



# Lent 2021

St. Francis de Sales Church

## Lent—A Journey to Holiness

Each year as we start thinking about Lent, we often seem initially drawn to the concepts of sacrifice and self-denial. These issues are significant, but they are neither the starting point nor the end of the season. The goal of Lent, in fact is quite the opposite. Lent is first and foremost a time, not for diminishment, but for growth and development. We should aspire to expand our hearts, enlarge our souls, and enrich our minds.

The first question we often ask is, “what should I give up for

Lent?” Perhaps instead we might begin by asking: “What do I need for Lent?” or “What is missing from my life?” The first goal of Lent is holiness and the meaning of holiness is wholeness. Such holiness is measured, not by the scale of our deprivation, but by the fullness of our life in Christ. Lent is a time to seek the real gifts we lack: patience, joy, trust, and compassion. True blessedness does not arrive by denying our craving for chocolate, but by fulfilling our hunger for righteousness.

Once we determine what we

lack, only then do we turn to the question of self-denial. The human heart and soul are much like our hard drives and garages; they fill up with junk very quickly. The role of self-sacrifice is to discard the unnecessary in order to clear a space for life’s real treasures. We live in a culture that is often distracted by noise materialism, and self-absorption. We use the three disciplinary tools of Lent – prayer, fasting, and almsgiving – to open our hearts and minds to others and to make room in our lives for God.



### Lenten Regulations

**Fasting** expresses our desire to find joy in God rather than in the satisfaction of our own physical needs. Through fasting our relationship to ourselves is reoriented toward God.

**Fasting & Abstinence** are required by Church law on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Fridays during Lent are days of Abstinence from meat. The law of abstinence applies to those over the age of 14. The Law of Fasting applies to those between the ages of 18 and 59. This Lenten practice allows for one full meal and two smaller meals.

#### Special points of interest

- *Lenten regulations*
- *Ash Wednesday*
- *Weekday Mass*
- *Stations of the Cross*
- *Lenten Project*
- *Best Lent Ever*
- *Preparing For Lent*
- *Adult Faith Formation*
- *Sacrament of Reconciliation*
- *Reconciliation Rite*
- *Act of Contrition*
- *Examination of Conscience*
- *Ecumenical Service*
- *Holy Week Schedule*

**May our prayers challenge us to love and embrace those who are poor and vulnerable;**

**May our fasting challenge us to live simply and be better stewards of Your creation;**

**May our almsgiving challenge us to give generously to those in need.**

#### PRAYER

Balance your spiritual life increasing not only the quantity but also the quality of your prayer. Enhance your prayer by “unplugging” from the TV, the iPod, the computer, your phone and the car radio. Create spaces where God’s voice can be heard.

#### FASTING

Use your fasting, not to impress God with you discomfort, but to feed on the gifts for which you hunger most. Let your fasting serve the

lives of others as well as your own. It does little good to give up dessert, but then to grumble at your children’s need for attention. Fast from some of your private pursuits to become food for your family and friends. Fast from anger, blame, and entitlement; feast on forgiveness, affirmation, and the common good.

#### ALMSGIVING

Connect your almsgiving to your fasting so that self-denial becomes enhance-

ment. If you skip a daily latte, give the money to our Lenten Project Operation Rice Bowl. If you have limited financial means, supplement your alms by giving of your time and talent. Volunteer in our food pantry or become a minister of hospitality at our parish. Let your own poverty, whatever it may be, enrich the lives of others. Give generously, not just from the leftovers, but from the “first fruits” of your table.

# LENTEN SCHEDULE

## Ash Wednesday – February 17, 2021

The blessing and distribution of ashes will take place at all liturgies.

Masses: 8:30 AM, 12:00 and 7:30 PM

There will also be a distribution of ashes at 5:00 PM

### Weekday Mass

Monday through Saturday - 8:30 AM

## Stations of the Cross



We are all familiar with bus and train stations. They are places of exchange. Baggage and cargo are exchanged between various groups. New items are received, while others are given up. Praying and meditating briefly on the Stations of the Cross is a centuries-old devo-

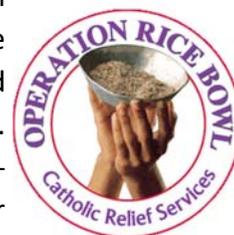
tion and continues to be practiced by Catholics of all ages, especially during Lent. They too can provide a place of exchange. We come to Jesus with our failings, disappointments and pains. On that road to Calvary, Christ has taken on our sins. By His suffering, we are healed. However, this divine exchange is only effective when we leave our sins at Calvary, and also accept the overflowing grace

that Jesus offers us from the cross. The Stations of the Cross give us the opportunity to explore the depths of this great mystery: Christ has died so that we might have life!

