# St. Michael's — St. Benedict — Canadian Martyrs

Cudworth St. Benedict

Middle Lake

## **Roman Catholic Parishes**

April 6<sup>th</sup> (Fifth Sunday of Lent) – April 13<sup>th</sup> (Palm Sunday)

Fr. Benjamin Ezekwudo, Pastor – Email: <a href="mailto:bezekwudo@rcdos.ca">bezekwudo@rcdos.ca</a> Mobile: (306) 270-8592

Office/Rectory: St. Michael's Parish: 503 Main Street, Box 239 – Cudworth, SK S0K 1B0 Phone: (306) 256-3218

Fax: (306) 256-7000 Email and e-Transfer: <a href="mailto:smcudworth@rcdos.ca">smcudworth@rcdos.ca</a> Website <a href="https://www.saintsnorth.ca">https://www.saintsnorth.ca</a>

Office Hours: Mon/Tue/Fri: 9 –12noon (closed during Mass times) Administration: Fr. Benjamin Ezekwudo, Teresa

Richardson, and Chara Sargeant (Bulletin)

## **Sunday Mass times April:**

Saturday 5<sub>PM</sub> Canadian Martyrs Sunday 9<sub>AM</sub> St. Benedict

Sunday 11<sub>AM</sub> St. Michael's

# Weekday Mass times (year round):

Tuesday 6:30<sub>PM</sub> Haven

Wednesday  $10:30_{AM}$  Nursing Home Wednesday  $1:30_{PM}$  Bethany St. Michael's

Low-gluten communion hosts are available. Please see Fr. before Mass.

#### **Sacrament of Reconciliation:**

Sat:  $11_{AM}$  -  $12_{PM}$  (noon) – St. Michael's

Sat:  $4:30_{PM}$  -  $4:55_{PM}$  – St. Benedict (only when Mass falls on Saturday)

By appointment: Contact Fr. Benjamin directly on his mobile

# **Eucharistic Adoration:**

**St. Michael's:** Every Friday from Mass:  $8_{AM}$  to  $9_{AM}$  (Except for  $1^{st}$  Friday of the month, when it is after Mass:  $9:30_{AM}$  to  $12_{PM}$ )

**St. Michael's Haven:** Every first Tuesday of

the month,  $5:30_{PM}$  to  $6:30_{PM}$ 

Marriage Prep: Please contact Fr. Benjamin at least one year prior to the desired date of marriage.

Mass Intentions: Please contact Fr. Benjamin directly. Suggested donation: \$10.00 Fr. Benjamin is available on his mobile at any time outside Mass times for EMERGENCIES and to administer the sacrament of the

#### Anointing of the Sick.

To request <u>Communion to the Sick</u>, <u>Baptism</u>, or <u>Funeral</u>, please call Fr. Benjamin at the office, or directly on his mobile.

**Reminder:** You can request the sacraments when you are in ANY hospital.

St. Michael's Sunday Masses can be followed at 91.3FM

# **ALL MASS INTENTIONS** April 5<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>

April 5<sup>th</sup> – First Saturday 9<sub>AM</sub> - Rosary 9:30<sub>AM</sub> - Mass St. Michael's: In reparation for the offenses and blasphemies against the

Immaculate Heart of Mary **April 5<sup>th</sup>-Saturday 5<sub>PM</sub>** Canadian Martyrs: John

Lange+/ Ray & Donna

Jungwirth

April 6<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 9<sub>AM</sub>
St. Benedict: Joycelyn
Diederichs+/ Jeff Diederichs

April 6<sup>th</sup> -Sunday 11<sub>AM</sub>
St. Michael's: Isabelle
Osolinsky+/ Mel Osolinsky

**April 8<sup>th</sup> –Tues. 6:30<sub>PM</sub>** St. Michael's Haven: John

Koenning+/ Jim & Liz Wilde

April 9<sup>th</sup> -Wed. 10:30<sub>AM</sub>
Cudworth Nursing Home:

