

# SAINT JOHN NEUMANN PARISH

708 Milford Rd (Rte 101A), Merrimack, NH 03054 — SJNNH.ORG



3rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
January 24, 2021

**Fr. Robert Glasgow**  
Pastor  
Chaplain (LTC) USA, Ret.  
880-4689 x113, pastor@sjnnh.org

**Eileen Buckley**  
Business Manager / Parish Secretary  
880-4689 x110, office@sjnnh.org

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## MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday (Outdoor) ..... 4:00 PM  
Saturday (Anticipatory) ..... 5:30 PM  
Sunday ..... 8:00 AM  
Sunday ..... 10:00 AM  
Sunday (Labor Day thru Memorial Day) .... 6:00 PM  
Daily (Mon, Wed-Fri) ..... 12:15 PM

## CONFESSION

Sunday ..... 11:15 AM - 1:00 PM  
And before/after daily Mass, or by appointment.

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## BAPTISM

Parents must attend a Parent Baptism Class before the baptism of their child. The class is offered the first Sunday of each month following the 10:00 AM Mass.

## MARRIAGE

Please contact the office at least six months prior to the wedding date. The diocese requires Marriage Prep.

## VISITS TO THE HOMEBOUND AND SICK, ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Please call the office to request home or hospital visitation.

## RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

RCIA is the process of formation offered to those who seek to become Catholic. For information, please call the office.

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## RETURN TO ME

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. —Joel 2:12

The excerpt below is from Pope Benedict XVI's final public homily (Ash Wednesday, 13 Feb 2013), just days after announcing his resignation.



CHRIST CARRYING HIS CROSS [detail]  
by El Greco (d. 1614)

TODAY, Ash Wednesday, we begin a new Lenten journey, a journey that extends over forty days and leads us towards the joy of Easter, to victory of Life over death. Following the ancient Roman tradition of Lenten stations, we are gathered for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The tradition says that the first statio took place in the Basilica of Saint Sabina on the Aventine Hill. Circumstances suggested we gather in St Peter's Basilica. Tonight there are many of us gathered around the tomb of the Apostle Peter, to also ask him to pray for the path of the Church going forward at this particular moment in time, to renew our faith in the Supreme Pastor, Christ the Lord. For me it is also a good opportunity to thank everyone, especially the faithful of the Diocese of Rome, as I prepare to conclude the Petrine ministry, and I ask you for a special remembrance in your prayer.

The readings that have just been proclaimed offer us ideas which, by the grace of God, we are called to transform into a concrete attitude and behavior during Lent. First of all the Church proposes the powerful appeal which the prophet Joel addresses to the people of Israel, "Thus says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning" (2:12). Please note the phrase "with all your heart," which means from the very core of our thoughts and feelings, from the roots of our decisions, choices and actions, with a gesture



of total and radical freedom. But is this return to God possible? Yes, because there is a force that does not reside in our hearts, but that emanates from the heart of God and the power of His mercy. The prophet says: "return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting in punishment" (v. 13). It is possible to return to the Lord, it is a 'grace', because it is the work of God and the fruit of faith that we entrust to His mercy. But this return to God becomes a reality in our lives only when the grace of God penetrates and moves our innermost core, gifting us the power that "rends the heart". Once again the prophet proclaims these words from God: "Rend your hearts and not your garments" (v. 13). Today, in fact, many are ready to "rend their garments" over scandals and injustices – which are of course caused by others - but few seem willing to act according to their own "heart", their own conscience and their own intentions, by allowing the Lord transform, renew and convert them.

This "return to me with all your heart," then, is a reminder that not only involves the individual but the entire community. Again we heard in the first reading: "Blow the horn in Zion! Proclaim a fast, call an assembly! Gather the people, sanctify the congregation; Assemble the elderly; gather the children, even infants nursing at the breast; Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her bridal tent (vv.15-16). The community dimension is an essential element in faith and Christian life. Christ came "to gather the children of God who are scattered into one" (Jn 11:52). The "we" of the Church is the community in which Jesus brings us together (cf. Jn 12:32), faith is necessarily ecclesial. And it is important to remember and to live this during Lent: each person must be aware that the penitential journey cannot be faced alone, but together with many brothers and sisters in the Church.

