



# Mass Intentions for the Week

**March 6 - March 14**

**Third Sunday in Lent**

**Saturday**

5:00 Semosky Family  
RB David & Mary Ann Semosky

**Sunday**

7:30 All Parishioners Living and Deceased

9:00 Joseph & Irene Zdrodowski  
RB Bob & Marie Sadowski

10:30 Chriss Sullivan  
RB Sister

12:00 Amoroso Family  
RB Children

**Monday**

8:00 Collective Intention

5:30 Beverly DeGirolamo  
RB Maraczi Family

**Tuesday**

8:00 Adele Zahar

5:30 Al Bedford  
RB Sister

**Wednesday**

8:00 August & Mary Biondi  
RB Genia Falcioni

5:30 Paul McNamara  
RB Family

**Thursday**

8:00 Phil Cortina

5:30 Michael W. Healy, 1st Anniversary  
RB Edna & John Henchy

**Friday**

8:00 Elizabeth McKinney  
RB Holmes Family

5:30 Maria Buzeta  
RB Flash Family

**Saturday**

8:00 Kelly Fischer

5:00 Rose Nicoletti  
RB Family

**Fourth Sunday in Lent**

**Sunday**

7:30 All Parishioners Living and Deceased

9:00 Mary Dolores Mendizabal  
RB Flo Simonelli

10:30 Henry Rafferty  
RB Mary Gorman

12:00 Stephan Kubica  
RB Judith & Richard Stabler

The readings for this Sunday may be found in:  
Catholic Community Hymnal in  
Section 510 / Third Sunday in Lent/C

**St. Mark 50th Anniversary** - On Sunday, April 18, 2010, St. Mark will celebrate its 50th anniversary as a parish. The Noon Mass will be celebrated with Bishop Lori, and a lunch will follow at the Marriott on Hawley Lane at 1:30 PM. Reservations are required for the lunch; please reserve early using the forms at the doors of the church. Reservations for tables of 10 for the lunch may be made at the parish office. All other seating will be open.

**Diocesan Lenten Confession Campaign**

A priest will be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Church from 7 - 9 PM on Tuesday evenings during Lent.

**Stations of the Cross** will be prayed in the Church at 4:00 PM and 6:00 PM on Fridays during Lent. All are welcome.

**Children's Mass** will be celebrated at the 9 AM Mass on this Sunday, March 7th. Refreshments will be served after Mass in the Church Hall. All are welcome.

**The Guild of Our Lady** will be holding their meeting on Monday, March 8th, with a speaker from Bigelow Tea present. All present will receive a "goodie bag". Executive board will meet at 6:30 p.m. - followed by regular business meeting at 7:00 and speaker at 7:30 p.m. in the upper room.

**La Pieta Prayer Group** will meet in the Church on Sunday, March 14th, at 2 PM. All are welcome.

**St. Mark Youth Group** - returns for Grades 7 & 8 on Thursdays from 7 to 8:30 PM in the Parish Center. We welcome Mrs. Donna Miller as our new Jr. High Youth Minister.

**The Walter Wright Jr. Memorial Basketball Tournament** continues until March 13th and is sponsored by our Men's League. Please stop in for *delicious food and refreshments made daily in the kitchen, to cheer on our teams and watch some great basketball*. This is the largest fundraiser for the Men's League which supports the parish basketball program, as well as many special parish projects.

**St. Mark 4th Annual Golf Tournament** will be held on Monday, June 21st. The Committee needs new volunteers to help plan this fundraiser, which benefits both our parish and school. If interested, please call Sue Valentine, 203-375-4873, or Bob Richard, 203-375-0606.

**Life in the Spirit Journey** to awaken the joy of your faith - began Thursday, March 4th, from 7-9 PM in the Church and continuing until April 22nd. All are welcome.

