

Like every Sunday the Scriptural readings of this weekend tells us something about who is the God we worship, who Jesus is for us and who I, we, are called to be. In **Genesis 22: 1-8** we have the story of Abraham being asked to sacrifice his son Isaac (I wonder what Sarah thought about all this!). We need to remember that pagan rituals of sacrificing the first born son to appease the gods were common. The God of Israel was not such a God, a different God, the God of life! Abraham and Israel needed to learn this. The same is true about the Gospel, **Mark 9:2-10**: the God of Jesus is not demanding that Jesus be killed; Jesus offers himself so we might live. Jesus and his disciples needed to learn this.

Both these stories happen on a mountain, because it is on a mountain that biblical people meet God, have visions and revelations; revelations about who God is and how different God is from other gods; revelations of what God is asking from the person, from the people. Each one of the characters involved, Abraham (and Sarah), Moses and Elijah, Jesus, they are believers who are faithful to God to the point of suffering for their faith, making enormous sacrifices leading even to death. Jesus strove to be faithful to God and to the mission he freely took on and because of that he was killed.

In our history and in our present world there are innumerable examples of people who have freely decided to follow their conscience, the voice from within, in order to sacrifice their desires for themselves for their careers. Abraham sacrificed his desire for an offspring, his hopes and security. Jesus sacrificed his life with God: "... did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, ..humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross (**Philippians 2: 6-9**).” **Today we have people, parents, grandparents, care givers, teachers, leaders, etc. who choose to stand on basic principles of justice, equity and compassion and who witness to their children, to others, by acts of courage and generosity. Like Abraham they are willing in a sense to “sacrifice” their children, teach them what is essential and most important, to give up money, prestige, careers and instead to give of themselves for others. You meet such people everywhere, in all cultures and races, in all faiths; they see their lives and their mission in a different light; they are transfigured. They all have been led up a mountain in order to be given a vision about God, a vision of their true self and a vision about sacrifice.**

In the Gospel Jesus is “transfigured”, which really means that the disciples for a fleeting moment really recognize the true identity of Jesus as a person: how connected he was to God, how connected he was to their ancestors Moses and Elijah, how he was far more than a healer or miracle worker. A person is transfigured when something breaks through the surface and uncovers the hidden potential for all to see and to follow. The disciples are told **“This is my beloved son, listen to him”** and then, when back on earth, they are shown that listening to and following Jesus is not going to be easy, will include a great deal of sacrifice, of self-giving. **Whenever there are people who en flesh God’s plan for a reign of justice, of forgiveness and reconciliation, of true peace and love, they, like Jesus, will be put to death out of fear, the pursuit of power and greed and self-interest.**

We are all led or called to scale a mountain so that our true self can be revealed, the self which we wish to be or to become, the self which God wishes us to be, the self which deep within our DNA is there.

Our Lenten journey invites us to see that spark of divinity within ourselves and in our world; to imagine and discover or rediscover our possibilities as individuals and as communities, and then to open and give ourselves to others and create a better world.

The light that we need to see ourselves and our world in that way does not usually come in spectacular visions. That light is present in the ordinary daily down-to-earth events of our life. Each one is an opportunity, an occasion to become a transfiguration experience. No doubt, reflecting or looking back you may have had a transfiguration experience when something, someone or an experience lived made you see people or events in a whole new and wonderful light. In light of the Gospel of the Transfiguration resurrection has already begun and our lives are already being transformed for those who look beneath the surface.

This is true not just of ourselves as individuals but also true of us as a community, as a people, as a race, as a culture, as a religion, as a species. No matter who we are we can and need to learn from one another: peoples can and need to learn from other peoples; races can and need to learn from other races; religions can and need to learn from other faiths. The pandemic, the examples of racism, of nationalism and extremism which we are living these days, all remind us once more how connected we are, how we can and need to learn from one another, how we need each other and how we need to, in fact must, work together, how we are all “fratelli tutti.”

Take time during this Lenten journey to slowly read and reflect on Pope Francis’ beautiful encyclical “Fratelli Tutti” and see how you can contribute to a better world.

