

OUR LADY QUEEN OF THE UNIVERSE

CATHOLIC CHURCH



March 23, 2025 – Third Sunday of Lent

Fruit of the Fig Tree

In the Church, we are made children of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God who makes known His name and His ways to Moses in today’s First Reading. Mindful of His covenant with Abraham, God came down to rescue His people from the slave drivers of Egypt. Faithful to that same covenant, He sent Jesus to redeem all lives from destruction, as today’s Psalm tells us.

Paul says in today’s Epistle that God’s saving deeds in the Exodus were written down for the Church, intended as a prelude and foreshadowing of our own Baptism by water, our liberation from sin, our feeding with spiritual food and drink. Yet the events of the Exodus were also given as a “warning”—that being children of Abraham is no guarantee that we will reach the promised land of our salvation.

At any moment, Jesus warns in today’s Gospel, we could perish, not as God’s punishment for being “greater sinners” but because, like the Israelites in the wilderness, we stumble into evil desires, fall into grumbling, forget all His benefits. Jesus calls us today to “repentance”—not a one-time change of heart, but an ongoing, daily transformation of our lives. We’re called to live the life we sing about in today’s Psalm, blessing His holy name, giving thanks for His kindness and mercy.

The fig tree in His parable is a familiar Old Testament symbol for Israel. As the fig tree is given one last season to produce fruit before it is cut down, so too Jesus is giving Israel one final opportunity to bear good fruit as evidence of its repentance. Lent should be for us like the season of reprieve given to the fig tree, a grace period in which we let “the gardener,” Christ, cultivate our hearts, uprooting what chokes the divine life in us, strengthening us to bear fruit that will last into eternity.

Jesus’ parable of the barren fig tree illustrates his warning about the consequences of allowing sin and corruption to take root in our hearts and minds. Fig trees were a common and important source of food for the people of Palestine. A fig tree normally matured within three years, producing plentiful fruit. If it failed, it was cut down to make room for more healthy trees. A decaying fig tree and its bad fruit came to symbolize for the Jews the consequence of spiritual corruption caused by evil deeds and unrepentant sin.

Jesus’ parable depicts the patience of God, but it also contains a warning that we should not presume upon God’s patience and mercy. God’s judgment will come in due course - sooner or later. Jesus warns us that we must be ready at all times. Tolerating sinful habits and excusing unrepentant sin and wrongdoing will result in bad fruit, painful discipline, and spiritual disease that leads to death and destruction. The Lord in his mercy gives us both grace and time to turn away from sin, but that time is right now. If we delay, even for a day, we may discover that grace has passed us by and our time is up. We shall always ask for God’s Grace to repent and go back to God. God Bless you all.

Fr. Charley

MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday Celebrations:

Saturday: 5:00pm (Vigil) Church

Sunday: 8:00am Church & 10:00am Church

Rosary: Saturday: 4:30pm /Sunday: 7:30am /9:25am

Weekday Mass Schedule

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday:

St. Joseph Chapel

Rosary: 11:30 am before Noon Mass

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 3:30—4:30pm

Important Messages

**First Friday-Healing Mass/Noon-Church
Exposition of the Holy Eucharist 11:00am**

First Saturday morning Mass

8:00am, in the Chapel

Adoration of the Holy Eucharist at 7:30am

WEEKLY READINGS

Sunday – March 23

Third Sunday of Lent

Ex 1-8a, 13-15/ 1 Cor 10: 1-6, 10-12/Lk 13: 1-9

Monday – March 24

Lenten Weekday

2 Kgs 5: 1-15ab/Lk 4: 24-30

Tuesday – March 25

The Annunciation of the Lord

Is 7: 10-14; 8: 10/Heb 10: 4-10/ Lk 1: 26-38

Wednesday – March 26

Lenten Weekday

Dt 4: 1, 5-9/Mt 5: 17-19

Thursday – March 27

Lenten Weekday

Jer 7: 23-28/Lk 11: 14-23

Friday – March 28

Lenten Weekday

Hos 14: 2-10/Mk 12: 28-34

Saturday – March 29

Lenten Weekday

Hos 6: 1-6/Lk 18: 9-14

Sunday – March 30

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Jos 5: 9a, 10-12/2 Cor 5: 17-21/Lk 15: 1-3, 11-32

Seder Meal

The Seder Meal is a commemorative meal that honors the Jewish origins of Christianity. We will gather to recall the Passover, “deliverance,” on Wednesday, April 16th at 6 pm in Joy Hall. Tickets are \$5.00 and will be available starting the weekend of March 22nd /23rd. Please join us for this special event.



