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**2024 CDA Pastor’s Messages**

The following messages are meant for use as a message from the Pastor in a weekly bulletin or e-newsletter for the first 5 weeks of the CDA. All messages tie to a Sunday reading and were written by a deacon. Feel free to use them, modify them, or create your own.

**Sunday January 27-28 – CDA Announcement Weekend**

Today’s Gospel states that Jesus *“taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes”* (Mark 1:22). He proved his authority with accompanying signs, such as casting out a demon. The people were astonished.

Today, many of us waver between craving real authority and rebelling against authority altogether. We criticize our leaders for being too weak or the Catholic Church for being too firm. Why can’t the Church loosen up her doctrines and “get with the times”?

The truth is, the Church cannot “change with the times.” Jesus, who “is the same today, yesterday, and forever,” founded the Church (Hebrews 13:8). However, together, we can continue to stay strong in the way God is calling us and, through your support of the Charity and Development Appeal, spread the Good News as we always have.

**Sunday February 3-4 – CDA Kickoff Weekend – Week 1**

Today’s Gospel theme is the opposite of “hesitation”: The disciples did not hesitate to ask the Healer for help. Jesus did not hesitate to respond. And even Simon’s mother-in-law, after returning from fever, rises to *serve* him immediately.

If Jesus were to walk in the door of our parish right now, he would be on a mission to love someone. If he were to enter your home, as he entered Simon’s, he would be on a mission to love you.

Our parish is on Jesus’ same mission of love, and we need your help to spread the love Christ entrusted to us. Love acts! When Jesus showed Simon’s mother-in-law love, her heart wished to respond with more love. She chose to serve herself. Today, evaluate your ability to give, listen to the prompting of love, and then, do not hesitate… act by giving to our diocesan Charity and Development Appeal!

**Sunday February 10-11 – Week 2**

In today’s Gospel story, Jesus cleanses a leper with the words, *“Be made clean”* (Mark 1:41). The faith of this leper moves God to give him the outward cleanliness he sought. This healing would allow him to re-enter Jewish society, from which he had been cast out.

Jesus says he came that “they might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). He didn’t just come to cleanse the outside, like the Pharisees, who *“cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish”"* (Luke 11:39). He came to renew *all* of us, outside and in.

We need your help to meet the many needs of those around you. Jesus says that, *“As to what is within, give alms, and behold, everything will be made clean for you”* (Luke 11:41). Jesus says there is a connection between almsgiving and the true cleanness of life which the Jews sought. Small wonder: Almsgiving requires sacrifice. It requires the same spirit of sacrifice that we need to take up our personal cross valiantly. Our Charity and Development Appeal is in full swing and I encourage you to take this opportunity to help us help others.

**Sunday February 17-18 – Week 3**

Today’s Gospel said that Jesus “*remained* in the desert for forty days” (Mark 1:13, emphasis added). Remaining with Jesus in the desert is not easy. (Welcome to Lent.)

Further driving home how difficult it is to follow him, in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus warns, *“If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily”* (Luke 9:23). Yet on another note, in John’s Gospel, Jesus commands us, *“Remain in my love”* (John 15:9). Remaining in Jesus’ love isn’t easy, either—especially when it involves the desert.

Feeling like it’s too difficult to do this by ourselves is okay. It’s often exactly where God wants us—because it pushes us to rely on him. *That* can be a place of profound growth. Our parish, and those we serve, relies on you to help us meet our many needs and the needs of our community. As you lift the cross Jesus asks of you this Lent, please remember our Charity and Development Appeal. We are counting on you. This Lent, count on us, and count on God! We’ll walk in the desert with you.

**Sunday February 24-25 – Week 4**

As the second week of Lent begins, the Church invites us to contemplate the transfigured Jesus with Peter, James, and John: *“His clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them”* (Mark 9:3).

Before he suffered his Passion, Jesus gave his three closest friends a glimpse into his glorified nature—a glimpse of where he could take them. God loves us where we are and loves us too much to leave us where we are.

We can radiate divine light like Jesus. When we receive Jesus into our hearts, he transfigures us. We can shine with his joy, love, and serenity. He wants to transfigure our whole parish! Please support our Charity and Development Appeal so we can have all the resources we need to shine the way He wishes us to, so we can reach all those He longs for in our community*. “I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth”* (Isaiah 49:6).