



6th Sunday in Ordinary Time February 11, 2018

St. Peter's Church

47 Central Avenue, Wellsboro, Pennsylvania 16901
 Rectory Phone: 570-724-3371 ~ Fax: 570-724-6322
 Religious Education Office: 570-724-9789
 Website: www.stpeterswellsboro.org ~ Email: stpch@ptd.net

Rectory Office Hours

Monday through Thursday 8:00–2:00pm

Parish Staff

Pastor: Rev. David Bechtel – Dbechtel00@yahoo.com
 Secretary: Connie Spang – stpch@ptd.net
 Business Manager: Patti Mitchell – stpadm@ptd.net
 Directors of Religious Ed.: Maureen Poirier & Melissa Mann –
stpreled@ptd.net
 Maintenance Staff: Connie Spang, Francis Kennedy

Schedule of Weekend Masses

Saturday Vigil: 5:00pm ~ Sunday: 8:30am

Reconciliation

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 11:45am -12:00noon;
 Saturday 4:15 – 4:45pm; By appointment by calling the Rectory.

Mission Statement

We, the parishioners of St. Peter's Church, are called to holiness by God as present day disciples of Jesus Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are united in service to God to share our faith with one another and our community. May our participation in the Holy Sacraments, our ministries and our devotion to Mary bring glory to God and His Kingdom.

Emergency Contact

In the event of an emergency, please call the rectory at 570-724-3371. If no answer, please call 570-329-5762. This is a pager. You will be instructed to enter your phone number and Fr. Bechtel will return your call.

What to Give Up...

Give up complaining ...	focus on Gratitude
Give up pessimism ...	become an Optimist
Give up worry ...	trust Divine Providence
Give up bitterness ...	turn to Forgiveness
Give up hatred ...	return Good for evil
Give up negativism ...	be Positive
Give up anger ...	be More Patient
Give up pettiness ...	become Mature
Give up gloom ...	enjoy the Beauty all around you
Give up jealousy ...	pray for Trust
Give up gossiping ...	control your Tongue
Give up sin ...	turn to Virtue
Give up giving up ...	Hang in there!

Pregnancy Support

Catholic Social Services (800) 982-4310
 Crisis Pregnancy Help line (888) 4-OPTIONS
 Endless Mountains Pregnancy Care Center (570) 673-4476

Religious Education and Formation

Religious Education classes are held for Pre-K – 12th grade. Classes begin in September and conclude in May. Pre-K (ages 3-5) is held during the 8:30am Mass. K-12th begins at 9:30am and concludes at 10:40am. To register, please contact the Religious Education Office at 570-724-9789 or the Rectory at 570-724-3371.

Welcome to St. Peter's Church!

If you are visiting Tioga County this weekend, welcome and thank you for worshiping with us! If you are searching for a Spiritual home, we welcome you to join us and invite you to become part of our church family. Please complete this form and return it to the parish office or drop it in the offertory basket.

Request for Parishioner Registration Form

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Parish Contact Listing

Women's Bible Study – Sue Singer 570-724-2360
 St. John Neumann's Prayer Group – Christina Simonis 570-724-2085
 Contemplative Spirituality Group – Kate Black 570-724-3047
 Cards & Games – Patty Kramer 570-948-9023
 Knights of Columbus – George Gamble 570-724-5216
 Social Concerns – Karen Plumley 570-439-0175
 Parish Rummage Sale – Mary Lasko 570-439-7706
 Pat Gorda 570-724-3035
 Church Linens & Decorations – Sue Singer 570-724-2360
 Buildings & Grounds – Rick Joachim 570-439-2591
 Cemetery Committee – Howard Rutledge 570-724-4529
 Fundraising Dinners – Paul Urner 570-723-9970
 Music Ministry – Christina Simonis 570-724-2085,
 Marilyn deGuzman 570-376-5427
 Samaritan House – Daria Guelig 570-724-3030
 Youth Group – Maureen Poirier/ Melissa Mann 570-724-9789
 Eucharistic Adoration – Rhonda Gooch 570-724-3092
 Finance Council – Priscilla Walrath 570-724-2056
 Parish Council – Rectory 570-724-3371
 Worship Committee – Rectory 570- 724-3371
 Sunday Nursing Home Communion – Eileen Evert 570-439-4470
 Prayer Chain – Kate Black 570-724-3047
 Order of Secular Carmelite – Lori Makos 570-724-3371
 ChristLife – Norb Josten 570-724-9095
 Prayer Shawl Ministry - Jan Bernethy 307-267-0677

