

March/April 2014



the

connecting the community of st. francis xavier catholic church

Navigator

Walking the Way of the Cross

As a youngster, I attended Assumption School in Broadview Heights. During Lent, we would go over to the church as a class and pray the Stations of the Cross. Sometimes the entire student body would pray them after Friday morning Mass.

To be honest, I remember it being quite long (we used St. Alphonsus Liguori's version) and not too engaging until I began to understand what had happened to Jesus, and then I was captivated by each station. I remember being struck by the cruelty, betrayal and utter horror that Christ suffered. I also was struck by Jesus' lack of retaliation and condemnation of those who did him violence. It was amazing to me that, even in torment, he would offer words of mercy, comfort and forgiveness.

When I was old enough to serve the evening Mass and stations, it was quite the physical feat to carry the cross or one of the candles leading the priest to each of the stations. I remember many families and the elderly making time to engage in this devotional prayer.

One meaningful experience during the time I spent in Jerusalem on pilgrimage was to walk the traditional Way of the Cross through the city. We began our journey just inside the Lion's Gate at the Chapel of Condemnation. There were many other groups all speaking different languages doing the same thing.

The Way of the Cross took us through the old city, past shops, stores, restaurants and residences. Each station was marked, some had roadside shrines outside; others had small chapels inside. We took turns carrying the cross, leading the meditations while singing "Stabat Mater (At the cross her station keeping)" between the stops. We finally reached the

Place of the Skull, over which now is built a huge church. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher encompasses Calvary the place his body was prepared for burial and the tomb in which it was placed.

Listening to the voices of others raised in prayer inside the cavernous halls of that place reminded me that this is what Catholics do during Lent – honor the death of Lord to prepare to celebrate his resurrection.

As Catholics, Lent affords us the opportunity to enter into the Passion of Jesus by praying the Way of the Cross. The children will pray it at school and during PSR. Our Life Teen members will enact it the Friday before Good Friday. The sixth-graders will do something similar for their peers and parents. We will have the Stations following Mass on Friday evenings. You also are welcome to stop in to church to pray them on your own.

Let us make it a good Lent by engaging in this prayer that helps us to focus on what we celebrate when we gather at Mass to celebrate the Eucharist.

In His Love,

Fr. Tony



Praying the Stations while a priest friend carries the cross in Jerusalem.

Photo by Father Charles Keeney



Saturday Vigil – 5 p.m., Sunday – 8 & 10 a.m., noon & 5:30 p.m.
Weekdays – 7:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday; 7 p.m. Monday, Thursday & First Friday of the month
See page 8 for our Holy Week liturgy schedule.



Dr. Ray instructs, delights hearers

Some 200 people braved a cold and snowy Sunday afternoon to hear advice about being strong parents and committed marriage partners from Dr. Ray Guarendi on World Marriage Day.

“That tells me you are caring, conscientious, loving people who would do everything for your families, or you have no life whatsoever,” he began his Feb. 9 talk in St. Francis Xavier Church.

The EWTN radio and television host, prolific author and North Canton clinical psychologist entertained his audience with amusing tales about his 10 children and wife as he shared his views on family life.



Dr. Ray stands with SFX Marriage Ministry leaders Gabby and Dino Paoletta.

“I know why I’m here. It’s quieter here and it smells better,” he joked.

“Dr. Ray,” as he is known on the air, asserted that a “massive erosion of self-confidence and strength of will” by adults is responsible for the overwhelming number of discipline concerns confronted by his clients.

The reason for that lack of confidence?

“Me. The ‘experts,’” he responded, charging that pop psychology has undermined parents’ instincts and made them fearful to assert their authority. As a result, children grow up with too much control and low behavioral expectations.

“I believe my generation is the last generation to receive a core reality of this whole family life process: ‘I am Dad. You are not,’” he said.

Parents should expect respect and obedience, he said. That requires them to “screen out media toxic sewage” and make

unpopular choices. “The irony is many of you have raised great kids even though you’ve had to go against the great cultural flow,” Dr. Ray said.

Too much emphasis on protecting children’s self-esteem has replaced concern for their humility, which he said is “at the core of who we are as humans.”

Good parents, he said, possess “that quiet, strong perception of authority,” where children learn from an early age not to disobey.

He urged fathers to take an active role in discipline and not allow their children to talk back to their mother, he said. “You would never let any other human being talk to your wife the way that kid does,” Dr. Ray said. “Get in there and protect. Say, ‘that’s not just your mother you’re talking to, that’s my wife. Now go to your room.’”

