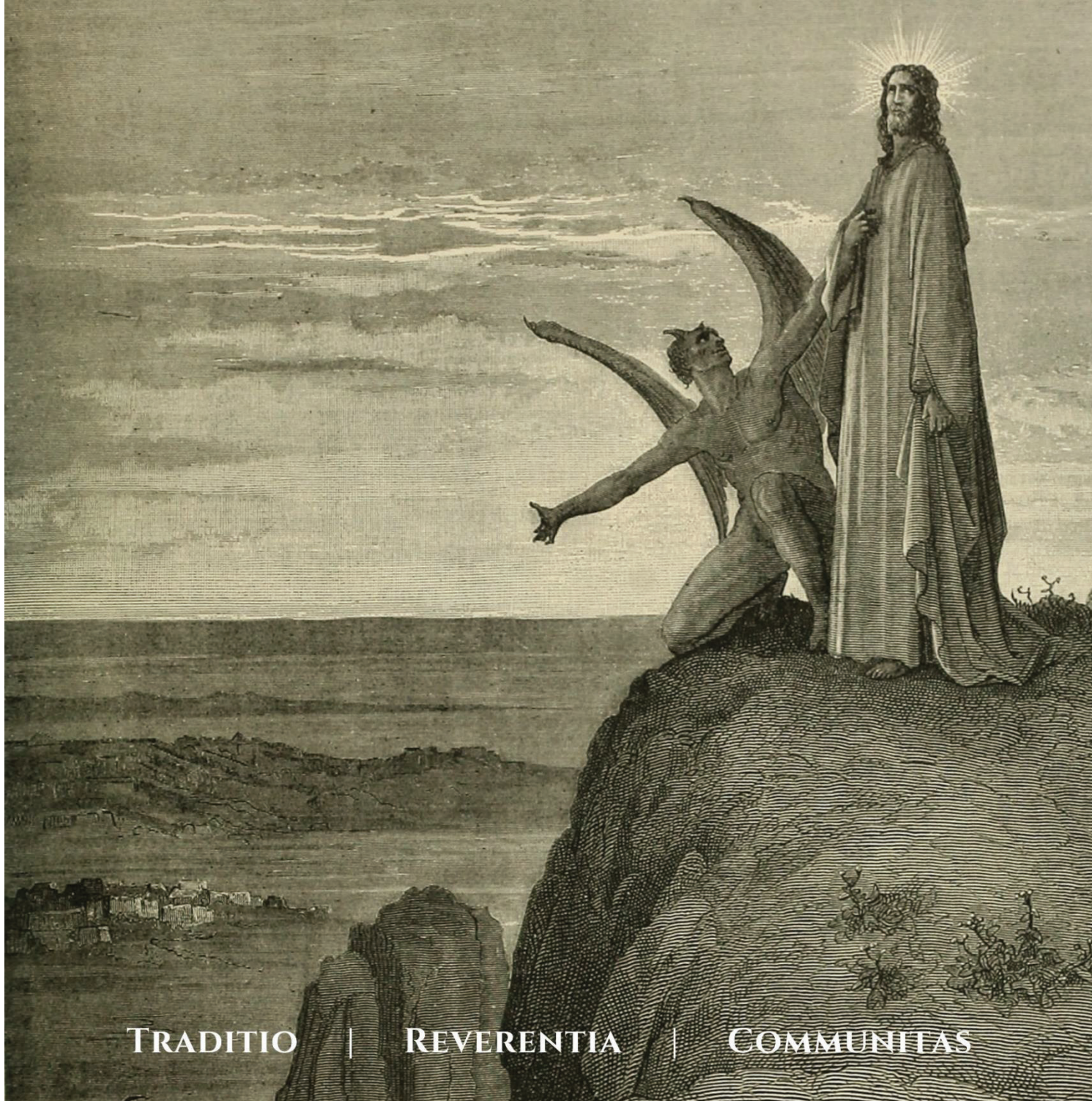


THE ORATORY OF SAINTS
GREGORY & AUGUSTINE



TRADITIO

REVERENTIA

COMMUNITAS

Welcome to the Oratory of Saints Gregory and Augustine

The Oratory of Saints Gregory and Augustine is pleased to welcome you. We are an apostolate of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis faithful to the teachings of the Church and striving to grow as a family of faith through the celebration of the Traditional Latin Mass and other Sacraments.