Henry Kohle+/ Armelia Frie

April 9<sup>th</sup> –Wed. 1:30<sub>PM</sub>

<u>Bethany:</u> Gerald Saxinger+/ Darrell & Heide Kolla

April 11<sup>th</sup> -Friday –

Fr. Benjamin is away

# Palm Sunday Masses

April 12<sup>th</sup>-Saturday 5<sub>PM</sub>
Canadian Martyrs: Stanley
Osolinsky+/ Mel Osolinsky
April 13<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 9<sub>AM</sub>
St. Benedict: John Lange+/
Ivan & Teresa Richardson
April 13<sup>th</sup> -Sunday 11<sub>AM</sub>

St. Michael's: Members of the Kurtenbach family/

# April is the Month of the Holy Eucharist

The Catholic Church teaches that the Blessed Sacrament is the real and living presence of Christ - His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity - received into our souls with ever reception of Holy Communion.

#### Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, be my sanctification;
Body of Christ, be my salvation;
Blood of Christ, fill all my veins;
Water of Christ's side, wash out my stains;
Passion of Christ, my comfort be;
O good Jesus, listen to me;
In Thy wounds I fain would hide;
Ne'er to be parted from Thy side;
Guard me, should the foe assail me;
Call me when my life shall fail me;
Bid me come to Thee above,
With Thy saints to sing Thy love,
World without end. Amen.

# An Explanation of the Anima Christi

This prayer, often said after receiving Communion, dates from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. The prayer takes its name from its first two words in Latin. *Anima Christi* means "the soul of Christ." This translation is by Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman, one of the great converts to Roman Catholicism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



# ST. MICHAEL'S -503 Main Street.

Cudworth, SK. S0K 1B0

Mass Time – April: Sunday 11<sub>AM</sub>

# Together we listen, receive, believe, and serve from the heart of Jesus

Parish Council: Fr. Benjamin Ezekwudo 2<sup>nd</sup>. Term: Grace Jungwirth (Chair), Glen Lingel (Vice Chair), Teresa Richardson (Secretary), Vince Dierker (K of C Representative), Stuart Kolla (Maintenance), Kyle Slobodian 1st. Term: Don Kolla, Catherine Mazurkewich, Audrey van der Gracht, Ida Rose Wilde

Finance Committee: Catherine Mazurkewich (Chair), Derreck Kolla, Michael Wilde, Lee Hauber

Cemetery Committee: Don Kolla (Chair), Ida-Rose Wilde, James Hauber, Raymond Jungwirth- For all cemetery related

information: Teresa Richardson Parish Covenant of Care Coordinator: Grace Jungwirth

## Knights of Columbus - Thursday April 10th

**Sunday Mass Ministries** 11<sub>AM</sub> – Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>

Rosary: Glen Ushers: Danny, Darrel Screens: Grace J. Servers: Jax, Kennedy

Readers: 1st – James, 2nd – Lee, Prayers of the Faithful – Kim

Offerings: James & Kim Eucharistic Minister: Heide

Counters: Garry, Catherine, Heide

11<sub>AM</sub> – Palm Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>

Welcomers: Jim & Liz

Ushers: Garry, Edward, Leonard Rosarv: Vince

Screens: Jill Servers: Eric, Leo, Alynn Readers: Narrator – Don, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Garry,

**Prayers of the Faithful** – Doreen

Offerings: Bernadette, Vince, Tammy

**Eucharistic Minister:** Vince

Counters: Dennis, Sylvia

7:30<sub>PM</sub> – Holy Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>

Rosary: Phil Ushers: James, Clarence

Screens: Grace L.

Servers: Chelsea, Brianna, Cael, Gage, Brooke

Readers: 1st - Barbara, 2nd - Morris,

**Pravers of the Faithful** – Teresa

Offerings: Edward & Leonard

**Eucharistic Minister:** Barbara

3<sub>PM</sub> – Good Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>

Rosary: Glen Ushers: Danny, Darrel

Screens: Grace L. Servers: Chelsea, Camryn, Brady

Readers: Narrator – Doreen, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Catherine,

**Prayers of the Faithful** – Bernadette

Offerings: John & Audrey

Eucharistic Minister: John K.

