

February 1, 2024 Sharing the Good News

By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.” Genesis 3:19

Thoughts from the Vicar

We're all familiar with the last two lines of these verses from the Ash Wednesday liturgy. These words were spoken by God to Adam in the Garden of Eden before Adam and Eve were banished.

Because Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the Lord sent them out of the Garden of Eden into the world. Their physical condition changed as a result of their eating the forbidden fruit. As God had promised, they became mortal. They and their children would experience sickness, pain, and physical death.

Because of their transgression, Adam and Eve also suffered spiritual death. This meant they and their children could not walk and talk face to face with God. Adam and Eve and their children were separated from God both physically and spiritually. God told Eve that because of her sin, women would suffer great pain in childbirth and that she would be ruled over by her husband. As far as Adam was concerned, his punishment would consist of having to work the ground which he would find to be “cursed”. He would also have to eat the plants that he grew

Ultimately, the question of the unfallen world being overpopulated leads to fanciful and surreal considerations. It's akin to asking, “If Adam and Eve had not sinned, could their perfection have caused something bad to happen?” As we know, it's *sin* that causes bad things to happen, not righteousness; given that overpopulation would be a bad thing, it would not have been caused by perfection. God is perfect and sovereign and all-powerful, and His creation was "very good" Genesis 1:31 tells us “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” In His foreknowledge, God even factored in the fall of mankind, and His plan of redemption was already in place (Revelation 13:8).

This fact alone makes the concept of a sinless, overpopulated world entirely academic.

It seems to me that the season of Epiphany was extremely short this year and now it's February and Lent will soon be here. We will observe **Ash Wednesday at 6 pm on February 14.**

BIRTHDAY ALERT – FEBRUARY 26 is Tressie's birthdayop

Important: Please return last year's palms no later than February 11!

Important Upcoming Dates

February 4 – Food Pantry Sunday
Anointing Sunday

February 11 -The Last Sunday of Epiphany

February 14 - Ash Wednesday – 6 pm

February 18 – Lent I followed by Bible Study

February 21 – 6 pm Stations of the Cross followed by Bible Study

February 25 - Lent II followed by Bible Study

February 28 – 6 pm Stations of the Cross followed by Bible Study

Readers and Coffee Hours for February

February 4 – Diane and Graham McCoy

February 11- Deacon Tom and Elisabeth Langford

February 18 – Braden and Jess Bisping

February 25 – Fr. Tom and Sylvia Swegle

Parish Prayer List

For those fighting cancer: Cindy, Karen, Carol, Malia, Richard, Barb, Kevin, Mark Heys, Fr. Michael, Judy, Bishop Wencelas

For those in need of uplifting prayer: Diane, Kathy, Dan, David and Tressie, Sylvia, the Todd family, Alex, Shannon, Susan, Jon, Luke, Jerry, Jonas, Tim, Carolyn, Gary, Stuart, Madeleine, Brenda, Teegan, Jordan, Judy, Kay, Daniel, Larry, William, Kris, Dick, Donna, Terry, Jennifer, Fr. Fabián Castillo
Braden

For those in long term care: Gabriel, Grace, Danielle, the residents at Holly Brook, Reflections and South Park

For the Church's ministry in Nepal: Purna, Mahendra, Dipendra, Reshma, Prakash, their families and Churches; the Transformation Spiritual Church

For the growth of St. Mary's Anglican Mission

For those affected by the war in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine

With the arrival of Lent, I find myself wondering how I can observe a holy Lenten season. Maybe you have had the same thoughts. I'd like to share some ideas with you:

1. You can always go the traditional route and "give something up" for Lent. But. be careful; it has to be something that you like. Giving up vegetables is not a sacrifice if you don't like them!
2. You can give up something that you enjoy doing. I once had a student who gave up watching TV during Lent!
3. Do you like to read? Read a Christian book. I am planning on reading a book about a modern day Christian martyr that my kids gave me for Christmas.
4. Take part in Stations of the Cross at 6 pm on Wednesdays.
5. Take part in our Lenten Bible Study. Our materials have not arrived yet (they're due the 5th), but I am planning have Bible Study after Stations on Wednesday and completing the lesson after church on Sunday. More details to come.
6. Random acts of kindness are always good.
7. Please be prepared to share **your** ideas at coffee hour on Sunday.