

Church of the Incarnation

240 Main Street, Mantua, NJ 08051

Parish Office 856-468-1314 * PREP Office 856-468-7566 * Fax Number 856-468-4886

Visit us at www.incarnation-church.org



Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time * February 4, 2024

We come together as a Christian community to minister the Gospel of Christ

PARISH STAFF

Reverend Raymond P. Gormley
Pastor

Reverend Steven Bertonazzi
Parochial Vicar

Thomas F. O'Brien
Deacon

Peter Traum
Deacon

Phil Curran
Deacon

Mr. & Mrs. Casey Corigliano
Directors of Music

Mr. Gerald Voltura
Director of Faith Formation

Mrs. Patricia Houwen
Business Manager

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

Welcome!

Please register at the parish office or online by visiting our website at www.incarnation-church.org.

MASS SCHEDULE

Monday - Friday.....7 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

(No 7 a.m. Mass from Memorial Day through early September)

Saturday.....8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Vigil Mass)

Sunday.....7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m..

Holy Days.....5 p.m. (Vigil Mass)

7 a.m., 8:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Holy Day

Eucharistic Adoration.....Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

BAPTISM

Baptisms are held every Sunday and some Saturdays at 1:00 pm. Baptism Preparation Sessions are held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month via Zoom. Please call the office for an appointment.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Confessions are heard Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in church or by appointment.

CARE OF SICK

Arrangements should be made through the parish office for home visits with the Eucharist for the sick and elderly. The office should be contacted for the Sacrament of the Sick.

SACRAMENTAL SPONSORSHIP

Sponsors for Baptism or Confirmation must:

Be a registered member of a Catholic parish

Be at least 16 years of age

Received Sacraments of Initiation:

Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation

If married, according to the laws of the Catholic Church

Sunday, February 4, 2024

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 1:29-39

Jesus cured Simon and Andrew's mother of a fever, then others with illnesses or demons came to see him. He cured those who were ill and cast out the demons of the others. Then he went off and prayed alone until his followers sought him out. Jesus and his disciples then moved on to other villages to proclaim the good news.

Mass Intentions

Saturday, February 3 – St. Blaise

8:30am For the Intention of Christina McNasby
r/b Maria & Joe Cardella
5:00pm Mary & Jack Whelan r/b Christina McNasby

Sunday, February 4

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

7:30am Fran Dickson r/b Kitty Reilly & Family
9:30am Sam Gandini (16th Anniversary) r/b sister Grace
Maria Palmina Adriana Trasatti Castro
r/b Carlos & Amelia Weber
In Thanksgiving for special healing r/b Marilyn Forte
Anthony Furfari r/b Joseph & Angles Leona
Margaret Postorivo r/b Todd Family
11:30am Richard Fizur r/b brother Tom

Monday, February 5 – St. Agatha

7:00am Louis McCall
8:30am Catherine Wolfe r/b husband Robert

Tuesday, February 6 – St. Paul Miki & Companions

7:00am John Forsman
8:30am Liberta Marcianna r/b Lorene Newman

Wednesday, February 7

7:00am Jennifer Martin
8:30am Elaine Falci r/b Robert Falci

Thursday, February 8

7:00am Living & Deceased Members of the Parish
8:30am Barbara DiPaolo r/b Patti & Peter Houwen

Friday, February 9

7:00am Donna Walker
8:30am Walter Wojciechowski r/b Bajorek Family

Saturday, February 10 – St. Scholastica

8:30am Emily Olinsky r/b Henry & Kim Olinsky
5:00pm Mike McNasby r/b sister Christina

Sunday, February 11

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

7:30am George C. Flem r/b Robert & MaryJo Flem
9:30am Joseph Gandini (27th Anniversary)
r/b daughter Grace
11:30am Marie Sullivan r/b Elizabeth Iannelli
Phil Sabato r/b Siano Family
Mary Angela Steer r/b Hollywood Family
Helen Squadroni r/b her Family
Patrick McKenna r/b Bill & Jennifer Murphy