This past week in the lectionary we have had the story of Jonah and the whale (read the short book of Jonah in the Bible). Jonah thought that he knew it all, that his God would punish the Ninevites. But he had to learn that his Creator compassionate and merciful God was also the Creator compassionate and merciful God of the people of Nineveh and that he needed to have a transfiguration experience to see how he could and needed to learn from the people of Nineveh. I invite you to enjoy this video of a young girl enthusiastically telling the story of Jonah: <https://youtu.be/qvdKpNB8M2s> NOTE! Upon opening the video, click on the closed caption “CC” symbol located at the bottom right corner of the youtube screen so that the actual lyrics come up as she is speaking..it will be easier to follow 😊



We offer condolences to the family and pray for the repose of the souls of:

- ***Ian Ronald Anderson***, (son of John and Anne Anderson) who died on Feb. 14
- ***Rita Fox*** who died on Feb 17

All are welcome to come inside St. Elizabeth's when the doors are unlocked for quiet reflection and prayer. Please maintain protocols.

Please, continue to reach out to others by phone, in prayer. Thank you; shalom, fr Rolf, op

Join **Bishop Gary Gordon** for mass, Monday to Friday at 7 PM as well as on Sundays at 10 AM through live stream from the Cathedral. Simply click on: www.rcdvictoria.org/diocese-of-victoria-live-stream. To keep connected to the various communities in our Diocese, check out the weekly blog's at: <https://www.rcdvictoria.org/diocesanblog>

UPDATED BC PUBLIC HEALTH RESTRICTIONS - [Click Here](#)

- **[As of February 5 Masses in all BC churches will continue to be suspended until further notice.](#) This is true for religious services of all faith groups.**

- You are **required to wear a mask** when entering the St. Elizabeth Church in Sidney which is open for individual prayer visits during office hours provided you observe protocols.

- The celebration of **baptisms, weddings and funerals** continue to be possible but with limitations (**10 persons only**) and observance of strict protocols. If you wish to receive the **Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession)**, please, contact Fr. Rolf to arrange for a day and time.

- The **hospital and home Visiting Ministries** will continue to be by phone or electronically.

2020 TAX RECEIPTS & 2021 ENVELOPES - PLEASE PICK UP!

Receipts & Envelopes in the foyer of St. Elizabeth's during office hours: Tues. to Fri. 9:00 am – noon or whenever the church doors are unlocked.

DONATIONS

If you plan on dropping off or sending your regular weekly offertory envelopes, please try and consolidate your white envelope givings into one cheque and into one envelope, rather than putting your contributions into 3 or 4 separate white envelopes. Our counters appreciate your help!

E-TRANSFER DONATIONS CAN BE SENT DIRECTLY TO OUR PARISH

Effective immediately, E-Transfer donations can come directly to spparish@shaw.ca .

Our bank account is set-up with “**Auto-Deposit**” feature and therefore **we do not require a security question to complete the transfer**. Thank you for all your weekly donations, including Pre-Authorized Debit's (PAD's). Your generosity is helping the Parish to stay afloat.

CALLING ON ALL YOUNG ARTISTS AGES 5 TO 16 YRS!

Carla Fretwell is encouraging all youth artists to participate in the **5th Annual Fine Arts & Poster Contest** with the theme “Fratelli Tutti” or “*Brothers & Sisters All*”. Please click on the link below to see all the contest details including the poster categories by age group, along with prizes and entry form.

Entries must be submitted by no later than March 26!

<https://www.olota.org/moodle/pluginfile.php/2/course/section/23/5th%20Annual%20Fine%20Arts%20%20Poster%20Contest%20Info2021.pdf>

“VIRTUAL CONCERT” FOR THE PEOPLE IN ALEPPO, SYRIA

People who viewed this concert last Sunday shared very positive comments about the talent of these young musicians. The concert can still be viewed by clicking here: <https://youtu.be/nO9j7NmhRYc>

This “Virtual” Benefit for the Blue Marists of Aleppo, features our very own **Joseph Shudian** along with other accomplished musicians. You may remember that our parish decided that instead of sponsoring a family from Syria that we would help the displaced people of Aleppo, Syria.

