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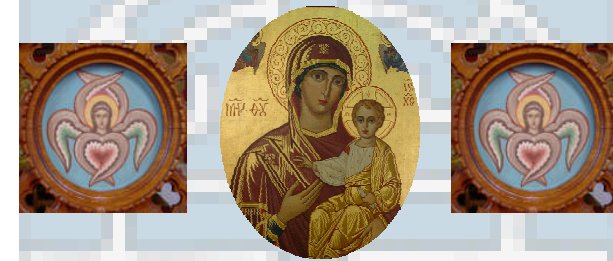
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SAINT NICHOLAS
UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



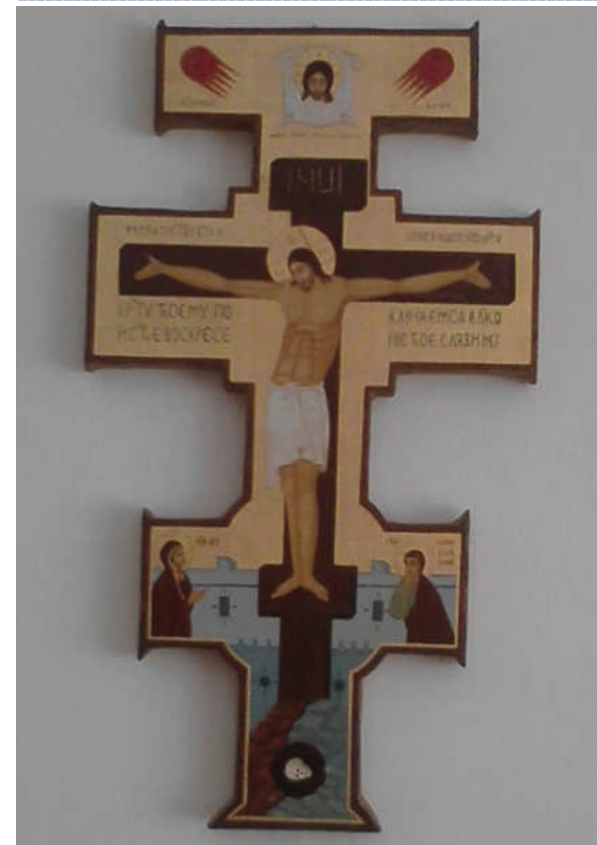
УКРАЇНЬКА КАТОЛИЦЬКА
ЦЕРКВА СВЯТОГО МИКОЛАЯ

UNDER THE PROTECTION
OF MOTHER OF GOD



ПІД ОПІКОЮ ПРЕЧИСТОЇ
ДІВИ МАРІЇ ОДІГІТРІЇ

CHURCH BULLETIN - N^o12
March 18 - 2012 - 18 Березня
ЦЕРКОВНИЙ ВІСНИК - Ч.12



Через хрест Господь хоче не мучити нас, а звільнити, показати, що все ми отримуємо від Нього. Роздумуючи над своїм життям, стараючись зрозуміти, як Бог нас веде, ми починаємо усвідомлювати, що ми, люди, є тими, хто просить, надіється, довіряє і отримує. Ісус Христос сказав: «якщо Ви не станете такими, як діти, не увійдете в Небесне Царство». Дитина не має турбот: вона знає, що тато і мама її люблять, що вони про неї подбають, що вона від них усе отримає. Тільки тоді, коли ми дійдемо до дитинного розуміння свого ставлення до Бога, почуватимемося вільні і щасливі. Господь Бог веде нас до цього своїми щоденними маленькими випробуваннями, тим, що ми називаємо хрестом. (Патр. Л. Гузар)

+++

Хресту твоєму, поклоняємося
Владико, і святее воскресіння
твоє славимо!