8:30<sub>PM</sub> - Holy Vigil, (Saturday)April 19<sup>th</sup>

**Rosary:** Vince **Ushers:** Edward, Leonard

Screens: Grace L.

Servers: Chelsea, Brianna, Cael, Gage, Brooke

Readers: 1st – John v., 2nd – Morris, 3rd – Teresa,

4th – Doreen, 5th – Garry, 6th – Catherine,

7th - Don, 8th (Epistle) - Heide,

Prayers of the Faithful – Kim

Offerings: James & Kim Eucharistic Minister: Roger

Rosary: 7<sub>PM</sub>

Installment of Officers - 7:30 PM

CWL - Next meeting: Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>

Annual Membership Tea at St. Michael's Haven

Rosary @ 6<sub>PM</sub>; Mass @ 6:30<sub>PM</sub> followed by Membership Tea and pin presentation

Parish Council -

Next meeting: Wednesday April 9th @ 7:00<sub>PM</sub>

St. Michael's Parish AGM & Coffee

**Sunday** April 27<sup>th</sup> after 11<sub>AM</sub> Mass in downstairs assembly room, or

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: https://meet.google.com/sxd-twwp-nmw

# Knights of Columbus Easter Turkey/Ham Bingo

Sunday, April 6th at the Cudworth Sr. Citizen's Rec Association Center - 216 Main Street.

Doors open @ 6:30<sub>PM</sub>: Bingo @ 7<sub>PM</sub>. Please call Don Kolla 306-233-7502

for van service

Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup> is **Solidarity** 

**Sunday.** The theme for this Lenten season is "Turn Debt into HOPE". Pope Francis wants us to be "Pilgrims of Hope" with our sisters and brothers.

There will be a petition to sign in each entrance of St. Michael's Parish.

Children's Liturgy 🔀 Sundays @ St. Michaels 🦠





# STATIONS OF THE CROSS



Every Friday at 5 PM in St. Michael's

# Good Friday Outdoor Way Of The Cross (April 18th)

10<sub>AM</sub> ~ Stations begin at St. Michael's Parish, and will end there around noon. If you are unable to join in the walking, you may pray at the church at this time. If anyone is interested in following behind the walkers by riding in the van, please call the office.

# Easter Schedule 2025

PALM SUNDAY (April 13th)

Canadian Martyrs ~ 5<sub>PM</sub> (Sat.Apr.12<sup>th</sup>)

St. Benedict ~ 9<sub>AM</sub>

St. Michael's ~ 11<sub>AM</sub>

HOLY THURSDAY (April 17th)

Canadian Martyrs ~ 5<sub>PM</sub>

St. Michaels's 7:30<sub>PM</sub>

GOOD FRIDAY (April 18th)

Outdoor Way Of The Cross ~  $10_{\text{AM}}$ 

(Inside town of Cudworth)

St. Michael's ~ 3<sub>PM</sub>

St. Benedict ~ 5:30<sub>PM</sub>

EASTER VIGIL (Holy Saturday)

St. Michael's 8:30<sub>PM</sub>

EASTER SUNDAY (April 20th)

St. Benedict ~ 8:30<sub>AM</sub>

Canadian Martyrs ~ 10<sub>AM</sub>

St. Michael's ~ 12<sub>PM</sub> (Noon)

# Please pray for our upcoming Confirmation Candidates.

- ~ Abby Broad ~ Kalli Jungwirth
- ~ Brody Broad ~ Gage Kolla
- ~ Peyton Chelack ~ Waylon Leuschen
- ~ Hailey Hadland ~ Wyatt Leuschen
- ~ Emma Hauber ~ Jax Slobodian
- ~ Rhett Hauber ~ Camryn Stewart
- ~ Leo Hoffman

Confirmation with Bishop Mark Hagemoen is set for Friday May 16<sup>th</sup> @ 7<sub>PM</sub>

We are looking for another person to do screens Sundays @ St. Michael's. Please consider joining this ministry. Training provided and to start as soon as possible. Contact the office if interested or text Jill @ 306-233-7788

Dear Lord,

We PRAY that you protect life until natural death (the unborn, the elderly, disabled & handicapped).

