

TIME TO COME BACK HOME!

2 Chron. 36:14-16, 19-23; Ps. 137: 1-6; Eph. 2:4-10; John 3:14-21

Last week the video of the documentary on Joseph Kony posted on YouTube went viral. For those who may not have heard about him, Joseph Kony is a Ugandan (East African) rebel leader, who for more than twenty-six years, has kidnapped tens of thousands of children, turning the girls into sex slaves, and the boys into child soldiers, forcing them to kill and/or mutilate their own parents and siblings. While this is a true story of maiming and killing, it is also a true story of slavery. The human mind is always yearning for freedom! These children desire to return and be reunited with their families.

Alienation can be terribly painful! You and I may not have experienced slavery, displacement or separation, but we may have seen it on television. Some may have read about it in history books – magazines – newspapers. The slave trade was a very painful experience. Apartheid and other forms of racial discrimination and oppression can be dehumanizing and demoralizing. Across the world today, prisoners of conscience – political and ideological prisoners – are being transported across the Atlantic to the Pacific. In today's troubled spots – Iraq, Afghanistan, Congo, Uganda, et cetera – many people are displaced from their homelands. They cannot return to the home they once knew. They are being held captive against their will by wars and violence. They yearn to be liberated from their bondage. They find themselves in a situation or in a place they would rather not be. They are alienated from their homelands – separated from their families and loved ones. They need freedom! They long to go home, but cannot!

Like the displaced people, you and I are separated from God's love because the beauty of Satan's deceits has captivated us and thus, we are slow to say "no" to sin. We have estranged ourselves and have wandered away from God's love. We have become lax and complacent in our religious practices. We have preferred the dictates of the social media, ungodly politicians and irreligious leaders to God's commandments and the teachings of His Holy Church. Thus, we have become so used to the routine of the practice of our faith that it lacks any meaningful depth. We have so mingled with falsehood that we have allowed ourselves to be enticed into serving others gods in wealth and other material things instead of the Almighty God Who so loves us that "He sent His only Son to die for our sins."

This Lenten season, you and I are lovingly invited to take stock and to realize how alienated we have been from God because of our sins. It reminds us that a return to God is possible through Christ: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life." Our faith challenges us to remember that the Cross of Christ is the symbol of our redemption and of God's unending love. Christ is the light that has come into the world, and if we need true freedom from slavery to sin we must choose this light above all else. Our complacency and relativism have certainly put us in a situation whereby we prefer darkness to light – Satan to Christ. Lent is an opportune time to break away from the darkness that oppresses and enslaves us. It is time to believe that our God is full of compassion and rich in mercy – always ready to forgive. It's time to come back home!

Rev. Anthony Ita Bassey, MSP

PARISH NEWS

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: The Parish Pastoral Council will meet this Monday, March 19th, at 7:00 p.m. in the school. All members are encouraged to attend this meeting.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Every Friday evening during Lent, the devotion of the Stations of the Cross is held in the Church at 7 p.m. Families are encouraged to participate together. We will also have the Stations of the Cross at 2 p.m. on Good Friday, just prior to the 3 p.m. Good Friday Service.



CHILDREN'S MASS: Please make it a point to bring your child to our Children's Mass next Sunday, March 25th. The 10 a.m. Mass will focus on our children. The Parish Children's Choir will sing the Mass. The children are encouraged to sit with other children at a designated place during the Mass.



OUR PARISH R.C.I.A. PROGRAM

If you or someone you know needs information on the Catholic Faith or have not been confirmed, please call the Religious Education Office for information on the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (R.C.I.A.) in our parish.



Please pray for the repose of the souls of all the faithful departed, especially Sister Esther Byrne and Walter Patrick Campion.

Couples celebrating their **50th Wedding Anniversary** anytime during 2012 are invited to attend the **Annual Golden Wedding Jubilee Mass** with Cardinal Egan at St. Patrick Cathedral, **Sunday, April 29th**, at 2 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Please contact our Rectory Office for more information. The deadline for registrations for the Mass is Friday, April 13th. This event is sponsored by the Family Life/Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of New York.

CHRISM MASS: Mass of Chrism will be celebrated this year on **Tuesday, April 3rd**, at 4 p.m. in St. Patrick's Cathedral. Every parishioner is encouraged to attend this beautiful ceremony, where we celebrate with the Archbishop of our Archdiocese and witness our priests renew their vow to serve God's people with the humility of a good shepherd. **Please come support our own parish priests.** Due to the generosity of one of our parishioners, a motor coach will travel from our parking lot directly to St. Patrick's Cathedral at the **cost of \$10 per person**. Please arrive at the parking lot by 1:15 p.m.; we expect to be back in the lot around 6:30 p.m. 28 of the 50 seats are already taken, please call the Rectory on 965-0566, Monday to Friday, as soon as possible to reserve a seat.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