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Mar. 18: 4 S. Of Lent – 4 Н. Посту **T7**

12:00 AM +Halyna Szczerba (Ivan Szczerba & Myroslava Szczerba Bertalan)

Mon., Mar. 19 – Пон., 19 Березня

8:15 AM +Ярослава Борачок (р. Дякун)

Tue., Mar. 20 – Вівторок, 20 Березня

9:00 AM +Frana Bodnarsky
(Dudkiewicz Family)

Wednesday, Mar. 21 – Серeda, 21 Березня

12:00 PM Літургія Наперед Осв. Дарів
Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts

Thu., March 22 – Чет., 22 Березня

8:15 AM Євгенія Сукмановська
(Ярослав і Галя Мочерняки)

Fri., March 23 – П'ят., 23 Березня

5:30 PM Літургія Наперед Осв. Дарів
Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts
Sorokousty - Сорокоусти

Sat., March 24 – Субота, 24 Березня

9:00 AM +Анна Седлярчук (А. Мельник)
4:30 PM For Parishioners – За Парохіян

Mar. 25: 5 S. Of Lent – 5 Н. Посту **T8**

12:00 AM Living and deceased members of
Sitch

Молитва св. Єфрема Сирина (+373)

Господи і Владико життя мого, духа
лінивства, недбалости, властолюб'я і
пустослов'я віджини від мене. *(поклін)*

Духа чистоти, покори, терпеливості і
любви дай мені слугі твоєму. *(поклін)*

Так, Господи царю, дай мені бачити
провини мої, і не осуджувати брата мого ні
сестри моєї, бо ти благословен єси на віки
вічні. Амінь! *(поклін)*

ПОР'ЯДОК СВ. ЛІТУРГІЙ

18 Березня: 3 Неділя Посту **T7**

10:00 р. +Пилип Плотиця (Дружина)

25 Березня: 4 Неділя Посту **T8**

10:00 р. +Іван, Анастасія, Марія,
Микола, Алекса, Василь
(Катерина Лехновська)

49. відділ СУА запрошує на смачний
обід сьогодні, 18 березня по Св. Літур-
гії. Будемо просити даток за обід.
Просимо прийти і провести приємно
час в колі приятелів і знайомих!

Branch 49 of UNWLA requests your
presence at a lunch on Sun., March 18,
after the 10:00 am Liturgy. There will
be a donation requested for the lunch.
Please come and enjoy the time with
your friends and parishioners!

Eternal Light burns for
+Phylp Plotycia (wife Maria)

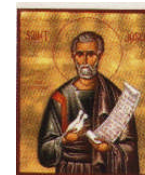
Вічне Світло в честь ПДМ горить
+Антон Вішку (Родина)

Prayer of St. Ephrem

O Lord and Master of my life, Take
away from me the will to be lazy and to be
sad, the desire to get ahead of other peo-
ple, to boast and brag. *(Profound bow)*

Give me instead, a pure and humble
spirit, the will to be patient with other
people and to love them. *(Profound bow)*

Let me realize my own mistakes, and
keep me from judging the things other
people do. For you are blessed, now and
forever, Amen. *(Profound bow)*



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(716) 894-1772

UPCOMING CHURCH EVENTS

Просимо звернути
увагу на дати:



Sunday Coffee Hours: If any one would like to volunteer to host a Sunday, please contact Elaine, Dora, Emily, Mary (B.) or Anna.

- **KITCHEN** – is open Fridays 11 AM - 3 PM. Thank you for your help and patronage.
- **Coffee Hour** - Usually Every Sunday after Liturgy in Church Hall. Please join us!

SUA 49 Dinner – March 18 aft. 10 Liturgy

TOP'S GIFT CARDS:

Please help us raise money for our Church by purchasing



Top's Gift Cards from us. If you buy in Tops anyway, why not help. You do not lose or gain anything by doing this, but our Church will benefit greatly. We receive back 5% of your spending. To take advantage of this program, see Mary Bodnar or call 655-3810, or call the rectory. Thank you and God Bless!

Please note: You can purchase gasoline with this card at Tops Gasoline Station.

У нас успішно продаються Карточки з крамниці "Топс". Купуючи їх ви допомагаєте церкві. Для Вас не робить різниці чи ви платили грішми чи карточкою, але церква дістане від „Топс” 5%. На \$1,000 церква одержить \$50. Що б закупити слід звертатися до п. Марії Боднар, або до канцелярії. Дякуємо! Також можна цією карточкою купувати бензину.

CHURCH BULLETIN is published weekly. Deadline for information is Friday Evening.

ЦЕРК. ВІСНИК видається тижнево
Інформації подавати до четверга вечора.

