The Catholic Community of the East End of Pittsburgh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>St. Bede Church</th>
<th>Mother of Good Counsel Church</th>
<th>St. James Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>509 South Dallas Avenue</td>
<td>7705 Bennett Street</td>
<td>718 Franklin Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh PA 15208</td>
<td>Pittsburgh PA 15208</td>
<td>Wilkinsburg PA 15221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mass Schedule
Saturday Vigil  4:00 pm  St. James
Sunday          9:00 am   Mother of Good Counsel
               11:00 am   St. Bede
Monday - Saturday 9:00 am  St. Bede

Novenas  9:30 am  St. Bede
Monday  Miraculous Medal Perpetual Novena
Wednesday Mother of Perpetual Help Novena

Confession & Eucharistic Adoration
Saturday 9:30 - 10:30 am  St. Bede
The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available by appointment.

St. Bede Church is open
Monday to Friday 7 am to 3 pm
Saturday, 8 am to 12 pm

Faith Formation (CCD)  Sunday 9 am on Zoom

Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals by appointment only.

Our churches are accessible.

PARISH OFFICE
509 South Dallas Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15208
parishoffice@stmarymagpgh.org
Phone: 412.661.7222
Fax: 412.661.9337

“With God All Things Are Possible!”

Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord;
let us acclaim the rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

Psalm 95:1-2

Website: saintmarymagdalenepgh.org  @smmppgh  St. Mary Magdalene Parish PGH
Parish Office  
412.661.7222

Pastoral Staff  
Rev. Thomas J. Burke, Pastor  
tburke@diopitt.org  
Rev. David Taylor, Senior Parochial Vicar  
dtaylor@diopitt.org  
Rev. C. Matthew Hawkins, Parochial Vicar  
mhawkins@diopitt.org

In Residence  
Rev. James Adeoye  
iamesadeoye@yahoo.com  
Rev. Augustine Temu  
temuago@yahoo.com

Office Staff  
Frank Grande  
businessmanager@stmarymagpgh.org  
Terri Price  
parishoffice@stmarymagpgh.org

Religious Education  
Teresa Maynor  
tmaynor@stmarymagpgh.org

Music Ministries  
Jennifer Gorske, Director of Music Ministries  
412.370.2638;  
jgorske@stmarymagpgh.org  
Gerard Rohlf 412.657.7570;  
grohlf@stmarymagpgh.org

Safe Environment  
Melissa Viator  
mviator@stmarymagpgh.org

Social Ministry & Community Outreach  
412.241.1309  
Anne Scheuermann  
ascheuermann@stmarymagpgh.org

Pat Hoffman, Social Worker  
Marcus Smith, Food Distribution Assistant/Maintenance

Holy Rosary Food Bank  
Veronica Synder  412.731.4195

Media & Communications  
Cathy Raffaele  
craffaele@stmarymagpgh.org  
Glennen Lloyd  
parishnewsletter@stmarymagpgh.org

Bulletin  
bulletin@stmarymagpgh.org

Housekeeping/Maintenance  
Paul Denk, Ray Krivanek, Michael Natalia, Annette Shunk

Principals  
Sr. Thea Bowman Catholic Academy:  
Ms. Stephanie Michael  
412.242.3515;  
info@stbca.net;  
sistertheabowman.org  
St. Bede School:  
Sr. Daniela Bronka  
412.661.9425;  
info@saintbedeschool.com

New Parishioners  
Welcome! To register, please call or email the parish office. Registration forms are also available on the welcome page of our website:  
saintmarymagdalenepgh.org

PROTECTION OF GOD’S CHILDREN  
Report suspected child abuse  
At the 24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline: 800.932.0313  
If a child is in imminent danger, call 911

Mass Online: Livestream  
The direct link for the live stream:  
facebook.com/smmppgh/live/  
(choose the video with the red "live" icon)  
(link is also on the homepage of our website)

You do not have to have a Facebook account.