In the First Book of *The Confessions*, the other great St. Augustine (of Hippo) wrote the following: “Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee.” Whether you are curious about the traditional Latin Mass and interested in exploring its beauty, searching for a parish community where you and your family will feel at home, or seeking rest for your heart, we hope that the Oratory of Saints Gregory and Augustine can provide that respite for you.

Our bulletin serves to provide information about the weekly activities occurring here at the Oratory. Along with our website (www.stlouislatinmass.com), the bulletin is your point of contact with the ever-increasing activities at the Oratory. I hope this will give you some sense of the grace of God, the love of Jesus Christ, and work of the Holy Spirit in our midst. I am delighted that God has brought you here! *Oremus pro invicem!* ~ The Very Reverend Monsignor C. Eugene Morris, Rector

MASS AND SACRAMENTS

Sunday Masses

- 6:30 am (Low Mass)
- 8:00 am (Low Mass)
- 10:00 am (High Mass)

Weekday Masses

- Monday thru Friday: 6:30 am & 12:15 pm
- First Friday: 6:30 pm
- Saturday: 8:15 am

Confession

- Sunday: 7:30 am – 10:30 am
- Monday thru Friday: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Wednesday: 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm
- First Friday: 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm
- Saturday: 7:00 am – 8:00 am

Adoration

- Wednesday: 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm
- First Friday: 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm (starting 2/6/26)

Divine Office

- Sunday: Prime @ 7:20 am; Terce @ 9:40 am; Vespers @ 2:30 pm
- Monday: Vespers @ 6 pm; Compline @ 6:30 pm
- Tuesday & Thursday: Compline @ 6:30 pm
- Wednesday: Vespers @ 6 pm; Compline @ 6:30 pm

Infant Baptism – Baptisms are normally scheduled on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Saturdays of the month beginning at 10:00 am. Families expecting newborns and anticipating that they will be baptized here at the Oratory should schedule their baptism at the earliest convenience by contacting the Oratory office.

Adult Baptism – If you are interested in becoming Catholic or if you are an adult Catholic not yet confirmed, please contact the Oratory office for more information about adult catechesis.

Matrimony – Please contact the Oratory office at least six months prior to the desired date for the rite of marriage. The date is reserved after consultation and confirmation from the Rector of the Oratory.

Extreme Unction/Visitation of the Sick – Contact the Oratory to arrange the sacrament either at home or in the hospital.

STAFF/ORGANIZATIONS

- **Rector:** Msgr. C. Eugene Morris
rector@oratorysga.org
- **Vice-Rector:** Fr. Michael Rennie
vicerector@oratorysga.org
- **Deacon:** Deacon Steve Pieper, MD
deacon@oratorysga.org
- **Administrative Assistant:** Donna Mueller
office@oratorysga.org
- **Facilities Manager:** Ben Schubert
facilities@oratorysga.org
- **Auxiliary:** Anna Kalinowski
auxiliary@oratorysga.org
- **Almonry of Ss. Gregory & Augustine:**
almonry@oratorysga.org
- **Altar and Rosary Society:**
altarandrosary@oratorysga.org
- **Altar Servers:**
servers@oratorysga.org
- **Choir:**
choir@oratorysga.org
- **Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD):**
ccd@oratorysga.org
- **Co-Op:**
co-op@oratorysga.org
- **Events:**
events@oratorysga.org
- **Knights of Columbus:**
kofc17355@oratorysga.org
- **Schola:**
schola@oratorysga.org
- **Troops of Saint George:**
tsg@oratorysga.org
- **Ushers:**
ostiarum@oratorysga.org
- **Young Adults:**
youngadults@oratorysga.org
- **Online Giving:**
<https://www.osvhub.com/st-louis-latin-mass>