“We are not protecting the women,” he said of men. “We aren’t stepping into the breach and stopping this.”

Dr. Ray cautioned women to allow their husbands to discipline “like men.” While women often lean on negotiations and words, men are “quicker to action,” he said.

He talked about his own children, all of whom were adopted and most had “risk factors,” including fetal alcohol syndrome. Three are white, two are Hispanic, two are bi-racial and three are black. None is “strong-willed,” a term he often hears from clients. “‘Difficult child’ is redundant,” he said. “We have a shortage of will among the big people.”

Children who have been disrespectful should be calmly informed: “I have done you a disservice and I’m sorry. I’ve been letting you talk to me in ways that are not good for you and not good for me. So, from this point on, if you talk to or look at me in any way that’s disrespectful, you will owe me an essay on respect for your mother. We’ll start off with 600 words.” When they protest, increase the word count.

Until the essay is complete, issue a blackout – a cessation of every privilege, including cell phones, computer, TV, iPod, friends and activities, money, and washing of favorite clothes. “Until you get the essay, she’s shut down,” he advised.

Children as young as 4 could be sent to a corner, removing all toys and games until they do what parents ask, he said.

Many parents worry about the high percentage of young adults who abandon the church as they gain independence, he said. “It’s time to stop blaming yourself,” Dr. Ray said. “God asked you to raise them well. He respects free will. It’s now between them and God.”



Seniors gather to learn, grow, have fun

Every month, parishioners who are 55 years and older come together for spiritual growth, fellowship and friendship in what has become one of the most active ministries of the parish: the Seniors Club.

With more than 130 members on the roster, the group holds monthly meetings to learn about Church teaching, take small trips or pilgrimages, and hear advice on financial and legal matters, and many other subjects.

“For being seniors, we do quite a bit,” admits Pete Danszczak, the vice president and activities director of the organization.

The first Wednesday each month, about 60 of the members gather in the Xavier Room for a planned activity – usually some sort of speaker – and refreshments.

Speakers have instructed members about computer skills, legal matters, gardening, investments, medical issues, vocations and more.

Sometimes those meetings are replaced by short trips by bus or car to such places as the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey (near Findlay), Sorrowful Mother Shrine near Bellevue, Our Lady of Lourdes National Shrine in Euclid, St. Anthony’s Chapel in Pittsburgh, the Jubilee Museum at Holy Family Church in Columbus or Shrine Church of St. Stansilaus in Cleveland.

The group also has toured the Greater Cleveland Aquarium, enjoyed a buffet luncheon cruise aboard the Nautica Queen, visited Historic Roscoe Village in Coshocton, gambled at

casinos and traveled to the “Behalt” Cyclorama at the Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center in Berlin. A trip to Lancaster, Pa., is planned for May. (See the bulletin for details.)

The group also takes part in the Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by the Moms and Tots group.

A Christmas party and summer picnic are held each year.

“All the activities bind us together as a parish and as friends,” says Pete, who joined the parish 13 years ago.

John White serves as president of the organization, with Mary Grace Zirola serving as secretary, and Jim Sovey as treasurer. Dues cost \$5 per year, and members contribute \$1 per meeting to cover the cost of snacks. A 50/50 raffle is held at each meeting. Sometimes money is donated to contribute to such things as a more secure railing at the church entrance. Deacon Joe Loutzenhiser serves as spiritual director and liaison to Father Tony. Deacon Dan Norris is a member and prayer leader.

A retired certified public accountant and business owner who also is active as a member of the adult and Resurrection choirs, Pete says he enjoys the opportunity to mingle with other parishioners.

“The people of the parish are just really delightful and lovely,” he says. “I like people and just fell in love with the whole group.”



Carol Doraty, Pat Taylor, Pat Danszczak and Joyce Bonitz help with the Easter Egg Hunt.

He points to the members’ wide variety of personal and professional backgrounds that make them so interesting: “There are people who are so talented, and to me it’s an honor to know a lot of these people who have done so well in their lives.”

“It is a group that once you come to a meeting you’re most likely coming back to another one the following month because it’s a great way to spend at least one day a month with your peers,” adds John. “Four years ago when I joined the parish, I found it to be a place where I was welcomed and I wanted really to belong.”

To join, simply come to the next Seniors Club meetings March 5 and April 2, at 1 p.m. in the Xavier Room. Or, call Dorothy Saylor at 330-723-1950 for more information.



