

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

February 20th/February 21st: 2021: First Sunday of Lent



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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: 7:30 a.m. and 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: We have returned to an approximation of our normal weekend schedule with Mass inside the Church. We will have a 4:00 p.m. Saturday English Mass, a 9:00 a.m. Sunday English Mass, a 10:45 a.m. Sunday Latin Mass, and an additional Sunday Latin Mass at 7:30 a.m. The additional Latin Mass is intended to aid in the social distancing, **which is the responsibility of those attending Mass.** Please be considerate. This additional Mass will continue as long as social distancing is necessary.

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. Confessions will be offered at 3:30-3:55 p.m. on Saturday and on Sunday at 7:00-7:25 a.m., 8:30-8:55 a.m., and 10:15-10:40 a.m.

DISPENSATION FOR SUNDAY MASS OBLIGATION: Per Bishop Raica, all Roman Catholics who reside in the diocese are **dispensed from the Sunday Mass obligation through March 14th.** No one, especially the vulnerable, should feel obliged to attend Mass. This is almost certainly the last extension for the Covid dispensation. Those who are not at risk are encouraged to return to Mass.

A REMINDER FROM BISHOP RAICA: Those who have a fever, have any Covid symptom, feel sick, are in a high-risk group, are of a more advanced age, or who live with someone in one of these categories, are urged to avail themselves of the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass for all Roman Catholics living in the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama.

CHANGES TO THE MASS: We will forgo the distribution of the Precious Blood, reception of which is ordinarily optional, and the sign of peace, the omission of which is also optional.

WELCOME to all of our visitors: We are glad you have attended Mass with us. If you wish to join Blessed Sacrament, please pick up a parish census form at the Religious Goods Counter located in the vestibule of the front entrance.

IN MEMORIAM: In memory of Gary Wolter, the sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of his soul from February 21st to until February 27th. The sanctuary lamp will burn for the repose of Salvatore and Mary Riccardi from February 28th until March 6th.

SECOND COLLECTION: There will be a second collection this weekend for the Black and Indian Missions.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: We will have Stations of the Cross at 6:00 p.m. during the Fridays of Lent (Stations on Good Friday, April 2nd it will be at 2:30 p.m.). No meal will follow stations but we will have confessions following Stations.

THIRD SUNDAY: Next Sunday is the Third Sunday of the month. We will have vocations prayers following the 10:45 a.m. Mass.

FIRST COMMUNION DATE: First Communion will be on Sunday, April 18th. Opportunities for first confession will be provided on several occasions prior to First Communion.

CONFIRMATION DATE: Confirmation will be on Thursday, June 3rd.

PARISH SUPPORT: The collection last weekend was \$5114 and \$950 was donated to the Preservation Fund.

2021 HIGH MASS SCHEDULE: The High Mass schedule for the 10:45 a.m. Mass will be as follows: Every second, third, and fourth Sunday of the month excluding Palm Sunday (March 28th) and December 26th with the addition of the Annunciation (March 25th), Holy Thursday (April 1st), Easter Sunday (April 4th), Corpus Christi (June 3rd, Confirmation), All Saints (November 1st), All Souls (November 2nd), Immaculate Conception (December 8th), and Christmas (December 25th).

MASS SCHEDULE AND INTENTIONS: (*Masses in the Rectory Chapel)

Sat, Feb 20	8:30 a.m.	Special Intention for Linda Cooper (by the Donellan Family)
	4:00 p.m.	† Tom Davis (by Betty Mason)
Sun, Feb 21:	7:30 a.m.	Special Intention for Bill & Judy Donellan (by the Donellans)
	9:00 a.m.	Pro Populo
	10:45 a.m.	† Tom Davis (by Betty Mason)
Mon, Feb 22:	*8:30 a.m.	Special Intention for Miguel Valencia (by Paula Pinter)
Tues, Feb 23:	*8:30 a.m.	Special Intention for Teresita Valencia (by Paula Pinter)
Wed, Feb 24:	*7:00 a.m.	† Mary Anne Glentz (by Alan & Pam Olson)
	*8:30 a.m.	Special Intention for Brian Pinter (by Tom & Paula Pinter)
Thur, Feb 25:	*8:30 p.m.	Special Intention for Joseph Pinter (by Tom & Paula Pinter)
Fri, Feb 26:	*7:00 a.m.	† Evelyn Roten (by Alan & Pam Olson)
	*8:30 a.m.	Special Intention for Catherine Hahn (by Tom & Paula Pinter)
Sat, Feb 27	4:00 p.m.	Special Intention for Joseph Hahn (by Tom & Paula Pinter)
Sun, Feb 28:	7:30 a.m.	Special Intention for Ari Fogelman (by Tom & Paula Pinter)
	9:00 a.m.	Pro Populo
	10:45 a.m.	Special Intention for Emilia Valencia (by Tom & Paula Pinter)

