

# PROCLAIM

WINTER/LENT 2020  
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*Christ in your Life*

## INSIDE:

Praise others  
and Praise God

The joy of prayer

Why we  
became Catholic



# EXPERIENCE THE Joy of Lent



# Faith, Generosity, Respect, Discovery and Joy

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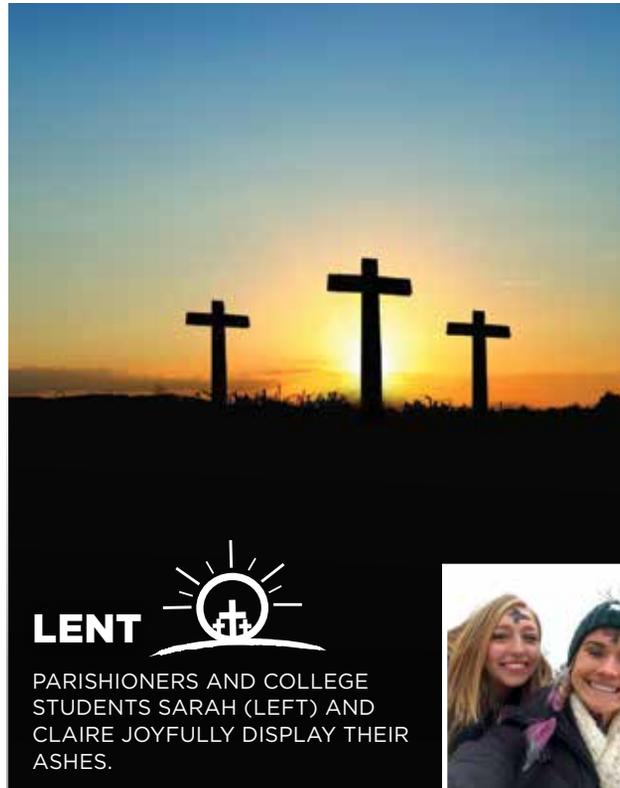
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**SHARE YOUR FAITH THROUGH YOUR STORY AND PHOTOS!**  
We know everyone has a faith story and we would like to hear yours!  
Send all story ideas and photographs to :  
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# KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE FINISH LINE



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**A**n adult visitor to a friend's home heard a little girl in the living room reciting the alphabet backward: z-y-x-w-v-u-t-s-r-q, etc. She asked, "Why are you saying the letters backward?" The little girl replied, "If I say it the other way, it takes too long to get to the letter Z." And with a huge smile, she added, "It's my favorite letter because my name is Zoe!"

I thought of Zoe because the focus of this issue of *Proclaim! Magazine* is "the joy of Lent"! Now those are two words (joy and Lent) that don't seem to go together. Most of us would prefer to skip things like fasting from food between meals or giving up our favorite dessert for 40 days. We want to get right to that great big Easter basket, especially if it has our favorite chocolate.

Who "enjoys" focusing on the dark sadness of the betrayal of Jesus by one of the apostles, the agony in the garden, the scourging at the pillar, the crowning with thorns or the crucifixion? Who would prefer spending time thinking about what we have done and what we have failed to do that is not pleasing to God?

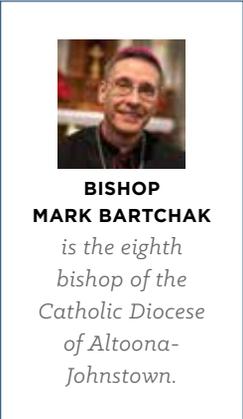
In the Letter to the Philippians, St. Paul writes, "My entire attention is on the finish

line as I run toward the prize to which God calls me – life on high in Christ Jesus." Of course, he is talking about the joy of the Resurrection; the eternal life that is promised to all of us who believe in Christ. And he highly recommends that we should have the same perspective. (Phil 3:14-15)

Does St. Paul mean that we should ignore the shame and awkwardness of admitting our sin and our fear of suffering and death? Is he implying that there is no fun to be found in penitential acts like fasting and giving alms that we most often do during Lent? Does St. Paul suggest that we don't have to think about repentance and conversion during the season of Lent?

In Chapter 3 of the Letter to the Philippians, St. Paul acknowledges the darkness of sin and suffering in a very personal way. But St. Paul also reveals the joy that is to be found whenever we turn away from sin and turn toward God. He writes, "Those things I used to consider gain I have now reappraised as loss in the light of Christ...For his sake I have forfeited everything; I have accounted all else rubbish so that Christ may be my wealth." (Phil 3:7-8)

What happened to St. Paul that brought him to this realization? He discovered how to look at the cross through the power of the Resurrection. Sin and temptation are real, and they discourage us. And it can be a challenge to commit ourselves to prayer, fasting and almsgiving during these 40 days of Lent.



**BISHOP MARK BARTCHAK**  
*is the eighth bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.*

Zoe understands this concept of looking at it backward: Reciting the alphabet can be just a task, but if she starts at the end, there is a great joy that awaits. For that young girl, it's the letter Z, simply because her name is Zoe! If we want to make sense of the cross, we need to start with the Resurrection.

During these 40 days, I hope that you discover "the joy of Lent"! It's waiting to be found in the awesome sacrament of reconciliation, in reading the Bible, in doing works of mercy and in discovering that real joy may be found by reading it backward. Just ask Zoe, or St. Paul, and search for it in the reflections shared in this issue. †

**NOW, IT'S EASY TO FIND A MASS TIME!**

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Select any Mass in the Diocese by **Parish/Church, County, City, Date, or Time.**



## HAVING A HOLY FAMILY LOOKS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE

**G**ANGSTA RAP AND GREGORIAN CHANT - not a combination you would necessarily consider harmonious, but when it comes to Jennifer Fulwiler's favorite music, you can't beat the two.

"It shows how multidimensional people of the faith are," she says, laughing.

A wordsmith, radio host and mother of six, Jennifer wasn't raised Catholic. In fact, she was brought up as an atheist, but her father encouraged her to seek truth and question assumptions.

Like many atheists, Jennifer believed in being a good person, but she found she couldn't defend a morality based on kindness and love objectively. She began questioning the origins of goodness and love when she stumbled upon the book *The Case for Christ*, by Lee Strobel, which opened her eyes to the possibility that Jesus might be more than she thought.

"It was clear to me I couldn't interpret the New Testament for myself," she says. "I would ask Christians about the Trinity because I didn't see it spelled out in the Bible. There were as many answers as there were people, but the idea of God instilling a Church with his authority made a lot of natural sense to me."

In her search for truth, Jennifer and her husband embraced God's calling to join the Catholic Church and have a big family. Because of their upbringing, she says, "It's the blind leading the blind when it comes to raising our children as Catholics."

Upon entering the Church, Jennifer thought being a good Catholic mom meant she should put her gifts and passions on hold until her children were older. But, if she were going to continue to be open to God's call for a big family, she couldn't suppress God's gifts.

"There is absolutely a place for using your gifts in the midst of family life," she says. "That's going to look different for everyone.

For some people, it's a paying job. For others, it's doing something in the home. The key is thinking outside the box and finding creative ways to use your gifts to honor your vocation and keep your priorities in the right place."

**“There is absolutely a place for using your gifts in the midst of family life. That’s going to look different for everyone.”**

People often ask her how she managed to write her book, *One Beautiful Dream*, and take care of six kids. The answer is simple: Writing is her "blue flame," her charisma, her gift. It doesn't feel like work; it fills her with energy.

"That's how you know you've found your blue flame. It might feel like work to others, but it doesn't feel like that to you," she says. "I couldn't have taken on something that felt like work. Writing gave me more energy that I could then turn around and share with my family.

When she's not homeschooling her children or writing, Jennifer reaches out to Catholics through the *Jennifer Fulwiler Show* on SiriusXM's Catholic radio station. Embracing the station's mission of being a lifestyle channel from the Catholic perspective, Jennifer keeps her show light and entertaining with different guests, including a Christian rapper and a group that promotes incorporating insects into your diet.

"By being honest with my own imperfections through my speaking engagements, my show and my social media outlets, I hope people will be inspired to not beat themselves up about their own imperfections," she says.

Jennifer uses her blue flame to encourage us to think and pray about the unique family culture we are called to have.

"It's easy to compare ourselves at church and on social media, but having a holy and thriving family is going to look different to each family," she says. "The name of the game is to be the people God is calling you to be as a family." †

**Listen to the Jen Fulwiler Show on SiriusXM's *The Catholic Channel*, Ch. 129.**  
Weekdays 2 -4 p.m. ET  
Rebroadcast 12 a.m. ET

# Lent

## *The symbols and meanings of the most important season in our Church*

**F**orty days of preparing for the springtime of Easter. Praying, fasting and almsgiving open us to a deeper share of the new life we have in Christ who is the Resurrection and the Life.