Finally, the prophet focuses on the prayers of priests, who, with tears in their eyes, turn to God, saying: "Between the porch and the altar let the priests weep, let the ministers of the LORD weep and say: "Spare your people, Lord! Do not let your heritage become a disgrace, a byword among the nations! Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"(v. 17). This prayer leads us to reflect on the importance of witnessing to faith and Christian life, for each of us and our community, so that we can reveal the face of the Church and how this face is, at times, disfigured. I am thinking in particular of the sins against the unity of the Church, of the divisions in the body of the Church. Living Lent in a more intense and evident ecclesial communion, overcoming individualism and rivalry is a humble and precious sign for those who have distanced themselves from the faith or who are indifferent.

"Well, now is the favorable time, this is the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2). The words of the Apostle Paul to the Christians of Corinth resonate for us with an urgency that does not permit absences or inertia. The term "now" is repeated and can not be missed, it is offered to us as a unique opportunity. And the Apostle's gaze focuses on sharing with which Christ chose to characterize his life, taking on everything human to the point of taking on all of

man's sins. The words of St. Paul are very strong: "God made him sin for our sake." Jesus, the innocent, the Holy One, "He who knew no sin" (2 Cor 5:21), bears the burden of sin sharing the outcome of death, and death of the Cross with humanity. The reconciliation we are offered came at a very high price, that of the Cross raised on Golgotha, on which the Son of God made man was hung. In this, in God's immersion in human suffering and the abyss of evil, is the root of our justification. The "return to God with all your heart" in our Lenten journey passes through the Cross, in following Christ on the road to Calvary, to the total gift of self. It is a journey on which each and every day we learn to leave behind our selfishness and our being closed in on ourselves, to make room for God who opens and transforms our hearts. And as St. Paul reminds us, the proclamation of the Cross resonates within us thanks to the preaching of the Word, of which the Apostle himself is an ambassador. It is a call to us so that this Lenten journey be characterized by a more careful and assiduous listening to the Word of God, the light that illuminates our steps.

In the Gospel passage according to Matthew, to whom belongs to the so-called Sermon on the Mount, Jesus refers to three fundamental practices required by the Mosaic Law: almsgiving, prayer and fasting. These are also traditional indications on the Lenten journey to respond to the invitation to "return to God with all your heart." But he points out that both the quality and the truth of our relationship with God is what qualifies the authenticity of every religious act. For this reason he denounces religious hypocrisy, a behavior that seeks applause and approval. The true disciple does not serve himself or the "public", but his Lord, in simplicity and generosity: "And your Father who sees everything in secret will reward you" (Mt 6.18). Our fitness will always be more effective the less we seek our own glory and the more we are aware that the reward of the righteous is God Himself, to be united to Him, here, on a journey of faith, and at the end of life, in the peace light of coming face to face with Him forever (cf. 1 Cor 13:12).

Dear brothers and sisters, we begin our Lenten journey with trust and joy. May the invitation to conversion, to "return to God with all our heart", resonate strongly in us, accepting His grace that makes us new men and women, with the surprising news that is participating in the very life of Jesus. May none of us, therefore, be deaf to this appeal, also addressed in the austere rite, so simple and yet so beautiful, of the imposition of ashes, which we will shortly carry out. May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and model of every true disciple of the Lord accompany us in this time. Amen!

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#### MASS INTENTIONS

Jan 24 (Sun), 8:00 AM Mary Ann Warpinski (req. by  
the Fregault family)  
Jan 24 (Sun), 6:00 PM SJN Parishioners

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The Code of Canon Law confirms the practice of offering Mass(es) for particular intentions is ancient: "The Christian faithful who give an offering to apply the

Mass for their intention contribute to the good of the Church and by that offering share its concern to support its ministers and works" (945 §2).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### — TAX NOTICE —

If you would like a statement of your 2020 contributions to the parish, please fill out the CONTRIBUTIONS REQUEST CARD (located alongside the bulletins in the foyer) and place it in the collection basket. You can also request a statement by emailing us your:

- Name
- Address
- Phone #
- Envelope #

Statements will go out in February. Your financial support, especially during the past few months, has been very much appreciated!

