



# HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC CHURCH

## DIOCESE OF TYLER

1612 S FM 2869  
 HOLLY LAKE RANCH, TX 75765  
 WEBSITE: HOLYSPIRITHOLLYLAKE.COM

### Celebration of the Mass

Saturday 5:00 pm  
 Sunday 9:00 am  
 Monday 6:00 pm  
 Tuesday 9:00 am  
 Wednesday 9:00 am  
**Thursday 9:00 am**  
**Communion Service**  
 Friday 6:00 pm

### Adoration

Tuesday 9:45 am - 12:30 pm  
 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

### Reconciliation

Saturday 4:00 - 4:45 pm  
 Sunday Before Mass  
 (upon request)  
 1st Friday 5:00 - 5:45 pm

### Sacrament of the Sick

Offered the first weekend of the month during each Mass

### Marriage or Baptism

Contact the parish office six (6) months prior to the anticipated date

### Church Staff

**Pastor:** Reverend Timothy John Kelly, STL, D. Min.  
 lismakera@gmail.com 903-330-9142  
**Deacon:** Deacon John Erdag  
 jerdag@hotmail.com 949-285-5695  
**Office:** Bridget Rich  
 holy.spirit2@yahoo.com 903-769-3235

### Church Organizations

Financial Council	Charlie Clymer
Virtus	Justin Mahaffey
Knights of Columbus	Michael Jernigan
4th Degree Knights	Gary Laudt
Legion of Mary	Marge Clymer
	Jane Bidlack
Food Pantry	Bryan Todd
Music Ministry	Cathy Ellis
Rosary Makers	Carol Szczepanski
Cenacle of Life	Vicki Hauck
Welcome Committee	Anna Parker
Bereavement Committee	Eva & Jess Corrigan



Second Sunday of Lent  
 February 25, 2024

### TODAY'S READINGS

1ST READING: GN 22 : 1 - 2, 9A, 10 - 13, 15 - 18  
 2ND READING: ROM 8 : 31B - 34  
 RESPONSORIAL: PS 116 : 10, 15 - 19  
 GOSPEL: MK 9 : 2 - 10

## Second Sunday of Lent



### Pope's February Intention

**For the terminally ill. We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.**



#### Remember the sick of our parish:

Harry Needham. Eva Corrigan. Lupe Leal. Jo Hoffman. Jason McCormick. Eloise Sanchez. John & Mary Ott. Linda Hedgecock. Juan & Barbara Delgado. Elizabeth Eagan. John Buchanan. Dale Boman. Avery Boultinghouse. Fr. Lawrence Love, Bishop Joseph Strickland, Fr. Mark Kusmirek. Rosemary Seltzer. Elaine March. Mike Jernigan. Libby Paladino. Jo & Doris Hoffman. Roy Marchak. Emly Walker. Jim Hickey. David Borel. Verna Sloan. Mike Stephens. Kathy Bowers. John McGrane. Msgr. Ron Diegel. Richard & Dottie Schuetz. John Fabitz. Jodie Woods. Wanda & George Duke. Jean Hamilton. Kathleen Fleming. Jaye Anderson. Greg Mooney. Karee Haney. Charlie Parker. Jacob Stephens. We list the names of our sick Parishioners. Friends and Relatives for one month.

#### Remember the active military of our parish:

Ben Clymer, Air Force (Grandson of Charlie & Marge). Reid Patrick Hope, US Marine (Nephew of Mike Stephens). 1LT Joseph Chandler, U.S. Army (Nephew of Mike & Margaret Jernigan). Staff Sargeant, Natalie York (Daughter of Steve & Julie York). Lt. Gary Buchanan; Capt. Blake Gaughan; Lt. Will Corrigan (Great Nephews of Jess & Eva Corrigan). Paul Moreno E4 AMT 3rd Class (Grandson of Kathy & Dale Boman). Staff Sergeant Daniel Hodan. U.S. Army (Grandson of Ron & Barbara Eamma). Petty Officer 2 Rainer Hauck (Grandson of Jerry & Vicki Hauck & nephew of Jeff & Cathy Ellis).