Unite us to help the world understand they are NOT a burden, but a BLESSING for society. Help us be patient, loving, & respectful of the dignity you have given each person. Amen

# Act now to stop assisted suicide

Currently, MPs are discussing and debating a matter of life and death.

A private members' bill to legalise assisted suicide is currently going through parliament. If passed, this would mark a very significant change in our culture and its attitude towards suicide.

This bill is now at committee stage, where MPs will consider possible changes to the bill before the crucial vote at its third reading, which we expect to be in April.

Similar bills have been rejected in recent years but the challenge now is greater than ever.

Act now to stand for life by opposing suicide.

# Join us in praying against assisted suicide

We need to pray that God works in the heart of our nation and that our MPs would vote against the bill at third reading.

This Lent, could you take one minute every day to pray that assisted suicide would not be legalised in this nation?

Throughout Lent, we are sharing short daily prayer points on social media and through our emails so that you can pray for one minute, once every day, against assisted suicide.

We are also hosting prayer livestreams every Wednesday from 12:30-1pm on <u>our YouTube</u> <u>channel</u>, where together we will pray that the assisted suicide bill will be defeated.

More information about our prayer campaign visit: <a href="https://christianconcern.com/action/act-now-to-stop-assisted-suicide/">https://christianconcern.com/action/act-now-to-stop-assisted-suicide/</a>



#### ST. BENEDICT

10 1<sup>st</sup> Street South (Church Avenue) St. Benedict, SK S0K 3T0

St. Benedict Parish will be accepting donations for Easter Flowers in memory of loved ones. Anyone who would like to make a donation please contact Theresa Chipeur at (306) 289-0008 or Barb Wedewer at (306) 256-3522

# Ste. Jeanne D'Arc Parish in Domremy is having a pancake breakfast on April 6th 10<sub>AM</sub> ~1<sub>PM</sub>

Various Raffle Prizes available including a \$200 gift card to Manitou Springs Resort & Spa

Adults: \$15 10 & under: \$12 5 & under: Free



Progressive 50/50 Draw Win up to \$2500! Call or text Karleen at (306) 713-8106 Only 250 tickets available

# **Sunday Mass Ministries**

Mass Times:

April: Sunday 9<sub>AM</sub>

May: Saturday 5<sub>PM</sub>

9<sub>AM</sub> – Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup>

Ushers: Laverne Sacristan: Laverne Cross Bearer: Colleen Servers: Draude's Readings and Prayers of the Faithful: Lee Ann

9<sub>AM</sub> - Palm Sunday April 13th

<u>Ushers:</u> Reg Sacristan: Reg

Cross Bearer: Reg Readings: LeeAnn

Prayers of the Faithful: LeeAnn & Tristina

5:30<sub>PM</sub> – Good Friday April 18<sup>th</sup>

Sacristan: Laverne Ushers: Laverne Cross Bearer: Colleen Servers: Draude's

Readings: LeeAnn

Prayers of the Faithful: LeeAnn & Tristina

8:30<sub>AM</sub> – Easter Sunday April 20<sup>th</sup> Ushers: Reg Sacristan: Reg

Cross Bearer: Reg

Readings and Prayers of the Faithful: Lee Ann



# CANADIAN MARTYR'S

1<sup>st</sup> Street North Middle Lake, SK S0K 2X0

# **READERS / COLLECTION:**

Sat. April 5<sup>th</sup> @ 5<sub>PM</sub> Andrea & Gloria Sat. April 12<sup>th</sup> @ 5<sub>PM</sub> Marj & Janice Thurs. April 17<sup>th</sup> @ 5<sub>PM</sub> Tim & Janine Sun. Apr 20<sup>th</sup> @ 10<sub>AM</sub> Andrea & Gloria

