

Fr. Joseph's Corner

Dear Fr. Joseph,

Is it true that the Catholic Church allows cremation now, and if so, why? Thank you for taking the time to answer my question.

—Mary

Dear Mary,

Thank you very much for the question. Yes, it is true that the Catholic Church allows cremation now, but the Church's preference has always been to bury the dead.

The ban on cremation was to oppose the pagan practices that were considered to be anti-Christian. The Romans did not believe in an afterlife. As such, they cremated their dead. The Christians of the early Church avoided cremation because of the connection with the Roman view. To be cremated served the purpose of denying the resurrection and afterlife.

Because Jesus was not cremated, this is another reason why this practice fell into disfavor with the Christians. And also because of the belief that the body is the home of the Holy Spirit, and it should be respected as such.

The Catholic Church's rejection of cremation was never intended to imply that someone who is cremated would never go to heaven. The Church has never opposed the cremation of Catholics after disasters such as a plague, or earthquakes or floods—when mass casualties occurred, making individual burials next to impossible.

The Church also permitted cremation in extraordinary situations where transporting a body half way around the world or a very great distance would have created extreme financial hardship.

In 1963, while continuing to maintain a strong preference toward burial, the Catholic Church became more open to allowing cremation. As more and more Catholics became aware of this change in the law, there has been an increase in the number of cremations among Catholics.

The current *1983 Code of Canon Law*, states: "The Church earnestly recommends the pious custom of burial be retained; but it does not forbid cremation, unless this is chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching."

Prior to 1997, cremations had to take place after the funeral Mass so that the body could be present during the rite. Since then, the Vatican has granted permission to allow funeral Masses with the presence of just the ashes.

To this day, the Catholic Church Law forbids cremation when it is chosen for reasons that are contrary to Christian teaching. For example, if cremation is implemented for the purpose of denying the resurrection of the body.

Ashes are not to be scattered. You cannot decorate your living room with the ashes/urns of the dead. Nor can you keep the ashes in your basement, buried in your yard, or in the yard at your cottage.

The ashes of cremated Catholics are to be preserved afterward as a body would be preserved, either in a mausoleum or buried in a Catholic cemetery, which is holy grounds.

I hope this will explain your question.

—Prayerful wishes, Father Joseph

St. Joseph Catholic Church

150 E First St., P.O. Box 1315, Prineville OR 97754

February 23, 2025 † 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Vigil Mass Saturday | 5:00 p.m. |
| Sunday Mass (English)* | 9:00 a.m. |
| Sunday Mass (Spanish) | 12:00 p.m. |
| Holy Days | 8:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. |
| Mondays • Tuesdays • Thursdays | 8:00 a.m. |
| Wednesdays • Fridays | 12:00 p.m. |

*Coffee and Donuts are served after the 9 a.m. Mass.

Pastor ♦ Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Kunnelaya T.

Secretary ♦ Darlene Counts

Parish Office Hours ♦ Monday – Thursday ♦ 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Parish Office Telephone: (541) 447-6475

Fr. Joseph: 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. ♦ (541) 420-4458

Parish Website: <https://stjosephsprineville.org>

Email: stjosephparish@bendbroadband.com

Pastor: fatherjoseph@bendbroadband.com / joekunel55@gmail.com

Facebook: St. Joseph Parish / Instagram: [st_josephparish](https://www.instagram.com/st_josephparish)

Director of Religious Education ♦ Barbara Dalton

RCIA ♦ Jim Friese

Parish Bulletin Designer / Editor ♦ Tina Hill



Confessions

Wednesdays: 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Saturdays: 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

(other times by appointment)

Anointing of the Sick

Contact Fr. Joseph for this Sacrament

- ♦ DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET AND GENACLE GROUP: Every Monday after the 8 a.m. Mass.
- ♦ FRIDAY ROSARY at 11:30 a.m., MASS at 12:00 p.m., EXPOSITION of the Blessed Sacrament immediately following Mass, EUCHARISTIC ADORATION 1–2 p.m., BENEDICTION AND REPOSITION



Baptisms

Baptisms will be held on Saturdays.

Parents of children to be baptized must be registered members of the parish 6 months prior to baptism.

A Baptismal Preparation Class is mandatory for both parents and godparents.

For more information, call the Parish Office.

Marriages

Couples need to make an appointment with Fr. Joseph 6 months before the proposed date.

