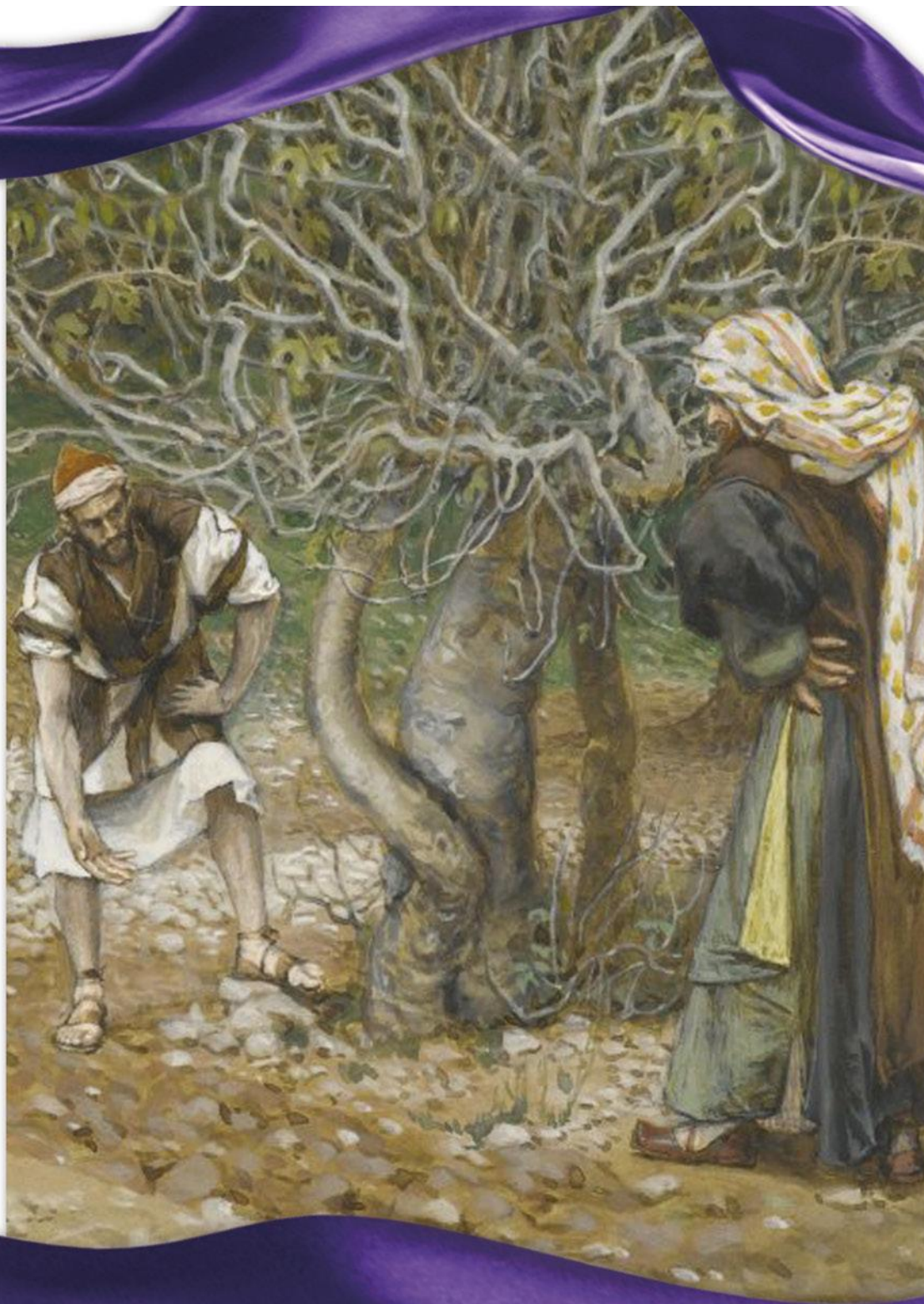


“Sir, leave it
for this year
also, and I shall
cultivate the
grounds around
it and fertilize it;
it may bear fruit
in the future.
If not you can
cut it down.”