### Special Observances

**Monday:** St. Gregory of Narek Abbot, Doctor of the Church (Armenian mystical and lyrical poet, abbot, and theologian; best known for his *Book of Lamentations*, a major work of mystical literature)



### Mass Intentions

**Sat 2/24** Wanda Stephens+ (Mike Stephens)  
**Sun 2/25** Msgr. John Flynn  
**Mon 2/26** Fr. Ben Smiley+  
**Wed 2/28** Msgr. Ron Diegel  
**Thurs 2/29** Mrs. Becky Snider+  
**Fri 3/1** Deacon Len Sanchez+

### PARISH SUPPORT

**Attendance:** 2/17 SAT: 77 2/18 SUN: 89

#### Collections from 2/17 - 2/18:

**Offerory** \$ 2,860.60  
**Building & Maintenance Fund** \$ 30.00

#### FEBRUARY SECOND COLLECTIONS

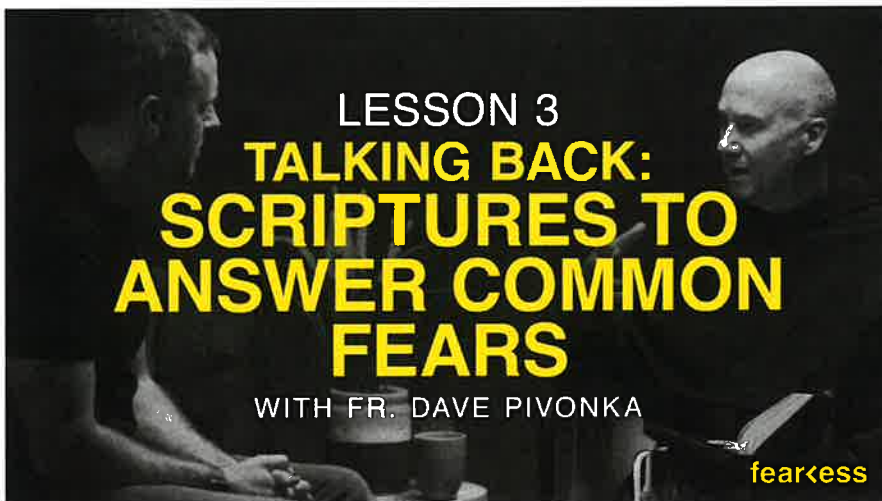
3rd & 4th: "Building & Maintenance Fund"

14th (Ash Wednesday): Church in Central & Eastern Europe

24th & 25th: Black and Indian Missions

**FORMED**

THE CATHOLIC FAITH.  
ON DEMAND.



## Talking Back: Scripture's to Answer Common Fears | Fearless | Episode 3

How can the Word of God help us face fear and win back victory from the Enemy's control? Chris continues his conversation with Fr. Dave Pivonka about how people of faith address fear. Scripture provides concrete ways to wield the power of God's Word against the fear of need, abandonment, vulnerability, condemnation, and more. Unlock the means for the Lord to free you from all fear.

Our parish has a FORMED subscription.

Visit [formed.org/signup](https://formed.org/signup) and select our parish.

Scan the QR code to download the FORMED app to your phone.



An offering from the AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE and agnoscere primum

### Lenten Time Changes

All Fridays (during Lent): Stations of the Cross will be conducted at 4:45 pm. Immediately following, Father will offer Mass (5:00ish pm). The Knights of Columbus will host their Fish Fry from 5:00 - 6:30 pm on Friday, Feb. 16th. Adults \$15.00 (Children under 5 yrs free) Tickets at the door.

### "For Lent For Life" (Operation Rice Bowl)

Each Lent, Catholic families across the country unite to put their faith into action through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Through CRS Rice Bowl, families support our sisters and brothers across the globe to overcome hardships like hunger and climate change. Through Lenten alms, we have the power to make the world a better place for all.

Pick up a family rice bowl (cardboard box) in the Narthex of the church. During the Lenten season collect your family's weekly change in the box.

Rice Bowls will be collected Holy Thursday.

The new Ministry schedule is attached..

