

February 18, 2024

From Father Kirby...

Happy Sunday, Team Grace! We are now in the holy season of Lent. This is a time for serious penance, as we seek to die to ourselves and live for the Lord Jesus. What is distracting you from the Lord? What is taking you away from a full adherence to the Gospel?

This weekend, our nation pauses to honor the early presidents of our country. We ask God to continue to pour out his blessings upon the United States of America.

The parish campus will be closed on Monday, February 19, in honor of Presidents' Day. There is no public Mass that day. All other activities are suspended. May God continue to bless the United States of America!

It's my great hope that many of you will choose to participate in our Diocesan Eucharistic Congress on Saturday, April 6. The parish is sponsoring buses for the event and will provide free polo shirts. [Here's the registration form](#). Please email or drop off the completed form to the attention of Ryan Kubic: rkubic@charlestdiocese.org.

Some things happening at the parish that I'd like to highlight this week:

During Lent, please note that the Church takes on certain penitential practices: the color violet is used; the "Gloria" at the beginning of Mass is paused; the "Alleluia" is suspended throughout the Mass; flowers and festive music are halted; and, here at our parish, we reduce our altar candles from six to two. All of these are external reminders to us of the penitential nature of Lent.

When our parish opened the doors of our church building over seven years ago, I agreed to two evening Masses on Saturday evening. We've held that schedule since then. Time, however, has proven that two Masses are not needed. *As such, starting Saturday, April 13, we're going to merge the two Masses into one Mass at 5:00 PM.* This arrangement meets both Mass groups in the middle and provides the option of a Saturday evening Mass, even though this is not preferred by the Church.

Starting on Saturday, April 13, we'll have Solemn Vespers at 4:00 PM on Saturdays. This is the preferred way to begin the Lord's Day. Everyone is encouraged to come and join in the Evening Prayer of the Church!

Confessions will still be heard from 3:00 – 3:30 PM on Saturdays.

This Tuesday - Wednesday, February 20-21, I'll be away giving a Parish Mission at Saint Columba's Parish in Dothan, Alabama. While I'm away, Father Morey will offer daily Mass and hear Confessions.

This Wednesday, February 21, at 5:30 PM, our weekly Stations of the Cross for Lent begin. All are welcome!

Deacon Tom Heath recently celebrated his first anniversary as a Deacon, and so for our adult Bible Study this Wednesday, February 21, at 6:30 PM, the Deacon will talk about the diaconate and his experiences as a deacon this past year. All are encouraged to come and hear the Deacon's testimony!

This Thursday, February 22, [Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers](#) will be visiting our parish. The Deacon will give a talk on *Building a Civilization of Love: A Catholic Response to Racism*. A sacred music concert will be offered at 6:30 PM. The Deacon will speak at 7:00 PM. A fellowship and book-signing will be held after the talk. Free copies of the Deacon's recent book will be distributed to those who attend the event. All are welcome!

Our next Prayer Outreach at the local abortion facility is next Saturday, February 24, at 8:30 AM. All parishioners are encouraged to come and join in this peaceful, prayerful protest against abortion. The facility is located at 3220 Latrobe Drive, Charlotte, NC.

Please note our [calendar for the program year](#) 2023/2024 is posted on our parish website. The calendar describes all our events and programs for the year.

Some other future events I'd like to highlight:

On Thursday, March 7, at 7:00 PM, author and social commentator [Noelle Mering](#) will give a talk on her book, *Awake, Not Woke!* All are welcome to come to the talk! A fellowship and book-signing will be held afterwards. Free copies of Noelle's book will be given to those who participate.

Some general announcements for the good of the parish:

On Sunday, March 17, from 2:00 – 4:00 PM, the parish will host a *Student Athlete Day of Reflection* for high school and college-aged student athletes. Dr John Acquaviva, an author and professor of exercise science, as well as a devout Catholic Christian, will lead the event. The event is free. Copies of Dr Acquaviva's books will be given to all participants. To sign up, please contact Charlie Petrizzo: cpetrizzo@charlestandiocese.org.

As we begin to prepare for our parish's participation in our Diocesan Eucharistic Congress, please note the following:

- Our First Friday Adoration on April 5 will conclude at Midnight.
- We will have no Confessions and no Healing Mass on First Saturday, April 6.
- All other First Saturday observances are suspended on April 6.
- Our Saturday evening Masses on Saturday, April 6, are suspended. We will not have Masses on Saturday evening, April 6, since the parish will be in Columbia for the Eucharistic Congress.
- Registrations have begun for our parish. Please see the notes above for information.

I'd like to encourage every household of the parish to register for [FORMED](#). This is a free digital platform with good Catholic, family-friendly content. I also want to strongly encourage every household to join [EWTN OnDemand](#), which is another free digital platform whose content is supportive of our faith.

As a reminder, our parish staff can be readily reached via email. [Here is the staff directory](#).

I'm very happy to announce that two Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia will be participating in the pilgrimage this summer to the [Great Shrines of France](#). The tour includes Lourdes, Lisieux (Saint Therese the Little Flower), the holy places of Paris, Nevers (Saint Bernadette), Paray-le-Monial (Sacred Heart Apparitions), Lyon, LaSalette, Ars (Saint John Vianney), and the Beaches of Normandy with a Mass at the US Foreign Cemetery. This is not a parish pilgrimage, but I wanted to make the parish family aware of the opportunity. The pilgrimage is a personal pilgrimage of mine and many people from different parts of the United States will be participating in it. *All are welcome!*

More updates next week! Oremus pro invicem (let's pray for one another)!

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Website: www.frkirby.com

Twitter: @fatherkirby

Radio Show: *Of First Importance*, [RadioMariaUS](http://RadioMariaUS.com)

Weekly spirituality column: <https://cruxnow.com/author/fr-jeff-kirby>

Daily Reflections available through MorningOffering.com.