The name “Lent” is from the Middle English Lencten, meaning spring; its more primitive ecclesiastical name was the “40 days,” quadragesima in Latin or tessaracoste in Greek. The number “40” is first noted in the Canons of Nicaea (A.D. 325), likely in imitation of Jesus’ fast in the desert before his public ministry.

### **PENANCE**

Penance is what Lent is all about. Penance means conversion, turning aside from the things of earth and turning inward to the things of God and turning completely to the Lord, away from money, possessions, food, pleasures and habits. Penance allows us to tear down any walls between ourselves and our Lord to have a meaningful, personal relationship with him.

### **WHY PRAYER, FASTING AND ALMSGIVING?**

These are three fundamental biblical actions of man coming back to God. All three elements were in use by the prophets of Israel, the saints of the Church and Jesus himself, who fasted in the desert and prayed to be able to give his life on the cross. They enable us to hear God in the deepness of our hearts.

Prayer is a necessary food for spiritual life. Prayer opens our hearts to the Lord and opens our spirit to his direction. Prayer gives us confidence that the Lord is in charge.

Fasting is a traditional Lenten practice and a prayer of the body that pulls us away from our own desires and self-satisfaction while making us more receptive to God’s grace and inspirations.

Almsgiving refers to giving money or goods to the needy. The Lord tells us that when we give alms, we are giving of ourselves to someone more in need than ourselves.

### **RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)**

Lent is the time of final preparation for those coming into the Catholic faith.

Non-baptized persons become catechumens, and catechumens become full members of the Catholic Church through baptism, confirmation and Holy Communion — all sacraments of initiation. Already baptized persons — either in the Catholic faith or in another religion — are called candidates, and they are candidates for the sacraments of confirmation and Holy Communion. Catechumens and candidates become fully one with the Church at the Easter Vigil Mass.

### **THE COLOR VIOLET**

Violet is a liturgical color used for Lent, as well as the color of the stole worn by the priest for the sacrament of reconciliation. It signifies suffering and sorrow, hard labor and torment and is associated with Jesus’ suffering when soldiers clothed him in a purple cloak and tortured him. Violet is the color of blood (red) mixed with a heavenly goal (blue). It is also the color of kings and royalty. It is also used in Advent.

### **WATER**

Water is a Lenten symbol reminding us of our baptism. There is no water in the fonts at Church during the triduum (three days’ observance — Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday). Jesus said he would give us Living Water so that we would never thirst for God again, and he kept that promise by giving us himself in the Eucharist. Water returns to the fonts during or immediately after the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday evening.

### **ASH WEDNESDAY**

Ashes were used in the Old Testament to symbolize humility, death and repentance. A symbolic day marking the beginning of the 40 Days of Lent. Priests sign the faithful with ashes on their foreheads, with the traditional words, “Remember that you are dust and unto dust you will return.” This is a reminder of God’s creation of the first man Adam from the dust of the earth to which



photo: getty images

Go to [www.dioceseaj.org](http://www.dioceseaj.org) for a listing of Lenten communal penance services held throughout the diocese or contact your local parish.

our bodies will return in death. We are reminded that our lives do not go on forever — we have a beginning and an end.

Ashes used on Ash Wednesday come from the burning of palms that were blessed the previous Palm Sunday. (This happens before Ash Wednesday.)

### **PALM SUNDAY**

Palm Sunday is the final Sunday of Lent, the beginning of Holy Week, and commemorates the triumphant arrival of Christ in Jerusalem, days before he was crucified. On this day, the faithful receive blessed palm fronds to participate in the re-enactment of Christ's arrival. In the Gospel, Jesus entered Jerusalem riding a young donkey, and to the lavish praise of the townspeople who threw clothes, or possibly palms or small branches, in front of him as a sign of homage. This was a customary practice for people of great respect.

### **CHRISM MASS**

**All are invited to attend the Chrism Mass on Monday, April 6 at 11 a.m. at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.**

A Mass held during Holy Week where the bishop is joined by priests of the diocese signifying their unity. The bishop blesses three oils: the oil of the catechumens, the oil of the infirm, and chrism, which will be used in the administration of the sacraments throughout the diocese for the year.

### **THE LAST SUPPER (HOLY THURSDAY)**

This night is the most profound of all religious observances, saving only the Easter Vigil. The central observance of this Mass is the ritual re-enactment of the Last Supper. Here, Jesus breaks bread and gives it to his disciples, uttering the words, "This is my body, which is given for you." Subsequently, he passes a cup filled with wine. He then says, "This is my blood ..." It is believed those who eat of Christ's flesh and blood shall have eternal life.

At the Last Supper, Jesus would fulfill his role as the Christian victim of the Passover for all to be saved by his final sacrifice.

During the meal, Jesus also predicts his betrayal.

The Last Supper not only celebrates the institution by Christ himself of the Eucharist but establishes the special priesthood for his apostles, which is distinct from the "priesthood of all believers." Priests share in this special ministerial priesthood and show that it is meant for the service of others by washing the feet of several parishioners.

At the end of the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is brought to a place of repose where a vigil is kept.

For 2,000 years, the Last Supper has been celebrated daily in the Catholic Church as part of every Mass, every day around the world.

### **GOOD FRIDAY: THE LORD'S PASSION**

The center of our Catholic faith story is the passion narrative of Jesus Christ: His condemnation by Pilate, his torture and his death on the cross — all for the salvation of our sins. We, too, prepare ourselves spiritually to die with Jesus Christ as we meditate on the last moments in Jesus' life.

At Good Friday services, veneration of the cross is one of the most powerful expressions of the Lord's self-sacrifice that forged the path of salvation for all of us. The cross represents the humiliation, torture and death that our Lord suffered, and through its veneration by the kissing of the Cross we also commit ourselves to live by that cross.

In keeping with ancient tradition, there is no eucharistic sacrifice offered on Good Friday or Holy Saturday.

### **EASTER VIGIL: HOLY SATURDAY**

At this special Mass, the lighting of fire celebrates the light that conquers darkness. Jesus is the Light of the World, who once and for all conquers darkness. The Easter candle or "Christ candle" is lit from the Easter fire and burns throughout the Easter season. The candle is used in baptisms and during funerals, symbolizing the Resurrection. This is the night catechumens are immersed in baptismal waters, cleansing them from sins, even original sin, and are raised to a new life in the kingdom of God. Catechumens, along with candidates, are also anointed with chrism in the sacrament of confirmation, receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit to make them luminous with his gifts.

### **EASTER SUNDAY**

The most glorious feast of all, celebrating Jesus Christ rising from the dead.

For Catholics, Easter Sunday comes at the end of 40 days of fasting, prayer and almsgiving. Through this time of spiritual struggle and self-denial, we have prepared ourselves to die spiritually with Christ on the day of his crucifixion, so that we can rise again with him in new life on Easter.

The *Alleluia*, missing since the beginning of Lent before Gospel readings, triumphantly returns! We will rise again with him in new life on Easter. "Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!" †

# PRAISE OTHERS AND PRAISE GOD

BY DEACON MICHAEL RUSSO

Director, Office of the Permanent Diaconate and  
Office of Adult Enrichment and Lay Ecclesial Ministry

According to a 2018 Nielsen study, American adults spend more than 11 hours per day watching, reading, listening to, or interacting with the media.

photo: getty images

**The media — Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube,** 24-hour news channels, breaking news, and fake news — is now a significant part of our daily lives. We already live on a hectic earth, where tempers sometimes flare at the slightest infraction and where anonymity is becoming the norm, not the exception.

This attitude can undoubtedly create a hostile and bitter world. It can also fan the flames of envy and resentment, leading many to live a life of painful isolation as charity and concern for our neighbor fade away. But what if we turn the tables? Stop the frenzy of rumors, innuendo and character assassination and choose a different path — opening our hearts to embracing positive thoughts and solutions that foster a deeper relationship with God.

To turn away from being part of the negativity and embracing an attitude of “my glass is half full,” we need to get back to the basics, beginning with the prophet Isaiah: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, my thoughts higher than your thoughts.” (Is 55:8-9)

Christianity is not a “Lone Ranger” religion or a title to wear on one’s sleeve. It is a way of life to be lived, and we should live it now!