Readings for the Week

Monday, February 5	1 Kgs 8:1-7, 9-13; Mk 6:53-56
Tuesday, February 6	1 Kgs 8:22-23, 27-30; Mk 7:1-13
Wednesday, February 7	1 Kgs 10:1-10; Mk 7:14-23
Thursday, February 8	1 Kgs 11:4-13; Mk 7:24-30
Friday, February 9	1 Kgs 11:29-32, 12:19; Mk 7:31-37
Saturday, February 10	1 Kgs 12:26-32, 13:33-34; Mk 8:1-10

Prayer for Religious Vocations

Priest: Let us pray for vocations

All: O God, we earnestly beseech thee to bless the Church with many priests, deacons, seminarians and religious who will love you with their whole strength, be faithful to their vocation and gladly spend their entire lives to teach your truths, serve your Church and make you known and loved.

Priest: Bless our families, bless our children.

All: Choose from our homes those who are needed for your work.

Priest: O Mary, Queen of the clergy,

All: Pray for us. Pray for our priests, deacons, seminarians and religious. Obtain for us many more. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise You. We bless You. We adore you. We glorify You. We give You thanks for Your great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, O God almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only-begotten Son. Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father: you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord, You alone, are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Reading 1 - Jb 7:1-4, 6-7

Job spoke, saying: Is not man's life on earth a drudgery? Are not his days those of hirelings? He is a slave who longs for the shade, a hireling who waits for his wages. So I have been assigned months of misery, and troubled nights have been allotted to me. If in bed I say, "When shall I arise?" then the night drags on; I am filled with restlessness until the dawn. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle; they come to an end without hope. Remember that my life is like the wind; I shall not see happiness again.

Responsorial Psalm - Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

Praise the Lord, who heals the brokenhearted.

Reading 2 - 1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23

Brothers and sisters: If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it! If I do so willingly, I have a recompense, but if unwillingly, then I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What then is my recompense? That, when I preach, I offer the gospel free of charge so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it.

Gospel - Mk 1:29-39

On leaving the synagogue Jesus entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her. He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them. When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons. The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him. Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you." He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come." So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

**To everything there is a season and a time
for every purpose under heaven.**

Ecclesiastes 3:1

“...a time to be born...”

Jack Matthew Carrera
Olivia Gail Carrera
Emmett Michael Dimitratos

“...a time to welcome...”

“a time to be married...”

...a time to be healed...”

Sam Amaradio, Bernadette Andrews, Anjan Amin, Chase Atkinson, George Austin, Baby Olivia, Joyce Bailey, Chase Bell, Otto Bonaventure, Diane Brady, Charli Burke, Christine Cassell, Jerrolyn Covely, Robert Deegan, Michael Donahue, Ann Marie Donofrio, Beth Donofrio, Rich Donofrio, Ellie Edwards, Jack Ewen, Helen Fowler, Keith & Linda Franchetti, Linda Gerwatoski, John Gilmore, Michael Groody, Ben Groves, Donovan & John Gura, Rachel Hall, John R. Hart, Kathy Heisinger, Karol Hennessey, Caelyn Holland, Theresa Hutchinson, Marie Ianoale, Carol Iannotti, Lou Iocona, Jason, Christopher Jeffers, Adalynne Johnson, Susan Kane, Karen, Carol Taylor-Kearney, Stephen Korotinsky, Brianna & Kylee Lewis, Mary Logan, Joe Lumpkin, Jeff Lyons, Richard Maloumian, Elwood Martz III, Anita Martin, Susan Mazza, Patricia McAllister, Michelle McCaffery, Dorothy McKenna, Barbara & Len McCarron, Danielle McGlinchey, Ira McManus, Patricia and Tim McSorley, Hannah McStay, Zoe Ann Meenan, Richard Mull, Jennifer Nevius, Frank Nowak, Lorene Newman, David Odom, Steven Paoline, Lee Peters, Nancy Petri, John Poloney, Helen Powell, Anna Primavera, Rose Quigley, Janet Rainier, Teri Reed, Joan Reilly, Mary Reilly, Corey Riggio, Patti Roberts, Jim Roche, Marci Rodilloso, Domenic Ruggeri, Joanne Ryder, Marguerite Sadler, Caterina Saya, Loretta Scardino, Leonard Scully, Linda Sesko, Jason Shipman, John Sirolli, Frank Smith, Terri Smith, Chris Stalker, John Stanton, Steve Stefanow, Doug Stetser, Gina Strohm, Brian Stroup, Jason Tallarida, Doreen Thorson, Barb Tomarchio, Evelyne & Tom Tull, Lou Underwood, Rosemarie Villari, Darlene & John Voll, William Walsh, John Werner, Shannon Whyte, Jean Wiebalk, Saylor Wilgus, Nancy Taylor-Williams, Theresa Woods, Lori Wotypka, Lois Wunsch, Maria Wyzykowski, Francesco Zarzycki, their caregivers, all others in need of our prayers.

