The Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated on the second, third and fourth Sundays of the month. The Pre-Baptism Class is held in the Church on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00PM. Please contact the rectory for an appointment with a priest.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated on Saturday from 12:30 to 1:30 PM or by appointment with a priest.

For the Sacrament of Matrimony contact the rectory for an appointment with a priest.

The Sacrament of the Sick is celebrated on the fourth Saturday of every month following the 8:00 AM Mass. To arrange a visit to a sick person by a priest, contact the rectory.
St. Barnabas the Apostle

Holy Week

Monday, March 21
6:30 AM  Frank Goldsmith III
9:00 AM  James B. Spillane  Ferdinand DeLuca
Patricia Fama  Raymond Beier
3:00 PM - 9:00 PM  Confessions in the Church

Tuesday, March 22
6:30 AM  Jack Burke
9:00 AM  Lynn Keating

Wednesday, March 23
6:30 AM  Anne Marie Prince
9:00 AM  Ralph Faiella

Thursday, March 24  Holy Thursday
Fr. Charles  9:00 AM  Morning Prayer
Fr. Adrian  3:00 PM  Children’s Service in Holy Family Chapel
Fr. Charles  7:30 PM  Mass of the Lord’s Supper

Friday, March 25  Friday of the Passion of the Lord
Fr. Francis  9:00 AM  Morning Prayer
Fr. Adrian  12 Noon  Stations of the Cross
Fr. Francis  3:00 PM  Celebration of the Passion and Death of the Lord Jesus
All Priest  4:15 PM  Confessions in the Church
Fr. Charles  7:30 PM  The Seven Last Words
Sung by the St. Barnabas Choir

Saturday, March 26  Holy Saturday
Fr. Adrian  9:00 AM  Morning Prayer
All Priests  10:00 AM - 12 Noon  Confessions in the Church
Fr. Adrian  7:30 PM  Easter Vigil

Sunday, March 27  Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
Fr. Francis  7:00AM  For the People of the Parish
Fr. Charles  9:00AM  Joseph Tavella
Fr. Francis  10:15AM  Edward Patrick Nallan
Fr. Adrian  10:30AM  Brian Dione
Fr. Charles  12:00 PM  (Church) Stephen Andrew Clifford
Fr. Adrian  12:00 PM  (Chapel) Armando Forte

We pray for our recently deceased
Almerico Parisi
John R. Morris

and those whose anniversaries occur around this time.
May they rest in peace

Bread & Wine
The Eucharistic Bread & Wine will be offered this week in loving memory of Jennie Picone from Angela Curro.

Mission Statement
Our parish is a vibrant and spirited Catholic Community. Through our Eucharistic worship and daily lives, we are strengthened by our liturgical and sacramental celebrations which are always at the heart of Catholicism. These solemn ceremonies help to shape the faith of children and adults alike. There are numerous opportunities for service that allow us to love one another as Christ commanded. May our Patron Saint, Saint Barnabas, whose name means Son of Encouragement, allow this community to be for you a faithful friend, a sturdy shelter and a treasure beyond price.
Holy Week brings to conclusion the last events of the life of Jesus on earth.

We begin with Palm Sunday which celebrates His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Today everyone receives a blessed palm to take home. The palm is then hung somewhere visible to be kept all year long as a sign of our welcome to Christ.

On Holy Thursday we celebrate the Last Supper of Jesus. At this supper he instituted the Eucharist. By washing his apostles feet he showed them that good leadership required service to others.

Good Friday is the passion and crucifixion of Christ. Suffering is part of our human condition. Jesus is a model of how we are to embrace and enter into the suffering we encounter. What would seem as a failure to many people, especially the Romans, is remembered and re-enacted. The liturgy and music on Good Friday helps us to walk with Jesus on this difficult path.

