

THE DESERT IS TRANSFORMED INTO GREEN PASTURES:

There are some wonderful contrasts in our readings today, all dealing with nature. In Genesis, we find God speaking to Noah after the flood waters have receded. God is establishing His covenant with Noah and his descendants, but also every living creature that was with him on the Ark: all the birds, and the various tame and wild animals. God promises that flood waters shall never again destroy the earth, and he establishes the rainbow as a sign of this covenant, to be witnessed among the clouds.

The imagery of the colorful rainbow among cloud-filled skies, with the fresh scent of the newly-rained-upon earth that is filled with animals of all variety, clashes quite a bit with the imagery in our Gospel passage. Here, Jesus is spending forty days in a desert – dry, dusty and most likely free of much color or scent. He is alone but for wild beasts, and the ministration of angels. Unlike what we see with Noah, there is no apparent conversation with God, but there are temptations from Satan.

What might these contrasts have to share with us about the Good News we come to this place to hear? Let us look at two things in particular. The first is the fullness of nature in Genesis. As in the beginning of Creation, God is intervening in and caring deeply for the earth and its inhabitants. He promises to remain with all of his creation in a covenant that promises that full destruction shall never again come upon it. In fact, God will come to impose destruction upon death itself, renewing his covenant with all of creation in the person of Jesus Christ.

And Jesus comes to us, with a fully human nature, and initiates the kingdom of God on earth. But prior to his final victory, he spends time in the desert. This is the second way that nature “speaks” to us today: in his time before his glory, Jesus is in the dry, arid and naturally dead environment of the desert. As were we. His forty days remind us of the desert of death and sin, even in a world where rainbows grace the sky and vegetation springs from flood-receded plains. Compared to the kingdom, this earth – even as just described – is a desert. But once Jesus had died and was raised, the valleys of the shadow of death were transformed into green pastures – the pastures where we, too, hope to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

CATHOLIC SHARING APPEAL:

Today is Commitment Sunday for the 2018 Catholic Sharing Appeal. The CSA is an appeal from the Bishop, directly to the parishioners of the diocese, to ask for financial help in funding over 30 ministries of our diocesan Church that Minister to the basic needs of many of our brothers and sisters in South Mississippi. Please consider joining Bishop Kihneman and me in reaching out to help those in need through our prayers and support. Fr. Dennis Carver

ADORE MIINSTRIES GULF COAST

Adore Gulf Coast (formerly known as Adore Unplugged) is bringing you regular nights of worship, teaching, and adoration along the Gulf Coast. Please check this weekend’s bulletin insert for dates, places and times.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon Feb 19	Lv 19:1-2, 11-18, Mt 25:31-46
Tues Feb 20	Is 55:10-11, Mt 6:7-15
Wed Feb 21	Jon 3:1-10, Lk 11:29-32
Thur Feb 22	1 Pt 5:1-4, Mt 16:13-19
Fri Feb 23	Ez 18:21-28, Mt 5:20-26
Sat Feb 24	Dt 26:16-19, Mt 5:43-48
Sun Feb 25	Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18, Rom 8:31b-34, Mk 9:2-10



YOUR SUNDAY TITHING AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Regular Collections	\$	8,144.00
Capital Improve.	\$	919.82
Maintenance	\$	699.00
Nativity Elem.	\$	530.00
TOTAL COLLECTION	\$	10,292.00

LENTEN FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

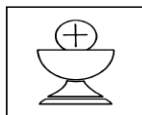
On all the weekdays of Lent the U.S. Bishops strongly encourage the faithful to participate in Mass and to observe a self-imposed fast. The law of fasting allows only one full meal a day but does not prohibit taking food in the morning and evening. All Catholics 14 years of age and older are obliged to abstain from meat on Good Friday, and all the Fridays of Lent, unless Friday is a solemnity (there are no Friday solemnities in 2018).

CCD

There will be a make-up meeting of the parents of CCD children preparing to make their First Confession and First Communion this year. The meeting will be on February 21, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. in the second floor RCIA Room of the Sacred Heart Center.

RCIA CATECHUMENS.

We celebrate and congratulate our RCIA Catechumens this Sunday at 9:00 Mass as they celebrate the Rite of Sending Forth and the Breaking Open of the Word. As we enter the Season of Lent on our journey toward Easter, we support our RCIA group with greater prayer and welcome.



Jesus says of you and me, “You are the salt of the earth”. No one should be deprived of the Most Holy Eucharist because they are homebound, elderly, have no means of getting to Mass and/or sick in their home. Sister Jackie Tarrant, RSM will gladly bring the Eucharist to you in your home. Together we can be “salt of the earth”. Sister can be reached at the rectory at 228-374-1717.

MUSIC FOR THIS WEEKEND

ENTRANCE HYMN	#136
OFFERTORY	#661
COMMUNION	#437
SENDING	#477

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS	LECTORS	ALTAR SERVERS
Feb 24 4:00 pm I. Dale Dorcik 2. Ann Kavanagh 3. Sondra Ahern 4. Patrick Hall 5. Andrea Gilich	Feb 24 4:00 pm Rose Ann Kimball	Feb 24 4:00 pm Cayden Cannon Sabree Sanders
Feb 25 7:00 am 1. Jim Shugart 2. Nancy Powell 3. Linda Stewart	Feb 25 7:00 am Joe Powell	Feb 25 7:00 am Alec Ryan Liam Jerrel
9:00 am I. Bobby Weaver 2. Belinda Corley 3. Nora Ziz 4. Rocky Greathouse 5. John Brauchle	9:00 am Al Simons, Jr.	9:00 am Morgan Newman Rush Newman Rhys Newman McKinzy Mathis
11:00 am I. Nanette Burke 2. Johnny Williams 3. Sondra Williams 4. Susan Toche 5. Robert Moniot	11:00 am Daliance Kirkland-Ross	11:00 am Blake Walli Hady Hollis Terrence McDonnell Cameron McDonnell
5:30 pm 1. Tricia Creel 2. Roland Creel 3. Angela Cannon	5:30 pm Janice Fields	5:30 pm Samantha Sharplin Breanna Smith Dylan Mitchell
	CANTORS	
	Feb 24 4:00 pm William Endicott	
	Feb 25 9:00 am Susie Portas/Choir	
	11:00 am Dennis Burke	

