

Church of the Incarnation

240 Main Street, Mantua, NJ 08051

Parish Office 856-468-1314 * PREP Office 856-468-7566

Visit us at www.incarnation-church.org



Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time * February 1, 2026

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

PARISH STAFF

Reverend Stephen J Rapposelli
Pastor

Reverend Shaji Muttathottil
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 Monday through Saturday following the 8:30 A.M. Mass and on Saturdays from 4:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.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 1

Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12a

Jesus teaches the Beatitudes in his Sermon on the Mount. He extols those who are merciful, peaceful, lowly, poor in spirit and promises them that “the reign of God is theirs.”

Mass Intentions

Saturday, January 31 – St. John Bosco

8:30am Norman Metzger r/b Lucy
5:00pm Purgatorial Society

Sunday, February 1

7:30am Julia Crumsho r/b Maria Cody
Joseph Schiavo r/b Wayne & Bernadette Wexler
Mary Hess r/b Leadership Team
Scott Hurff r/b Jack & Marianne Sheehan
Janet Galante r/b Frank & Rosemary Duras
9:30am Sam Gandini (18th anniversary)
r/b sister, Grace
11:30am Julia Crumsho r/b Carolyn & Dan Oldt

Monday, February 2

The Presentation of the Lord

7:00am For the Intentions of Athena Schultz
r/b Schultz Family
8:30am Ronald Bacon r/b Rosemarie DiPatre

Tuesday, February 3

7:00am Living & Deceased Members of the Parish
8:30am Ron Raffa r/b Wife Trish and daughter

Wednesday, February 4

7:00am For the Intentions of Sherri Ann Ouimette
r/b Samantha Mallett
8:30am John Caruso r/b his Family

Thursday, February 5 – St. Agatha

7:00am Florence Wesolowski
8:30am Catherine Wolfe r/b Husband

Friday, February 6 – St. Paul Miki and Companions

7:00am Dorothy Fiocco r/b son, John
8:30am George P. Bonner r/b Mom and Dad

Saturday, February 7

8:30am Jason Lockwood r/b John Fiocco
5:00pm Michael McNasby Sr. and Jr.
r/b Christina McNasby

Sunday, February 8

Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time

7:30am John and Craig Forsman r/b Wife and Mother
9:30am Frank McKenna r/b Ed and Pat Hughes
11:30am Helen and Betty
Joseph Gandini (29th Anniversary) r/b daughter, Grace
Chris Noakes r/b Mom and Dad
John and Theresa Hawley
r/b Robert and Carol LaPalomento
Mary Hess r/b Robert and Carol LaPalomento

Readings for the Week

Monday, February 2	Mal 3:1-4; Heb 2:14-18; Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22-32
Tuesday, February 3	2 Sm 18:9-10, 14b, 24-25a, 30-19:3; Mk 5:21-43
Wednesday, February 4	2 Sm 24:2, 9-17; Mk 6:1-6
Thursday, February 5	1 Kgs 2:1-4, 10-12; Mk 6:7-13
Friday, February 6	Sir 47:2-11; Mk 6:14-29
Saturday, February 7	1 Kgs 3:4-13; Mk 6:30-34

Prayer for Religious Vocations

Priest: Let us pray for vocations.

All: O God, we earnestly beseech you 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 – Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13

Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth, who have observed his law; seek justice, seek humility; perhaps you may be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger. But I will leave as a remnant in your midst a people humble and lowly, who shall take refuge in the name of the LORD: the remnant of Israel. They shall do no wrong and speak no lies; nor shall there be found in their mouths a deceitful tongue; they shall pasture and couch their flocks with none to disturb them.

Responsorial Psalm - Psalm 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10 - Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

Reading II - 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Consider your own calling, brothers and sisters. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God. It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord."

Gospel - Matthew 5:1-12a

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

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.

Follow us on Facebook and Youtube and watch for the Friday Flocknote...even if you can't get here we are available!





To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven.
Ecclesiastes 3:1

“...a time to be born...”

“...a time to welcome...”

“a time to be married...”

...a time to be healed...”