**Please join us for the Stations of the Cross which will be conducted each Friday morning during Lent following the 8:30 AM Mass and at 7:00 PM on Facebook.**

## Parish Lenten Project—Operation Rice Bowl

This year, once again, our diocesan-wide project for Lent is Operation Rice Bowl. Operation Rice Bowl is an educational Lenten program sponsored by the Catholic Relief Services. The proceeds provide training and materials that enable families to escape abject poverty and become self-sufficient. The bowl reminds us of the plight of the poor around the world. Many people live on half a bowl of simple food, such as rice, daily. By participating in Operation Rice Bowl, you and your family will become good stewards, and work to help the poor liberate themselves from involuntary poverty. More information to come in the bulletin.



## BEST LENT EVER

Lent comes every year. It is a time when we invite God to help us become the-best-version of ourselves. It is an opportunity to examine our lives, give our struggles to God, and invite him to help us grow in holiness as we prepare to celebrate the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. But for many of us, Lent isn't a transformative experience. It's just a time when they give up chocolate or something else they enjoy, then go back to it at Easter.

This Lent, do something different. Sign up for Dynamic Catholic's BEST LENT EVER, a free daily email program that will help you have a life-changing Lent. [dynamiccatholic.com/best-lent-ever](http://dynamiccatholic.com/best-lent-ever)

## Preparing For Lent

For Catholics, there are probably many things that come to mind when thinking of Lent. – Ashes, meatless Fridays, fasting, almsgiving and acts of penance. And while Lent this year will be quite a bit different than usual, it is still an opportunity to step outside of our “normal” and take time to refocus on what truly matters – our relationship with God; our faith; and our Church.

Lent is a time to get back to basics. What does it mean to be a Catholic? What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? What did Jesus do for us? What are we getting ready to celebrate at the Paschal Triduum? Lent is a time to step back from the busyness of life and go inward and reconnect with God. Lent is a time to look at the parts of our lives that need to be improved? Changed?

As a Catholic it is easy to feel that we are such a small part of a bigger thing. What difference can I make? But that is not how God thinks of us? He put us here, in this place, at this time, for a reason. We are his beloved sons and daughters, each created for a specific purpose. Lent is that time to look inward and reconnect with our faith and with God.

While life today is still not “back to normal” for many of us, it can be a time to prioritize our faith in our everyday life. Will we take the opportunity, during this time while we are home, to spend more time in prayer, reading/studying the Bible, watching Mass on television, saying the Rosary, or praying as a family? We all have a different normal at this point, but whatever our normal life is at any given time, it can tend to draw us away from things that are ultimately important. Lent is the time we’re challenged to step back from whatever is normal for us and ask “Am I focused on the things that are eternally important? And if not, what can I do about it?”

Hopefully, as we are nearing the end of this pandemic, let us realign ourselves and use this Lenten season as a time to reevaluate our outlook and focus so we can keep God in the center of our lives. Then we will arrive spiritually transformed at the celebration of Easter.

Taking some time to get ready for Lent will ensure that we aren't going to miss the first week or two of Lent, because we are just getting started. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, but we want to be ready to really take off on that day, rather than just beginning to think about Lent on that day.

Before we get to Ash Wednesday, we should start asking ourselves some questions and we should start with some preparations. "What does God want to give me this year?" This question may require that I slow down a bit and listen to my inner spirit. How will fasting and abstaining happen for me, for my family on that special day?

It doesn't take a lot of time to prepare for the beginning of Lent. It just takes desire and focus. God can do so much with that. We can give God more of a space to touch our hearts if we begin to establish some simple patterns. We could wake up each morning, and ask the Lord for the grace to make changes in our life. Perhaps we need to ask for specific help as we begin Lent. Whatever we try to say, our Lord can understand the Spirit trying to speak through our simple words. And all it takes is to make the time.. Each night, in the days ahead, we can practice giving thanks to God before we go to sleep. This simple pattern, in the morning and evening can stir our spirits to look forward to and prepare for Lent, as a season of grace.