Holy Saturday is a day of quiet reflection and prayer. On that evening we celebrate the Easter Vigil which begins with the Easter fire. From total darkness we gradually move into the light as the readings lead us through salvation history to the Easter story. At the Easter Vigil we also welcome the adults who have been preparing to enter into the Christian community.

As we begin this Holy Week, maybe we can renew our Lenten promises. Is there a relationship that I had hoped to renew? Did I live up to a commitment to prayer? Do I have some unfinished business with God or others?

I invite you to come to St. Barnabas and celebrate the mystery of Easter this year.

Have a blessed Holy Week.

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The Seven Last Words of Jesus

By Theodore Dubois.

Taking time to meditate on the seven last words of Jesus is a traditional devotion during Holy Week. Here are the last words spoken by Jesus with their Scripture citations. You might want to read the passages from your Bible and then ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what meaning these words have in your life today:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
(Lk 23:34)

“Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”
(Lk 23:43)

“Behold, your mother!”
(Jn 19:26-27)

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
(Mt 27:46)

“I thirst!”
(Jn 19:28)

“It is finished!”
(Jn 19:30)

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”
(Lk 23:46)
Public opinion polls reveal some strange things about the opinions of the mass population.

We wonder how come some candidates ride so high? The reality is of course that one day you’re riding the crest of the public opinion wave; the next day the wave is well and truly broken and you’re the wipeout. Today’s rooster is tomorrow’s feather duster. Public opinion can be remarkably fickle.

On Palm Sunday the Jesus bandwagon is well and truly rolling and everybody wants to be on it. It has rolled through the Judean countryside for weeks and weeks and now it is approaching the end of its journey - Jerusalem, the holy city, the seat of power, the place where the Messiah would establish himself and rid the nation of its oppressors. Jesus certainly hasn’t said that he’s going to do that, but that’s the rumor, and by now he’s got enough enemies in Jerusalem that unless he’s planning something pretty big you’d reckon he’d know better than to walk in there.

But public opinion is on his side. Everyone is jumping on the bandwagon. The ticker tape is raining down. The people are singing and dancing and chanting “Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!” Placards are held high. Palm branches are waving. People are throwing their coats in front of him. Jesus is recording the highest opinion poll rating ever, knocking off even sliced bread.

But public opinion is a fickle, fickle thing. As we shall hear again on Friday, just a few days later the cry of the crowd has become a snarling call for blood. “Crucify him! Crucify him! Crucify him!” How could they be so fickle? How could they call for him to be crowned one day and crucified the next? Enthroned one day and crucified the next? Who are these people and how could they abandon him so easily?

Well we could go into all sorts of explanations about failed expectations, about how they had a certain sort of image in their minds about what sort of Messiah they wanted and how they weren’t prepared to accept a Messiah on different terms.

We could go into details about the complex power play that was going on and the way public opinion was being manipulated. We could talk about the psychology of crowd behavior and how people will get swept along in a mob mentality and do things that they would never do on their own with time to think about it.

We could explore all these things and more and all of them would yield up valuable information, all of them would contribute to our knowledge of what happened back then and how
and why. But as illuminating as it might be, I don’t think we need to do that. If we really want to understand how these people could sing Jesus’ praises one day and call for his death the next, I don’t think we need to look any further than ourselves. The contents of our own hearts and the quality of our own behavior. You see, my guess is that most of you are not that different from us, and I know a little of what I’m capable of.

I know that one day I can sing praises to Jesus, and walk by on the other side of the road as he begs for my help the next.

I know that I can be lost in wonder and praise at the mercy of God one day, and then turn around and make the most callous judgment of someone the next day, rejecting them entirely without showing that the grace I have been shown.

And I don’t think I’m alone. You see it’s easy to cheer for Jesus, to wave palm branches in Church and honor Jesus as Messiah and King of the Universe. But there’s a lot more to following Jesus than just cheering from the sidelines.

How could the crowds be so fickle? How could they cheer for Jesus one day and call for his blood the next? Perhaps they were just like us.

It’s a sobering realization, but don’t despair. This is not the end of the story.