Ann Marie Agar, Sam Amaradio, Bernadette Andrews, George & Maureen Austin, Verna Bisconte, Rita Bruno, Carla Carelli, Colleen, Lynn Collins, Krista Collings, Bob Cooper, Jerrolyn Covely, Bob D'Alessio, Robert Deegan, Alberta DiFabio, Lucyna Dinces, Barbara, Stephen & Vincent DiTullio, Michael Donahue, Rich Donofrio, Ellie & Les Edwards, Jack Ewen, Francis Ferry, Anna Forsman, Marylou Furfari, Linda Gerwatoski, Jay Gigante, John Gilmore, Margaret Giordano, Michael Groody, Donovan & John Gura, John & Joseph Hart, Kathy Heisinger, Karol Hennessey, Nat Holland, George Ivan, Jason, Adalynne Johnson, Susan Kane, Karen, Carol Taylor-Kearney, Caroline Keenan, Marilyn Angelotti-Kelly, Fred Krumm, Steffanie Lerch, Richard Marcantonio, Michelle Marhefka, Barbara Marker, Elwood Martz III, Maryellen McAteer, John McDevitt, Dorothy McKeever, Anne McMenamin, Barbara & Ira McManus, Christina McNasby, Jack & Tim McSorley, Hannah McStay, Joan Morlachetta, Katie Mutek, Peter Myers, Frank Nowak, Nicole P., William Pappernek, Lee Peters, Giovanni Poloney, Helen Powell, Rose Quigley, Barbara Ragonese, Janet Rainier, Teri Reed, Joan Reilly, Mary Reilly, George Rein, Angie & Pete Richman, Patti Roberts, Jim Roche, Karen Rucci, Denise Sacco, Marguerite Sadler, Caterina & Santi Saya, Loretta Scardino, Nicholas Simeo, Sr., Linda Sesko, Eda Shannon, Jason Shipman, Frank Smith, Chris Stalker, Nick Stansbury, Melissa Swanson, Janie Talemal, Jason Tallarida, Ernie Tolentino, Evelyne & Tom Tull, Lou Underwood, Rosemarie Villari, William Walsh, Justin Weaver, John Werner, Nancy Taylor-Williams, Dianne Williamson, Richard Wilson, Theresa Woods, Lois Worthington, Lori Wotypka, Lois Wunsch, Maria Wyzykowski, Catherine Zabrodski, Francesco Zarzycki, Jacqueline Zellner, their caregivers, all others in need of our prayers.

“...a time to die...”

Patricia Peterson

GIVING STEWARDSHIP

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

-Matthew 5:3

The phrase “poor in spirit” can be confusing. Think of it in this sense – poor in spirit means depending on God’s providence and not depending on our own self-reliance. Being detached from earthly things (power, money, and comfort) and being attached to heavenly things (charity, sacrifice, and mercy). Denying ourselves from satisfying our desires and helping others through stewardship to obtain their basic needs.

Stewardship Report

Will resume next week.

FORGOT YOUR ENVELOPES?

If you forgot your envelopes, are new to the parish or are visiting the parish and would like to make a donation. You can do so here. **Be sure to select one-time gift – as recurring is default.**



2025 TAX STATEMENTS

Tax statements for 2025 are now available. If you require one, please contact the parish office at 856-468-1314. We can email or mail your copy, or you can pick it up in person. As always, we thank you for your continued generosity to the parish.



STEPHEN MINISTRY

I Get by with a Little Help from My Friends

We all need a concerned, caring friend at difficult times in our lives. A Stephen Minister can listen and care for you or for someone you know who is going through a tough time. If you would like to talk to a Stephen Leader or to request a Stephen Minister, please call 856-468-5536. Office at 856-468-1314 or email Deacon Phil at pcurran@incarnation-church.org.

K OF C SCHOLARSHIPS

Incarnation Council #6364 is offering high school scholarships and college scholarships. To be considered, the 8th grade student must be a member of Incarnation Parish or St. Margaret's School and plan to attend a Catholic high school. The 12th grade student must be a member of Incarnation Parish and plan to attend a 2- or 4-year accredited college. The scholarship intends to recognize the student that best represents the Knights of Columbus virtue of charity in the form of active ministry and academic accomplishments will also be considered.

An application can be found on the parish website – <https://www.incarnation-church.org/knights-of-columbus>. Paper applications may be picked up at the parish office. Completed applications must be submitted along with a letter of recommendation from a teacher or counselor at student's school, an essay (essay requirements are on the last page of the application) along with a certification from one of your parish priests.

Completed applications are due by February 20. They may be emailed to davezyc@comcast.net or mailed to the address found on the application cover letter.

VALENTINES DAY DINNER DANCE

Join us for a night of dinner, live entertainment, dancing and door prizes on Saturday, February 14 beginning at 6 p.m. Catering by DiPaolo's of Pennsgrove. Bring your own beverage. Tickets are \$35.00 per person and will be available for purchase after all Masses or at the parish office. No tickets will be sold at the door. For information or purchase by phone, call Jeff Lyons at 856-371-2642 or Dave McGee at 240-561-8361. All proceeds will benefit the charities of the Knights of Columbus Council #6364.