SAINT NICHOLAS

UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
УКРАЇНСЬКА КАТОЛИЦЬКА ЦЕРКВА
СВЯТОГО МИКОЛАЯ
(ПІД ОПІКОЮ ПРЕЧИСТОЇ
ДІВИ МАРІЇ ОДІГІТРИЇ)

Parish E-Mail: stnbuffalo@yahoo.com

Web Page: <http://www.stnbuffalo.com>

Dioc. Web: <http://www.stamforddio.org>

308 Fillmore Avenue, Buffalo, N. Y. 14206

Rectory: (716) 852-7566

Fax: 855-1319 ~ **Kitchen:** 852-1908

Confession: Before Liturgies

Сповідь: Перед Св. Літургіями

Baptism: By appointment

Хрещення: За домовленням

Marriage: Contact 6 months in advance

Вінчання: Голоситися 6 місяців скорше

Religion classes – Релігійна Програма

Saturday 11:45 AM – Субота 11:45 р.

Ministry to the sick - Опіка над хворими

Family members should call the Rectory

Родина повинна повідомити священика

IN EMERGENCY CALL ANY TIME

В разі потреби завжди можна закликати

Rev. Raymond Palko, visiting priest

V. Rev. Marijan Procyk, pastor & dean

**Please call if you are hospitalized,
homebound and need a priest.**

**Просимо закликати якщо ви у
лічниці або приковані до ліжка!**

DONATIONS TO ST. NICHOLAS

To the Church

IMO Mary Petryshyn

Peter Petryshyn - \$100.00

Andrij & Maria Petryshyn - \$100.00

League of Ukrainian Catholics, Niagara

Frontier Council \$600.00

Rev. Walter Werbicki - \$100.00

Peter Maxim - \$2500.00

“Special Appeal”

IMO Peter Polisczczuk

Natalia Krawczuk - \$100.00

Mykola & Tania Paslawsky - \$25.00

Dmytro & Dolores Baranyckyj - \$20.00

Myron & Zenia Burak - \$10.00

Donations Towards Coffee Hour

(Coffee Hour Benefits- Yearly Communication Assessment Fee)

Eva Kowtalo

Thank You! Дякуємо!

SAVE THE DATE

**Sunday, April 29, 2012 – League of
Ukrainian Catholics Spaghetti
Dinner to benefit the Msgr. Paul
Iwachiw Scholarship Fund**

The Liturgical Choir of the Buffalo Deanery will have rehearsal for the Easter season on Monday, March 27, 2012 in St. Nicholas Church Hall at 7:00PM. Any one interested in joining the choir is most welcome.

ОБ'ЄДНАННЯ ЖІНОК - ОЧСУ
Відділ Боффало, Н.Й.
і Жіночий Хор «Мрія»
Влаштовує

ВЕЛИКОДНИЙ БАЗАР

Неділя, 25-го березня, 2012р.
після Богослуження
в церкві, св. Миколая, 308 Філмор
вул.

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Картки!!

Писанки!! Гердани!!

Ласкаво Просимо!

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EASTER BAZAAR

Baked Goods!!

Delicious

Lunch!!

Ukrainian Greeting
Cards!!

Pysanky!! Ger-
dany!!

St. Nicholas Church, 308 Fillmore Ave.

Sunday, March 25th, 2012
after the Liturgy ends.

Everyone is most cordially invited!!!



Opening our Hearts To the Buffalo City Mission

До 1. Квітня збираємо убрання у доброму стані, коци і конзерви для «City Mission».

Просимо перечитати по англійськи.

“What you do to the least of my brethren, you do to me” (Matthew 25:40). The religious education students here at Saint Nicholas Parish will be running an **Open our Hearts** collection of food and items for the Buffalo City Mission. They are asking parishioners to bring in any extra can good items, blankets, or clothing to the Church on Sundays, in order to help those who are in need on a daily basis at the Buffalo City Mission. Religion students /or their teachers will be collecting these items at the end of each Liturgy, throughout the remainder of Great Lent. We ask that you help our Parish “Open its Heart” to those who are less fortunate, especially during this time of Lent, so that the love of our Savior can reach out to all our brothers and sisters in need. As you know, the City Mission is funded in part by the Catholic Diocese and other agencies, but they are always in need of non-perishable food items, blankets, and clothing. Our religious education students would like to run this **Open our Hearts** collection for the Buffalo City Mission as another church-based community outreach program. It is so important for our youth to know that they can still make a difference, especially during these difficult economic times. With the world changing every day, we want to encourage our Ukrainian Youth to take an active role in spreading the message of Christ throughout the community. Please consider donating any non-perishable items, blankets /or clothing to this worthy cause. Religion students will be collecting every Sunday through April 1, 2012. When we take the time to **Open our Hearts**, our drawers and our cupboards - to Christ - we can and we will make a difference!

