

**Gathered Together: A Lenten Journey  
of Love and Belonging**

**4th Sunday of Lent | March 30, 2025**  
**Theme for the week: A Father's Welcome**

Today's Gospel kicks off with a familiar jab at Jesus: He welcomes sinners and eats with them. What they called "sinners" in Jesus' time were not people who had minor slip-ups but those who had seriously broken the laws of God. Tax collectors were considered extortioners—really unsavory characters. Their outrage that Jesus would associate with these types of people prompted him to tell the parable of the prodigal son.

The prodigal son story is really a story about a father and his two sons and his crazy, wild, passionate, fatherly love for both of them (not just the squanderer).

The younger son demands his share. The father agrees and seems pretty unemotional about it. The son just wanted out. So he left. And we know the rest. The kid spends all his money, a famine hits, and he takes work doing the unthinkable for a Jew: tending to unclean swine. When he was beyond miserable and sinking fast, he came to his senses and decided to go beg for a job from his dad.

While the younger son drafted and rehearsed the speech he planned to give to his father and walked home barefooted, we learn that the father was far from unemotional. When he saw him from a distance, he ran out to meet him. To us, this doesn't seem unusual, "he ran to his son," but well-off men of the time did NOT run. It would be considered silly and undignified to run. But he didn't care. What was in his heart went to his feet, and he ran.

Now, the older son. The stalwart son. The obedient son. He wasn't watching for his brother's return; he was busy working in the field as was expected of him. When he saw the rowdy crowd gathering for the celebration, instead of being overjoyed that his brother was home, he got mad and sulked. The father loved his oldest son enough to leave the party and beg him to have compassion for his little brother. The father was loving and kind to his eldest, who was being, for all intents and purposes, a petulant jerk.

The story's message for Jesus' critics is the same now as it was then. God loves the prodigals, the sinners, and the tax collectors. God also loves the older sons, the devout Pharisees, and the scribes. When today's "prodigals" turn to the Father, he runs out to meet them, and the celebration begins. The Father also tenderly invites the older sons of today to the feast.

This parable reminds us that the Father longs to draw us close, whether we are lost in the messiness of our own mistakes or distant because of pride and resentment. As we reflect on this story, we're also challenged to extend that same love and welcome to others who are searching for belonging—especially those who feel lost, excluded, or alone. Can we run to meet them as the Father meets us?

**Daily Challenges**

3/30/25—Today is Laetare Sunday! Laetare means "rejoice!" In the midst of your Lent sacrifices, fasts, and penances, it is a day to remember that the Easter celebration is coming. Take a moment—by yourself or with your family—and think about 5 (or more!) things that bring you joy, and thank God for them.

3/31/25—Read and pray with Psalm 51 in light of the story of the prodigal son. Then, in your own words, pour your heart out to the Father, thanking him for his mercy and forgiveness.

4/1/25—Reflect on a time when you felt resentful or distant from others. Today, focus on extending compassion to those who seem judgmental or unapproachable.

4/2/25—Share a "Lent update" with a friend or on social media. What is God showing you?

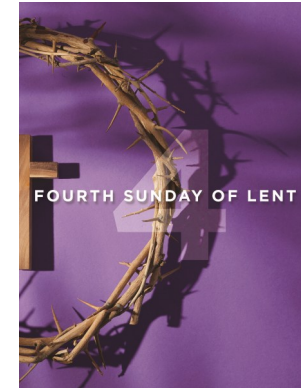
4/3/25—Take some time today to reflect on a relationship in your life that needs healing. Ask God to soften your heart in this area.

4/4/25—Pray a "Hail Mary" after your dinner prayer for a special family intention. Don't forget: today is a day to abstain from meat.