January 31:  
St. Bede Church, 11 am

February 6:  
St. James Church, 4 pm

February 14:  
Mother of Good Counsel Church, 9 am

The Mass will be available on the homepage of our website and YouTube within two hours of the livestream.  
saintmarymagdalenepgh.org  
St. Mary Magdalene Parish PGH

Stewardship  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Offertory</th>
<th>PSP 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>$4,630.00</td>
<td>$153,393.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>$5,185.00</td>
<td>Received $143,576.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Online Giving  
We invite you to consider online giving through Faith Direct. To sign up for regular contributions or for a one time gift, visit  
faithdirect.net  
and use church code PA994.  Enrollment forms are available at all our churches and Parish Office.

Advisory Councils  

Parish Pastoral Council  
Patricia Albacete  
Linda Atkins  
Lois Campbell  
Denise Charron-Prochownik  
Anne Kovalan-Santoni  
Peter Lahoda  
Teresa Maynor  
Joan Price  
Janice Reed  
Dante Romito  
Eric Setzler  
Gloria White

Pastoral Council meets on the 3rd Monday of the month.

Finance Council  
Martin Albacete  
David Aleva  
Christopher Benec  
Linda Burke  
Michael Myers  
Michael Polite  
Judy Prata  
Mara Sullivan

Finance Council meets on the 4th Monday of the month.

Covid-19 Safety Guidelines  
Masks, properly worn, are required; do not sit in a roped off pew; and the Communion line should be single file, with 6 feet between each person.

We are all in this together,  
so please, let’s keep each other safe.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS  
are due on Monday at 9 am for next week’s bulletin.  
Larger announcements must be submitted a week prior to the Monday deadline.  
bulletin@stmarymagpgh.org

As a Faith Community,  
we pray for all who request prayers.

Loretta Ashley, Gail Britanik, Scot Brown, Terri Burns,  
Diane Catley, Mary Ann Dickerson, Brian Durant,  
Louann & Joseph Gordon, Theresa Grieco, Pat Griffin,  
Dureena Grove, Mel Hobayan, Mary Kubicar,  
Theresa Kubicar, Kimberly Lattimore, Martin Lavelle,  
Patricia Marino, Matilda McGuinness, Michelle Menzietti,  
Dee Pryor, Mary Reidell, Emily Reiling, Natalie Semler,  
James & Rose Smith, Wallace Russell, Carlos Steele,  
Arlene Trichtinger, MaKenna Grace Turner, and Rose Vega

Our parish community prays for those who request prayers for any reason.  
If you, a family member, or friend would like to be on our prayer list, please contact Cathy at 412.661.7222 or  
craffaele@stmarymagpgh.org.
### Mass Intentions January 30–February 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mass Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Parish Commitment</th>
<th>Parish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Vigil Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time</td>
<td>4 pm</td>
<td>James Cantwell (St. James 150th Anniversary Committee)</td>
<td>TAYLOR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>For the People of the Parish</td>
<td>HAWKINS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 am Livestream</td>
<td>Barb Popowitz (Rita &amp; Jim Louge)</td>
<td>BURKE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONDAY Weekday</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Dr. Robert Lee (Mr. &amp; Mrs. William W. Rielly)</td>
<td>ADEOYE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUESDAY Feast of the Presentation of the Lord</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Robert Marchione (Nancy O’Brien)</td>
<td>BURKE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEDNESDAY Weekday</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Ann and John Lydon (Mary &amp; Paul Lydon)</td>
<td>HAWKINS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THURSDAY Weekday</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Michael and Martin Lydon (Mary &amp; Paul Lydon)</td>
<td>TEMU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRIDAY Memorial of Saint Agatha, Virgin and Martyr</td>
<td>9 am SB</td>
<td>Temporal &amp; Spiritual Well-Being of the School Children in Uganda (The Prochownik Family) James Seeger (Robert &amp; Carole Seeger)</td>
<td>TAYLOR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATURDAY Weekday</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Barb Popowitz (Jordan Holub)</td>
<td>BURKE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Vigil Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time</td>
<td>4 pm Livestream</td>
<td>Mary Louise Byrnes Kane (Karen Thomas)</td>
<td>HAWKINS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Jesse Scatorchia and Russell &amp; Grace Prata (Mary Grace &amp; Judy Prata)</td>
<td>TAYLOR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 am</td>
<td>For the People of the Parish</td>
<td>BURKE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### In Memoriam