NEW BIBLE STUDY BEGINNING

Our next Bible study will be "No Greater Love" starting on Monday, February 23 at 7:00 p.m. and ending Monday, March 30. Filmed on location in the Holy Land, No Greater Love is a biblical pilgrimage that reveals Christ's amazing love for us. Best-selling author Edward Sri guides you through the last hours of Christ's life. You will walk step-by-step with Jesus from the garden of Gethsemane to Mount Calvary. Experience a deeper understanding and appreciation of God's immeasurable and unconditional love for you. Grow closer to Jesus than you ever have before. If you are interested in participating, please contact the Parish Office at 856-468-1314 or email Deacon Phil at pcurran@incarnation-church.org.

Like us on Facebook – Incarnation, Mantua



REMINDER – Casseroles and paper products will be delivered to the Joseph's House this Monday, February 2. Drop off at Kernan Center Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday (day of delivery) 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Any questions please contact Jerry at 856-579-7004 or jerbotemple@comcast.net. Thank you for your continued support!

GCHS CENTENNIAL JUBILEE

This year marks Gloucester Catholic's Centennial Jubilee, a milestone that reflects one hundred years of faith, tradition, and the strong spirit of community that has shaped generations of Rams. Please join us this spring as we gather to honor our past, celebrate our present, and continue the proud story of Gloucester Catholic. Once A Ram, Always A Ram!

GCHS Centennial Jubilee

March 22, 2026, 6:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

Collingswood Ballroom, Collingswood, NJ

Tickets: GCHS100.org – order yours below



Inquiries: gchscentennial@gchsrms.org

PRAY FOR OUR TROOPS

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, John Robinson, Sean Owens, Matthew Cottrell, David Nahas, Colin Wexler, Liam Wahl, Ty Thuston, Brian Guzzetti, Leonard Puggi, Daniel Golden, Brett Govern, Ryan Lisle, Devin Kozlosky, Cory Carpenter, Christopher Hansen, Luke Wordelmann, Ryan Gilroy, Tyler L. Novak, Danielle Davis, Jesse Nester, Adam Stetser, Joseph Vaccarella, Matthew Murphy, Sara Huber, Robert Coughlan

Visit us at www.incarnation-church.org

A TRADITIONAL PRAYER AGAINST FALLING

Take my hand, O Blessed Mother (Traditional Marian Prayer)

Take my hand, O Blessed Mother, hold me firmly lest I fall.
I am nervous when I'm walking and to thee I humbly call.

Guide me over every crossing, watch me when I'm on the stairs,
let me know you are beside me, listen to my fervent prayers.

Bring me to my destination safely, every single day.
Help me with each undertaking, as the hours go on their way.

And when evening falls upon me and I fear to be alone,
take my hand, O Blessed Mother, once again and lead me home. Amen.

LIVING AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

Our Scripture passage for this Sunday comes from the Gospel of Matthew 5:1-12. We know this passage well because it contains a set of teachings known as the Beatitudes. For Christians, the Beatitudes serve as the defining characteristics we are to embody in our communal life. Just as Moses went up the Mountain and God gave the Ten Commandments to him, so we now read that Jesus goes up the Mountain and gives the Beatitudes to His disciples. That parallel between the actions of Moses and Jesus means that the Beatitudes are worthy of careful study and reflection because of the importance they are intended to have in forming us as Christian disciples.

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Pray about it: Thank you, Jesus, for giving us the Beatitudes as a blueprint on how to live as your disciples.

PURGATORIAL SOCIETY PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Raymond Akers, Sr.
Akers & Thorp Families
Joseph & Marjorie Albert
Kevin Albert
Kenneth Bowers
Maria F. Bowers
Terry Budzynski
Val Cavalieri
John James Costello Family
Emma & Lloyd Curtis
Robert Curley
John Echtermeyer, Jr.
John & Rita Echtermeyer, Sr.
Michael Flood
Thomas Flood
Marie E. & Joseph P. Gallagher.