How will you make Lent different this year? Look at the events and suggestions on our web page, Facebook page, or in our Lenten booklet. See what is happening in our parish. Then ask yourself, “What am I going to do differently?” May our Lord bless us all on this journey ahead.

## Adult Faith Formation

### The Year of St. Joseph

In his apostolic letter "Patris Corde" ("With a Father's Heart"), Pope Francis announced the "Year of St. Joseph" on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St. Joseph as the Patron of the Universal Church. The Year of St. Joseph began on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2020, and will continue to the same feast this year on December 8.

In the wake of the pandemic, perhaps we have not given due attention to this great grace in honor of St. Joseph. Pope Francis highlighted some attributes of Saint Joseph in his apostolic letter. "The greatness of Saint Joseph is that he was the spouse of Mary and the foster father of Jesus." St. Joseph "employed his legal authority over the Holy Family to devote himself completely to them in his life and work." He lovingly placed himself at the "service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home," noted the Pope. Arising from his role in salvation history, St. Joseph has been revered as a father by all Christians around the world.

"In Joseph, Jesus saw the tender love of God," affirmed Pope Francis. In light of these challenging times, the Pontiff urges the faithful to follow the example of Joseph to "set aside all anger and disappointment, and to embrace the way things are, even when they do not turn out as we wish. Not with mere resignation, but with hope and courage." The Holy Father pointed out that the faith Saint Joseph displayed was not one that looked for "shortcuts" but rather one that "confronted reality with open eyes and accepted personal responsibility for it."

Come join us this Lent for 6 weeks to learn all about Saint Joseph. We will be consecrating ourselves and our families to him on Friday, March 19th. At the end of the program you can decide if you would like to join us for that.

Due to CoVid restrictions, instead of in-person meetings, we will hold this program virtually, on Zoom.

When: Monday evenings starting Feb.15th (next Monday)

Time: 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

How: Zoom Meeting, link to be sent via e-mail.

Consecration Date: Friday, March 19th - Feast of Saint Joseph

So here is how the program works! We will read a short reflection from the book at home every day, followed by a reading provided by Fr. Calloway, and then you pray the Litany of St. Joseph. The total number of days to complete this consecration preparation is 33. Everything is provided in the book.

We are asking each of you to purchase your own copy of the *Consecration to St. Joseph*, as we know that it is back ordered on Amazon until February 20<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, once you sign up to let us know that you would like to participate, we will provide you with the information that you need to begin this consecration until your book arrives.

Please respond to Cheryl Avery, who will be facilitating this program, via e-mail [chmcavery@aol.com](mailto:chmcavery@aol.com) so she will be able to send you the link to the Zoom Meeting. If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl @ 973-670-8550

## Additional Adult Faith Formation Opportunities

National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
70 Carmelite Drive, P.O. Box 2163, Middletown, NY 10940

*Masks are required to be worn; pews in the Shrine Church are marked for social distancing and hand sanitizer is available as you enter. For further information contact Carol Bezak, Shrine Director, 845-343-1879 or visit [www.ourladyofmtcarmelshrine.com](http://www.ourladyofmtcarmelshrine.com)*

### **“Carmelite Wednesdays”**

Special presentation  
Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> – 10:00 – 11:00am followed by  
Ash Wednesday Mass @ 11:30

### **“In the Desert with Mary”**

- **Presenter: Fr. Paul Denault, O.Carm**

Please call to reserve a space. **No fee to attend** - free-will offering accepted. Event will also be livestreamed on our website: [www.ourladyofmtcarmelshrine.com](http://www.ourladyofmtcarmelshrine.com) and our Facebook page

### **“Luke for Lent”**

Friday, February 19th - 9:30 – 11:00am followed by  
11:30am Mass & Stations of the Cross  
**Journey with the Gospel of Luke** - Fr. Tim Ennis, O.Carm