Fr. Charley's Easter Baskets

If you are in need of an Easter basket or know someone who is in need of one please contact the parish office at 256-852-0788 before April 7th.



Wedding Anniversaries

Tom Fitzgerald & Bev Massa,
Theodore & Jelyn Grilly, Robert & Jo Ann Harper,
James & Margaret Mullen, Francisco & Selene Neri,
Mike Nguyen & Kim Tran, Kevin & Susan Turner

Let us Pray for the Living and the Deceased

For the living:

Barbara Chandler, Patricia Thomas, Mary Lou Zurowski, Helen Bill-Cash, Rose Marie Phillips, Paul Shea, Riley Scott, Fred & Margaret Dorsey, Cathy McCoy, Jean Matjazic, Teresa Wilson and all those in our parish community in need of physical or spiritual healing.

For the deceased:

Morry Mack brother of Karen Ruiz.

MASS INTENTIONS

If you wish to have a loved one remembered during the liturgy for any special occasion such as a birthday, anniversary, get well, deceased etc. Contact the Parish office at 256-852-0788.

Sat.	Mar. 22	5:00PM	Jim & Margaret Mullen (I) George & Gwen McClure †
Sun.	Mar. 23.	8:00AM	The Parish Family (I)
		10:00AM	William Fideli †
Mon.	Mar. 24	5:00PM	Rafael Urrutia Sr. †
Tues.	Mar. 25	12:00PM	Louis Millin † Marjorie Nipper †
Wed.	Mar. 26	7:00AM	Michael Breighner (I)
Thurs.	Mar. 27	12:00PM	Miranda Webster (I)
Fri.	Mar. 28	12:00PM	Joshua Webster (I)
Sat.	Mar. 29	5:00PM	The Vu Family † Baptist & Dora Santos †
Sun.	Mar. 30	8:00AM	The Souls in Purgatory †
		10:00AM	Erik Knutson †

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mon. Mar. 24	Adoration Rosary Stations of the Cross Mass	5:00 pm
Thurs. Mar. 27	Charismatic Workshop	7:00 pm
Fri. Mar. 28	Stations of the Cross (soup to go)	6:00 pm
Mon. Mar. 31	Adoration Rosary Mass Tenebrae Service	5:00 pm
Fri/Sat Mar. 28/29	Pictures for 2025 Directory	
Sat. April 5	No Altar Servers Training	
Sat. April 12	Church Cleaning Day	9:00-11:00 am

Lenten Workshops of Spiritual Gifts and Growth

Join us at OLQU on Thursday evenings from 7:00-8:30 pm continuing to April 10th. These are informal sessions of teaching, witness and prayer tailored to address your questions. If you have any questions contact Jeff Anderson at 256-852-8734.

GRADES 3—10 Parents, the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** is a way for the children to meet the forgiving Jesus. During class time this Lent, your students in grades 3—10 will go to confession with Father Charley. Please help guide them in making a good examination of conscience. Thank you! March 23rd—4th, 5th & 7th March 30th—8th & 9th

CONFIRMATION The candidates have made it to the final phase of their preparation to receive the sacrament from Bishop Raica on Tuesday, April 8th. Let us continue to remember our young people in our prayers as they continue their spiritual journey. They are: Josiah Dorsey, Blake Duckworth, Felicity Ebelhar, Jordan Francisco, Daniella Enyong, Daniel Manglona, David McClure, Louis Plattsmier, Brennan Pry, and Isabella Scariya. Catechists: Claudia McClure and Dominic Ebelhar

