

# Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

April 18<sup>th</sup>/April 19<sup>th</sup> 2019: Divine Mercy Sunday



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**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 at least until or perhaps after April 30<sup>th</sup>. 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.

**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 Chester Olson, the sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of his soul from April 19<sup>th</sup> to April 25<sup>th</sup>. The sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of Alexander Salillas from April 26<sup>th</sup> until May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**PARISH SUPPORT:** The collection for last weekend was \$3256. Please feel free to mail your contributions in or save them up for when we return to having Mass.

**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 3<sup>rd</sup>. Given the state of things, it will probably be postponed.

**MASS SCHEDULE AND INTENTIONS:** (All Private)

Sat, Apr 18: † Clair Murrell (by Mallorie Duvall)  
Sun, Apr 19: Pro Populo  
Mon, Apr 20: † Bishop David Foley  
Tues, Apr 21: † Fred Nisi (by Cathy Schauer)  
Wed, Apr 22: † Esther Accardo (by the Juneau Family)  
Thur, Apr 23: † Renee Boltz (by the Juneau Family)  
Fri, Apr 24: † Ronnie Mason (by Mary & Betty Mason)  
Sat, Apr 25: † Eugene Mason (by Mary & Betty Mason)  
Sun, Apr 26: Pro Populo

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND** especially Terry Rumore, Jr., Fr Raymond Dunmyer, Stephanie Burke, Daniel Burke, 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.

## *Infinite Mercy on God's Terms*

This Sunday is Divine Mercy Sunday. We celebrate God's gracious, free, and undeserved mercy toward mankind. Divine mercy is gracious in that it is a gift. He and He alone has chosen to show mankind His mercy, knowing that we are inclined to evil and prone to sin. He has chosen to be merciful even though we reject Him, His ways, and His mercy on a regular basis. We reject His goodness, His love, and His mercy every time we sin. In fact, our sins are nothing less than a rejection of God Himself since in sinning we choose the evil and reject the good, and He is goodness itself. Part of His mercy lies in His patience with us. God does not have to show us His mercy, and if we have doubts about that, we need to consider those who mocked Noah for building an ark: God cleansed the earth of sinful men yet graciously saved but eight people from His wrath. The saving of Noah and his family was a gracious gift of His mercy. We could also ask the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. They knew their perversions were evil. They ought to have taken warning from being blinded. Instead, ignoring the warning, they got what they deserved for their transgressions. Likewise, the people of Nineveh could have continued in their wicked and godless ways, but their hearts were moved to repent at the reluctant preaching of Jonah. Having repented as they did, they tasted God's gracious mercy. God did not have to send Jonah to warn the Ninevites. Jonah and his message were purely a gift to the people of Nineveh. The warnings of Noah building an ark, the blinding of the men of Sodom, and the preaching of Jonah were all gifts and manifestations of God's patience.

God's mercy is also free. He is hardly obliged to bestow His mercy upon any one of us. He did not need to show His mercy to mankind in saving us through Noah and his family. Noah and his family were also sinners, perhaps more righteous than many who were swept away in the great flood, but sinners just the same. Nevertheless, God chose Noah as the instrument of saving mankind from their wickedness. Indeed, God could have totally wiped man off the face of the earth once and for all because of our wickedness, but instead chose to give us a new beginning. God was certainly free to abandon Lot along with the rest of the citizens of Sodom. How wise was it for Lot, a shepherd, to embrace city life, especially in the moral cesspool of Sodom? These people were hardly his kin. How wise was it for him to raise his daughters in such an environment? It is certain that Lot had the resources to move away from the city of Sodom, but chose not to. His salvation stems from accepting the visiting angels into his home and heeding their warning about what God was going to do to Sodom. God freely sent the angels to Lot, but He did not have to. Likewise, in God's freely bestowed mercy, He freely chose to manifest His mercy to the Ninevites despite their wickedness, despite their abuse and persecution of His Chosen People. He freely sent Jonah, freely saved him from drowning, and freely told Jonah to preach repentance. The gift of mercy is also free on the human side of the equation. Noah did not have to build the ark, he could have just gone about his business as if God had not called him to save himself, his family, and mankind in the process. Lot did not have to listen to the angels, he did not have to flee from Sodom in order to escape the wrath of God. And the people of Nineveh did not have to listen to Jonah or repent of their evil ways. While we are free to accept God's mercy, we are also free to reject it. Jesus Himself warns us that we possess the freedom to reject God's mercy when He says "*Remember Lot's wife*" (Lk 17:32). Lot's wife freely chose to look back at Sodom as if she was reluctant to leave that den of iniquity, as if she would miss all of that sinfulness.