SVDP quietly helps needy in Medina

In their own quiet way, members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society chapter sponsored by our parish have helped nearly 4,000 Medina-area residents each year find shelter, stay warm, put food on the table, pay bills and much more.

The chapter works discreetly to preserve the dignity of the people it helps, many of whom have endured terrible hardships and feel quite vulnerable. Now, new officers taking the reins of the organization want to remind parishioners of the good work being done, reach out to those who need assistance and seek the help of those able to commit to their ranks.

After guiding the organization for more than 20 years, president Tom Rebeschler has stepped aside in favor of new leadership but remains active with the group. Rick Niese, who joined more than 15 years ago and has served as secretary, has become president; Mary Lou Cavanaugh continues as vice president; Meg Benninger serves as secretary; and Greg Felber is the treasurer.

“We’ve been very blessed with good careers, and there’s nothing more satisfying in life than helping those who have less,” Meg says. “It’s my favorite way to give back.”

How it works

Every Monday and Thursday evening, up to 16 individuals and families make appointments and meet with a team of SVDP members to discuss the help they need. Most of those nights, the rectory lobby is full of anxious people. They leave with about two bags of groceries and perhaps a check made payable to a landlord, utility or pharmacy. If they need furniture or appliances, they might leave with a voucher for those items from an Akron warehouse of donated items.

And, they leave with a lighter heart, having shared their burden and prayed with caring people who offer their help.

“What we don’t do is write a check to a person individually,” Meg explains.

SVDP members listen without judgment and offer help as they are able. They share a list – updated each week by a member – of employers who are hiring and two pages of area resources available throughout the county. Help is generally limited to those who live within the parish boundaries, and



SVDP officers Meg Benninger, Rick Niese and Greg Felber stand in the small SVDP food pantry inside the rectory. Vice President Mary Lou Cavanaugh is absent from the photo.

those who live outside of that area are referred to other agencies.

Those in need range from young to old and are of every race, nationality and religious affiliation.

“A lot are homeless and don’t qualify to get into Operation Homes or shelters because they have a felony conviction,” Meg says. “A lot of people from the Battered Women’s Shelter will come for food. One guy got kicked out (of his home) and it was cold and he had nowhere to go. He’d burned all his bridges. We put him up in a motel for a week.”

“You can’t be judgmental,” Rick explains. “That goes to the mission of St. Vincent de Paul, to help those who can’t help themselves. It’s exactly what we’re there for.”

Clients can request help once a month, and they always leave with food if needed. Generally, financial assistance is provided once a year. “We are more generous with parishioners,” Rick says, although some 95 percent of those helped are non-parishioners.

Greg says the organization would like to help more parishioners, who may be reluctant to seek help so close to home. Separate meeting times can be arranged to avoid embarrassment, he says.

SVDP members work in teams of five or six and must commit to working a given night every month. It is a considerable commitment, but one that members find fulfilling. Auxiliary members help as needed, such as with furniture

**To offer or receive help, call the rectory
at 330-764-8952 and leave
a message on the SVDP voicemail.**



pick-ups and packing holiday food baskets.

Funding the help

Assistance provided by the organization – which technically is not a ministry of the parish, much like the Knights of Columbus or Birthcare, but is entirely comprised of SFX parishioners – is possible because of the generosity of parishioners who donate money and food for the pantry, a small room just inside the rectory.

Some parishioners send checks for \$25 or \$35 every month, and “poor boxes” are stationed at church entrances for donations. The bulk of the SVDP budget, though, is funded by the annual Meadows Turkey Bowl organized by parishioners Mike and Bill Meadows, Tom Judson and John Cassidy. This year, the Thanksgiving morning backyard football game among friends, who “bid” competitively on players, raised \$158,000. The event has raised \$619,800 over its 24-year span, with most of that money benefiting SVDP clients. The parish’s annual Christ Renews His Parish golf outing also benefits SVDP.

In addition to paying bills, the money is used to buy food at the Akron-Canton Regional Food Bank for pennies on the dollar. Other food is donated: For example, SFX day school children filled the halls with cereal boxes in late January, and every Monday and Thursday morning, SVDP volunteers pick up day-old bread and pastries donated by Giant Eagle.

There is very little overhead, with the exception of a few office supplies. Last year, SVDP spent \$120,000 helping those in need.

How you can help

Because of the private nature of the help provided, SVDP full members work in small groups all year. They must preserve

confidentiality, work compassionately and honor their commitment to be present every month. Rick says the organization could use seven or eight new members to help when clients visit.