## FEBRUARY UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sat 2/24: 5:00 pm Mass  
Sun 2/25: 9:00 am Mass  
Breakfast (burritos & fruit) will be served immediately following Mass (Free of charge)
- Mon 2/26: 6:00 pm Mass  
Tues 2/27: 9:00 am Communion Service  
Adoration 9:30 am - 12:30 pm  
Adoration 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
- Wed 2/28: 9:00 am Mass  
Thurs 2/29: 9:00 am Mass  
6:30 pm Liturgy of Healing and Praise

## MARCH UPCOMING EVENTS

- Fri 3/1: 4:45 pm Stations of the Cross  
5:00 pm Mass
- Sat 3/2: 9:00 am Communion Service  
Patriotic Rosary (following Communion Service)  
5:00 pm Mass
- Sun 3/3: 9:00 am Mass  
Knights of Columbus Breakfast  
\$5/person (Children through 12th grade are free)
- Mon 3/4: 6:00 pm Mass  
Tues 3/5: 9:00 am Mass  
Adoration 9:30 am - 12:30 pm  
Adoration 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
- Wed 3/6: 9:00 am Mass  
Thurs 3/7: 9:00 am Communion Service  
**6:00 pm Fundraiser Meeting**
- Fri 3/8: 4:45 pm Stations of the Cross  
5:00 pm Mass
- Sat 3/9: Rosary Makers Game Day  
Time: 10:00 am—2:00 pm (in St. Jude's Hall)  
Cost: \$15 (includes lunch)  
5:00 pm Mass



1. Holy Spirit Choir opening: The Church choir is looking for a new Music Director. This position will work with Father Kelly to select the weekly music for the Mass Celebration. This person will also conduct weekly choir practices. If interested, please contact Bridget Rich in the church office: 903-769-3235 or holy.spirit2@yahoo.com
  2. Holy Spirit Choir would like to invite parishioners to prayerfully consider joining our choir. Young or old or older are invited—if you like to sing, come join our fun-loving group! We do have weekly practices. We would like to expand our “band”; if any parishioners play instruments such as guitar, horn, or saxophone, please consider joining our choir, as well.
  3. Holy Spirit is in need of a volunteer to clean and polish some of our brass candlesticks and candelabras. If you are interested, please contact Ada Choate 318-787-3131 or ada\_choate1@outlook.com
- Many thanks to Mary Jane Snodgrass who has begun working on this massive undertaking, however, we still need additional polishers! Contact Ada at the abovementioned information.



## Holy Spirit Food Ministry

Our Food Ministry is ready to meet the challenges of feeding the hungry again this year.

The cost of food has increased about 15% during the last year. We are asking for continued donations of canned meats, vegetables, pasta, fruit, peanut butter, jelly, etc. Please place dry goods in the bin near the church office. Monetary donations can be made by using the Food Ministry donation envelopes in the Narthex and being placed in the collection baskets or dropped off in the office.

We are always looking for volunteers. You might be surprised as to how many parishioners it takes to run this ministry. Please call Robert Mailliard (503-559-6022) or Bryan Todd (972-672-4218) if you have any questions. Also if you know anyone that needs help, contact us.

**PLEASE HELP US FEED THE HUNGRY IN OUR COMMUNITY**

*From the desk of: Fr. Kelly*

## **EVENING OF HEALING AND PRAISE (NOCHE DE SANACION Y ALABANZA)**

The power of the Holy Spirit has often been misunderstood and ignored by Catholics. The Holy Spirit is the continuous power and fire within the Church.

Healing and Praise are fruits of the Holy Spirit. We hope we can all find spiritual, emotional and physical healing for ourselves and for friends. When we enter, we are invited to write a prayer for healing on a slip of paper. These prayers are taken up to the altar with the gifts during the liturgy. Our needs and our petitions are joined to the intentions of the priest at the altar.

In the course of the evening, the GOSPEL will be proclaimed. There will be time for CONFESSION, ADORATION of the BLESSED SACRAMENT and for the SACRAMENT OF THE SICK. We can receive prayer and blessing. We can then go to the prayer stations where a trained prayer team will pray with us, using the signs of salt and holy water.

Please join us for a  
**LITURGY OF HEALING AND PRAISE**  
THURSDAY - February 29, 6:30 pm.

**HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
1612 FM 2869 Holly Lake, Hawkins 75765

***Holy Spirit Ministries Schedule***  
***March 9, 2024 -June 30, 2024***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Ems</b>	<b>LECTORS</b>	<b>USHERS</b>	<b>SERVERS</b>	<b>ACOLYTES</b>
03/09/24	Sat	Bridget Rich	Dan Zenor	Jess Corrigan		Stan Evans
		Mike Laurel	Jeanette Sterner	Ed Baker		
03/10/24	Sun	James Cormier	Kim Sine	Ileana Suchta	Kaleb Seidel	Justin Mahaffey
		Ruddie Anderson	Lillian Speights	Jon Suchta		
03/16/24	Sat	Terri Evans	Rebecca Niebrugge	Shell Boudreaux		Brian Todd
		Jeanette Sterner	Melinda Hlavenka	Steve Boswank		
03/17/24	Sun	Ken Pregeant	Randy Munoz	Pat Bonneville	Zachary Ellis	Jeff Ellis
		Patsy Pregeant	Cindy Sue Erdag	Terrie Bonneville		
03/23/24	Sat	Diane Laudt	Bridget Rich	John Riggins		Charlie Clymer
		Rebecca Niebrugge	Mike Laurel	Bob Mailliard		
03/24/24	Sun	Nitja McGrane	Steve York	Ken Pregeant	Kaleb Seidel	Jerry Hauck
		Cindy Sue Erdag	Jane Bidlack	Ruddie Anderson		
03/30/24	Sat	Marie Hanson	Eva Corrigan	Jess Corrigan		Stan Evans
Vigil		Dianne Robinson	Kim Sine	Ed Baker		
03/31/24	Sun	James Cormier	Pat Bonneville	Ileana Suchta	Zachary Ellis	Justin Mahaffey
Easter		Ruddie Anderson	Lou Masferrer	Jon Suchta		
04/06/24	Sat	Bridget Rich	Dianne Robertson	Shell Boudreaux		Brian Todd
		Mike Laurel	Marie Hanson	Steve Boswank		
04/07/24	Sun	Ken Pregeant	Lillian Speights	Pat Bonneville	Kaleb Seidel	Jeff Ellis
		Patsy Pregeant	Kim Sine	Terrie Bonneville		
04/13/24	Sat	Terri Evans	Melinda Hlavenka	John Riggins		Charlie Clymer
		Jeanette Sterner	Rebecca Niebrugge	Bob Mailliard		
04/14/24	Sun	Nitja McGrane	Jane Bidlack	Ken Pregeant	Zachary Ellis	Jerry Hauck
		Cindy Sue Erdag	Steve York	Ruddie Anderson		
04/20/24	Sat	Diane Laudt	Jeanette Sterner	Jess Corrigan		Stan Evans
		Rebecca Niebrugge	Dan Zenor	Ed Baker		
04/21/24	Sun	James Cormier	Cindy Sue Erdag	Ileana Suchta	Kaleb Seidel	Justin Mahaffey
		Ruddie Anderson	Randy Munoz	Jon Suchta		
04/27/24	Sat	Marie Hanson	Mike Laurel	Shell Boudreaux		Brian Todd
		Dianne Robinson	Bridget Rich	Steve Boswank		
04/28/24	Sun	Ken Pregeant	Lou Masferrer	Pat Bonneville	Zachary Ellis	Jeff Ellis
		Patsy Pregeant	Pat Bonneville	Terrie Bonneville		
05/04/24	Sat	Bridget Rich	Cindy Sue Erdag	John Riggins		Charlie Clymer
		Mike Laurel	Eva Corrigan	Bob Mailliard		
05/05/24	Sun	Nitja McGrane	Kim Sine	Ken Pregeant	Kaleb Seidel	Jerry Hauck
		Cindy Sue Erdag	Lillian Speights	Ruddie Anderson		

