

Living the
Gospel

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ST. MARY'S CHURCH

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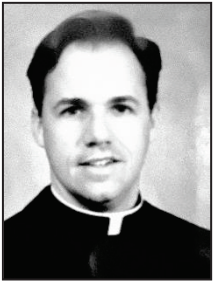
LENT: FIVE EVENINGS OF REFLECTION AT ST. MARY'S

The fourth of five, one-hour Lenten Talks, will be given this coming *Thursday in the church at 7:00 pm:

***Thursday, April 3 - "The Restoring"**
with the final talk on Thursday, April 10
The talks will be given by Father Charles

EVOLUTION & BEAUTY

Everything evolves in the natural world and this continuance of that which is ever-changing applies to us humans. We evolve in the womb and at birth are born into the world as one of its inhabitants, but for a time. Our growth continues and we change, mature and at some point, variable in each of us, reach a high point of our appearance, energy as well as in body and mind where changes take place and we begin to notice our decline with age. We can even live to a ripe old age but not without that real sense that decline is still in progression within us. It's a sign, I think, that tells us that we're meant to inhabit these bodies but for a time and that we are aging creatures. I'm reminded of comedian Red Skelton who, on his 86th birthday said, "I've finally reached the age when I can do anything I feel like doing. The problem is, I don't feel like doing it". It is all a part of the aging process that is the result of man's fall from the beginning when death came into the world, though it was not part of God's plan. What was in God's plan was to offer us a way out of death that would make death nothing but a door to be passed through into the resplendent heights of heaven! Jesus' Death has made this possible for Jesus Himself is The Door. (John 10:9)



The above picture taken of me in my year of ordination, hangs on the outside walls surrounding St. Augustine's Seminary chapel along with my classmates of 1993 and the photographs of ordained priests as far back as 1911. (And yes, I had hair.) First year seminarian, Jonathan Harper, who spoke at all of the Masses last Sunday on behalf of ShareLife, took a picture of my seminary photo and sent it to me last Sunday evening. While I had not seen the photo in many years, it serves as a reminder of what I looked like way back when. Seeing the picture reminded me of my late Aunt Mary who had been in a nursing home and wheelchair bound for many years with MS. One time when I was visiting her near Christmas, Santa Claus and a young female staff member dressed as an elf, visited my aunt at the same time. As Santa was conversing with Aunt Mary, the elf was studying the family photographs of my aunt displayed on her wall. She inquired of my aunt who this one particular and stunningly beautiful woman was in one of the pictures. My aunt said, "That was me many years ago." The young woman gasped and said, "You were so beautiful!", to which my aunt replied "Were?" The young woman's face turned the colour of Santa's suit but soon the awkward moment passed as we all laughed about it. Evolution is proven in all our family photo albums.

In the last decade or so, more often we see obituary pictures as being those from when the deceased was in their prime or looked their best with youth and vitality, though of course they didn't look like that at the time of their death. Perhaps it comes from family members who want to present the deceased at what they might consider 'their best' while most people would actually remember them by the way they looked in more recent years. The modern world has had its sway over us in persuading us to think that youthful looks and beauty are more important than the soul which brings life to our bodies. Yet our souls last forever and were created by God even before we were conceived for this is when God already knew us.

Why is it that we put such a premium on looks that come and go in age and time? Why is beauty viewed as a thing to be capitalized on (or profaned) in the world but not dedicated to God? The 1933 song, Keep Young and Beautiful's lyrics read: "*Keep young and beautiful – it's your duty to be beautiful. Keep young and beautiful, if you want to be loved.*" If you want to be loved – and we all have been made for this – why is the physical countenance of a person necessary? We say that love is blind, but real, authentic love isn't blind – it has 20/20 vision. Attraction is blind. Recently I found an interesting statement which said; "We are not lonely because we are not loved. We are lonely because we don't love". This makes sense in that love that goes out toward others causes us to discover love within us. Sometimes people are lonely in their marriages, in their relationships and in a crowd. To love outwardly is to know love within. We find it so tragic when the glamorous movie stars are depressed or unhappy when our thinking might suggest to us that they should be the happiest people alive for all their fame and notoriety. And while people may clamour for their attention and marvel and even envy their lives, they are like all of us, wounded, scarred and perhaps even lonely. The many beautiful women and handsome men of the screen who met untimely deaths are mourned for the loss they are to us who idolized them, but so often they are broken, desperate people.