On Thursday night we’ll pick up the story again and follow what happens to Jesus and to these people just like us. We’ll hear of him kneeling at the feet of people just like us and washing our feet and promising us that we’ll be a part of him.

And on Friday we’ll look in horror at the extent of what people just like us can do and we’ll hear him say for us, “Father, forgive them, they don’t know what they’re doing.”

And by letting the light shatter the darkness on Saturday night and through our visit to an empty tomb on Sunday morning, who knows what we might become?

**The Chrism Mass**

During Holy Week the bishop will bless sacred oils in the diocesan Cathedral at a special liturgy known as the Chrism Mass.

The oil of chrism is used during baptisms, confirmation, ordination and the consecration of altars. The oil of catechumens is used at the Easter Vigil. The oil of the sick is used to anoint people during the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. The oils are then distributed to the parishes for sacramental celebrations throughout the year.

As part of the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, the renewal of priestly promises was incorporated into the Chrism Mass. Please join other parishioners from around the Diocese at the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday at 11am in St. Agnes Cathedral, Rockville Centre.
Holy Week customs

**Palm crosses:** From medieval times, people have believed that blessed palms formed into the shape of a cross would protect them from danger. The easiest way to make a cross from blessed palms is to cut two pieces of the palm, arrange in the shape of a cross, put a thumbtack in the middle, and attach the cross to a doorway or a bulletin board. Check the Internet for directions on how to braid or weave palms into more decorative crosses.

**Housecleaning:** In many cultures the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week are designated as days for vigorous housecleaning in preparation for Easter. This custom probably evolved from the Jewish custom of ritual cleaning before Passover.

**Coloring eggs:** Decorating eggs was a pagan symbol of rebirth at springtime for the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Persians and even the Chinese. Christians adopted the colored egg as a symbol of new life which comes with the Resurrection.

**Visiting churches:** The custom of visiting several churches to say a prayer on Holy Thursday was a tradition that evolved from the practice of making pilgrimages to holy places.

**Blessing of Easter baskets:** In many cultures, families bring food that will be eaten on Easter Sunday to church in a basket for a special blessing on Holy Saturday.

**Easter lilies:** The tradition of buying Easter lilies during Holy Week for use as decorations in homes and churches came into practice in the 1800s. The white flower is a symbol of purity and new life that heralds the resurrection of Jesus.

**Confessions**
Monday, March 21st, 3:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Good Friday, March 25th at 4:15 PM
Holy Saturday, March 26th, 10:00 AM - 12 Noon

**Morning Prayer**
9:00 AM
Holy Thursday, Good Friday & Holy Saturday

**Stations of the Cross**
Good Friday at 12 Noon

**Sweet breads:** In many cultures, Holy Week was traditionally a time for baking sweet breads, cakes and pastries that would be served on Easter Sunday.

**New clothes:** From the time of the early Christians, the newly baptized wore white garments made from new linen. In medieval times, it became a tradition for people to wear new clothes on Easter Sunday, symbolizing the “new life” that comes with the Resurrection. In some places it was believed that bad luck would come to those who could afford new Easter clothes but refused to buy them.

**Holy Water blessings:** Some families bring holy water containers to Mass on Easter so they can bring home some Easter water, which is blessed during the Easter Vigil, to bless their homes.
Eagle Scout Project
Altar server and youth group member Thomas Ham is a member of Boy Scout Troop 285 and is currently working on his Eagle Scout project. Thomas’ project is to renovate the St. Barnabas Youth Group Room situated in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School. He is an active member of the Parish as well as the youth ministry program. His plan is to buy shelving for storage, replace the rug and the seating area (couches), purchase an entertainment center with television and a DVD player. The approximate cost of this project is $1,650. Thomas is asking for donations of money and materials. If you can help, please send checks payable to “Troop 285” and in the memo section note, “Thomas Ham Eagle Scout Project” to 332 Frederick Ave., Bellmore, NY 11710. Contact Thomas at 804-0012 or email thoham285@outlook.com with questions or donations.

