

Mass Intentions ~ April 29 - May 5, 2019

Monday @ 7:30 am — Fr. Jerome Boxleither (RIP)

Tuesday @ 7:30 am — Edith Granger (RIP)

Wednesday @ 6:00 pm — Ron Zebrowski (RIP)

Thursday @ 7:30 am — Sarah Favara (RIP)

Friday @ 10:00 am — Healing Mass

Saturday @ 5:30 pm — Valerie Bergsten (RIP)

Sunday @ 8:00 am — People of the Parish (Sp Int)

Sunday @ 10:30 am — Leroy Salazar and Arnold Espinoza (RIP)

New Prayer Requests

Special Intentions:

Richard & Marion Viberg

Carolyn Rehm

John Bonelli

Cindy Luebbert-Forck, friend of Louise Pipitone

(full prayer list on our website & prayer board)

Sacrament of Reconciliation, Saturday. @ 4:30-5:00 pm

Adoration this week: Monday—Thursday, 8 am—12 noon; Friday, 8 am - 10 am

~ notes ~ dates ~ events ~

First Communion Mass @ 8:00 a.m. Mass. Congratulations Students!

Divine Mercy Chaplet, Sunday April 28th @ 9:15 am in the Chapel. Join us in the special prayer.

Healing Mass, Friday, May 3rd @ 10:00 am, followed by a Fellowship Brunch

Final Big Deal Youth Group for this school year on May 1st @ 6:00 pm. A fun-filled night has been planned, so youth will not want to miss this one! Please be on time to begin the fun!

Final Sunday Morning CGS & Religious Ed for this school year on May 5th @ 9:15 am

Second Collection NEXT weekend, May 4/5 for the Catholic Home Missions Appeal

May Crowning of Mary, Sunday May 5th at the beginning of 10:30 Mass. All children are invited to meet in the Family Life Center at 10:15 a.m. to receive a flower and join the procession to crown Mary. The children will join their parents for Mass.

Confirmation, May 8th @ 6:00 pm Mass — All are welcome to join us for this special celebration with Bishop Kopacz.



Office phone: 601-992-9547 Hours: Tuesday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
www.saintpaulcatholicchurch.com



Our mission is to invite everyone into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

**April 28, 2019 ~ Second Sunday of Easter
Divine Mercy Sunday**

Meet the St. Paul Senior Leadership Team

Today, we hear from Rebecca –

I have enjoyed being part of the SLT Senior Leadership Team. I was first asked to take the Strength Finder test to see how my strengths could complement Fr. Gerry's strengths. I enjoyed that process because it revealed how my strengths really do effect how I approach so many things in my life. I was asked to join the team, but I was not sure exactly what this new adventure would be about. I knew Fr. Gerry had been talking about our parish moving from Maintenance to Mission, and at the time our parish was going through ChristLife. How all these pieces fit together was still a puzzle to me. I had some long conversations with God. I needed to know if becoming part of this team was truly where God needed me to be.

I was asked to read Fr. James Mallon's book, *Divine Renovation*. On the back of the book Bill Heusch writes, "A guide to renewing the Church that parish priests and leaders can actually do! Practical, faith-filled, and powerful." I enjoyed this book so much. I began to put the puzzle pieces together, and I was intrigued. Each chapter in the book was confirmation that parishes need to come up with new evangelization methods and a new leadership model.

The leadership chapter was the piece I really enjoyed. First it pointed out that we need a new leadership module for our pastor — one that allows Fr. Gerry to focus on preaching the Word of God, celebrating the sacraments, and leading our people. This is why they became priests. All too often, our priests are dealing with roof leaks, building of churches, budgets, and so many other things throughout the day. I began to see that this team could help Fr. Gerry focus on our people, and as a group we could help him accomplish so much in our parish. Because I work at the diocese, I see so many of our priests having to wear so many hats within their parish and the diocese. I often think our expectations on them are too much. I also liked the idea of ministry leader training that Fr. James talked about. We often ask someone to lead a ministry and leave them out in the cold with no support. Fr. James suggests that we should have leadership retreats to show our leaders they are supported and offer guidance. Guidance that comes not only from the senior leadership team but from other ministry leaders. Many of us receive professional development in our careers, and it made perfect sense to me that we would want the same for the leaders in our parish.

Being on the SLT team does require time. However, I feel that our parish and parishioners are so worth the time. If we all remain focused on our mission and the importance of helping others develop a closer relationship with Jesus, the amount of time has become irrelevant for me. Thank you for allowing me to be part of the Senior Leadership Team. I invite each of you to not only pray that this team continue to make the best decisions for our parish, but I also ask you to pray on where you can be a leader in our parish. There are so many opportunities and it will take all of us together to make St. Paul and even stronger faith-filled community.

I recommend this great podcast from the Divine Renovation Team: go to <https://www.divinerenovation.tv> search the Podcasts for "Renew My Church."

Rebecca Harris

Responding to some of the questions raised during our Lenten Study

Two weeks ago, I shared in the bulletin that our study of *Respectable Sins Confronting the Sins we Tolerate*, raised questions that puzzled, troubled, and intrigued some Small Groups. What a gift! When we question our personal beliefs, we grow in our Faith and relationship with God! I invited everyone to pray and reflect during Holy Week on some of those areas in the book that made you take pause, that stretched you, that made you uncomfortable.

As we began this study, we knew that it would bring to the fore many questions and issues that would challenge us to look at what we believe as individual Catholics, and what we believe collectively, as the Community of the Catholic Church. In other words, what is the official teaching of the Catholic Church on this matter or that? This was one of the reasons we chose this study. We wanted our family members at St. Paul to really extend ourselves — as Jesus says to us, “Put out into deep waters.” That is scary stuff — putting out into the deep. For many of us as Catholics, we like to fish close to the shore, hanging with the tried-and-true answers to our questions, and not expanding the depth and capacity of our Catholic Faith.