Date	Time	Confession Time and Mass Intention
Monday 2/12 <i>Jas 1:1-11; Mk 8:11-13</i>	No Mass	
Tuesday 2/13 <i>Jas 1:12-18; Mk 8:14-21</i>	7:30am	In Memory of Beth Patt (Paul & Marion)
Wednesday 2/14 <i>Jl 2:12-18; 2 Cor 6:2; Mt 6:1-6,16-18</i>	7:30am 12:10pm 7:00pm	(Liturgy of the Word with Distribution of Ashes) In Memory of Richard Frank (Keck & Bryant Family) In Memory of Valerie Fermeic (Leonard & Family)
Thursday 2/15 <i>Dt 30:15-20; Lk 9:22-25</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confession In Memory of Janusz & Knighton Families (Mike & Patti Knighton)
Friday 2/16 <i>Is 58:1-9; Mt 9:14-15</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confession In Memory of James Quimby (Kathy Wilcox)
Saturday 2/17 <i>Is 58:9-14; Lk 5:27-32</i>	4:15-4:45pm 5:00pm	Confessions In Memory of Ted & Doris Sykora (Don & Lucy Whitney)
Sunday 2/18 <i>Gn 9:8-15; 1 Pt 3:18-22; Mk 1:12-15</i>	8:30am	All Living and Deceased Members of St. Peter's Parish

This week's Sanctuary Candle is offered in Memory of
Peter Saladis, Sr. & Theresa Jasko (Wife & Daughter)

The Week Ahead

SUNDAY, February 11, 2018

Religious Ed –Pre-School:8:30-9:30am; K-12th:9:30-10:40am

R.C.I.A. – 9:30am, Parish Center

Youth Group – 10:45am, Parish Center

Carmelites – 11:30am, Parish Center

MONDAY, February 12, 2018

Valentine Meal Preparation – 9:00am, Parish Center

TUESDAY, February 13, 2018

Adoration – 8:00am-7:00pm; Benediction 6:45pm

Valentine Meal Prep & Delivery – 9:00am -12:00pm

Women's Bible Study – 9:00am, Parish Center

AA/Al-Anon – 8:00pm, Parish Center

WEDNESDAY, February 14, 2018

Broad Acres Service – 10:30am

St. John Neumann Group – 1:00pm, Parish Center

Green Home Service – 2:00pm

ChristLife – 7:00pm, Parish Center

THURSDAY, February 15, 2018

Cards & Games – 12:00pm, Parish Center

SUNDAY, February 18, 2018

Religious Ed –Pre-School:8:30-9:30am; K-12th:9:30-10:40am

R.C.I.A. – 9:30am. Parish Center

GOODIES FOR OUR TROOPS - This month's Goodies for our Troops items are: **Hand and Feet Warmers, Beef Jerky, Slim Jims, Homemade Cookies and Fudge & Personal Notes** (cards, letters, drawings from children.)

A donation box can be found at the entrance of the church.

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS - This month's food pantry items are: **Chicken Noodle and Tomato Soup.**

A donation box can be found at the entrance of the church.

ST. THOMAS/ST. CATHERINE MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday, St. Catherine, Westfield - 7:00pm

Sunday, St. Thomas, Elkland – 11:30am

Ministers of the Altar Schedule

February 14th – Ash Wednesday

12:10pm

Lectors: R.Kramer, P.Kramer

E. Min.: T. Straniere, K.Wilcox, N.Ostapowicz, G.Brown

7:00pm

Servers: A.Dunkel, L.Germino, W.Steinbacher

Lectors: P.Walrath, N.Kennedy

E. Min.: T.Gamble, B.Butler, D.Sherman, M.Bialas

February 17th/18th

5:00pm

Servers: M.Mann, E.Hazelton, I.Hazelton

Lectors: D.Bleggi, T.Sampson

E. Min.: D.Sherman, I.Dziengowski, E.Evert, V.Anthony

8:30am

Servers: L.Singer, Z.Singer, J.Lubera

Lectors: L.Gordon, D.Gordon

E. Min.: L.Whitney, M.Sampson, M.Stirnaman, A.Singer

Sacramental Information

Baptisms - Parents anticipating the birth of their first child are asked to attend instructions classes before the birth of their child. Note: Baptisms cannot be scheduled until all the necessary paperwork is completed. Contact the Rectory to schedule.