**John (Jack) Siewiorek (Brother of Dan Siewiorek)**

_Daniel Stokes_  

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen

### Letter Writing in January

_This week the Sanctuary Candle at St. James Church is lit for Mary Louise Byrnes Kane and John, Dennis, and Jimmy Byrnes Requested by Karen Thomas_

### Calling All Singers!

_The St. Mary Magdalene Music Ministry is looking for parishioners who would like to sing for a virtual choir song for Easter. Please let Jennifer know as soon as possible if you would like to participate or learn more details about this project: jjgorske@stmarymagpgh.org or 412.370.2638._

### January 30–February 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>Adoration &amp; Confession Worship Committee Meeting</td>
<td>St. Bede</td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Zoom 1 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUN</td>
<td>CCD Faith Sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td>9:45 am</td>
<td>Zoom 2 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MON</td>
<td>Miraculous Medal Novena Cultural Action Team Book Study</td>
<td>St. Bede</td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Zoom 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUE</td>
<td>National Day of Prayer for the African American Family RCIA Tuesday Vigil Group Social Ministries &amp; Community Outreach Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zoom 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WED</td>
<td>Food Bank Pick Up Food Bank</td>
<td>Ministry Ctr</td>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>HR Rectory 9 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THURS</td>
<td>Mother of Perpetual Help Novena Bible Study with Fr. Matthew</td>
<td>St. Bede</td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Zoom 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRI</td>
<td>St. Bede School Mass STBCA School Mass</td>
<td>St. Bede 9 am</td>
<td>St. James, 9 am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>Adoration &amp; Confession</td>
<td>St. Bede</td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUN</td>
<td>CCD Christian Mothers Meeting Faith Sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td>9:45 am</td>
<td>Phone, 11 am Zoom 2 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the EVENTS page of our website for meeting information.

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**Calling All Singers!** The St. Mary Magdalene Music Ministry is looking for parishioners who would like to sing for a virtual choir song for Easter. Please let Jennifer know as soon as possible if you would like to participate or learn more details about this project: jjgorske@stmarymagpgh.org or 412.370.2638.
Radio Program, with Fr. Tom Burke as host, highlights elementary and secondary schools; colleges; youth ministry programs; and more, and is broadcast every other Sunday morning on KDKA-AM.

Fr. Tom’s guest on January 31: Dr. Brad Swiger, Principal of St. James School in Sewickley.

See the homepage of our website, for the link to podcasts of the programs: saintmarymagdalenepgh.org.

New Bulletin Coming in February We invite you to consider placing an ad in our bulletin and sharing this information with others. It is a great way to support our parish and parishioners. Diocesan Publications is our new bulletin publisher. For information on ads, please contact Rick Cortez: rcortez@diocesan.com or 412.897.6610

CATHOLICISM: The Pivotal Players showcases a handful of saints, artists, mystics, and scholars who not only shaped the life of the Church but changed the course of western civilization. Journey with Bishop Barron, Word on Fire, and fellow parishioners to learn about and explore the lasting influence of these Pivotal Players.

The fifth presentation will be on Wednesday, February 3, at 7 pm and features G.K. Chesterton, the Evangelist, who publicly, humbly, and humorously announced the paradoxes and truth of Christianity.

The zoom link is on the Events page of our website

Upcoming presentation: Michelangelo, the Artist, who dramatically demonstrated that beauty and creativity are a primary route of access to God.