Luke 13:8, 9

The Vine Dresser and
the Fig Tree
by James Tissot, circa 1890s



3RD SUNDAY OF
LENT

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Readings This Weekend:

Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15 1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12 Luke 13:1-9

Readings Next Weekend:

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



Today's Gospel reminds us of the hymn that says, "It's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer!" The Lord begins Presenting the Problem in the form of a question. He asks if certain people who had suffered calamity were worse sinners than others. He answers, firmly, "No." And then he presents the central point, saying, "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish." So, rather than comparing ourselves with others and trying to set up some pecking order about who's better or worse, we all need to remember that we all have to get ready for judgment and that we will all need grace and mercy. Yes, Lord, it's me, standing in the need of prayer! Then in the second half of the Gospel, using a parable, the Lord announces a three-fold Portrayal of the Process in terms of the judgment that is upon us. First, there is an **Assessment** that a certain fig tree is not bearing the expected fruit. Faith is a fruit-bearing tree in our life and there are certain fruits we ought to expect, that are born by those who say they have saving faith. In the parable, the tree is lacking the necessary fruits. But the Lord responds to this assessment with **Assistance**. And thus, hearing the request for mercy, the Lord orders that the ground around the tree should be cultivated and fertilized. Yes, for now there are many graces the Lord sends to us to summon us to repentance and to ready us for the day of judgment. This leads to the final stage of the judgment process, **Acceptance**. That is, while judgment is delayed for now, and grace and mercy are supplied in abundance, there comes the day when judgment must finally be rendered. And the judgment is not so much the mere passing of a sentence, but acceptance on the part of the Lord of whether we ever really wanted our faith to bear fruit.

† MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK †

Sunday, March 23 *Third Sunday of Lent*

8:00am Elizabeth Fairfax (B'day) †
 9:30am Lillian Myrick †
 11:00am Aaron Lee †
 7:00pm Terrance Gregory Teasley †

Monday, March 24

7:00am Marlene Whitlock †

Tuesday, March 25 *The Annunciation of the Lord*

7:00am Charles Myrick, Sr. †

Wednesday, March 26

7:00am Charles Lancaster †

Thursday, March 27

7:00am Harry Clapp †

Friday, March 28

7:00am Constance Peaks †

Saturday, March 29

8:00am For the People
 4:30pm Intentions of Arlene Long

DAILY READINGS FOR THE WEEK

MONDAY: 2 KINGS 5:-15B LUKE 4:24-30
TUESDAY: ISAIAH 7:10-14, 8-10 LUKE 1:26-38
WEDNESDAY: DEUTERONOMY 4:1, 5-9 MATTHEW 5:17-19
THURSDAY: JEREMIAH 7:23-28 LUKE 11:14-23
FRIDAY: HOSEA 14:2-10 MARK 12:28-34
SATURDAY HOSEA 6:1-6 LUKE 18:9-14



FAITH DIRECT (Electronic Tithing): We offer electronic tithing through *Faith Direct*. Here are 3 ways to get info and register:

1. Scan the QR code to the right.
2. Text "Enroll" to 301-478-8900 to give.
3. Go online to faith.direct/DC59 and register.

This eGiving service is **FREE**. You can register to have your tithes automatically deducted twice a month or give a one-time gift/donation. **Questions?** Contact Kim Peaks (kpeaks@hscchurch.org or 202-546-1885).



Stay Connected

- Visit our website - hscchurch.org
- Subscribe to Flocknote to receive emails and updates
 1. Text **HCSC** to **84576** OR
 2. Visit <https://hscchurch.flocknote.com/>
- Download the **MyParishApp** to your mobile phone and turn on notifications to get parish updates
- Follow us on social media



Facebook.com/HCSCChurch



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MASS ATTENDANCE

March 16, 2025—2nd Sunday in Lent

4:30pm	42
8:00am	51
9:30am	50
11:00am	174
7:00pm	66
Total:	383

THIS WEEK AT THE PARISH

Monday (3/24)

7:15pm Young Adult Bible Study

Wednesday (3/26)

6:00-7:15pm Confessions
 7:30pm Adult Bible Study (Zoom)

Tuesday (3/25)

10:30am Senior Bible Study

Friday (3/28)

6:00pm Holy Hour w/confession
 7:00pm Stations of the Cross



FUNERAL: Gloria Cobb (March 24th)



OUR CHURCH SANCTUARY IS OPEN FROM 8AM—8PM every day for you to come in for private prayer. Consider spending quiet, personal time in the presence of our Lord in prayer. All are welcome.