Confirmation - Confirmation is administered every year to all 8th grade students in our Parish Religious Education program. Children wishing to receive Confirmation must be enrolled and participating in the program for two years before they are eligible to receive the sacrament.

Marriages - In order to complete the necessary paperwork, couples are asked to contact the Rectory at least one full year in advance of the proposed marriage date.

Anointing of the Sick - Please contact the Rectory whenever a member of your family has become sick or hospitalized.

Monthly Visitations - Any parishioner who is homebound and wishes to receive the Eucharist on a monthly basis is asked to contact the Rectory to schedule a visit.

Rite of Christian Initiation in Adults (R.C.I.A.) - The R.C.I.A. prepares unbaptized adults for reception into the Catholic Church. The program is adapted to the needs of each person and prepares them for full initiation into the faith. Contact the Rectory for more information.



Liturgical Reflection

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46

Leviticus is a book teaching Israel how to be clean and holy in God's presence. Our first reading comes from a section dealing with purity laws. A priest is to declare a person who bears the sores of leprosy "unclean." Today's reading, however, does not provide for the healing of lepers as the ritual codes in the next chapter of Leviticus do. The Lord wants people to be healed. The link with today's First Reading and Gospel is Jesus' healing of the leper. No one's home will be outside and away from God. Once healed, all will dwell with God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 32

Psalm 32 is a hymn for those who know they have sinned and are overjoyed by God's forgiveness. The Psalm speaks of the healing that God will grant us; a healing that only God can give; a healing of our hearts.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

Paul's advice in this brief reading is to keep everyone else in mind when we act. Selfishness does not lead to God's glory, imitating Christ's unselfish ways does. Letting God's glory be foremost in our minds and hearts, Paul calls us to imitate him just as he imitates Christ.



GOSPEL: Mark 1:40-45

Healed by Jesus, the leper is no longer unclean, nor is he an outsider in Jesus' world. He, too, like those without leprosy, dwells with God in Jesus. We do not know whether or not the leper followed Jesus' instructions to show himself to the priest as required by the purity laws. We do know that he disobeyed Jesus' command to not tell anyone about how he was healed. He couldn't help but publicize the miracle and lead others to Jesus.

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Many forms of illness make people feel isolate. It is a true work of mercy to reach out to those who feel isolated and let them know that they are accepted and loved.

Parish Activities and Information

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time or donations of goods to make the Polish Dinner a great success. A special thanks to Paul Urner for chairing the event. A financial report will be in next week's bulletin.

ADORATION/EVENING PRAYER CANCELLATION POLICY

If the Wellsboro District cancels school or operates on a two hour delay on a Tuesday, there will be no adoration or evening prayer for that day.

LENTEN MATERIAL AVAILABLE

Lenten materials, for your spiritual enrichment, have been placed on the handout table at the back of the church.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday during Lent at 7:00pm in the church. Children's Stations of the Cross will also be held at 3:30pm. Students are invited to the parish center after school for a light snack before stations begin. The students will be chaperoned following the conclusion of stations, until parents are able to arrive. All parishioners are encouraged to attend Stations of the Cross during the Lenten season.



WEDNESDAY LENTEN SERVICES

The Wellsboro Ministerium will be offering Wednesday Lenten Services. All services will be held at the First Presbyterian Church from 12:00-12:30pm, with a light lunch to follow. The theme for this year is *Fruit of the Spirit*. The schedule for this year is as follows:

February 14th – First Presbyterian Church – *Love*

February 21st – United Methodist Church – *Faithfulness*

February 28th – St. Peter's Catholic Church – *Patience*

March 7th – Valley Alliance Church – *Goodness*

March 14th – First Baptist Church – *Peace*

March 21st – Living Word Fellowship – *Joy*

ST. JOHN NEUMANN RELIC



In 2019 our church building, erected in 1969, turns 50 years old. To celebrate this milestone in the life of ur parish,

different events are being planned. You will hear more about those events in the future. In anticipation of the celebration, a relic was requested from the Saint John Neumann Shrine in Philadelphia, PA. The Diocese of Scranton was not founded until 1868. Before 1868, we were part of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Saint John Neumann who was Archbishop of Philadelphia from 1852-1860, was also our bishop and has a connection with our town, as he came to the area and administered the Sacrament of Confirmation. The shrine sent us a beautiful relic, which can be seen in the showcase on the right, outside the double doors leading into the parish hall. A pilgrimage is being planned to the Saint John Neumann Shrine, as part of the 50th celebration. In 1842 St. John Neumann became the first man to profess his vows as a Redemptorist in America and an invitation to the Redemptorists to come and offer a parish mission during the Season of Lent 2019, is being extended. Look for more information as we get closer to 2019!



Also in that showcase is a second class relic of Saint Pope John Paul II (a Zucchetto (skullcap) worn by Pope John Paul) and a Rosary given to a parishioner by St. Mother Theresa of Calcutta.



Ash Wednesday Mass Schedule -

February 14th



7:30am – Liturgy of the Word
with Distribution of Ashes
12:10pm & 7:00pm – Mass

That's The Way It Is!



The Season of Lent will be upon us this coming week. Lent will begin on Ash Wednesday and end with the start of Mass on Maundy Thursday evening. I suppose that it is fitting that Lent comes right smack in the middle of the dead of winter. Lent is the liturgical equivalent of a spiritual winter time. The season of Lent is penitential in nature. Because of the penitential nature of the season you will notice a change in the tone of the Mass.

The tone of the music will be the most obvious. Gone will be the traditional four square hymnody or usual contemporary songs. Much of music will be replaced with chant or music set to chant like tones/hymns written in a minor key. Other things that may be less striking but none-the-less happen are the omission of the Gloria and Gospel Alleluia. The Alleluia will be replaced with "Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ." Decorations such as flowers will be sparse. Some churches even have the practice of draining their Holy Water fonts during Lent. To a person not used to Catholic practice, it might seem like we don't believe in the resurrection and the triumph of Jesus over sin.

It isn't that we don't believe in the resurrection and the triumph of Jesus over sin and death. The Liturgical Calendar takes us through the life of Christ—from birth to death to life again. During Advent, we experience the yearning for the messiah; the journey from darkness to light. In Christmas we experience the joy and mystery of the Incarnation of God. In Ordinary Time we experience different important events in the earthly life of Christ and his ministry. During Lent, we experience grief and sorrow for sin as we see what it cost God to redeem us. Lent is like a time of journey with Christ from light to darkness, life to death. This journey culminates with the passion of Christ. The day Christ died is the darkest day in the history of creation. We then experience the triumph of God over sin and death in the resurrection. The Easter Season closes with Pentecost where we experience the promise of the Holy Spirit and birth of the Church.

We are now in a season whereby we are in a journey from light to darkness. The ritualism and music of the Mass reflect that. The Lenten practices and liturgical practices are geared so that our joy in the Easter mysteries may be more complete. I know from my own childhood that this is true. I remember going to Mass during the weeks of Lent and listening to the somber music; dreadful

chant, hymns in minor key, and all the other Lenten liturgical disciplines. The organ was subdued. There is nothing to describe the feeling on Easter Sunday when the powerful 27 rank pipe organ began the Entrance hymn "Jesus Christ is Risen Today." WOW! The music thundered and reverberated in the Church and we all sang out the Alleluias to the praise and glory of God the Father. What an experience. That is why we have Lent; it helps us experience the triumph of Easter even more fully than we otherwise could. If you enter into the Season of Lent I think you can have that same experience during Easter.

How can we talk about Lent without taking about the fast and abstinence requirements of the season? To those outside the Catholic Church, the fast and abstinence requirements appear to be arbitrary. Meatless Fridays, except that fish does not qualify as meat for whatever reason; fasting and abstinence on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. What gives? When Jesus went into the desert before he began his public ministry, fasting was part of his 40 day experience. I don't see how any "Bible Christian" could condemn fasting when Scripture records our very Lord and savior doing it. If Jesus fasted and prayed, it seems pretty obvious that we should couple prayer and fasting at times during the year. The practice of fasting helps us discipline our passions and learn to rely on God even in our hunger. What better time than Lent, a season of penitence and conversion to fast?