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND especially Gracimo Ribeiro Bento, Mary Cavanagh, Paul Minjares, Sr Miracles, Bob Wiseman, Bernita Hicks, Jerry Bryant, Eve Moore, Nida Hammond, Aaron Minjares, Hamp Schauer, Bill Dinan, Carol Brandley, Eddie Hunter, Mark Corley, Lee Gaissert, Lawrence Brandley, Don Williams, Roseanne Timpa, Pete Ransom, Jerry Joiner, Beryl Curtis, Nicole Copeland, Laura Minjares, Linda Cooper, Lee Dinan, Levi Ray, Danny Rohling, Kay Dorion, Krissy Chism, William Scroggins, Lamar Smith, Paul Herrmann, Wayne Little, Maria Morin, Andrea Little, Joseph Edwards, George Dunham, Fran Costanza, Christine Cover, Thatcher Kerzie, Malcolm Perry, Koslyn Chism, Kathleen Strawmeyer, and Stephanie Perry.

NEXT WEEK'S MASS READINGS

4:00 p.m. Second Sunday of Lent	Gen 22:1-2,9-13,15-18, Rom 8:31-34, Mk 9:2-10
7:30 a.m. Second Sunday of Lent	1Thes 4:1-7, Mt 17:1-9
9:00 a.m. Second Sunday of Lent	Gen 22:1-2,9-13,15-18, Rom 8:31-34, Mk 9:2-10
10:45 a.m. Second Sunday of Lent	1Thes 4:1-7, Mt 17:1-9

Sterner Stuff

So, yet another Lent is upon us. Surely it will be a better Lent than what we had last year, which was rudely interrupted by the pandemic. We were in lockdown from March 22nd (the 4th Sunday of Lent) and did not emerge, at least liturgically, until Mother's Day, May 10th (the 5th Sunday of Easter). Thanks to Bishop Baker, who permitted outdoor Masses beginning on May 10th, we had two outdoor Masses in our large field, drawing Catholics from many local parishes and even from Mississippi, Georgia, and Tennessee. For many, Blessed Sacrament's outdoor Masses were their first opportunity to return to public worship in nearly two months. For many it was a memorable and most welcome Mother's Day gift. It looked as if outdoor Masses would be the norm for a while, yet again, thanks to Bishop Baker, we were allowed to have indoor Masses beginning the following weekend.

Given all that has happened since last Lent, it may not be obvious that the people of the diocese will have had the Sunday Obligation to attend Mass dispensed for 51 straight weeks, nearly a full year. This dispensation will likely end on March 14th and is utterly unprecedented in the history of the Church. Never has the Church completely retreated from public worship willingly for six weeks and partially for an additional forty-five weeks on its own accord and on such a large scale. To put things in perspective, the Diocese of Mobile, which included what is now the Diocese of Birmingham, only shut down for two weeks during the much more deadly Spanish Flu outbreak of October 1918.

Were the people of 100 years ago made of sterner stuff? Compared to them, are we utter wimps? Several things much be considered. First, besides being deadlier than today's Wuhan Virus, the Spanish Flu spread faster, hit harder, and killed much quicker. The first and deadliest wave of the Spanish Flu lasted only about three weeks in Birmingham and there were two additional waves in mid November 1918 and in early January 1919, but they were much milder than the first wave. Thus, they were dealing with a very different epidemic than what we have today.

Second, the people of that time were much more devout than we tend to be today. Church attendance rates were roughly 75-80% and the practice of the faith was more ingrained in their daily lives. Parochial school students, which represented a large fraction of Catholic kids, were offered daily Mass while today's Catholic school offers Mass only once a week. Our Sunday Masses were full, people returned to the Church on Sunday evening for Adoration and Benediction or Sunday Vespers, on Saturday the lines for confession were long and priests heard confessions for six to eight hours, and we had many more vocations. So it would be hard to dispute that the people of 100 years ago were made of sterner stuff in terms of the faith.

They also had to contend with more adversity in daily life. In addition to horrid racial oppression there was also a vibrant anti-immigrant ethos at that time so much so that Italians, Germans, and Central Europeans faced significant discrimination. It is often forgotten that the Klan targeted anyone who was not a white Anglo-Saxon protestant democrat. Their hatred was thus racial, ethnic, religious, and political. The murder of Father Coyle and the acquittal of his murderer stand as proof of how ugly the social and political climate was in Birmingham. Such an environment, however, makes for more fervent faith and focuses us on the importance of following Christ without reservation. In other words, the people living here 100 years ago were made of sterner stuff spiritually because they had to be, which has proven true during just about any period where the faith has faced persecution.

Will the people of 2121 look back at us and see that we were made of sterner stuff? Hard to say. But given the rise of neo-fascist groups such as Antifa and the vindictive spirit of politics today, where we see people who disagree with the current regime being branded as white supremacists (including Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians!) and justice depending on who you are and what you believe, it is entirely possible that we may see a nasty persecution unfold in the near future. So, the fundamental question is this: will we emerge from this pandemic with a more fervent faith to withstand the institutionalized hatred festering in our culture? That question might find an answer, at least partially, in how we emerge from the disciplines of Lent. Will we be more fervent in our faith by Easter, or not?

- Fr Booth