None of us should be sitting in the bleachers. We all need to be on the field, using our extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit to build up the body of Christ. We are a community of believers helping one another along the path to our heavenly home. This behavior is pleasing to God, but it is not easy. There are frequent speed bumps and twists and turns along the way. That is one reason why we need to listen carefully to St. Paul: “Rejoice in hope ... be patient in tribulation ... be constant in prayer.” (Rom 12:12)

Paul, the encourager, had a strong desire to build people up, and we should be following his lead. We should encourage others to walk in a manner worthy of their calling by God and focus on strengthening

those who are discouraged and beaten down by the stresses of everyday life. We need to be a beacon of encouragement for both those in the Church and those who have strayed away.

Being truly God and truly man, Jesus understood the importance of giving praise. He performed miracles for those who demonstrated

sincere faith and sought him out for relief from their suffering. If we are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we must seek ways to inspire others with natural words of praise. Jesus showed us that words of praise encourage others to spread the Good News. Words of praise inspire the recipient to repeat their good actions, and that is a tremendous step forward in healing the world.

You will be pleasantly surprised that once you silence the harmful noise in your life, Jesus will be there — waiting to talk to only to you all the time, to hear about your day, to be a part of everything you are doing, and most important, to praise you for your kind thoughts and deeds in his name.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could all hear and pay forward the beautiful words of God — the ultimate compliment, “Well done, my good and faithful servant”? †

**CHRISTIANITY IS NOT  
A “LONE RANGER”  
RELIGION OR A TITLE  
TO WEAR ON ONE’S  
SLEEVE. IT IS A WAY  
OF LIFE TO BE LIVED,  
AND WE SHOULD  
LIVE IT NOW!**

# The joy of prayer

During Lent, we have a wonderful opportunity to make a spiritual pilgrimage through contemplation of the Passion of Christ through **Stations of the Cross**. The timeless prayer is a powerful way to meditate on the true meaning of the love of Christ, his suffering for our sins and the price he paid for our salvation.

The stations grew out of imitations of *Via Dolorosa*, known as “the sorrowful way” in Jerusalem, which is believed to be the actual path Jesus walked on the day of his crucifixion from the judgment seat of Pilate. Fourteen “stations of the cross” commemorate 14 incidents that took place along the way. Five of these incidents are not recorded in the Bible, springing instead from Roman Catholic tradition.

On the following pages is a revised version of St. Alphonsus Liguori’s **The Way of the Cross**, a parish favorite. St. Alphonsus (1696–1787) was an Italian bishop, spiritual writer, composer, musician, artist, poet, lawyer, philosopher, and theologian. He was the founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, known as Redemptorists, a community of Roman Catholic priests and lay brothers.

Stations of the Cross are held in churches on Fridays during Lent, and Catholics are encouraged to attend this solemn and beautiful event. However, anyone at any time can walk “the sorrowful way” with Christ. Consider reciting **The Way of the Cross** alone or with others every Friday or every day.

St. Alphonsus wrote, “*We should, therefore, practice this devotion with the greatest fervor, placing ourselves beside our Savior as he walked this sorrowful way, uniting our tears with his, and offering to him both our compassion and our gratitude.*” †



“THE WAY OF THE  
CROSS ALONE OR  
WITH OTHERS  
EVERY FRIDAY OR  
EVERY DAY.”

## TO BE SAID BEFORE EACH STATION.

**V.** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**R.** Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

### OPENING PRAYER

My Lord Jesus Christ, You have made this journey to die for me with unspeakable love; and I have so many times ungratefully abandoned You. But now I love You with all my heart; and because I love You, I am sincerely sorry for ever having offended You. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany You on this journey. You go to die for love of me; I want, my beloved Redeemer, to die for love of You. I will live and die always united to You.

*At the cross her station keeping  
Stood the mournful Mother  
weeping  
Close to Jesus to the last.*

The Diocese's own, Deacon Michael Russo, award-winning author of the *Via Dolorosa* (The Way of Sorrows), invites you to join him on a personal walk with Jesus on His journey to Calvary. See page 30 for more information.

### FIRST STATION:

Pilate condemns Jesus to die.

**MEDITATION:** Consider how Jesus Christ, after having been scourged and crowned with thorns, was unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on the cross.

**PRAYER:** My adorable Jesus, it was not Pilate; no, it was my sins that condemned You to die. I beseech You, by the merits of this sorrowful journey, to assist my soul on its journey to eternity. I love You, my beloved Jesus; I love You more than I love myself. With all my heart, I repent of ever having offended You. Never let me be separated from You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*Through her heart, His sorrow sharing  
All His bitter anguish bearing  
Now at length the sword has passed.*

1



### FOURTH STATION:

Jesus meets his afflicted Mother.

**MEDITATION:** Consider how the Son met His Mother on His way to Calvary. Jesus and Mary gazed at each other and their looks became as so many arrows to wound those hearts which loved each other so tenderly.

**PRAYER:** My most loving Jesus, by the pain you suffered in this meeting grant me the grace of being truly devoted to Your most holy Mother. And, You, my Queen, who was overwhelmed with sorrow, obtain for by my prayers a tender and lasting remembrance of the Passion of your divine Son. I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things. I repent of ever having offended You. Never allow me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*Is there one who would not weep,  
'whelmed in miseries so deep  
Christ's dear Mother to behold.*

4



**SECOND STATION:**

Jesus accepts his cross.

**MEDITATION:** Consider how Jesus as he walked this road with the cross on His shoulders, thinking of us, and offering to his Father, on our behalf, the death he was about to suffer.

**PRAYER:** My most beloved Jesus, I embrace all the sufferings You have destined for me until death. I beg You, by all You suffered in carrying your cross, to help me carry mine with Your perfect peace and resignation. I love You, Jesus, my love; I repent of ever having offended You. Never let me separate myself from You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*O, how sad and sore distressed  
Was that Mother highly blessed  
Of the sole Begotten One.*

2



**THIRD STATION:**

Jesus falls the first time.

**MEDITATION:** Consider the first fall of Jesus. Loss of blood from the scourging and crowning with thorns had so weakened Him that He could hardly walk; and yet He had to carry that great load upon His shoulders. As the soldiers struck Him cruelly, He fell several times under the heavy cross.

**PRAYER:** My most beloved Jesus, it was not the weight of the cross but the weight of my sins which made You suffer so much. By the merits of this first fall, save me from falling into mortal sin. I love You, O my Jesus, with all my heart; I am so sorry that I offended You. May I never offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*Christ above in torment hangs  
She beneath beholds the pangs  
Of her dying, glorious Son.*

3



**FIFTH STATION:**

Simon helps carry the cross.

**MEDITATION:** Consider how weak and weary Jesus was. At each step, He was at the point of expiring. Fearing that He would die on the way when they wished Him to die the infamous death of the cross, they forced Simon of Cyrene to help carry the cross after our Lord.

**PRAYER:** My beloved Jesus, I will not refuse the cross as Simon did; I accept and embrace it. I accept in particular the death that is destined for me with all the pains that may accompany it. I unite it to Your death and I offer it to You. You have died for love me; I will die for love of You and to please You. Help me by Your grace. I love You, Jesus, my love; I repent of ever having offended You. Never let me offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*Can the human heart refrain  
From partaking in her pain  
In that Mother's pain untold?*

5



**SIXTH STATION:**

Veronica offers her veil to Jesus.

**MEDITATION:** Consider the compassion of the holy woman, Veronica. Seeing Jesus in such distress, His face bathed in sweat and blood, she presented Him with her veil. Jesus wipes His face, and left upon the cloth the image of His sacred countenance.

**PRAYER:** My beloved Jesus, your face was beautiful before You began this journey; but, now, it no longer appears beautiful and is disfigured with wounds and blood. Alas, my soul also was once beautiful when it received Your grace in Baptism; but I have since then disfigured it with my sins. You alone, my Redeemer, can restore it to its former beauty. Do this by the merits of Your Passion; and then do with me as You will.

*Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled  
She beheld her tender Child  
All with bloody scourges rent.*

6



**SEVENTH STATION:**

Jesus falls the second time.



**MEDITATION:** Consider how the second fall of Jesus under His cross renews the pain in all the wounds of the head and members of our afflicted Lord.

**PRAYER:** My most gentle Jesus, how many times You have forgiven me; and how many times I have fallen again and begun again to offend You! By the merits of this second fall, give me the grace to persevere in Your love until death. Grant, that in all my temptations, I may always have recourse to You. I love You, Jesus, my love, with all my heart; I am sorry that I have offended You. Never let me offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*For the sins of His own nation  
Saw Him hang in desolation  
Till His spirit forth He sent.*

7

**EIGHTH STATION:**

Jesus speaks to the women.



**MEDITATION:** Consider how the women wept with compassion seeing Jesus so distressed and dripping with blood as He walked along. Jesus said to them, "Weep not so much for me but rather for your children."