4/5/25—Prepare for the Fifth Sunday of Lent by reading the Gospel, John 8:1-11

**Saint Mary's Village Church**  
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**(812) 535—1261**  
[www.saintmaryvillagechurch.org](http://www.saintmaryvillagechurch.org)

**March 30, 2025**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**



**Weekend Worship Sunday 9 am**

**Parish Life Coordinator**  
**Elizabeth Davis**  
[elizabeth@shjth.org](mailto:elizabeth@shjth.org)  
**(812) 240—5234**  
**Hours: TH, F 9—4**

**Secretary**  
**Connie Fitch**  
[secretary@shjth.org](mailto:secretary@shjth.org)  
**(502) 821—1022**  
**Hours: W, F 8:30—2:30**

**We welcome new members. To enroll, call the Parish Office or contact Connie Fitch.**

**Coordinator of Religious Education**  
**Jena Robertson**  
[jenaleerobertson@gmail.com](mailto:jenaleerobertson@gmail.com)  
**(812) 243—5070**

**Sacramental Minister**  
**Fr. Darwin Winters**

**Fr. Darwin is available to hear confessions on Saturdays from 4—4:20 pm at Sacred Heart or by appointment.**

**The sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony are arranged by calling the Parish Office to schedule preparation.**

Date	Mar 30	April 6
Lector	Carol Cummins	Patty Curley
Server	Lane Norton	Owen Ramsey
Gift Bearers	Brockmeier Family	James Callahan Family
Ushers	Tom McKinney Owen Ramsey	Jody Stafford Matt Breneman
EMs	Pam Norris Carol Cummins	Lana Thralls Kelly Stafford
Counters	Terry & Kay Jatczak	Bob & Patricia Kane
Cleaners		Jody & Kelly Stafford
Coffee & Donuts		Bob & Patty Curley

*Happy Anniversary* **Warmest blessings for our April Brides and Grooms!**

Gary & Jan Garzolini    4   11   1970  
Chris & Marlene Smithson    4   19   2014

## Finance Report

Description	March 23	Budgeted
Sunday Collection	\$ 1,912	\$ 2,308
Galvin Fund	\$ 0	\$ 115
Church in Africa	\$ 95	
Easter Flowers	\$ 300	

## Providence Food Pantry

Sr. Maureen Fallon would like to thank you for your cash donations of \$70. During this time of their annual appeal, this donation is matched 1:1.

## Please Pray For Our Loved Ones

David Auterson	Gary Garzolini
Jon Auterson	John Heck
Ray Edwards	Dan Kane
Jane Frazier	Rosie Meehan



Just a reminder that the Palm Sunday Bake Sale is coming up soon, on April 13! Come join us for a cup of coffee/tea and some fellowship! Bring your offerings of

baked goods, treats, and crafts before Mass! Questions? Ask Karen or Robin! See you there!

## National Collection

Today we take up The Catholic Relief Services Collection. Your support for this collection aids victims of persecution and natural disasters, provides legal services to poor immigrants, and advocates for the powerless. Through your generosity, six Catholic agencies reveal Christ's love to the vulnerable refugee, the immigrant family, and those who are poor and marginalized. Please prayerfully consider contributing to The Catholic Relief Services Collection today.

## Palms



There will be a box located by the front entrance to return your old Palms. Please feel free to bring these with you next weekend.

## Pianist Needed

Do you have hidden talents that you are willing to share? Sacred Heart of Jesus is looking to hire a pianist for both weekend masses. Anyone interested in applying please see Elizabeth.

## BIRTHDAYS

Morgan Ramsey	31
Jena Robertson	2
Christina Mangia	2
Jacquelyn Wrin	3

## OCIA News

Please keep **Rachel Marion** in your prayers as she prepares to make her First Communion and be Confirmed at Easter.

## Mass Intentions

3/30 In Honor of Angie Ellis  
By Frances Faulkner

4/6 In Honor of Mrs. Gloria Tubbs  
By Frances Faulkner

**April 4**  
St. Benedict's Church  
4—7 pm  
Sponsored by K of C



## Resurrection Egg Hunt



Our Annual Resurrection Egg Hunt will take place on April 13 (Palm Sunday). We are taking donations for candy or egg-fillers between now and then. Please let Jena know if you are able to help. Again, thank you for your support!

## No April Youth Liturgy



Due to Vigo County spring break, we will not be having Youth Liturgy during the month of April. Our next (and last) Youth Liturgy will take place on May 4.