SITCH DINNER MEETING

Sunday, March 25, 2012

at Joseph Hriczko Post,
Clemon St., Buffalo, NY after

12:00 pm Liturgy for the reposed and living members of Sitch at

St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church
COCKTAILS at 1:00 pm DINNER

at 1:30 pm includes refreshments
Meeting to be held after dinner.

Dinner cost is \$10.00 for members
and \$15.00 for guests.

Membership dues of \$5.00 for the 2012 year must be current and may be paid at the door. For reservations call:

Mike Liskiewicz 837-0285 or

Maria Malaniak 668-5105

Reservation deadline is March 18, 2012

You are invited
to attend

LUC - League of
Ukrainian Catholics of America
Annual Retreat

St. Mary's in Sloatsburg, NY

Theme:

“Bread of the Journey”

V.Rev. Msgr George Appleyard

March 23, 24 & 25, 2012

\$175.00

If interested please
call ASAP:

201-843-3960

E-Mail: mc.hrubic@att.net or
omfaryna@aol.com (sr. Olga)

З радія "Милосердний Самарянин"



50 років тому, у 1962, благопокийний Патріярх Йосиф Сліпий так писав у своєму посланні з нагоди Великого посту:

«У ці Великопосні дні стає нам перед очі ясніше, як ніколи, правда жертви і любові Христа до нас. Її треба добре собі пригадати і відсві-

жити в пам'яті. Своїми терпіннями і смертю Спаситель вповні заслужив нам відкуплення і спасіння від гріха, але в своїй все мудрості Він оставив і частину страдань для нас, щоби ми із свого боку спричинялись і лучились з Ним тісно в ділі нашого відкуплення. Щоби ми склали свої тіла на жертву живу, святу, милу Богові (Рим 12, 1). Вправді Бог зсилає на нас всякі терпіння, але Він хоче, щоби ми і добровільно і радо брали на себе якісь хрести і умертвлення, не лякались болю в ім'я віри, поконували свої пристрасті і забаганки, нехить і отяжілість, відмовляли собі деякі приємності та тим засвідчили нашу добру волю в службі і любові Христа. Так треба розуміти слова св. Павла в посланні до Євреїв, що без жертви нема спасіння. Христос провів сорок днів на відлюдді і в самоті, в горячій молитві і строгому пості. Цей приклад ставить нам перед очі св. Церква, бо піст і молитва, – це найпевніші засоби спасіння. Вони поскромлюють і очищують тіло і душу християнської людини і доводять її до св. Сповіді і св. Причастя, бо ними повинно кінчитись великопосне каєння. Тоді щойно належно може кожний християнин празднувати Христове Воскресіння. Нехай, отже, ці великопосні застанови, повага і сум в часі пам'яті Христових страстей і смерті, передусім в страсному тижні, осяють Ваші душі і тіла, скріпляють безсилість і надію у всіх прикрятах і недолегливостях. Це справді найсудоворіший час, але і найблагодатніший в християнському році. Світ любить у переситі, надмірному уживанні матеріальних дібр, в їді, напитку і розгнуданості пристрастей, але

він не знаходить в них остаточного вдоволення і щастя. Христова Церква навпаки, поручає навіть любитись в пості і молитві і каєнні, щоби цим заслужити і приготувитись до справдішної душевної радості, в першу чергу до радості з Христового Воскресіння.»

Сьогодні третя неділя великого посту в якій свята церква наказує виставляти хрест до публичного почитання. Кладемо його на тетрапод, щоби розважувати над Христовими страстями, щоби відповідно приготувитись до Господнього Воскресіння.

