat of my heart may be an act of perfect love for You. Amen.

Prayer Against a Sudden and Unprovided Death

O most merciful Lord Jesus, by the agony You endured, by the sweat of Your Blood, by Your precious death, deliver us, we beseech You, from a sudden and unprovided death. O most kind Lord Jesus, by Your ignominious scourging, by Your crowning with thorns, by Your holy Cross and bitter Passion, by Your love and mercy, we humbly pray that You would not let us die unprovided with Your holy Sacraments. O dearly beloved Lord Jesus, by all Your labors and sorrows, by the Precious Blood shed in Your passion, by the sacred Wounds You endured, by Your last words on the Cross: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" by Your surrender: "Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit," we beseech You to deliver us from a sudden death. O Lord Jesus, we pray grant us room for repentance, grant us a happy passing in Your grace, grant us a peaceful end, that so we may be able to love You, praise You, and bless You forever. Amen. Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

Cardinal Newman's Prayer Against a Sudden and Unprovided Death

Oh, my Lord and Savior, support me in that hour in the strong arms of Your Sacraments, and by the fresh fragrance of Your consolations. Let the absolving words be said over me, and the holy oil sign and seal me, and Your own Body be my food, and Your Blood my sprinkling; and let my sweet Mother, Mary, breathe on me, and my Angel whisper peace to me, and my glorious Saints (NN.) smile upon me; that in them all, and through them all, I may receive the gift of perseverance, and die, as I desire to live, in Your faith, in Your Church, in Your service, and in Your love. Amen.

Given that some of us will likely contract this disease, given its ability to kill, and given the sparsity and advanced age of our priests, some of whom will succumb to the coronavirus themselves, it makes sense that we recognize that many of us are more prepared in terms of toilet paper and hand sanitizer than we are spiritually. It truly behooves us to make provision for the more fundamental and longstanding crisis of faith that so typifies modern American life. Indeed, let none of us miss the true essence of this crisis and thereby die an unhappy death, one that goes unprovided of the sacraments.

- Fr Booth