**If you are unable to serve on your assigned date, please switch with someone else. Thanks.**

***Holy Spirit Ministries Schedule***  
***March 9, 2024 -June 30, 2024***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Ems</b>	<b>LECTORS</b>	<b>USHERS</b>	<b>SERVERS</b>	<b>ACOLYTES</b>
05/11/24	Sat	Terri Evans	Marie Hanson	Jess Corrigan		Stan Evans
		Jeanette Sterner	Dianne Robertson	Ed Baker		
05/12/24	Sun	James Cormier	Steve York	Ileana Suchta	Zachary Ellis	Justin Mahaffey
		Ruddie Anderson	Jane Bidlack	Jon Suchta		
05/18/24	Sat	Diane Laudt	Dan Zenor	Shell Boudreaux		Brian Todd
		Rebecca Niebrugge	Jeanette Sterner	Steve Boswank		
05/19/24	Sun	Ken Pregeant	Randy Munoz	Pat Bonneville	Kaleb Seidel	Jeff Ellis
		Patsy Pregeant	Cindy Sue Erdag	Terrie Bonneville		
05/25/24	Sat	Marie Hanson	Rebecca Niebrugge	John Riggins		Charlie Clymer
		Dianne Robinson	Melinda Hlavenka	Bob Mailliard		
05/26/24	Sun	Nitja McGrane	Pat Bonneville	Ken Pregeant	Zachary Ellis	Jerry Hauck
		Cindy Sue Erdag	Lou Masferrer	Ruddie Anderson		
06/01/24	Sat	Bridget Rich	Eva Corrigan	Jess Corrigan		Stan Evans
		Mike Laurel	Kim Sine	Ed Baker		
06/02/24	Sun	James Cormier	Lillian Speights	Ileana Suchta	Kaleb Seidel	Justin Mahaffey
		Ruddie Anderson	Kim Sine	Jon Suchta		
06/08/24	Sat	Terri Evans	Bridget Rich	Shell Boudreaux		Brian Todd
		Jeanette Sterner	Mike Laurel	Steve Boswank		
06/09/24	Sun	Ken Pregeant	Cindy Sue Erdag	Pat Bonneville	Zachary Ellis	Jeff Ellis
		Patsy Pregeant	Randy Munoz	Terrie Bonneville		
06/15/24	Sat	Diane Laudt	Dianne Robertson	John Riggins		Charlie Clymer
		Rebecca Niebrugge	Marie Hanson	Bob Mailliard		
06/16/24	Sun	Nitja McGrane	Jane Bidlack	Ken Pregeant	Kaleb Seidel	Jerry Hauck
		Cindy Sue Erdag	Steve York	Ruddie Anderson		
06/22/24	Sat	Marie Hanson	Jeanette Sterner	Jess Corrigan		Stan Evans
		Dianne Robinson	Dan Zenor	Ed Baker		
06/23/24	Sun	James Cormier	Lou Masferrer	Ileana Suchta	Zachary Ellis	Justin Mahaffey
		Ruddie Anderson	Pat Bonneville	Jon Suchta		
06/29/24	Sat	Bridget Rich	Melinda Hlavenka	Shell Boudreaux		Brian Todd
		Mike Laurel	Rebecca Niebrugge	Steve Boswank		
06/30/24	Sun	Ken Pregeant	Kim Sine	Pat Bonneville	Kaleb Seidel	Jeff Ellis
		Patsy Pregeant	Lillian Speights	Terrie Bonneville		

**If you are unable to serve on your assigned date, please switch with someone else. Thanks.**

Lenten Reflection Second week; Abraham and Isaac.

From Fr. Kelly

To God's Holy People at Holy Spirit

Grace and Peace.

I hope that you enjoy this reflection on next Sunday's Mass readings. Every year, on the second Sunday of Lent, the Gospel relates the Transfiguration as recounted in Matthew (2023), Mark (2024), and Luke (2025).

The Church has quite deliberately connected the accounts of the New Testament Transfiguration of Jesus on a mountain with Genesis stories of Abraham.

Last year we heard the call of Abram from Genesis 12. In this Sunday's reading (Year B) from Genesis (Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18) Abraham goes to Mount Moriah to slaughter his son Isaac as a holocaust on an altar. Next year, Year C (2025) we will listen as the covenant with Abram is proclaimed from Genesis 15.