CONTACT US

314-644-2144 / stlouislatinmass.com
7230 Dale Avenue, Richmond Heights, MO 63117

FROM THE RECTOR

One of the Church’s great sources of spiritual richness is the structure of the liturgical calendar and how it assists us in not only celebrating the Paschal Mystery but forces us to penetrate more deeply into these very mysteries. This dynamic is manifest in our celebration today of Passion Sunday. In the new calendar, Passion Sunday and Palm Sunday are collapsed into one reality which is an unfortunate occurrence precisely because entrance into the Lord’s Passion and Death requires not only recalling His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) but also meditating on the hardness of heart, hatred of truth, and rejection of God that was swirling around Our Lord before and during His entrance into the Holy City. Passion Sunday begins the painful journey of inserting us into the events surrounding our Lord which lead to His Passion and Death. This profound meditation on these Sacred Mysteries forces us to acknowledge our own sins and their contribution to the Lord’s suffering. Given the nature of the world and the lies we tell ourselves, it is easy to gloss over the Lord’s Passion or relegate its remembrance to history. However, our holy Mother the Church compels us to truth: to the telling of truth about the world and ourselves and to the living of the truth in our daily lives. The veiled images we encounter in Church today, which will remain hidden until the joyous proclamation of Easter, serve as liturgical reminders for us to strive to find the Lord at all times especially when He might be obscured by our lies, doubts, fears, and sins. Let us entreat the Holy Spirit to provide us with strength and courage to die with Christ in order that we might truly live with Him!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, 23 March:

- Vespers @ 6:00 pm
- Compline @ 6:30 pm

Tuesday, 24 March:

- Compline @ 6:30 pm
- Choir practice @ 7:00 pm

Wednesday, 25 March:

- Adult Catechesis @ 4:00 pm
- Holy Hour/Confessions @ 5:00 pm
- Vespers @ 6:00 pm
- Compline @ 6:30 pm

Thursday, 26 March:

- Compline @ 6:30 pm

Friday, 27 March:

- Stations of the Cross @ 1:15 pm

Saturday, 28 March:

- Vespers & Compline @ 6:00 pm
- Matins & Lauds @ 7:00 pm

Sunday, 29 March:

- Prime @ 7:20 am
- Confessions @ 7:30 am
- Terce @ 9:40 am
- Sext @ 2:00 pm
- None @ 2:15 pm
- Vespers @ 2:30 pm
- Compline @ 6:00 pm
- Matins & Lauds @ 7:00 pm

PILGRIM VIRGIN MARY STATUE 2026

03/08-03/15 Santschi	03/15-03/22 Kiser
03/22-03/29 Agnew	03/29-04/05 Buyle
04/05-04/12 LeJedal	04/12-04/19 Grizzle
04/19-04/26 Turntine	04/26-05/03 Haulard
05/03-05/10 Kelly	05/10-05/17 Jones
05/17-05/24 Holman	05/24-05/31 Carapella

Drop off and pick up the statue in the vestibule (back of church). Place the statue bag on the floor to left of the Oratory table. To join or to quit the schedule contact Sharon Alexander saalex@sbglobal.net.

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, 23 March – *Feria*

- 6:30 am: Marjorie Daniel (d)
- 12:15 pm: Most Rev. Julius Jia Zhiguo (d)

Tuesday, 24 March – *St. Gabriel the Archangel*

- 6:30 am: Shane Kiser (d)
- 12:15 pm: Ron & Arlene Wood

Wednesday, 25 March – *THE ANNUNCIATION*

- 6:30 am: John Mendel (d)
- 12:15 pm: Kim Willoughby (d)

Thursday, 26 March – *Feria*

- 6:30 am: John Mendel (d)
- 12:15 pm: Most Rev. Julius Jia Zhiguo (d)

Friday, 27 March – *Seven Sorrows of the BVM*

- 6:30 am: Br. Macarius of Jesus Christ Crucified
- 12:15 pm: Samantha & Anthony Podesta

Saturday, 28 March – *St. John Capistrano*

- 8:15 am: Mark & Patricia Manley

Sunday, 29 March – *Palm Sunday*

- 6:30 am: Pro Populo
- 8:00 am: Louis Harold Bernstein (d)
- 10:00 am: Rev. Samuel Conedera, SJ