Widow & Widowers Group
The Widow and Widowers will have their next luncheon on Wednesday, April 20th at 12:30 PM at the Oak Chalet on Bellmore Ave. in Bellmore. The cost is $22 and payment should be sent no later than April 10th to Kathy Lowe at 945 Leeds Drive, N. Bellmore 11710. If you have any questions call Kathy at 785-3981.

St. Vincent de Paul
Help is available for low income families and the needy who have trouble paying their electric bills. You can contact PSE&G Long Island Advocacy at 454-4331. For more information call our parish social ministry at 785-6243. This week please pray for the poor and needy of the parish. Thank you.

Volunteer Drivers Wanted for Veterans
Nassau County will provide vehicles to transport residents to and from the Northport VA, East Meadow, Valley Stream and Hicksville Clinics. The hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM. Contact the Veteran’s Service Agency at 572-6526.

Save the Date
Supermarket Bingo, Friday, April 22nd; 7:00 PM. German-American Night, Saturday, April 23rd; 6:00 PM - 10:00PM. Details to follow.

Ban's of Marriage
Joseph Geary & Angelica Madero

Golden Wedding Jubilee Celebrations
Couples that have been married fifty years or more will be honored at liturgies on Sunday, April 10th at the Church of St. Lawrence the Martyr in Sayville and on Sunday, April 24th at the Church of Maria Regina in Seaford. Both liturgies will begin at 2:30 PM. Couples may register for ONE liturgy. Registration forms and complete instructions can be obtained at the rectory. Registration must be received by March 25th for the April 10th liturgy and by April 8th for the April 24th liturgy. If you have any questions call 678-5800 ext. 207.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend
Spring Into Love! It’s time to renew your relationship. Rediscover your love and enhance your hopes and dreams. April 29th - May 1st at The Montfort Spiritual Center, 26 South Saxon Ave., Bay Shore and June 10th - 12th at The Seminary of The Immaculate Conception, 440 West Neck Rd., Huntington. Space is limited. For more information about the weekends, or to apply call 1-877-697-9963 or visit the website at www.wwme.org.
The Week at a Glance

Sunday:
7:30 PM  Al-Anon Meeting, School Cafeteria

Monday:
3:00 PM - 9:00 PM Confessions in the Church
8:00 PM  Charismatic Prayer Meeting, Holy Family Chapel

Tuesday:
6:00 PM  Holy Thursday Family Liturgy Practice, Holy Family Chapel
7:00 PM  Family Music Practice, Holy Family Chapel

Holy Thursday:
3:00 PM  Holy Thursday Children’s Service, Holy Family Chapel
7:30 PM  Mass of the Lord’s Supper, Church

Good Friday:
12:00 PM  Stations of the Cross, Outside
3:00 PM  Passion of Our Lord
4:15 PM  Confessions in the Church
7:30 PM  The Seven Last Words by Theodore Dubois sung by St. Barnabas Choir

Holy Saturday:
10:00 AM - 12 Noon Confessions in the Church
7:30 PM  Easter Vigil, Church

Financial Reports
Weekend Collections
3/15/15:  $16,478
3/13/16:  $15,105

Parish Families Registered 5,005
# Envelopes Mailed 1,463
# Envelopes Used 695
# Envelopes 3/15/15  594

2016 Catholic Ministries Appeal
Goal Amount:  $107,900
Total Pledged:  $57,528
Total Received:  $32,392
Total # of Donors:  286

Rice Bowls
Please return your Rice Bowls to the Church or Rectory.

Year End Contribution
Call the Rectory to receive a contribution statement for 2015.
**Part-Time Bookkeeper Wanted**
The Diocese of Rockville Centre seeks a financial professional to work with select parishes and schools within Nassau County. Must be an experienced bookkeeper with knowledge of computerized accounting systems, bank reconciliations and account analyses. Proficiency in Excel and Word required.

