First Sunday of Lent

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness...

LUKE 4:1



Saint Philip the Apostle Parish

CLIFTON, NEW JERSEY

SUNDAY GOSPEL

MATTHEW 4:1-11

At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry.

The tempter approached and said to him,

"If you are the Son of God,
command that these stones become loaves of bread."

He said in reply,

"It is written:

One does not live on bread alone,
but on every word that comes forth
from the mouth of God."

Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down.

For it is written:

He will command his angels concerning you and with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone."

Jesus answered him,

"Again it is written,

You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test."

Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence,

and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me."

At this, Jesus said to him,

"Get away, Satan!
It is written:

The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve."

Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners,

There is an ancient legend that on the day of Jesus' resurrection, the devil, who is a master of disguise, attempted to get into heaven by pretending to be the risen Christ. The devil brought with him minions of demons all disguised as angels of light. As the group approached the heavenly gates, the demons began to cry out the opening verses of the great hymn which welcomes the Messiah. They cried out, "Lift up your heads, oh gates of heaven. Open wide your doors and let the King of Glory come in!" The real angels in heaven looked down upon the group and saw the one whom they thought was their risen Lord. So, they joyously added their voices to the next part of the hymn by crying out, "Who is the King of Glory?" Here the devil made a fatal mistake. In answer to that question, he lifted his arms and said, "I am!" In that instant the angels shut the doors of heaven to keep out

the imposter. Because the minute the devil lifted up his hands, the angels could see that his palms did not bear the nail marks of the passion. And without the wounds of the passion, the angels knew that this was an imposter. He could not be the risen Lord.

Now Jesus is our savior, but He is also the way to salvation. He is the model we are called to follow. Therefore, so it is not by chance that He bears the wounds of His passion in every gospel scene in which we see the risen Lord. These marks of the passion are not some stain or some flaw which the resurrection was unable to erase. They are an indelible reminder to us that our way to salvation will include struggle, pain, and death. Now this is not to say that struggle, pain, and death are somehow good gifts. It is to remind us that trouble and pain are part of the human condition, and the way that Jesus shows us to salvation is not around the human condition but through it. Jesus' way must be our way as well.

This is certainly clear in today's Gospel. Because immediately after Jesus' baptism the **first thing he does is not preach but face evil**. The first thing he does is not heal the sick, but grapple with the devil. The first thing he does is not to proclaim God's Kingdom but confront the fragility of his human nature. Jesus confronts the devil, and in that action shows his weakness. Jesus struggles with human weakness. The gospel stories present this struggle in a very formal way, placing Jesus in complete control. But we can be sure that the historical Jesus did not find things quite as easy. He was like us in all things but sin. He experienced **real doubt, real turmoil, real temptation, real pain**. Such struggle with human weakness is part of our way to salvation. In his confrontation with human weakness, Jesus shows us our way to glory.

Now there is no doubt that we would prefer another way. We would all prefer to come closer to God without doubt, without struggle, without pain. But this is not the model which is presented to us. If we intend to be Disciples of Christ, we must prepare ourselves to deal with the human condition which causes us to struggle and to doubt. As difficult as that model is, the minute we accept it, there is good news. When we accept it, it leads to hope.

If we find ourselves doubting our faith, questioning what we have been taught, wondering whether the promises of eternal life are true, if we find ourselves struggling with sin, trying over and over again to improve but failing, the last question we should ask ourselves, "What is wrong with me? Why do I doubt? Why do I sin?" Those weaknesses are part of the human condition. But it is by fighting against doubt and sin that we trust that God will use our efforts to lead us deeper and closer to life. If we find ourselves lost with grief over the death of someone that we loved, over the end of a marriage, if we find ourselves paralyzed because the pain of a sickness or the fear of growing old or death, the last thing we should ask ourselves is "What have I done to deserve this? Why is this happening to me?" It happens to us because we are human. We face the same struggles which every human person must face. But we trust and hope that if

we face them in union with Christ, if we fight the good fight, God will use our struggle for our growth.

Jesus is our model. He shows us the way. His way is not around our human condition but through it. His way includes the doubts, the struggles, the pains of life. Considering his example, we believe that God allows our worst trials, our greatest troubles, to be a part of our salvation. Those who wish to share in Christ's glory but cannot show the marks of the wounds in their hands, are not disciples. They are merely imposters at the gates of paradise.

Peace, Fr. Monteleone

WELCOME HOME TO HEALING

CONFESSIONS ARE AVAILABLE EVERY MONDAY OF LENT FROM 7 PM to 8:30 PM IN THE CHURCH. (February 27, March 6, 13, 20, and 27)

PLEASE NOTE: There will be 7 AM Mass Every Friday of Lent (February 24, March 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31)

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study sessions will begin on Monday, February 27th at 11 AM. in the Jubilee Wing Room of the Molloy Center. Meetings will be every Monday through March 27th. Fr. Monteleone will lead the discussion on the Gospel of John concentrating on the Bread of Life Discourse.

SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Saint Philip would like to welcome all families with young children to a family holy HALF hour on **Friday**, **April 21st, at 5:30 PM in Marian Hall** in the Molloy Center. A Holy Hour is where we are in the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, exposed in front of us, on the altar. It is a beautiful experience that families often miss out on due to fear of their children's inability to sit still for long durations. This format is geared towards kids by shortening the time to a half hour and having music and activities that will help your children and you, as

parents, understand the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. We encourage you to come and spend time with Jesus as a family.



If you have any questions, please speak with Fr. Nico, or call the Parish Office at (973) 779 6200.

2023 PARISH LENTEN MISSION

Reverend Kenneth Brighenti, the Vice-Rector of the Josephinum School of Theology in Ohio will be joining us this second week of Lent!