## **From Our Pastor, Fr. Don... Evidence of the After Life**

Since the dawn of man on earth, people have asked the most fundamental questions about human existence: "What is man? What is the meaning of pain, of evil, of death?...What will come after this life on earth?" The Church provides answers to these questions, answers that she has received from the Word of God. In recent years though, science has also begun to investigate these questions. I just finished reading a fascinating book by Dr. Jeffrey Long called *Evidence of the After Life*. Dr. Long has made the most comprehensive study ever. He studied more than 1300 Near Death Experiences: People who have died or experienced an imminent life-threatening event and subsequently come back to life. What separates this book from others like it is the author's conclusion: *there is life after death*. For Catholics, this will come as no great surprise, but for a man of science to reach this conclusion, based solely on his scientific research is rather startling: *It is medically inexplicable to have a highly organized and lucid experience while unconscious or clinically dead...yet NDErs say they experience a more heightened state of awareness than in everyday earthly life...they describe highly lucid, organized and real experiences.*

Here are just a couple. One atheist (Ian) encountered Jesus and described Him in these words: *Standing in front of me was the most awesome sight - I could see a man standing in front of me, but he was not like anyone I'd ever seen before in my life. His garments were shimmering white in color - garments of light - I could see His bare feet and His hands were outstretched towards me as if to welcome me. I knew I was looking upon God ... as I looked toward His face the intensity of the light seemed to increase 7-fold - such purity, such holiness, such beauty. I asked Jesus if I could step closer. His voice responded "Ian, if you wish to return here - you must see in a new light." He knows my name and I didn't tell Him, only God could do that - He knows what I am thinking before I even speak, only God could do that. I asked Him, "Are you the true light???" Words appeared in front of me "God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). And so, as I moved my face into the radiance that surrounded His face, He moved - and all His Glory moved with Him. Directly behind Him it opened out into a brand new world - green pastures, a crystal clear stream, rolling green hills to my right, mountains in the distance, blue skies above, to my left fields interspersed with trees and flowers. As I looked at the grass in front of me I could see the same light that was on the presence of God was radiating throughout this entire creation - totally untouched by man - perfect creation. And in my heart, I knew I belonged here, that God had created me to live here - I knew I was home.* Needless to say, after this experience, Ian was no longer an atheist; he knew that if he wanted to return to that beautiful place, he would have to see in a new light, with the light of faith.

Notice how remarkably similar is this man's description of Jesus to the one presented in the Gospel of the Transfiguration. The apostles were given a glimpse of Jesus, as God and Man, in all His risen glory – "such purity, such holiness, such beauty!" Each of the NDErs describes Our Lord in similar terms. Amazingly, even people who were born blind could see vividly during their NDE. Many reported meeting deceased loved ones who appeared to be in their prime.

*My heart stopped during surgery...I floated up to the ceiling and could see my body lying on the table. The doctors were alarmed and saying that they were losing me. I was not scared. I was with two beings who were angels. They told me not to worry. Then I was pulled through a dark tunnel toward a light...A woman held out her hand to me; she was lovely and I felt that she knew me and loved me. I did not know who she was. One day a few years later, my mother showed me a picture of my grandmother, who died giving birth to my father. It was the same lovely woman who held my hand at the other side of the tunnel. I had never seen a picture of her before.*

Others describe that their encounter with Jesus involved a "life review." In Catholic theology, we call this life review "the particular judgment" upon each soul immediately after death. Here is how one person described it: *All of sudden...like an IMAX movie...I saw all the very important moments of my life up to that present time...Everything I ever thought, did, and said; everyone I ever hated, helped, did not help, should have helped, was shown to me...How mean I'd been to people, how I could have helped them, how mean I was to animals! Yes! Even animals have feelings. I felt the pain I caused to others and I fell on my face in shame. I saw how my acting or not acting, had a rippling effect on other people and their lives. It wasn't until then that I understood how each little decision or choice affects the world. The sense of letting my Savior down was too real...My life has since changed because I take into account more the feelings of others when I act.*

What must be carefully discerned here is that some books about NDE's give the impression that everyone who dies will go automatically to heaven, no matter what they did in this life. We call this idea "Universal Salvation," and it is not what Jesus taught. God wants everyone to be saved, of course, and He gives everyone sufficient grace to be saved, but we all have free will and we must choose our eternal destiny. Many of the NDErs stated this clearly. If you went to Dr. Long's website, he records a number of individuals who died and went to hell. Their descriptions of hell are as real and vivid as anything you can read in Catholic mystical literature. I don't want to frighten anyone with a narrative, but those who did not believe in hell certainly returned confessing that it is real, just as taught in the Bible. And those who found themselves there, were rescued and returned to life when they called upon the holy name of Jesus. When sending them back to earth, God said to them: "return now, but change your ways or this is where you will spend eternity."