### ASH WEDNESDAY

Feb 17, 2021

Mass w/ distribution of Ashes  
12:15, 4:00 (OUTDOOR), 5:30 and 7:00 PM

NOTE: As a COVID precaution, the Vatican has directed that ashes be sprinkled rather than traced on people's foreheads this year.

### PARISH INFORMATION

We love being in touch with you. Now you can keep in touch with us via email and/or text messaging.

Visit > <https://SJMERRIMACK.flocknote.com>

— or —

Text > "SJMERRIMACK" to 84576  
(message and data rates may apply)

Choose to get updates from parish groups you're interested in. Unsubscribe anytime. No spam, we promise.

### — EMAIL SCAM ALERT —

NOTE: A number of parishioners both here at St John Neumann and at other parishes throughout the diocese have received emails purporting to come from the pastor requesting help purchasing Gift Cards. DO NOT RESPOND TO THESE

### REQUESTS.

The diocesan website lists Recent Cyber Alerts as well as best Cyber Security Practices:

<https://www.catholicnh.org/security>

### — NOTICE —

- Due to the Saturday 4:00 PM Outdoor Mass, CONFESSION has moved temporarily to Sundays following the 10:00 AM Mass = 11:15 AM - 1:00 PM.
- The Sunday 10:00 AM Mass continues to be LIVE STREAMED at:

<https://www.facebook.com/112258683764613/live>

- The 12:15 daily Mass is posted Monday, and Wednesday thru Friday to:

<https://www.facebook.com/sjnnh>

- PLEASE NOTE: the 4:00 PM Outdoor Mass affords the greatest pandemic precautions for those most at risk.

### — AMAZON SMILE —

Please consider supporting our St John Neumann FOOD PANTRY whenever you purchase items through AMAZON.COM. Go to:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/02-0370038>

and add "Saint John Neumann Parish" as your charity of choice. 0.5% of every purchase is donated by Amazon.com to the SJN FOOD PANTRY.

### PRESENTATION OF MARY ACADEMY [www.pmaschool.org](http://www.pmaschool.org)

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**SESSION & REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

SESSION 1	6/27 - 7/10
SESSION 2	7/11 - 7/24
SESSION 3	7/25 - 8/7
SESSION 4	8/8 - 8/21
SESSION 5	8/22 - 8/28

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For more information about the diocesan youth camps  
visit their website: <<http://bfcamp.com>>.

### AT-HOME MARRIAGE RETREAT National Marriage Week 2021 "To Have, To Hold, To Honor"

NATIONAL MARRIAGE WEEK is 7-14 February 2021. This year, the United States Council of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth is offering an at-home MARRIAGE RETREAT this year. Copies of the 7-day retreat are available upon request (please email Fr. Glasgow) or from the USCCB website:  
<<https://www.usccb.org/>>

Dear Married Couples,

This year's theme for National Marriage Week is "To Have, To Hold, and To Honor," a reminder of the promises made on your wedding day. The stories and reflection questions that follow are intended to help you renew your commitment "to

have, to hold, to honor" your spouse. **Celebrate and enrich your marriage this week by taking some time each day to listen to the Word of God, meditate, reflect, and pray together.**

Each day is an opportunity to read and meditate on a passage from Scripture followed by a re-imagined story from a different perspective. Reflect on the questions that follow and close with the prayer for couples. This exercise of praying with the Scriptures is called LECTIO DIVINA: it consists of four steps: Lectio (the reading of Scriptures), Meditatio (meditation), Oratio (prayer), and Contemplatio (contemplation).

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### SJN Staff

CLAIRE BRYSON  
Children's Ministry (K-5th Grade)  
(603) 880-4689 x114  
cbryson@sjnnh.org

CHERI ANDERSEN  
Youth Ministry (6th-12th Grade)  
(603) 880-4689 x111  
candersen@sjnnh.org

TERI SCHMITT  
Religious Education Secretary  
tschmitt@sjnnh.org

DIANE BONENFANT  
Sacristan

CAROL YETTO  
Music Ministry  
SJNMusic@myfairpoint.net

CAROL HOPFENSPIRGER and EVELYN VERBECK  
Outreach & Food Pantry  
(603) 880-4689 x116

KATHY HOPKINS  
Day Away (Thursday)  
(603) 880-4689  
dayaway@sjnnh.org

PASTORAL COUNCIL  
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