~ 03/15/2026 ~	
Weekly Collection Total	\$ 6,488.46
Online Giving	\$ 8,115.69
Total	\$ 14,604.15
Needed	\$ 16,800.00
Year to Date Total	\$ 704,209.42

CELL PHONES

There has been an increasing number of cell phones ringing during Holy Mass. Please be sure to silence your cell phones before entering Church. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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ST. LOUIS MARIAN CONFERENCE

The 27th Anniversary St. Louis Marian Conference is 15-17 May 2026 at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel. Everyone is welcome and parking is FREE. The cost is only \$60 for 3 full, dynamic days of inspiring talks, Holy Mass, Adoration, Confession, a large selection of vendors, beautiful music, and fellowship with Catholics from all over the country (20 states so far). The hotel group rate is \$119 per night (1-4 people).

Confirmed speakers: His Eminence Raymon Leo Cardinal Burke; Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J.; Fr. Bill Casey, CPM; **Msgr. Eugene Morris**; Sr. Gianna Casino, LIHM; Patty Schneider; Susan Tassone; Ken and Mary Ann Duppong (parents of Servant of God, Michelle Duppong); and Eric Genius.

For more information, to register, or to book your hotel room please visit us at www.stlmc.org or call 314-850-7718.

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FSSP VISIT: CANCELLED

We regret to inform you that the Seminary of Our Lady of Guadalupe (FSSP) has had to cancel their visit due to some logistical challenges encountered in their travel preparation. The seminary graciously reached out to thank us for our willingness to host; thank you to all who reached out to support their visit. If you made a donation to help with the expenses of the visit, and you would like to be refunded, please contact the rectory office at office@oratorysga.org. Thank you for your understanding and please continue to pray for all men in formation for the priesthood.

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BLESSING OF ITEMS: NEW PROCEDURE

Going forward, the blessings of religious items will take place after the 8:00 am Holy Mass at St. Joseph Altar. This will happen on the Second Sunday of each month. In this way, items can be blessed and retrieved in a more timely manner. This process will replace bringing items to the rectory to be blessed. **ALL ITEMS TO BE BLESSED MUST BE BROUGHT TO THE ST. JOSEPH ALTAR ON THE 2nd SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH BEFORE HOLY MASS.** Those who desire to have items blessed should bring them to the St. Joseph Altar before the 8:00 am Holy Mass with their names clearly marked on the items to be blessed. These items should be left on the St. Joseph Altar. If there are a large number of items, they can be placed around the altar but should not impede the distribution of Holy Communion. Two blessings will be given: one for rosaries and one for all other items grouped together. There is no need to take items from their packaging. **This new process began Sunday, 8 February 2026, therefore the rectory is no longer accepting items to be blessed (as of 9 February).**

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ALTAR OF REPOSE PATRONAGE OPPORTUNITY

As many of our faithful know, it is our fond custom here at the Oratory to lavish our Maundy Thursday Altar of Repose

with candles, flowers, precious fabrics, and other treasures. In this, we follow the churches of Rome who maintain this custom to this day and who vie with one another in friendly rivalry. Because we strive each year to add a little more to our visible pledge of our love for the Eucharist, we will be adding several enhancements to the altar decorations this year. To see how things turn out, come for adoration on Thursday, 2 April, from 7 pm until midnight.

If you would like to be one of just a few patrons of this holy artistic endeavor, please consider taking one of the below offered slots:

- \$100 - *Good Thief Patron* (1 remaining): Cover the cost of polishing, replating, and updating our brass candelabra.
- \$200 - *Five Holy Wounds Patron* (ALL FIVE HAVE BEEN FULFILLED): Cover the cost of flowers.
- \$500 - *Magdelene Patron* (FULFILLED): Cover the cost of the thirty-foot floral garland used to frame the altar.

Patronages may be in your name or in honor of a loved one, living or deceased, and will be published in the Easter Flower Giving bulletin page. To inquire about a patronage please email auxiliatrix@oratorysga.org.