**Tabor Retreat Center**
Habits of Resilience, Sunday, April 17th, 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM. Discover and reclaim in the “between time”...hope, trust and gentle acceptance of loss, change, detours and the GPS of life moment...smile and “recalculate”.

**Mary’s Heart of Love**
Sunday, May 15th, 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM. Come and share how the love of Mother Mary touches our hearts in the “deeper ever ways”. The donation for each retreat is $20. The presenter for both retreats is Sr. Ave Clark, OP a Dominican Sister of Amityville. Please call 536-3004 to register.

**Faith On Tap**
Faith on Tap is an open forum engaging young adults in straight talk and honest answers to questions of faith and where young adults can meet others who are also living out their faith. We are honored to have with us Brother Timothy Driscoll, a Marianist Brother of the Province of Meribah and an educator for the past 35 years teaching in Chaminade High School and Kellenberg Memorial High School. Brother Tim is a dynamic and enthusiastic speaker. In light of the Year of Mercy, Brother Tim’s topic for the evening is: “The Art of Mercy” Rembrandt’s Return of the Prodigal Son.” Bringing together his passion for art and drawing young people closer to Christ, this is a talk you don’t want to miss. Faith on Tap will be at the Wantagh Inn, 3264 Railroad Avenue, (across the street from the Wantagh RR Station) on Monday, April 11th. The talk begins at 7:30 PM, doors will at 7:00 PM. – Come early, have something to eat – meet new friends, catch up with old ones. Questions or for more information, email Marianne Sheridan at msheridan @drvc.org.

**The Long Island Catholic Magazine**
In the March edition you will read about how women who have had an abortion are experiencing God’s mercy through special retreats conducted by the Sisters of Life here in our own diocese. Bishop Murphy reflects on the process for selecting a new shepherd. Read about ways to celebrate the Easter Triduum with your family and so much more. Please support the monthly magazine of the Diocese of Rockville Centre - Subscribe today. One year of 10 issues for $20. Sign up today online at licatholic.org or call 1-800-443-2155.

**Life Center Chinese Auction**
Support the Life Center on Sunday, April 10th; 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM at Our Lady of Grace Parish, Fr. Patrick Shanahan Hall, 666 Albin Ave., West Babylon. Admission is $13 or 2 for $25 and includes Pasta Dinner/Beer, Wine, Soda. Auction tickets sold separately. Tickets available at the door. Call 798-9100 for tickets and information.

**Naloxone Training Program**
On Thursday, March 31st, from 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM at Brookside School, 1260 Meadowbrook Road, North Merrick, learn overdose facts and statistics, recognize the signs and symptoms of Opioid abuse and how to identify & prevent an overdose. Learn how to administer the antidote Narcan. Registration is required: http://goo.gl/forms/Tok0GGlz9W.

**Bereavement Counseling and Support**
Curé of Ars will hold a 7 week session on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM in the Rectory Lower Level on April 13th, 20th, 27th, May 4th, 11th, 18th. A closing Mass will take place on Thursday, May 26th in Msgr. Leonard Hall. Register in advance by calling 623-1400 est. 175.
**US Army:**

**National Guard:**

**US Navy:**

**US Marines:**

**US Air Force:**
Capt. McLean G. Bethea, Nicholas P. Wright, Rev. Major Timothy Hirten

**US Merchant Marine:**
Lt. J.G. Eric Stumpel.

**US Coast Guard:**

**US Peace Corps**
Patrick Coons

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**Remember your loved ones, living and deceased, at Easter by having Easter flowers on the altar in their honor. The offering is $15. To arrange for this, fill out this form and drop it off at the rectory or in the collection basket.**

Easter flowers in memory of:

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**We Pray for the Sick**

Nicoletta Russo, Meghan Alice Roach, Debbie Cain, Stephen Rich, Patrick Hoynie, Rosemary Grandwilliams, Barbara Cannon, George Donohue, Lillian Rocco, Pat Simone, Don Davis, Louis Romano, Kristin O’Halloran, Patricia Merget, Mildred Scalesi, Rita Lemma, Mary Grimes, Donald Grimes, Jacob Daniel Haubeil, Damon Capobianco, Eugene Ryan, Carol Chiasera, Francis G. Noonan, Terri-Ann Clarke, Charlie Riiska, Natalie Martin, Patrick Clarke, Kevin Keegan, Jason Todhunter, John Nalick, Dolores Young, Corinne Capozzi, Barbara O’Neil, Diane LaBianca, Theresa Anselmo, John C. Hannan Sr., Clarence Anspake, Dr. Lawton Manderson, Terrie Manderson, George Stockerl, James P. Corliss, Jr., Vic Caliguiri, Lottie Smakowski, Dominick Schiavone, Nicole & Baby Ella McKernan, Raffaele Esposito, Joseph Fiumefredo & Rudolph Brochhagen
Are You Considering Becoming Catholic?

Are You A Catholic Interested In Being Confirmed?

Join Us For RCIA
The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, or RCIA, is a series of classes that present an adult exploration of the Catholic faith. RCIA is a chance for people to learn the basics of what it means to be Catholic, to ask their burning questions, and to seek ways to more fully open their lives to Jesus Christ.

RCIA is primarily for adults considering becoming Catholic and for Catholics who were never Confirmed. RCIA prepares men and women to make a conscious choice whether or not they want receive the sacraments of initiation offered by the Catholic Church (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation).

Each year men and women embark on an exploration of the Catholic faith. Together we witness to the fact that our search for God is a lifelong journey, a journey on which we make the most progress when we walk it with others and with intention.

When:
The RCIA group meets every Wednesday evening from September to Easter. This is the primary time commitment, and there may be other commitments depending on what part of the process you’re going through.

What:
Exploring The Catholic Faith

Who:
Non-Catholics & Catholics Together

How to Signup:
Call the rectory and leave a message for Terry Hubert.
Palm Sunday, March 20th - Children will participate in the entrance procession at the 10:15 Family Mass. Palms will be blessed and distributed after Mass.

Holy Thursday
Service for Children,
Thursday, March 24th,
3:00 PM Holy Family Chapel
Please join us for this moving service where children will reenact the Last Supper. Children ages 3 and up are invited to participate as followers of Jesus. Practice will be held on Tuesday, March 22nd at 6:00 PM in the Holy Family Chapel.

If you are interested in participating please contact stbarnabasfamilyliturgy@gmail.com or sign up after the 10:15 Family Mass.

Easter Sunday, March 27th - Following the 10:15 Family Mass small bottles of holy water will be available to take home.

Paper hearts will be available for children to color and complete, filling in how they will open their heart to Jesus during Lent. Each Sunday at the 10:15 AM Family Mass, children can present their completed hearts in the Offertory Procession. These hearts will then be placed on the cross with hopes of being transformed for Easter.
Hi Everyone,

Palm Sunday starts such an important week for us as Christians! Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday. Jesus comes into Jerusalem celebrated by the crowds. Within days they turn on him and will allow him to be killed. How do we do that in our lives?

I think we see that in schools all the time. It’s easier to follow the crowd sometimes than to stand up for what’s right. Even Peter did that when he denied Jesus. So what can you do?

This spring there are some great new movies in theaters like “The Young Messiah” that are great positive movies. Why not see them with friends? I think sometimes we come to Church on Sundays and forget to live it through the week.

This week, let’s try to live our faith all week and attend the Holy Week services that are held here at St. Barnabas. It will definitely be worth it!

Have a blessed week!

Peggy

If you are a teen or an adult who might enjoy working with our middle schoolers, maybe you would like to be a part of our Core team! Email Peggy for information!! We need you!

