

Sunday Bulletin

St. John Vianney Church

OUR MISSION

As followers of Jesus Christ, and as full members of the Roman Catholic Church, we, the Parish Community of St. John Vianney, joyfully proclaim our Saviour risen. Through prayer and sacramental celebration of life in Jesus, we join as co-creators in his mission of justice and peace, through the power of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God.

OUR PARISH TEAM

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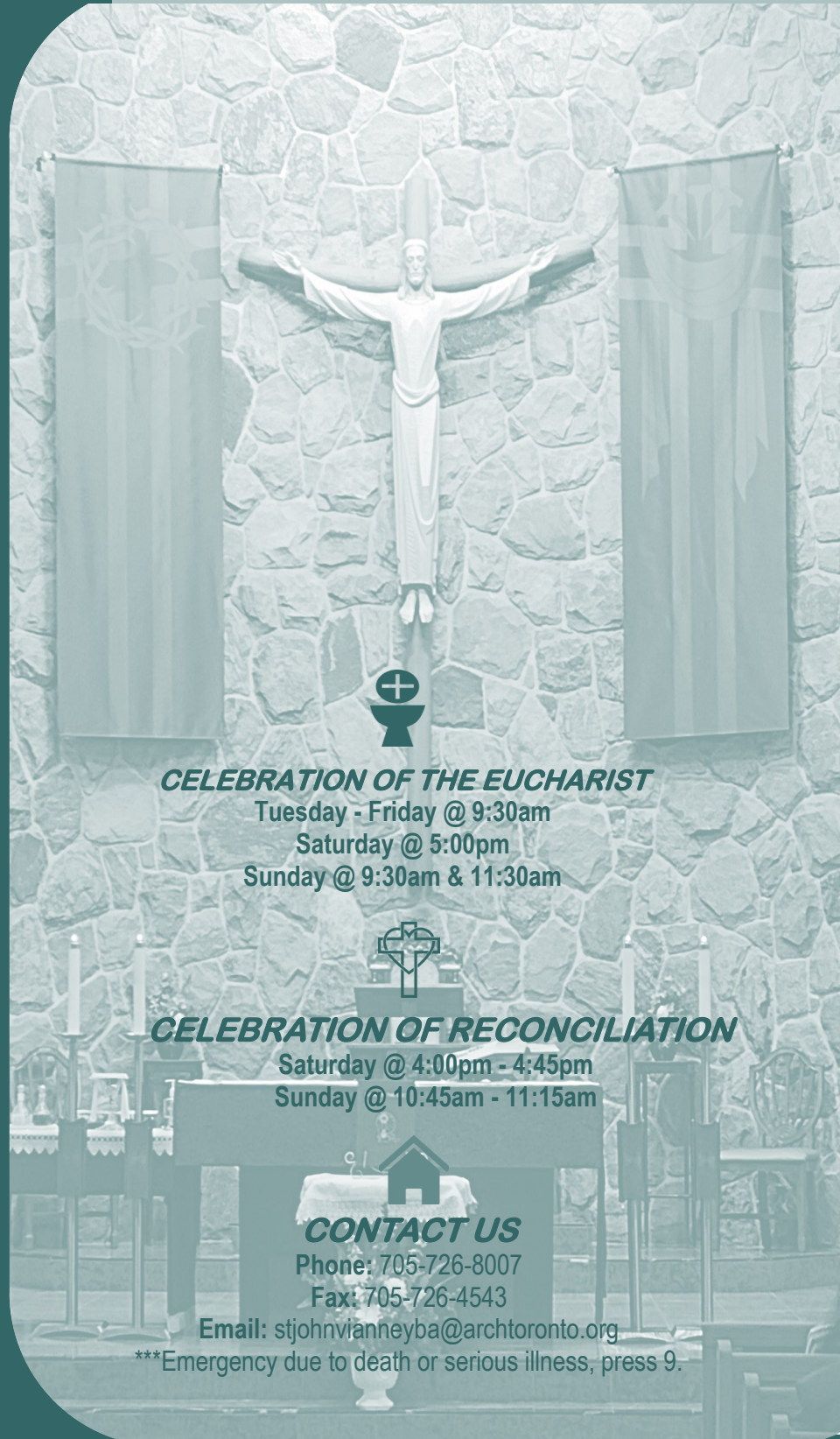
OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday 9:00am - 4:00pm

Closed from 12:00pm - 1:00pm for lunch

13 Baldwin Lane, Barrie, ON, L4N 2W1

www.stjohnvianneyba.archtoronto.org



CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Tuesday - Friday @ 9:30am

Saturday @ 5:00pm

Sunday @ 9:30am & 11:30am

CELEBRATION OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday @ 4:00pm - 4:45pm

Sunday @ 10:45am - 11:15am

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***Emergency due to death or serious illness, press 9.

DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN

Today is the Second Sunday of Lent. We can easily think Lent is just about ourselves, putting ourselves in order, training ourselves to love ourselves in more healthy way. Fasting is the Lenten penance that most easily comes to mind, something by which we train ourselves to love ourselves in a healthy and moderate way. But today's Gospel tells us about some of the other important things about Lent.

We find Jesus getting away from the crowds to have time to be alone and pray, time with his Father and his closest disciples, with God and his saints. When Jesus is transfigured, two of the saints of the Old Covenant come and speak with him. They are Moses and Elijah. This suggests the particular importance of prayer in Lent, of special times of keeping company with God and his saints. Alongside fasting, prayer is another of the traditional Jewish forms of penance that passed over from the Old Covenant into the New. Just as the saints of the Old Covenant fasted and prayed, so did Jesus and the saints of his New Covenant.

But prayer is something that directs us to God in a more obvious way than fasting does, even if we do undertake fasting for God and not for ourselves. As fasting trains us to love ourselves in a good way, so prayer gets us in the good habit of loving God above all else. Prayer is in the first place directed to God. Prayer acknowledges that all the good we have come from God. This helps us to train ourselves to love ourselves well, because it helps us get all the good things of the world in perspective: they are God's gifts and not God himself. But by praying, we first of all open ourselves up to God, and focus our whole being on him and not on ourselves or any of the good things of the world. Prayer gets us in the habit of relating properly to God as the Father of us all.

But today's Gospel has another thing to suggest to us, because the story doesn't end on the mountain. It ends with Jesus and the three disciples coming down from the mountain, leaving behind their brief respite of prayer, leaving behind the company of the saints who joined the transfigured Jesus. In his overwhelming joy at the experience, Peter had wanted to stay put, build tents. But that is not an option. They have to come down from the mountain. And before that the

voice of the Father has rung out from heaven: 'This is my beloved Son. Listen to him. If we listen to Jesus, we will learn that we must spend time apart in prayer in the company of God and the saints; but we also learn from Jesus that we must come down from the mountain too.

So what is it that happens as they reach the crowd again? A father brings his son to Jesus for an exorcism. The son has suffered terribly through sickness, in this case brought on by a demon. Jesus rebukes the demon, he comes out instantly, and the boy is cured. So what Jesus has left prayer and communion with the saints for turns out to be the work of liberating a human being, freeing him from evil.

This too has something to say to us about Lent. This suggests that there may always be different ways in which we can help free other people from whatever is holding them back from the fullness of life God wants for them. Sometimes we might free someone with a word of truth; sometimes we can free the sick by caring for them in ways that are just part of normal human kindness; sometimes we can help those who are in need.

To fasting and prayer the Jews added a third traditional form of penance: almsgiving: Prayer to put us right with God; fasting to put ourselves right with ourselves; and almsgiving to put us right with other people. Just as prayer on the mountain focuses first on loving God, so generosity focuses us on loving our neighbors as ourselves.

When Jesus had come down from the mountain and healed the boy, it didn't stop there. His journey was all the way to the cross to liberate others. The cross was also his greatest prayer to the Father. In one act he gave himself entirely to God and entirely to us. And that is our goal too: to give ourselves at one and the same time entirely to God and entirely to others. And so Lent is our help to lead us to Good Friday and then to Easter morning. If we act alright to God, self and neighbor, our whole life will become one great offering to God and neighbor, and we too shall be transfigured.



The Stations of the Cross

Join us for **The Stations of the Cross** devotion on Friday evenings at **7:00 pm.** during Lent. The next *Stations of the Cross* will take place **Friday March 10th** and will be led by members of the Choir.

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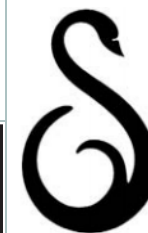
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