For more information or if you are interested in participating in this series but find the time conflicting, please contact Dante Romito: dante.romito@gmail.com or 412.596.9799

Bible Study with Fr. Matthew continues on Thursdays at 7 pm on Zoom. For bible study videos visit our website: saintmarymagdalenepgh.org/bible-study-videos

For more information, contact Fr. Matthew 412.661.7222 or mhawkins@diopitt.org.

To register (required): craffaele@stmarymagpgh.org.

Cultural Action Team

Black History Month Calendar A special Black History Month Calendar is available on the St. Mary Magdalene website. It features information as well as "actions" that people can take to explore black history in Pittsburgh and beyond. Hard copies will also be available at the churches.

Christian Mothers At this time, meetings will be via conference calls on the first Sunday of the month.

February 7 at 11 am:
♦ Phone number to use:1.605.475.4875
♦ When asked, put in this code: 947018#
♦ When connected, just say your name.

For more information, please call Janice Reed, Secretary, at 412.727.6418.

All are welcome to attend

Book Study: “Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity”

All are invited to the next Cultural Action Team’s (CAT) meeting on Monday, February 1, from 7 to 8:30 pm on Zoom as we discuss the revised edition of Fr. James Martin SJ’s book.

The meeting will be facilitated by parishioner, Vicki Sheridan, the mother of three LGBT daughters.

Even if you do not get a chance to read the book, please feel welcome to join us for the meeting.

Please RSVP for the Zoom link:
Linda Atkins (lindadanza@verizon.net) and Jennifer Gorske (gorske38@verizon.net).

CAT Corner

“To be pure, to remain pure, can only come at a price, the price of knowing God and loving him enough to do his will. He will always give us the strength we need to keep purity as something as beautiful for him.”

Mother Teresa

Fair Trade Fair Report Proceeds from our Fair Trade Fair and financial contributions made for our Global Solidarity Partners during Advent totaled $3810. This month our donations were sent to Bread for the World, the Chimbote Foundation, Partners in Progress (for Fati-ma House Orphanage in Haiti), and Queen of Apostles Academy (Fr. Fred’s School) in Uganda.

Thank you for your generous support. Please pray for the important missions of our Global Solidarity Partners. To learn more about them, see the informational video on our parish website.

Many thanks to Emily Lippert for her efforts for this year’s Fair Trade Fair and to all who contributed financially to supplement our Fair Trade proceeds!
Our Parish Pantries have requested cereal for February. Please bring donations to one of the churches. If you bring them to the Parish Office, 509 S. Dallas Avenue in Point Breeze, it is preferred that they be brought between 10 am and 5 pm, Monday through Friday. If not, they can be left on the front or back porch.

It is suggested that donations no longer be put in plastic bags but recyclable bags which will then be used at the pantries.

Thank you for your continued support.

Our three Food Pantries (St. James, Holy Rosary and Holy Rosary Senior Center) saw a significant uptick in community need for food, paper products and detergent during 2020. As a result, 307,749 pounds, or almost 154 tons, were given during 5,612 visits to the three sites, at a total cost of $45,149. This was made possible in part by your participation in the annual spring Highmark Walk for Healthy Communities.

In the first three weeks of January, financial assistance for rental assistance, utilities, and other emergency needs totaled $3,276.

The Ministry Center received $10,000 from The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank to purchase food and they also supplied the funds for the Ministry Center to purchase both a commercial freezer and refrigerator, which have boosted our ability to serve the increasing number of people who are food insecure. We are grateful for this new equipment that has greatly helped us achieve our mission of serving those in need.

The SW PA Bread for the World Team is meeting on Monday, February 1 at 1 pm via zoom. Consider participating to learn more about one of our St. Mary Magdalene Global Solidarity Partners. Call Joyce Rothermel to get the zoom link at 412.780.5118.