MASS INTENTIONS: It is a spiritual work of mercy to pray for others, both living and deceased. If you would like to offer a Mass in memory of a friend or family, call 202-546-1885 or hscstaff@hscchurch.org. The customary stipend is \$10 per intention.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Roman Catholic Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, exists to evangelize and to uphold Christian values by promoting the teachings of the Church in Word, Sacrament and Witness.

OUR VISION STATEMENT:

A welcoming, embracing and joyful faith family richly rooted in the community today, tomorrow and forever.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

PARISH LIFE

EASTER FLOWERS: Remember your loved ones this Easter by submitting their names with your Easter Flower envelope. All names submitted will be listed in the Easter bulletin. If you use Faith Direct for a donation, email name(s) to hscstaff2@hscchurch.org. To include a memorial for your loved ones, please return your envelope to an usher (or via email), or drop at the rectory, **NO LATER THAN Sun., April 13th**. Envelopes available in the rear of church or from an usher. **PLEASE PRINT NAMES CLEARLY.** Please know that any donations received will go toward the cost of the beautiful altar and church flowers.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR LENT?

L **formed** To make this your most fruitful Lent yet, here is **a plan, a guide, and encouragement** right at your fingertips. Prepare for Lent with this four-part video series called **HOW TO LENT**. Our parish has a **FREE** subscription to **FORMED** which is an online service that teaches our faith and provides resources such as movies/videos, teaching series and more for the entire family. If you don't already have FORMED on your SmartTV, computer or cellphone, pick up an info card in the lobby of the church and sign in for this informative and interesting video on Lent.

P Dive deeper into prayer this Lent with the **HALLOW** app. Start your day with the daily gospel, rosary, imaginative prayer or one of over 10,000 sessions including homilies and bible studies. Pick up a flyer/card in lobby of church for more details. There is a subscription, but for Lent you can redeem 3 **FREE** months!



WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY—at 7:30PM via Zoom with Msgr. Pope. **Theme: The 7 Deadly Sins.** Sign up at hscchurch.flocknote.com to receive Zoom link or call the rectory office.

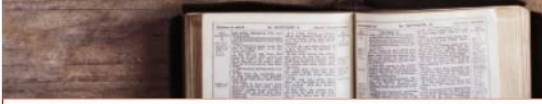
DAILY MASS: Consider attending a daily Mass this Lent. Mass is held every weekday at 7AM in the chapel.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: During the season of Lent and to accommodate those who visit since our parish has been named a "Jubilee Parish" for the Year of the Jubilee, clergy will hear **confessions every Wednesday** from 6:PM-7:15PM in the church. Come and experience God's mercy!

HOLY HOUR and **STATIONS OF THE CROSS** are held **throughout Lent every Friday** in the church with **Holy Hour at 6PM** followed by **Stations of the Cross at 7PM**. Come and Adore Jesus present in the Eucharist and then journey with Jesus to Calvary during stations.

LENTEN FOOD DRIVE: Give to others this Lent. This year, our parish in conjunction with the Oblate Sisters of Providence hosts a food drive for a teenager named **Gifty** and her village in Ghana, Africa. You can donate the requested food items or make a monetary donation for shipping costs. Visit our website or see flyer in rear of church for info.

Biblical Basics of the Greatest Story Ever Told



This year, our parish will set our focus on the "*Biblical Basics of the Greatest Story Ever Told*". The Scriptures teach us why and how we exist, what happened to us in Original Sin and How God, in his great mercy, has redeemed us and called us back to Him in newness of life. This will be a whole-parish catechesis, led by our pastor, in three stages. Words from a keynote song titled *Just a Little Talk with Jesus* helps us to understand the 3 stages:

- i) **OUR FALL**— *I once was lost in Sin,*
- ii) **OUR REDEEMPTION** — *But Jesus took me in,*
- iii) **OUR GRACE** — *And then a little Light from Heaven Filled my Soul.*

A reflection by Msgr. Pope on the bible stories will be in the bulletin **every other week**. They are also on our website (scan the QR code) or have them emailed via **FlockNote** along with a video. **To sign-up** to receive emails/videos, or visit: hscchurch.flocknote.com and sign up for Bible Basics! FlockNote is a **FREE** service!



Yes, Just a little talk with Jesus made me whole!

YEAR OF THE JUBILEE 2025—The Pope has declared 2025 as a Jubilee Year and our parish has the honor of being a Jubilee site. Special blessings are available to all who attend or visit here seeking Jubilee graces. See the flyers in the rear of the church and stay tuned for more information.