"Хресту твоєму, поклоняємося Владико, і святее воскресіння твоє славимо", співали ми підчас сьогоднішньої відправи по наших церквах. Ці слова мають скріпити нас у нашій дорозі продовж цього великого посту, щоби наші думки не розгубилися, але щоби ми зосередилися на Христа страждуючого а згодом воскреслого. Щоб у своїх терпіннях ми завжди могли мати надію на наше воскресіння. Щоб нести свій хрест зі зрозумінням, що Господь несе його разом з нами, і ми з Ним безумовно переможемо.

«Нести хрест — означає віддатися Богові цілковито, відкинути самолюбство, нічого собі не притримати» - писав у своєму посланні Патріярх Любомир. «Кожний з нас хоче забезпечити собі майбутнє, сховати щось собі на чорну годину. Часто молоді люди (і в цьому, можливо, полягає трагедія багатьох подружжів) присягаючи одне одному, що готові все віддати своєму коханому чи коханій, хочуть щось трошки зберегти і для себе. Пізніше на цьому тлі зароджуються різні непорозуміння, труднощі і розбрат. Таку саму позицію ми маємо часто і супроти Господа Бога: ми Йому нібито віримо, але про всяк випадок хочемо ще щось залишити і собі, шукаємо якийсь інший можливий вихід. Ми не готові віддати Господу все, стовідсотково прийняти хрест. А Ісус Христос недвозначно каже: віддати все, цілковито, бо саме в цьому полягає значення хреста...»

From the desk of Fr. Ray Palko

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

GLORY FOREVER!

March 18, 2012

Dear _____,
(Your name here, for your very own personal letter)

So how are you doing this week? Have you been able to get outside and enjoy the unseasonable, unusual, but beautiful spring days? I hope so!

It is already 7pm (that would be Daylight Saving Time) on Thursday as I write to you. Most of today was spent outdoors with “the little Martelli’s,” who like the rest of us, have found the best ever cure for “cabin fever.” That cure would be a few beautiful hours outside in the fresh air and sunshine doing whatever we want. It was so much fun to throw rocks in the water, climb up and down steps, carry bird seed to the feeders, have a McDonald’s lunch, and just play outside. Of course they protested when it was time to come in. They are home and, no doubt in their cribs right about now. And tonight, first chance I get, I’m heading for “my cribby,” too! Yep, Martelli’s ten; Didi zero!! In other words, they win! Baba always said, “Oh to have half their energy!!”

Speaking of that, I just moved the computer a bit more to the back of the desk. Don’t want my family to find me with my head in the computer screen! C’mon, admit it, you’ve dozed off at the keyboard, too. ☺ ☺

Last Saturday and Sunday were remarkable days in Niagara Falls because we had a visiting deacon with us for the Liturgy. Father Paul del Junco, who serves in the Eparchy of Toronto at our parish of the Holy Eucharist in Toronto, was passing through and concelebrated both the Saturday and Sunday morning Liturgies with me. It was indeed a joy and a blessing to have him with us! To you, who love the Liturgy and the Feasts, and

especially, if you are in a parish where there is a deacon, I hope you and your priest appreciate the blessing you have. I wish everyone could have the opportunity to pray the services when a deacon is there.

Our deacons are all extremely hard working and devoted ministers who more often than not, have a full time job “out in the world.” They are indeed “angels of the Holy of Holies” and guardians of the Eucharist. When a church is blessed to have the ministry of a deacon it truly becomes a very special place. Deacons are always most welcome in our parish of Holy Protection and we pray that one day God will bless us with a vocation from that church, “For..the Diaconate in Christ.. let us pray to the Lord.”



This upcoming week has two very important dates for us. Remember last week I told you about the opening of the movie, “October Baby” on Friday March 23? It will be playing here in the Buffalo area at *Transit Center 18* in *Williamsville*. If you are not in western NY, please check your local listings for this special and worthwhile movie. I hope to see it so I’ll probably be telling you some more about it.

There is another very important event also scheduled for Friday March 23. Just as the movie will open throughout the country, so too this other event, will be occurring in over one hundred US cities. Next Friday in these many cities there will be a rally entitled “Stand up for Religious Freedom-Stop the HHS Mandate.” Pro-life and religious groups will gather here in Buffalo downtown at the Federal Bldg in defense of religious liberty.

Please check your local diocese to find out if, where and when the rally will be in your area. Everyone who is able must join in this effort to stand up and resist the new and dastardly attack on the Catholic Church in particular, but is, without a doubt an assault on all religious belief. It is so clear what can and will happen to a country that is governed and directed by godlessness! We don’t only have to put God back into our schools, but we must allow Him to be in every part of our lives and being. Hope to see you downtown on Friday! I expect I’ll be writing more about this next week, God willing.

