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WHY I LOVE LENT

People are always surprised to learn that I love the Season of Lent. That's because most people associate Lent with "giving something up." So, for them, Lent seems like a burden and can take on a somber or even depressing tone. For me though, nothing could be further from the truth!

The readings during the Season of Lent are some of the richest during the entire liturgical year. They challenge us to deepen our relationship with God and the people around us: our family, friends, classmates, co-workers and neighbors. The Church takes her cue from the readings and suggests three ways of deepening those relationships and make the most of Lent: **Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving.**

Prayer is the way in which we come to know God and converse with him about our thoughts, feelings and desires. Take time this Lent to spend a few minutes in prayer with God each day. The best prayers are the ones that come from the heart. So try starting a prayer journal and spend a few minutes each day letting God know what's on your heart. What are you grateful for? What are you anxious about? Who are you praying for and why? Where do you want to experience God's love and friendship in your life right now? You might also want to take a look at the readings for Mass each day by visiting the www.usccb.org website. There's daily video reflections that accompany the readings, to help you pray and reflect on the readings.

Fasting is where I think people most often go wrong during Lent. Too often we give up chocolate or things we really like. What's the point in that? Lent is about deepening our relationships with God and others. So the things we should fast from or rather root out of our lives are the things that are hindering those relationships. What stops me from making time for God? What are the things that I am too attached to that stop me from being more charitable or engaged with the people around me? These are things to fast from! By letting go of these idols, our relationships will improve dramatically. That's a good thing!

Almsgiving is a way of remembering that our lives are not all about us. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are

called to be men and women of relationship, to be attentive to the needs of our brothers and sisters around us, especially those living on the margins who have no one else to support them. This can be done in a myriad of ways. We always welcome volunteers to participate in our Don's Helping Hands ministry, preparing and serving lunches to our neighbors in need. You can sign up for a day and time slot on our parish website.

As you can see, all of these opportunities that the Church provides us through Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving should add to the richness of our spiritual lives. And that's why I love Lent! When we give ourselves over to these practices, our relationships with God and the people around us will deepen and grow stronger. How can you not love that?

Have a Blessed Lent,

Fr. Francis



FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT February 21, 2021

First Reading Genesis 9:8–15

Responsorial Psalms 25:4–5, 6–7, 8–9

**Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth
to those who keep your covenant.**

Second Reading 1 Peter 3:18–22

Gospel Mark 1:12–15

UNITY EVENT: **SAVE THE DATE!**

Friday, **March 19**, from 8–9 pm on Zoom.
More details coming soon!

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

1ST: Gn 9:8–15 2ND: 1 Pt 3:18–22 GOSPEL: Mk 1:12–15

As I sat reading and rereading today's gospel passage, I thought to myself, it is so short, and it is not giving me a direction to go off onto. I kept coming up with, "I am blank, I am blank"—the reading being so short I was not getting an easy jumping-off point. As I sat and reflected on the "I am blank," it changed to me. I am empty. I reflected on that and then it hit me, that is the theme. I am empty, that is the desert, it was empty, that is what I needed to be considering all along, EMPTY. I need to empty my heart to make room for Christ, just as Christ was in the desert making room in his heart for his coming ministry and ultimately his passion. He needed to prepare himself to accept his destiny, his fate, the fulfilment of God's promises. This is the entire meaning of Lent. To empty yourself to have room for the coming of God's grace on Easter Sunday. Unburden yourself of your sins, do away with that guilt. Asking for forgiveness and confessing your sins and making room in your heart and your life for the coming grace.

To empty myself of the past and to accept the coming glory with the risen Lord. The coming graces. The biggest challenge is to accept this grace with a life worthy of those graces. To accept this love of Christ that he opened his arms wide and said, *this is how much I love you.*

Am I ready, able and willing to accept this life of grace that God has promised? Not asking "why this," but rather "yes, of course this"?

This is the self-examination and contemplation that we need to seriously consider in the remainder of these forty days. As to be worthy of the coming grace.

Peace.

— Steven Kulhanek, Parish Business Manager



MAKE A DIFFERENCE THIS LENT

CARE PACKAGES FOR KOLBE HOUSE

Compelled by the Gospel "*I was in prison and you visited me,*" Kolbe House ministers to those impacted by incarceration. St. Josaphat will be collecting white washcloths and puzzle books (crossword, sudoku, activities) to be included in care packages for women incarcerated at Cook County Jail. Please bring items to the rectory **by March 19**. Questions? Please contact Kelly Smith at kellytheresesmith@gmail.com.

NEXT WEEKEND'S SPECIAL COLLECTION

The collection for the **Church in Central and Eastern Europe** supports the Church in more than 25 countries that still struggle to recover from former communist rule. Funds collected support pastoral care, catechesis, building renovations and seminary formation. Your support restores the Church and builds the future in this region. Please prayerfully consider how you can support the collection next week. More information can be found at www.usccb.org/ceec.

