



Saint Wenceslaus Catholic Church

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Pastor*

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Lyceum

2100 E. Madison St.....410-675-3320

*St. Wenceslaus is "twinned" with St. Ann Church,
at Greenmount Ave. and E. 22nd St.
410-235-8169*

*Masses at St. Ann: Sunday – 9:45 a.m.
Thursday - 7:00 p.m.*

MASSES

SUNDAY
WEEKDAYS
HOLYDAYS

8:00 and 11:45 am
8:00 am
As announced in the bulletin

CONFESSIONS:

Please contact the parish office to schedule an appointment for confessions

DEVOTIONS:

Infant of Prague Novena - Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Novena - Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m.

First Friday Holy Hour for Vocations - 8:30 a.m.

BAPTISMS:

Adult candidates and parents of infants are invited to contact the pastor so that we can begin preparations for baptism.

MARRIAGE:

We extend a warm welcome to couples desiring to be married in the church. Please contact us early (six months or more) so that we can work with you to prepare for your wedding.

PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK:

Please notify the pastor when a member is unable to come to church. We will be happy to provide pastoral care at home or in the hospital.

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Sunday School classes for children and youth meet every Sunday in the Lyceum from 9:30 to 11:30A.M. To register call the church office or Ms. Edith Pumphrey, Director, at 410-488-7069.

PARISH MEMBERSHIP:

We urge you to register as a member of the parish, so that we can keep you informed of church activities. We will be happy to provide you with church envelopes to assist you in the support of the church. You may register in person at the church office weekdays between 9:00 to 2:00 or by completing the following form.

Name _____

Street _____

Phone _____ Zip _____

Check:

New Registration Moving out of Parish

Change of Address Want Envelopes

Catholic Review Yes No

Please cut out and drop in the collection box or mail to the rectory.

SAINT WENCESLAUS CHURCH
Eighth Sunday In Ordinary Time
February 26, 2017

From the Pastor . . .

My Sisters and Brothers:

The lessons of today's Scriptures speak of God's great love and care for his children; they also challenge his followers to trust God will always provide for their needs, and will never abandon them. In the first reading Isaiah compares God's love to the great love a mother has for her child, and he says it's even greater than that. He therefore proclaims that God can never forget his own. Isaiah's words were meant to give comfort and consolation to people in distress, and were focused on the themes of God's love, forgiveness of sins, and liberation. Of course, these ideas were very powerful when later reinterpreted by followers of Jesus. This is why I believe they serve to frame well today's Gospel admonitions emphasizing the need for complete trust in an ever-caring God. In the Gospel, this is precisely why Jesus instructed his disciples *"not to worry about their lives, to trust God would provide for their basic needs, to seek the kingdom of God and righteousness, and not to worry about tomorrow"* (cf. *Matthew 6:24-34*). These Scriptures revealed a God who loved and cared for his children more than they could have ever possibly imagined! And they challenged them to respond accordingly.

But what about reality? While we may long to hear the message of today's Scriptures, I'm sure all of us can think of affairs and events in our lives that *"bring us down."* Who among us hasn't had a difficult moment, a hard day, a challenging situation, a frightening health issue, a draining financial setback, a conflicting relationship, and/or a prolonged drudgery of one sort or another? Regarding such things, and the worries they've caused, most of us can probably remember feeling *"at our wits' end"* as we tried to figure out *"what to do next"* in order to resolve these various kinds of problems and struggles. That's certainly my experience! And so we may ask: *"How can I reconcile these Scriptural teachings with my actual lived experience in this world?"* I suppose this is exactly why the lessons of today's Scriptures are so pertinent, and why they are worth our careful consideration and attention.

Isaiah's words were meant to bring consolation to people otherwise on the brink of losing hope. *"Zion,"* the *"Chosen People,"* had been exiled to a foreign land, and because they had been held captive and had suffered so much, they were tempted to believe God no longer loved them, and had completely abandoned them. They feared they would be forever punished and never permitted to return home. It was from this perspective that *"Zion"* had cried out *"the Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me"* (see *Isaiah 49:14*).

In response to *"Zion's"* lament, and with full confidence in God's never-ending love and desire to protect his own, Isaiah posed an obvious rhetorical question when he asked: *"Can a mother forget her infant, or be without tenderness for the child of her womb?"* (see *verse 15*). Anyone contemplating this question certainly would have known healthy and loving mothers would never abandon their children; such would have been unthinkable because a mother's love was thought to be perfect and all consuming! And so by comparison, the people of Zion were encouraged to believe God's love for them was even greater than love mothers have for their own children. In other words, God's love was a type of almost inexplicable *"love beyond love."* And so Isaiah's words *"even should she forget, I will never forget you"* were understood to be purely superlative, and were very demonstrative of God's limitless love for his people.

Jesus offered nearly the same message when he said *"Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they?"* Jesus didn't tell his followers they wouldn't have to live responsible lives, or that they wouldn't need to labor to better their own lives, and the lives of others. After all, this was the same Jesus who said *"whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me"* (see *Matthew 24:16*). He made it clear *"discipleship"* would often come at a great cost, and it would indeed involve difficulties and challenges along the way. But Jesus also promised his followers final victory over any affairs and/or events that might have *"brought them down"* at any one moment or another. He wanted his disciples to trust that God would never abandon them. And this is exactly the same reason Isaiah had proclaimed *"even if a mother could forget her child, God would never forget his faithful ones."*

And so my friends, let's trust this same God will also love and care for us more than we can ever possibly imagine! And let's respond accordingly by the manner in which we live our lives. ***And really, let's not worry about tomorrow; with God's help, let's truly believe tomorrow will take care of itself.***

Praise God! *Friar Timothy*

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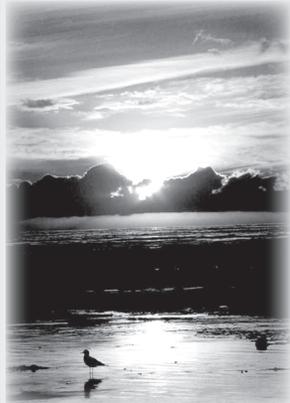


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