#### **CHURCH MAINTENANCE:**

Sun. April 6<sup>th</sup> **Dorian & Bakers** Sun. April 13<sup>th</sup> Kenny Sun. April 20<sup>th</sup> Tim & Allen Sun. April 27<sup>th</sup> Matthew & Ken P Sun. May 4<sup>th</sup> **Dorian & Bakers** 

#### **CHURCH CLEANERS:**

April: Saturday 5<sub>PM</sub>

May: Sunday 11<sub>AM</sub>

Mass Times:

April: Lisa Parsons & Lisa Demers

Mau: Nora Gies & Anne Loeffelholz

# Canadian Martyr's Parish AGM will take place Sunday May 4th at 12<sub>PM</sub> Everyone welcome!

# Share Lent "Turn Debt Into Hope"

– Bishop Mark Hagemoen's message about Share Lent is on the diocesan website at https://rcdos.ca . Please give generously during the Share Lent collection on Solidarity Sunday, April 6. Find information and resources on the Development and Peace-Caritas Canada website: https://devp.org

# Looking for volunteers to sit at the donation tables for funerals.

Contact the office: 306-256-3218

Chrism Mass - All are welcome to join Bishop Mark Hagemoen and priests from across our diocese for the annual Chrism Mass in Holy Week, 7<sub>PM</sub> Tuesday, April 15. Priests will renew their priestly commitment and the sacred oils used in sacraments across our diocese in the year ahead will be blessed at this diocesan celebration.

Spring Courses at St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission at Bruno, SK offer an opportunity to deepen faith and understanding, while participating in a common schedule of prayer, study, meals and recreation. Courses include: April 6-11 Ignatian Discernment;

**April 6-11** Holistic Sexuality (TeenSTAR program); **April 21-25** Building an Excellent Youth Ministry (hosted by FaceToFace Ministries).

See: https://sttherese.ca/events or call (306) 369-2555.

#### CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF SASKATCHEWAN



Most Rev. Donald Bolen Archdiocese of Regina



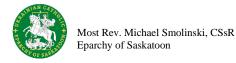
Most Rev. Murray Chatlain Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas



Most Rev. Mark Hagemoen Diocese of Saskatoon



Most Rev. A. Stephen Hero Diocese of Prince Albert



#### **Dying with Hope: Living and Walking Together**

On February 6, 2017, the Catholic Bishops of Saskatchewan wrote a pastoral letter titled "On Living through our Dying". In it, we addressed the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide, euphemistically known as Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD). The message of "On Living through our Dying" holds even greater significance today as the practice of medically assisted death continues to grow and expand in our country.

We begin this new pastoral letter by repeating the same invitation we offered eight years ago:

Our faith invites us to live and die with trust in the God who gave us breath. We mourn any time a person seeks to end their own life. Our calling at this time and in this place is to form ourselves well in a Christian understanding of living and dying, so that we can witness to the world that there is another way.

The Church's teaching across the whole breadth of issues touching on human life is consistent and credible. Too often, her stance against the intentional taking of an innocent human life is heard as a "no." But in saying "no" to assisted suicide, the Church is saying "yes" to accompaniment; "yes" to community; "yes" to solidarity with the suffering; and "yes" to caring for those who need it most. Indeed, it is because of these commitments that we can confidently reject acts that fail to recognize the dignity of each human person.

#### We Begin by Listening

Many of you have been touched, as we have, by the experience of losing family, friends and community members to assisted suicide. Responses to these situations have been as intense as they are varied. We have heard descriptions of feeling shut out of end-of-life decision making and guilt over not being able to prevent a medically administered death.

Genuine empathy and the influence of romanticized accounts of assisted suicide in the media lead many individuals to sympathize with those who choose a medically administered death. Above all, we hear and appreciate your profound anger and sadness when supporters of assisted suicide portray the Christian gift of accompaniment to natural death as merciless, even cruel. It is still common to encounter the objection that a rejection of assisted death implies an insistence on

using every possible means to prolong life, despite burden or cost. The Catholic Church does not insist on this. There comes a time to accept death graciously. That is far different from willfully causing it.

