

Saint Paul the Apostle Church

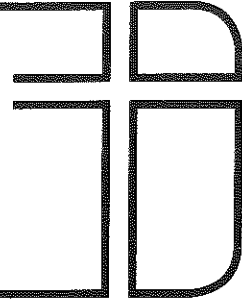
Conventual Franciscan Friars

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First Sunday of Lent
Sunday, February 21

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

May Almighty God give you his peace. Welcome to Lent. A season of healing, renewal, and grace for all. We have begun an annual privileged journey to draw closer to God and to strengthen our Sacred Communion as a Church. We began with the reception of Ashes on Ash Wednesday with important reminders. The first one is that we are sinners called to repentance and conversion through acts of penance primarily prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Secondly, we are reminded that we are human beings and will someday leave this earth due to bodily death. The ashes are a reminder of that from one of the forms used to apply them: ***“Remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return.”*** While that is true, we cannot allow sin to destroy and kill our souls which is why we have the other words of admonition ***“Repent and believe in the Gospel.”***

As we begin the first full week of Lent, we become aware of the fact that in less than six weeks we will find ourselves on a journey with Jesus as will be carrying the Cross. Having been called and challenged to repent and conversion, it is a good time to examine our consciences and see how we have sinned. May this examination of conscience lead to remorse for the times we have fallen short and a strong resolution to turn back to God and allow the Gospel which we have been called to believe in shape and form us on our Lenten journey.

Today’s readings focus on God’s covenant with humanity, meaning with all of us. In the aftermath of the Great Flood we received a fresh new beginning (***Genesis 9: 8 – 15***). The responsorial psalm reminds us of the benefits we receive by being faithful to that covenant ***“Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant” (Psalm 25)***. Peter expresses very well the effects of Baptism as a sign of that covenant saving us as the ark had saved Noah (***1 Peter 3: 18 – 22***). The Gospel finds Jesus in the desert and tempted by Satan, however, he rejected every temptation, the angels ministered to him and he moved forward with the beginning of his ministry calling us to ***“Repent, and believe in the Gospel” (Mark 1: 12 – 15)***.

My prayer for us is that when Holy Week and the Easter Triduum arrive nearly six weeks from now, we will express with great gratitude for what Jesus has done for us.

Now that we are back in the church for Mass and celebration of the Sacraments, let us keep in mind that the Covid-19 health and safety guidelines are still in place. Therefore, please take the following into consideration. At this time, only 100 people will be admitted into the church on a first come, first served basis per Mass. **BEFORE ENTERING THE CHURCH** your temperature will be taken and you must have a face mask on and continue to wear it the entire time you are in the church. The six feet of physical distancing is also to be observed at all times while inside the church.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF ANYONE IS ILL OR OVER THE AGE OF 65 WITH PREEXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS THAT COMPROMISE ONE'S IMMUNITY AND CONCERNED ABOUT BEING IN A LARGE GATHERING OF PEOPLE, THE DISPENSATION FROM THE SUNDAY MASS OBLIGATION IS STILL IN EFFECT AND WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

Our parish website <https://www.stpaulspismobeach.com> contains the most recent weekly bulletin, links to the Livestreamed Daily and Sunday Masses, as well as links to my weekly message to you, updates from Bishop Garcia and myself as they become available, and a safe user-friendly option for online giving.

If you need assistance with the online giving system, please contact our Parish Administrative Assistant Christopher Garza at admin@stpaulspismobeach.com as well at his direct telephone extension **(805)773-2219 Ext. 102**.

For those of you unable to make it to Mass at this time and wish to continue sending in your weekly contribution you may continue do so by the US Mail, dropping it off at the Rectory using the Rectory door mail slot, or using the online giving option described above. In order to keep an accurate record of your offerings, please include your weekly contributions envelope as well as write it on the check. No donation is too small and all are joyfully received with great gratitude.

May God bless you all today and always,



Fr. Jacob Carazo, OFM Conv.
Pastor