



PALM SUNDAY

March 24, 2024



Mission Statement

“Good Shepherd Parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love.”

954 Stuyvesant Ave Irvington NJ 07111 Phone: (973) 375-8568

Fax (973) 375-7040 Email gsirvington@comcast.net

Website: www.goodshepherdnj.com



SERVED BY

Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor
Ed Stolarz Director of Music Ministry
Denise Perry Secretary

For more information on our parish please go to:
Goodshepherdnj.com
Or email us at
gsirvington@comcast.net

From the Pastor's Desk on the Passion Sunday of our Lord.

Weakness and Vulnerability of our Lord

Today we begin with the Passion Sunday of our Lord or Palm Sunday which is the great doorway leading into Holy Week, the week when our Lord Jesus Christ makes his way towards the culmination of his earthly ministry and existence. He goes to his beloved city Jerusalem to fulfill what was the prophets prophesied in the Scripture. The two Gospel readings of today can give us emotional whiplash. As we begin this Mass, we hear the story of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The blessing of palms focuses on the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It proclaims Jesus as the Messiah and hope of Israel. In contrast, in the account of the passion, we focus on the weakness and vulnerability of our Lord Jesus.

He is betrayed, handed over, mocked and scourged, led to carry the Cross to Calvary to be crucified. He was driven from garbage to dumpster and condemned to die on the cross. The cross is the most powerful act of love of Jesus for his people so that he can free them from their sins. The cross is the most absurd and shameful thing standing on its own. But when you have to put somebody on it, it's no longer an absurdity, because, the person whom you put there, teaches us that without Good Friday, there would be no Easter Sunday. So he has to carry the cross to die for our sins—Via Crucis.

Triumph and weakness are two strange partners. There is a paradox in today's festivity. The scriptures reveal that it is through weakness and vulnerability that God triumphs and victorious in his mercy and forgiveness. The person who suffers for living out the gospel message can find comfort and reassurance in the first two readings. The suffering servant of Isaiah could describe the way in which the Christian may hope in God even if he or she is criticized and rebuked for being a Christian. The hymn from St. Paul's letter shows how God will triumph through the suffering. As the prophet Isaiah said, through his obedience, loyalty and humility, my servant will justify many. This could be seen on the cross, the good thief in humility and trusted in Jesus and asked for forgiveness, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." In the fragility of the cross is the hope of resurrection. We are invited to recognize the cross in the midst of life and in that suffering to trust in God. May the Lord graciously pour out his graces and blessings on us as we begin this most Solemn Week of the year.

Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm
Holy Day TBD.

Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am
Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm

National Holidays —9:00am
Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm

Mass Intentions For the week of March 23, 2024—March 30 2024

Saturday 5:30pm For the Repose of the Soul of Libera Armenti
Mar 23

Sunday 9:00am For the Repose of the Soul of John Bors
Mar 24 11:00am Fr the Repose of the Soul of Michael and Cecilia Ihegbunam

Monday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Earl Horning
Mar 25

Tuesday 7:00am Thanksgiving for the Birthday of Olivia Zirachi Oguh
Mar 26

Wednesday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Julius Ihegbunam
Mar 27

Thursday 8:00pm For The Repose of the Soul of Bertie Julian
Mar 28

Friday 3:30pm Thanksgiving for the Birthday of Victoria Oguh
Mar 29

Saturday 9:00pm For the Protection of the Babies in Wombs and Their Families
Mar 30

Kindly keep our parishioner's family, with health and other challenges, in your prayers

Let us always remember in our prayers the sick members of our Parish

Denise Younker	Paul Kocum	Sandi Mosley	Debbie Watson	Rihanna Scott
Elizabeth Cassata	Pope Francis	Frank Rocchi	Camile Laidlaw	
Frederick Hamilton	Curtis Richards	Carlos Quinones	Venus Matthews	
Jean Michelin	Corizon Abuzied	Bob and Barbara Nezlick	Patrick Roylance	


* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

Hospital Privacy | Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/ pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call the I office at (973)375-8568

Ministries: If you're interested in ministries of service either as a Lector or Eucharistic Minister, please call the rectory at 975-375-8568 or fill out the Information below and place in the collection basket.

