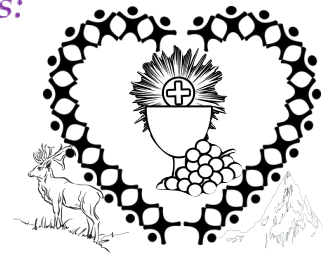


Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

*Fernie on Saturday evening at 5pm,
Sparwood at 9am Sunday morning,
and Elkford at 4pm Sunday afternoon.*



The Sunday Mass is broadcast via Zoom from Fernie & Sparwood (see below).

25th/26th February 2023

*The
Season
of
Lent*



Dear All,

As we now start our journey up to Easter, can I wish you a happy Lent; I do hope and pray that it will be a productive time for you.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa (335 – 395) Again!

A couple of weeks ago I talked about Saint Gregory of Nyssa who came from the central part of Turkey — very near where all the earthquakes have been. He was a bishop and with his brother, St. Basil, and their friend St. Gregory of Nazianzus, they were collectively known as the Cappadocian Fathers. They were very influential as the Church transitioned from a breakaway group from Judaism to a Church with a full set of doctrines and beliefs.

I came across some more of St. Gregory's writings this week, and again I was struck by how sharp they are and that they still seem so fresh. The text I found took the passage from Ecclesiastes 3:2, "There is a time to be born and a time to die" and St. Gregory wrote,

God grant that mine may be a timely birth and a timely death!

And he went on to point out that there is nothing virtuous about either when we are born or when we die, as really these are not things in our control. So he says,

We must consider what is meant by a timely birth and a timely death.

It seems to me that the birth referred to here is our salvation.

Now I am interpreting slightly, but basically St. Gregory went on to explain that God plants a seed within us, and we can choose to take that seed and let it grow, or alternatively we can choose to stifle it. And the way we let that seed grow is both by meditating on the love of God, particularly in God's Word but also in our daily lives, and then practicing the love of God through good deeds. Or alternatively, like the seed that fell on rocks, we can just let the seed lie there and give it no birth. But in time, in God's time, if we nurture the seed it will grow and at some point spring forth and bring us to the new birth of salvation, the new life of Christ, the new world of seeing God in all things. So St. Gregory says,

"We are in a sense our own parents,"

And *"we give birth to ourselves by our own free choice"* of embracing that seed that God has planted within us.

**The love of gain,
which is a large,
– an incalculably large –
element in every soul,
when once applied to
the desire for God,
will bless the one
who has it.**

Gregory of Nyssa (On Virginity - Chapter 18)



Then, in a very real sense, it is also a time to die; a time to die to the futility of trying to do everything by our own strengths as we are born anew to be co-workers with Christ.

Thus the virtue is to let that seed grow and to bring it to birth in our lives, that is, bring it to a “*timely birth*”. And in a very real sense the “time to be born” is Easter; in this way we can see Lent as a time to let that seed grow within us by meditating on the love of God and by doing good works.

St. Gregory finishes by saying with this new birth we “*become children of God, children of the Most High*”, and yet, because we also are – *in a way* – our own parents, then as children of God we must reach our full maturity.

So we have this lovely idea that we are called to a mature understanding of our faith and what is being asked of us by God, the growth that is needed and the good works to which we are being called. Yet at the same time we can see that really it is all God’s work, and we are the children upon whom God chooses to shower grace and blessing.

With all this in mind, my hope and my prayer is that Lent will be for you – and for all of us – a time when what God has already planted in you will have a chance to grow through the nurture and love lavished upon it, and thus Easter will be for you a time when you can really rejoice and celebrate – in a timely fashion – a newness of Christ’s life within you.

Lent Talks from Britain

This week we start our Lent talks. All five of this year’s Lent talks will come from Britain and all are at the same time on the same day of the week, that is, at 12noon Mountain Time on Thursdays. As Fr. Mark told us last week,

This year the talks, using the Sorrowful Mysteries as their inspiration, are attempts to look at the Passion and Death of the Lord through a variety of lenses. Giving us a different perspective perhaps on to this wonderful gift. Each talk, beginning with one of the mysteries as its 'leaping off point', will explore the person of Jesus, our faith journey, our Christian hope.