We recognize that our healthcare system is also struggling. Strained caregivers sometimes feel that death would be preferable to providing inadequate care. As a result, they may offer assisted suicide as a solution to the heart-wrenching suffering that they find themselves unable to relieve. Assisted suicide is also actively promoted by the health care system as a favoured option. Medically administered death is readily accessible and, in some cases, is provided within twenty-four hours of an assessment, whereas support for chronic pain management, daily living, and palliative care can take weeks or months to access.

As Catholic Bishops, we think it is very important that we as Church listen to and also speak on behalf of the vulnerable. Increasingly, vulnerable people are being forced into terrible choices by a system that offers aid in dying but fails by not always offering aid in living. We are called to speak on behalf of faithful health care workers, heirs of a long and proud tradition of compassion and care in our province, who seek the support and resources to provide dignified, life-affirming care. Finally, as Church we are called to give voice to the Word spoken by God, the Lord and giver of life, defender of the weak and the oppressed, who calls us to "never tire in firmly speaking out in defense of life." (St. John Paul II, *Address to Visiting Bishops*, 3 February 2001)

#### **Christian Hope**

Christians are uniquely qualified to imbue the experience of suffering and dying with hope. This is so because we have come to believe and trust in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ's victory over death makes us a people of hope. In this world, we strive to be faith-filled disciples of Christ, who is the guarantor of our hope.

At this moment in our history, we wish to repeat the words of Christ: "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid" (Mat 14:27). This is the repeated message of the Scriptures. Consider young David as he faces Goliath (1 Sam 17), Moses and the Israelites as they trek through the wilderness (Ex 14 – 40), the woman healed after being crippled for many years (Luke 13:10-17) or the man lame from birth who finds healing at the Beautiful Gate after so much struggle (Acts 3). Life confronts us with many difficult circumstances, but we are assured of God's unwavering love and guidance illuminating our path: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

Our longstanding Catholic commitment to healthcare encourages us to confront the current challenges head-on. We support a vision of healthcare as *medical assistance in living* and assert that the genuine autonomy of vulnerable persons requires uncompromising support for them and their families to live fruitful lives. We do well to ask: Where is our constitutional right to suitable housing, aid for disabled persons and palliative care? Why is a "constitutional right" to death at the forefront of discussion about care for the elderly? What meaning does "autonomy" have when

death is offered while support in living is withheld? In such a context, "choice" is not experienced as freedom, but as a threat.

Christian communities are called to challenge this false notion of autonomy and bear witness to the intrinsic value of those who are dying or living with chronic illness. Our hope is manifest in concrete actions. Every kindness, smile, word of encouragement or difficult administrative decision that testifies to our hope is an embrace, wrapping vulnerable people in the warmth of our love

#### Action

Given the challenges that we face today, there are three practical things we encourage you to do:

First, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has developed an excellent program called *Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care*. This program promotes and assists us in understanding what is involved in living and dying well. Supporting and participating in this program expresses our hope.

Second, entering into conversations about dying can help us to overcome our fear of death. Accordingly, we invite you to fill out a *Faith Based Advanced Care Directive*. This directive is available from the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan. It will help to inform your family, friends, health care professionals, and appointed proxy/proxies about your treatment wishes when you lack the capacity to make health care decisions.

Finally, commit yourself to accompanying vulnerable individuals as they navigate our healthcare system, including hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities. Increasingly, medical personnel are suggesting the idea of a medically administered death to those who are vulnerable because of a serious diagnosis. Often the patient will acquiesce with devastating consequences. Supporting individuals as they consider complex healthcare decisions or receive care is a gift to both the individual who is seeking care and the person who faithfully stands with them.

#### Walking Faithfully

In conclusion we want to recall again the message of our pastoral letter "Living through our Dying":

... God has called us to walk through this life together, and this includes journeying with people to the end of their days on earth. Now more than ever, our world needs to know that we will not leave them to face their dying alone.