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BLESSING OF EASTER FOOD BASKETS

On Holy Saturday, 4 April, promptly at 9:00 am, the traditional blessing of Easter Baskets will take place in the church. All families are encouraged to bring samples of their Easter feast in a decorated basket to be blessed. There will be a designated table set up at the front of the church for baskets. The blessing will take fifteen minutes. Families should stay in the church to witness the blessing. Upon completion of the blessing, families should take their baskets back home. **NOTE: Due to the extensive duties of all church staff and clergy on this day, baskets left behind at the blessing will not be returned. Be sure to re-claim your basket immediately upon the conclusion of the blessing.**

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CALLING POTENTIAL CANTORS!

The Cantores Sancti Ludovici, who provide Gregorian Chant at the Oratory of Ss. Gregory and Augustine, are looking to add 2-4 men to join as cantors in our Schola. If you have some experience singing in a choir, or believe yourself capable of learning and you are interested in joining, please reach out to Precentor Kevin Murphy at schola@oratorysga.org to schedule an audition and learn more.

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STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Stations of the Cross will be celebrated on the Fridays of Lent after the conclusion of the 12:15 pm Holy Mass.

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OFFICE OF TENEBRAE

“Tenebrae” is the name given to the service of Matins and Lauds belonging to the last three days of Holy Week and normatively anticipated the evening before. These services are marked by a somber and sober, nearly mournful praying of the Divine Office. The structure of the office is sparse, reflecting the seriousness of these sacred days and the

Passion Sunday

22 March 2026

sadness that should accompany all of us because Christ our Savior suffered for our sins.

The Oratory of Ss. Gregory and Augustine will have the opportunity to pray Tenebrae on the following evenings:

- **Wednesday, 1 April @ 9:00 pm – Tenebrae of Holy Thursday**
- **Thursday, 2 April @ 9:00 pm – Tenebrae of Good Friday**
- **Friday, 3 April @ 9:00 pm – Tenebrae of Holy Saturday**

This is a solemn and profound way to enter more deeply into the Sacred Triduum and the Paschal Mystery which has brought us our salvation.

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HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Holy Thursday @ 5:00 PM; Good Friday @ 3:00 PM; and Holy Saturday @ 2:00 PM.

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HOLY WEEK/EASTER WEEK

As we move closer to the celebration of the holiest days of the liturgical year, please mark your calendars regarding the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass during Holy Week and the Octave of Easter. **HOLY WEEK:** The Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week, Holy Mass will only be celebrated at 12:15 pm. In order to accommodate those wanting to go to confession, they will begin at 10:30 am and go until 12 Noon. **OCTAVE OF EASTER:** The Oratory will celebrate High Mass every day during the Octave of Easter. Everyone is encouraged to attend to truly celebrate well the Resurrection of Our Savior. The schedule will be as follows: (Monday – Friday) Holy Mass will only be celebrated at 12:15 pm with the normal time of 11:00 am for confessions.

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EASTER VIGIL CELEBRATION

The Oratory would like to invite all members to join us in celebrating the Resurrection of the Lord at a picnic feast immediately following the Easter Vigil liturgy on Saturday, 4 April 2026. The celebration will be held at McMahan Field (directly across the street from the Church on Dale Avenue). We invite you to enjoy burgers, barbecue, and most importantly fellowship. Please bring lawn chairs for your family and a side or dessert and your drink of choice but don't let empty hands prevent you from joining us. We look forward to seeing you there!

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THOUGHTS ON PASSIONTIDE VEILING

From the Gospel of Passion Sunday (John 8 46:59): "They took up stones therefore to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple." This reminds us of the humiliation to which Our Lord subjected Himself in hiding from the Pharisees. If the Master's glory is eclipsed, it is but right that the servants (the statues of Our Lady and the Saints) also be so. Thus, they are veiled.

Furthermore, the veiling increases the breathtaking suspense of the great mysteries by carrying on that progressive stripping that takes place in Septuagesima and Lent. In Septuagesima, flowers are no longer used. In Passiontide, the relics are taken away and the statues hidden. Finally, after the Liturgy of Holy Thursday, the altars

themselves (except the altar of repose) are stripped bare to show the desolation of Good Friday.