Father Brighenti comes to the Josephinum following nine years as pastor at Saint Magdalen de Pazzi Church in the Diocese of Metuchen. Ordained in 1988, he was engaged in parish ministry until 2009, then served as Vice Rector and Director of Apostolates at Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD. Father Brighenti holds a PhD in Theocentric Studies from LaSalle University and is author of many books including Catholicism for Dummies, John Paul II for Dummies and Catholic Mass for Dummies. He has also co-hosted many shows on EWTN, including "Web of Faith." He is a Third-Degree member of the Knights of Columbus, member and chaplain of the Amerigo Vespucci Society, founding chaplain for Unico National (an Italian American service organization), and a Knight of Grace in the Constantinian Order. Father Brighenti will offer us 3 presentations on the Eucharist: Scriptural, Art of Celebrating the Mass (Ars Celebrandi) & Catechetical and Eucharistic Miracles.

The schedule of the Lenten Mission is as follows:

Saturday, March 4

4:30 to 5:00 PM – Confessions (Fr. Kenneth Brighenti) **5:30 PM** – Mass (Celebrant: Fr. Monteleone | Homilist: Fr. Kenneth Brighenti)

Sunday, March 5

8 AM – Mass (Celebrant: Fr. Kevin | Homilist: Fr. Kenneth Brighenti) 10 AM – Broadcast Mass (Celebrant & Homilist: Fr. Kenneth Brighenti) 12 PM – Mass (Celebrant: Fr. Nico | Homilist: Fr. Kenneth Brighenti)

Monday, March 6

9 AM – Mass (Fr. Kenneth Brighenti)
9:30 AM – Lenten Talk (Fr. Kenneth Brighenti)
7 PM – Lenten Talk (Fr. Kenneth Brighenti)
7 PM to 8:30 PM – Confessions will be heard by Fr. Monteleone and Fr. Nico in the Church.

Tuesday, March 7

9 AM – Mass (Fr. Kenneth Brighenti) 7 PM – Lenten Talk (Fr. Kenneth Brighenti)

ST. PHILIP PREPARATORY SCHOOL

In preparation for the Lenten season, the students attended Ash Wednesday Mass to receive their ashes. Fr. Monteleone will lead the students in praying the Stations of the Cross every Monday afternoon during Lent. The 2nd grade students continue to prepare for the Blessed Sacrament.











Students from Grades 1-8 have been working hard and completed taking their NWEA exams this week. Great job by all!

Students throughout the school are continuing to work with their eighth-grade buddies to prepare for their countries for Multicultural Day in May. In kindergarten, students are working with their eighth-grade buddies to research their country for Multicultural Day.





Middle School students are busy rehearsing for their musical production of Moana in May. Break a leg!

SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

COLUMBIETTE BLANKET MINISTRY

The next meetings of the blanket ministry will be Thursday, March 2 and 16, 2023 at 9:45am in the Molloy Center. We would like to thank Carol, Peggy, Phyllis, and Pricilla for their donations of fabric and yarn. For further information, please call Cathie Murtha at (973) 471-1265.

PRIME-TIMERS

A meeting of the Prime-Timers will be held on Friday, March 3rd at 1 PM in Marian Hall.

Personal Trainer, *Karen Rigamonti* is our special guest and will get us moving in our seats.

All are welcome!

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Fish Fry Sunday

on March 5th from 1:30 - 3:30 PM

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Upcoming Second Collections: February 26 - Project Faith March 12 - Project Faith

PRIESTS' SCHEDULE

Saturday, March 4

5:30 PM – Mass (Celebrant: Fr. Monteleone | Homilist: Fr. Kenneth Brighenti)

Sunday, March 5

8 AM – Mass (Celebrant: Fr. Kevin | Homilist: Fr. Kenneth Brighenti) 10 AM – Broadcast Mass (Celebrant & Homilist: Fr. Kenneth Brighenti)

12 PM – Mass (Celebrant: Fr. Nico | Homilist: Fr. Kenneth Brighenti)

WE PRAY FOR...

May the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace... Annette Russo, Robert J. Toscano

A Time to be Healed...

Susan Stierlen, Jill Festa, Sylvia Shami, Dominick Cappello, Todd Daigneault, Cheri Albanesius, James Jablonowski, Michael Nael, Elmer Rodriguez, Martha Sirvidio, Victoria Aloia, Michael Barbetta, John Hughes, Bernadette Menzaco, Adelaido Cuasay, Barbara Tolvay, Msgr. Herbert Tillyer, Lorraine DeBellis, Sebastian Centinaro, Pauline Jelken, Patricia Canavan Petrowski, The Sikora sisters, Jobo Valentin, Ralph and Maria Tommaro

MASS INTENTIONS

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2023

8:00 Anthony Fusco Richard Rean - 21st Anniversary

10:00 Giuseppe Esposito Dolores Bonkowski Eileen Pigut Gloria Attoinese

12:00 Marlene Chidiac Lee and Peter Bartolo

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2023

9:00 Nancy Bandel

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023

9:00 Eileen Pigut

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023

9:00 Harry Hadinata

THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2023

9:00 Anita Garbarino

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2023

Gregorio Prado 9:00 Edward Kovacs

SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2023

9:00 Rizaldy Quintos

5:30 Loretta Pennella - 18th Anniversary Dr. William Lesko - 4th Anniversary Barbara Christiaens

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2023

8:00 All the People of the Parish

10:00 Anthony Neglia Gloria Attoinese Jennifer Bozian George Tuzzolino

12:00 Giuseppe Esposito Nikki Valle



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