As for the meatless Fridays: on a Friday, God offered his flesh for the life of the world. Therefore on the day that God offered his flesh, his disciples abstain from flesh as a public witness to that sacrifice and in honor of the sacrifice. Fish does not qualify as meat, nor does any "meat" that is exothermic. (Cold Blooded.) This is because the flesh that God offered in sacrifice was endothermic (Warm Blooded.) Thus, it is endothermic flesh that we abstain. There is nothing arbitrary about the rule when properly understood. In fact, as a Catholic myself, I have learned that when properly understood, you discover that the Church never teaches something arbitrarily. You find that there really is a purpose behind many of the Church teachings that society rejects—and what is more—that those teachings really do make sense.

That's the Way it is!

The Reverend David W. Bechtel

Stewardship

Sunday Collection for February 4th: \$5,923.00

Weekly Goal to Meet Expenses: \$5,750.00

Difference: \$ 173.00


Year-to-Date Budget Variance: \$2,593.36

Care & Education of Priests: \$ 713.00

*We are grateful to all those who financially sacrifice
every week to support our parish and its ministries*

Diocese of Scranton News

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY MASS

 Celebrating His Excellency, the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, and the Office for Parish Life wish to invite couples celebrating their 25th or 50th wedding anniversary in 2018 to a Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass on Sunday, June 10, 2018. The event includes a 2:30pm Mass at St. Peter's Cathedral, followed by a reception. Requests for an invitation should be made through your pastor before March 12, 2018.

ANNULMENT QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Do You Want to Know More About the Annulment Process? In the Diocese of Scranton, the annulment process is now more "user friendly" than you might expect, and there is no longer a processing fee. Please contact your pastor or the Diocesan Tribunal Office (570-207-2246) to begin a conversation. It is possible to get clear answers to these questions and to renew your connection with the Church.

CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE MAY 5th

Our 4th annual "Be A Man" Catholic Men's Conference for the Scranton Diocese will be held at King's College in Wilkes Barre on Saturday, May 5th, from 8:00am to 3:00pm. Based on our 2018 theme "Christ is Here, Come and See," our three nationally-known presenters will highlight various aspects of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist: Tom Peterson – founder of Catholics Come Home Inc.; Fr Michael Gaitley MIC – author of 33 Days to Morning Glory; Jesse Romero – a full-time bilingual Catholic Lay Evangelist.

- Join hundreds of like-minded Catholic men for a half-day conference celebrating the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist
- Hear excellent talks that will challenge you, re-awaken your spirit, and lift you up
- Examine your priorities
- Rejuvenate your commitment to Catholic Faith, Family & Fellowship
- Get new insights for growing in holiness in your daily life
- Support, challenge and affirm your call as a son of God and brother of Christ
- Participate in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist
- Help you come closer to Jesus!!

We will be honored to have Scranton Bishop Joseph Bambera celebrate our closing Mass. There will be opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Various exhibitors will be present with a full array of Catholic products, as well as information concerning ministry opportunities.

St. Peter's will provide transportation through Benedicts Bus Company and will pay half of the registration fee for those interested in attending. Registration forms can be found on the hand out table on the side of the church.

Refresh Your Faith

The First Annual Catholic Women's Conference of the Diocese of Scranton

Saturday, June 23, 2018 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Byron Complex, The University of Scranton

Featuring:

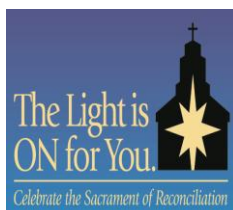
Judy Landrieu Klein: Faith Through It All
Father Richard McAlear: Ministry of Hope and Healing
Music by "His Own"
Mass Celebrated by the Most Reverend Joseph Bambera
Megan Murphy: Host

For information or to register:
dioceseofscranton.org/catholic-womens-conference

Co-Sponsored by:



THE LIGHT IS ON FOR YOU



As we begin this season of Lenten preparation, each of us is invited to reflect on those choices which will bring about the new life we celebrate in Easter. For this reason, the Church invites us to experience Lent as a time for deepened prayer, personal sacrifice, and self-giving – all so that we can be raised to new life in Christ! The Church encourages us to make confession a regular part of our spiritual life, especially during the holy season of Lent, as we reflect on our baptism and repentance. Bishop Joseph C. Bambera is helping to make this experience possible by arranging for a Lenten initiative called *The Light Is On for You*. **Every Monday evening during Lent**, each parish throughout the Diocese of Scranton will have their "lights on" from **5:30-7:00pm** for confession so that Catholics can come to or return to this incredible source of God's grace, mercy and healing. **Due to Fr. Bechtel responsibility for St. Thomas Parish, the schedule for St. Peter's will be February 19th, March 5th & 19th.**

Please make plans to come on a Lenten Monday, and spread the word of this special outreach of mercy to those you know. If you have been reluctant to come to the sacrament, have been away for some time, or just find it difficult to get to a Saturday afternoon confession time, this is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with Christ and his Church. **"The Light Is On for You!"**

Pro Life News

PRIESTS FOR LIFE

"I do will it. Be made clean." Jesus healed the lepers, who were outcasts to their community, as the first reading makes clear. The healing demonstrates two key lessons that relate to the Church's stand on life.

First, Jesus is always on the side of human life. His healing of some represents his liberation of all from the power of sin and death. Ultimately, the healings described in the Gospels point to the overthrow of the entire kingdom of death, and the final triumph of life. Christ is life, and to stand with him is to stand with life and against whatever destroys it.

Second, the Lord always broke down false barriers between different classes of human beings. He saw their humanity, and the image of God inscribed on them from creation. This image is not obscured by the false distinctions people make by their prejudice or by the customs that deny the equal dignity of all people.

When it comes to human dignity, Christ erases distinctions. St. Paul declares, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). We can likewise say, "There is neither born nor unborn." Using this distinction as a basis for the value of life or the protection one deserves is meaningless and offensive to all that Scripture teaches. The unborn are the segment of our society which is most neglected and discriminated against. Christ Himself surely has a special love for them.

News from the Vatican

2018 LENTEN MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS



Dear Brothers and Sisters, Once again, the Pasch of the Lord draws near! In our preparation for Easter, God in his providence offers us each year the season of

Lent as a sacramental sign of our conversion. Lent summons us, and enables us, to come back to the Lord wholeheartedly and in every aspect of our life. With this message, I would like again this year to help the entire Church experience this time of grace anew, with joy and in truth. I will take my cue from the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: "Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold" (24:12). These words appear in Christ's preaching about the end of time. They were spoken in Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives, where the Lord's passion would begin. In reply to a question of the disciples, Jesus foretells a great tribulation and describes a situation in which the community of believers might well find itself: amid great trials, false prophets would lead people astray and the love that is the core of the Gospel would grow cold in the hearts of many.

False prophets - Let us listen to the Gospel passage and try to understand the guise such false prophets can assume. They can appear as "snake charmers", who manipulate human emotions in order to enslave others and lead them where they

would have them go. How many of God's children are mesmerized by momentary pleasures, mistaking them for true happiness! How many men and women live entranced by the dream of wealth, which only makes them slaves to profit and petty interests! How many go through life believing that they are sufficient unto themselves, and end up entrapped by loneliness! False prophets can also be "charlatans", who offer easy and immediate solutions to suffering that soon prove utterly useless. How many young people are taken in by the panacea of drugs, of disposable relationships, of easy but dishonest gains! How many more are ensnared in a thoroughly "virtual" existence, in which relationships appear quick and straightforward, only to prove meaningless! These swindlers, in peddling things that have no real value, rob people of all that is most precious: dignity, freedom and the ability to love. They appeal to our vanity, our trust in appearances, but in the end they only make fools of us. Nor should we be surprised. In order to confound the human heart, the devil, who is "a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44), has always presented evil as good, falsehood as truth. That is why each of us is called to peer into our heart to see if we are falling prey to the lies of these false prophets.

We must learn to look closely, beneath the surface, and to recognize what leaves a good and lasting mark on our hearts, because it comes from God and is truly for our benefit.

