



1ST SUNDAY OF LENT



After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." - Mk 1:14-15

MASS:

Sunday 10:00 am

The Annual Lenten Duel

Here we are five days into the Lenten season and my bathroom scale must not be working. It is clear that I have not lost an ounce in the past 120 hours.

I mention this because, back a couple of decades ago, I could rely on Lenten fasting and decreased caloric intake to reduce my weight by 15 to 20 pounds every winter like clockwork. Either my metabolism has changed dramatically or we need to press for a federal investigation into the quality of electronic scales currently being manufactured in the western world. You may have noticed this same phenomenon in your house as well.

Lent is not really about weight loss, of course, even if the latter has proven to be a more reliable sign of dieting progress each winter than any New Year's resolution to visit the calisthenics room at the Y or cut back on my serial ingestion of Little Debbie's Snack Cakes. Lent is more about the soul than the body, no matter how much any folks struggling to cut back to one large meal and two smaller meals per day for 40 days might disagree.

Being well past 60, the age at which the Church feels an individual no longer needs to adhere to strict fasting guidelines for ages 14 to 59, I have noticed that I tend to grow a bit lax about cutting back on desserts in Lent as religiously as I once did. These days, I am more likely to reward myself in retirement for any and, let's be honest, all exertions. For example, I feel called to get a Panera's bear claw to celebrate having gotten up on time to drive the grandkids to school. Or I might knock back a Handel's large double-whipped butter pecan milkshake to congratulate myself for remembering which day of the week to wheel the trash barrel out to the curb. You get the idea.

My Lenten resolutions this year are to spend more time in prayerful meditation, and to cut out the Little Debbie Snack Cakes until after we celebrate the Resurrection. No matter my age in any given year, this much seems certain in the annual Lenten duel between body and the soul: The spirit is willing, but the flesh craves dessert. I pray for spiritual strength, but this year, it may take an AA-style intervention to save me.

This Lent, may all of us decrease in weight and increase in grace and love of the Lord.

— Lou Jacquet

Fish Dinners Continue

Our St. Brendan Lenten drive-through fish dinners (takeout only) will continue Friday, Feb. 26. Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and dinners will be served from 1 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Lunch is sandwich and a choice of side, \$7; Dinners are \$11 for adult, \$6 for children 12 and under.

Call 330-799-3683 to order ahead from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursdays, and beginning at 8 a.m. on Fridays.

Workers are still needed to take orders from cars in the parking lot from persons who have not pre-ordered. These workers are needed 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Fridays. Call 330-799-3339.

Journey, Youth Ministry Events

St. Brendan Youth Ministry will be participating in a special evening of Adoration including Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, praise and worship music, a reflection by Fr. Ryan Furlong, the opportunity for confession, and prayer teams.

This event will take place TONIGHT, February 21st, at 7 p.m. at St. Charles Church. However, teens are asked to meet in the Youth Ministry Loft at St. Charles at 6 p.m. for a minisession on the power of the Eucharist prior to our praise and worship. Contact Natalie @ nwardle@youngstowndiocese.org if you are interested.

Sunday, February 21

10:00 a.m. Harold Shaulis

By Deb Flora

Wednesday, February 24

9:00 a.m. Harold Shaulis

By Lou and Geri Jacquet

Friday, February 26

3:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

Sunday, February 28

10:00 a.m. Paul Plunkett

By George and Mary Alyce Kinnick

Please Pray For Our Sick

Ralph Ruggiero, Patricia Alexander, Joe Gorman, Dorothy LoSasso, Joseph Molinari III

Pray for the Faithful Departed, May They Rest from Their Labors

First Sunday Of Lent

St. Polycarp: Fearless Martyr, Defender Against Heresies

No matter how deep the Catholic faith of anyone alive in the world today, not a single one of us could ever say we were taught its principles by the original Apostles. But St. Polycarp (69-155 A.D.), the second century bishop of Smyrna whose feast the Church commemorates on Feb. 23, could make just that claim. He was brought into the Church by St. John the Evangelist about 80 A.D. and lived until his martyrdom in 155 A.D.



To say that Polycarp was martyred is almost an understatement. As the bishop of Smyrna, he was burned alive at age 86 with eleven companions. During his long and fruitful lifetime, Polycarp was one of the foremost leaders of the Church in the second century. He was so revered throughout the Church that he had just returned from Rome where he had been consulted by Pope Anicetus about establishing a firm date for Easter.