NOMINATE FOR THE UNITY AWARD

Know a Catholic organization in Chicago doing great work to help the less fortunate? Nominate them for our annual Unity Award! Details and nominating form are on our website—please complete **by March 1**.

JOIN US TO PRAY THE ROSARY

Every Tuesday during Lent, register for your spot in church for a prayer service at 7 pm, followed by a Holy Hour of Adoration. This week, 8th Graders will lead us in the Rosary.

TRY THE 2-MINUTE CHALLENGE!

Did you know that one of our parish goals this year is to Start Everything With a Prayer (SEWP)? With that in mind, the SEWP committee challenges YOU and your family this Lent to **start each day with a prayer!** Will you commit to just 2 minutes of prayer each morning? How will you encourage your family members to keep it up? A friendly competition or a sticker chart? Keep an eye out for prayer ideas, prompts and encouragement throughout Lent.

MASS INTENTIONS

Fr. Francis is praying his daily Mass for us and these intentions this week:

MONDAY Living and Deceased Mothers and Fathers

TUESDAY Colleen Giudice

WEDNESDAY † Purgatorial Society

FRIDAY Parishioners of St. Josaphat

SATURDAY † Nicholas Q. Wagner

SUNDAY † Sheila Burrello

PLEASE INCLUDE IN YOUR PRAYERS

WELCOMED IN BAPTISM

Theodore Yoon, child of
Dennis Nam and Anna Jeong

THOSE IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Theresa & Leonard Hester,
Mary Louise Koehl, Frederic Kullman,
Leroy Merrell, Suzanne Scott

REST IN PEACE

Daniel Joseph Vaughan
(father of parishioner Kevin Vaughan)
Adelina Zottola (grandmother of
parishioner Kristin Domzal)



We're most in need of bottled water

THIS WEEK

Mon.	2/22	8:00 am	School Mass (Church)
		6:30 pm	School Board (Zoom)
Tues.	2/23	8:00 am	School Mass (Church)
		10:00 am	Faith Sharing: Breaking Open the Word (Zoom)
		6:00 pm	Religious Education (Google Classroom)
		7:00 pm	Lenten Prayer Service: The Rosary* (Church)
		7:30 pm	Holy Hour of Prayer, Eucharistic Adoration and Reconciliation* (Church)
Wed.	2/24	8:00 am	School Mass, Watch Live on Facebook
		7:00 pm	Faith Sharing: The Book of Matthew (Zoom)
Thu.	2/25	6:30 pm	Alpha (Zoom)
Fri.	2/26	8:00 am	Mass* (Church)
Sat.	2/27	5:00 pm	Mass* (Church)
Sun.	2/28	10:00 am	Mass* (Church) or Watch Live on Facebook
		10:00 am	RCIA (Zoom)
		2:30 pm	RCIA (Holy Name Cathedral)

*Reservations required

Next weekend's Special Collection is for **Aid for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe**. If you donate through Give Central, you can also specify an amount for this cause by selecting this "Event" (fund) or **text EUROPE to 312.625.5666**. Thank you for your generosity.

WANT TECH EXPERIENCE?

We are looking for 2 adults (18+) who **love tech** and are **interested in video production** for our Sunday 10:00 am Mass livestream team. You will be trained on our livestream technology, which includes the Mevo camera and Vimeo. Hours are 9:30–11:15 am on Sundays, with additional events as scheduled. This is a paid position. Please send an email to Grace@stjosaphatparish.org with your credentials and contact information.

SUNDAY OFFERING

We apologize that our numbers are still from November! We're continuing to work on accurate budget information. **Stay tuned!**

FISCAL YEAR 2021 THROUGH END OF NOVEMBER 2020

Budget.....\$240,291.00
Actuals.....\$231,900.78
Deficit(–8,390.22)

TACO TUESDAY

Tuco & Blondie taco truck
Tuesday, **February 23**, 4–7 pm

Preorder family packs and drink specials using this QR Code, then pick up in front of school on the 23rd!
A portion of proceeds directly benefits St. Josaphat!



DIRECTORY

PARISH STAFF

Phone.....773.327.8955
Pastor Rev. Francis Bitterman
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Pastoral Associate/
Dir. Evangelization...Mrs. Mary Jane Sullivan
maryjane@stjosaphatparish.org
Deacon Dcn. Pat Casey
312.316.7515, pcasey@sidley.com

More on our website: [Welcome > Directory](#)

WHO'S NEW IN THE PEW?

We warmly welcome new parishioners James McHugh and Family. You will receive our Welcome Kit in the mail. New to the neighborhood? Please register through our website at www.stjosaphatparish.org.

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