The crucifixes are unveiled on Good Friday beautifully highlighting the primacy of the Cross for our salvation. Good Friday is the climax, even the crown jewel of the Sacred Triduum. The rest of the statues are unveiled at the Easter Vigil during the Gloria liturgically manifesting the joy of Heaven that has been won for us only through the Cross of Christ and His Crucifixion. **(Thank you for these reflections to Anna Kalinowski, Auxiliatrix of the Oratory.)**

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SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS DURING LENT FOR THE RECTOR

In years past, I have found it spiritually profitable to limit my social engagements during the Lenten season and will do so for this Lenten season as well. Obviously, I am available to the faithful for spiritual counseling and matters related to faith but will limit social engagements and dinners until after the Octave of Easter. **If you do need to contact me for any reason, please do not hesitate to email or call.** I look forward to visiting, blessing homes, and other opportunities for us to socialize together after the completion of the great Lenten retreat.

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EASTER FLOWERS

Easter flower envelopes are available in the pews for all who wish to honor a deceased loved one by donating. The names of loved ones included on the envelopes will be shared in an upcoming bulletin. Envelopes must be received no later than 22 March to be included in the bulletin. Thank you and may God reward your generosity.

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FIRST FRIDAY EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

It has long been a desire of mine as rector to have more Eucharistic Adoration at the Oratory of Ss. Gregory and Augustine. Our hope is that Adoration will take place every First Friday afternoon going forward to honor the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As a reminder: faithful are needed to adopt an hour of adoration to ensure that the Blessed Sacrament is never left alone. To sign up for an hour, please email Anthony Jones at events@oratorysga.org

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ADULTS SEEKING THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

We welcome those interested in becoming Catholic. To get started in that process within the OSGA community, please email one of our priests for an introductory meeting. Their contacts are available in the bulletin. After this, candidates for Initiation at the Oratory will be directed to complete a registration form with our Administrator.

Catechism classes are held in the St Joseph Room (rectory basement) generally on a bi-monthly basis on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 4:00-5:15 pm.

The content surrounds a set of topics central to Catholic teaching, as set forth by Msgr. Morris. Deacon Pieper moderates most meetings through a question and answer format and hopes to promote sincere dialogue with the candidates regarding those topics and/or related questions. The intent is to communicate Christ and His Church. Sacraments are offered on an individual basis, on a

Passion Sunday

22 March 2026

rolling schedule throughout the year, after mutual discernment by the candidate, our deacon, and priests.

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RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

For those in our community who are new to the Traditional Latin Mass, when you approach the altar rail for holy communion it is the custom to begin filling in the altar rail at the far right near St. Joseph's altar and fill in the rail until its end at the Marian altar. This practice is not impacted by which side of the Church you are seated. You are allowed, and encouraged, to switch sides in order to keep the communion line moving. This is particularly important when there are two sacred ministers distributing Holy Communion. So too, do not overly delay approaching the rail waiting for others to return to their pews. If everyone moves with attention to what is happening, there should be a flow of movement between those departing the altar rail and those approaching the altar rail. Also, for daily Holy Mass: please kneel at the rail only where the houseling cloth has been prepared for communion. Please keep in mind that we should not keep the Lord waiting but moving with grace and deliberation to the altar rail to receive our Eucharistic Lord.

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NEW FAMILIES for FEBRUARY (alphabetical order)

A warm welcome to our new parishioners!

- The Bateman Family ~ Rob & Kathryn, Saoirse, Lilly, and Joey
- Christopher Borro
- Basil Damukaitis
- Ken Hinton
- Kim Perry

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PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

In your charity, please pray for the following members of the Oratory who are ill: Mary Jane Bolte; Amanda Camarillo, daughter of Gregory & Nancy Latham; Heath Cheaney, son

of Michael & Jaime; Jeanmarie DeCoster; Donna Hagan; Dotty Kuhlmann, mother of Donna Mueller; Mary McMahan; Kim Morgan; Michael Norfleet, son of Marsha Norfleet; Elizabeth Ryan; Mary Joseph Schenk, daughter of Nicholas & Elaine; Patrick Schneider; Sylvester Soldinie; Caleb & Sheila Ten Eyck; Lara Trudell, daughter of Sharon and Jim Alexander; Renee Weidner; and Msgr. Witt.

