



Rev. Todd Schneider
PO Box 287, Morris, MN 56267
(320) 589-3003
assumpfathertodd@info-link.net

February 22, 2017

Dear Parishioners,

Peace and joy be with you!

Accompanying this letter is a schedule for our annual Lenten Speaker Series and our Holy Week and Easter celebrations. Hopefully, you will find time to enter into the graces of these Holy Seasons.

Since we are approaching the 100th anniversary of a transformative historical event, Our Blessed Mother's appearance to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal, let us respond anew to Mary's request to pray the Rosary this Lenten season. Mary asked the children to pray especially for the following intentions:

- ▶ Pray for peace in the world.
- ▶ Pray for healing and renewal of marriage and family life.
- ▶ Offer penances and sacrifices for the conversion of sinners.
- ▶ Pray that the gift of faith in her Son Jesus would increase.
- ▶ Pray the Rosary, so her Immaculate Heart would triumph.

Since Mary asked the three shepherd children, Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco, to pray the Rosary every time she appeared, may we pray the Rosary with our families, our friends, and when we are alone at prayer this Lenten season.

Since there are forty days in Lent, and twenty mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary, families with children and young people could gather together and pray at least one mystery of the Rosary each night. Therefore, during the course of Lent, you will pray the twenty mysteries of the Rosary at least twice in these forty days. Beginning Ash Wednesday, if we all commit to praying at least one decade of the Rosary each day, we will complete our commitment to pray the twenty mysteries twice by Palm Sunday. Such a commitment would not be burdensome, even for little children.

I am going on pilgrimage with others, including members from our parish, to attend the 100th anniversary of Our Lady's appearance at Fatima. Pope Francis thought the 100th anniversary was so important that he is also traveling to Fatima out of love for our Blessed Mother. Let our generation hear in a new way the request of Mary to pray the Rosary.

God bless you this Lent and Easter!

Sincerely in Christ,
Father Todd Schneider



LENTEN/EASTER SCHEDULE 2017

A full calendar of events and more information is always at assumptionofmorris.org.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			MARCH 01 Ash Wednesday Masses 8:30 AM / 7:00 PM	02 Adult Faith Formation 6:30 PM	03 Stations of the Cross 2:30 PM / 5:15 PM	04 Confessions 4:30 PM Mass 5:30 PM Misa en Español 7:30 PM
05 Sunday Mass 9:00 AM	06	07	08	09 Adult Faith Formation 6:30 PM	10 Stations of the Cross 2:30 PM / 5:15 PM	11 Confessions 4:30 PM Mass 5:30 PM Misa en Español 7:30 PM
 12 Sunday Mass 9:00 AM	13	14	15	16 Adult Faith Formation 6:30 PM	17 Stations of the Cross 2:30 PM / 5:15 PM	18 Confessions 4:30 PM Mass 5:30 PM Misa en Español 7:30 PM
19 Sunday Mass 9:00 AM St. Patrick's Dinner After Mass Proceeds for Helping Hands.	20	21	22 Lenten Speaker Jeff Johnson History of Fatima 7:00 PM	23 Adult Faith Formation 6:30 PM	24 Stations of the Cross 2:30 PM / 5:15 PM St. Mary's Fish Fry American Legion 4:30 - 7:30 PM	25 Confessions 4:30 PM Mass 5:30 PM Misa en Español 7:30 PM
26 Sunday Mass 9:00 AM	27 Lenten Speaker Nic Davidson Defend Your Faith 7:00 PM	28 Lenten Speaker Nic Davidson Eucharist/Confession 7:00 PM	29	30	31 Stations of the Cross 2:30 PM / 5:15 PM	APRIL 01 Confessions 4:30 PM Mass 5:30 PM Misa en Español 7:30 PM
02 Sunday Mass 9:00 AM Penance Service 4:00 PM Multiple priests for confessions.	03	04	05	06	07 Stations of the Cross 2:30 PM / 5:15 PM	08 Confessions 4:30 PM Mass 5:30 PM Misa en Español 7:30 PM
09 Sunday Mass 9:00 AM Confessions follow.	10	11 Confessions 7:30 - 8:30 PM	12 St. Mary's Sedar Meal Call school for a spot! Confessions 7:00 - 8:00 PM	13 Holy Thursday Mass 7:00 PM Confessions follow.	14 Passion of the Lord 12:00 PM Confessions follow. Tenebrae Service 7:30 PM	15 Easter Vigil Mass 9:00 PM
16 Easter Sunday Mass 9:00 AM	17	18	19	20	21	22 Confessions 4:30 PM Mass 5:30 PM Misa en Español 7:30 PM

2017 LENTEN SPEAKER SERIES

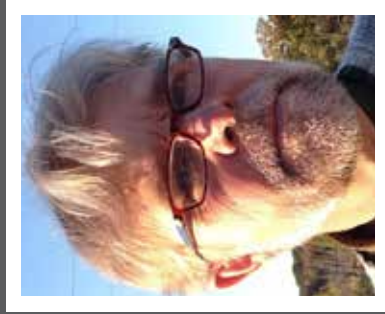
JOURNEY TOGETHER TO DISCOVER TRUTHS AND MYSTERIES OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

“ I don't know of anyone who can share the message of Jesus Christ and His Church with as much humor and depth as Nic Davidson. He is able to make sense of our beautiful and complex faith so that those who hear him understand God's plan for their lives. ”

Father Mike Schmitz



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22 AT 7:00 PM



**JEFF
JOHNSON**

In 2017, we commemorate the 100th anniversary of our Blessed Mother's Vatican-approved appearances to three children in Fatima, Portugal. After years of studying these prophetic events, **Jeff Johnson** will present on the historical context, promises, prophecies and warnings in these apparitions. Jeff is a college English teacher in Brainerd and an active parishioner at Immaculate Conception in St. Anna, Minnesota.

