

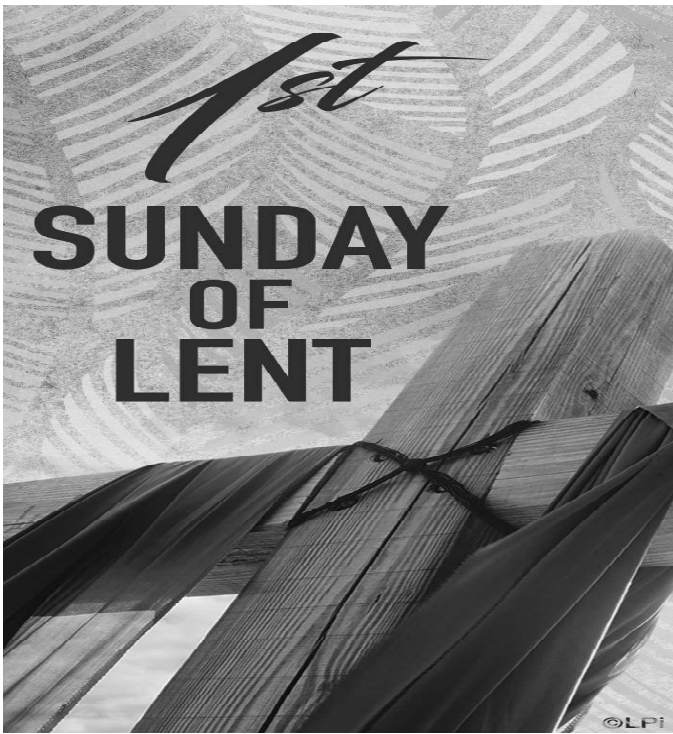
FEBRUARY 21, 2021

St. Oscar Romero said, “Aspire not to have more, but to be more.” These powerful words provide the perfect framework for a conversion oriented Lenten experience. God is giving us this Lenten sign to stop being concerned about what you have and focus on who you are. This requires that we create a desert space and listen more attentively for God to reveal His presence. It is all so wonderfully simple on the one hand and so incredibly challenging on the other. The message is simple: love God, neighbor, and self. Those simple words make great sense, but we struggle translating them into reality. Our attachments, compulsions, obsessions, addictions, routines, and busyness all anchor us to the “idol of the self,” keeping us mired in our compulsive need for self-aggrandizement. It’s not about us!

God vowed, long ago, to nurture, sustain and protect the relationship He has with His people. He called us into being, nurtures us in being, and sustains us in being. Without the Loving Divine Presence, all life would cease. Once we slow down a bit and clear away some of the clutter, we can see how the journey of our life is unfolding. We can see what brings us in and out of tune with God’s love and how we can better imitate God’s loving fidelity in our relationship with Him. In short, we will see our myopic short sightedness and figure out how we can better share the Divine Fire within with others. Lent isn’t just about giving stuff up for forty days and indulging again at Easter. We need to push things much farther and wrestle with the question of how we can be more. “Being more” means becoming more fully alive and in touch with the holiness of life and the divinity that lives in and empowers all beings and things. It is realizing that the “quality” of our presence is crucial to being an effective witness and herald of God’s unconditional love.

The illusion we have bought into causes us to believe that the wrong things and systems matter. We tirelessly fight to keep things the way they are, to return to the former ways of doing things or restore some nostalgic fantasy memory of “life in the good old days.” Lent isn’t about maintaining what we have or returning to something that is gone. It’s about becoming something new. It’s about being more focused, centered, convicted, and grounded so that we can be a person who truly loves and treasures being made in the image of God. The secret to Gospel living is not found in accumulating anything for ourselves, even merit points for heaven. Gospel living means learning how to live with less so that others can live with more. The thought of permanently giving something up makes us feel uncomfortable. Truth often does.

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The Unlikely Suspects

Have you ever taken a nature walk? Have you leisurely strolled through a forest or field, with no real destination in mind and your only objective being receptivity to and observation of all God’s creation?

Sometimes, Scripture readings can feel like a nature walk. All of salvation history plays out against the backdrop of the natural world, with all elements of God’s creation — plants and animals and the dust of the earth itself — turning in a supporting performance. How about Jesus in the hot and dusty desert, tempted, living “among the wild beasts?” Noah departed from his ark with the animals he rescued, observing God’s sign in the very clouds of the sky. Even God Himself, offering us salvation from original sin through the waters of baptism.

How often do we remember that God speaks to us through all of His creation, even in the unlikely suspects?

Let’s go back to the nature walk. It sounds like a lovely way to pass an afternoon, amongst wildflowers and butterflies, but don’t forget the beating hot sun, mosquitos, and threat of rain on the horizon. Remember, we’re not in heaven yet. Here on earth, God may be present in His creation, but that doesn’t mean it’s always easy to endure.