Name : _____
 Telephone #: _____
 Lector _____ Eucharistic Minister _____

Please contact Fr. Valentine or call the rectory if you are interested in Intensions, of a Sanctuary Lamp, Alter bread and wine or Alter Flowers




ANNUAL APPEAL 2024
 MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY

Announcement
 Our Church now has an Adoration Room. All are invited to visit the room, Mon-Fri 7:30AM-5:00PM.
 To gain access to the adoration room, reservations are required. Please visit the rectory to reserve your date and time.

Collection Report		March 17, 2024
Weekly Target		\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)		\$ 2,684.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ 3,816.00
Fiscal Year to Date		
Budget:		\$346,811.00
Actual:		\$62,148.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$284.663.00
Rolling 4 Week Averages		
Average Collection:		\$2,652.00
Average Surplus (Deficit)		\$3,848.00

Minister Assignments March 2– March 3, 2024

Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	Presider
03/30 5:30pm	SIGN –UP		Fr. Val
03/ 31 9:00am		SHEET	Fr. Val
03/31 11:00am	IN	SCARISTRY	Fr. Val

GSP EVENT CALENDER	
Sunday Mar 24	
PALM SUNDAY	
Monday Mar 25	
Tuesday Mar 26	
Wednesday Mar 27	
Thursday Mar 28	
8:00 AM Morning Prayer	
8:00PM HOLY THURSDAY SERVICE	
Friday Mar 29	
8:00 AM Morning Prayer	
2:30pm Stations of the Cross	
3:30PM The Lords Passion and Death	
Saturday Mar 30 HOLY SATURDAY	
8:00 AM Morning Prayer	
9:00PM VIGIL OF OUR LORD’S RESSURACTION	

Good Shepherd Parish Information

RECTORY HOURS: Monday Thru Wednesday 10:00AM-2:00PM; Thursday / Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM

Parish Registration Forms can be found at the back of the church or call the rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION Saturday 4:45-5:15 pm

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM In order to have your child baptized at Good Shepherd, the parents must be registered and active members of our parish. Godparents or sponsors must meet qualifications as to have received both sacraments of Communion and Confirmation, attend Mass regularly and been a registered parishioner at a Catholic Church For more information please call the Rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY Couples who are planning a wedding should call the parish office to meet the priest, to choose the date of the wedding and before any other arrangements are made call (973)375-8568

PASTORAL OF THE SICK Notify a priest of all who are hospitalized, home-bound, or Emergencies call (973)375-8568

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS, RCIA. Adults interested in becoming members of the Catholic Church and Catholics in need of Sacraments, Confirmation or Eucharist; inquire at the Rectory. To register please call the rectory at(973-375-8568

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Sunday of October-April from 10:00-11:00 am in the Church building. For more information please call the Rectory at (973-375-8568

THE HEART OF LOVE THAT WENT TO DEATH FOR THE OTHER

We have several marches in the course of humankind history. The march of Soldiers to war, a wedding march, the last – the march of someone on a death row to his place of execution, and the last smile. But the march of today's celebration is the heroic march of our Blessed Lord, his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, his beloved city. The story of the Triumphant entry into Jerusalem reminds us of the power of the single victim mechanism. No one would imagine that the crowd that cheered "Hosanna to the Son of David" would in five days later shout "Crucify Him". Jesus Christ accepted the reality and was obedient until crucifixion. Quite a mood swing. One moment it's 'Hosanna, Praise the king' (Lk 19:28-40), next it's 'Crucify him' (Lk 22:14-23:56). One moment high as a kite, waving palms, singing and dancing, so excitedly the very stones seem to cry out; next it's down in the dumps, full of anxiety and foreboding, looking for a scapegoat. First, garments are laid before Him to honour Him; then, they're stripped off Him to humiliate Him. One moment they're following and committing to die for Him; next, they're fleeing and denying Him. We could say the Israel at the time of our Lord has all the symptoms of Bipolar Disorder. And which Israel are we? Elation and depression, highs and lows, virtues and vices, beauty and the beast. They are the human condition. Christians are no exception. We love God and we blame God. We are generous and we are stingy. Hopeful and despondent. Caring and hating. Sinners and saints. These things are in us all. Our community, too, is bipolar. There is so much that is so good about it; and so much good it neglects to do also. It still looks to the Church to teach and inspire, heal and care, advocate and liberate; all the while some are seeking that same church's extinction. The same community that says 'you can expect nothing good from those guys' is disillusioned when our Church falters. Palm Sunday is about the tension, even contradiction, in every human heart, every community, even the Church. The tension between the old Adam and the new – both fighting for and within each soul – the Adam of Genesis and the Jesus of the Gospels (cf. 1Cor 15:20-3,45-9; Rom 5:12-21).