**PRAYER:** My Jesus, laden with sorrows, I weep for the sins which I have committed against You because of the punishment I deserve for them; and, still more, because of the displeasure they have caused You who have loved me with an infinite love. It is Your love, more than the fear of hell, which makes me weep for my sins. My Jesus, I love You more than myself; I am sorry that I have offended You. Never allow me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*O sweet Mother! Fount of Love,  
Touch my spirit from above  
Make my heart with Yours accord.*

8

**ELEVENTH STATION:**

Jesus is nailed to the cross.



**MEDITATION:** Consider Jesus, thrown down upon the cross. He stretched out His arms and offered to His eternal Father the sacrifice of His life for our salvation. They nailed His hands and feet, and then, raising the cross, left Him to die in anguish.

**PRAYER:** My despised Jesus, nail my heart to the cross that it may always remain there to love You and never leave You again. I love You more than myself; I am sorry for ever having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*Let me share with you His pain  
Who for all our sins was slain,  
Who for me in torments died.*

11

**TWELFTH STATION:**

Jesus dies upon the cross.



**MEDITATION:** Consider how Your Jesus, after three hours of agony on the cross, is finally overwhelmed with suffering, and, abandoning Himself to the weight of His body, bows His head and dies.

**PRAYER:** My dying Jesus, I devoutly kiss the cross on which You would die for love of me. I deserve, because of my sins, to die a terrible death; but Your death is my hope. By the merits of Your death, give me the grace to die embracing Your feet and burning with love of You. I yield my soul into Your hands. I love You with my whole heart. I am sorry that I have offended You. Never let me offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*Let me mingle tears with thee  
Mourning Him who mourned for me,  
All the days that I may live.*

12

**NINTH STATION:**

Jesus falls the third time.



**MEDITATION:** Consider how Jesus Christ fell for the third time. He was extremely weak and the cruelty of His executioners was excessive; they tried to hasten His steps though He hardly had strength to move.

**PRAYER:** My outraged Jesus, by the weakness You suffered in going to Calvary, give me enough strength to overcome all human respect and all my evil passion which have led me to despise Your friendship. I love You, Jesus my love, with all my heart; I am sorry for ever having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*Make me feel as You have felt  
Make my soul to glow and melt  
With the love of Christ, my Lord.*

9

**TENTH STATION:**

Jesus is stripped of his garments.



**MEDITATION:** Consider how Jesus was violently stripped of His clothes by His executioners. The inner garments adhered to His lacerated flesh and the soldiers tore them off so roughly that the skin came with them. Have pity for Your Savior so cruelly treated and tell Him:

**PRAYER:** My innocent Jesus, by the torment You suffered in being stripped of Your garments, help me to strip myself of all attachment for the things of earth that I may place all of my love in You who are so worthy of my love. I love You, O Jesus, with all my heart; I am sorry for ever having offended You. Never let me offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*Holy Mother, pierce me through  
In my heart each wound renew  
Of my Savior crucified.*

10

**THIRTEENTH STATION:**

Jesus is taken down from the cross.



**MEDITATION:** Consider how, after our Lord had died, He was taken down from the cross by two of His disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, and placed in the arms of His afflicted Mother. She received Him with unutterable tenderness and pressed Him close to Her bosom.

**PRAYER:** O Mother of Sorrows, for the love of Your Son, accept me as Your servant and pray to Him for me. And You, my Redeemer, since You have died for me, allow me to love You, for I desire only You and nothing more. I love You, Jesus my love, and I am sorry that I have offended You. Never let me offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me as You will.

*By the cross with You to stay  
There with You to weep and pray  
Is all I ask of You to give.*

13

**FOURTEENTH STATION:**

Jesus is placed in the sepulcher.



**MEDITATION:** Consider how the disciples carried the body of Jesus to its burial, while His holy Mother went with them and arranged it in the sepulcher with her own hands. They then closed the tomb and all departed.

**PRAYER:** Oh, my buried Jesus, I kiss the stone that closes You in. But You gloriously did rise again on the third day. I beg you by Your Resurrection that I may be raised gloriously on the last day, to be united with You in heaven, to praise You and love You forever. I love You, Jesus, and I repent of ever having offended You. Grant that I may love You always; then do with me as You will.

*Virgins of all virgins blest!  
Listen to my fond request:  
Let me share Your grief divine.*

14

## OUR BEAUTIFUL

# Gospels of Lent



**BY FATHER  
MATTHEW BAUM,**

*Prince of Peace  
Church, Northern  
Cambria*

ONCE WE  
START  
SAYING NO  
AND BEGIN  
TO REALIZE  
THAT ALL THE  
DEVIL HAS TO  
OFFER ARE  
FALSE HOPES,  
WE CAN  
START TO  
SEE THOSE  
TEMPTATIONS  
FOR WHAT  
THEY ARE.

**T**his year, as we enter the Lenten season, the readings we hear have been used for Lent since the early Church fathers like St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome. In parishes that are welcoming members into the Church, these Gospels walk with them on their final journey toward baptism.

### FIRST SUNDAY: TEMPTATION IN THE DESERT

This first Sunday of Lent, as we begin our fasting, we hear about Jesus' struggles with fasting and temptations in the desert.

It's a time when we go into the desert to detach ourselves from the things that can tempt us. Fasting is giving up something good for a time so that we can have something better.

When we're tempted, something in front of us looks good, but so often, it either isn't what it seems or can get in the way of what we need.

I love this Gospel story. If we really listen to the temptations that the devil offers Jesus, they seem very tempting, at least at first. After 40 days of fasting, I'm sure Jesus would be very hungry. So it might be tempting to turn a stone into bread. Once he refuses that temptation, though, notice how the devil's offers seems less and less helpful. If Jesus is already the king of the universe, how tempting would the offer of all the kingdoms of the world be? They're already his. As for the third temptation, if I was standing at the top of a tall building, I don't think I would be very tempted to jump off so I could see what could happen. Once we start saying no and begin to realize that all the devil has to offer are false hopes, we can start to see those temptations for what they are.

I know I've experienced the same thing when I start to eat healthier. At first, I really want that greasy food.

Yet after a while, when I begin to see real results, the greasy food doesn't even seem appealing anymore. When I start to struggle with the things I've sacrificed for Lent, can I see that those things had control of me? Now, as I begin to live without them, can I see how I can be healthier in body and soul, how I can be more the person God wants me to be?

### SECOND SUNDAY: TRANSFIGURATION

Throughout Lent, we're walking with Jesus in his preparation for the triduum: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and ultimately Easter. Now that mystery only makes sense if we know who Jesus is, that he really is God come to earth. So on the second Sunday, we get a peek into the real mystery of who Jesus is.

This is the great moment when Jesus reveals to the disciples who he really is. This is the moment when we see the sort of God we had been expecting all the time. There's a bright shining light, and his face shines like the sun; there is a booming voice from heaven proclaiming that "This is my beloved Son." For all the other moments in Scripture when Jesus does the unexpected, this is the moment when we see him as everything we were expecting.

Last Sunday, we saw how everything the devil wanted to throw at Jesus was downright silly if we really know who Jesus is. This Sunday, we're asked to see Jesus again for who he is. It's only when we keep our eyes entirely on Jesus and see him as the creator of all and king of the universe that we can begin to realize just how much he gave up to come to earth and ultimately to die for us. When we stop and reflect on that, how could we do anything but love the one willing to sacrifice everything for us?



photos: getty images

### THIRD SUNDAY: WOMAN AT THE WELL

This week, we hear the story of the Samaritan woman at the well. It's a story of conversion.

When Jesus comes on the scene to speak to the Samaritan woman, who is poor and illiterate, he does a couple of things. He offers her living water, real healing. He tells her about her sin, and he points out how she and others who have been abandoned have been confused in how they had been worshipping. That where they are isn't nearly as important as where they are going. He saw how she thirsted for real healing, and he offered baptism, real healing from original sin, and a new start.

This Sunday, we ask ourselves where we fall short and need Jesus in our lives. I remember a friend who was sick. Of course, what he needed was to go to the doctor for some antibiotics. Of course, he was stubborn and refused to go, so he kept getting sicker and sicker until he finally developed walking pneumonia. It was only when he was willing to admit that he wasn't going to get better without help that he was open to the medicine he needed. Are we, like the Samaritan woman, ready to admit where we're weak and need help? If we are, it doesn't matter how deep we've gotten ourselves in. Jesus' power to heal us is always greater than our ability to sin. The question is: Are we prepared to admit that our souls are sick, that we can't do it alone, that we need help and that we sometimes need to say those difficult words, "I was wrong," and be open to humbly accept the medicine that Jesus offers us?