During this time of the Great Fast I hope we are truly putting our priorities in order. What is really important in our life? The city of Buffalo is wild with joy today! Goodness, it’s almost as if there’s a Super Bowl about to be played! You can’t even imagine the craziness of this city over one football player! The reason for all the excitement, salivating reporters, headlines in the paper, and leading stories and further reports on TV is because the Buffalo Bills signed a free agent tight end who is “going to get this team over the hump and make it a winner.” It is incredible how much of our time and effort goes to vain and worldly pursuits. God bless this talented sports star, but even with his 96 million dollars and beautiful girl friend, compared to the grave problems of the world, he is certainly ‘small potatoes’ and not worth the astounding coverage and reporting. Pssst...hey guys, he’s not the Messiah! But I do know about the real Messiah! “Put not your trust in the princes of men,” we hear somewhere in scripture.

There was one other interesting story on the news tonight. It seems there is a pair of nesting Canada geese near one of the local creeks, but near also, to a shopping area. The “problem,” if you can call it that, is the geese attack humans who get too close to the nest. These “dumb birds” know that they have new life in

that nest and they will protect it at all costs, even if it means going up against the intelligent humans. Interesting isn’t it.....Those “dumb birds” know how to protect their new life from the very beginning, but the very smart human beings in so many ways think nothing of protecting our little babies, but even allow them to be killed through the sin of abortion throughout the world. For sure, those two geese parents can teach us a valuable lesson!!

I need to close again for another week, but before I do, I want to be sure you know of my love and prayers for you. Especially if you are sick, grieving, away from us, or just struggling with daily life, please know that we lift you up in our poor prayers. I know some days you, and your care-givers, battle through the times of pain, illness, loneliness and fear. “Our God is a great God, whom shall we fear?!” The good John Paul II often reminded us of those beautiful words of Jesus: “Be not afraid!”

Be happy and hopeful in the Lord. We have already passed the half-way mark of this Great Fast. Pascha is rapidly approaching. Keep up the good fight! May the Lord bless your Fast and lead you to His holy Resurrection!

God willing, and the “Creek” don’t rise, I’ll write again next week. May our holy Lady keep you beneath the mantle of her heavenly protection, and as the saintly Bishop Sheen always said, “God love you!”

In His Love,

Fr. Ray

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Journeying together through the Lent. Discussion about Liturgy, Bible, Rite, Customs ... Every Thursday of Great Lent at 1:00 PM. Please take Part!

(fr. Marijan)

From "Good Samaritan" Ukr. Radio pr.

Today is the fourth Sunday of Great Lent, and on this day in a simple, but sublime way, the Gospel reading reveals to us the path of deliverance, and the tender love and mercy which our Lord holds out to a hurting humanity. Today our lesson opens with a father caught in the grips of an understandable fear, lost in his worry over the illness of his child, this father seeks out Jesus. His child is suffering from a horrible illness, which the Gospel refers to as being tormented by demons; the Apostles cannot seem to cure him no matter how hard they try, so the father goes to Jesus. He comes to Him, explaining how a demon has cast his son into the fire and into the water, and how he could only with great difficulty save his son from being burned or drowned alive. Christ says to the man, "*All things are possible to him that believes.*" This is perhaps the most powerful verse from today's scripture reading, because it reaffirms our hope in the supernatural power of our Lord. If we accept these words of Jesus to be true, if we let them settle into our hearts and especially on those occasions when we feel like our life is a "mess", then now we can truly believe that God can and will do what we ask of Him. That God can turn our "mess" into His message of faith...

