



Society of African Missions

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 Phone: 201-567-0450
 Visit our website
www.smafathers.org



Administration:

Fr Ranees A. Rayappan,
 Provincial Superior
Fr Dermot Roache,
 House Superior

Mass Schedule

Sundays
 10:00 am; 12 noon
Weekdays & Holy Days
 11:45 am
Christmas & New Year's Day
 10:00 am; 12 noon

Confessions

By appointment. Contact
 Fr Dermot Roache 201-567-0450 Ext 212

Bereavement & Visit to the Sick

Contact Fr. Dermot Roache
 201-567-0450 Ext. 212

Perpetual Mass Association

Office open Monday-Friday
 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

S.M.A. Vocation Office

Fr. Eliecer Sandoval, SMA
 551-449-4357

Sunday Collection: \$244

Thank you for your support.

Please remember to support
 your local parishes.

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Masses for the week of February 14, 2021 - February 20, 2021

Date	Time	Intention	Requested by:
Sun.-Sat.	8:00	Liv & Dec Benefactors of the SMA	
Sun. Feb. 14	10:00	Catherine Doonan Moseley+	Susan Murphy
	12:00	Rufina Albamento Bisquerro+ Marilyn Roy Benedito+	Linda Rubio
Mon. Feb. 15	9:30	Deceased Members of the McCarthy Family	
	11:45	Mary Jean Quinn+	Lisa McCarthy
Tue. Feb. 16	9:30	Deceased Members of the Guiney Family	
	11:45	John Bruno+	Diane & Mike Bruno
Wed. Feb. 17	9:30	Diane Crowell+	Martha DiPaolo
	11:45	John Hamil+	Daughter
Thurs. Feb. 18	9:30	Albert & Helen Fleckenstein+	
	11:45	Aideen O'Sullivan+	Breda Walsh & Family
Fri. Feb. 19	9:30	A. Ralph Sabbatino+	
	11:45	Vincent Hillery+	Mary Ann Harte
Sat. Feb. 20	9:30	Marian V. Sheehy+	
	11:45	Morman Tavares+	Breda Walsh & Family

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

There will be Stations
 of the Cross in the
 Chapel each Friday
 during Lent at 7:30pm

Today's Readings

First Reading *Leviticus 13:1-2. 44-46* *The book of Leviticus shows us the practical implications of the Law of Moses. At a time when people had no defence against virulent diseases, rules are laid down which exclude those with skin diseases from wider society, for the protection of the whole people.*

Second Reading *1 Corinthians 10:31 – 11:1* *Paul is talking to early Christians about how to behave when dining with pagans. Paul balances the freedom of the Spirit, which no longer requires strict adherence to the Law of Moses, and the need to avoid shocking the conscience of others.*

Gospel *Mark 1:40-45* *Jesus heals a man with a virulent skin disease and puts himself at risk of being rendered ritually unclean in the process. There is nothing any of us could ever do that Jesus would not be willing to heal, at whatever cost to himself.*

“Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him.”

Illustration *Few of us knew the fear of touching or being touched by an unclean person until the onset of the coronavirus in early 2020. One moment we were all willing to be herded into buses, planes or crowded cinemas or restaurants together, sharing sitting and breathing spaces, up close and personal. Then almost overnight, it seemed, other people became a dangerous enemy, potential disease-carriers, killers unawares. New concepts came into common vocabulary like social distancing, and in the lockdown that followed, we sheltered in homes that became fortresses, wary of coming too close to one another, with the safe distance marked out in supermarket queues and other places of unavoidable contact.*

Gospel Teaching *These fears would have been familiar in Jesus’ time, when contact with a person who had a skin disease meant inevitable contamination, either physical or ritual. The diseased other was a person of dread and fear in an era with few reliable medical remedies. You stayed clean or you died, simple as that. Small wonder, then, that the man with a skin disease is doubtful about Jesus’ willingness to come near him. Yet he also has faith that God can work a gift of healing through him, “If you want to... you can cure me.” Jesus feels compassion for him and does completely the opposite of what makes sense. Anyone with a knowledge of contagion would shrink from a person so obviously diseased, but Jesus actively goes towards him and stretches out his hand to reach him. “Of course I want to!” It’s the opposite of the survival instinct. Jesus is willing to go into the darkest and most fearful places that human beings can find themselves in. There are no “no go” areas for Jesus, not even death itself. He is willing to come into the memories and experiences that we most deeply wish to hide from in order to free us from the darkness that they contain.*

We don’t only fear physical contagion. For many people there is an instinctive shrinking away from whoever is thought to be “other”, whether it be in cultural terms or in terms of morality and lifestyle. It’s as if we fear that we will be contaminated by a different way of thinking or behaving. It’s so much easier to judge and to erect barriers: them and us, insiders and outsiders, the virtuous and sinners. Jesus tells some powerful stories about this, for example the Pharisee praying, “I thank you, God, that I am not like other people...” In St Paul’s time it was common for formerly Jewish Christians to worry about mixing with pagans in the new Christian community. Paul tries to be culturally sensitive. He doesn’t want to impose burdens on the conscience of others. But he also stresses the freedom of the children of God.

Application *It is not for us to stand in judgement on one another, but to mirror the welcome of Jesus even for those whose beliefs or practices we find strange or shocking. This isn’t to say, “anything goes”. But it is to proclaim the Christian belief that everyone can find a home in the family of Jesus. Our first task is to keep the door to this family home wide open, to make space for others to enter in God’s own time and way, however “other” they may seem to us. Pope Francis teaches this powerfully in *Evangelii Gaudium*, “The Joy of the Gospel”, where he reminds us that the Eucharist is “not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak”. He goes on, “the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems”.*

It is not for us to judge, but to recognise our own sinfulness and to offer the same welcome and compassion that we hope to receive ourselves. That is why forgiveness is at the heart of the prayer Jesus taught us. He puts the grace of forgiving and being forgiven alongside daily survival itself. Daily bread and daily forgiveness are his recipe for spiritual health, but the choice is ours. It is easy to highlight the faults of others, while we can be blind to our own sinfulness. At the heart of Jesus’ teaching is mercy and compassion: he is willing to heal us of all our darkness, but are we willing to open up that darkness to his healing touch? And are we willing to become healers in our turn?

The Living Word

NOTE: Wednesday, February 17th marks the beginning of Lent.
Ashes will be distributed after 11:45 am Mass and upon request.

HOLY HOUR
March 6, 2021 8:00pm