“...a time to die...”

Donna Walker



***Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands.
Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and
their families for the selfless acts
they perform in our time of need.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.***

We pray for all in our armed forces, especially:

Francis M. Duras, Greg Giordano, Dane Kozlosky, James Tingle, Johnny McGowan, Vincent McManus, Vincent W. Abruzzese, Mitchell Luckman, John Robinson, Sean Owens, Matthew Cottrell, David Nahas, Michael Nahas, Shane Wexler, Liam Wahl, Ty Thuston, Brian Guzzetti, Eric Reeves, Leonard Puggi, Daniel Golden, Brett Govern, Ryan Lisle

STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

“Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed...He told them, ‘Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come.’”

- MARK 1:35, 38

In today's Gospel reading we see a perfect example of **Stewardship**. Jesus gives His time to do all that God wishes - healing the sick and preaching. But before He begins, Jesus takes time to be alone with God in prayer. It is through prayer, spending time with God, that we are given the graces needed to do what He wishes us to do. Praying before acting is a great habit to develop.

January 23 through January 30 Giving - \$18,671.00

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Listening with Thoughtful Attention

Did you ever talk to someone but feel as if that person just wasn't listening? Stephen Ministers are trained to listen well. They will hear what you have to share and respond lovingly and non-judgmentally – rather than telling you what you should or shouldn't have done. If you need someone who will really listen to you as you work through a problem in your life, consider Stephen Ministry. Call 856-468-5536.



Ash Wednesday is February 14. Masses will be celebrated at 7:00 AM, 8:30 AM and 7:00 PM. Prayer services will be at Noon, 4:30 PM and 6:00 PM.

Remember Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. In addition, Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence.

LENT

Lent is a 40-day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting. We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ.

Consider joining us for some of our Lenten events to help you grow in your faith and love of God.

Monday evenings

Soup and Adoration

Soup at 5:15 PM – Kernan Center
Adoration 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM - Church

Wednesday evenings

Holy Hour and Stations of the Cross

Holy Hour from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Stations of the Cross – 8:00 PM

Friday evenings

Stations of the Cross – 7:00 PM

Saturday mornings

Confessions – 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM



The next delivery to Joseph House will be Monday, February 5. Products and casseroles can be dropped off at 529 Cooper St., Woodbury on Sunday 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM or Monday from 8:00 AM to 9:30 AM. Please make sure the date and type of casserole is noted on your donation. Any questions please email Jerry Campbell at jerbotemple@comcast.net or call 856-435-0509.

LIVING AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

Our Scripture passage for this Sunday comes from the Gospel of Mark 1:29-39. In this text we read of Jesus going to the home of Simon Peter and healing his mother-in-law. This passage is a wonderful instruction for us as disciples so that we can experience and respond to the Lord's grace in our lives with fidelity and generosity.