RCIA The catechumens and candidates are getting closer to receiving the Easter Sacraments! Please remember to keep them in your thoughts and prayers as time draws near. They are: Susanne Bales, Carlo Ballesteros, Eduardo Mason, Eduardo Ramos, Lisa Smith, Jaydon Schaefer, Sasithorn Intharasorn, Deandre Jamar, Antonio Lopé, and Ngoc Nguyen.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL NEWS

St. John Paul II Catholic High School

St. John Paul II Catholic High School is currently accepting applications for two open positions: Principal and Athletic Director. Applicants who have the qualifications and expertise for the roles are encouraged to apply. For a complete job description and instructions for applying, please visit www.jp2falcons.org/employment today.

Holy Family School

Applications for the School Calendar Year 2025-2026 are now being taken. Please contact HFS at 256-539-5221 or email office @hfscatholic .com with any questions.

MUSIC * YOUTH MINISTRY * LITURGY NEWS

Youth Ministry Upcoming Events

Shadow Stations

Shadow Stations Rehearsals continue in Joy Hall Sundays at 4:30 pm. Food will be served. Preparation for Palm Sunday will continue.

Liturgy

Liturgical Ministers Needed

Altar Servers, Lectors, Communion Ministers, Ushers, decorators and Sacristans are needed for a smooth 2025 year. If you are interested in serving as a Liturgical Minister don't hesitate to get in touch with Mark Blackburn at mark@olqu.org or call at 256-852-0788.

Music Ministry

Tenebrae Service

Tenebrae, Service of Darkness will follow our Lenten Monday Mass on March 24th at 6:15 pm. Please join us for this Lenten Event to meditate and pray through word and music the Journey of Christ

Easter Children's Choir

The Easter Children's Choir begins rehearsal Sunday, March 30th after religious Education in the Church. All youth grades 1 through 12 are welcome.

MINISTRIES * NEWS * EVENTS

Easter Flower Envelopes are available on the tables in the gathering area. Donate in memory of, or in honor of a loved one or a friend at \$15 each. The last date to order is April 6th.



Catholic Relief Services Collection

The Catholic Relief Services Collection is March 30th. Your support for this collection provides emergency assistance to victims of war, and natural disasters; assists migrants and refugees who need housing, education and specialized legal assistance and supports travelers and others whose livelihoods require special pastoral support to access the sacraments.

Please prayerfully consider how you can support this collection this year. To learn more about this collection and the people who benefit from it, visit www.usccb.org/catholic-relief.



40DAYS 40 PSALMS...

Congratulations to Stephen Nason for faithfully participating in the Psalm weekly challenge. He's our lucky winner of the drawing for the first week of Lent. Let's remember to participate in Father's challenge and then put our names in the box for these remaining weeks of Lent. Please see display in the gathering area!

Mass Intentions

We have many dates and times available for those who wish to have Masses for friends and loved ones. Please contact the office at 256-852-0788 to schedule a Mass. The stipend is \$10.00 per Mass.

OLQU Office Contact Information

Reverend Charley Alookaran, Pastor

aocharley@olqu.org

Deacon James Multeri

deaconjim@olqu.org

Susan Turner, Director of Religious Education

susan@olqu.org

Shirley Bernal, Bookkeeper

bookkeeper@olqu.org

Juan Mark Blackburn SDS, Director of Music and Youth Ministry

mark@olqu.org | youthministry@olqu.org

Donna Pillarella, Parish Secretary

OLQU Parish Office Contact:

office@olqu.org / Telephone 256-852-0788

OLQU Parish Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday: 9:00am - 3:00pm

Mission Statement: We, the Parish Family of Our Lady, Queen of the Universe Catholic Church, through spiritual growth and service to others, seek to follow Mary's example of doing God's will by being a loving and open community centering on the Word, the Sacraments, and the Presence of Christ in our lives.