The Association of Pittsburgh Priests presents Bill Huebsch, theologian, author and catechist who will be speaking on Pope Francis’ latest encyclical, “Fratelli Tutti: Brothers and Sisters All” on Sunday, February 21, at 1 pm via Zoom. Mr. Huebsch will share highlights and insights from the Pope’s recent writing. There is a PDF version of the encyclical on our website.

To register: associationofpittsburghpriests.com.

From Fratell Tutti “Social friendship and universal fraternity necessarily call for an acknowledgement of the worth of every human person, always and everywhere. If each individual is of such great worth, it must be stated clearly and firmly that ‘the mere fact that some people are born in places with fewer resources or less development does not justify the fact that they are living with less dignity.’ This is a basic principle of social life that tends to be ignored in a variety of ways by those who sense that it does not fit into their worldview or serve their purposes.” (paragraph 106)
Celebrating Catholic Schools Week!

As a product of both a Catholic and Public Education, I am very grateful for the sacrifices my parents made for me and my two sisters so we could get a great Catholic elementary education. I graduated from St. Norbert Elementary School in Overbrook in 1984, Carrick High School in 1988 and Clarion University in 1992. I am very thankful for the foundation of the morals and values that Catholic Education has given me in my life.

This week we celebrate Catholic Schools Week. There are many wonderful options for schools in our area. St. Bede and Sister Thea Bowman Catholic Academy offer a quality Catholic education in a safe and loving environment with a 3 and 4 year-old pre-school program and Kindergarten through Eighth Grade. We have two great “neighborhood schools” in the Point Breeze and Wilkinsburg Communities. Please call 412.661.9425 at St. Bede or 412.242.3515 at Sister Thea Bowman for more information. With many public and other private schools closed due to the pandemic, we are blessed to have our Catholic schools open for in person instruction or the option for daily virtual learning.

This weekend we celebrate the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time. In the first reading from the Book of Deuteronomy, we read how Moses assures the people that God will never abandon them. He challenges them to show their gratitude by remaining loyal to the terms of the covenant with God. In the Second Reading from Paul to the Corinthians, we read how Paul devotes himself to helping the people of faith remain loyal to God. In the Gospel of Mark, we read how Jesus teaches in the synagogue on the sabbath and all those who heard were astounded by his teachings and he then expels an unclean spirit from a man. Jesus speaks to us each time we gather to hear the gospel proclaimed. Guiding us through our own personal exodus with every-day life challenges, Jesus leads us to eternal life if we only follow and trust him.

Blessing of Throats

In honor of the Feast of St. Blaise, which is this coming Wednesday, February 3, we will have a special “Blessing of Throats” prayer at the conclusion of Mass this weekend and at the end of the Mass on Wednesday. Because of the pandemic we are unable to have individual throat blessings.

Parish Improvements

The Holy Rosary Rectory is getting a fresh coat of paint on the first floor.

Richard A. Smith Painting has completed painting upgrades on the first floor of St. James Rectory and is currently working on the first floor of the St. Bede Rectory.

Toth Carpeting of Munhall has completed installing new carpeting on the first floor of St. James Rectory.

Are You Registered?

If you are attending Mass at St. Mary Magdalene on a regular basis and are not officially registered, please call Terri Price at the office at 412.661.7222. Every Catholic needs a place to call home and be officially registered at a parish.

2020 Tax Letters

If you would like to request a donation letter for your 2020 taxes, please contact Frank Grande at 412.661.7222 ext. 204 or email at businessmanager@stmarymagpgh.org. To help the parish save on postage (and ensure that you receive it in a timely manner) you may pick up your tax letters at the parish office during normal business hours after you call for your request.

2021 Mass Intentions

Mass Intention and Sanctuary Memorial Candle forms are available in the vestibule of our churches and at the parish office. Please complete the form and return with the $10 stipend. No requests can be taken over the phone or via email, and each request needs the specific form with the $10 stipend enclosed in order for it to be processed. Please contact Terri Price at the Parish Office, 412.661.7222 ext. 0 for more information.