“You have to be able to say no sometimes,” Meg says. “They’ll beg and beg sometimes, and for good reason we’ll have to say no. You do your best and take solace that you’re helping as best you can.”

“For the next 30 days, we know they’re going to have heat,”

Greg says. “Or their lights are going to be on.”

Auxiliary members help during special events and when needs arise. For example, SVDP rents a large moving truck every month to pick up donated furniture and appliances from parishioners. These items are taken to an Akron warehouse. Volunteers are needed to help transport furniture (teens are welcome), and adults are needed to staff volunteer shifts at the warehouse on behalf of SVDP.

To volunteer, leave a message for Rick on the SVDP voicemail at the rectory, 330-764-8952.

“We see the need,” Rick says. “The need is out there.”

DONATIONS ALWAYS NEEDED:

- Beds and mattresses (all sizes)
- Kitchen tables and chairs
- Stoves
- Non-perishable food items
- Paper towels, tissues, toilet paper
- Soaps & shampoos (travel sizes are good)
- Deodorant
- Gas-only gift cards
- Money
- Grocery sacks (paper & plastic)

Items may be dropped off in marked plastic tubs inside the church vestibules.

The Edge Summer Camp registration nears

The registration forms for our very popular Edge Summer Camp will be available in mid-March.

This year, two one-week camps will be offered the weeks of June 16 and July 7. The camp is open for all current seventh- and eighth-graders in the SFX day school, Edge and home school programs. The focus is on service, with fun and fellowship!

Details are still being finalized for this year, but in the past Edge Campers have provided service at Camp Paradise, Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Medina County

Home and area nursing homes such as Emeritus and Medina Meadows. They’ve even traveled to Cleveland to work directly with the poor at the St. Augustine Hunger Center, St. Patrick Parish on Bridge Avenue, and the Bishop Cosgrove Center.

Fun, recreational activities are always part of the week as well. Sue Rohe-Brooks, our director of religious education, says she is busy working out all the arrangements, so stay tuned for where campers will go this year.

These camps do fill up, so try to submit your registration forms to the rectory as early as possible.



The Church's teaching on cremation

By Father Joe Koopman, assistant professor of moral theology, St. Mary Seminary

Recently, after offering prayers at a wake, I was a bit surprised to see that the funeral home had set up a display where they were selling a variety of different pieces of jewelry. Upon closer inspection, the pieces for sale (including pendants, bracelets, necklaces, rings, and even key-chains) were not ordinary jewelry: rather they were all designed to carry bits of cremains, the ashes of a deceased person who had been cremated. As one on-line company advertises, "Along with the rising number of cremations in recent years comes a wide range of options for storing cremated remains and memorializing deceased loved ones. Among those options, cremation jewelry is quickly becoming a favorite choice of survivors who wish to pay tribute to their departed loved ones and hold them forever close at heart."

Grief from losing loved ones is something all of us experience; so, too, is the desire to remember and to remain close to those who have passed on from this world. The Church acknowledges this in its funeral rites and its pastoral outreach to the grieving.