Lent is, essentially, a time to listen for the voice of God in places we may not expect: the mild irritations you experience when you’re craving the chocolate you gave up, or the dull pangs of hunger during the Ash Wednesday fast. It’s a golden opportunity to see the divine hand in all of creation, even those unlikely suspects.

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THE CHURCH OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN
THE CATHEDRAL
OF THE
BLESSED SACRAMENT

ONE CATHEDRAL SQUARE, ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA 16601-3315
CHURCH OFFICE: 814-944-4603

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

The process of formation for those seeking God through membership in the Catholic Christian community.

INFANT BAPTISM:

Arrange in advance for pre-baptismal instructions.

CONFIRMATION:

Ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students are invited to participate in the Confirmation Preparation Process.

RECONCILIATION:

Wednesday: 7:00 PM, Saturday: 12:30 PM.
Communal Penance Services: Advent and Lent.

ANointing OF THE SICK:

Upon Request and Communal celebration

MARRIAGE:

Arrange nine months in advance. Couples expected to participate in pre-marriage preparation program.

DEVOTIONS:

Charismatic Prayer - Normally 3rd Monday of the Month
Eucharistic Adoration - First Wednesday - 12:30 PM - 8:00 PM
Eucharistic Day - Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

September through April: Pre-Kindergarten thru 12.
Sunday morning 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM
Pre-Kindergarten thru 8.
Sunday Evening 6:15 PM- 8:15 PM
Grades 9 thru 12.

WEB: WWW.ALTOONACATHEDRAL.ORG

FAX: 814-942-4337

E-MAIL: ALT.CATHEDRAL@DIOCESEAJ.ORG

<https://www.facebook.com/cathedralofaltoona>

Sunday: 5:00 PM (Vigil)
8:00 AM
10:00 AM
12:00 Noon
5:00 PM

Holyday: 5:30 PM (Vigil)
8:00 AM
12:00 Noon
5:30 PM

Weekday: 6:45 AM
12:00 Noon
Saturday: 8:00 AM
12:00 Noon

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, J.C.D., Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Stanley Carson, Administrator

Reverend Father Dennis M. Kurdziel, Parochial Vicar

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 944-4603

MAIL MINISTRY TO ELDERLY, HOMEBOUND,
SERIOUSLY SICK, AND GRIEVING - 944-4603

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL
Web: www.holytrinitycatholic.school

Altoona Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 381-7011
Hollidaysburg Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 695-6112
Middle School Campus (Grades 5 thru 8) - 942-7835

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 944-4014

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 8 - 312-7317
Jean Koury - 9 thru 12 - 949-2777
Religious Education Office: Sundays - 943-7424

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY
Leslie C. Thayer, MM, CAGO
Music Ministry Office - 944-2044
E-mail: lthayer@dioceseaj.org

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE CITY OF ALTOONA SINCE 1851

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

February 21, 2021

MASS INTENTIONS

February 22, Monday: Chair of St. Peter the Apostle

6:45 AM + Jeannie Farabaugh (Jim & Steph Kilcoyne)
12:00 PM + William V Bettwy (Tim & JoAnn Bettwy Fam.)

February 23, Tuesday: St. Polycarp, Bishop/Martyr

6:45 AM + Fred & Margaret Lumadue (Jeff & Elaine Spencer Family)
12:00 PM + David Ponder (Family)

February 24, Wednesday: Lenten Weekday

6:45 AM + Helen Soyka (Karen & Steve Martynuska)
12:00 PM + Tom & Mary Irwin (Children)

February 25, Thursday: Lenten Weekday

6:45 AM To End Abortion (Chris McNelis)
12:00 PM + Souls in Purgatory (Anonymous)

February 26, Friday: Lenten Weekday

6:45 AM + Terry Joyce (Family)
12:00 PM + Richard Dick Nelson, Birth, (Gibson Family)

February 27, Weekday

8:00 AM + Karen Detwiler (Maureen Schoch)
12:00 PM + Jim Davidson (Tom & Patricia Forr)

Vigil: **SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT**

5:00 PM + Joe Tomlinson (Ed & Lois Simanski)

February 28, Sunday

8:00 AM + Anna Mercer (Children)
10:00 AM + Martha Maurer (Tim & Anne Marie Longwill)
12:00 PM Eric Hockenberry Jr, Birthday (Family)
5:00 PM Pro Popolo/ For the People

Please remember our sick in your prayers.

Facebook

Our parish has created an official Facebook page and the address is <https://www.facebook.com/cathedralofaltoona> The link is found at the top of our parish's webpage. Our official page will gradually become a convenient way to keep people informed and post notices. (Please do not use the link at the bottom on the page.)