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PRAYERS FOR THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

- Robert Anthony, father of Jeanmarie DeCoster
- Sheryl Ann Gibbs, wife of Jeff Gibbs
- Andrew Richard "Andy" Gilfoil, brother of Joe Gilfoil
- Shane Kiser, husband of Maggie Kiser
- Joan Rita Short, aunt and godmother of Gregory Latham

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USHERS' SCHEDULE

Sunday, 22 March

- 6:30 am Chris Bauman*, Brayden Bauman
- 8:00 am Greg Rheinheimer*, Kip Babington, Jeff Martin, Michael Nelson
- 10:00 am Cory Conway*, Jesse Hermann, Charlie Raymond, Joe Thomas

Sunday, 29 March

- 6:30 am Bill Saccente*, Ben Schubert
- 8:00 am Kip Babington*, Jeff Martin, Michael Nelson, Kenny Buyle
- 10:00 am Patrick Kelly*, Mark Scheer, Brandon Roberts, Owen Bruns

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BULLETIN COVER: Temptation of Jesus – From Gustave Doré's Bible Engravings

+ Altar Server Schedule: March 2026 +

Date	Time	MC at High Mass / Acolyte at Low Mass	Thurifer	Acolyte 1	Acolyte 2
22 March 2026	6:30	Michael Norfleet			
	8:00	Michael Rheinheimer			
	10:00	Joseph Blum	Levi Garvey	Leo Grizzle	Dominic Green
29 March 2026	6:30	Jack Ryan			
	8:00	Joseph Blum			
	10:00	Philip Petrick	Augustine Rennier	Elijah Garvey	Robert Jones

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WELLSPRING OF TRADITION: THE ROAD TO EASTER: THE ROAD LESS TAKEN

The American Baptist preacher and motivational speaker, Tony Campolo, has a favorite story that he tells so often it's become his trademark. At a revival meeting in Campolo's West Philadelphia church, which has a mainly African-American congregation, Campolo and the lead pastor were having a friendly 'preach-off' competition. Campolo is a very powerful speaker, and he really gave it his all. He was sure his effort would rival anyone's preaching. But then the older man rose, patted him on the shoulder, and then quietly stepped up to the pulpit and began. His words slowly but surely painted a dark and dreary picture of the increasingly tragic events of Jesus's passion on Good Friday. He ended his description of each scene with the same words: 'It was Friday, but Sunday's a comin'. The tension mounted in the congregation each time the words were repeated until the climax of the sermon, when the entire congregation leapt to their feet and a choral burst of joyous 'Amen!' raised the roof of that church. That sermon is now legendary, as the number of YouTube versions and views can confirm. You can visit YouTube and have a listen.

Passion Week, Holy Week, The Sacred Triduum, and the Easter Octave are upon us. During these days, we celebrate in the liturgy the final stages of Our Lord’s journey to Jerusalem for what He knows will be the end of his earthly public ministry, culminating in his arrest and death at the hands of the authorities. Although the raising of Lazarus is yet another of the ‘signs’ that tell us who Jesus is and the power He has, the visit to Bethany is only a brief respite. The sign that will fulfill Simeon’s prophecy that Our Lord would himself be a ‘sign of contradiction,’ is soon to follow: the sign of the Cross, in which He will be exalted and glorified. His ‘hour’ has come; and once He has ‘set his face to Jerusalem,’ there is no turning back from the road ahead. And choosing this ‘road less traveled’, as Robert Frost would have it, has made all the difference. His steps on the road up to Jerusalem do not falter.

St John’s Gospel reaches its climax with the final word of Our Lord on the cross. In the original Greek, that word is *tetelestai*, which in Latin is translated as *Consumatum est*, and in English is usually translated as ‘It is finished (or/consumated/or/completed).’ In that one word, we have a summary of all of John’s Gospel and actually of all of the Scriptures. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of the Father, became flesh by the work of the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary to suffer and die for our sins. That is the central event of human history; everything else in the history of creation depends on it. Once the work of our redemption is accomplished, the Father raises up His Son in the glory of the resurrection and the Passover from death to life prefigured in the liberation of Israel from Egypt, is complete. In those events, we have a pledge of our own promise of eternal life if we too embrace the cross prepared for us.