### FOURTH SUNDAY: MAN BORN BLIND

This Sunday, we continue in the Gospel of John with the story of the man born blind. It's an amazing story of reversal. The man who was born blind is able truly to see who Jesus really is.

Meanwhile, the ones who can physically see, who have all the Scriptures right in front of them, are completely blind to the reality of who Jesus is.

The man who was blind was completely dependent on others for nearly everything. He was a beggar, yet he had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. He knew beyond any shadow of a doubt what had happened. He had encountered the true light of the world, and now he could see, and no one would be able to tell him different. Meanwhile, the leaders of the synagogue had decided that because Jesus didn't honor the Sabbath the way they expected, he couldn't be from God. They had become so blinded by their own personal way of looking at things that they missed the miracle right in front of them.

There's an old joke that if you want to make God laugh, tell him your future plans. Are we open to the very real possibility of our own blindness? When someone else tells me something happened that I have a hard time believing, does it

cross my mind that they might have had different experiences than me, that my way of seeing the world might not be the only way? Am I open to the reality that I might be the blind one in need of the light of Jesus in my own heart and mind?



### FIFTH SUNDAY: RAISING OF LAZARUS

Of all the Gospels throughout the year, of all the miracles that Jesus performed—next to, of course, his own Resurrection—the raising of Lazarus is probably the most dramatic example of Jesus doing what only God can do. I've asked people, "If you had to put one reason why you are here in Church, what would it be?" Every time, I got the same overwhelming response: "Because I want to go to heaven." When we talk about the Christian faith, the make-or-break point is the reality of the Resurrection, the reality of life after death, the reality that there is something more than just this world. That's what drives us and keeps us going. So the Church puts this reading, showing that Jesus really does have power even over death, as the final Sunday of Lent before Palm Sunday.

The reality of our faith, the reality of the Gospel, is that we really are going to live forever. Jesus Christ has power over even death itself. There is a power of darkness, there is a devil, death and sin are real, but Jesus is more significant, more powerful than all of that, and if we follow him, we have nothing to fear. That mindset — not to deny the power of evil, but to realize that Jesus Christ is far more powerful — does change our lives. He can snatch us away from the power of death and show us a glory beyond our wildest dreams. As we say during the rite of baptism, "This is our faith, this is the faith of the Church, we are proud to profess it, through Christ our Lord." Living the faith intentionally changes our mindset; it changes how we approach everything. †

## Great Faith Reads

**The New American Bible, St. Joseph Edition**

**Rediscover Lent or A Call to Joy (Living in the Presence of God)** by Matthew Kelly

**Rome Sweet Home, Our Journey to Catholicism** by Scott and Kimberly Hahn





**2020 CATHOLIC MINISTRIES DRIVE**

DIOCESE OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN



# THE JOY OF GIVING

**Lent is often called the “tithe of the year,” being approximately one-tenth of the year, when Catholics give to God.** During these 40 days, believers are challenged to renew their spiritual devotions and duties — and one of those holy duties is supporting the Church.

Lent is also the time when the diocese begins its annual Catholic Ministries Drive. This campaign supports 14 ministries that provide programs and services beyond the resources of any single parish. The programs of our local parishes are important because much of the work of the Church and diocese takes place at the local level. But no one parish can provide for the 14 ministries supported by the Catholic Ministries Drive; we must all share the responsibility.

It would be impossible for any individual parish to duplicate the scope of these ministries. By having the diocese coordinate programs such as religious education, seminarian education and vocations, deacon and lay ministry formation and youth and campus ministries, we eliminate the duplication of services and save both time and money. It’s important to know that the 14 ministries rely solely on parishioner support, and 100 percent of donations are restricted to these ministries. If funding decreases, the ministries will face the threat of reduced services.



Additionally, many people mistakenly think the Catholic Church in Rome supports dioceses financially. It does not. Dioceses support their own work with the financial help of parishes. Each parish is assigned a target, and dollars raised over that target are returned to parishes for needs at their discretion.

God has given each of us many gifts. Faithful stewardship is more than minimal acts of charity and service. It is a way of life, a commitment to the giving of our time, talent, and treasure in gratitude for all the blessings we have received from him.

Catholic Charities is an example of a ministry that cannot be done in any parish. Its scope of helping our neighbors in need is enormous.

However, like all the ministries, it needs more support to help more people.

The only way that can be accomplished is through your generosity. Please consider a gift today. Even the smallest donation can make a significant impact. **Thank you!**

**100%** of your GIFT supports 14 ministries



- Adult Enrichment and Lay Ecclesial Ministry • Campus Ministry • Catholic Charities
- Christian Initiation (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) • Educating Youth • Evangelization
- Family Life • Fulton County Mission • Mandeville Diocese, Jamaica
- Ongoing Formation of Priests and Deacons
- Priests’ Vocations • Sacramental Preparation • Youth Ministry

# ‘WHAT IN THE WORLD AM I GOING TO DO?’

“Just over the limit” — the financial limit—is what brought Debbie to Catholic Charities seeking help. “I could pay for oil,” she said. “I just didn’t have enough money to pay for a broken furnace.”

With a disabled husband in a nursing home, as well as medical issues preventing her from returning to work as a caregiver, Debbie became fraught with worry when the heat didn’t kick on one day.

“I just hated to ask anyone for help, but I thought, ‘What in the world am I going to do?’”

The last couple of years have been rough, as ongoing extensive medical bills (including a six-month hospital stay) gobble up most of their Social Security and small pension each month.

“I am still able to get by, but there’s nothing for anything extra,” she said.

Debbie was encouraged to apply

for heating help, but when she did, the agency told her that her income was just over the limit for assistance. However, they provided her with the names of five other agencies that could help.

“Catholic Charities was the last name on the list I called,” she said. “And the only one to help. They gave me \$359. I was able to add \$200 to it to get the furnace fixed.”

“I think it’s wonderful that the Church helps people in need,” she added. “I’m a Protestant, and I thought that would be a roadblock, but they weren’t judgmental, and everyone was so nice.”

Debbie said she now has two goals. “I want to go back to work, and as soon as I straighten up, I plan to give back to Catholic Charities. It’s God’s way of speaking, helping others — our neighbors — who need it, like me.”



## YOUR SUPPORT CAN TRANSFORM LIVES!

**Catholic Charities:** Relies heavily on CMD dollars to help offset salaries and building expenses for three offices that serves thousands annually. “The Catholic Ministries Drive is essential to our existence. We have to keep the doors open, or there’s not a purpose of helping someone who needs it,” says Executive Director Jean Johnstone.

**Priests’ Vocations:** With the crisis of a priest shortage and the cost of education rising for our current and future seminarians, your support is needed to help these young men who are called to serve our Diocese.

**Youth and Campus Ministries:** Everyone says that our youth is leaving the Church. These ministries are trying to keep our youth connected to Christ and to grow our Church.

**Family Life:** Supports families experiencing difficulties and challenges in all stages of life. Families are God’s love in action, and the Church is committed to strengthening families in His name.

For a description of the 14 ministries and how your dollars make a difference go to:

[www.dioceseaj.org/ministries](http://www.dioceseaj.org/ministries)



“We all have gifts, the things that we are capable of giving. I can’t sharpen a chisel, but I can earn money to help support what Christ is asking me to do.”

## ‘CHRIST’S MESSAGE IS TO TAKE CARE OF OUR NEIGHBORS.’

In 1950, Peter Kreckel’s grandfather was a widower raising eight children when he was asked to donate money for the construction for the new parochial school. Instead, the blacksmith offered his talent to sharpen the workers’ chisels, an essential tool in their toolbox.

“My grandfather gave what he could, and it made a difference,” said Peter, who, with his wife, Denise, are longtime area pharmacists. “We all have gifts, the things that we are capable of giving. I can’t sharpen a chisel, but I can earn money to help support what Christ is asking me to do.”

Growing up, Peter said, he often passed the school — imagining his grandfather at work and reflecting upon the enormous contribution he made to his Catholic faith. It is a lesson that has continued to resonate with him and Denise throughout their marriage, family, and work.

“We need to help all the people of our faith and even those who are not,” said Denise. “Christ’s message is to take care of our neighbors.”

Through her work as a pharmacist and at Centre Volunteers in Medicine, Denise said she sees people suffering physically, emotionally and spiritually every day.

“People in our community are falling through the cracks. Many of them are homeless, and many can’t speak English. As faithful Catholics, we need to help one another in whatever way we can.”

Added Peter, “This is our Church. The Church of Mother Teresa and John Paul II. It’s an amazing history of faith, hope and charity. We are called upon to give what we can, and it needs everyone’s support.”

