

CELEBRATE!

A NEWSLETTER FOR VIEWERS AND FRIENDS OF THE SUNDAY TV MASS

FALL/WINTER
2023

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The Sunday TV Mass airs every Sunday morning on WDCW-50 at 10:30 a.m.

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The Roman Catholic
Archdiocese of
Washington

THE THREE-MINUTE HOMILY: A SPECIALIZED SKILL FOR TV MASS CELEBRANTS

By Patricia Zapor

It takes a special skillset to preach a homily in three minutes. Pope Francis has repeatedly emphasized the importance of concise homilies, but even his guidance would allow seven minutes for cogent Scripture-focused thoughts during Mass.

For presiders at the TV Mass, three minutes is the rule. Exceptions for Christmas and Easter allow around five minutes.

A review of homilies at recent TV Masses during Advent and for Christmas illustrate successful compact preaching by various priests as well as Arlington Bishop Michael Burbidge and Washington Cardinal Wilton Gregory. Here are some samples:

For the First Sunday of Advent in 2023, Msgr. Raymond East, pastor of St. Teresa of Avila Parish in Washington, D.C., connected Advent to the kind of emergency preparation for which first responders train at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

“Today I want to prepare you for an emergency,” said Msgr. East. “The Lord is coming. And the Lord is coming at a time when we do not know how to receive him. We don’t know when he will come.”

“While everybody else by this first Sunday of Advent has launched into a full celebration of Christmas, looking and celebrating the birth of Jesus, we say, ‘Mary,’” he said. “We watch with Mary. Jesus has not appeared yet. A son has not yet been given to us, as we go through these Scriptures and the four Sundays of Advent. Everybody’s saying ‘Joy to the World’ and ‘Merry Christmas.’ But we say ‘hope.’”

In 2022, Father Andrew Fisher, pastor of St. Ambrose Parish in Annandale, Virginia, connected the Gospel reading about John



Msgr. Ray East preaches at the Dec. 3, 2023, Sunday TV Mass, on the first Sunday of Advent.

the Baptist preaching in the desert to the birthplace of Jesus immortalized in the song *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. The carol describes a calm, peaceful night in Bethlehem. Father Fisher asks: “Why is it this way? Why isn’t everyone lined up to see the newborn king? Where is everybody? The people of Israel have waited centuries (for this).” This is why John the Baptist’s message is important, he said.

“In ancient times when a king or the emperor arrived, he would send an emissary ahead of him to announce his coming,” Father Fisher said. “Our Gospel today takes place 30 years after Christmas, when now, as an adult, John the Baptist preaches, ‘the Lord has come. The Messiah is here. Open your eyes. Wake up. Drop everything and believe in him and follow him. He has come to give us life and salvation.’”

“So it is that at Christmas time,” he continued. “Everyone is so busy and thinking of other things that when Jesus arrives in Bethlehem, there was no one there. Mary and Joseph are there, filled with joy. The angels will announce it to the shepherds who come and are filled with joy. And a great star will announce to the wise men to come. And slowly the word

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2 HONORING THEIR LIVES OF SERVICE: DONATE TO THE RETIRED PRIESTS COLLECTION



RETIRED PRIESTS COLLECTION 2023



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SUPPORT OUR RETIRED PRIESTS!

Our priests inspire our lives in many ways: they baptize our children, comfort us in the confessional, witness our marriage vows, and hold our loved ones' hands as the Lord calls them home. They have selflessly served the faithful and the community to continue Christ's mission for decades, and in some cases, for more than a half century.

Catholics of the The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington are invited to express their gratitude to retired priests by donating to the annual Retired Priests Collection so they can live their retirement in dignity.

WAYS TO GIVE

There are multiple ways for viewers of the TV Mass to support the Retired Priests of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington:

- **Online** via credit card at adw.org/rpc.
- **Text** the word "Priest" to 301-231-1816.
- **Phone:** Please call (301) 853-4486 to make your gift with a credit/debit card or bank information.
- **Mail:** You may have received envelopes mailed directly to your home. If not, you may send a check payable to "Retired Priests Collection" to: Office of Development, The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, P.O. Box 29260, Washington, DC 20017-0260.
- **IRA Transfers:** Please visit adw.org/rpc for instructions or call Joseph Gillmer at (301) 853-5375.

After managing a theater and later becoming a priest, Father Early in his retirement continues serving people

By Mark Zimmermann

As is the case with many retired priests, retirement for Father Francis Early has not meant inactivity.