## With Abraham on the Mountain



February 28, 2021

On this second Sunday of Lent, as every year, we hear the story of the Transfiguration, but during this year of Mark, it is juxtaposed with another story – that of Abraham's call to sacrifice Isaac. Actually, Abraham is associated with the Transfiguration every year, since Year A has the call of Abram from Genesis 12, and Year C has the covenant with Abram from Genesis 15. You might say that this is Abraham's day. I wonder why. On the mountain, the

transfigured Christ is seen with Moses and Elijah, two men whose peak experience was an encounter with the living God on Mount Sinai. Abraham is not mentioned, although his mountain experience was no less momentous. Peter could have built a tent for him too. I wonder why he didn't.

Perhaps a walk is in order, to trace with Abraham his path to the mountain, which is also ours, I believe. Abraham, father of a multitude, lived before there was a people, because he was to be its source. His life was spent wandering and worshiping, sustained by a series of promises. The long walk began in Ur of the Chaldeans, with a trek to Haran accompanied by extended family. From there God called him forth from country, kindred and his father's house to something more: a journey to Canaan, a promise of land, and a promise of paternity. We hear of Abraham's faith, but what of his patience? The father of us all spent most of his life landless and childless. He and his wife Sarah grew old in a land not theirs, Sarah's womb barren, and "himself as good as dead," as the letter to the Hebrews so delicately puts it (Heb 11:12). When at last he says to God: "You have given me no offspring," he is pointing out that in spite of all his wealth, he has no future and no hope of fulfillment (Gn 15:3). God invites him to look at the stars: "*So shall your descendants be*" (Gn 15:5). He will be looking up at those stars until the day he dies, waiting, hoping, believing.

Do not we, children of Abraham and followers of Christ, walk a similar road? Peter asked Jesus: "Lord, we have left everything and followed you" (Mk 10:28) – the implied question made explicit by Matthew: "What then will we have?" (Mt 19:27). Christ answers him with the promise of "a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields" (Mk 10:30). What could this mean? We who choose to follow Christ by the narrow way place our lives in God's hand, seeking its meaning in him alone. This does not mean we do not hope for good things. We do! We hope to receive everything from him. Everything: all the necessities of life, as well as companionship, meaning, purpose, direction for our energies, reward for our labors, present happiness and a future full of hope. This is our hundredfold, and we expect to get it! And yet, having heard the call and taken up our journey into the unknown, we may wait a long time and wander a long distance before finding what we are looking for. Our lives of discipleship may take us through barren places without much sustenance or foreign lands where we do not speak the language and misunderstand the customs. I am speaking of seasons of life in which we do not experience the rewards of discipleship, but only its cost.

After yet more years of wandering, Abraham is again promised land and progeny, and this time, prostrate on the ground, he laughs. Sarah laughs too, though she has trouble admitting it. But the laughter of Abraham and Sarah is soon to be realized in flesh and blood. Laughter comes into their lives after they have almost stopped hoping for it, with

the birth of their son Isaac.

We too, have laughter come into our life. What is Isaac for us? Isaac is the sense we sometimes have that God has received our offering and blessed it. That he is actively bringing good into the world through us, through our efforts, our gifts, our presence. Isaac is our fruitfulness, our fecundity, our generativity; he is everything we hoped for from the Lord when we gave him our lives. Our children are not of flesh and blood, but they do come to us in real, tangible ways through things, events, and people.

Then comes the day when God again calls Abraham to something more, but this time the “more” seems to be a total contradiction of all that has gone before. He is to sacrifice his son, his only son whom he loves, in whom are to be fulfilled all God’s promises: Isaac. What is striking about Genesis 22 is that every detail of the journey to Moriah and the preparation for the sacrifice is so carefully rendered, and yet not a word is said about Abraham’s inner state. He just goes and does what is asked. We may fail to notice this spareness because we find it so natural to fill in the feelings and the inner turmoil imaginatively. Perhaps this is because we know well the road to Moriah.