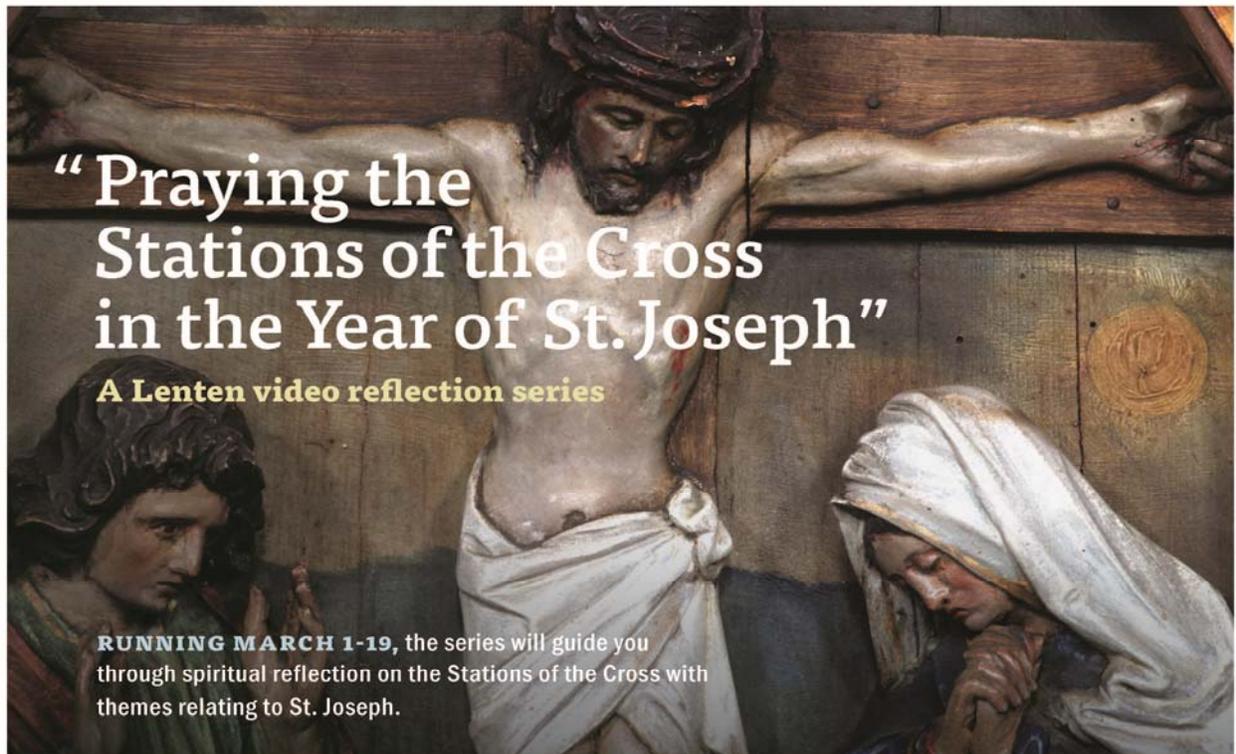
**Conference Fee: \$15pp**

Payment for in-person attendance can be made at the door or mailed in to the Shrine office. For virtual livestream attendance, please register and send in payment on our website under “special events” – you will receive a link to view this presentation.

### **“Healing Mass with Anointing of the Sick”**

Thursday, February 25<sup>th</sup> - 7:00pm  
Fr. James Sidoti, O.Carm

Open to those seeking a prayer of healing for physical, spiritual or emotional illness.



Monsignor Joseph Reilly, Rector/Dean, and Dr. Dianne Traflet, Associate Dean, will offer a reflection each weekday, delivered via e-mail. Subscribe at **[WWW.SHU.EDU/LENTENSERIES](http://WWW.SHU.EDU/LENTENSERIES)**



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SEMINARY  
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## Welcome Home

## Sacrament of Reconciliation



“Welcome Home” is a diocesan initiative to invite all Catholics to experience the grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Confession is a wonderful opportunity to set aside our sinful ways and to draw closer to our Lord.

Confessions will be held every Monday during Lent, from February 22 to March 22 from 7:00 PM-8:30 PM. As well as every Saturday throughout the year from 4:00 to 4:45 PM.

Experience the gracious mercy of God!

Reconciliation (also known as Confession) is a Sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ in His love and mercy to offer sinners forgiveness for offenses committed against God. At the same time sinners reconcile with the Church because it is also wounded by our sins. Every time we sin, we hurt ourselves, other people and God. In Reconciliation, we acknowledge our sins before God and His Church, make reparation for what we have done and resolve to do better in the future. The forgiveness of sins involves four parts. These are contrition, confession, penance and absolution.

**Contrition:** a sincere sorrow for having offended God, and the most important act of the penitent. There can be no forgiveness of sin if we do not have sorrow and a firm resolve not to repeat our sin.

