

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

May 2nd/May 3rd 2019: Fourth Sunday of Easter (English)
Third Sunday After Easter (Latin)



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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 until further notice: the best realistic guess for a return to public Mass, perhaps a partial return, is mid to late May. In any case, 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 Tevin Williams, the sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of his soul from May 3rd to May 9th. The sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of Glenn A. Varnell from May 10th until May 16th.

PARISH SUPPORT: The collection for last weekend was \$5515. Please feel free to mail your contributions in or save them up for when we return to having public 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 tentatively rescheduled for Thursday, June 11th (Corpus Christi).

MASS SCHEDULE AND INTENTIONS: (All Private)

Sat, May 2: † Wayne Bullock (by Allen Bull)
Sun, May 3: Pro Populo
Mon, May 4: † Barbara Tonti (by Allen Bull)
Tues, May 5: † Jim Clarkson (by Allen Bull)
Wed, May 6: † Fr Leonard Klein by Allen Bull)
Thur, May 7: † Floyd Steiner (by Allen Bull)
Fri, May 8: Special Intention for Paula Bullock (by Allen Bull)
Sat, May 9: Special Intention for Richard Bull (by Allen Bull)
Sun, May 10: Pro Populo

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND especially Fr Vincent Bresowar, Fr Raymond Dunmyer, 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, 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.

Seals, Trumpets, and Signs

The Book of Revelation is always an interesting read. It may not be obvious, but its message is one of hope and mercy. But what about all of those plagues and disasters and calamities? Indeed, there are seven seals opened and seven trumpets blown announcing the woes and tribulations to befall the earth. In the first opened seal, worldly conquering dominion comes forth symbolized by a rider on a white horse. A rider on a red horse comes forth into the world at the breaking of the second seal, a rider that would rob the earth of peace and plunge it into war. The third seal brings forth a rider on a black horse that brings with it famine while the fourth broken seal brings the sickly green horse of death and the underworld. The fifth seal elicits the outcry from the multitude of martyrs calling for divine justice to descend upon their persecutors. Earthquakes and signs in the sky result from the opening of the sixth seal. After these woes, what does the world do? It falls into tremendous fear: *“The kings of the earth, the nobles, the military officers, the rich, the powerful, and every slave and free person hid themselves in caves and among mountain crags. They cried out to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, because the great day of their wrath has come and who can withstand it?’”* (Rev 6:15-17). The wrath of the Lamb? What an interesting image. In any case, these first six plagues upon the earth are natural and worldly in their essence. Famine, war, oppression, un-avenged injustice, and natural disasters have been with mankind from the beginning; it is just that in the end of the world these things will exact a greater toll on the world than in previous ages. That seventh seal, when broken, brings about the something entirely different. That last seal leads to the blowing of the seven trumpets.

Seven angels blow seven trumpets, and when the first four were blown *“there came hail and fire mixed with blood, which was hurled down to the earth. A third of the land was burned up, along with a third of the trees and all green grass. When the second angel blew his trumpet, something like a large burning mountain was hurled into the sea. A third of the sea turned to blood, third of the creatures living in the sea died, and a third of the ships were wrecked. When the third angel blew his trumpet, a large star burning like a torch fell from the sky. It fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The star was called ‘Wormwood,’ and a third of all the water turned to wormwood. Many people died from this water, because it was made bitter. When the fourth angel blew his trumpet, a third of the sun, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them became dark. The day lost its light for a third of the time, as did the night”* (Rev 8:7-12). In the blowing of the fifth trumpet, the hellish abyss is opened and *“locusts came out of the smoke onto the land, and they were given the same power as scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or any tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not allowed to kill them but only to torment them for five months; the torment they inflicted was like that of a scorpion when it stings a person. During that time these people will seek death but will not find it, and they will long to die but death will escape them”* (Rev 9:3-6). Then sixth trumpet blast: *“So four angels were released, who were prepared for this hour, day, month, and year to kill a third of the human race. The number of cavalry troops was two hundred million; I heard their number. Now in my vision this is how I saw the horses and their riders. They wore red, blue, and yellow breastplates, and the horses’ heads were like heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur. By these three plagues of fire, smoke, and sulfur that came out of their mouths a third of the human race was killed”* (Rev 9:15-18). While the seals opened up natural or manmade disasters, the trumpets are very much supernatural plagues unknown to the world under normal circumstances. Thus, mankind is beset with profound and unprecedented natural calamities as well as things that neither nature nor human endeavor could produce or inflict. The natural events should have gotten people’s attention. Should have. The supernatural events unleashed by the trumpet blasts truly should have been an unmistakable wake-up call. Should have.