There are 3 essential stages in Faith Development :

1. **Faith Given** — *What we learned, what was passed on to us by family, education, Church.*
2. **Faith Questioned** — *When we question what our parents, Church, and others have taught us. We struggle with issues, and acknowledge we may not feel or agree with some of what they taught us or told us. We say that's fine for them, but that's not where I am. That's a healthy process.*
3. **Faith Owned** — *This is where we grow into our own personal faith. We are able to state, this is what I believe (and have a good measure of confidence in that though it may still be refined as I mature). This is what I trust, believe and understand, at least at this point. This is how I celebrate it.*

Faith formation is a lifelong process for each one of us. If we cease seeing ourselves as growing, challenging, and struggling to understand our Faith, then we are settling for a very limited perspective of what it means to have a Personal Relationship with Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is the only valid reason for having and practicing Faith to begin with — to become aware of how deeply and genuinely loved I am by Him, My God and Savior. We just completed a most wonderful celebration of that reality in the Sacred Triduum, Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday. How powerful those days were for all who celebrated!

So, as we reflect on some of the questions raised in our Small Group book study, let's begin with the email from Leigh Ann Mangum. She wrote, “*While I don't believe we are predestined, because that would remove our free will, I do believe God has a plan and knows every detail of our lives before it happens. I found it hard understanding him (the author) saying God allows bad things to happen to us and uses them for good. I also have a hard time believing that God would 'intentionally allow' something bad for us to learn.*”

Leigh Ann wrestles with the idea of understanding God doesn't necessarily prevent bad things happening, yet we see evidence of God intervening when miracles occur. She asks, “*Does God intervene or not? I know God works in mysterious ways. But, when does He choose to take action?*”

So, what do you believe about Predestination?

What does the Church believe about Predestination?

Yes, we as the Catholic Church believe in Predestination, but not the type of Predestination that is often spoken of in our world. We do not believe in a type of Predestination that claims God has a certain number of people in mind who are going to attain the Kingdom, and that is it. Nor do we believe in what is found in the Calvinist tradition, often referred to as ‘Double Predestination.’

That belief appears in the study book and claims that God, “freely and unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass.” It is referred to as ‘Double Predestination’ because it espouses a belief that God predestines some people for Salvation and some for Condemnation.

Our Catholic doctrine teaches that God created us in His image and likeness, that we might have life in Him! It is His will that NOBODY be lost or condemned. However, because of the ‘free will’ which He has given to each one of us, one may choose to not accept His invitation to Life Eternal, and may persist in that state to the end of their life, thus incurring condemnation. We call this Mortal Sin in our Catholic Doctrine. But, Jesus’ own words are very clear on this:

He says, “It is the will of Him who sent Me that I should lose nothing of what He has given me; rather, that I should raise it up on the last day.” (John 6:39)

Many of you will remember the old Catholic Catechism question, “Why did God make the world?” The answer was, “That we should know, love, and serve Him here on earth, and be happy with Him forever in Heaven.” It was a very wholesome answer, and is still absolutely true.

Notice the order of terminology...how valuable that is...though we never did talk much about that in the day...KNOW...LOVE...SERVE. It remained pretty cerebral — head knowledge — that we carried with us. But, we gave very little time or energy to how one might “know” Him apart from ‘saying prayers.’ These were usually prayers formulated by somebody else with very few of my own words! How could I know Him and love Him using somebody else’s words? That is a pretty impossible task!

While formal prayer has been a great staple for us all growing up Catholic, it is really important to expand our horizons and become capable of speaking to Our Lord and Savior in our own words. I believe one of the greatest problems in the realm of Faith in our world today is that we are trying to serve a God whom we do not KNOW and LOVE in a very real sense. It is impossible to really love somebody I don't know! We use the terminology ‘I love you’ in everyday parlance, but what does that mean if I haven't spent time with you, getting to know you?

To really ‘love’ somebody means I have taken time to get to know them, spent time, built trust, believe in them, count on them, and know they are going to be there when I need them. I have their interests in my heart, and know they have mine. I know their strengths & weaknesses, what they love and treasure, and who they love and treasure. I cannot do this through hearsay.

Yes, God has Predestined us as ‘Beloved Sons and Daughters,’ and He has given us the extraordinary gift of free will. He never tires of inviting us into His life, into His embrace! But, one thing He will not do is pressure or coerce us. He will not intervene, control, or manipulate us or our environment! If we choose to accept His invitation, we will know His Presence, feel His power working in our lives, and have His Peace. There is no promise of a ‘bed of roses.’ On the contrary, there is a clear assurance of ‘carrying the cross’ just as He himself has done!

Yes, God has certainly predestined us! Saint Paul, the most prolific writer in the whole of the New Testament, was one who, just like ourselves never met Jesus in the flesh. Paul says:

“Those whom He foreknew He predestined to share the image of His Son, that the Son might be the first-born of many brothers. Those He predestined He likewise called: those He called He also justified, and those He justified He in turn glorified.” (Romans 8:29-30)

“He likewise predestined us through Christ Jesus to be His adopted sons (and daughters) — such as His will and pleasure.” (Ephesians 1:5)

“In Him we were chosen; for in the decree of God, who administers everything according to His will and counsel, we were predestined.” (Ephesians 1:11)

So, does the fact that God knows my plans restrict my Freedom? Does God intervene or take action in my life? I invite you to reflect on this, and send me your thoughts. Stay tuned as our discussion continues!

— Fr. Gerry pastor@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com