After her healing, we are told that Simon Peter's mother-in-law began to serve Jesus and the disciples. This action is significant because it means she used her gift of healing for the purpose of ministry. It is further significant as a reminder we all have received gifts from God's generous mercy, although we don't all respond as faithfully and generously as she did. Oftentimes, we use our gifts only for our benefit or to do our will, but she used her gift to serve Jesus and do His will. Thus, Simon Peter's mother-in-law represents the ideal disciple when she serves others (see Mk 10:43). Also, this passage is more than just a story about physical healing. On a deeper level it is an instruction on how to live our Baptism. This additional element is introduced when we are told that Jesus "raised" her up. The word used for "raised" (Greek: *egeiren*) is the same term used in reference to the Resurrection of Jesus Himself (1 Cor 15:4, Gal 1:1, Rom 4:24, Acts 3:15, 4:10). Thus, we see Jesus sharing His resurrected life with her by "raising" her and then we are told how she responds by entering a relationship of service for Jesus and those who follow Him (the Church). This deeper understanding of the passage challenges us to share the gift of God's life with others through works of charity and faithful service for the mission of the Gospel. According to this interpretation, Jesus and His first disciples represent the beginnings of the Church, and Simon Peter's mother-in-law exemplifies an aspect of pastoral ministry in caring for the members of the Church.

Think about it: How has God blessed me, and how have I used those blessings to serve the Lord?



Knights of Columbus®

Incarnation Council #6364 Inc. invites all parishioners to Valentine's dinner and party hosted by Knights of Columbus on Saturday, February 17 at 6:00 PM - Kernan Center. The cost is \$35.00 per person/\$60.00 per couple (BYOB) and includes a dinner catered by Di Paolo's, music by Nick Colonna and door prizes included. For tickets call Jeff at 856-371-2642, Karl at 609-440-3779 or purchase at the parish office. Tickets can also be purchased after Masses beginning the weekend of January 27-28. No tickets will be sold at the door. Proceeds benefit programs of Knights of Columbus.

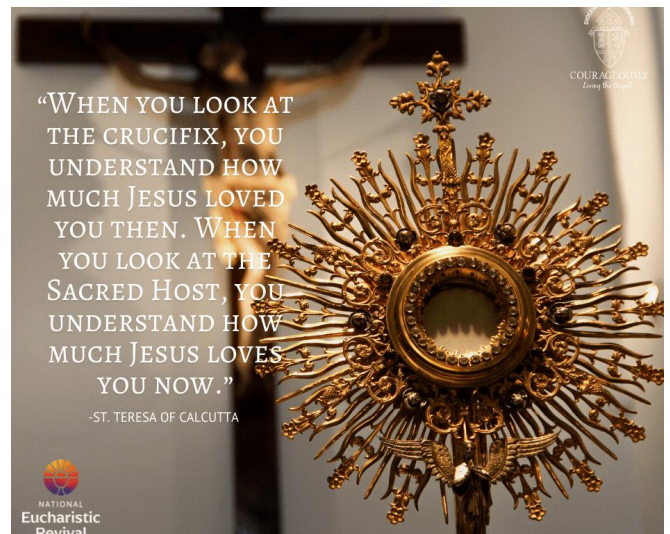


Incarnation Knights Council is offering scholarships for high school and college students. The scholarships will be for students going into a Catholic high school and high school seniors going into a two- or four-year accredited college. Applications are available on the Knights of Columbus link on the church web site (Ministries/Knights of Columbus/Scholarship Application) or email Dave at davezyz@comcast.net. A letter explaining the application process will accompany the application. Applications must be submitted no later than February 25. Questions? Email or text David Zarzycki, 609-226-2879 Good luck to everyone.