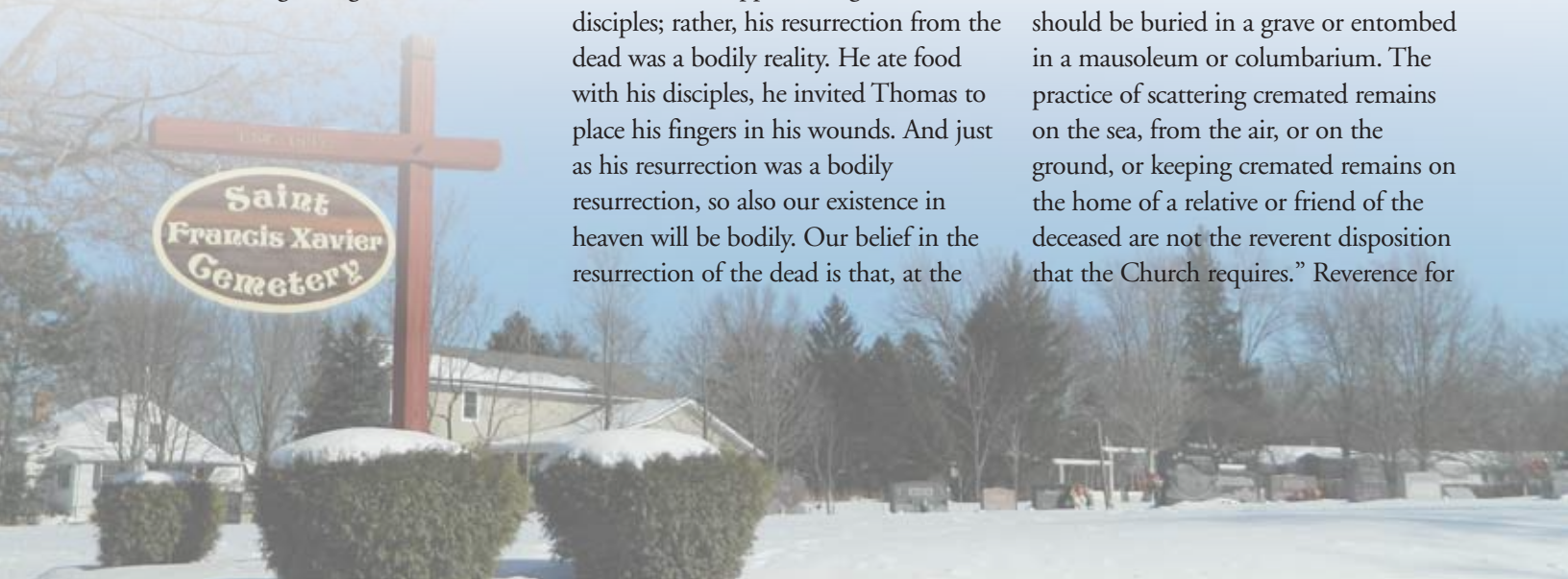
Yet, while the Church encourages us to pray for and to remember our deceased loved ones, what is this new trend of carrying cremains in jewelry? Or of the practice of keeping the urn of a loved one on our mantels, or scattering their remains in memorable places (such as the ocean, parks, or gardens)? To answer these questions, it would be helpful to briefly explore both the history of the Church's approach to cremation, along with its theology of death and dying.

Cremation was common in the Roman Empire. However, as opposed to cremating the bodies of the deceased, early Christians (following the tradition of Judaism) buried the dead. Part of the reason centers on the importance of the body in our tradition. At the heart of our faith is the great mystery of the Incarnation: that God became flesh in the person of Jesus. Far from insignificant or worthless, our bodies have great importance and dignity as temples of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the reality of the resurrection highlights the importance of the body. On Easter, Christ did not appear as a ghost to his disciples; rather, his resurrection from the dead was a bodily reality. He ate food with his disciples, he invited Thomas to place his fingers in his wounds. And just as his resurrection was a bodily resurrection, so also our existence in heaven will be bodily. Our belief in the resurrection of the dead is that, at the

end of time, all those who have died will be reunited with their glorified bodies. As the Catechism explains, "The 'resurrection of the flesh' (the literal formulation of the Apostles' Creed) means not only that the immortal soul will live on after death, but that even our 'mortal body' will come to life again."

It was because of this belief that, for part of its history, the Church opposed cremation. This opposition centered not on the act of cremating as such, but rather on an accompanying denial of the reality of the bodily resurrection. As cremation became more commonplace in the 20th century, and because people did not intend cremation to be a denial of the resurrection of the dead, the Church lifted the prohibition in 1963, allowing Catholics to choose cremation.

However, while the Church allows cremation, it guards against situations where cremains are not given proper respect. As the Rites state, "the cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come." This respect includes a proper burial. As the Rites continue, "The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains on the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires." Reverence for





Spring Grove vestibule mulled

the body, therefore, is the underlying reason the Church opposes the above practices, which would also include distributing ashes to be worn in jewelry. Our bodies, and the remains of our bodies, are not mere objects or commodities; rather, they have dignity that demand respect and reverence.

One last note: while the Church stresses that proper burial is the only practice that upholds the dignity of the body and the reverence owed the body, there are other deeper, spiritual reasons for burial. While it is true that, in our tradition, Christians buried their dead, it is also true that Christians would often return to the place of burial, as to a sacred place, offering their prayers for the dead. This practice continues, as evident in the many Catholic cemeteries throughout our diocese, and our world. As for my family, we regularly go to the grave of my dad, as a way not only to pray for him, but also to honor him and remember him. Going to this sacred place, where he is buried with dignity and respect, continues to bring us healing from our grief, and renews our hope in the resurrection of the dead.