Charles J. Gerber, Sr.
Henry Gonserkevis Family
Jenna Grabko
Eileen Haverluk
Richard & Mary Hess
Frances & John Hogan
Percy & Lyonia Hughes
Leon & Julia Jankauskas
Albert & Amy Klopsic
Rosemary 'Rose' Leger
John P. Lenoci
Peter C. Lenoci
Leone Family
Rita Loftus
Joan & Ray Marini
Carol Anne Maurer

Ed & Doris Maurer
Rita & Kathryn McCall
William & Catherine McCall
Frances & Buddy McCutcheon
Frank & Bernice McKenna
Elmer & Marie Norris
James & Carmela O'Brien
Chester Pajerski
Kate Phillips
Brian J. & Dominic J. Pinizzotto
Jill Sullivan
James J. Taylor
John & Rose Tierno
Regina Vogt
Peter Worthington
Anne Marie Zimmerman

Most Catholics settle for giving up something small and spend Lent going through the motions. Journal Through Lent gives you a short daily video and one reflection question that helps you encounter Jesus every day and prepare your heart for Easter.

Sign up free today at
camdendiocese.org/lent.

REBOOT

A LIFE-CHANGING EVENT

Perfect
for Ages
12 & Up!

This high-energy, 2-hour event with internationally acclaimed speaker **Chris Stefanick** will awaken your faith, reignite your joy, and equip you with tools to live the life God created you for: A life of JOY. It will help you rediscover the JOY you were created for, and is perfect for everyone... even friends, family, and children (12+) who may not be actively practicing their faith.

Tickets Are Limited!

[HTTPS://BUYTICKETS.AT/REALLIFECATHOLIC/1765337](https://buytickets.at/reallifecatholic/1765337)

Wednesday, March 18, 2026
7:00 - 9:00 PM

Church of the Incarnation
240 Main St, Mantua Twp, NJ 08051



Healing Mass on World Day of the Sick

The Sacrament of
Anointing of the Sick will
be administered to those
in need of its healing grace



Wednesday, February 11 at 7:00 PM

Mary, Mother of Mercy Parish
Our Lady of Lourdes Church
500 Greentree Road - Glassboro, NJ

Bishop Joseph Williams will preside at this Mass

Kindly RSVP by Feb 6th
VITALity-Events@CamdenDiocese.org or 856-583-6123

Following Mass, please join us for dessert and coffee





Discovering **hope** and **joy** in the Catholic faith.

February 2026

Church of the Incarnation, Mantua, NJ

Rev. Stephen J. Rapposelli, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

St. Onesimus

Born in Phrygia, St. Onesimus was enslaved to Philemon of Colossae in present-day Turkey. He encountered St. Paul during the apostle's imprisonment in Rome, where Onesimus had fled after stealing from his master. Moved by Paul's witness, he repented, was baptized, and later gained his freedom. Onesimus became a trusted companion and co-worker of St. Paul and was eventually martyred for the faith during the persecutions under Emperor Domitian.

God's Valentine to us

If God sent a Valentine, it might sound something like this: *"My darling child"* (Jeremiah 31:20), *"You are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you"* (Isaiah 43:4). *"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love"* (John 15:9). *"Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends..."* (John 15:13-14). *"Do you love me?"* (John 21:16) That makes the Bible the world's longest love letter.

"God is not the enemy of our freedom but its ground. That is something we ought to relearn in these days. Only love that is almighty can ground a joy that is free from anxiety." Pope Benedict XVI

"What do you seek?" (John 1:38)

Have you ever felt restless or quietly dissatisfied, sensing that something in your life needs changing? Lent offers that opportunity. It is a spiritual reset, inviting us to reorient our hearts toward Christ, the true source of peace, joy, purpose, and meaning. Here are practical ways to deepen your encounter with God and His love this Lent.

Faith is relational, not informational. The first disciples were not content with simply hearing about Jesus. They wanted to be with Him and to know Him personally. Christ extends that same invitation to us today. We respond by making room for Him through prayer and meditation, regular participation in Mass, and time with Scripture, not as duties to complete, but as ways of choosing a living relationship with the One who loves us most.

Choose trust over control. "Let Him lead and guide you," Pope Leo has urged. God's invitation to deeper friendship is renewed each day, and Lent is a privileged time to respond with intention. Begin each morning by

offering your day to God, placing your work, relationships, and uncertainties in His hands. This simple act of trust opens the door to genuine freedom.

Share what you have received. A true encounter with God naturally leads to what Pope Leo called "missionary

"If you sense the Lord calling you, do not be afraid...He alone knows the deepest, perhaps hidden, longings of your heart — the path that will lead you to true fulfillment." (Pope Leo XIV)

zeal," the desire to share with others what we have received. After meeting Christ, St. Andrew simply brought his brother, Simon Peter, to Him. Likewise, sharing your faith is often as simple as an honest conversation with a friend about the source of your hope. You are not persuading or performing; you are inviting someone you care about to meet the Friend who has changed your life.