I've sometimes wondered how a person who was born blind, like the man in this Sunday's Gospel, (Year A readings), would 'see' beauty. Obviously never being able to see with ocular vision would render them unable to physically see the beautiful face of a child or that of a woman or man, yet there must be another way of seeing and detecting the beautiful in another's tone of voice, touch or care of them. I think of St. Mother Teresa in this way in that a blind person who was spoken to by Mother would detect great beauty in her voice, her expression of love and her care and kindness shown to others. St. Thomas Aquinas said that "Beauty and the beautiful – these are one and the same in God". St. Augustine stated, "Beauty is indeed a good gift of God; but that the good may not think it a great good, God dispenses it even to the wicked". And yet, some of the most beautiful people I have ever met were deemed so by my judgment simply because they didn't seem to know it. It wasn't conceited or haughty but humble and void of it within their minds. This trait can in fact make someone all the more, beautiful. (Fr. Charles)



Tues April 1st 6:30pm to Mass 7:00pm	Confession +Helen Adams Requested by Nancy & Vince Massa
Wed April 2 nd 8:30am	+Feliks Kosierb Requested by the Mary Cudney & Family
9:00 to 10:00am 6:00 TO 7:00pm	CONFESSION CONFESSION
Thurs April 3 rd 7:30am 8:30am	HOLY HOUR Intentions of the Ordinandi Requested by Chris Godin
Fri April 4 th 6:30pm 7:00pm	STATIONS OF THE CROSS +Ted Van Boxmeer Requested by Nancy & Vince Massa
Sat April 5 th 8:30am 3:00 to 4:00pm 4:30pm	Mass Confession +Paul Robinson Requested by Mary Cudney & Family
Sun April 6 th 9:00am	+Deceased Members of Holzendorff Family Requested by Rose Holzendorff
11:00am	For the People

Please Pray for the Sick

Fred Coulson, Hilary Joseph, Henry Niepalla, Albert Sant, Teresa Kosierb, Elizabeth Pavilsa, Alex Poirier & Family, Tammy MacDonald, Anita Taglione, Mary Little, Yvonne Grimm, Janine Wright, Anne Johnston, Dorothy Shaughnessy, Rose Flanagan, Norma Still, Pat Ironside-Mayes, Yvonne Besley, Bev Underhill

Please Pray for the Recently Deceased

Jean Ferguson



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4TH Sunday of Lent March 30TH, 2025



This weekend is ShareLife Sunday

ShareLife Sunday marks the first collection for our parish's annual campaign. But ShareLife is more than a parish collection. It is how we, as Catholics in the Archdiocese of Toronto, bring the hands of Christ to those in need. From children to seniors and everyone in between, more than 40 ShareLife agencies are there each step of the way.

As a family of faith, we lift each other up from our lowest moments. Nick's life had an easy start – he came from a good home, where he was raised with a strong work ethic, and he welcomed a son. But living with a mental illness, he struggled more than some. Deep inside, he felt like something was missing, and he devastatingly fell into addiction. With your helping hand, he rose up through the DARE Program at Good Shepherd.

"By the grace of God, I am still alive," he proclaims. "I'd love to be able to give back what was so freely given to me. I am taking roles of service, giving back as much as I can. I was afraid I'd never be able to feel the way I feel. I am very grateful that I have been given this opportunity to be sober." Thanks to your support, he is no longer just surviving—he is thriving, with a heart full of hope and a future filled with promise.

Please give at the parish using a ShareLife envelope, online through our parish website, or at sharelife.org/donate.

LENTEN COLLECTION

Thank you so much to those who have given, the response has been amazing, and we have sent the first lot of donations down to Mississauga, thanks to Helen & Len McGuire for picking up donations and taking them down. There is still time to give. **Iodized salt, Cans of meat and fish, soap bars, new socks and shoes.** The last day for the collection will be Palm Sunday.

St. Mary's CWL Spring Plant Sale

The CWL will be having a spring Plant Sale. You will be able to pre-order your plants starting the weekend of April 5th & 6th up to Sun April 27, 2025. Order forms and information will be available after all the masses in April, or on the St. Mary's CWL Website (collcwl.ca). Plants are to be picked up from the Church Hall on Saturday, May 24 from 10 am to 2 pm
"Help us Help our community by purchasing your spring plants through the St. Mary's CWL". Thank You, Kindly.

THANK YOU

The family of Helen Adams would like to thank everyone for their support, well wishes and masses. It truly meant a lot.

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