Fr. Koopman is the brother of SFX youth minister Paul Koopman. Reprinted with permission from the Catholic Universe Bulletin.

Thanks to the generosity of parishioners, the parish has received \$200,000 so far as its share of the Cleveland Diocese's "Rooted in Faith, Forward in Hope" campaign. SFX receives checks for 30 percent of the money our parishioners pay each quarter toward their commitments. Once parishioners pay the \$1.54 million that was our goal, the parish will receive 70 percent of what is collected. A total of \$750,000 could come into the parish if everyone fulfills their commitments.

Now it's time to decide how that money will be used. While we have many needs, one area that must be addressed in the near future is the Spring Grove Street entrance to the church.

Father Tony Sejba says the ramp is crumbling and must be rebuilt. After consulting with architects and members of the Buildings and Grounds group and Parish and Finance councils, he thinks the entrance should be enclosed to prevent deterioration by the "forces of nature."

"I am thinking about building a vestibule where one could enter on ground level, and, once inside, go up steps to the church. The vestibule would have a lift for a wheelchair to meet ADA requirements," he says. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, he says, 66 percent of entryways must be accessible for those who can't walk. (Our existing structure was grandfathered.)

The plan is to then remodel the main entrance off the parking lot, which would restrict access to the basement during construction. "Would it make sense to include access to the basement from this new Spring Grove vestibule?" Father Tony asks. "Doing so would mean the basement could be accessible from two ways inside the church" – the other way being the steps inside the Washington Street vestibule.

Basement access from the Spring Grove side would come through what now are storage rooms used by the Boy Scouts and the school's Parent-Teacher Club (also known as "Stella's Closet").

To offer input, contact Father Tony at 330-725-4968 or tsejba@stfrancisxavier.info, or see him after Mass.



Vacation Bible School planning begins

Join us this summer for Vacation Bible School the week of June 23-27. Our 2014 theme takes us away to Son Treasure Island. Registration forms will be available in mid-April for children ages 4 through sixth grade. Camp runs from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at the school and parish grounds.

Adult and high school help is needed to provide an educational and fun week for our treasure hunters. We need volunteers to help as teachers and classroom aides, song

leaders, decorators, playground monitors and snack assistants. Help us transform the Xavier Room and hallways into a lush, tropical island in the sea! Along the way we'll help the children learn familiar Bible stories and verses, sing songs and make some island crafts. Expect a few sailor hats!

A staff meeting to begin planning this VBS adventure will be held Monday, March 10, from 7 to 8 p.m. in the school. Please consider helping. It takes many hands to make this another great VBS experience for our youth!

St. Francis Xavier

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www.stfrancisxavier.info

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Calendar of Events

March 5

Ash Wednesday
Masses: 7:30 & 9:15 a.m.;
12, 5 & 7:15 p.m.

March 7-9

Life Teen Retreat, Camp Cheerful

March 8-9

Men's Renewal, SFX campus

March 12

Diocesan-wide Reconciliation
5 to 8 p.m., Church

March 15

St. Patrick's Day Dinner & Dance
sponsored by Boy Scouts Troop 506
6:30 p.m., Church Basement
Call 330-722-6448 for tickets

March 31-April 6

SFX School Spring Break

April 3

Spring cleaning of church
Come lend a hand!

April 7-14

SFX hosts Operation Homes
at Randel House

April 11

Life Teen Stations of the Cross
7 p.m., Church
Join us for prayer as the
Stations are movingly
re-enacted by our teens.

April 13

Confirmation candidates meet
7 p.m., Xavier Room

April 27

Divine Mercy Sunday
3 p.m., Church

Lent & Easter

Stations of the Cross are
prayed every Friday following
7 p.m. Mass, except 3/7 and 4/4
Reconciliation is available
every Saturday at 3:30 p.m.
or by appointment

Holy Thursday, April 17:

School Prayer Service, 9:15 a.m.
Mass of the Lord's Supper, 7 p.m.

Good Friday, April 18:

Morning Prayer, 9 a.m.
The Lord's Passion, 3 & 7 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 19:

Morning Prayer, 9 a.m.
Blessing of Food Baskets, 3 p.m.



Easter Sunday, April 20:

8 & 10 a.m., noon, Church
8:30 & 10:30 a.m., Medina
High School Performing Arts Center

The Navigator newsletter is brought to you by the Stewardship Committee of St. Francis Xavier Parish.
Want to help? Have feedback? Contact Jennifer Webb at jenniferwebb@zoominternet.net.