We are faced with a dramatic Gospel reading in that each of us can certainly feel the pain and anguish that this father must be going through. His child is sick, and it seems that no one can heal him. Considering when my own son has been ill or needed surgery in the hospital, I think of how badly I needed to cling to the belief that he would be okay. As a parent, we need certainty because the love between a child and a parent is an unbreakable bond. So the father falls before Jesus and asks him to heal his son, the child he loves more than anything in this world. Jesus then says to the man, "*Do you believe that I can do*

this for you"? I often wonder that if Jesus came to you or me today and asked, "*Do you believe that I can do this for you*"? What would we say to Him? The beautiful reality of today's Gospel is that it reminds us of God's unending mercy, and how in light of His compassion and love for us, Christ can and will heal anyone who comes before Him in need. But we must believe that the Lord can and will do what we ask of Him. Torn by years of grief and anguish, this father cried out to Jesus in complete desperation, with tears: "*Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.*" And Jesus takes pity on the father, He accepts his level of faith, and heals the son. "*All things are possible to him that believes.*" Sometimes, we doubt that God can remove from us a certain sin or ailment, because it has plagued us for years. But when we do that, there is this guilt in us that pushes us away from holy things and that causes our disbelief. So because of that temptation, I believe the words of this man are recorded in today's Gospel, so we may more readily believe in the healing power of Christ when it comes to our own afflictions...

When I think of the father in today's Gospel reading and the horrible situation he faced with regards to his son, I think about the "mess" that comes into our lives every now and then. The curve ball we are thrown that changes everything, unexpectedly, and how that sometimes makes us question whether God can do what we ask of Him. This father certainly never thought that his son would grow up to be so ailing as to throw himself into fire and water and act out like a child possessed by an evil spirit. I am sure that when his son was born, this father experienced his greatest joy and imagined the many things that he would one day be able to do together with his son; the many accomplishments that his son would be able to make, and he envisioned what any parent

hopes for when they have the blessing of a child. But today, we realize that nothing which this father hoped for came to fruition and we feel the heartache and the suffering he has endured watching his beloved son go aimlessly through life in great torment and agony. Instead, his son was plagued by a terrible illness and that unexpected "mess" took over their lives, perhaps it even placed a great strain on his family and his marriage – because nothing was what this father had hoped. It reminds me of a story I read about a mother who had similar hopes for her son. He was an all-star athlete, near the top of his class in grade school. This mother dreamed about him making something really special out of his life, she even smiled at the thought of the grandchildren she might have one day, only to have her dreamed shattered when her son ended up in prison serving a life sentence. She wrote about the holidays and how what use to be celebrated around the family table with all the delicious ethnic foods, turned into holidays spent at the prison, sharing food from the vending machine, just so they could still be together and share a meal for Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter. She cried at the thought of her son never having children of his own or the life she had dreamt for him. Like the father in today's Gospel reading, this mother certainly never expected this kind of "mess" to enter into her life either, but then she realized something extraordinary. While visiting her son in prison, she met other mothers facing the same precarious situation, the same hopelessness, and she found out that by sharing their hardships together, they could learn to support each other. She started bringing her Bible to the prison, and she and other mothers would read from the Word of God and discover that their burdens were no longer as great with the Lord by their sides. Somehow her "mess" had become a great message of faith. She found great relief in

scripture and through sharing the word of God with others. It was no longer about her problem, her "mess", but rather it became about reaching out to others in the same predicament and using the message of God to strengthen their faith as well as redeem hers. The father in today's Gospel brought his son before Jesus; he handed over the "mess" in his life and found the greatest message of all. The father's plea to Jesus: "*Lord, I believe, but help my unbelief*" showed great courage and faith which led to Jesus healing his son. When we come face to face with God and respond in obedience, we will see supernatural results. What seemed impossible will be made possible, and our faith will be strengthened, because the Lord will help our unbelief. He will help us move past the "mess" in our lives and make the impossible, possible.

During this time of Great Lent, we need to feed our faith with activity, with fasting, and with prayer. Then, God will hear us when we say, "*Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.*" Jesus will not only hear us; He will bring a steady flow of peace and healing to our souls which will strengthen our belief. Jesus said, "*Blessed are those who have not seen and believe*". We need to trust in the awesome power of God - in what we cannot always see - or risk becoming caged by our own fears and doubts. This reminds me of the African impala, an animal that is capable of jumping nearly nine feet into the air, although it is a very small creature, only about three and a half feet tall. Yet, did you know that any zoo can keep the impala confined to a yard with a stone wall only 4 feet high? Why? Because the impala will never jump anywhere, unless it can see the place where its feet will land! Our faith must be greater than our sight, and our doubts can only be removed when we are willing to maintain a relationship with Christ! ...We must trust that the Lord can and will make us whole again.