

The **COLLECTION** Basket



MARCH 2026

Family Life Office
2713 West Chestnut Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601
familylife@dioceseaj.org
(814) 695-5579

Volume XLIII, Number 3

IDEAS FOR LIVING BETTER FROM THE FAMILY LIFE OFFICE



fulfills the
prophecy of
the **Book of**
Zechariah

Exult greatly, O daughter Zion!
Shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem!
Behold: your king* is coming to you,
a just savior is he,
Humble, and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.



First Day of Spring March 20th!

If you do have a garden, this would also be a good day to bless it with this prayer that might also be used as a meal prayer, substituting the word table for garden.

God, our Creator and Maker of all things, help us grow in our appreciation for the good earth You have given us. We thank You for all the gifts of food You have given from this garden. Today, we ask You to bless it still with many new and vibrant forms of life in food that will sustain us. Grant this through Jesus, our Savior. Amen!

Christ shield me today...

*Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me,*

*Christ in me, Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,*

*Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,*

*Christ in the heart of every person who thinks
of me,*

*Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of
me,*

*Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.*

This prayer is commonly known as “St. Patrick’s Breastplate” or “The Lorica of St. Patrick.” It is traditionally attributed to:

Saint Patrick



Families and the Gospel

March 1, 2026 **Second Sunday of Lent**
Matthew 17:1-9

Transfiguration is a common occurrence in families. When we commit to another, such as a spouse in marriage or a child in parenting, we are not committing to them only as they are today, but to the person they are becoming.

March 8, 2026 **Third Sunday of Lent**
John 4:5-42

Our children are like the Samaritan woman in today's gospel. They need more than material things. They need the "living water" only the adults can give. It will teach them how to make decisions, take responsibility, respect themselves and others and live their commitments. With this "living water" they will "never thirst."

March 15, 2026 **Fourth Sunday of Lent**
John 9:1-41

Failure to forgive blinds us to another's goodness. Lent provides an opportunity to wash away our blindspots in the pool of forgiveness. Listen to Jesus in today's gospel: "Go wash and see."

March 22, 2026 **Fifth Sunday of Lent**
John 11:1-45

Our families can become wrapped up chasing things we perceive will make us happy. Jesus' words to Lazarus, He says to us: "Come out" from what entombs you. In this fifth week of Lent "untie" yourself and be free from unnecessary possessions.

March 29, 2026 **Passion (Palm) Sunday**
Matthew 26:14-27

The cruel death of Jesus tells us bad things can and do happen to very good people. It also tells us God is present during the suffering. Bad things happen but God does not abandon us.

Permission granted from A Family Perspective
By Bud Ozar



Jesus is Forgiveness, Healing and Peace

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. PSALM 32:1-2

During this season of Lent, take the opportunity to receive forgiveness, healing and peace through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There is no sin too big or too ugly for Jesus to forgive. There are countless women and men who carry the heavy burden of guilt and grief because of an aborted child. If this is your situation, Jesus is waiting and eager to forgive and heal you. There are many resources to assist with post-abortion grief and healing through the USCCB website: USCCB.org and Project Rachel: HopeAfterAbortion.org. Project Rachel is a network of diocesan ministries that offer confidential, non-judgmental help to those who have suffered from abortion.

Prayer for Healing

Eternal Father, Source of all mercy and love, out of love for us you sent your Son, and willed that blood and water flow from his side to cleanse us of sin and restore lost innocence.

Hear the cry of each woman/man who mourns the loss of her/his child to abortion. Forgive her/his sin, restore her/him to your grace, and still the terror of her/his heart with a peace beyond all understanding.

Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of all tenderness and our Mother, strengthen her/his faith in you. Give her/him the consolation to believe that her /his child is now living in the Lord.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, who conquered sin and death, and who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

For more information on the Respect Life Committee and how you can get involved in Pro-life activities in the diocese, please contact: RespectLifegm@gmail.com