2012 ARCHDIOCESAN STEWARDSHIP APPEAL

The 2012 *Archdiocesan Stewardship Appeal* is almost in its final stages in our parish. Next weekend (March 24th & 25th) is **Commitment Weekend** here in our parish. At all Masses, you will have an opportunity to make your commitment to the *Appeal*. This will provide a special opportunity to those who have not yet pledged to make their pledges to the *Appeal*. As children of Christ, we are called to serve others out of gratitude to our most generous God. Please consider a sacrificial pledge to the 2012 *Appeal*. Thank you! Below are the current stats of parish pledges so far:

Goal: ----- \$50,500
Pledge: ----- \$14,505
Paid: ----- \$8,505
Donors: ----- 42 families
% of Goal: ----- 28.72%

OUR 2012 EASTER WISH-LIST

In the spirit of Lent and in anticipation of a joyous Easter feast, I am once again inviting you, our parish families or individuals, who can afford to assist the parish in purchasing the following liturgical items needed for the Holy Week and Easter ceremonies:



1. 1 Paschal (Easter) Candle @ \$450
2. 4 bundles of Palms for Palm Sunday @ \$60 each.

Please, note that any of the above items can be donated in memory of your loved ones; and will be so noted in the Easter Bulletin.

Thank you for always responding whenever I call upon you to step forward and assist our parish in any way possible.

THIRD ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE OF NEW YORK will take place on **Saturday, March 24th**, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Shrine of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, 701 Fort Washington Avenue, Manhattan and ending at 6:30 p.m. at the Pilgrim's Mass at the Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, 7 State Street, Manhattan. 200 passes to visit the 9/11 Memorial will be available on a first come, first served basis. You can register for the event on the Registration Page of www.pofnyc.org.



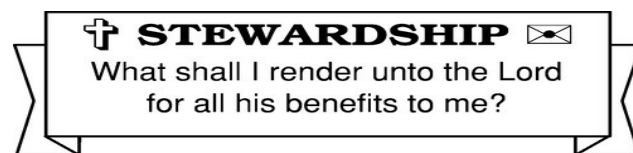
The first Sunday evening of each month immediately following the 5 p.m. Mass, our Youth Group meets in the McManus Parish Center. All youths age 13 and up are invited.

MIRACULOUS MEDAL NOVENA: Held after the 9 a.m. Mass on Mondays.

EUCCHARISTIC DEVOTION: Held the First Friday of every month at 1 p.m. Please join us when you are able.

DIVINE MERCY DEVOTION: Held the First Saturday of every month at 3 p.m. All are encouraged to participate.

RECITATION OF THE ROSARY: Join your fellow parishioners in praying the Rosary after the 9 a.m. Mass on *weekdays and Saturdays*



Tithing - God's Plan for Giving

March 13, 2011

Adults' Contribution \$5154.50
Children's Contribution \$146.45
Last Year's Total \$5300.95

March 11, 2012

Adults' Contribution \$7924.75
Children's Contribution \$109.65
This Year's Total \$8034.40

"The true purpose of tithing is to secure not the tithe, but the tither; not the gift, but the giver; not your money, but you... for God."



Please pray for all the sick & the homebound members of our Parish, especially Ethel Thomas, Aldina Pereira, Rebecca Conroy, Alejandra Santander, Grace Raguso, Andy DeFabritis, Maryann Tolli, Maria Marte, Ed Carpenter, Barbara Rup, Jule Yaskovic, Rosalie Heit, Dolores Santamarena, Florence B. Swetz, Clare Yaskovic, Neil Caruso, Raymond Fitzpatrick, Sr., Deacon James Byrnes, Andrea Objay, Carmen Torres, John Esposito, Francis Farrell, Mark Baum, Frank Marra, Deacon Patrick Troy, Josephine Apuzzo, Edith Dugan, Gary Roth, Joyann Allan, Anna Rita Morgante, Lois Burton, Mary DeStefano, Dan Seratto, Mark Cianfaglione, Shawn Colon, Margaret Maccia, Nicole Ryan Betancourt, Anthony Spinner, Audrey & Alfred Falcone, Kathleen Hayes, Marge Muraik, Stan Buoninfante, Donna Vasconez, Mary Ann Berengur, Gene DelBene, Angelina Brusco, Mary Romanchik, Nicole Pisani-Frame, Louis Petrulo, Cynthia Swiatkovicz, Rose Botcheller, Silvia Georgi, Jimmy Maimone, Robert Mirsky, Steve Oddo, Roseann Mercandetti, and Patricia Galik.

WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER


"Whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his work can be clearly seen as done in God." Let Worldwide Marriage Encounter help your marriage/Holy Orders to be more Christ-centered on the next Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend, April 27 – 29. For more information call toll free 1-877 697-9963, ext. 3.