Remember – February Breakfast this Sunday in the Kernan Center from 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM. The Knights will be serving breakfast from 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM. Cost is \$8.00 for adults, \$4.00 for children and includes eggs, sausage, bacon, omelets, French toast, pancakes, coffee, juice and more!

WORLD DAY OF THE SICK

February 11 is World Day of the Sick. Pope John Paul II introduced this day of observation in 1992 in order to bring awareness and offer prayers for those suffering from illnesses. The day coincides with the commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes and is an important opportunity for all to reflect on and pray for those enduring illnesses as well as remember those who take care of them. Pope Francis declared the 2024 theme for World Day of the Sick as: **“It is not good that man should be alone”**. **Healing the Sick by Healing Relationships**. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick will be offered next weekend at the 5:00 PM Saturday evening Mass and the 11:30 AM Sunday morning Mass. Please sign in when you arrive if you would like to be anointed.





CHURCH *of the* INCARNATION

Dear Parishioner,

Soon you will receive a letter from Bishop Sullivan that will include the 2024 *South Jersey Catholic Ministries Appeal* materials. I encourage you to review the materials you receive and consider a donation toward this year's campaign.

The theme of this year's appeal campaign, "Through Him and For Him", focuses on Christ's central place in our lives, and His presence in the Eucharist.

By supporting the *South Jersey Catholic Ministries Appeal*, you are making a difference to those who comprise the programs and ministries of the Diocese of Camden. These ministries serve the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the hungry and challenged. When we support the *South Jersey Catholic Ministries*, we strengthen our Catholic community and the world around us, which is critical.

Please prayerfully consider joining us once again either by returning your pledge card, which can be found in the request from the Bishop or completing a pledge card during our start up weekend which will be held on February 10 and 11.

May God continue to bless you and your family.

Sincerely,

Pastor

This year's South Jersey Catholic Ministry Appeal video will be sent out in this Friday's Flocknote. We will also post it on our website.

Our SJCMA goal is the same as last year - \$201,000.00.

We were able to meet last year's goal because of YOU!

Your generosity makes a difference for those struggling in our communities, our seniors, our youth and many more initiatives throughout the Diocese of Camden.

Please see the following page which details the services and ministries this appeal supports.



2024 APPEAL: “THROUGH HIM AND FOR HIM”

This year's theme: “Through Him and For Him” continues our focus on the nation-wide Eucharist Revival and reminds us that “in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself.”

Through the Catholic Ministries Appeal, we support those in need throughout the six counties of the Diocese of Camden.

YOUR GIFT TO THE CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL PROVIDES:

SOCIAL, COMMUNITY AND HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Your generosity provides services through Catholic Charities offices in each county of South Jersey. VITALity's Hospital Chaplaincy is able to provide spiritual and emotional support to patients, their families and staff through your donations. Together, we offer support to the weak, vulnerable, and disenfranchised.

EVANGELIZATION AND FAITH FORMATION

Lay leadership training, intercultural ministries, ministry with the deaf and persons with disabilities, marriage enrichment, adult faith formation, liturgical catechesis and other evangelization efforts, along with your gifts, kindle the fire of faith into a bright beacon for all to see.

YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT AND CAMPUS MINISTRIES

Your donation enables programs like Summer in the City, Catholic Scouting, Theology on Tap, college campus ministries and Newman Centers, and support for a growing number of parish-based Youth Ministry programs and many more activities to build community and prepare our youth and young adults for the mission that God has chosen for them.

VOCATIONS, SEMINARIAN & PERMANENT DIACONATE FORMATION, CARE OF PRIESTS

Your support ensures that pastors and clergy continue to bring the light of Jesus into the world. Through prayers and support, we currently have seminarians studying for the priesthood in the Diocese of Camden.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION – “FORMING MINDS AND HEARTS IN GRACE”

Catholic schools are an integral part of the teaching mission of the Church.

Catholic schools build faith, develop leadership ability and provide academic excellence in a safe environment.