But what does St John's vision of the end of the world tell us? It says that those who survive these events brought about by the seals and the trumpets, that is "*the rest of the human race, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, to give up the worship of demons and idols made from gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic potions, their unchastity, or their robberies*" (Rev 9:20-21). Instead of seeing the error of their ways and acting accordingly, they cling to their sinister deeds and their sins. For the Christian, this should be quite unthinkable. Such events happening would be a call to change our ways and to seek the God's mercy. Some make the mistake of thinking that these woes will befall the world as a mere punishment for the wickedness of mankind. While there is an aspect of punishment in what is described in the Book of Revelation, however, the wars, the famines, the earthquakes, the scorpion stings, and so forth are primarily a means of getting man to repent, to turn away from evil and sin and to turn toward God. We have to remember that this world is not where divine retribution for unbelief, despair, presumption, hatred, and sin is meted out. No, hell exists for this very reason, hell exists to punish man's evil. After all, is it possible for Genghis Khan, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Margaret Sanger, Mao, etc. to suffer enough in this life to balance out the untold evil they foisted on this world? Even the garden-variety unrepentant sinner could not be punished in this world, even over ten lifetimes, to satisfy human justice let alone the justice of God. Thus, the calamities and woes that the world suffers as described in the Book of Revelation are a form of God's mercy, they are an effort on God's part to get the world's attention and an invitation to reform our ways.

But should it take such extraordinary events to inspire us to reconsider what we do? Surely, the torment of being stung by the scorpion tail of a locust from hell for five months ought to be a hint that things are not right in our lives and it ought to be a clear indication of what the torments of hell must be like. If five months of that plague proves to be intolerable, how much more would one want to escape such vexation for eternity? But should it really take millions and billions of hellish creatures loosed upon the earth to get the world to turn away from evil and turn toward the Lord?

Truly it should not. For those who believe in an afterlife, for those who believe in divine justice, for those who believe in divine mercy, for those who believe that our sins have eternal consequences, and for those who believe in the Gospel, it should not take one third of the land being burned to a crisp, for a third of the waters being made undrinkable, or a third of mankind being killed to get our attention. Our attention ought to be constantly fixed upon God, responding to what He has taught us, and trusting in what His Son, Jesus, has done on our behalf. Just the indisputable reality of our own sins – that they brought death and the possibility of hell to all of mankind but also brought Jesus to the cross – should inspire us to mend our ways irrespective of what is or is not happening in the world around us. If, for example, we have a heart attack, no doubt the doctor will tell us to mend our ways by correcting our diet and by making exercise an essential part of our lives. We can tell ourselves that we won't suffer a heart attack, we might choose to live in denial, but having had one ought to erase all rationalizations. We rationalize because for most people a heart attack is only a possibility, not a certainty. Yet, if a man survives one heart attack, what would we think if the survivor chose not to reform his ways? It would be easy to see such a man as a fool. But what if we had total certainty that a heart attack lurked in our future? We'd be fools not to eat better and exercise now, wouldn't we? If a heart attack was a certainty, why would there be need for a wakeup call to mend our ways?

Nineteen years ago we had 9/11. Even though this directly touched the lives of small fraction of our populace, there was an immediate, but short-lived, return to faith nationwide. This COVID thing is far more pervasive and will touch the lives of most people worldwide. It remains to be seen if the faith response to this pandemic is a greater turning toward God or even a continued turning away from Him. This virus is nothing compared to a plague of Biblical proportions, yet it must be seen as a wakeup call. Death is a certainty, so shouldn't this fact be enough of a wakeup call for us to turn away from evil and turn toward God no matter how this pandemic eventually runs its course? - Fr Booth