How can Isaac be sacrificed? How can it be that God takes away his gifts and nullifies his promises? How can God even ask us to wield the knife ourselves? We may have to give up a job that provides meaning and a sense of competence, or a relationship that supports and enlivens. An ability or talent that once allowed us to shine is now diminished or must be set aside for some reason. A once clear conviction about the meaning, purpose and direction of our life is obscured, even obliterated by a cloud that comes out of nowhere. It could be the loss of faculties, the failure of health or finally even the threat to life itself. Keep death daily before your eyes, says St Benedict, but for all my bursts of fervor, I have no idea if my last walk to Moriah will be undertaken willingly, bearing the fire and the knife, or perhaps the wood on my shoulders.

I do not know why the Church places Abraham before our gaze on Transfiguration Sunday in Lent each year. But what I do begin to see is that Abraham’s long journey evoked in him an exquisite knowledge of the Father’s heart. All those decades of waiting, longing for fatherhood brought him to the point where he could not let go of God, no matter how mysterious and seemingly contradictory his deeds. As the letter to the Hebrews puts it: “he considered him faithful who had promised,” to the point where: “He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead” (Heb 11:11, 19). Abraham had never seen the face of Christ, and did not know any better than the disciples, or any of us for that matter, what rising from the dead meant. But he did see Isaac, the impossible gift of God, in flesh and blood before him: his hundredfold. And he did believe, hoping beyond hope,



that the author of life would never revoke his gift.

If we find that we cannot let go of God, no matter what is taken from us, we too have learned something of the Father's heart. We may ask ourselves if it is really Isaac who is sacrificed – our life, our hope, our future – or something more superficial, just a symbol of our fruitfulness: a ram, perhaps. Like Abraham our father, we have a fruitfulness beyond our imagining, which is hidden in Christ. The Father's heart is moved by one who does not withhold his beloved son, because he, too will not withhold his Beloved Son, his all, from us. On the mountain, he shows us the face of his Son, saying:

“Here is my Isaac, my beautiful one, my Beloved, whom I give you as yours, who will lay down his life for you. For love of you, I will lose my Isaac to the depths of hell. By mutual consent, we will be lost to one another, we whose bond of love is stronger than any human bond, of which the love between parent and child, husband and wife, brother and sister is only a shadow. On the third day I will reach down to the depths into which he has fallen and grasp my Son's hand. I will draw him out of death, and all creation with him. Then, with faces unveiled, you will see the glory of God, shining on the face of Christ.”

This reflection was written by a sister of the Cistercian Trappist monastery in Boston, Mass. The website does not name the sister who wrote the reflection.

*Image: Abraham and Isaac on the Way to the Place of Sacrifice, by Marc Chagall*

## “Put to the Test”

By Deacon John

*“God put Abraham to the test.” – Genesis 22:1*

The very first verse of today’s First Reading is from the Book of Genesis: “God put Abraham to the test.” Why did God test Abraham? Well, it was for Abraham’s own sake. God knew how great his trust was in Him, but Abraham had to reveal it to himself. Isn’t that what Lent is about for us, too? God knows our faith in Him, too, but we need to reveal it to ourselves. To put ourselves to the test. That’s what we do during Lent.

During Lent, we’re tested to use this time in deep reflection, repentance, and prayer. The first step is to reflect on the things we have and on the things we need to change. We review our love for God, and how much we have Him in our lives. We examine ourselves and recognize the recurring sins that we’re constantly fighting; the same ones that we’re always bringing to Confession. Those challenges that keep us from putting Christ first in our lives.

Then comes our repentance; humbly and contritely seeking forgiveness for those things, and consciously acting to remove them from our lives. That can be an extremely difficult thing to do. If these are the sins that have been tripping us up for years, how do we expect to rid ourselves of them in 40 days? It goes back to Abraham and his trust in God, and the trust that we should have in Him, too.

That trust is explained in our second reading as it tells us that if God “handed his Son over to us all, how will He also not give us everything else along with Him?” If God is willing to give us the ultimate gift of His Son, how can we not trust that He will give us everything else? How can we not trust in His help to relieve ourselves from our burdens that separate us from Him?