Others describe what we call Purgatory. So when reading a book about these experiences, the basic question to ask yourself is this: Do these experiences conform to what the Word of God teaches or not? If they do, they are of God and can be trusted; if they do not, they are deceptions of the devil, who can make himself appear as an angel of light. *Continued on the last page of the bulletin.*



## Our Stewardship of Treasure

Budget for this Week	\$12,000.
Sunday, February 28, 2010	\$ 8,989.
Sunday, March 1, 2009	\$10,066.
Annual thru March 1, 2010	\$43,971.
Annual, 2009	\$68,250.

*“He said to the gardener, ‘For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none.’”*

*- Luke 13:7*

Are we like the barren fig tree? What does God find when He searches for the fruits which we have given back?

**Second Collection** next weekend will be the Diocesan Collection for Catholic Relief Services & Aid to the Church in Central & Eastern Europe. Thank you for your support

**The Monthly Collection** which helps toward the extraordinary expenses of the parish will be taken up on March 20 & 21. Thank you for your generosity!

### PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL:

Lorraine Studley, Bob Haborak, Fedare Hrinak, Jeff Mastroni, Barbara Manning, Arlene Liscinsky, Julie Koloules, Bob Wargo, Mark Burry, Jose Millet, Kathy Skinner, Diane Vanderwaylan, Matthew Freetas, Caroline DiRiusso, Toni Stabile, Kathleen Hampton, Shirley Fenn, Michael Howard, Katie Bleekrod, Mary King, Christina Alterio, Evelyn Garafolo, Andy Yankowski, Carol Gay, Elaine Hauge, David Gallo, Eugene Greytak, Julia Sellers, Julie Porzio, Lawrence & Emma Cannon, Mary Kahanec, James Whelan, Lillian Butler, Michael Hostetter, Jr., Rachel Maietto, Joan Watkins, Marilyn Lonzenski, Carl Blumenthal, Mark Bensen, Florence Steele, Yvonne Wilson, Henry Pawley, Marie Pfrommer, Bea Fiocca, Martha Reynolds, George Fountain, Samantha Frattarola, Claire Hromjak, Eddie Corcoran, Mary Hovan, Constance Papp, Bette Stumpp, Nancy LaGanga, Bill Maloney, Mike Czech, Kevin Collins, Arlene Zayas, Spencer Grady, Joan Shannon, Raphaella Gaglione, Eleanor Cornese, Carol Curcio, Lee Everetts, Frank Vitucci, Sr., Terri Nardone, Cayden Morin, Felizardo Cipriano, Connie Dezso, Gail Bergers, Chelsea Wheeler, Thomas D. Smith, Joan Green, Andrea Timchak, William Flynn, Paul Iwanoski, Mark Morreale, Charles Petrino, Patricia Lembo, Sharon Gotch, Michael McLoughlin, Gary Iadarola, Charles Falzone, Donna Bizak, John Semosky, Joanne McCormick, Maureen Siuzdak, Alex Convertito, Edward Recupero, Jim Garrity, Gail Kotalick, Daniel Marzella, Yolanda Arkilander, Gail Sullivan, Marcella Barr, James Conway, Shirley Esposito, Quinn Faerdy.



*Let light eternal shine on them,  
O Lord, with Your saints forever,  
for You are merciful.*

Anne Vanicky

## Readings for the Week of March 7

Sunday:	Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15/1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12/Lk 13:1-9
Monday:	2 Kgs 5:1-15b/Lk 4:24-30
Tuesday:	Dn 3:25, 34-43/Mt 18:21-35
Wednesday:	Dt 4:1, 5-9/Mt 5:17-19
Thursday:	Jer 7:23-28/Lk 11:14-23
Friday:	Hos 14:2-10/Mk 12:28-34
Saturday:	Hos 6:1-6/Lk 18:9-14
Next Sunday:	Jos 5:9a, 10-12/2 Cor 5:17-21/Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

**Parish Office Hours:** Please note that as of March 1, the parish office hours are 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Friday.

**Chapel Snow Closings** When snow or bad weather forces the closing of the Adoration Chapel, we will announce the closing on WICC 600AM radio and post the news on CTWEATHER.com (in closings, Public Organizations). In general, the Chapel will be closed any time the Stratford Public Schools are closed.

