

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF CYCLONE-WESTPHALIA
St. Joseph, Cyclone & Church of the Visitation, Westphalia.

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The Sacraments

Baptism: Saturday after Mass. Please contact the pastor for scheduling a meeting with him; a preparation program may be needed. Parents must be registered parishioners of St Joseph, Cyclone or Church of the Visitation, Westphalia.

Confessions: SATURDAYS 3:00-4:00 PM OR BY APPOINTMENT.

Marriage: Couples planning to be married should contact the pastor at least six months in advance before date of wedding. Completion of required paperwork and a preparation program needed.

MARCH 8, 2026 THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Describing the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, St. Augustine said that the Lord was "little by little finding a way into her heart." Layered, veiled, critical and pointed at times, what the Lord was ultimately doing in his conversation with this woman on the margins was drawing her close to him. Carried by his words and her interest and desire, Jesus draws her to him "in spirit and truth" and then says to her "I am he" (Jn 4:24-26). The conversation, you see, is mystical; it's revelatory. St. Augustine also said that we should "recognize ourselves in her." That makes this story from John's Gospel also about us. That means these words may little by little find their way into our hearts too. That's how the Church has long read this story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, as a story that is also about us. For centuries, this passage has been read during Lent in association with the ancient practice of the scrutinies. Over the next three weeks, by ancient custom, the Gospel readings are all from John. They were proclaimed alongside the final purifying rites which the Church applied to those seeking baptism; they still are. Recalling the ancient context, however, is important as we listen to these stories over the next several weeks. As rites of exorcism and repentance, the scrutinies in ancient times were often mysterious and somewhat frightening. Sometimes involving physical examination or hissing at the devil, strange and primitive things like that, the scrutinies in antiquity were dramatic renunciations of the demonic, the symbolic performance of the rebellion of conversion, the revolt started from within the kingdom of Satan, the fallen world, liberating the faithful for the kingdom of Christ. This, it's helpful to remember, was the liturgical setting in which ancient catechumens heard this story. It was clearly meant by ancient Christians to be heard as a parable of their own conversion, a conversion which they saw more clearly to be an act of cosmic rebellion against the rule of Satan rather than, as many see it today, the mere expression of religious preference. In the past conversion was conceived in far more radical terms. Which is precisely what is worth remembering as we read this story from John today in tamer times and alongside less exciting rituals, for it helps us to understand that what we are still talking about here is real conversion, deeper conversion, complete conversion, life-changing conversion. Again, we moderns have difficulty thinking about conversion so totally; we must deconstruct much of our conventional thinking about what it means to be religious in order to remind ourselves that Christ means to convert the whole of us. But such a total conversion is not something that we achieve on our own. Rather, conversion is completely a gift of the Spirit. This is one way to interpret Jesus's offer of "living water." He draws the Samaritan woman into conversation simply asking for a drink; that conversation then moves from the material to the mystical when he begins to talk about the "living water" able to satisfy every thirst. "Sir, give me this water," she says to him (Jn 4:15). He has brought her to the moment of spiritual desire, to prayer. Now she longs for what she realizes she does not possess. Thus, in the state of spiritual desire now she may hear the brutal truth. Now Jesus talks to her about her five husbands and how she worships what she does not know (Jn 4:16-22). The Lord's words here, open to various interpretations, are nonetheless morally and theologically convicting. Their conversation now is penitential; she must be brought to the point where she renounces her past sin and ignorance. Only then may she hear the words, "I am he" (Jn 4:26).

It's a story about conversion. It's a story that teaches us that conversion is about desiring the living water of God. That water is the water that flows from the heart of Christ; it's the water of baptism (Jn 7:37-38; 1 Cor 12:13). Nothing like any water we've ever known, which has never really satisfied us, this water we can only desire, beg for it. We must also renounce whatever keeps us from drinking this new living water whether it be our past sins or past error. Desire and purification, that's what this story is about. By this story, Mother Church whispers in the womb to her unborn children, to those soon to be born in baptism. Here are but the final few steps. Is your desire for God this deep? But, of course, these are questions fit not only for those not yet baptized but also for the rest of us. Do we desire Christ like she did? Like that Samaritan woman so like ourselves?

Bulletin Information: Cyclone: Nancy Posvar (254 913-2696)

Bulletin Deadline: Please call or send by email all info for the bulletin by Wednesday before the weekend!