St barnabas youthministry@gmail.com

All Level 7 families will receive a letter explaining the Level 7 Welcome Ceremony that will be taking place during ALL Masses on Saturday, April 16th and Sunday, April 17th.

There are several Communion Dresses that have been donated, many with tags, as well as gently worn boys suits. If you would like to see the clothing contact the Office of Christian formation at 785-0130.

Important Dates

Confirmation will be held on Monday, May 23rd - parents/students should have received a letter with the time of their Mass as well as the rehearsal information.

NO CLASSES – March 21st through 31st – Easter Recess. Classes resume on Monday April 4th!

Monday, April 4th – Level 2 Parent meeting – The Eucharist - 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

Tuesday, April 5th – Level 1 Parent meeting- Conscience Formation – 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

Saturday, April 9th – Level 3 Reconciliation – 11:00 AM.

Please remember to check the Religious Education grade level calendars as well as the website to keep informed of class dates, as well as when classes are not in session, homework assignments, and requirements.

There are a few sweatshirts, jackets and miscellaneous items that are in our lost and found in the Religious Education Room in the school building. Please check when you bring your child to religious education class.
The Year of Mercy
Pope Francis on Holy Week

At the heart of this celebration, which seems so festive, are the words we heard in the hymn of the Letter to the Philippians: “He humbled himself” (2:8). Jesus’ humiliation.

These words show us God’s way and the way of Christians: it is humility. A way which constantly amazes and disturbs us: we will never get used to a humble God!

Humility is above all God’s way: God humbles himself to walk with his people, to put up with their infidelity. This is clear when we read the Book of Exodus. How humiliating for the Lord to hear all that grumbling, all those complaints against Moses, but ultimately against him, their Father, who brought them out of slavery and was leading them on the journey through the desert to the land of freedom.

This week, Holy Week, which leads us to Easter, we will take this path of Jesus’ own humiliation. Only in this way will this week be “holy” for us too!

We will feel the contempt of the leaders of his people and their attempts to trip him up. We will be there at the betrayal of Judas, one of the Twelve, who will sell him for thirty pieces of silver. We will see the Lord arrested and carried off like a criminal; abandoned by his disciples, dragged before the Sanhedrin, condemned to death, beaten and insulted. We will hear Peter, the “rock” among the disciples, deny him three times. We will hear the shouts of the crowd, egged on by their leaders, who demand that Barabas be freed and Jesus crucified. We will see him mocked by the soldiers, robed in purple and crowned with thorns. And then, as he makes his sorrowful way beneath the cross, we will hear the jeering of the people and their leaders, who scoff at his being King and Son of God.

This is God’s way, the way of humility. It is the way of Jesus; there is no other. And there can be no humility without humiliation.

Following this path to the full, the Son of God took on the “form of a slave” (cf. Phil 2:7). In the end, humility means service. It means making room for God by stripping oneself, “emptying oneself”, as Scripture says (v. 7). This is the greatest humiliation of all.

There is another way, however, opposed to the way of Christ. It is worldliness, the way of the world. The world proposes the way of vanity, pride, success… the other way. The Evil One proposed this way to Jesus too, during his forty days in the desert. But Jesus immediately rejected it. With him, we too can overcome this temptation, not only at significant moments, but in daily life as well.

In this, we are helped and comforted by the example of so many men and women who, in silence and hiddenness, sacrifice themselves daily to serve others: a sick relative, an elderly person living alone, a disabled person…

We think too of the humiliation endured by all those who, for their lives of fidelity to the Gospel, encounter discrimination and pay a personal price. We think too of our brothers and sisters who are persecuted because they are Christians, the martyrs of our own time. They refuse to deny Jesus and they endure insult and injury with dignity. They follow him on his way. We can speak of a “cloud of witnesses” (cf. Heb 12:1).

Let us set about with determination along this same path, with immense love for him, our Lord and Savior. Love will guide us and give us strength. For where he is, we too shall be (cf. Jn 12:26). Amen

Holy Week