### Adoration Chapel Schedule

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
12am	X	X	O	O	O	O	C
1am	X	X	X	X	X	X	C
2am	X	X	X	X	X	X	C
3am	O	O	O	O	O	O	C
4am	O	X	O	X	O	X	C
5am	O	O	O	O	X	O	C
6am	X	X	O	X	O	X	C
7am	X	X	O	X	O	O	C
8am	O		O	O		O	C
9am	O					O	C
10am	O	O	X	X	O	C	C
11am	X		O	O	O	C	C
12pm	O	O	O		X	C	C
1pm	O	O		O	O	C	C
2pm	X	O		O	O	C	C
3pm	O	X	X	O	X	C	C
4pm		O	O			C	C
5pm	O	O	O	X	O	C	C
6pm	O	X	O		X	C	O
7pm					X	C	O
8pm	O	X		X	O	C	X
9pm	O	O	O		O	C	O
10pm	O		O	O	O	C	O
11pm	O		O	O	O	C	O

**ADORERS NEEDED FOR ALL "X" and "O" HOURS!**

**X = NO ADORER SCHEDULED**

**O = One Adorer Scheduled**

**C = Chapel CLOSED (for now)**

**Partial Update: Nov. 30, 2009**

**Please call Gary Tennyson at 203-953-1200**

**or Scott Goodfellow at 203-394-2248 or**

**Email to [StMarkAdoration@comcast.net](mailto:StMarkAdoration@comcast.net)**

**with questions or to volunteer for an hour**

*Continued from Page 2 ... From Our Pastor.*

Christ came to remind us that we're both spiritual and physical beings and that our awareness does not cease upon earthly death. We do not "blank out." Our existence does not turn into nothingness—despite what certain philosophers say. Earth is temporary. It lasts for 70 or 80 years, and that's a grain of sand on the beach of eternity. While on earth we're in exile. We're away from home. We're on a mission and we're in a kind of school and we're being tested for something much larger than anything you can see with your eyes or hear with your ears or even imagine. St. Paul writes: "eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love Him" (*1 Corinthians 2:9*). The vision that apostles had of Jesus transfigured is a vision of our eternal destiny too. St. Paul tells us in the second reading: *Our citizenship is in heaven... He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body.* And the responsorial psalm also speaks of this hope: *I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD in the land of the living.*

I don't think there could possibly be better news than that: after death there is life, and if we prepare, it's a splendid existence, an incredible existence, an infinite situation that will engage us for all eternity. Heaven is endless and we'll be spending eternity exploring it! There is nothing to fear if we have Jesus. There is nothing to fear if He awaits us.

Our Blessed Mother reminds us of this at her famous apparition site in Medjugorje. On July 24, 1982 Our Lady said: *"At the moment of death you are conscious of the separation of the body and soul. It is false to teach people that you are reborn many times and that you pass to different bodies. One is born only once. The body, drawn from the earth, decomposes after death. Man receives a transfigured body...I want each one of you to be happy here on earth and to be with me in Heaven. That is, dear children, the purpose of my coming here, and it's my desire. Peace, peace, peace. Only peace. Make your peace with God and among yourselves. For that, it is necessary to believe, to pray, to fast, and to go to Confession. Whoever has done very much evil during his life can go to Heaven if he confesses, is sorry for what he has done, and receives Communion at the end of his life."*

Every moment of life on earth is a precious opportunity for attaining Heaven. Every moment is an opportunity for prayer and love. Only then do we have the sure path to paradise and its golden gates, its shining cities, its angelic choirs, its vibrant colors and beautiful, unknown landscapes. Then, and only then, can we approach the fantastic light, the incredible and infinitely powerful light, the never-ending Light that is the Vision of God, so pure, so holy, so beautiful! AMEN.

**Convivio** is a High School Congress on March 12, 13 & 14 at Sacred Heart University. Bishop Lori will join us for the Opening Ceremony on Friday, March 12th, at 5:00 PM, and will also celebrate the Sunday Mass at 2:00 PM in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit. Cost: \$35 which includes the Congress workbook and materials, and meals. For more information: [www.convivio.org/connecticut](http://www.convivio.org/connecticut).

Acct # 04-0152

Saint Mark Church  
Stratford, CT.

04-0152 wk# 15c  
Sunday, March 7  
tom@hitekrcing.com  
Questions: Call Susan  
203-377-0444