**THERE IS NO REVENUE STREAM TO SUPPORT THESE MINISTRIES. PLEASE DONATE TODAY.**

# How can I follow Christ in these DARK TIMES?



photo: getty images

**Q** **DEAR FR. JOE:** *The world seems very dark lately and it's really wearing me down. How can I be a witness to Christ in times like this?*

**A** I've felt this a lot too, lately. I believe it was C.S. Lewis who pointed out that the teaching on original sin is probably the most easily provable doctrine of the Church, and days like this are good evidence for that position! These are dark days.

I always say this and I won't hammer it too hard, but I will say it again: We should pray. We should pray against the darkness. I strongly recommend that we pray the Prayer to St. Michael, the Hail Mary and ask for the intercession of St. Joseph. We are facing great evil in these days and we need to pray against that evil.

Beyond that, I want to give us a few general ideas that can help us be a witness to Christ in these dark days. I'll share an action, a commitment and a discipline that will help you shine.

## FIRST, AN ACTION: CARE FOR THE POOR

■ As Catholics, there are innumerable ways we can give to the poor. We can give our money, our time and our prayers to the least among us. Volunteer at a pro-life agency, donate to Catholic Charities, help out in your local food pantry. These things are not "extras." It is the clear and consistent teaching of our Church and its founder, Jesus Christ, that our treasure and our talents do not exist for our benefit, but for the benefit of the least among us. When we are struggling with the darkness, it can be an incredible

blessing to give our energy, time and even financial assistance to the poor.

## SECOND, A COMMITMENT TO HOLINESS

■ As God's children, we have two choices: to be a saint or to go to hell. There's no third option here. The dark is getting darker, the confusion and lies from hell are gaining more and more ground in our culture, and any moral authority our Church once held in society is severely damaged. We have to be the solution and we can't be if we are not saints. **We. Must.**

**Be. Holy.** Holiness begins with the internal. Make a solid commitment to pray every day and never give up on it no matter how many times you fail. Make sure you get to confession once a month, minimum. Each day, examine any way that you did not love God or others as you should and ask his forgiveness. The next morning when you wake up, you've got a fresh start. Read one of the Gospels, repent of evil thoughts and actions, do whatever it takes. Coupled with a life of service to others, you will find your life changing, and your whole viewpoint changing, as you realize that each day you are growing closer and closer to the Kingdom of Heaven.

## THIRD, A DISCIPLINE OF MEEKNESS

■ Why meekness? Because I find it exceedingly rare. Jesus specifically calls us to meekness, but we miss that call, perhaps because we don't know what

it is. To be meek is to refuse to do harm. That's it.

A few years ago, I had an experience that drove me to strive for meekness. I was and am surprised at what a challenge it is. There's a lot inside of us that wants us to be anything but meek and frankly, not many people honor it because they interpret it as weakness. Start striving for meekness and it will astound you how much strength it requires!

How to be meek? Here's a few ways I have found helpful to practice the gift of meekness:

- If I can't say it out of love, I will not say it.
- If I am not asked my opinion, I will not offer it, unless failing to speak up will cause harm to others.
- When deciding whether to do "a" or "b," I will go with what others want, as long as it is a moral option.
- When someone hurts me, I will instantly ask God to forgive them and help me to forgive them.

These are just some of the things that I noted to help me challenge myself to be meek, and I have found it very, very good for me.

I urge all my readers to take this call very seriously - by God's grace, we not only can do these things, but we must do these things! Scripture tells us that, "Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more," and I have found that to be true.

Let's make a commitment, not to spend our precious God-given energy raging at those, them or the other, but instead to focus on caring for the poor, being holy and the discipline of meekness.

May God strengthen and bless our efforts to be his. †



**FATHER  
JOE KRUPP**

*is a former comedy writer  
who is now a Catholic  
priest. @Joeinblack*

A photograph of a man with light brown hair, wearing a black zip-up jacket over a black clerical shirt with a white tab collar. He is smiling broadly at the camera. He is standing in a kitchen, with a window behind him covered by light-colored curtains and blinds. In the foreground, he is cooking pasta in a black pan on a stovetop, using a wooden spoon. The kitchen counter and sink are visible to the right.

# Finding joy in Lent

BY FATHER GEORGE JAKOPAC, St. John the Evangelist, Bellefonte & St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Spring Mills

# **W**hen people think of Lent, joy isn't the first word to pop into anyone's mouth. Perhaps drudgery, suffering or hunger, but probably not joy.

**However, spiritually, Lent can be an opportunity for joy.**

Lent is a stripping away of excess, and in our materialistic, technological age, Lent may be about freedom and joy. It's an opportunity to stop all the distractions and limit the endless choices to see the happiness in the simplicity of the season.

When I was a kid in the late '70s, Lent had very particular memories. I grew up in a big family with parents who were of the WWII generation. They grew up in the "old" strict Church before Vatican II but were raising their children in a different Church environment. We were taught with the Baltimore Catechism, but Latin was a forgotten language for my generation. We sang a lot of the old hymns, but sometimes guitars entered into the Mass. Yet somehow, in the middle of these two paradigms, families forged a sense of sacrifice and Catholic culture fitting to the times.

For me, Lent is filled with joyful memories. At the time, the only seafood we got was fish sticks. For some reason, I remember hanging out in the kitchen those Friday evenings after school, and we'd help put the fish sticks on the cookie tray while my mother made up a batch of "cottage cheese and noodles." It didn't sound too exciting, but it was pretty darn tasty! I remember the steam billowing up from the strainer as we prepared the noodles, causing the windows to fog up. It was winter, but as Lent stretched on, spring started to emerge slowly.

As kids, we walked everywhere. Most activities revolved around Church anyway, so in Lent, it was weekly treks to Stations of the Cross. I was an altar "boy" (no girls in those days), and we would prepare the purple incense and process around the church with the cross. Back then, we also did Benediction and Adoration. To a 9-year-old altar boy, this was a big deal. I remember watching Father McCullough use the tiny spoon to scoop some incense into the thurible as smoke billowed out. And, we always had to help him take off the "cope" and place the "humeral veil" around his shoulders as he blessed the congregation with the monstrance.

Unfortunately, as the decades have gone by, a lot of these devotions weren't as visible. I hope they are coming back because they helped shape the experience of the Church — the experience of Lent. I think that is what makes being a Catholic so great. Our worship is sensory. There is a real Catholic culture, and our lived experience permeates family life and home life just as

much as our worship in church.

Those memories gave me a sense of joy in Lent then and now. God is supposed to be the center of our lives. Our Catholic worship is seasonal, just as the weather is. We embrace those seasons and enjoy activities particular to the time. I think that those practices in Lent were so joyful because I was part of something bigger than myself, bigger than just my family. We were unified as believers — it was a true communion in a sense.

Like any good symphony, the Lenten journey peaked with a crescendo: Holy Week. By the time Palm Sunday rolled around, spring had arrived (even if it was still chilly). I remember that we would process with the palms. Holy Thursday was so solemn. We would process as the priest placed the Blessed Sacrament in the reserve tabernacle, used only one night a year. We would take a break after Mass, but then walk back to church in the crisp night to attend Adoration.

Good Friday service in those days was packed! I remember walking to church and people were hurrying along to the stores and the bank to get their business





accomplished before everything closed from noon to 3 p.m. as Christ hung on the cross. As an altar boy, one thing that fascinated me was how, on Good Friday, we didn't use the bells. Instead, we used this wooden instrument I still refer to as the "click-clacker" because that's the sound it made! All would approach and venerate the cross. Of course, Easter had its own distinct joys. Lent was over, and we celebrated the Risen Christ.

Looking back, my Lenten journey shaped me in those formative years. Even now, I still relish certain Lenten traditions. I always break out my CD of *Godspell* because, in the 1970s, my older sister brought the record home from college. It is a beautiful album, and it's totally about Lent. When I think about it, Lent can most certainly be an opportunity for joy in surprising ways. I am not sure I understood it at the time, but I would think Jesus probably experienced his religious expression in a similar family and cultural context. If it was good enough for him, it's good enough for me! †



## FATHER GEORGE, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

### BALTIMORE CATECHISM:

A summary of the principles of Christian religion in the form of questions and answers for children in the United States from 1885 to the late 1960s.

### PURPLE INCENSE:

Incense is a symbol of the prayer of the faithful rising to heaven. The purple incense is from the akebia vine that features very dark purple, fragrant flowers and large fruit. Purple reflects sorrow and suffering.

### BENEDICTION:

Benediction or blessing follows exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, i.e., the placing of the consecrated host in a monstrance set upon the altar or at least exposition of the ciborium containing the Blessed Sacrament.

### MONSTRANCE:

A vessel in which the eucharistic host is carried in processions and is exposed during certain devotional ceremonies.