Councils, Commissions & Ministries

Ministry Coordinator: Eva Andrzejewski 256-430-3486

Finance Council: Fran Spinelli 256-830-4135

Adult Ed/Sacrament/RCIA Susan Turner 256-852-0788

Agape Joy: Maria Nolen 334-517-8157

Altar Linens: Pat Spinelli 256-830-4135

Altar Servers: Jared Ebelhar 256-684-8385

Arts & Environment: Beth Anderson 256-852-8734

Baptism Preparation: Deacon Jim Multeri 256-852-0788

Building & Maintenance: Joe Andrzejewski 256-430-3486

Care Ministry: Deacon Jim Multeri 256-852-0788

Chain Rosary: David McClure 502-759-1939

Charismatic Prayer Group: Jeff Anderson 256-852-8734

Communications: Damian Hochmuth 256-890-1621

EMHC: Maria Nolen 334-517-8157

Fund Raising: Fran Spinelli 256-830-4135

Gardening: Marge Mullen 256-683-1663

Greeters: Tom Heath 256-859-9554

Grief Ministry: Almaretta Brislin 256-603-1213

IT & A/V Care: Jim Chaloupka 256-852-0788

Lawn Care: Orlando Herrera 256-990-7212

Lectors: Sybil Shearburn 256-679-7023

Life in Faith: Cindy Williams 256-509-7258

Marriage Preparation: Deacon Jim Multeri 256-852-0788

Loving Hands: Carol Lee 256-852-4095

Mass Coordinator: Pat Spinelli 256-830-4135

Men's Club: Roberto Ruiz 256-655-2509

Money Counters: Pat Spinelli 256-830-4135

Music Ministry: Mark Blackburn, Director 256-852-0788

Prayer Shawl Donna Pillarella 256-852-0788

Queen Bees: Claudia McClure 256-337-6986

Religious Education: Susan Turner, Director 256-852-0788

Sacristans: Pam Mefford 256-509-5000

Safety & Security: Celeste Brothers 707-365-1607

Social: Orlando Herrera 256-990-7212

St. Andrew's Table: Joanna Acker 256-721-6922

St. Vincent de Paul: Luster Ingram 256-852-2899

Ushers: Jay Hammer 256-337-1016

Youth Ministry: Mark Blackburn, Director 256-852-0788

"The only thing ever achieved in life without effort is failure."
Pope Francis

SOCIAL CONCERNS & FOOD PANTRY

St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) Pantry

Needs: rice, pinto beans, canned meats, mashed potatoes, cake mix, icing, cookies, corn meal mix, pancake mix, syrup, jello, pudding, cereal, coffee, tea, toiletries. Please donate non perishable items only.

PLEASE HELP US HELP THE POOR...

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS: 256-852-2899

NEWS

Her Choice Birmingham Women Center 21st Annual GOLF FORE LIFE

We Need Golfers and Hole Sponsors

Friday, May 16, 2025 - Highland Park Golf Course

Registration 7:45 am · SHOTGUN START 9:00 am

Have fun, save lives and raise funds for Her Choice, the only

pro-life pregnancy resource center located in the heart of

Birmingham. The cost is \$250 (\$125 tax deductible) per

individual golfer and prizes will be awarded immediately

following the tournament. We need 18 people to organize

foursomes to make this year's fundraiser the most successful

ever. Individual golfers are welcome and will be

paired up. We are also asking individuals, families and

companies to be a Hole Sponsor, \$500.00, or a half Hole

Sponsor, \$250.00. Our signage is beautifully done and shows

others your commitment to the Sanctity of Life. This Ministry

exists to help women facing a crisis pregnancy choose life, and

to support them in that decision. Post-Abortion healing support

is also offered. This life-giving ministry of Her Choice exists

because of the gracious giving of people like you. Please,

support this event and contact Her Choice Women's Center:

205.447.8796 · golf4life@herchoicebirmingham.org.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

March 23	Building Fund
March 30	Catholic Relief Services
April 6	Religious Education
April 13	Building & Renovations Fund

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Weekly Estimated Expenses	\$	10,358.66
Weekly Collection Mar. 15/16	\$	4,170.00
Religious Education	\$	20.00
St. Vincent de Paul	\$	375.00
Building Fund	\$	-0-
Building & Renovations Fund	\$	90.00
Seminarian Education Fund	\$	335.00
Black & Indian Missions	\$	135.00
Catholic Relief Services	\$	15.00