

There's no Sin or Selfishness in Heaven!

Over the past month, we've offered to each of our registered Parishioners ...
3 beautiful Holy Cards. Did you receive them?

The First item, mailed with your Annual Statement of contributions to the Church,
was a **4 x 6 laminated color image of Jesus crowned with thorns ...**
with a beautiful Prayer to the **Suffering Jesus on the back**

I display mine in a clear plastic frame on my Desk at the Office.

Where did you put yours?

Is it somewhere that you can see it every day during Lent ...
and maybe whisper the prayer on the back?

The Second item was a **2" x 8" laminated Bookmark** that was offered to you after Mass along with the purple paperback book by Matthew Kelly entitled, "Rediscovering Jesus" ... with its 40 reflections for the 40 Days of Lent.

I keep mine in my book to mark my progress day by day! It lists the 7 Last Words of Jesus as He hung upon the Cross ... and they make for great meditation.

Where do you have yours? Is it there in your book? Are you reading your book?
Is it somewhere that you can see it every day during Lent ...
and contemplate Jesus' Last words on the front and back?

The Third item mailed with my Letter and your blank Tithing Pledge Card ...
was a **3-1/2" x 6-1/2" laminated color image of the Prodigal Son ...**
being embraced by his father ...
with a Listing of the Works of Mercy on the back?

I keep mine with me in my Day-Timer and refer to it often reminding myself of ...
the **7 Corporal Works of Mercy** and the **7 Spiritual Works of Mercy.**

Where do you keep yours?

Do you carry it with you?

Do you make it a point to look at it daily to learn the Works of Mercy?

Indeed, we've given you 3 nice tools to help you make this a fruitful Lent.
And in **Pastor's Desk** last week, I offered you 2 mo. free use of "Formed" s/w.

Are you using any or all of these tools?

Tools are only helpful if you use them ... left lying on the counter they do nothing.

Having the right tools can make the job before us easier.

Having a flashlight or the right screwdriver or some WF-40 can make a big job possible and even pleasurable.

So, the Church is offering us a variety of wonderful tools to pick from to make the job before us ... which is turning away from sin and being faithful to the gospel ... possible ... and even pleasurable.

All of us need to do this ... and so, the Church carves out a special 40 day period in which to get it done. It's called Lent .. and it is placed right before our celebration of Easter ... the day that marks Jesus's victory over sin and death.

**If we spend our Lent in a worthwhile way ...
then Easter Sunday will mark not only Jesus' victory ... but our victory too!**

You may say, "Well, I'm baptized, I'm a child of God, what more do I need to do?"

St. Paul speaks to this today, pointing out that salvation is not solely dependent on receiving Baptism ... but also on living out our Baptismal promises.

Yes we're made children of God by Baptism ... but what kind of children are we?

Are we being good children or bad children?

Are we reflecting the generosity of God or the selfishness of man?

So there's two things to consider ... sin and selfishness ... are we avoiding them?

St. Paul speaks about the Chosen People of the Old Testament, noting that:

- they **all** ate the same spiritual food, (manna from Heaven), and
- they **all** drank the same spiritual drink (water from the rock), and yet he says:
"God was not pleased with most of them."

Ouch, here they were... doing the right things ... but they were also sinning too!

For this **Paul** says, "They were struck down in the desert."

Paul goes on, *"These things happened as examples for us, (who are baptized into Jesus Christ), so that we do not desire evil things as they did."*

He emphasizes, *"These things have been written down as a warning to us."*

Why would Paul be sending a warning to baptized Christians?

Because they were acting like the chosen people of the Old Testament and figuring that just because they were marked for God they could go and sin.

Wrong!

Being marked for God in Baptism, is **all the more reason** to turn away from sin.

Baptism is God's gracious gift; not some magic ritual that assures us of Heaven.

Rather, Baptism bestows adoption into God's family ...
and prepares us with God's Holy Spirit ... for the work of
serving God and neighbor in this life so as to merit Eternal Life.