In a letter from the Church of Smyrna dated

156 A.D. to the Church in Greater Phrygia, we have a detailed account of Polycarp's martyrdom, the oldest such account of the martyrdom of an individual in Church history. The account captures Polycarp's incredible bravery and his staunch defense of his deep faith. Asked to revile Christ to win his freedom, the old bishop replied, "For six and 80 years I have been serving Him, and He has done no wrong to me. How, then, dare I blaspheme my King who has saved me!"

Polycarp's death also marked the first known account of a Christian community collecting the bones of a martyr to save, venerate, and celebrate his imitation of the death of Christ. This account shows that even in the earliest days of the Church martyrs were seen as true disciples and imitators of the Lord.

Aside from his celebrated death, Polycarp was known for his defense of Church teaching against heresies, and his urging of the faithful to give alms, "which deliver from death." He was also ahead of his time in calling for believers to pray for the state even when its officials were persecuting Christians in the most brutal ways.

St. Polycarp, fearless martyr, staunch defender of the Christian faith, pray for us.

— Lou Jacquet

Sunday's Scriptures: Spiritual Benefits Of The Desert

"The Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness, and He was in the wilderness 40 days, tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered to Him" (Gospel of Mark 1:12-13)

Why would the Spirit send Jesus out into the wilderness? One reason, theologians have suspected, is in preparation for Jesus' ministry. This would be in keeping with the Jewish tradition of leadership. Moses spent 40 years in the desert before leading the Hebrew people. After experiencing freedom from Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea, the nation of Israel spent 40 years in the desert before entering the promised land. John the Baptist lived in the desert until his public appearance to Israel. Paul spent three years in the desert of Arabia after his conversion.

The desert is a place of solitude and silence. It is a place of being separated from our busy-

ness and our constant interaction with stimuli. It is a place to be with God alone, to listen and contemplate God. In Paul's case, the desert was a time and place to be taught the Gospel from God Himself rather than learning and repeating what the other Apostles could teach him. It provided Paul with a personal encounter with Jesus as his teacher and Lord.

Jesus is driven by the Spirit into the desert before beginning His public ministry. The desert experience has Jesus rely on His Father for everything. It appears to strengthen His resolve to do the will of His Father. The time in the desert for Jesus was not easy. He had to face His humanity with its limitations and temptations.

The Church each year gives us an opportunity to spend 40 days stepping back from our usual patterns of life, to spend time in a differ-

Spiritual Benefits Of Desert

Continued from Page 3

ent, less stimulated, quieter and simpler way. What if, instead of giving up the "usual things" we have been giving up for Lent since our childhood, we were to enter the desert? What if we took the next 40 days and accompanied Jesus like St. Paul? What if we spent time in Scripture reflection and prayer to let Jesus teach us the Gospel? What if we came to church on Sunday 15 minutes early to be silent and sit with Jesus?

We could disconnect for a period of time each day from the media and Facebook frenzy, the noise of constant television, and give that allotted time to allowing the Holy Spirit to mold us into images of Jesus.

The desert, even for short periods of time, is not an easy, comfortable or entertaining place. But what extraordinary spiritual benefits can be found there!

– Geri Jacquet

Prayer To St. Polycarp

God of all creation,
who are pleased to give the Bishop St. Polycarp
a place in the company of Martyrs,
grant, through his intercession,
that, sharing with him in the chalice of Christ,
we may rise through the Holy Spirit to eternal life.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.

Your Sacrificial Offering

Amount needed monthly to meet expenses

For February 2021 **\$29,440.00**

Week of February 14, 2021

Sunday Collection	\$8,623.00
Increased Operating Exp.	\$340.00
Major Repairs	\$170.00
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Mass 2/14 10 a.m. 57



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Email: lwehrlin@youngstowndiocese.org

Parochial Vicar

Father Simon Mino Ext. 11

Parish Secretary

Lynn Anderson Ext.10

Email: office@stbrendanyo.org

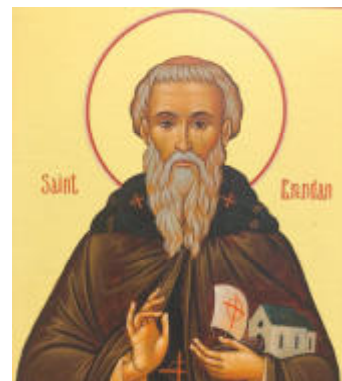
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