**Confession:** confronting our sins in a profound way to God by speaking about them – aloud- to the priest.

**Penance:** an important part of our healing is the “penance” the priest imposes in reparation for our sins.

**Absolution:** the priest speaks the words by



## Reconciliation Rite

1. Priest gives a blessing or greeting.
2. Make the Sign of the Cross and say “Bless me Father, for I have sinned. My last confession was...” (give weeks, months or years).
3. Confess all of your sins to the priest. (If you are unsure or uneasy, tell him and ask for help.)
4. Say, “I am sorry for these and all of my sins.”
5. The priest assigns a penance and offers advice to help you be a better Catholic.
6. Say an Act of Contrition, (below), expressing your sorrow for your sins. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.

### Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins, because of your just punishments, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.



### Act of Contrition (modern)

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.

Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

## How to Make a Good Confession

Confession is not difficult, but it does require preparation. We should begin with prayer, placing ourselves in the presence of God, our loving Father. We seek healing and forgiveness through repentance and a resolve to sin no more. Then we review our lives since our last confession, searching our thoughts, words and actions that did not conform to God's love, to His law or the laws of the Church. This is called an examination of conscience.

- Begin with a prayer asking for God's help.
- Review your life with the help of some questions, which are based on the 10 Commandments.
- Tell God how truly sorry you are for your sins.
- Make a firm resolution not to sin again.

## Examination of Conscience

Recall your sins. Prayerfully ask yourself what you have done with full knowledge and full consent against God's commandments.

- Do I pray to God every day? Have I thanked God for His gifts to me?
- Did I put my faith in danger through readings hostile to Catholic teachings or involvement in non-Catholic sects? Did I engage in superstitious practices: palm-reading or fortune-telling?
- Did I take the name of God in vain? Did I curse or take a false oath?
- Did I miss Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of obligation through my own fault? Am I attentive at Mass? Did I keep fast and abstinence on the prescribed days?
- Did I disobey my parents and lawful superiors in important matters?
- Did I hate or quarrel with anyone, or desire revenge? Did I refuse to forgive? Was I disrespectful?
- Did I get drunk? Did I take illicit drugs?
- Did I consent to, recommend, advise or actively take part in an abortion?
- Did I willfully look at pornography, entertain impure thoughts or engage in impure conversations? Did I use artificial means to prevent conception?
- Was I unfaithful to my spouse? Did I engage in sexual activity outside of marriage? Did I steal or damage another's property? Have I been honest and just in my business relations?
- Have I been responsive to the needs of the poor and respected the dignity of others?
- Did I tell lies? Did I sin by slander, or detraction, of others? Did I judge others rashly in serious matters?



## 2021 Ecumenical Lenten Service

Due to Covid, this year we will only hold one Ecumenical Service on

Wednesday, March 10 at 7:00 PM

at St. Francis de Sales RC Church the Rev. Nicholas Fontana will preach.

## Holy Week



### **PALM (PASSION) SUNDAY— March 28**

Masses: 5:00 PM (Saturday Eve); 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 12:00 Noon (Sunday)

Palms distributed and blessed at all Masses.



### **HOLY THURSDAY – April 1**

Mass of the Lord's Supper - 8:00 PM

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 9:00 PM - Midnight



### **GOOD FRIDAY – April 2**

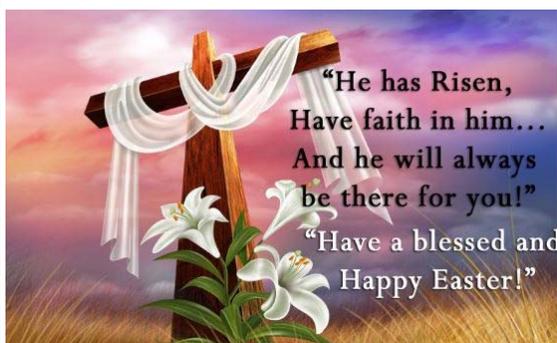
Stations of the Cross - 3:00 PM

Liturgy of the Passion and Communion—8:00 PM

### **HOLY SATURDAY—April 3**

Blessing of Easter Food—10:30AM

Easter Candlelight Vigil Liturgy - 8:00 PM



“He has Risen,  
Have faith in him...  
And he will always  
be there for you!”

“Have a blessed and  
Happy Easter!”

### **EASTER SUNDAY – April 4**

Masses at 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM and 12:00 Noon

St. Francis de Sales Church, Vernon, NJ