If all you had to do to get to Heaven was be baptized,
then why in each of **Paul's 13 Letters** in the **New Testament,**
(all of which were directed to baptized Christians),
did he warn them to turn away from sin and bear fruit for the Lord?

It's because, **while Baptism is essential for Heaven ... more is required.**

Baptism brings us into God's family and makes us a new creation in **Jesus Christ.**

But then ... we have to ... avoid sin and live for Him!

Sin distorts our resemblance to God.
Mortal Sin breaks our connection with God.

If we die in Mortal Sin, our **destiny** will be **hell ...**
which means eternal punishment and eternal separation from God.

This can happen ... even to the Baptized!

Jesus says twice today, "*If you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!*"

This side of eternity, **Jesus** is **Savior.** **The other side of eternity,** **Jesus** is **Judge!**
Now is the time to go to Him; **while we're still alive,** trusting what the psalmist said:
"He pardons all your iniquities, he heals all your ills.
He redeems your life from destruction, he crowns you with kindness and compassion."

Lent is **the time** to examine our souls ... to identify and admit of our sins ...
and **then** to repent and make amends with God **while we still have time.**

For us Catholics, that means going to Confession.

That gives us a great new beginning!

Lec. # 30C – 3rd Sunday of Lent!

But there's more! Yes more!

Fr. Michael Deering – Sunday, February 28, 2016

**You see, “committing sin” isn’t the only thing that can keep us from Heaven ...
“not bearing fruit in our lives” will also keep us from entering **Heaven**.**

I call it **S & S ... Sin & Selfishness** ... **neither of these** are found in **Heaven**
and so ... **if we have either of them ... they will keep us out** of Heaven!

Today, **Jesus** tells **the parable** of a person who planted a **fig tree** in his orchard ...
and **when** he came searching for fruit and found none, he said, “*Cut it down.*”

**Well, Jesus planted His Holy Spirit in each one of us on the Day of Baptism,
And when He calls us to Himself ... He will be looking for fruit.
If He finds none, He will say the same words ... “*Cut it down.*”**

So, the question is: Are we living our lives for Jesus ... or for ourselves?

How would you answer that?

To help you see **if you’re living for Jesus** or **for yourself**, just ask yourself
how well are you performing the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

That will tell you if you’re bearing the kind of fruit that **Jesus is looking for!**

Are you living for yourself ... or for Him?

Are you leaving this world a better place for having been here?

Are you a bearer of good fruit ... or just a **taker** ... simply looking out for #1 and
the heck with everyone else ... **focused on your enjoyment**, your **satisfaction** and
your **pleasure**. playing crosswords & video games; watching TV and Videos, doing
and following your sports and hobbies and generally wasting time on yourself?

That’s not bearing fruit for Jesus! That’s not building up His Kingdom on earth!

**Ask yourself: How many people have you sponsored through RCIA? How many
people have you even talked to about RCIA? How many **new people** have you
brought with you to Sunday Mass? How many have you even invited to Mass?
How many people have you introduced to Jesus?**

How many people have you invited to come to or come back to the Faith?

These are the things that matter to Jesus ... that’s what *bearing fruit* means to Him!

Yes, the Birthright to Heaven ... that you received at Baptism ... can be lost!

Hell is real and we need to take our salvation seriously.

Sin & selfishness can prevent us from entering Heaven.

Yes, even though we are baptized Christians, and **even though** we claim Jesus as Lord, and eat the same spiritual food (the **Bread of Life**) and drink the same spiritual drink (the **Blood of Christ**)... like **the people of old** ... we're still susceptible to falling away from God & into Hell. **Paul** warns us of this today saying, *“Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall.”*

Let's contemplate Jesus' strong reminders ... **Repent and Bear Fruit!**

And as we approach the mid-point of Lent, let's make amends with the Lord now!
Now is better than ... the tomorrow ... that may never come.

Now is the time to take the time to confess your sins & make amends with the Lord.
Now is the time to bear fruit and start living for the Lord.