Don’t worry if it doesn’t happen overnight. Building true, sincere trust is not something we can just turn on like a light switch. But that’s the test. That’s where our Lenten prayers come in strong. Ask Him to help you build that trust. Talk with Him frequently. Read Scripture; His word will reinforce His love for you and your ability to trust Him. Open your heart to let Him in. And during that time, ask for His help to rid you of that recurring sin. Then commit to Him that you will.

That’s the test we’re in. Reflection, repentance and prayer. We recognize that our Lenten journey is to continue to mature our trust in God and to unite His love with everything we do. Through awareness of what we should change, sincere repentance and willingness to make the change, and prayer diligence seeking His love, we will grow our trust in Him to help us make the change. We can make all the goals we want during this Lenten period, but like Abraham, the foundation of it all has to be built upon our trust in God.

Article for the Big Sandy-Hawkins Journal. 21 February 2024 Edition  
(Submission date: 15 February 2024) Submitted by Randy Munoz

St. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215 AD)

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/saint/st-clement-of-alexandria-688>

Dec. 4 was once the traditional feast day of an early Christian theological author whose legacy is controversial, but who is cited as a saint in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and has been described as such in several addresses of Pope Benedict XVI. The writer in question is Saint Clement of Alexandria, who led the city's famous Catechetical School during the late second century.

Clement is not always referred to as a saint in Church documents, and his feast day was removed from the Western liturgical calendar around the year 1600 due to suspicions about some of his writings. Eastern Christian traditions also seem to regard him with some reluctance. On the other hand, he is called "St. Clement of Alexandria" not only in the Catholic catechism, but also in the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

On Oct. 28, 2012, during his homily at the closing Mass for the Synod on the New Evangelization, Pope Benedict XVI made a notable public reference to him as "Saint Clement of Alexandria," as he has done elsewhere. On that occasion, the Pope concluded his homily with a long quotation from St. Clement. However, the title of "saint" was dropped during the Pope's earlier April 2007 audience talk on his life and writings. In that general audience, however, Pope Benedict described Clement as a "great theologian" whose Christ-centered intellectual vision "can serve as an example to Christians, catechists and theologians of our time." Nine years earlier, Blessed John Paul II had cited his pioneering integration of philosophy and theology in his 1998 encyclical "Fides et Ratio."

Clement's date of birth is not known, though he was most likely born in Athens, and converted to Christianity later in life. His intellectual curiosity prompted him to travel widely and study with a succession of teachers in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Eventually Clement settled in Egypt where he studied under Pantaenus, a teacher at the Catechetical School of Alexandria.

Located in a cultural and commercial center, Alexandria's Catechetical School played an important role in the development of theology during the Church's early centuries. Clement served as an assistant to Pantaenus and eventually became a teacher himself, taking a position of leadership in the school around 190. His theological writings circulated before the century's end, and he may have become a priest.

During the early third century, persecution against the Church prompted Clement to leave Egypt for Cappadocia in Asia Minor. One of his former students in that region, a bishop named Alexander, was jailed for his faith, and Clement stepped in to give direction to the faithful in Caesarea during their bishop's imprisonment. Clement died in Cappadocia in approximately 215. Clement and other Alexandrian teachers sought to express Catholic doctrines in a philosophically-influenced, intellectually rigorous manner. Later Church Fathers, especially in the Greek tradition, owed much to their work. But the school's legacy is mixed: Origen, one of its main representatives and possibly Clement's student, is associated with doctrines later condemned by an ecumenical council.

Three of St. Clement of Alexandria's works survive: the "Protreptikos" ("Exhortation"), which presents the Christian faith in contrast with paganism; the "Paedagogus" ("The Tutor"), encouraging Christians in the disciplined pursuit of holiness; and the "Stromata" ("Miscellanies" or "Tapestries"), which takes up the topic of faith in its relationship to human reason. In a passage of the "Protreptikos" quoted by Pope Benedict XVI at the conclusion of the Synod for the New Evangelization, St. Clement encouraged his readers: "Let us put away, then, let us put away all blindness to the truth, all ignorance: and removing the darkness that obscures our vision like fog before the eyes, let us contemplate the true God ... since a light from heaven shone down upon us who were buried in darkness and imprisoned in the shadow of death, (a light) purer than the sun, sweeter than life on this earth."