May the God who came to earth and showed us how to live and die draw near to us as we walk faithfully in a culture that has forgotten how to die well. May we receive the courage and strength of the Spirit that we need to be witnesses to the gift of living through dying. And may our hearts be fixed on Jesus, who has walked this path before us to show us the way.

Given on March 25, 2025, the Solemnity of the Annunciation.

Sincerely,

Most Rev. Donald Bolen Archbishop of Regina Most Rev. Murray Chatlain Apostolic Administrator Keewatin-Le Pas Most Rev. Mark Hagemoen Bishop of Saskatoon

+ Stephen a. Hero

Most Rev. Stephen A. Hero Bishop of Prince Albert Most Rev. Michael Smolinski, CSsR Bishop of the Eparchy of Saskatoon

+ Michael Smolinder; C.Ss. R.

# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent: Judge Not

"When you are spiritually connected, you are not looking for occasions to be offended, and you are not judging and labeling others. You are in a state of grace in which you know you are connected to God...." Wayne Dyer

What God wants is not the death of the sinners but that they may repent and live (Ezekiel 18:32). In his wisdom God understands our weakness, and in his mercy he forgives our sins. The factthat we have all sinned, and therefore stand continually in need of God's mercy, will make us refrain from casting stones at others.

Once upon a time a man was caught stealing and was brought before the king, who immediately gave orders that he be hanged. However, as he was being led to the gallows, the man told the prison governor that he knew a wonderful secret, which was taught him by his father. He claimed that using this secret he could plant the seed of a pomegranate and make it grow and bear fruit overnight. He said that it would be a pity if the secret died with him, and that he was willing to reveal it to the king. The governor was so impressed that he halted the execution, and brought the man back before the king. There the man dug a hole in the ground, and taking a pomegranate seed said, 'Your Majesty, the seed must be planted by a person who has never taken anything that didn't belong to him. I being a thief cannot do it.' Then turning to one of the king's officials he said, 'Maybe you would like to plant it.'

But the official refused, saying, 'In my younger days I kept something that didn't belong to me.' Then the man turned to the king's treasurer and said, 'Well then, maybe you would like to plant it.' But the treasurer too refused, saying, 'Over the years I've handled a lot of money. Now and again I might have kept a little for myself.'

And so it went on. Finally there was only the king left. Turning to him the man said, 'Perhaps your Majesty would do the honour of planting the seed. But the king said, 'I'm ashamed to say it, but once I kept a watch that belonged to my father.'

Then the thief said, 'All of you are great and powerful people wholack nothing. Yet none of you can plant the seed, while I who have stolen a little because I was starving, am about to be hanged.'

The king pardoned him. That story would have ended very differently if the king had not been prepared to listen.

The Gospel scene could have ended in a very ugly manner. If Jesus had gone along with the script of the Scribes and Pharisees, the woman would have died a horrible death. Instead, thanks to the understanding and compassion Jesus showed her, she was able to put it behind her and make a new start.

The fact that Jesus didn't condemn her does not mean that he thought lightly of adultery. He realised that she had already been condemned. What she needed now was compassion. He treated her in such a way that it made her want to reform her life.

There is a difference between judging people or correcting them. Judging involves forming an opinion or evaluation about someone's character, actions, or worth, often based on beliefs or norms. The intent may be to criticize or condemn rather than to help.

Correcting someone involves providing guidance or feedback aimed at helping him/her improve or make better choices, often based on a shared understanding of what is considered right or beneficial. The intent is generally constructive, focusing on the well-being of the other person. It reflects a desire to support and encourage positive change.

Jesus refused to condemn her, rather he corrected her and did it so gently. His mission was about mercy and forgiveness, not judgement and condemnation. We must learn from the example of Jesus not to condemn. At the same time, we must not refrain from correcting others. But there is an art is doing so. It consists in being totally kind and totally honest at the same time when giving a correction.

**Prayer:** 

Thank you, Jesus

Thank you, Lord