

THE CATHEDRAL PARISH

EST. 2012

2019

Dear Members and Guests of The Cathedral Parish,

The Church's liturgical calendar reflects the changes in seasons and the ups and downs that we experience in our lives. There are moments of great joy (exs. Christmas and Easter) and times of difficulty and sorrow (Good Friday, days and seasons of repentance). There are people that we might see occasionally (an obscure saint celebrated once a year, who is still an acquaintance, St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, for example) while there will be others, close friends and families, let's say, that we spend much time with during the year (Mother Mary, Sts. Peter and Paul and others). As the great season of Lent approaches, I wish to take this opportunity to review the importance and meaning of Lent and to call to your attention some of the opportunities available for us as a community at The Cathedral Parish.

LENT (QUADRAGESIMA)

The English speaking world refers to the season prior to Easter as Lent. The word comes from an older version of the English language and means "spring" or "spring season". In Spanish the time is called *Cuaresma* and *Quaresima* in Italian more closely resembles the Latin for the season – *Quadragesima*. Here we can see the connection with the number of days for the word *quadragesima* means "forty" or "fortieth". Lent lasts for a period of forty or about forty days, depending on which source you consult, but let's save that for another time. We will be entering the period of time that is or is about forty days before Easter. (Sidenote: On the old calendar, the three Sundays before Ash Wednesday are Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima, which name, respectively, the Sundays for the period of time approximately seventy, sixty and fifty days before Easter. You can see it if you look at the beginnings of the words: sept-, sex-, and quin-.)

The season of Lent is characterized by three particular activities found in the Gospel from Ash Wednesday taken from St. Matthew. Lent focuses upon a more intense action of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. I say "more intense" because these three activities should be a part of the life of every Christian. If they are, then Lent encourages us to try harder. If they are not a part of our lives, then Lent is the perfect reminder and nudge to start again. It does not have to be anything super difficult. The goal is consistency and perseverance, not quantity and magnitude. To do something small from the correct motivation for the duration of Lent is greater than something large that was intended for the entirety of the season but that fizzles out or is coming from the wrong motivation. The proper motivation is conversion, moving from sin to Christ. Here are some ideas, but by no means is this an exhaustive list.

- Prayer – Daily recitation of the rosary, attending additional Masses during the week, daily time for reading and praying with the Scriptures (I would recommend starting with Gospels, not the Old Testament), visits to a church or chapel for quiet prayer and meditation, listening to sacred music.
- Fasting – In addition to abstaining from meat on Fridays in Lent if you are fourteen years of age or older (and I would encourage Fridays throughout the year), Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting for those between eighteen and fifty-nine years of age. Fasting means that one can eat a regular meal and two smaller meals that combined to not equal the normal meal. A person could choose to eat less and could choose to carry out the practice more often, but the Church provides a minimum. It is in the spirit of fasting that one often gives up something. Items that one could give up can include certain foods, limiting the intake of news in the world, reducing or eliminating tv and/or social media and other forms of technology. All of this opens up space for the Lord to work.

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- **Almsgiving** – This entails the works of mercy, spiritual or corporal, and other acts of charity. It can be done in a structured manner, perhaps helping with our Mission Committee or volunteering at the Merton Center or Rescue Mission. It can be done in an informal way, such as having some extra food in your bag or car and providing if someone were to ask or if you see a person that you thought might benefit. Whatever is done, it is always remembering that this is for another person, one who is loved by God and possesses the same value and worth as each of us, but that either experienced unfortunate circumstances or made some bad choices. In the moment of charity or mercy, you do it for another person and are doing it for Christ, as the Lord Jesus says in Chapter 25 of St. Matthew’s Gospel that whenever we did anything for his brothers and sisters, “you did it to me.”

STUDY GROUPS

- **Catolicismo** – Fr. Alexis will continue to meet with his Spanish Catholicism group on Friday evenings. Please contact him for an update about time and topics.
- **Catholicism** – I am going to facilitate and lead Bishop Barron’s Catholicism group in English on Tuesdays at 9 AM in the Parish Center at St. Patrick beginning on March 5. It consists of ten episodes. We will start with the first episode and I will review my approach. If you have to miss a class here and there, or even if you do not attend the first class, don’t hesitate to contact me and come later. The Word on Fire Engage program to which the parish subscribed is available for anyone to use for free if he or she has a Flocknote account. All of the videos are available for viewing there.
- **Pivotal Players** – I am going to facilitate and lead Bishop Barron’s Pivotal Players study group. It lasts for six weeks with each week dedicated to a different important figure in the history of the Church. It will take place on Thursday evenings at 7 PM in the Parish Center at St. Patrick starting on March 14.