Of course, both Adams were born without sin. Both had the gifts of intellect, freedom and love. Both were beloved of God. Each modelled the other. Yet in so many ways, Jesus is the inversion of Adam. If the first came from the earth, the second was from heaven. The one acceded to the Devil's lies, the other resisted such temptations. The former disobeyed God, whereas the latter was obedient, even unto death. Adam took from the tree, for his own ambition, while Jesus gave Himself to the tree, for our sakes. The one put on clothes, to cover his shame; the other shed His, so as to take on our shame. As St Paul taught, sin entered the world through the first Adam, salvation through the second; death through the former, resurrection through the latter. By the first was paradise lost; from the lips of the second we are promised "you will be with me in Paradise". Such contrasts are unsurprising, given that so much of Christ's mission overturned ordinary human expectations, moods and priorities. Today we saw this Messiah arrive, not on a glorious steed but a mere colt (Lk 19:28-40); His courtiers, not a select aristocracy, but a multitude of deplorables. This is Isaiah's suffering servant (Is 50:4-7 etc.), very different to the kings of the earth. And before He goes to His death, He reminds His disciples that, unlike any earthly politics, the greatest amongst them must act as the least, the leader be the one who serves (Lk 22:14-23:56).

Walking with Jesus, we've come to expect such inversions of power and expectations... and yet they are forever challenging. Ours is not a culture that valorises forgiveness, self-sacrifice, humility, obedience; no, it rewards indignation, self-serving, power and autonomy. But on Palm Sunday we recall that the One clothed in majesty and splendour assumed our nakedness, weakness, mortality. He is not the earthly kings and presidents who are autocratic, and authoritative who undermines the democratic votes of the people or to overturn elections to his own advantage. He doesn't need our vote. No! He is a humble suffering Servant and King of the universe who rules the world with love, equity, justice, forgiveness and compassion. That was why then, as St. Paul in his celebrated hymn, said that why God raised him up on high and bestowed on him the name which is above every name and made him Lord of "all beings in the heavens, on earth, and in the underworld". (Phil 2:6-11).

Every year, Palm Sunday – with all its shifts of mood and contrasting humanity – returns to unnerve us, subvert us, challenge us deeply. Whatever our present temper, it opens for us a holy week, in which grace transforms us more and more from the first Adam into the second; a week for stripping off the garments of our sins and laying them at the Lord's feet; a week to sing with all our voice, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!". Holy Week offers one more chance for us to plead "Jesus, remember me" and hear those wonderful words of absolution and hope: "Father Forgive them because they don't know what they are doing" and to the repentant thief, he assured him "Today you will be with me in Paradise". It is not wisdom that saves, rather ignorance, because if we knew what we were doing when we crucified the Lord, we wouldn't have been saved. And so, heaven was stolen by the repentant thief and heaven could be stolen again, if we can only repent. The Ethics of the Cross, the moral lessons for us is that 'renunciation' of the will to violence is the only remedy to the menace of the single victim mechanism. The innocent Jesus Christ was disposed not to retaliate even when He has the power as the Son of God. He understood the ultimate intention of the single victim mechanism to destabilize by causing confusion and unnecessary rivalry. It is a phantom unity of the crowd against the innocent Lamb of God. The mechanism has made the crowd to be united against Jesus Christ on the conviction that they are dealing with a social misfit. However, in reality, they hated Jesus Christ without reason. The Pharisees were searching desperately for evidence against Jesus Christ. It is useless resisting the angry crowd acting under the clutches of the single victim mechanism. The blood of the Lamb will testify for all the innocent victims beginning with Abel the just one. The cross of Jesus Christ has proved that the crowd does not have the final say. Rather than being united, the crowd left in sorrow after the crucifixion, leaving the mechanism exposed and paralyzed. For the very first time in the history of humanity, the mechanism failed. Jesus Christ tasked us not to yield to any rivalry, revenge, and envy. The Holy Spirit assists us to see through the illusion of rivalry.