A Marriage Preparation Course is mandatory.

MASS INTENTIONS / DAILY READINGS

The practice of requesting a Mass to be offered for loved ones, living or deceased, is a beautiful and wonderful part of our Catholic tradition.

Please Call the Parish Office to Have a Mass Intention Reserved

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| Monday | 02/24/2025 | 8:00 a.m. | Lloyd Rodgers (D) | Sir 1:1-10; Mk 9:14-29 |
| Tuesday | 02/25/2025 | 8:00 a.m. | Chelsea Kurtz (L) | Sir 2:1-11; Mk 9:30-37 |
| Wednesday | 02/26/2025 | 4:00 p.m. | Nikki Plum (L) | Sir 4:11-19; Mk 9:38-40 |
| Thursday | 02/27/2025 | 8:00 a.m. | Peggy Buselli (D) | Sir 5:1-8; Mk 9:41-50 |
| Friday | 02/28/2025 | 12:00 p.m. | J. T. Tauton (D) | Sir 6:5-17; Mk 10:1-12 |
| Saturday | 03/01/2025 | 5:00 p.m. | Lu & Jody Streetman (D) | Sir 27:4-7; 1 Cor 15:54-58; Lk 6:39-45 |
| Sunday | 03/02/2025 | 9:00 a.m. | Alicia Gonzalez (D) | Sir 27:4-7; 1 Cor 15:54-58; Lk 6:39-45 |
| Sunday | 03/02/2025 | 12:00 p.m. | Rev Gerald Condon (D) | Sir 27:4-7; 1 Cor 15:54-58; Lk 6:39-45 |

(L) Living ♦ (D) = Deceased

Today's Homily

TODAY'S GOSPEL presents one of the most difficult teachings of Jesus: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. This is radical love that goes beyond human instinct, beyond fairness, and beyond justice as we usually understand it. It is a love that transforms hearts and reflects the mercy of God.

Our first reading gives us a powerful example of mercy in action. King Saul had been hunting David out of jealousy, seeking to kill him. But when David has the perfect opportunity to take Saul's life, he refuses. He spares his enemy, saying, "The Lord forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord's anointed."

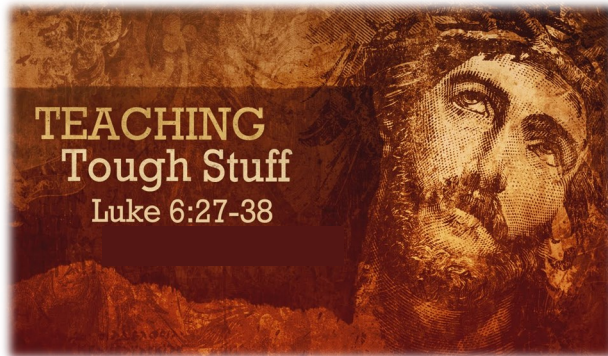
David shows us that mercy is not a sign of weakness but of great strength. He does not act out of vengeance but trusts in God's justice. His actions foreshadow the kind of mercy that Jesus would later teach.

In today's Gospel, Jesus takes mercy to an even higher level. He doesn't just say, "Don't take revenge." He tells us to love our enemies, to pray for those who hurt us, and to be generous even when it seems unreasonable.

This teaching is difficult because it goes against our natural instincts. We want fairness. We want to retaliate when we are wronged. But Jesus calls us to something greater: to break the cycle of hatred and revenge.

Why should we love in this radical way? Because this is how God loves us. Jesus says, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." God does not treat us as our sins deserve. Instead, He forgives, blesses, and calls us back to Him.

We see this most clearly in Christ's sacrifice on the cross. As He was crucified, He prayed for His enemies:



"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If we are followers of Christ, we must strive to love as He loves. How Can We Live This Love? Loving our enemies may seem impossible, but with God's grace, it is possible. Here are some practical ways to live out this Gospel message:

- ◆ Forgive instead of holding grudges. Ask God for the grace to let go of bitterness.
- ◆ Pray for those who hurt you. It may not change them immediately, but it will change your heart.
- ◆ Do good without expecting anything in return. True love is selfless.
- ◆ Remember how much God has forgiven you. When we realize how much mercy we have received, it becomes easier to show mercy to others.

St. Paul reminds us in the second reading that we are made for something greater. We are called not just to live as earthly people, but as spiritual people, bearing the image of Christ. Our destiny is heaven, and the way to heaven is the way of love, forgiveness, and mercy.