Contemplating these ‘mysteries’ or events in the life of Our Lord during these solemn days can provide an opportunity for us to examine our lives and ask whether indeed we are doing our bit to ‘make up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ,’ as St Paul admonishes us to do. The small sacrifices and penances we undertake during Lent are simply reminders that we have a higher destiny and ultimately there is a greater joy than our lives here and now can give us. The long experience of the Christian community has shown the three traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are valuable beyond measure in re-directing our awareness of who we are and what we are about. That awareness, especially in our modern culture, becomes dulled or diluted—if not destroyed—and making good use of this time each year is necessary to restore it.

Suffering is never popular. In a culture that prizes instant gratification and ever more acquisition, even the idea of deferring pleasure is considered absurd. Laws are being enacted today that offer death as a preferred choice over discomfort or deprivation or even inconvenience. But the Scriptures, the liturgy, and the teaching of the Magisterium continually remind us of the ineffable power of suffering embraced in love. Consider St. Venantius Fortunatus’s magnificent hymn (the original *Pange Lingua*) that we sing during Holy Week:

<i>Pange, lingua, gloriosi</i>	Sing my tongue, the Savior's glory;
<i>proelium certaminis</i>	tell His triumph far and wide;
<i>et super crucis trophaeo</i>	tell aloud the famous story
<i>dic triumphum nobilem,</i>	of His body crucified;
<i>qualiter redemptor orbis</i>	how upon the cross a victim,
<i>immolatus vicerit.</i>	vanquishing in death, He died.

The understanding of the cross here reflects a deep appreciation that Christians have had, from the earliest years of the Church, of the cross as a symbol of triumph and joy. Crosses were made from precious metals, and frequently adorned with priceless jewels. Many were so stunning that a custom of covering these beautiful crosses during the more somber days of celebrating the Lord’s passion developed, a practice later extended to all crucifixes and other sacred images. Over the centuries, particularly since the late middle ages, the emphasis has shifted in various times and places to a view of the cross as representative primarily of the human suffering of Jesus. Instead of jewels and precious metals, more ‘realistic’ crucifixes of wood bearing images of the crucified body of Jesus became the norm. The resultant application to our own lives, also, has shifted more to our own human suffering rather than looking forward to the promise of heavenly glory to which the triumphant cross points.

The sacred liturgy places before us both of these complementary views of the import of the cross. The climax of the year is surely the burst of Easter Sunday joy, a joy so great we spend 50 days of Paschaltide savouring it. We meditate then on the triumphant cross, the source of our salvation and a pledge of future joy for those who embrace it. To prepare for that, during the final days of Lent and in the Sacred Triduum, the liturgy asks us to contemplate the dark moments of the Passion. On Palm Sunday we hear the solemn proclamation of the passion from one of the synoptic gospels, that of S Matthew. S Mark and S Luke follow on Tuesday and Wednesday. These accounts give many details about the difficult and painful moments of human suffering that Our Lord endured. On Good Friday, after a stark and dramatic prostration in silence, we hear the passion account of St John, which offers a more triumphant view of these events, the *tetelestai* described above. And then, even this most somber of liturgies shifts. The cross is uncovered and held high in triumphant procession. As we venerate it, we sing the Reproaches and St. Venantius’s great *Pange Lingua* is sung in full. The import of the Paschal Mystery is clear: our salvation is accomplished. It’s Friday, but Sunday’s a comin’!

All of our lives have many Fridays. The liturgies of Holy Week, the Triduum, and Eastertide can be a source of grace for keeping our balance when our Fridays seem overwhelming. No matter how dense the darkness on a given Friday may be, Sunday’s a comin’.

***Our Lady of Walsingham, intercede for us who have recourse to thee!
Ss. Gregory and Augustine, pray for us!***

Perfect Love

DOULA SERVICES

Amanda Antony, Doula
doula@perfectlovedoula.com
 (903) 348-6205

"Perfect love casts out fear."
 1 John 4:18



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