A cold heart - In his description of hell, Dante Alighieri pictures the devil seated on a throne of ice, in frozen and loveless isolation. We might well ask ourselves how it happens that charity can turn cold within us. What are the signs that indicate that our love is beginning to cool? More than anything else, what destroys charity is greed for money, "the root of all evil" (1 Tim 6:10). The rejection of God and his peace soon follows; we prefer our own desolation rather than the comfort found in his word and the sacraments. All this leads to violence against anyone we think is a threat to our own "certainties": the unborn child, the elderly and infirm, the migrant, the alien among us, or our neighbor who does not live up to our expectations. Creation itself becomes a silent witness to this cooling of charity. The earth is poisoned by refuse, discarded out of carelessness or for self-interest. The seas, themselves polluted, engulf the remains of countless shipwrecked victims of forced migration. The heavens, which in God's plan, were created to sing his praises, are rent by engines raining down implements of death.

Love can also grow cold in our own communities. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, I sought to describe the most evident signs of this lack of love: selfishness and spiritual sloth, sterile pessimism, the temptation to self-absorption, constant warring among ourselves, and the worldly mentality that makes us concerned only for appearances, and thus lessens our missionary zeal.

What are we to do? - Perhaps we see, deep within ourselves and all about us, the signs I have just described. But the Church, our Mother and Teacher, along with the often bitter medicine of the truth, offers us in the Lenten season the soothing remedy of prayer, almsgiving and fasting. By devoting more time to *prayer*, we enable our hearts to root out our secret lies and forms of self-deception, and then to

find the consolation God offers. He is our Father and he wants us to live life well.

Almsgiving sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbor as a brother or sister. What I possess is never mine alone. How I would like almsgiving to become a genuine style of life for each of us! How I would like us, as Christians, to follow the example of the Apostles and see in the sharing of our possessions a tangible witness of the communion that is ours in the Church! For this reason, I echo Saint Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians to take up a collection for the community of Jerusalem as something from which they themselves would benefit (cf. 2 Cor 8:10). This is all the more fitting during the Lenten season, when many groups take up collections to assist Churches and peoples in need. Yet I would also hope that, even in our daily encounters with those who beg for our assistance, we would see such requests as coming from God himself. When we give alms, we share in God's providential care for each of his children. If through me God helps someone today, will he not tomorrow provide for my own needs? For no one is more generous than God.

Fasting weakens our tendency to violence; it disarms us and becomes an important opportunity for growth. On the one hand, it allows us to experience what the destitute and the starving have to endure. On the other hand, it expresses our own spiritual hunger and thirst for life in God. Fasting wakes us up. It makes us more attentive to God and our neighbor. It revives our desire to obey God, who alone is capable of satisfying our hunger.

I would also like my invitation to extend beyond the bounds of the Catholic Church, and to reach all of you, men and women of good will, who are open to hearing God's voice. Perhaps, like ourselves, you are disturbed by the spread of iniquity in the world, you are concerned about the chill that paralyzes hearts and actions, and you see a weakening in our sense of being members of the one human family. Join us, then, in raising our plea to God, in fasting, and in offering whatever you can to our brothers and sisters in need!

The fire of Easter - Above all, I urge the members of the Church to take up the Lenten journey with enthusiasm, sustained by almsgiving, fasting and prayer. If, at times, the flame of charity seems to die in our own hearts, know that this is never the case in the heart of God! He constantly gives us a chance to begin loving anew.

One such moment of grace will be, again this year, the "24 Hours for the Lord" initiative, which invites the entire Church community to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation in the context of Eucharistic adoration. In 2018, inspired by the words of Psalm 130:4, "With you is forgiveness", this will take place from Friday, 9 March to Saturday, 10 March. In each diocese, at least one church will remain open for twenty-four consecutive hours, offering an opportunity for both Eucharistic adoration and sacramental confession.

During the Easter Vigil, we will celebrate once more the moving rite of the lighting of the Easter candle. Drawn from the "new fire", this light will slowly overcome the darkness and illuminate the liturgical assembly. May the light of Christ rising in glory dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds, and enable all of us to relive the experience of the

disciples on the way to Emmaus. By listening to God's word and drawing nourishment from the table of the Eucharist, may our hearts be ever more ardent in faith, hope and love.

With affection and the promise of my prayers for all of you, I send you my blessing. Please do not forget to pray for me.