HELP DECORATE OUR CHURCH! We need to decorate our sanctuary for Easter (*April 20th*) and we could use your help! We need people who have decorating ideas sanctuary **and** those who can assist with the actual decorating (*on Sat., April 19th*). **Interested?** Contact Kim Peaks at kpeaks@hscchurch.org or 202-546-1885 ext 11 if you have decorating ideas or if you can come to help decorate. Any assistance is appreciated.



HCSC PILGRIMAGE TO FATIMA, LOURDES & PARIS: Join Msgr. Pope on a Marian pilgrimage on **Nov. 2—13, 2025** to the sites above. The cost includes non-stop roundtrip flight from WDC along with hotels, most meals, tour bus and guides. See flyer in rear of church for details.



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 Rev. Msgr. Charles Pope, Pastor (pastor1@hscchurch.org)
 Deacon James P. Flagg II (jpflaggII@gmail.com)

For information on membership, sacraments and funerals contact rectory staff at hscstaff@hscchurch.org or (202) 546-1885.

MASS TIMES: **Saturday** 8AM & 4:30AM (vigil);
Sunday 8AM, 9:30AM, 11AM and 7PM;
Weekdays Mon—Fri: 7AM (8AM on holidays)

RECTORY OFFICE HOURS:
 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 10AM—6PM
 Thursday, Saturday & Sunday: Closed

The Greatest Story Ever Told

Basic Biblical Stories and What we Can Learn from Them

Malachi's Message to God's People

In the last post, we considered the sins of the priests (and they were numerous enough). Today we examine the common sins of the people that the Lord describes in the Book of Malachi. Let's get started.

The Attitude of Ingratitude

The text says, "I have loved you," says the Lord. But you say, "How have You loved us?"... I have laid waste the hill country of your enemy. The Edomites...they may build, but I will tear down...Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, "Great is the Lord, beyond the border of Israel!" (Malachi 1:1-5)

God gives us astonishing gifts: life, air, water, food, and family—the list could go on and on. Mysteriously, even the burdens of life are gifts for us in the way they bring us wisdom, grant us humility, connect us more deeply to one another, and bring forth strengths that we never knew we had. Every day, trillions of things “go right.” Consider the intricate functioning of every cell in our body, the delicate balance of the earth's ecosystems, and even the balances and intricacies of our solar system and the cosmos. Trillions of things, large and small, go right every day of our existence. And yes, a few things go wrong: a health setback, a missed opportunity, bad traffic, etc. But a few things compared to trillions? And yet we are so easily resentful at the slightest wrinkle in our plans, the smallest trial or difficulty.

We are like the ancient Israelites boldly complaining to God, “How have you loved us?” God replies by simply declaring that he has rebuffed our enemies. Are you and I grateful that God has snatched us from Satan's

grasp? Through grace and mercy, we now stand a chance. Yes, there are trials to be endured, but in Christ Jesus we have overcome and can make it. Try to be more grateful.



Mangled Marriages

The text says, *And this again you do. You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor at your hand. You ask, "Why does he not?" Because the Lord was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Has not the one God made and sustained for us the spirit of life? And what does he desire? Godly offspring. So, take heed to yourselves,*

and let none be faithless to the wife of his youth. "For I hate divorce, says the Lord the God of Israel..." (Malachi, 2:13-16).

Yes, God hates divorce. Do we grasp this? Necessary separations for safety are one thing, but in our culture, people walk away from marriages at an astonishing rate. Even in the Church many shrug and even want to settle down with “the reality” of divorce instead of insisting, along with God, that divorce is something to be resisted, and considered shocking. Too many do not take into consideration how their individual decision to walk away from marriage harms others, especially children.

Divorce, along with all the other “mangling” of marriage that we do and approve in our culture (e.g., cohabitation, single motherhood, and adoption by homosexual couples) harm children. Every child has the need and the natural right to be conceived in a home in which his father and mother have married, committed to each other, and stay married, working out their difficulties and preserving their union for the sake of the children. To intentionally subject children to anything less than this is an injustice and is harmful to them. And when children are harmed, the whole culture is harmed. Wounded children often become dysfunctional adults.

Delight in Disorder

The text says, *You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them." Or by asking,*

“Where is the God of justice?”
(Malachi, 2:17)

Too often in our times we glamorize evil or excuse grave sin as “no big deal.” Our movies and many other forms of entertainment glamorize violence, greed, and fornication. Scurrilous comedians, and the like round out the debasement.