The **CATHOLIC WIDOWS & WIDOWERS OF YONKERS** will hold their monthly meeting on Monday, March 19th at 7:15 p.m. in the Fr. Anthony Hall, next to St. Ann's Big Church, 31 College Place, Yonkers. Please call (914) 476-4436 for more information. New members are welcome.

The **CANCER SUPPORT GROUP** will meet this Wednesday, March 21st, at 7 p.m. in Room 111 of St. John's Riverside Hospital, 967 North Broadway, Yonkers, for education & support

MARCH 18, 2012

Mass  for the
Intentions Week

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Saturday, March 17 (Anticipated Mass)

5:00 PM Vincent J. Campisi +

Sunday, March 18

8:30 AM Michael Castagnozzi +

10:00 AM Joseph LaVeglia +

11:30 AM Vincent J. Campisi +

5:00 PM For All the People of Our Parish

Monday, March 19

Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

7:00 AM No Intention

9:00 AM Sophie Pinto +

Tuesday, March 20

Lenten Weekday

7:00 AM No Intention

9:00 AM No Intention

Wednesday, March 21

Lenten Weekday

7:00 AM No Intention

9:00 AM Maria Furfaro +

Thursday, March 22

Lenten Weekday

7:00 AM No Intention

9:00 AM Luigi Campana +

Friday, March 23

Lenten Weekday

7:00 AM No Intention

9:00 AM Stephen Hickey +

Saturday, March 24

Lenten Weekday

9:00 AM Frank & Carmela Legio +

10 AM Memorial Mass for Sister Esther Byrne +

Saturday, March 24 (Anticipated Mass)

5:00 PM Gloria Brusco Flanagan +

Sunday, March 25

Fifth Sunday of Lent

8:30 AM Jeffrey Milowe +

10:00 AM For All the People of Our Parish

11:30 AM Bonaventuro J. Amato +

5:00 PM Juan Rosa Vazquez & Magdaleno Vazquez +

MARCH 18, 2012



(1927 – 2012)

Sister Esther Byrne Goes Home To God

If we die with Christ we will also live with Him, because as the book of Wisdom says, "The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them." The family of St. Bartholomew's Parish has lost one of its gems, Sister Esther Byrne (Sister Mary Gerard). She was born in Manhattan, New York to Edward and Esther (Walsh) Byrne on August 27, 1927. She died on March 12, 2012 at the age of 84.

Sister Esther entered Religious life in the congregation of the Sisters of the Presentation at the tender age of 18 on September 8, 1945. She made her First Vows on April 26, 1948, when she took on the profession name, Sister Mary Gerard. She made her Final Vows on April 26, 1951. After her Final Vows, Sister Esther served in various Catholic Schools as a teacher for 25 years. Apart from working as a teacher, she had worked in parishes and a funeral home as a receptionist, as a RN and a Home Nurse to the elderly.

We were blessed to have Sister Esther work in our parish, St. Bartholomew's, for 10 years (1988 – 1998) as a Pastoral Associate, under two pastors, Monsignors McManus and Case. All those who knew her and/or worked with her testified she was an amazing woman filled with faith and love of God and His people. Sister Esther devoted her time taking care of the homebound, the sick and the needy of our parish. She was a humble daughter of God, who never thought of herself, but always put the interests of the parish and the people first. She was beloved and adored by many in the parish, particularly by the ladies of the Rosary Altar Society, where she served as a Moderator during her stay in St. Bartholomew's. She moderated the annual Lenten Retreat for the ladies until 2008, when her frail body couldn't take the strain any longer. In 2003, the parish awarded Sister Esther with the Humanitarian Award for all the work she did at St. Bart's and beyond.

I first met Sister Esther in 2005, when I was the Parochial Vicar; and when I took over as pastor in 2006, she visited me to assure me that I had her support and that of the ladies. She promised to pray for me everyday. I grew to admire and respect her so very much. She was like a mom or a big sister to me, and never failed to tell me how much she loved and appreciated the work I do here. She often wrote me notes to encourage me and assure me of her prayers. One such note written on January 24, 2009 reads: *Dear Fr. Anthony, my love and prayers are with you every day! May God continue to bless you with the courage and determination to always be the "Alter Christus" and "Good Shepherd" to every soul entrusted to your care. Your pastoral letter to your parishioners conveys the "Spirit of Jesus." Indeed, you are truly a genuine son of St. Paul...May our Beloved Divine God accompany you very intimately every day in your humble, priestly service... Sr. Esther.* She was one of my mentors and I will surely miss her.

To celebrate the life of Sister Esther Byrne we, as a parish, are organizing a Memorial Mass where we will pray for the happy repose of the gentle soul of Sister Esther and for the consolation of her biological and religious families. The Mass will take place **March 24th**, in our Church at **10 a.m.** and will be followed by a reception (breaking-bread) at the McManus Parish Center. ***Tribute by Father Anthony***

MARCH 18, 2012

ADIEU SISTER ESTHER, WE LOVE YOU!!!

