

**HOMILY 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY LENT**  
**March 15, 2026**

Several years ago, a change was made in the way car accidents are reported in the media. In the past, they were referred to as accidents. No more. We cannot call them accidents because they are not accidents. Someone must be to blame. We now call them crashes or wrecks or collisions. When bad things happen, we must find someone to blame. If we cannot blame someone, we feel out of control. We feel more in control if we can believe that bad things can only happen if someone does something wrong. We know this is not true. We do not always know why bad things happen. We do know that it is not God's will. God never punishes, he only loves us and wants what is best for us.

In the Gospel reading we hear about the man born blind and Jesus restores his sight. They are certainly playing the blame game here. Was he born blind because of his sin or because of the sin of his parents? If he was born blind, how could it be because of his sin. He would have to have sinned before he was born. Maybe he is lying. Maybe we can blame him for that. He ended up getting thrown out of the synagogue. Are his parents to blame? His parents see this coming and immediately distance themselves from their son. He is an adult, ask him. We do not want to get involved. They abandon their son. This should be the happiest day in their son's life. He has physical sight for the first time in his life and he gained spiritual sight. He found Jesus. In addition to all of the blame, his whole life is going to change because of his physical and spiritual site. Change is hard even if we know it is change for the better.

We are in the process of planning for a big change in the Archdiocese of Detroit. Change is needed because 70% of the parishes have less than 600 people attending Mass on the weekend. We have too many buildings and properties that we do not need and are not able to maintain. We have been talking about the priest shortage for 20 years and now we need to do something about it. The

goals of this restructuring are to have vibrant parishes, flourishing priests and an Archdiocese prepared to carry out the mission of the Church in the future. This is going to be a two year process. It has already been going on for about 6 months. The priests of the Archdiocese have already spent 4 full days at the seminary and many hours in virtual meetings developing models for restructuring. No decisions have been made yet. Last week there was a meeting with Key Parish Leaders in our area to review the models and give input. No decisions have been made yet. Our Key Parish Leaders are: Elisbeth Johnston; Linda Riethmiller; Megan Szczyпка-Wolschleger; Matt Taggart; and Mark Tuttle. Deb Strautz is our Key Parish Contact. Two Listening Sessions will be held at every parish where anyone can attend and give input. Ours will be in June. The plan for restructuring will be announced in the spring of 2027 and the plan will be implemented on July 1, 2027. Every parish will be affected in some way by the Restructuring. Some buildings will close, some parishes will have to welcome new parishioners, some priests will be reassigned. This will be a big change, but I am confident that it will prove to be change for the better in the long run. Change is hard, but we have to remember that it is change for the better and press forward with what we need to do to support the change and make it work.

And we absolutely cannot get stuck in the blame game. You know what I mean? We can blame past Archbishops because of some of the bad decisions that were made. We can blame the new Archbishop's for coming in and changing everything. We can blame the parishes for not doing enough evangelizing and fund raising. We can blame the pastors and parish staffs for poor leadership or for spending too much money. Getting stuck in the blame game is just not helpful. We have to accept that everyone made the best decision they could at the time and move on. We cannot change the past. The blame game will make the positive changes made in the restructuring into something negative. Remember, change is hard but it will be change for the better.