This Lent, let renewal take root. Choose presence, trust, and generosity, and allow God to do the rest.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Abstaining from meat on Fridays in Lent is not merely a rule, but a reverent sacrifice rooted in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice on Good Friday. By giving up something we enjoy but do not need, we unite a small, bodily sacrifice to His offering on the Cross.

Why do Catholics give up meat on Fridays in Lent?

This "prayer of the body" strengthens the prayer of the soul, training our hearts in discipline and gratitude. It keeps our focus on Christ and serves as a quiet, outward sign of faith. For the same reasons, the Church encourages Friday penance throughout the year.

When things go wrong, choose charity

When difficulties arise, our instinct is often to complain, assign blame, or turn inward with harsh self-criticism. These reactions rarely solve the problem. More often, they weaken charity, cloud judgment, and strain relationships. A more constructive response is to choose kindness deliberately, in thought, speech, and action.

Practice kindness in thought: When self-pity, resentment, comparison, or harsh self-judgment appear, treat them as temptations rather than truths. Pause and redirect your thinking. Replace them with a steady reminder such as, "This is difficult, but I can respond well." Offer yourself the same patience you would give a friend.

Practice kindness in speech: Before speaking, ask whether

your words will help or simply vent frustration. If you would not say something to or about someone you love, refrain. When emotions run high, bring your complaints to prayer first. Naming them before God can bring clarity and restraint.

Practice kindness in action: Focus on what you can do rather than what you cannot control. Choose one concrete act of goodwill: express gratitude, offer help, listen attentively, or perform a small, unnoticed kindness. These simple actions restore perspective and soften difficult moments.

Responding with kindness does not ignore problems. It creates the conditions for peace, clearer judgment, and constructive action to take root.

from Scripture

Matthew 4:1-11, He chose us

In this passage, Jesus is tempted by the Devil. First, Satan tempted Jesus to satisfy His hunger with a miracle – to put physical needs above spiritual needs. Jesus showed us that spiritual needs come first, and to entrust both to God's care. Next, Satan commanded Jesus to jump from the temple roof, forcing God's hand. Again, Jesus refused: serving God means doing things God's way.

Finally, Satan offered to surrender all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would worship him. While horrible, it

promised a "painless" way to save the world. Jesus rejected it, choosing the Cross because it was the only way to save us. He chose us. When tempted to do what's "easy" versus what's morally right, ask for the strength to choose what's right.

The season of Lent is a powerful opportunity for spiritual renewal and growth in love. We can take comfort knowing Jesus faced the same temptations we do and conquered them. If we stay close to Jesus, He will lead us to victory.

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 – St. Margaret of Cortona (1297). St. Margaret's conversion came after the sudden death of the man she was having an affair with. Shaken, she repented and became a Franciscan tertiary. She founded a hospital and an order of Tertiary sisters — *le Poverelle* — to operate it.

February 22 – The Chair of St. Peter. Today marks St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See, the "seat" of authority, in Rome. We thank God for His Church and pray for its holy preservation.

Feasts & Celebrations

February 5 – St. Agatha (c.251). Born to a noble Sicilian family, St. Agatha dedicated herself to God at the age of fifteen. The governor Quintianus was determined to marry her and threatened her if she refused him. She kept her vow despite torture, and imprisonment. God sent her a vision of St. Peter to comfort her, heal her, and fill her dungeon with heavenly light.

February 18 – Ash Wednesday. The first day of Lent. The ashes of old palms are placed on the forehead in the shape of a Cross, as a sign of penance. It's

Q & A What to do with dryness in prayer

A God never leaves us, yet our experience of prayer can ebb and flow. There are times of joy and peace, and others marked by dryness and difficulty. While dry seasons can be discouraging, that is often when our faith can grow the most. Don't avoid them, but live them well.

Ask why. Dryness in prayer can point to areas that need attention. Chronic stress, lack of rest, constant busyness, excessive screen time, or unresolved sin can weaken our attentiveness to God. Examine your habits and ask what may be interfering with prayer.

Remember the good times. When times are tough, memory sustains love. Follow Mary's example, who "*kept all these things, pondering them in her heart*" (Luke 2:19). Recall the ways God has acted in your life. Remembering His faithfulness restores confidence.

Renew your "yes" daily. Mary's consent to God's will was a daily surrender, even amid suffering. Resist the temptation to abandon prayer. Each day, echo her words: "*Let it be done unto me according to your word*" (Luke 1:38).

Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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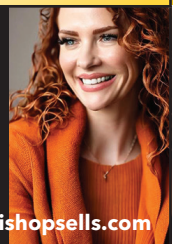
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