Welcome

A special warm welcome to Kaileen Daniber and Thomas Hon, who recently registered at St. Mary Magdalene Parish!

Congratulations

Congratulations to Emerild Elizabeth Green and Elijah Edward Nigborowicz who are being Baptized this weekend!

Wedding Bells

Congratulations to Cristina Habacon and Andrew Zaragoza who are validating their marriage this weekend!

Something to Think About…

The more we are transformed by the power of Christ, the less we will be conformed to this world.

With God, All Things Are Possible!

Fr. Tom Burke, Pastor
tburke@diopitt.org
Fr. David Taylor

Many of the most striking Gospel stories take up the issue of healing. Jesus and the disciples are often called upon for both spiritual and physical healing. This is significant in that most of us who seek physical health also are in need of spiritual renewal.

The most successful therapy sessions dealing with addictions have a strong spiritual component. As people go through a period of recovery, they discover that, in order to be whole again, they must recapture their relationship with God. This is why those experiencing healing could not help but go and tell others of what God had done for them. The present pandemic has left many suffering both in need of physical and spiritual health. Most who are sick find themselves in need of the sacraments, especially those of healing and the Holy Eucharist. It is difficult to experience a physical recovery without a renewal of faith.

Fr. Matthew Hawkins

Last week the United States hit a new tragic milestone. Over 400,000 Americans have died from the coronavirus pandemic. Additionally, the World Health Organization reports that wealthy nations have bought up almost all of the vaccines, leaving poorer nations without the means to immunize their people. As an indication of how divided we are as a nation, we have recently witnessed the sobering spectacle of the deployment of 25,000 National Guard troops in Washington so that the presidential inauguration took place under conditions that resembled a war zone.

If we see the world through a sacramental lens then we may begin to see how we journey through life together, and how the divisions in our world and in our society reflect the loss of our sense of a common humanity.

A sacramental view of this pandemic may show us how to slow down and not to be discouraged when we can no longer live with the illusion that everything is under our control. When all of our careful planning goes awry we learn what it means to trust more and more on divine providence. We also deepen our solidarity with the rest of humanity. The question we should confront in the face of tragedy is not primarily “Why did God allow this to happen? What is God saying to us?” Rather it is, “How is God calling us to respond to this tragedy? What is God calling me to do?”

We are now in a period that straddles the national holiday of the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr., which we celebrated two weeks ago, and the beginning of African American History month, which begins this week. During this time of the year, much of the discussion in the news and in schools is focused on “race” and “racism”. The model for a Christian response to the sin of racism was encoded into the DNA of the Civil Rights movement which King led 50 years ago. The Civil Rights movement was a church-based movement that was centered on prayer. The principle behind that movement was this: do not deny the humanity of those who hate you and do not allow them to diminish the dignity of the human person in yourself.

This principle is still a guide in our divided and restless society. One of the most shocking scenes described in today’s Gospel (Mk 1: 21-28) is the scene where a man who is possessed by an unclean spirit, filled with fear and anger, accosts Jesus in the temple for having come into the world to end the reign that such spirits have over the hearts of people. Jesus’ response was not to mirror the behavior of the man who had lost his senses, which would have solved nothing, rather it was to transform the situation by restoring that man to his humanity.

Today, Christians are called and challenged to reject a destructive spiral that is based on fear and anger and to restore the dignity of the human person in ourselves and in everyone we meet. The Gospel according to St. Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah who said: “The people who sit in darkness have seen a great light; on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death, light has arisen” (Mt 4:16).

Let us be that light that breaks through the darkness, but this will only be possible by remaining in communion with God through prayer, sacred scripture, and the sacraments. The dignity of the human person must be restored in us so that we can restore that dignity in those whom we otherwise might be tempted to see as being our “enemy”. The light must break through the darkness that is inside of each of us before we can be that light to break through the darkness in all the world.