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR FEBRUARY 2018 - ENTRUSTED TO THE POPE'S WORLDWIDE PRAYER NETWORK

Universal: *Say "No" to Corruption* - That those who have material, political or spiritual power may resist any lure of corruption.

Lenten Information

Days of Fast and Abstinence – Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence. All Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence. All Catholics, 18-59 years of age, are bound by Church law to fast, which means only one large meal and two smaller meals may be eaten. Catholics 14 years of age and older are required to abstain, which means no meat may be eaten.

Lenten Reflection Material - A selection of Lenten materials for your spiritual enrichment has been placed on the table at the back of the church.

Stations of the Cross – Stations of the Cross will be celebrated each Friday of Lent at 3:30pm and 7:00pm. The 3:30pm stations will be led by the youth of our parish, but are open to all parishioners.

Operation Rice Bowl - Operation Rice Bowl is the official Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services. You are asked to eat one sacrificial meal each week during Lent and to give the money you saved to the Rice Bowl program. An envelope can be found in your monthly offering packet boxes can be found on the table in the back of the church.

Easter Duty – All parishioners are reminded of their obligation to fulfill their Easter Duty. A person's Easter Duty consists of receiving Holy Communion at least once between Ash Wednesday and Pentecost Sunday as well as going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation to confess any mortal sins.

Traditional Pillars of the Church – We are provided with 3 personal challenges associated with our individual observance of Lent:

- Almsgiving – generously giving to those in need
- Fasting – practicing self-discipline and self-denial
- Prayer – reading, hearing, and reflecting on the Word of God

Prayer for Lent

Lord Jesus, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free. During this Lent, lead us by your Holy Spirit to live more faithfully in Christian freedom. Through prayer, increased charity, and the disciplines of this sacred season, draw us closer to you. Purify the intentions of our hearts so all our Lenten observances give you praise and glory. Grant that through our words and actions, we may be faithful messengers of the gospel message to a world in need of the hope of your mercy. Amen.

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Parish Prayer List



PRAYERS
Needed For...

Nettie Mays, Nan Bowser, Trish Knowlton, Judy Nagel, Sue Evert, Valerie Tobin, Shirley Mekos Broughton, Donna Brennan, Bob Erway, Mary Mekos, Nick Cavagnaro, Antoinette Davis, Jonathan Hardman, Stephen Hurd, Stephanie Hemighauf, Suzie Alexander, Larry Sasani, Wendy Doan-Newcomb, Syler Sullivan, Adrienne Gilbert, Rita Grinnan, Bob Murphy, Sylvia Smith, Susan Cleveland, Tom Mohr, Carol Weatherby, Carol Shine, Teresa Pavlock, Jerry Pierce, Joann Black, Gabriel, Melissa & Daniel Espinoza, Lori Lopaz, Patricia Quattrone, Larry Jackson, Katie Seip, Lisa Jones, Grace Bickham, Floyd Williammee, Renee Kennedy, Gay Furlong, Elsa DiBernardo, Fran Rose, Christine Palmer, June Sherman, Kathy Smith, Tim Bogaczyk, Beth Valdez, Virginia Shaefer, Charles Barrett, Joe Engel, Darleen Kohler, Victoria Salerno, Tony Pranses, Bob Snyder, Don Brooks, Kathy Macensky, Paul Beuter, Jerry Eckert, Cole Salerno, Mark Kilmer, Margaret Barnett, Richard Nowak, Frank Dziengowski, Jr., Stephen Horvatch, Callie Cavanaugh, Fr. Paul Mullen, Jane Johnson, Gus Vargas, Helene Carpenter, Michele Bush, Clark Hewitt, Larry Mommicco, Loretta Nonnenmacher, Everett Dean Brown, Roberta Mahar, Bud Boyce, Claire Vargas, Marian Coolidge, Kay Evans, Delores Scuderi, Colleen Rose, Elizabeth Payne, Ann Osgood, Brenden Young, Jane Usavage Johnson, Jenny Clemens, and Cindy Sereno.



Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them, O Lord and
Let the Perpetual Light Shine Upon Them.

Lord, this we know, no matter how difficult life may be at this time, we know you will not stop loving us and will always hold us in the palm of your hand. We are reaching to you, Lord, to hold us, comfort us, and heal us. Lord, this we know, you are faithful in your love for us today and forever. You are with us, and we are with you. Amen.