LITURGIES

- **Stations of the Cross** – We will have Stations of the Cross on Fridays in Lent. We will pray the Stations in English on Fridays following the 12:10 PM Mass at the Cathedral. At St. Patrick Church on Friday evenings we will have Stations in English at 6:30 PM and in Spanish at 7:30 PM.
- **Masses with the Bishop** – The Bishop is going to be present for several liturgies in Lent. Please make note of them. All of the Bishop’s liturgies will be at St. Augustine Cathedral. He will be the celebrant at the following liturgies:
 - Ash Wednesday at 12:10 PM
 - Chrism Mass at 10 AM on Holy Thursday, April 18
 - Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper also on Holy Thursday, April 18 at 8 PM
 - Passion of our Lord on Good Friday, April 19 at 3 PM
 - Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, April 20 at 8 PM
- **Solemn Latin Masses** – We will continue our monthly Solemn Mass at each of our two churches in the months ahead. The music will either be our choir singing a polyphonic Mass setting or a volunteer men’s schola that sings all chant.
 - Thursday, March 7 - St. Augustine Cathedral at 7 PM for Lent and St. Thomas Aquinas
 - Saturday, March 16 – St. Patrick Church at 6 PM for patronal feast of St. Patrick (with reception)
 - Friday, April 12 – St. Patrick Church at 7 PM for Passiontide and Seven Sorrows of Mary
 - Sunday, April 28 – St. Augustine Cathedral at 5:30 PM for Low Sunday (2nd Sunday of Easter)

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- Vespers – Solemn Evening Prayer for Lent on Sunday, March 31 at the Cathedral at 4:45 PM. It will precede the 5:30 PM Mass and last about 30 minutes. It will be according to the 1962 Breviary and entirely in Latin with chant and polyphony. It is a different way to pray.
- Walking Stations on Good Friday - On Good Friday, April 19 at 10 AM we will join Bishop Caggiano and most of the other parishes in Bridgeport for a walking Stations. Please note that this is different from past years when we did it on our own. We will depart from St. Mary's and conclude at Our Lady of Fatima. More information will be made available as planning continues.
- Sacred Triduum – The days of Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday are known as the Triduum. These liturgies are the most significant of the entire year for, as St. Paul says, “If Christ is not raised from the dead, then our faith is in vain and we are still in our sin.” These days bring the reality and depth of meaning of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ to us. The times and liturgies are above in the section about the Bishop's Masses. These liturgies are a time for the entire community, with its cultural and linguistic diversity, to come together and pray together. I am very excited for them as they will be done well. Our choir/schola will be present at all of the major liturgies to worship and assist us with music. I would like to stress that this is a time for us to come together as an entire community to pray together no matter where we are from or what language we speak, which is different from Sundays when we have Masses in different languages. I hope that this will be another step forward toward uniting the parish in worship of the Triune God not at different locations and times but together in the same space and at the same time and same liturgy.

RETREAT

We will have a Lenten Retreat Day on Saturday, April 6. More details will be forthcoming, including the schedule and topics. Like the Advent Day, Fr. Alexis and I will give the presentations and it will involve English and Spanish options for people. The day will include reflections, time for prayer and the opportunity of Mass. Look to the bulletin and website as more information is confirmed and made available.

COMMITTEES

The committees will continue to meet and information about them can be found on the website in the special sections for Councils and Committees. I will highlight the Mission Committee here in the Lenten letter as our next meeting is Monday, March 4 at 7 PM in the Parish Center at St. Patrick. We will continue our conversation from February about ideas of ways to serve and evangelize the larger community and create a plan for immediate activities and options.

REFLECTION BOOKLETS

We have a limited number of reflection booklets for the Lenten season available in English and Spanish. The English version is Magnificat, the same type that was given out for Advent. We have a different option for Spanish. It is something through Bishop Barron's Word on Fire. Please help yourself to a copy.

I expect that there are things that I forgot and that there will be other things that will be decided and come about even after this letter so please check the website and look to the bulletin for updates. Thank you for your support and continue to pray for the parish and the city. There is a simple Latin expression which means “Let us pray for one another,” which I conclude as my last line of the letter. *Oremus pro invicem.*

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