MINISTRIES

Saturday, March 14, 2026

Communion: Jackie Green
Lector: Letha Novosad
Altar Servers: Novosad & Souhrada Families
Ushers: Volunteers

Sunday, March 15, 2026

Communion: Lacy Jahns—Jason Hoelscher—
Andrew Brenek
Lector: REP
Altar Servers: H & E Cowen—A Stumbaugh—E Eixman
Ushers: REP

UPCOMING MASSES

3/8 Sunday 8:15 am: + Lucille Stock by Margaret Abel
+ Linda Hering by Family
3/10 Tuesday 7:00 am: + Josie Kleypas by David & Janet Kasner
+ Ruth Duskocil by David & Janet Kasner
3/12 Thursday 7:00 am: + Barbara Macek by Charlie & Jackie Green
+ Darwin Bruggman by Family
3/13 Friday 6:00 pm: + Monica Mikeska by Pat Balz
Stations of the Cross & Mass + Alfred Schneider by JoAnn Klepac
3/14 Saturday Vigil 4:00 pm: + Anton & Albina Vrazel by Daniel & Linda Wilde
+ John Macha by Donald & Regina Kitten
3/15 Sunday 8:15 am: + Maxie Roessler by Patsy Cofer
+ Jerome Schoppe by Family

WESTPHALIA MASSES

3/8 Sunday 10:15 am
3/11 Wednesday 6:00 pm
3/13 Friday 8:00 am
3/14 Saturday 6:00 pm
3/15 Sunday 10:15 am

In your charity, please pray for: Homebound: Leora Hering. Good health: A. J. Stermer, Bill Stock, Dorothy Haisler, Evelyn Richter, Buddy Roessler, Al & Lou Buckholt, Mary Jane Underwood, Lindsey Pierce, Rebecca Marek, Margaret Campbell, Barbara Johnson, Fr. Tom Chamberlain, Nickolas Jimenez.

Stewardship—February 22—\$2652 American Home Missions—\$50 Building Fund—\$877

Sanctuary Light—March 8—14—In Memory of Jerome Schoppe by Family.

Email your request to cyclone.marak@gmail.com by March 12 in order to receive a 2025 contribution statement for your records.

Parish Safety Survey: St. Joseph's Parish Council is conducting a needs and resources assessment for a new parish safety and emergency plan, in collaboration with the Diocese of Austin. This weekend and next weekend, we invite all adult parishioners to complete a short 18-question survey after Mass. Paper copies are available and can be left in the narthex, or you can complete the survey online using the QR code in the narthex, or by visiting this link: <https://forms.gle/zkK6RJS57mjlLV5D7>. Your feedback will help us protect the health and safety of our parish family, and we appreciate your input and suggestions as we develop this plan. Questions should be directed to Becky Dolgener or any Parish Council member.

SCHOLARSHIP—The Burlington-Cameron Branch of Catholic life Insurance is sponsoring a scholarship to graduating seniors from our parish and other parishes represented by our Branch. See Shirley Hoelscher, REP coordinator for applications.

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 20—March 27—Westphalia Knights of Columbus Council #13902 will sponsor a drive-thru Shrimp & Fish Fry every Friday evening. Plates will be "to go only" starting at 3:30 pm until 7:15 pm (or until sold out). Plates will consist of fried shrimp, fried fish, beans, slaw, and French fries. Cost \$15/plate. Plates can be picked up in drive-thru lane behind Westphalia Parish Hall. Proceeds support KC's charity goals for the year.

March 7 & 8, 14 & 15, and 21 & 22—Altar Society will be collecting money for Easter flowers.

March 11—Shadow Stations—7:15 pm—Everyone invited.

The Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) application is now open through March 17. This program offers families a valuable opportunity to seek funding for Catholic school tuition and other approved education expenses, helping parents choose the best academic environment for their children—one that aligns with their values and supports the faith taught at home. To support families through the application process, Catholic schools across the diocese are also hosting a series of TEFA Application Clinics. These clinics provide hands-on assistance in both English and Spanish, giving parents the confidence and guidance they need to complete the application successfully. View upcoming application clinics: <https://csdatx.org/tefaapplication>

March 22—Salem Lutheran Church BBQ Fundraiser—Star Hall—11:00 am—2:00 pm—BBQ beef, sausage, beans, potato salad, slaw, dessert & tea—\$15/plate—Dine in or drive thru—Proceeds going to the American Cancer Society Relay for Life—Help Fight Cancer!

March 25—"Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary" at special Masses on the Annunciation of the Lord. Rosary & Mass will be offered at St. Mary Cathedral—Austin at 6:00 pm; at St. Paul Church—Austin; at 6:30 pm; at St. Thomas Aquinas Church—College Station at 11:45 am; at Holy Family Church—Copperas Cove at 5:00 pm; at St. John the Baptist Church—Fayetteville at 11:45 am; and St. Helen Church—Georgetown at 11:30am—Visit www.TexasToJesusThroughMary.org for more information.

ALTAR SOCIETY NEWS

March 8—Next Altar Society meeting following mass.

Spring Fest—March 29—Mix dressing March 10 at 8:00 am at Green's. Please pick up your Worklists in church entry. Flyers are also in entry. Distribute to businesses.