

March 21st - Fifth Sunday of Lent



MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Saturday, March 20

9:00am

4:30pm † *Aura Josefina Zamora*

Sunday, March 21

8:00am

10:00am † *Etta Moreno*

12:00pm

Monday, March 22

9:00am † *James D. Jefferson*

Tuesday, March 23

9:00am

Wednesday, March 24

9:00am † *Emilia Smith*

Thursday, March 25

9:00am *YMI Brothers*

Friday, March 26

9:00am *YMI Brothers*

Saturday, March 27

9:00am

4:30pm

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

"Stations of the Cross and Via Crucis" are live video streamed and linked to the parish website:
www.stjohnevangelist.org

Palm Sunday & Holy Week

The schedule for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter Sunday Services is published on the Parish website. Please access the Parish website at:
www.stjohnevangelist.org

SECOND COLLECTION

Today's second collection is for **Catholic Relief Services**. Your generous support will go to Catholic organizations working to bring relief and hope to our brothers and sisters in need.

Thank you for our generosity

From the Desk of the Pastor

Prophet Jeremiah lived 600 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. God sends him on a mission to conscientize and make the people of Israel aware how far they have strayed from God living on the edge of their self destruction. Centuries of wanton idolatry and corruption had seriously demoralized them. They were morally bankrupt. But that God could and would save them and help avoid that disaster. That unless they listen to God's counsel, they would not escape the inevitable: That Babylonians would invade their land and destroy them. As expected they not only ignored Jeremiah's unpalatable warning, they accused him of treason and punished him.

Today's first reading comes shortly before the Babylonian invasion. God speaks through Jeremiah that he is disappointed with his people who have continually violated the covenant they made with God at Mt. Sinai, a covenant Moses sealed with blood. In spite of their unfaithfulness, God still loves them and would make a new covenant with them.

A covenant is an agreement between two parties. Six hundred years later, Jesus uses the words "new covenant" when he gave the cup of his blood to his apostles at the last supper. In anticipation of the sacrificial and sacramental offering of himself on the Cross, He instituted the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We renew that covenant every time we come for Mass.

In Jeremiah and John, emerge the specifications of this new covenant. "The new covenant becomes in fact, what the former was in theory" (*Fahey, Footprints on the Mountain, 227*). This new covenant promises a personal relationship with God to a responsive people so that "their hearts will learn and respond to God directly". (*Fahey, 226*)

We walk under the gentle shadow of a personal covenant with Jesus, sealed by his suffering death and resurrection. In Jesus we learn how suffering is redemptive. Jesus teaches us acceptance of the way of the Cross. The Cross of suffering spares no one: either in the form of a difficult flaw or sin, seemingly incapable of stopping; for others it may be the pain of failed relationship, or loss of a dream unfulfilled.

Jesus' call to discipleship demands from us a response of Faith, a similar total gift of oneself in the purest love, since this alone corresponds to the gift He makes of Himself to us.

Jesus offered his own life and died so that we might have life, the grain of wheat that is crushed and made into bread that feeds us.

Faith then makes it possible to follow Jesus through his agony, betrayal, torture, trial, humiliation, rejection and crucifixion; because Faith perceives his glory and the glorification of his Father's name in his passion and death. His glory manifests God's love for us. He then is able to draw all people freely to Himself, transform our lives and make them the most compelling evidence of his love.

PARISH COMMUNITY NEWS

Sunday masses are celebrated at 10am in English and 12noon en espanol

Additionally, the Sunday Mass is video streamed and made available on YouTube. It is posted on the Parish website every weekend. You may access and pray the mass at <https://www.saintjohnevangelist.org/>

The church is open for personal prayer and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Sundays from 8:00am to 1:00pm.

The Parish thanks the Knights of Columbus, Council 615, who generously offer their time, talent and treasure in faithful stewardship every weekend, keeping watch in the church.

THE NEW COVENANT... Today's first reading is an enormously important passage, not only in the history of the Jewish people, but also for us as disciples of Jesus, who see in it a foreshadowing of the Christian dispensation. The prophet announces that God has chosen to forgive the people, and that as a sign of divine forgiveness a new covenant will be established. Contrasting the new covenant with the one made with Moses on Mount Sinai, Jeremiah says that the new covenant will be written on the people's hearts rather than on tablets of stone. No longer will the community's tradition be the sole bearer of the covenant; henceforth, God will speak directly and personally to each individual, forgiving sin and calling for a return to God in faithfulness. No longer will mere outward compliance with the dictates of the Law suffice; henceforth, God asks for an obedience that springs from the depths of one's heart. Precisely that kind of obedience is highlighted in today's second reading, where the author of the Letter to the Hebrews describes Jesus as the mediator of the new covenant whose obedience has made him the source of salvation for all who, in turn, obey him.

The old covenant message of God's law was written on stones. It called man to holiness, as measured by the character of God. "You shall **be holy**, for I the LORD your God am **holy**". The message is magnificent. However, its impact would be limited (by design), since it was written on "**tablets of stone**." The new covenant message of God's grace is written on human hearts: "**on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart**." Grace not only forgives our failure, but it works to develop personal holiness at the very core of our being. This was the promise God gave through His prophets of old, that He would put His holy law into peoples' hearts.