



**5th SUNDAY OF LENT**

**MARCH 22, 2026**



THE **RESURRECTION**  
& THE **LIFE**

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**Mission Statement**

“Good Shepherd Parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love.”

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**SERVED BY**

Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor

Denise Perry Secretary

For more information on our parish please go to:

Goodshepherdnj.com

or email us at

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**The Pastor's Reflection on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent March 22, 2026**

*We all face times of sorrow and grief in our lives and are aware of the difficulties and challenges that such times can arouse! We are at the climax of our journey of faith and vision, which we have been exploring with the Samaritan woman and the blind man. Today Jesus takes us with Him into Resurrection. Ezekiel prepares us for the scene, by comparing the Exile with death and the Return as Resurrection and spiritual renewal. It is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus and we are raised! John wishes to awaken faith in Jesus, by showing its effects in Him,*

*We hear the challenge He gives and how people come to faith. Martha is our model, despite her feelings of loss; she makes her act of faith when asked by Jesus, who is the source of life, both physical and eternal. Friends are needed now, Jesus is the same as us, so we can wonder why He hasn't gone immediately to Bethany. They share in Lazarus' death and so we can identify with Martha's words of reproach. We feel abandoned too, so how are we to respond? By doing as she did: going to Jesus and pouring her heart out to Him: "If you were here, my brother wouldn't have died... I believe that you are the Christ...."*

*Today's readings speak to us of the resurrection of the dead. Both the Prophet Ezekiel and the author of John's Gospel speak about people being brought back to life, people who have died and come back as themselves. Clearly the afterlife for a believing Christian is a personal experience and not just being absorbed into the divinity.*

*In this modern time, many people do not believe in any life after this one. Sometimes teachers in schools even try to convince young people that there is no God and nothing beyond this life. We who believe in Jesus Christ have a great confidence in a personal afterlife in which we shall be with the Lord and fully alive in every way.*

*When we hear the first reading, from the Prophet Ezekiel, we can at first wonder if this is just some sort of hope for the future or is it really a prophecy. Resurrection from the dead is generally not a part of the teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures. On the other hand, when we find passages such as this one, we can see how easy it was for some to begin to think about what happens after this life.*

*One of the challenges in the Gospel today is that Lazarus is brought back to life, but will have to die again. There is no promise here at all of a lasting resurrection, but simply a returning to life after dying. Lazarus is not raised in the heavenly body that will be his when he dies into the Kingdom.*

*The second reading, from the Letter to the Romans, is interesting in that it speaks of living in the flesh and living in the spirit. Most of us probably know this difference simply from our own life's experience. When we live in the flesh, we allow our desires, our wants and our attractions to determine how we live, without examining them very much at all. When we live in the spirit, we have the same desires, wants and attractions as before but we look at them from the perspective of our life in Christ and choose that which helps us live more profoundly in Christ.*

*Let me tell you this incident that happened on the night of April 14, 1912, the Titanic crashed into an iceberg and four hours later sank to the bottom of the Atlantic. Survivors spoke of a woman who left the relative safety of the upper decks to return to her cabin. She hurried along the corridors already tilting at a dangerous angle. She crossed the gambling room where money and costly gems littered the floor. Reaching her stateroom, she saw her own treasures waiting to be picked up. But she paid no heed to them. Instead, she took as many oranges as she could hold and hurried back to the life boats. An hour earlier it would have seemed incredible to her that she could have preferred oranges to her own diamonds, but Death boarded the Titanic and all values were transformed. Precious things became worthless, and common things became precious. Oranges became more important than diamonds. Today the coronavirus has boarded our spaceship, and toilet paper has become more important than stocks and bonds. But what is really important? Is it not to be a friend of Jesus, like Lazarus?*

**Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)**

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm  
Holy Day TBD.

Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am  
Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm

National Holidays —9:00am  
Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm

**Mass Intentions For the week of Mar 21—March 28, 2026**

Saturday	5:30pm	For the Repose of the Soul of Elain Hubbard
Mar 21		
Sunday	9:00am	For the Repose of the Soul of Jorn Borg
Mar 22	11:00am	For The Repose of the Soul of Cecilia and Patrick Nze
Monday	7:00am	The Repose of the Soul of John Beihl
Mar 23		
Tuesday	7:00am	For the Repose of the Souls of Michael and Cecilia Ihiegbunam & Deceased Relatives
Mar 24		
Wednesday	7:00am	For the Repose of the Soul of Earl Horning
Mar 25		
Thursday	7:00am	Thanksgiving for the Birthday of Olivia Zirachi Oguh
Mar 26		
Friday	7:00am	For the Repose of the Soul of Julius Ihiegbunam & Deceased Relatives
Mar 27		
Saturday	8:30am	For the Repose of the Soul of Berti Julian
Mar 28	5:30pm	Thanksgiving for the Birthday of Victoria Oguh

*Kindly keep our parishioner's family, with health and other challenges, in your prayers*

Let us always remember in our prayers the sick members of our Parish

Paul Kocum	Sandi Mosley	Debbie Watson	Rihanna Scott	Venus Matthews
Curtis Richards	Carlos Quinones	John Valfour	Corizon Abuzied	Margarete Victor
Bob and Barbara Nezlick	Patrick Roylance	Graylan Banks	Aloysius Patrick Osuji	Avenelle Samaroo

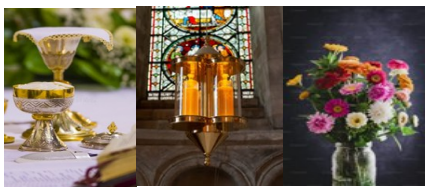
\* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

**Hospital Privacy |** Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/ pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call the I office at (973)375-8568

*We will be getting new Missal/Hymnal books on the week of November 30th First Week of Advent)*  
*Please, take this opportunity to honor a loved one (living or deceased) or commemorate a special event, like the birth of a child, anniversary, etc.,*

**Ministries:** If you're interested in ministries of service either as a Lector or Eucharistic Minister, please call the rectory at 975-375-8568 or fill out the Information below and place in the collection basket.  
 Name : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Contact Fr. Valentine or call the office, if you are interested in requesting mass intentions, intentions of a Sanctuary Lamp, Chapel Lamp, Altar Bread, or Altar Flowers.**



**ANNIVERSARY LITURGY FOR COUPLES:**  
**Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 3 p.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark.**  
 Cardinal Tobin, will be celebrating one mass for all married couples.  
 Please use the QR Code to register.