Divine mercy is also utterly undeserved. Not one of us has a right to God's mercy. None of us. We Americans often think we have a right to this and a right to that. We often speak of our God-given rights. But we have no right to His love or His mercy. Nor can we earn God's mercy as if we could say ten thousand rosaries and expect His mercy in return. God cannot be bought nor can He be bribed. A billionaire could show great generosity, donating vast sums of money to worthy causes, but no matter how much he spent, God would be in no way, shape, or form obliged to grant His mercy. No altar call or recitation of the sinner's prayer, both of which are thoroughly un-Biblical, will earn anyone His mercy. Even piety is no guarantee of mercy. Indeed, all we have to do is consider some of God's

instruments, people chosen by God to fulfill roles in His name. Was Noah deserving of God's mercy? No, but he was chosen to build the ark to save mankind from God's wrath. Lot was undeserving. It is likely that Abraham's intercession was effective in saving Lot, but then again, Abraham was a sinner too. So was Isaac, so was Jacob, so was Moses, so was David, so was Elijah, so was Peter, so was James, so was John, so was Paul, and so on. This is not to say that we receive God's mercy in a passive fashion. We must have faith, hope, and especially love. Part of love is doing the will of the Father. God has laid out for us the means for obtaining His mercy and we cannot expect His mercy if we try to obtain it in our own way. For example, when the Israelites spoke against God and Moses in the desert, He sent seraph serpents as a punishment for their unfaithfulness. The people begged for the venomous serpents to be taken away, Moses interceded on the behalf of the people, and God relented. However, He did not remove the serpents from their midst but told Moses to *"Make a seraph and mount it on a pole, and everyone who has been bitten will look at it and recover. Accordingly Moses made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever the serpent bit someone, the person looked at the bronze serpent and recovered"* (Num 21:8-9). The Lord had prescribed a means of being saved from the venom of the serpents that required a degree of faith. The men bitten by the seraph serpents would have known that an asp or a cobra bite could not be survived by just looking up at a bronze image of the snake. No doubt many who be bitten refused to do what they were instructed to do and perished from the venom of the serpents. Sadly, many people refuse to embrace the means God has presented mankind as a remedy for the venom of sin.

Just as many bitten by the serpents could say that gazing on a bronze seraph serpent on a pole could not possibly be a remedy for the venom, many people could say the same thing of the soul-saving means of mercy offered us by God. Surely baptism could not possibly absolve our sins and make us adopted sons and daughters of God. And yet it does just that. Surely the anointing of confirmation could not impart the Holy Spirit on anyone. And yet it does. Surely the anointing and laying on of hands could not empower a man to act in God's name as a priest. But it does. Surely the exchange of vows between a man and a woman could not bind them together for life with a bond that cannot be broken by sin or the craftiest of lawyers. And yet it is so. Surely mere words said by a priest can hardly transform mere bread and wine in the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus, and surely no one could receive Him into themselves by worthily partaking of Holy Communion. It happens nonetheless. Surely the anointing with oil could not strengthen the soul to face serious illness and death, and potentially forgive mortal sins. It happens. And most certainly sins cannot be forgiven merely by confessing them to a priest and receiving absolution. This happens as surely as the sun rises every morning. Just as looking up to a serpent was God's merciful life-saving remedy to the venom of the seraph serpents, the sacraments are God's merciful soul-saving remedies for our sins.

In other words, God has laid forth a means for obtaining His mercy that flows from the merits of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. We are free to accept or reject His mercy. The good thief, unable to receive any of the sacraments since he was nailed to a cross and because the Church had not yet come into being, is an exceptional recipient of God's mercy. Admitting his sinfulness and seeking to be remembered by Jesus, he obtained mercy. The other thief, who most certainly heard the exchange between the good thief and Jesus, chose not to pursue God's mercy. It is quite likely, but not a total certainty, that he regrets that now. We could hardly imagine Jesus denying him mercy if he repented and turned toward the Lord.

God's mercy is utterly infinite and is offered as a gracious gift to all. Although it is a gift, we have to accept it in the manner God has offered it to mankind. It is not as if the Israelites in the desert could have fashioned a bronze badger on a pole as a remedy for the venom of the seraph serpents, nor can we choose our own means of obtaining God's gift of mercy. Like those saved from the serpent's bite, like the good thief, like St Peter, St Paul, St Lucy, St Benedict, St Claire, St Pius X, and so on, we can be recipients of the gift of divine mercy by obeying God's plan for our salvation. - Fr Booth