### CIBORIUM:

A covered container used to hold the consecrated small hosts.

### ADORATION:

The faithful adore the Blessed Sacrament. This practice may occur either when the Eucharist is exposed, or when it is not publicly viewable because it is reserved in a place such as a church tabernacle.

### THURIBLE:

A metal censer suspended from chains, in which incense is burned during worship services.

### TABERNACLE:

A fixed, ornate box in which the Eucharist is reserved.

### COPE:

Known in Latin as (pluviale 'raincoat' or 'cappa' cape) is a liturgical vestment, more precisely a long mantle or cloak.

### HUMERAL VEIL:

A liturgical vestment that has pockets in the back for hands to slide into so items can be held without touching them. The humeral veil is most often seen during the liturgy of Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

# MORE THAN JUST GIVING SOMETHING UP

**LENT:** *the season of penance, prayer, and fasting. Time to do without chocolate, television, lattes. But why? Why would God want us to go without Snickers, Survivor and coffee?*

## ***To make more room for Him in our lives.***

Lenten penance is meant for our good — a time to get rid of habits and things that keep us from participating in the life of Christ.

The St. Amant family of Bellefonte — parents Erin and Stephen, and children Evelyn, 13, Henry, 9, and Oliver, 5 — are one young family navigating the ways of Lenten past with those of Lenten present.

“The three things we focus on in our house are a little extra fasting, praying, and giving away,” said Erin. “Some times we’re more successful than others!”

“One thing I always give up during Lent is sweets,” Erin said of her Lenten tradition. “We do encourage our kids to give up something, but

we don’t force it.”

She recalled a childhood memory of contributing to the Rice Bowl box if anybody had an unkind moment. “My mom always encouraged us to be nicer and kinder to others,” she said. “That is something we are trying to instill in our kids.”

“We pray together every night before Ollie goes to bed,” said Erin. “During Lent, we encourage the kids to learn a new prayer or think of a special intention. We have them focus on one person or thing that they want to pray for. We have a friend who has cancer, and we put a picture that reminds us of her by our front door so we say a prayer for her as we leave the house.”

She continued, “We try to teach them to give their time away. That’s just as important as their money, if not more. There’s a sacrifice in time, and there’s plenty of rewards. Take time to go over to Grandma’s and let her tell you stories of my siblings and me. Give your little brother some time to play a game that he wants to play.”

“I really do like Lent,” she added, “even to the point that I think, ‘Why is Lent the only time we practice these things?’ It’s really possible to find joy through the Lenten sacrifice, and I think we could find a little bit of Lent in each day throughout the year.” †



Photo credit: Ray Kauffman Photography

# THE JOY OF FASTING

## AND FISH FRIES



**“THE HEART  
OF HOLINESS  
IS LOVE, AND  
THE WAY  
WE EXPRESS  
OUR LOVE  
IS THROUGH  
OBEDIENCE.”**

**O**n Fridays in Lent, Catholics commemorate the passion and death of our savior, Jesus Christ. Friday is known as a day of penance — of fasting and of abstaining from eating meat. But why Friday, why fasting and why fish?

For Catholics, Friday is the day Jesus died, just as Sunday is the Lord’s Day because Jesus rose on a Sunday. Friday is a day to further demonstrate sorrow for our sins through penances such as prayer and fasting. Don’t let it be like any other day. The idea of Lenten penance is deeply rooted in Scripture. It is not man’s idea, but God’s.

*“In those days, I, Daniel, mourned three full weeks. I ate no savory food, took no meat or wine, and did not anoint myself at all until the end of the three weeks. Dn 10:2-3*

As a way of commemorating Christ’s crucifixion, Catholics abstain from eating meat. In early Christian times, meat was associated with celebrations and feasts. Fish never really had the same status as the flesh of mammals and birds. Think of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Upon the return of the lost son, the father had slaughtered his fattest calf in celebration. Meat is so good that we are asked to give it up at certain times. We wouldn’t offer something bad as a sacrifice to God.

As far as the legend that the real reason we eat fish today is that a pope was in cahoots with local fishermen to boost fish sales? Well, that is both fishy and fake.

Father Mike Schmiz, the chaplain for Newman

Catholic Campus Ministries at the University of Minnesota Duluth, describes beautifully in a sermon the reason we abstain from meat:

*“The heart of holiness is love, and the way we express our love is through obedience. Abstaining from meat won’t make a person closer to God, but having a posture of obedience to the Church that Christ established will. This happens to be what the Church asks us to do. If the Church changed the discipline and told us to eat meat on all Fridays during Lent, the obedience to that discipline would help us to grow. Why? Because we sinners like to take the rebellious pose. We like to do it our way. It is hard for us to be told what to do. But to submit is to place our lives in our Father’s hands.”*

Fasting, prayer and abstaining from meat one day a week should be done in honor of God, to remember Christ’s crucifixion, to discipline your appetites, to obey the Church and to have solidarity for and with fellow Catholics.

So go forth and eat some fish at any of the fish fries around the diocese. Not only will you get a delicious meal provided by countless volunteers, but you will also be supporting some great parish causes. Fish fries are the ultimate parish fundraiser supporting countless projects including parish operations, parochial school funding, and support of sister parishes like the one in Mandeville, Jamaica. Bon appétit! †

**NOT ALL PARISH FISH FRIES  
MAY BE LISTED AT PRESS  
TIME. PLEASE CONTACT  
YOUR PARISH DIRECTLY FOR  
FISH FRY INFORMATION.**

**Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament  
One Cathedral Square, Altoona**

**Cathedral Church Hall**  
Every Friday during Lent excluding  
Good Friday  
Takeout/In-house 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
**\$8**  
814-944-4603

**Our Lady of Lourdes Church  
2700 Broad Ave., Altoona,  
OLOL Church Hall**

Every Friday during Lent including Good Friday  
Takeout starting at @ 3 p.m. /  
In-house @ 4:30 p.m.  
**Adults \$10.50 / Children \$7.50**  
814-943-6185

**St. Patrick's Church Lenten Seafood Buffet  
731 Patrick Lane, Newry**

**St. Patrick School Cafeteria**  
Every Friday during Lent including Good Friday  
Takeout/In-house 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
**Adults (13-59) \$13.50/Seniors (60+) \$12.50/  
Children (5-12) \$8.50**  
**Children 4 and under Free / All TakeOuts \$14**

**Mount Carmel Church  
1010 8th Ave., Altoona**

**Mount Carmel School Cafeteria**  
Ash Wednesday ONLY, Feb. 26  
Takeout/In-house 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
**\$9**  
814-942-8501

**St. Therese of the Child Jesus Church  
25th Ave. and 5th St., Altoona**

**Father Kelley Hall**  
Every Friday during Lent excluding Good Friday  
Takeout/In-house 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
**Adults \$11 / Children \$7**  
814-942-4479

**St. Benedict Church  
2310 Bedford St., Johnstown  
Parish School Hall**

Every Friday during Lent excluding  
Good Friday  
Takeout starting @ 2:30 p.m. - 6 p.m. /  
In-house 3:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
Phone orders 814-266-9718

**Ss. GREGORY & Barnabas Church, Daisytown  
120 Botz St., Johnstown  
Church Hall**

Every Friday during Lent including  
Good Friday  
Takeout/In-house 4 p.m.-7 p.m. /  
Good Friday @ 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
**Adults \$10 / Children \$7**  
No phone orders accepted

**Ss. Gregory & Barnabas Church, Bon Air  
2408 Luzon Ave., Johnstown  
Church Hall**

Every Friday during Lent excluding  
Good Friday  
Takeout/In-house 4 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
**Adults \$10-\$12 / Children \$7**  
814-539-6213

**St. Francis of Assisi Church  
134 Barron Ave., Johnstown  
Activity Center**

Ash Wednesday and every Friday during  
Lent excluding Good Friday  
Takeout/In-house 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
**Cost varies**  
visit [www.stfrancisassisijohnstown.com](http://www.stfrancisassisijohnstown.com)  
814-539-3518

**The Church of the Transfiguration  
201 Third St., Conemaugh  
Church Hall**

Every Friday during Lent excluding  
Good Friday  
Takeout/In-house 3:30 p.m. - 6:30 pm  
**Adults \$10**  
814-535-2698

**St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church  
605 Graham Ave., Windber  
Church Hall**

Every Friday starting Feb. 21 through April 3  
Takeout/In-house 11 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
**Adults \$11 / \$6.50 Children**  
**\*\*Prices subject to change\*\***  
814-467-7191



**Immaculate Conception Church, Summerhill  
1635 New Germany Road, Summerhill  
New Germany Grove Hall**

Every Friday during Lent excluding Good Friday  
Takeout 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. / In-house 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
**Adults \$12 / Children \$6 / Children under 5 Free**  
814-495-4298