Readings for the week of February 21, 2021

Sunday: Gn 9:8-15/Ps 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 [cf. 10]/1 Pt 3:18-22/Mk 1:12-15

Monday: 1 Pt 5:1-4/Ps 23:1-3a, 4, 5, 6 [1]/Mt 16:13-19

Tuesday: Is 55:10-11/Ps 34:4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19 [18b]/Mt 6:7-15

Wednesday: Jon 3:1-10/Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19 [19b]/Lk 11:29-32

Thursday: Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25/Ps 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8 [3a]/Mt 7:7-12

Friday: Ez 18:21-28/Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8 [3]/Mt 5:20-26

Saturday: Dt 26:16-19/Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8 [1b]/Mt 5:43-48

Next Sunday: Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18/Ps 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19 [9]/Rom 8:31b-34/Mk 9:2-10

Drive Thru Lenten Fish Lunches

Cathedral Parish Social Committee will offer drive thru Fish Lunches on Ash Wednesday from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. and the Fridays during Lent, except Good Friday, from 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM or till sold out. Take out orders only. The menu includes fish, macaroni and cheese, cole slaw, and a sandwich roll. Please call in take-out orders of ten or more so we can have them ready for you the number is 814-944-4603. Spread the great news with others about our fine Fish Lunches! The cost is \$9.00. We deliver on orders of 10 or more lunches, if you would like.

First Communion Prep Meetings

Tuesday, February 23 and Tuesday, March 23 from 6-8 PM in the parish hall. All students must be accompanied by an adult. Masks are required.

ARISE Together in Christ

ARISE small groups will be resuming during the Easter 2021 season. If interested please contact Chris Laraia at 814-312-7317 so that booklets can be ordered in time.

EVENING PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

You are invited to sing evening prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament on the Sundays of Lent at 6:30 PM. Our worship ends with benediction. Our adoration of the sacramental presence of Christ outside of Mass is a profound expression of our appreciation of the Eucharist,

OFFERTORY COLLECTION Sunday, February 14, 2021 \$3,783.00

Calendar of Prizes 2021 Are Here!

The Calendar of Prizes are still available at the Parish Office from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday.

Each calendar costs \$20.00. There is a \$20.00 daily prize; an additional \$1,500.00 in special monthly prizes awarded throughout the year; and a grand prize of \$1,000.00. Thank you for all your support.

Religious Education

This year we have decided to make our annual Lenten Rice Bowl Project a parish project. The Rice Bowl project is sponsored by the Catholic Relief Services serving the nation and world including our own area where needed. Almsgiving is a very important part of Lent and we are asking anyone who would like to participate to please take a "Rice Bowl" from the baskets at the doors. Collect loose change in these bowls throughout the 40 days of Lent and return your box by Easter. You may drop the box into the collection baskets at the doors after Masses or return it to the Parish Office during hours Monday thru Friday 9:00AM-5:00PM.

We wish to thank all those in advance who choose to participate in our project. If you have any questions, please call Chris Laraia at 814-312-7317.

Stewardship Reflection

Today's readings remind us that "baptism is God's most beautiful and magnificent gift" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church; 1216*). In your Lenten journey, May you recommit yourself to living as Jesus' disciple and a passionate steward of all God's gifts in the kingdom of God. We should strive to fully participate in this Lenten season by mirroring Jesus, the model steward by whom we are called to imitate. Through our times in the desert, we will conflict evil by weeding out the roots of sin in our lives through fasting. May we be sustained and nourished in the desert by prayer. (*Stewardship Reflections, Catholic Stewardship Consultants, January 25, 2021*)

May we also model ourselves after Saint Joseph who was a creative hardworking and courageous child of God. We must strive to be the caretakers of all the sons and daughters who are in need of food, clothing, shelter, security and safety. It is in the Spirit of Living God that we may build up the Church in the earthly Kingdom of God that is here and now.



FAST AND ABSTINENCE

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence. All Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence. Abstinence refers to not eating meat at all on those days. Persons 14 years of age and older are to abstain. Fasting refers to one full meal, with two small meals, and no eating between meals. People who have reached their 18th birthday and up to their 59th are obligated to fast. In addition to these obligations, other forms of fast and abstinence may be observed.



STATIONS OF THE CROSS WILL BE
PRAYED DURING LENT ON FRIDAYS
AT 5:30 P.M.



Unter Uns Fish Dinner

Altoona Almrausch Schuhplatter's German Dance Group's annual fish dinner, 5:00PM to 7:00 PM or until sold out, every Friday during Lent beginning February 19th until April 2nd, 2021 at the Unter Uns Club on Van Buren Avenue and 14th Street; \$10.00 for adults, \$5.00 for children under 10. Dinners include your choice of baked or fried haddock fish, baked macaroni and cheese or scalloped potatoes, stewed tomatoes, cole slaw, roll and butter. You do not have to be a member of the Unter Uns to attend. Dinners will be available for take out; limited seating is available due to Covid-19 limitations at first come basis.