MON/TUE, MARCH 27 & 28 AT 7:00 PM



**NIC
DAVIDSON**

A convert to Catholicism, **Nic Davidson** brings delightful humor and deep faith knowledge to all engagements. Night one, we'll learn to defend our faith. Whether in person or online, Catholics often find themselves in a position of defending or clarifying our Faith. That can leave us feeling challenged and scrambling for answers. Night two, Nic will showcase two sacraments we are blessed to celebrate more than any others. We'll re-discover the Catholic Church's central teachings concerning the relationship between Eucharist and Reconciliation.



Cookies/bars served after!

CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

207 EAST THIRD STREET, MORRIS, MINNESOTA

MESSAGE FROM POPE FRANCIS FOR LENT 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to the certain goal of Easter, Christ's victory over death. This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God "with all their hearts" (Joel 2:12), to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord. Jesus is the faithful friend who never abandons us. Even when we sin, he patiently awaits our return; by that patient expectation, he shows us his readiness to forgive (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lent is a favourable season for deepening our spiritual life through the means of sanctification offered us by the Church: fasting, prayer and almsgiving. At the basis of everything is the word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply. I would now like to consider the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Lk 16:19-31). Let us find inspiration in this meaningful story, for it provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life. It exhorts us to sincere conversion.

1. The Other Person is a Gift

The parable begins by presenting its two main characters. The poor man is described in greater detail: he is wretched and lacks the strength even to stand. Lying before the door of the rich man, he fed on the crumbs falling from his table. His body is full of sores and dogs come to lick his wounds (cf. vv. 20-21). The picture is one of great misery; it portrays a man disgraced and pitiful.

The scene is even more dramatic if we consider that the poor man is called Lazarus: a name full of promise, which literally means God helps. This character is not anonymous. His features are clearly delineated and he appears as an individual with his own story. While practically invisible to the rich man, we see and know him as someone familiar. He becomes a face, and as such, a gift, a priceless treasure, a human being whom God loves and cares for, despite his concrete condition as an outcast (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lazarus teaches us that other persons are a gift. A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value. Even the poor person at the door of the rich is not a nuisance, but a summons to conversion and to change. The parable first invites us to open the doors of our heart to others because each person is a gift, whether it be our neighbour or an anonymous pauper. Lent is a favourable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ. Each of us meets people like this every day. Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable. But in order to do this, we have to take seriously what the Gospel tells us about the rich man.

2. Sin Blinds Us

The parable is unsparing in its description of the contradictions associated with the rich man (cf. v. 19). Unlike poor Lazarus, he does not have a name; he is simply called "a rich man". His opulence was seen in his extravagant and expensive robes. Purple cloth was even more precious than silver and gold, and was thus reserved to divinities (cf. Jer 10:9) and kings (cf. Jg 8:26), while fine linen gave one an almost sacred character. The man was clearly ostentatious about his wealth, and in the habit of displaying it daily: "He feasted sumptuously every day" (v. 19). In him we can catch a dramatic glimpse of the corruption of sin, which progresses in three successive stages: love of money, vanity and pride (cf. Homily, 20 September 2013).

The Apostle Paul tells us that "the love of money is the root of all evils" (1 Tim 6:10). It is the main cause of corruption and a source of envy, strife and suspicion. Money can come to dominate us, even to the point of becoming a tyrannical idol (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 55). Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity towards others, money can chain us and the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace.

The parable then shows that the rich man's greed makes him vain. His personality finds expression in appearances, in showing others

what he can do. But his appearance masks an interior emptiness. His life is a prisoner to outward appearances, to the most superficial and fleeting aspects of existence.

The lowest rung of this moral degradation is pride. The rich man dresses like a king and acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal. For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door.

Looking at this character, we can understand why the Gospel so bluntly condemns the love of money: "No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money" (Mt 6:24).

3. The Word is a Gift

The Gospel of the rich man and Lazarus helps us to make a good preparation for the approach of Easter. The liturgy of Ash Wednesday invites us to an experience quite similar to that of the rich man. When the priest imposes the ashes on our heads, he repeats the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return". As it turned out, the rich man and the poor man both died, and the greater part of the parable takes place in the afterlife. The two characters suddenly discover that "we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it" (1 Tim 6:7).

We too see what happens in the afterlife. There the rich man speaks at length with Abraham, whom he calls "father" (Lk 16:24.27), as a sign that he belongs to God's people. This detail makes his life appear all the more contradictory, for until this moment there had been no mention of his relation to God. In fact, there was no place for God in his life. His only god was himself.

The rich man recognizes Lazarus only amid the torments of the afterlife. He wants the poor man to alleviate his suffering with a drop of water. What he asks of Lazarus is similar to what he could have done but never did. Abraham tells him: "During your life you had your fill of good things, just as Lazarus had his fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony" (v. 25). In the afterlife, a kind of fairness is restored and life's evils are balanced by good.

The parable goes on to offer a message for all Christians. The rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, who are still alive. But Abraham answers: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them" (v. 29). Countering the rich man's objections, he adds: "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead" (v. 31).

The rich man's real problem thus comes to the fore. At the root of all his ills was the failure to heed God's word. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbour. The word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God. When we close our heart to the gift of God's word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.

Dear friends, Lent is the favourable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbour. The Lord, who overcame the deceptions of the Tempter during the forty days in the desert, shows us the path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need. I encourage all the faithful to express this spiritual renewal also by sharing in the Lenten Campaigns promoted by many Church organizations in different parts of the world, and thus to favour the culture of encounter in our one human family. Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor. Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter.

Francis