Brothers and sisters, the challenge of today's Gospel is not easy, but it is the path to true peace and holiness. The world tells us to seek revenge and to hate our enemies, but Jesus calls us to a different way—the way of love.

As we approach the Eucharist today, let us ask the Lord for the strength to love as He loves, to forgive as He forgives, and to be merciful as He is merciful. Then, we will truly be children of our Heavenly Father.

May God bless us and help us to live this radical love. Amen.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE ON OUR PRAYER LIST:

David Leonard ♦ Steve Forrester ♦ Carl Johnson ♦ Dolores Koivisto ♦ Anita Marquez ♦ Ben Guyger
Georgia Fitzgerald ♦ Pierre Jones ♦ Sammi Pedersen ♦ Chuck Renwick ♦ Reba McDermott
John Huthmacher ♦ Ed McNamara ♦ Brittany Duncan Osgood ♦ Julie Bither ♦ Mary Bither
Doni Bachand ♦ Terri Hintze ♦ Fred Vandehey ♦ Ralph Lee ♦ Mary Lee ♦ Jeanne Hackett
Peggy Holtz ♦ Michael Kuenzi ♦ Nancy MacDonald ♦ Mary Ellen Marquez

February—The Month of the Holy Family

Youth Mass

There will be a Youth Mass on **Wednesday, February 26th, at 4 p.m.** This is so that all the Religious Education Students can attend. If you can, please come and support our students. There will not be a 12 p.m. Mass on this day.

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Lenten Schedule

† **Ash Wednesday is on March 5th. Masses are at 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.**

† **Stations of the Cross are every Friday Night at 6 p.m., beginning March 7th to April 11th. A "soup supper" will follow in the Parish Hall.**

† **Lenten Penance is on Wednesday, March 26th, beginning at 6 p.m.**

† **The Chrism Mass is on Thursday, April 10th, at 11 a.m. in Baker City.**

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Friday Soup Suppers

Every Friday during Lent there is a Soup Supper after the Stations of the Cross put on by our volunteers. This year's schedule is:

March 7th: Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers

March 14th: Hispanic Ministries

March 21st: Acolytes

March 28th: Respect Life

April 4th: Knights of Columbus

April 11th: Religious Education

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Worldwide MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER:

As we journey during this Lenten Season, let us take time to reflect on our marriage.

What can we do to make our marriage even better?

Enrich your marriage by taking part in a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience from Friday, April 4th, to Sunday, April 6th, in Beaverton, Oregon.

To apply for **your** WWME Experience or to search for other dates, go to: rediscoverthespark.org.

For information about WWME, call (503) 704-0836, or send an email to: reservations@rediscoverthespark.org

Diocese of Baker Men's Conference in English and in Spanish

Join Catholic men from around the diocese for talks that inspire, conversations that give strength, and prayer that will help us become the husbands, fathers, and brothers God is calling us to be. Join us **IN ENGLISH on April 5th** in Bend. For more information and to register, please visit: dioceseofbaker.org/mens-conference or call Bryce at (541) 388-4004.

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[Únase a hombres católicos de toda la diócesis para charlas que inspiran, conversaciones que dan fortaleza y oraciones que nos ayudarán a convertirnos en los esposos, padres y hermanos que Dios nos llama a ser. Únase a nosotros **en ESPAÑOL en 12 de Abril** en The Dalles. Para obtener más información y registrarse visite: dioceseofbaker.org/mens-conference o llame a Bryce al (541) 388-4004.]

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2025 Directory

We are creating a new pictorial Parish Directory. This is free for everyone. Photos will be taken from **Wednesday, April 23rd, to Saturday, April 26th**. Sign-ups for picture appointments will begin in March. You can also schedule in the Parish Office. Everyone who is photographed will receive a free 8 x 10 portrait and a directory.

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Respect Life

- 1. Did you know?** 43% of all abortions are performed on African American women.
- 2. Did you know?** Planned Parenthood receives over \$600 million in taxpayers' money to fund their organization.
- 3. Did you know?** The first three people's reaction to a woman's pregnancy news will determine how she feels about her pregnancy.

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Holy Humor

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created Eve out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later that week, little Johnny's mother noticed that he was lying down as though he were ill. She asked what was wrong, and he said, "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."