Collection Report		Mar 15, 2026
Weekly Target		\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)		\$ 1,750.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ 4,750.00
<b>Fiscal Year to Date</b>		
Budget:		\$379,864.00
Actual:		\$ 63,598.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$316,266.00
Rolling 4 Week Averages		
Average Collection:		\$1,850.00
Average Surplus (Deficit)		\$4.650.00

**Minister Assignments Mar 28 - Mar29, 2026**

Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	Presiding
3:28 5:30pm	Al Papp Denise Perry	Denise Perry Nellie Bate Barbara Banks	Fr. Val
3/29 9:00AM	TBD	TBD	Fr. Val
3/29 11: 00am	Dorothy Nwa- nonyiri Sylvia Edozie	Janet Drewes Luer Drewes TBD	Fr. Val

**GSP EVENT CALENDER**

Sunday Mar 22
Monday Mar 23 St. Turibius of Mogrovejo
Tuesday Mar 24
Wednesday Mar 25 THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD
Thursday Mar 26
Friday Mar 27
Saturday Mar 28 Palm Sunday Vigil

**Good Shepherd Parish Information**

RECTORY HOURS: Monday Thru Wednesday 10:00AM-2:00PM; Thursday / Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM

Parish Registration Forms can be found at the back of the church or call the rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION Saturday 4:45PM - 5:15PM

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM In order to have your child baptized at Good Shepherd, the parents must be registered and active members of our parish. Godparents or sponsors must meet qualifications as to have received both sacraments of Communion and Confirmation, attend Mass regularly and been a registered parishioner at a Catholic Church Baptisms will be held the third Sunday of the month. For more information please call the Rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY Couples who are planning a wedding should call the parish office to meet the priest, to choose the date of the wedding and before any other arrangements are made call (973)375-8568

PASTORAL OF THE SICK Notify a priest of all who are hospitalized, home-bound, or Emergencies call (973)375-8568

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS, RCIA. Adults interested in becoming members of the Catholic Church and Catholics in need of Sacraments, Confirmation or Eucharist; inquire at the Rectory. To register please call the rectory at (973-375-8568

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Sunday of October-April from 10:00-11:00 am in the Church building. For more information please call the Rectory at (973-375-8568. Children’s mass will be every second Sunday of the month, at the 11AM mass.

## 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT YR. A BACK PAGE FROM

Fr. Charles Irvin Senior Priest Diocese of Lansing

All of us, I am sure, have read recent accounts about the decline of interest in religion among Americans. A recent survey reports that 20% of Americans have no religious affiliations at all and feel no need of God or belief in God. It seems they feel that they are self-sufficient; God is not necessary. So why are we here? Our motives are many and mixed. Some are here in their need seeking God's help. Some are here seeking God's forgiveness, others out of love of God, others out of thanksgiving for all that God has done for them. Some are here simply out of a sense of duty and others out of mere habit. All of us are looking forward to everlasting life with God in heaven.

In the opening prayer of today's Mass, we heard the words: "Help us to embrace the world that you have given us, that we may transform the darkness of its pain into the life and joy of Easter." In the first reading from the prophet Ezekiel we heard: "*Thus says the LORD GOD: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and have you rise from them...*" Well, what does this mean for us, living out our lives as we do in 2017 America?

To answer that I would pay some attention to what we frequently hear, namely the spirit of defeat often quoted in our newspapers and which sometimes infects our own hearts and thoughts. Fortunately, there are words of optimism coming from many people who surround us countering those transmitting a spirit of defeat. Perhaps some of our own sons and daughters, nieces or nephews, relatives or friends, speak of how awful life is, or about how much they are life's victims. They blame other people for being so mean to them, they blame their depression in the economy, they talk about their own lack of fulfillment, they tell us they're getting nothing out of life, and so forth. Doubt, disillusionment, discouragement, and depression hold many people in bondage.

What are the causes of this defeatism? Well there are many of course. But here I would like to examine four of them and then turn to what we can do about them.

The first source of defeat for so many people is what I call extremism. It's the sort of attitude that converts what is really happening only occasionally into something they claim is *always* happening. "I always goof. I never do anything right," we hear them say. "People always take advantage of me." These words and similar phrases are symptomatic of the spiritual condition such people are in. These thoughts come from a way of looking at life that is either extremely idealistic or else extremely pessimistic. They see life as either one or the other, not balanced. Defeat is guaranteed them because they do not have a balanced view of what really happens in life. Life isn't "either-or," "black or white," "all or nothing." In reality, life is a complicated mixture of many factors and forces.

The second source of defeat comes from the sort of mentality that continually makes comparisons. This outlook dooms one into never thinking that one has enough. This kind of person is forever comparing his or her lot in life with people who are better off. Someone else is better looking, has more money, lives in a better house, has a better job, and so on. Depression is guaranteed them; defeatism finally takes over. This is one of the major sources of defeat and frustration in our culture today. The entire advertising industry is built on the business of comparing yourself to others so that you will buy their advertised product and then be as wonderfully happy as others are.

(to be continued on insert)