Here's a short description provided by Joseph Shudian of what the Blue Marists in Aleppo do:

“They work on improving the situation for Syrians through many different activities, which are divided into 3 types of programs:

- 1.) **Aid & Relief**, such as providing a hot meal with bread and fruit for 150 elderly people living alone, with no family left in Syria and no one to help them.
- 2.) **Educational**, such as teaching the skills of sewing to young women, mothers and spouses of the displaced families, to help them find a job or for personal reasons.
- 3.) **Human Development**, such as recycling old clothing and remains of fabrics to fashionable pieces that can be sold, providing a job opportunity for the persons in this project while respecting the environment and reducing waste.”

DONATIONS can be made by dropping off cash or cheque (made out to **Saanich Peninsula Parish** with a memo stating “**For Aleppo Project**” or by E-Transfer to spparish@shaw.ca ***Please make sure to mention in the message that it's for the Aleppo Project!*** **Thank you to all those who have already donated!**

Here is a collage of photos showing some of the activities and classes done through the Blue Marists of Aleppo!



LENTEN BOOKLETS

The St. Vincent De Paul Society has provided Lenten Booklets by Joan Chittister. They are located in the lobby of St. Elizabeth's for a suggested donation of \$5 with the proceeds going to SSVD.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS ZOOM INVITE

Stations of the Cross via Zoom will begin every Friday at 9am starting on February 19 until April 2, 2021. Please click on the Zoom Meeting link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85982329559?pwd=YVNvbkFQUdVHLzZwT1B2V1dTRQ1I1UT09>

Meeting ID: 859 8232 9559

Passcode: cwl One tap mobile +14388097799,,85982329559#,,, *478321# Canada

PRAYING THE ROSARY VIA ZOOM

The Rosary will be continuing on Wednesdays through Lent. CWL invites you to join their weekly Rosary on Wednesdays at 9:30am; hosted via Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84574603894?pwd=SXFIVUtScm82Vm93L09FaTdTZFQ3dz09>

Meeting ID: 845 7460 3894

Passcode: CWL; One tap mobile: +15873281099,,84574603894#,,, *816531# Canada

Nurturing Friendship, Directory for Catechesis in Dialogue with the Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti

The CCCB Office for Evangelization and Catechesis will offer a four-part webinar series, "Nurturing Friendship. Beginning March 2, 2021 the series will explore how the themes of these two documents call catechists to be people of hope who promote human dignity and communion with God by building bridges and asking 'Who is my neighbour?'

... it is important that catechesis and preaching speak more directly and clearly about the social meaning of existence, the fraternal dimension of spirituality, our conviction of the inalienable dignity of each person, and our reasons for loving and accepting all our brothers and sisters. (FT 86)

Keynote speakers from across the country will draw insight from the two documents and propose concrete ways to help form communities of missionary disciples within dioceses, eparchies, parishes, and schools. The series is designed for those who have responsibility for evangelization and catechesis including, clergy, consecrated persons, laity involved in ministry, directors and coordinators of evangelization and catechesis, and Catholic educators.

Consult the attached PDF flyer for specific topics, dates, times, and registration. The webinar series is offered at no cost. [Please click here to access the online registration form.](#) For more information, contact Mrs. Marg Shea-Lawrence at m.shea-lawrence@cccb.ca.

Pope's Prayer Intention for the month of February:

During this month of February Pope Francis is inviting us to pray for women who have experienced violence (psychological, verbal, physical, and sexual), which he describes as the "degradation of all humanity". We are called to pray for victims that they may be "protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded by all". Please, click on link below:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-02/pope-s-prayer-intention-for-february.html>

SHARE LOVE, SHARE LENT

The **Share Love, Share Lent** campaign is inspired by Pope Francis's encyclical, Fratelli Tutti and its call "for a love that transcends... geography and distance" and "allows us to acknowledge, appreciate and love each person." Each week, the campaign explores a different aspect of Development and Peace's work and offers you ways to become involved. Discover activities and join Catholics across Canada on a journey of love and solidarity throughout the Lenten period.

This week we have a story from Lebanon; The Gospel reading for the first Sunday of Lent marks the start of Jesus's journey in the desert. Around the world, millions of women, children and men risk their lives on perilous journeys as they flee conflict zones or ecological disasters. Take a moment to watch a short video about Aysha, a Syrian refugee in Lebanon, whom Development and Peace's partners are helping. She is just one of the 80 million people displaced in the world today. (scroll down a little bit to see the video): <https://www.devp.org/en/lentcalendar-2021>