This week we start with Deacon Anthony from Teignmouth – the same parish as Fr. Mark. The full schedule is:

Thursday 2nd March — The Agony in the Garden:-
Rev. Anthony Carey – A reflection beyond nature.

Thursday 9th March — The Scourging at the Pillar:-
Rev. Mark Skelton – A reflection in Poetry.

Thursday 16th March — The Crowning with Thorns:-
Mr. Francis Harrington – A reflection with Music.

Thursday 23rd March — Jesus carries His Cross:-
Mgr. Robert Draper – A reflection using Scripture.

Thursday 30th March — Jesus dies on the Cross:-
Rev. Jonathan Stewart – A reflection through Art.

It will be the same 'Zoom link' for each of the talks:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89719389363>

So that is Zoom Meeting ID: 897 1938 9363
and you will be asked to enter a 'passcode' which will be 36 35 64.

Zoom
Meeting ID:
897 1938 9363
Passcode
36 35 64.

The Ashes of Ash Wednesday

If anyone didn't manage to get to one of the Ash Wednesday services, I will be offering Ashes again at the end of the Masses this weekend.



Other Lent Devotions

Again this Friday we will have a Mass at 11am in Sparwood. I am writing this before we have celebrated the Mass for the first Friday of Lent, so I don't as yet have an idea of who might turn up and so what is the best way of adapting the Mass to best help the participants on their Lenten journey. But I hope that this will be useful as a way to focus us on the five wonderful Sunday gospel readings that we have during Lent in the build up to Palm Sunday.

Looking Ahead

I am very pleased that Fr. Harry Clarke will be visiting us for a couple of weeks during Lent. I don't exactly know when he will be arriving or leaving, but he will be here for the weekend of 18th/19th March while I am at a CWL Provincial Executive meeting.

Hopefully we will also get Deacon Stephen back in the not too distant future to enrich us with his wisdom and understanding of scripture.

On-Line Zoom Community – Fran Lafreniere RIP

Anyone who joins us on-line for Masses or for our talks will have noticed in the participants and in the chat a couple called “Luc & Fran”; they are Luc & Fran Lafreniere from Castlegar. Luc’s health has been a bit problematic recently, this has included having cataract surgery earlier this month. But tragically, on Tuesday this week, Fran had a heart attack and died.

Fran was very involved with the parish in Castlegar as well as with the City of Castlegar. She was very active – not to say ebullient – in everything she did. Last time I saw her she certainly didn’t look like someone who was about to become an octogenarian! May she rest in peace, and our prayers are very much with Luc as well as the rest of their family.

And Finally...

Was it cold this week or was it cold? Here in the Elk Valley it was not only cold but with the wind it felt very cold. But when we went for a walk one of us really felt it and the other said, “Cold? No, come on, throw the Kong again!”

With prayers, *Fr. David @ Thumper*



Our churches are open to those *without* any viral symptoms.

But Covid is still a real threat – thus caution is needed!



Zoom Links – To Our ‘*Very Tempting*’ Sunday Masses

(that is to say, a Mass with the focus on Christ’s temptations)

Topic: **First Sunday of Lent**

Date & Time: Saturday – 25th February – at 5pm Mountain time from Fernie

Sunday – 26th February – at 9am Mountain Time from Sparwood

To get the link to watch our two weekend Masses via Zoom please send an e-mail to one of our parish offices with your name and you will then receive the link each week.

info@holyfamilyfernief.ca

ElkValleyRC@gmail.com

Audio Only

Don’t forget, if you don’t have the internet but have a phone you can still listen to Mass via a phone call to our Zoom link; again, e-mail the office for the link.

Chat:

Feel free to send greeting via the chat when you join our broadcast, and if you are praying for anything particular, do also share this with others.

Those who are attending church in person, be careful:

Covid and other viruses are about and many people have vulnerabilities.

Some people might have vulnerabilities that we don’t know about, and at the moment as well as Covid there are other viruses going around – *the normal winter colds* – but this year they might be slightly more problematic because many people haven’t been exposed to colds and flu for a few years. So please continue to be careful. If someone wants a bit of space, we have a lot of it in our churches, so please be respectful.

Everyone still needs to be careful.