After the priest of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington officially retired as the pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Bushwood, Maryland in 2013 after leading that parish for 19 years, he then began helping out at St. Patrick Parish in Rockville and Our Lady of Grace Parish in the Leisure World retirement community where he now lives.

In his retirement, celebrating Masses and hearing Confessions for people continues to be part of the fabric of his life, as it has been since he was ordained to the priesthood in 1985.

"Sometimes I feel I'm doing more than when I was active," the priest said, then jokingly added, "I've told people that I'm going to retire from my retirement."

During his 38 years as a priest, Father Early – who turned 87 in October – has served people faithfully out of the limelight, including his nearly two decades leading Sacred Heart, a country parish in St. Mary's County in Southern Maryland. But this fall, his photo was used to promote the archdiocese's 2023 Retired Priests Collection, which was taken up in parishes in November.



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CHRISTMAS DAY TV MASS

Cardinal Wilton Gregory of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington will be the celebrant for the 2023 Christmas Day Mass. This special hour-long Mass will air on WDC50 at **10:30 a.m.** on Dec. 25. The Basilica choir will provide the music with a cantor, organist and the Shrine Quartet.

KNOW, LOVE, AND LIVE THE MASS

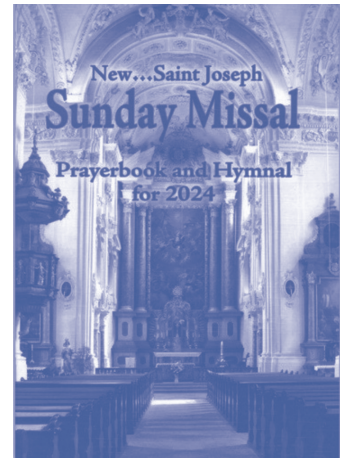
WITH A

2024 ST. JOSEPH SUNDAY MISSAL

The 2024 Saint Joseph Sunday Missal is now available to order for a suggested donation of \$7!

This pocket-sized missal is a wonderful tool to help TV Mass viewers understand the Mass and actively participate in it. It features:

- Clear, Easy-to-Read Type
- Two-color Order of Mass with Complete Prayers and Short Explanatory Texts
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Use the coupon below to make a donation to the TV Mass and receive your copy of the new missal. A self-addressed donation envelope is included with this newsletter for ease.

You can also read this newsletter in English and Spanish online at adw.org/parishes-masses/sunday-tv-mass.

CELEBRATE!

is produced by The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington.

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will spread.”

For Christmas 2022, Bishop Burbidge focused on Christmas rejoicing. “We have every reason to rejoice on this Christmas Day,” he said. “For all these gifts that God gives to us he asks so little in return. He simply wants us to trust him, to entrust him with our lives, our very being, to be faithful to his commands and more than ever in these turbulent times to be instruments of his peace.

He urged people to “give to each other the most precious of gifts, namely, your time and undivided attention. Be sure to promise that the goodness, the generosity, the charity that we see at Christmastime will continue. Be sure to share your time, your talents, your resources to help others, especially our brothers and sisters in most need, those who are suffering and those who feel alone.”

For his Christmas 2021 TV Mass homily, Cardinal Gregory focused on baby Jesus.

“Everyone loves a baby,” he said throughout the sermon. “Babies universally generate incredible joy in every human heart, simply because they happen to be babies. They stimulate sheer delight in their parents just by playing with their toes. Babies can send their grandparents into total ecstasy merely by flashing them a toothless grin.”

But those babies may be cranky and less endearing when they cry at 4 in the morning. And babies grow up to be sometimes difficult teenagers and adults with characteristics that are harder to love. “The humble baby boy born 2,000 years ago was like all other babies...” Cardinal Gregory said. “He brought much joy to Joseph and Mary and in time he also displayed all the characteristics that other youngsters demonstrate. For example, when he was lost on a family trip to Jerusalem and caused those worried parents much anguish and distress.”

“Christmas is a short-lived feast,” he said, “almost as brief as infancy itself. This holy day, therefore, has to point to the days that follow Christmas, during which we must also embrace and accept each other as precious in God’s sight.”

“It’s easy to love a baby, but much more challenging to love those who are no longer babies but cherished in the heart of the eternal father of that baby born 2,000 years ago to remind us all of that simple truth.

“Christmas is just the beginning of a love that we must have not only for this baby but for all those that this baby would eventually call to be the least of his sisters and of his brothers and for all those of us who stand in awe looking at an infant who offers hope and joy for all the world to behold.”

WDCW-50 local station guide

The TV Mass airs every Sunday at 10:30 - 11:00 a.m. on WDCW-50.



Use the chart below to determine the channel on your television.

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