Your gift will help keep tuition affordable for families to send children to schools that will support Catholic values, develop character and provide academic excellence.

INCENTIVES FOR PARISH INITIATIVES

When our parish collects its goal amount, up to 10% is returned to our parish for our local charitable needs. Additionally, 75% of all funds received above our parish goal will also be returned to our parish to foster our charitable and ministerial work.

**We invite all parishioners to participate in this important effort.
During Catholic Ministries Appeal Weekend, please make your sacrificial gift to help
continue the mission of the Church here in the Diocese of Camden!**

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering hope and joy in the Catholic faith.

February 2024

Church of the Incarnation, Mantua, NJ

Rev. Raymond Gormley, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Josephine Bakhita

Born in Darfur, Sudan around 1869, she was kidnapped and sold into slavery. Her captors gave her the name Bakhita, meaning "fortunate." After several years of serving under cruel masters, she was bought by Augusto Michieli. The Michielis sent Bakhita with their daughter to Italy, where Bakhita encountered Catholicism. Overjoyed, she was baptized and took the name Josephine. In 1893, instead of returning to Africa with the Michielis, she entered the Institute of St. Magdalene of Canossa.

The moment of truth

Conversion begins when we accept responsibility for our failures. Lent is an opportunity to stop and take a good look at our lives. Identify all the ways that sin keeps you from living the way Jesus taught us to live. Know that it may take courage to face your shortfalls.

"Apart from the cross, there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven." St. Rose of Lima



Deepen the connection to Christ during Lent

The key to a fruitful Lent is not to perform miserable penances. A good Lent hinges on encountering Christ in a personal way and letting Him change our hearts and minds. In fact, an effective way to deepen our encounter with Him is through the Eucharist. Consider these suggestions:

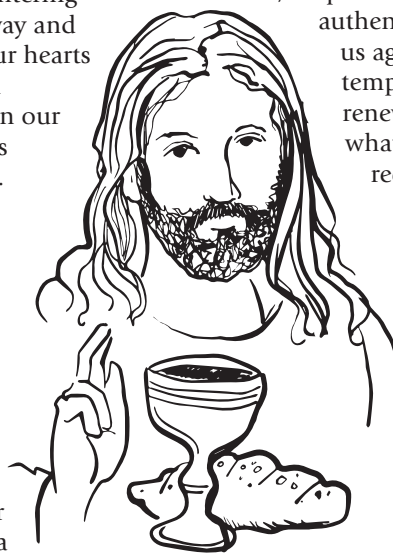
"Here I am, Lord. Love me!" Mother Teresa told her sisters to start their chapel time with this bold prayer, "Here I am, Lord. Love me!" No matter whether you are in His Presence for Mass, a holy hour, or a quick visit in front of the Blessed Sacrament, begin with, "Here I am, Lord. Love me!" It's a prayer of faith God delights to answer.

Live for the next Communion.

Every Communion deepens our union with God, strengthens our faith, helps us love more authentically, and immunizes us against future temptations. Each week, renew your resolve to do whatever is needed to receive Jesus well. For example, avoid activity or entertainment that tempts you away from God, and if you sin seriously, immediately go to Confession and start anew.

Invite others to the feast. Invite a friend, neighbor or colleague to Mass or Adoration

with you. Pray for priests to stay close to the Eucharist. Most importantly, pray that more people come to faithfully encounter Jesus in the tabernacle.

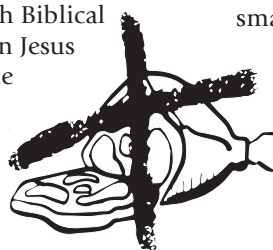


Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics have to fast on Ash Wednesday?

Fasting is a practice with Biblical roots, most notably, when Jesus fasted for forty days in the desert. Those in good health, aged 18-59, are required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. We're permitted one full meal and two

smaller meals that together don't equal the full meal. This includes abstaining from meat. Fasting expresses our recognition that we've sinned and desire to make amends. It purifies our hearts and frees them to love God and others well.