	6:30 a.m.	8:00 a.m.
Mon Feb 19	Maria Hoang Thi Khoai	Collins-Sims Fly.
Tue Feb 20	Nita Newman	Jean Kridle
Wed Feb 21	Peggy Brashier	Andrew Civitanovich
Thur Feb 22	Patricia Smolcich	Tillie Mallett
Fri Feb 23	Shirley Faust	Herbert/Bertha McDonnell
Sat Feb 24	8 Ben Wimberly	4 Josephine Esposito Allen
Sun Feb 25	7 -Anna Jo Wentzell	9:00 F.T.P. ₂
	11:00 am Helen Moniot Fabre	5:30 Gladys Schmidt

PLEASE KEEP OUR SICK IN YOUR PRAYERS

Linda Welter, Hugh Kavanagh, Gwen Gee, Gerrie Weldon, Lehwmon Skrmetti, Buddy Pullen, Annette Luther, Macklin Holloway, Mary Wimberly, Kim Wilkerson, Glynis Cavanaugh Broadway, Pete Skrmetta, Candy Widener, Tiffany Whitehead, Lena Marchioni, Kay Lawson, Holly Hill, Georgia Bellais Dominick, Maxine Kiddinger, Marie Manning, Raymond Egers, Betty Hilton, Mary Lancaster, Mickey Bradley, Cheryl Terry, Gwen Gollotte, Greg Hotaling, Jack Joachim, Jr., Eugene LaCaze, Michael Zorich, and Karen Skremetta.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Stations of the Cross are observed every Friday in Lent at 6:00 p.m. in the Cathedral Church. Come and walk with Jesus on his way to the cross in Lent.

NATIVITY BVM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*The annual Nativity School Open House, is being held this Sunday, February 18th from 11:00-2:00 p.m. All current, former and future children and families, as well as any parishioners, are welcome to attend! Come and experience the Nativity difference!

*Registration for the 2018-2019 school year is now taking place. For information about the school's programs, Pre-School – Grade 6, or to visit the school, please call Ms. Cheryl at the school office, 432-2269.

*Nativity BVM School is selling raffle tickets for the **ULTIMATE FAMILY VACATION**. Only 335 tickets will be sold/\$75.00 per ticket. The winner will receive \$1,000 spending money and \$4,000 in gift cards to either Disney Properties or Universal Properties or both. Additionally, donors have added a \$250 gas card and a set of family t-shirts and totes to the prize package. Tickets are on sale and the drawing will take place on March 29th. All proceeds will go to the school's Technology Fund. For more information please call the school or visit our website!

*Nativity School Parents, Friends of the School and the Nativity Men's Club will hold its first Lenten dinner on **Friday, February 23rd**. **Meals are dine in/take out from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the school.**

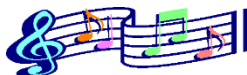
A MASS FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The local chapter of the International Order of Alhambra in conjunction with Our Lady of Fatima will be holding a Mass for people with Special Needs such as those Intellectually and Developmentally disadvantaged. There will also be a interpreter for the deaf present. The Mass is open to anyone and everyone that wishes to attend The Mass will be next Sunday February 25 at 2 pm at Our Lady of Fatima Church on Pass Road. This Mass is designed to involve as many people with special needs as want to participate. Following Mass there will be a social in the Sts. Mary and Joseph rooms of the parish hall. If you plan on participating at Mass and/or attending the social, please call Jim Rigby @ 435-5665 by Friday the 23rd so we can account for how many will be attending and what position will be open.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb 19** Women of Mary, 5:30 p.m.
- Feb 20** Men of St. Joseph, 7:00 a.m. – SHC
RCIA Class, 6:00 p.m.
- Feb 21** Cleaning Team "C"
CCD 5:30 p.m., SHC
- Feb. 22** Greenbriar Mass at 10:00 a.m.
- Feb 23** Stations of the Cross, 6:00 p.m., Cathedral

MUSIC NOTES



FEBRUARY SANCTUARY CHOIR SCHEDULE:

February 25th: 11 am

The Children's Choir will sing a small program offering for Nativity BVM Elementary's Open House at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, February 18th. The Children's Choir will share again at the Cathedral next on Sunday, February 25th for the 9 am Mass. Our Choral Ensembles – the Sanctuary Choir & our Choral Society - "Gloria In Excelsis" invites folks to prayerfully consider becoming members. All interested individuals wanting to inquiry/participate in the Music & Fine Arts Ministries Program should contact Terry Maddox – Minister of Music @ 251 4061454 &/or @ terrydalemaddox@gmail.com

BINGO MANIA

Bingo resumes on February 20th. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday. The following families are scheduled for February 20th:: Abbott (Tina), Alvarez (Edgar & Juanita), Amos (Albert & Dorthy), Baker (Roy & Jenny), Baxter (Brandon & Nicole), Boney (Betsy Boney) and Borja (Mary). **REMEMBER! If you are unable to attend, it is your responsibility to secure a replacement.**