

The Second Sunday of Lent
Homily ~ March 20, 2011
10 a.m. Liturgy

Rev. Andrew A. Czajkowski
St. John the Evangelist Parish
Davison, Michigan

Why is this year different from many other years? In addition to all the breaking news in the Middle East and in Japan, for one thing Easter is very late. Compared to some years when Easter could be as early as March 22nd, this year Easter is not until April 24th. In the year 325 A.D., the Council of Nicaea placed Easter on the first Sunday following the first full moon after March 20th—which is the vernal equinox, when the sun is directly above the Earth's equator. This date allowed pilgrims to have moonlight to travel to the great Easter festivals.

Because May brings First Communions, confirmations, graduations, and Mother's Day, the Diocesan Services Appeal has been moved up to March. Normally, we show a DVD featuring Bishop Boyea and what the DSA is all about. In the interest of time, you may view the DVD on our website.

This year, the DSA theme is *Do Everything for the Glory of God*. All 92 parishes that make up the Diocese of Lansing combine their prayers and resources to accomplish what no one parish can do on its own—continue the Lord's work in these ten counties for the glory of God and the good of his Church.

Our DSA contributions support more than 100 ministries. A couple of the ministries that are showcased on the DVD include the education of seminarians for the priesthood and other church ministries.

- ✦ This June four young men will be ordained to the priesthood for service in our diocese.
- ✦ This summer James Mangan, a seminarian from the North American College in Rome, will be with us for a pastoral internship.
- ✦ One of our own parishioners, Michael McCrandall will be ordained a permanent deacon come this May.
- ✦ As we speak, several women and men in our parish are taking classes in Lay Ecclesial Ministry as they are trying to discern their gifts for the good of the Church.

The DSA also showcases the work of Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities are those agencies that are placed in different regions of the diocese to accomplish the Corporal Works of Mercy. Here in Flint we have an excellent unit which makes available family counseling, foster care, and adoptions. You know there are a lot of children in the Diocese waiting to be adopted. Recently we opened the Warming Center at St. Michael's in Flint; and since December, through Catholic Charities, over 3,000 people have sought shelter or to be warmed during these very challenging months. The soup kitchens are expanding their programs—twice a day at the North End Soup Kitchen and now at the South End and at other units across the city that has one of the highest poverty and unemployment rates in the country. But what really is important is that a portion of DSA helps us right here in our own back yard to do the work of Jesus Christ in Genesee County, as well as in other regions in the Diocese that are affected.

Being the second largest parish in Genesee County, we are needed to do our share. Our goal this year is \$99,605. It's a lot, but it isn't if each of us pitches in and does a little bit. Again, it's not equal gifts we are inviting, but equal sacrifice! I ask your help. Envelopes are in the pews. Make a pledge or gift according to your ability. Let's be a 100% parish and then some! Taking part in DSA reminds us that we belong to a larger Church. We're part of a mutual support society—one for all, all for one, all for the greater glory of God.

This past week we began our partnership with Blessed Sacrament in Burton. Father Carl and I will be rotating Masses between the two sites. Starting next week, there will be a Saturday evening Mass at 6 p.m. and one Sunday Mass at 9:30 a.m. at Blessed Sacrament. You are welcome to worship with us at either site. Wherever you attend Mass, your offering will be recorded in the parish where you have registered. Weekday Masses will be available here Monday through Friday in our chapel. Eventually, we'll be merging our parish pastoral councils and our administration commissions together.

Since we neighbor each other and some of our children are in the same school districts, we are hoping to offer religious education both at Blessed Sacrament as well as here. This summer we will have a joint summer Vacation Bible School at Blessed Sacrament. It will be the same week that over 300 youth come to our campus to go out in teams to take on needed work projects in our area. As we begin to see new faces, please join me in welcoming one another.

Perhaps you've noticed that over the last several months we've begun to look at ways to further engage one another in the work of the Lord. We've invited comments from at-random parish members, as well as staff, and various ministries and organizations on how we can have more people engaged in the sacred mission God has entrusted us to do. We've asked for feedback about our strengths, weaknesses, needs and possibilities. We have plenty of work to do. Every single one of us has some gift, some skill, talent or ability to give back to the Lord.


If you haven't done so yet, we hope you will have your picture taken for our upcoming pictorial directory. There is no charge; and for having your picture taken you receive a complimentary photo and a pictorial directory. Appointments can be made online or by calling the 800 number listed in the bulletin.

I hope you'll save the date of Sunday, April 17—that's Palm Sunday. We're having an Open House at the Family Center and a Burn the Mortgage on Our Family Center party. Thanks to God, St. Joseph, you and many others, we are able to pay off our mortgage of \$4 million four years ahead of schedule!

This Wednesday, twenty-six of us leave for our long-awaited journey to the Holy Land. In addition to Masses at Bethlehem, the Mount of the Beatitudes and Mount Tabor, next Sunday we'll be in Jerusalem in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher where Jesus is believed to have been raised from the dead. As you gather around this sacred altar, we'll be gathered around the altar of our Mother Church in Jerusalem. An offering will also be brought from our parish to be given to the Patriarch of Jerusalem for needed assistance for our fellow Christian sisters and brothers who, like Jesus, are today the poorest of the poor.

The good news about Easter this year is that many of you will not be away on spring break as in years past. I look forward to celebrating the great walk of Holy Week, and most especially to fully enter with you into the sacred days that continue to bring about God's saving power among us!

≈140th Jubilee ≈

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