**St. Mary Church  
1020 Caroline St., Nanty Glo  
Church Hall**

Every Friday during Lent excluding Good Friday  
Takeout 3:30 p.m. / In-house 4 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
**Adults \$11 / Children \$6**  
814-749-9103

**St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church  
116 E Bishop St., Bellefonte  
St. John School Auditorium**

Every Friday during Lent - excluding Good Friday  
Takeout/In-house 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
**Adults \$9 / Children (6-12) \$5 /  
Children under 6 Free**  
814-355-3134

**Queen of Peace Church  
600 Palmer Ave., Patton  
Parish Center, Upper Level (eat in) &  
Lower Level (takeouts)**

Every Friday during Lent including Good Friday  
Takeout/In-house 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
**Adults \$10 / Children ( 5-12 ), \$5 /  
Children under 5 Free**  
(814) 674-8983

**St. Peter's Catholic Church  
433 West Church St., Somerset  
Church Parish Hall**

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 6, March 13 and April 3  
Takeout/In-house 4 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
**Adults \$10 / Children \$5**  
814-443-6574

**St. John the Baptist Church  
101 Findley St., New Baltimore  
Parish Hall**

Every Friday during Lent excluding Good Friday  
3:30 - 6:30 p.m.  
**Adults \$14 / Children under 12, \$4 /  
Children Under 5 Free**  
814-733-2210

# WHY WE BECAME CATHOLIC ?

## ONE FAMILY'S JOURNEY THROUGH RCIA

BY JEANNE THOMPSON, *Coordinator of Christian Initiation*



**D**rew and Christine Barkman celebrated their entrance into the Catholic Church at the 2019 Easter Vigil at St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Church in Roaring Spring.

The pastor, Rev. Leo Lynch, also had the privilege of baptizing their son, Vander, at the same Mass. The Barkmans' developing faith, celebrated within the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) in the Church, is a true inspiration and example.

The RCIA process begins with the movement of God's grace, which leads a person to freely choose the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Most Holy Eucharist in the Catholic Church. This period of pre-evangelization, or inquiry, can last for many years before a formal decision is expressed. The Barkmans' journey is this kind.

For Drew and Christine, their relationship with God began when they were both very young. They each had beginnings in small denominational churches in the Everett area but they never felt like they belonged to a church community. Their families attended services very infrequently or not at all. Drew's parents divorced when he was young and they moved often.

Christine attended church as a teen, when her sister was joining the United Methodist Church. She was active in a college evangelical group at Penn State, and when she moved home after graduation she "bounced back" to that church.

Drew recalled "God experiences" at age 11 that began his steps to become a Catholic: the kindness of an older nun in a gift shop during a trip to Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Md.; finding a

rosary in his quarters while he was a Marine stationed in Iraq; a relationship with a devout, kind, and patient Catholic priest who answered his many questions while performing his duties as a chaplain's assistant; and finally being "awakened" to the idea that the Apostles' Creed was his too. All of these experiences made Catholicism real for Drew.

Christine and Drew married in 2007. Then the combined leg of their faith journey began. After ten years of discussion, prayer, scripture reading, research, becoming parents, and still not making a formal decision about the Catholic Church, God made it for them.

"I never considered being a Catholic, although I knew some who were Catholic in name only," Christine shared. "After Vander was born, we knew we wanted to have him baptized, but still didn't know into which faith. We





photo credit: Ray Kauffman Photography

started to go to a little Catholic chapel. Drew went first, then I did, then we went as a family when Vander was 6 months old. We attended pretty regularly and debated actually becoming a part of the Catholic Church. We made our decision in the summer of 2018 after speaking with Fr. Leo and enrolled in RCIA.”

The second period of RCIA (Catechumenate) begins with a ritual at Mass, then formal instruction and religious formation time. The Barkmans’ sponsors, Laurie Staub and Barb Leslie, and a dedicated catechist at St. Thomas More walked this next period with them and even helped with child care.

The first Sunday of Lent marked the Rite of Election at the Altoona Cathedral, beginning the third period of RCIA, which led to Easter. It was here that the Barkmans knew they had made the right decision. They were

anointed at the Palm Sunday retreat by Bishop Mark, who was surprised when Vander said, “Hi, Bishop!” Even Vander was excited for the Easter sacraments!

Christine shared what she would tell others who were considering the Catholic Church: “I would say to try it. Go to inquiry sessions. Do some independent research. Ask questions. The best thing that can happen is that you realize how amazingly beautiful and indescribable the Catholic faith is. From Jesus’ presence in the Eucharist, to the communion of saints, to the freedom that comes with confession and penance, our beautiful Blessed Mother, the sacraments are the substance that keeps the Church alive. The moment I knelt down to receive my first Eucharist, I asked myself, why had I gone my whole life without doing this? It felt so natural. It felt like I was finally home.”

Drew added, “I will tell everyone

“THE BEST THING THAT CAN HAPPEN IS THAT YOU REALIZE HOW AMAZINGLY BEAUTIFUL AND INDESCRIBABLE THE CATHOLIC FAITH IS.”

I am so proud to be Catholic and I never run out of a way to pray or what to pray for.”

As neophytes (new members), the Barkmans continued their journey through the Easter season, entering the period of Mystagogy. They will journey with the entire Catholic Church in this lifelong unfolding period when the mysteries of the sacraments are revealed and their relationship with God grows even deeper. †

Interested in becoming Catholic? Call Jeanne today. **814.317.2672** or email: [jthompson@dioceseaj.org](mailto:jthompson@dioceseaj.org)

For more information and resources go to “God’s Grace Is Calling You” @ [www.dioceseaj.org/christian-initiation/](http://www.dioceseaj.org/christian-initiation/)

**The RCIA program is funded through donor support to the annual Catholic Ministries Drive.**

# Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl

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This Lent, you and your family can get involved with Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl, joining your parish community, and thousands of students in the Diocese's 13 Catholic elementary and four Catholic high schools.

Each year, the Diocese raises an average of \$25,000 annually, with 25% of the total remaining in our community benefitting local food pantries and poverty relief projects. The other 75% benefit families in poverty and disaster-stricken areas such as Vietnam, Honduras, and Kenya. Your support of \$20 can buy a school uniform; \$40 can feed a family for one month; and, \$80 will purchase a goat that provides milk.

**25%  
STAYS  
LOCAL**



photo: getty images

*"This is a faith-in-action program," said Andre McCarville, director of Missions. "It offers opportunities for individuals and families to engage daily with the spiritual pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. And it's an opportunity for your parish or school to come together as a community."*

The simple cardboard collection box is **free** along with a Lenten Calendar that guides families through 40 days of Lent with activities, reflections, and stories. One great family idea is to prepare simple, meatless meals on the Fridays of Lent to eat in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world. Place the money you have saved in the CRS Rice Bowl.

To participate, contact the Missions Office at 814.695.5579 or 814.317.2647 or email: [dcaminiti@dioceseaj.org](mailto:dcaminiti@dioceseaj.org)

For more information about the CRS Rice Bowl including Lenten recipes, visit [crsricebowl.org](http://crsricebowl.org)

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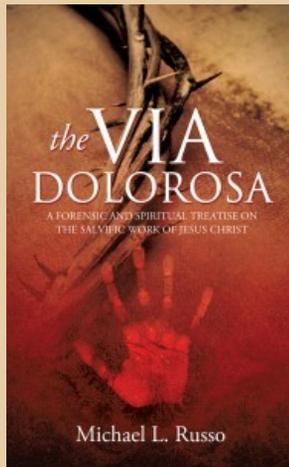
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Deacon Michael is the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and Office of Adult Enrichment and Lay Ecclesial Ministry of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

To learn more visit:  
<http://christianreading.com/mrusso>  
Book available at Amazon



☆☆☆ **Auditions** ☆☆☆

**Monday, March 23, 2020**

**4:30 p.m., The Mishler Theatre**

Auditions open for ages kindergarten to 12th grade

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**Saturday, March 28, 2020**

**3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m., The Mishler Theatre**

Tickets available at [www.mishlertheatre.org](http://www.mishlertheatre.org) or by calling the Mishler Theatre Box Office at (814) 944-9434

*The Missoula Children's Theatre is a non-profit organization based in Missoula, Montana. This coming year more than 65,000 cast members across the globe will take the stage to the delight and applause of their families, friends, community, neighbors, and teachers. The residency in Altoona is made possible by the Blair County Arts Foundation's Family Theatre Series and sponsored, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Contact the Blair County Arts Foundation at (814) 949-2787 for further info.*

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