Pope Francis's three-point approach to Confession

Instead of dreading seeking the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation (Confession), Pope Francis suggested we look at it as "the Sacrament of the tenderness of God, His way of embracing us." Follow the pope's three-point approach to the Sacrament:

What's my intention? Rather than an obligation, consider the Sacrament a fresh start. Firmly resolve, from this moment forward, to give up the activities or behaviors that separate you from God. The firm resolution to change is key to receiving absolution effectively.

Are there loose ends? Unconfessed sin creates



distance between us and God. Make sure you have not withheld mortal sins in prior Confessions, either intentionally or accidentally. If you become aware that you have, confess them and leave the confessional a new man or woman.

Have I completed the assigned penance?

The Sacrament is meant to change us. Purposefully make amends and continue your resolutions to realign your life to the Gospel.

Seeking Reconciliation often and staying in a state of grace helps us become holier people of God.

from Scripture

Mark 9:2-10, Heavenly glory, not worldly power

In Jesus' time, Israel was occupied by the Romans. The Israelites already had a long history of being attacked and conquered by other nations. The Jews dreamed of the day when the Messiah would set them free and make them the victors.

God had set up Moses as liberator and lawgiver, and sent them Elijah, the first of the great prophets who foretold Christ's coming. So when Jesus was transfigured in glory with Moses and Elijah, the Apostles assumed that God was revealing Jesus as the Messiah.

Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about His death and Resurrection.

Jesus warned His disciples that He would suffer and die (Mark 8:31). While many Jews were expecting the Messiah to overthrow the Romans and make Himself king,

God revealed that the Messiah would save His people by His own death and Resurrection.

The Transfiguration was

meant to strengthen the faith of the Apostles and prepare them for the Passion. The Transfiguration reminds us that however difficult this life may be there is unimaginable glory that awaits us in Heaven.



Q & A Why should we "offer it up"?

When tempted to complain about suffering, we may be encouraged to "offer it up" instead. This act of surrender carries incredible spiritual power.

A share in Christ's Cross. Because Jesus is God, His suffering and sacrifice have infinite value. When we unite even our

small sufferings to Jesus' suffering, it takes on an infinite value in helping Him to save souls.

Spiritual "strength training." When we offer

our sufferings to God, He is able to work on our hearts. Suffering for others helps us to become less selfish and more compassionate, less hard-hearted and more patient, less self-indulgent and more generous. Our hearts emerge more Christ-like, and better able to love.

Prudence is needed. Under most circumstances, encouragement to "offer it up" works as a spiritual discipline for inconveniences or mild suffering. Sometimes, however, remediation or professional help may be needed. God sees the sincerity of our love so we can still offer our suffering to Him and yet take constructive action to remediate whatever is causing the suffering. Be prudent.



Feasts & Celebrations

February 3 – St. Blaise (316). A bishop in fourth-century Turkey, St. Blaise was arrested for being a Christian. On his way to jail, he healed a young boy choking on a fish bone. Refusing to deny his faith, the bishop was martyred.

February 11 – Our Lady of Lourdes (1858). A heavenly lady appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous, a poor girl from a French village, and a spring with miraculous, healing waters emerged from a nearby cave. The lady revealed herself as the "Immaculate

Conception," the Blessed Virgin Mary.

February 14 – Ash Wednesday. The first day of Lent. Ashes of old palms are placed on the forehead as a sign of penance. It's also a day of abstinence from meat and fasting – one regular meal and two small meals that together don't equal a full meal.

February 22 – The Chair of St. Peter. Marking St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See, on this festival we thank God for His Church and pray for its holy preservation.



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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible)

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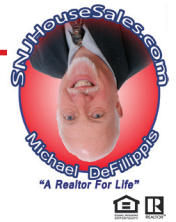
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