The text here says that the people wearied the Lord by claiming that God does not care that they sin or that there are no real consequences to sin. This is a terrible presumption and a highly distorted view of God’s mercy and love. Love never delights in what is wrong and wants for the beloved only what is good, true, and beautiful. And God has made us free.

Turning up our nose at God and saying sin doesn’t matter, and contemptuously asks, “Where is this God of Justice?” are going to be surprised. Sr. Faustina reported that Hell was quite full of people who had denied that there was a Hell.

Injurious Injustice

The text says, *“I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me,”* says the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 3:5-6).

Here the Lord denounces injustice to the poor and vulnerable by paying unjust wages, oppression, and insensitivity to the plight of the poor, the migrant, and the immigrant, children, and the unborn. Those who do such things do not fear the Lord, according to the text. They have forgotten that the Lord hears the cry of the poor and is close to those who are oppressed.

The Lord also condemns sorcerers and adulterers. Sorcerers (the Greek

Word is *Pharmakoi* where we get the word “pharmacy.” Sorcery then was often connected with abortifacients and contraceptive potions and often harmful drugs. As such children, in the womb were threatened and killed by such things as well as many others.

Adultery always harms marriage and family, and as such, harms children. Thus, the notion of injustice to the poor, the vulnerable, and the needy is a rather complete picture. All these sins of injustice are sadly common in our day—and God says that He will judge us for them.

Tightfisted in Tithes –

The text says, *Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How are we robbing you?’ In your tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me; the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be resources in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, I will open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing... Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts* (Malachi 3:7-12).

The fundamental point in this text is that the worship and praise of God were being neglected. And this is often the case today as well. Many give little to the Church in terms of time, talent, or treasure. Meanwhile, secular causes and pursuits are well-supported. As our houses, banks, and government buildings have gotten bigger, our churches have gotten smaller. In fact, many are closing.

Our immigrant ancestors had far less material wealth than we do today, yet they built beautiful churches, Catholic schools, and hospitals. Their priorities were better.

God says, Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. The proclamation of the Gospel and handing on of the faith

must be supplied and supported. Political campaigns raise billions, and too many churches get nickels and dimes. Again, this is less about money than it is about our hearts, our priorities, and our faith. If those are intact, the resources will flow.

Weary in Well-doing

The text says, *“Your words have been stout against me,”* says the Lord. *“Yet you say, ‘How have we spoken against you?’ You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God. What is the good of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the Lord of hosts? Henceforth we deem the arrogant blessed; evildoers not only prosper but when they put God to the test they escape”* (Malachi 3:13-15).

This is like what was said above insofar as glamorizing evil. But here the focus is more on the selfish notion that “I don’t get rewarded enough for doing good.” But we should not obey God just because we will benefit; we obey God because God is God.

That said, there *are* rewards for following God. However, the rewards may not be in line with the preferences of our earthly passions. We often think of rewards in terms of money, advancement, good health, popularity, and so forth. But sometimes the best blessing is the cross and whatever it takes to kill our pride and prepare us for eternal glory.

We think that we know what is good or best for us, but usually we don’t. We only want things to spend on our passions (*cf* James 4:3). God does reward those who serve Him, but He rewards us with what is best for us. Too often we are dismissive of spiritual blessings and prefer the toys, trinkets, and tender meats of the world.

Well, that’s quite a little catalogue of sins! But be of good cheer, God does have a plan. We can look at some of those remedies in the next flyer.

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 Joan M. Graham
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 Sharon L. Graham
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 The Family*

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OTHA JOHN HAMER III
 "ETERNAL LOVE"
 ~Anna, Othylene, Lataunya,
 Betty - wife and mother

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OUR DECEASED SODALISTS
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 Baby Sis, Beverly, Frankie, David,
 Neal, Kimberly, Cyprian Jr., Jovan
*Still Loved, Still Missed
 & Very Dear, The Family*

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**Winnie,
 Ray,
 Bertie**

In Memory of
**Hump,
 Will, Phil
 Henny**

In Loving Memory
Austina H. Jones
Mother
We Love You Always
Willie, Lawrence & Maria

To Our Beloved
Kenyon E. Jones
Son & Father
*We'll always love you,
 Mom, Kids
 & Venita*



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