

**First Sunday in Lent  
February 22, 2026  
Mass Intentions**

**February 22, Sunday, First Sunday in Lent**

8:00AM+Dave Rossbach, Birthday (Family)  
10:00AM+Angela "Angie" Auerbeck (Anonymous)  
5:00PM Pro Popolo/For the People

**February 23, Monday, Saint Polycarp, Bishop and Martyr**

12:00PM+William V Bettwy (Tim & JoAnn Bettwy)

**February 24, Tuesday, Weekday**

12:00PM+Martin Colello (Mother)

**February 25 Wednesday, Lenten Weekday**

12:00PM+Special Intention, Health (Anonymous)

**February 26, Thursday, Lenten Weekday**

12:00PM+Chris Gschwendtner, Birth. (Cecelia Ratszberger)

**February 27, Friday, Saint Gregory of Narek, Abbot and Doctor of the Church**

12:00PM+Genevieve Berardinelli (Carol Talley)

**February 28, Saturday, Lenten Weekday**

12:00PM+Marion Roberts (Kaylee, Dougie, Bennett Knepp)

**Vigil : Second Sunday in Lent**

5:00PM+Sister Beverly Hmel (Elizabeth Axinn)

**March 1, Sunday, Second Sunday in Lent**

8:00AM+John Kirsch (Friends of the Family)  
10:00AM+Patricia Vargo (Ron & Marilyn Adams)  
5:00PM Pro Popolo/For the People



**Cathedral's Lenten Schedule**

**Stations of the Cross:** Fridays at 5:30 P.M.

**Sunday Evening Prayer:** Beginning the Second Sunday of Lent at 4:00 P.M.

**Communal Penance Service:** Wednesday, March 25, at 6:00 P.M.

**OFERTORY COLLECTIONS**

Sunday, February 15, 2026 \$ 10,226.29

Thank you for your monetary and personal contributions to the life of our parish.



**First Communion Preparation**

First Communion Preparation will take place during parent/child sessions on Tuesday, February 24, and Tuesday, March 17. All meetings/sessions will be held in the Cathedral basement from 6:30-8:00 P.M. A parent must accompany your child to the meetings. A copy of your child's baptismal certificate is required. Please contact Chris Laraia (814-312-7317 or claraia@dioceseaj.org.) if you are unable to attend a meeting so that make-up work can be assigned.

First Communion will take place on Sunday, April 26, at the 10:00 A.M. Mass.



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, no eating between meals. People between the ages of 18 and 59 are obliged to fast. In addition to these obligations, additional forms of fast and abstinence may be observed.

**Stewardship Reflections**

As we begin the beautiful and challenging season of Lent, our readings season of Lent, our readings this week remind us why we need these 40 days so much. They also suggest a particular strategy we Christian stewards might take as we make the journey towards Easter, so that we arrive there as better disciples, more focused on Christ and His mission for us.

Our Gospel passage, from Matthew, shows us by example of Jesus Himself one way that we can attain spiritual strength and grow to become more effective disciples and stewards. In this passage we find our Lord in the desert, fasting for 40 days and 40 nights. Like Adam and Eve, He is confronted by the evil one. But unlike our fallen parents, our Lord triumphs over the devil's lies and sends him slithering away. How did He do it? By knowing the Scriptures and by proclaiming them confidently, and by His perfect trust in the Father.

This Lent, let's embrace this 40 day spiritual reset. Let's commit to prayerfully studying the Scriptures. This could take the form of a daily family Gospel reflection, a few moments with the Psalms at the beginning of a lunch break, "fasting" from social media, or any other countless ways. As faithful stewards, we are called to prioritize our use of time to seek a relationship with our loving God. Let's get to know Him better by studying His word this Lent.

**March For Life Collection**

On behalf of Citizens Concerned for Human Life. The Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament had collected a total of \$813.00. Thank you for your generosity for this fundraiser. God Bless all of you.



**Open House: 2026-2027**

Bishop Guilfoyle Academy invites you and your family (kids welcome!) to our OPEN HOUSES at each of our Preschool through Grade 5 campuses: Eldorado, Fairview, and Hollidaysburg.

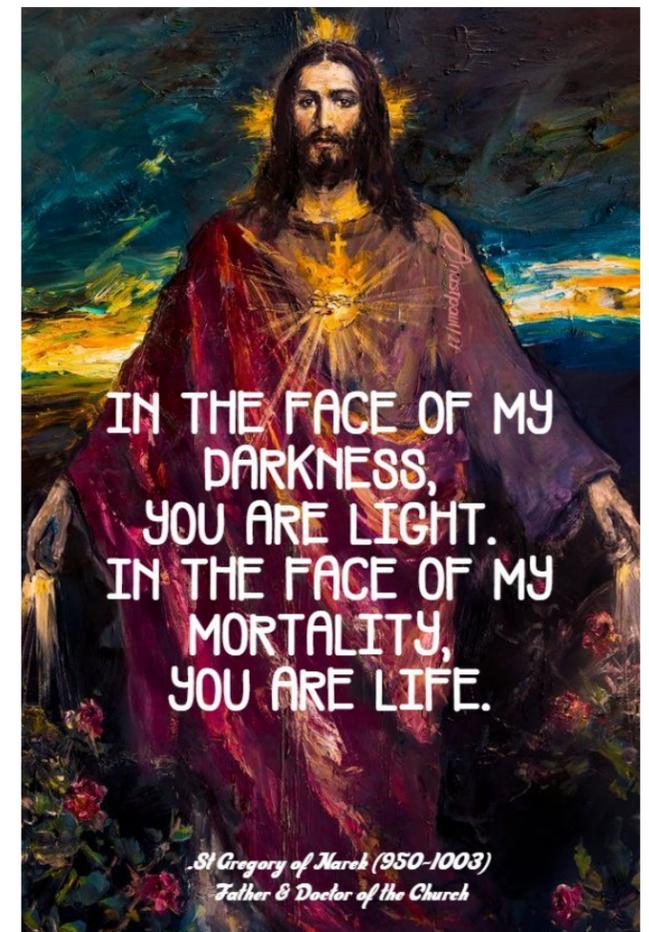
Space is filling up fast and is limited in some grades at certain campuses. Preschool begins at age 3 or 4.

Visit [bishopguilfoyle.org](http://bishopguilfoyle.org) for more information, including our household income chart to help you estimate tuition cost. BG is committed to meeting every family's financial need. Catholic families receive a special scholarship up to Grade 8.

RSVP for Open House (Encouraged, but not required). We also encourage personal tours. Call 814-944-4015.



Our Parish's Lenten Drive-Thru Fish Fry Luncheon is served starting Ash Wednesday, and Fridays, except Good Friday. The cost is \$12.00 for a fish sandwich, mac and cheese and coleslaw. The meal is available from 10:30 A.M. until 1:00 P.M. Orders of 10 or more will be delivered, if you call ahead 814-944-4603. If you are getting more than 10 dinners, for a pick-up please call ahead to order at 814-944-4603.





**THE SHRINES OF ITALY PILGRIMAGE**

Msgr. Stan Carson will be making a pilgrimage to Rome and some of the shrines of Italy from Monday, October 12, to Thursday, October 22, 2026. Brochures are at the entrances of the cathedral. Details can also be found at <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link1377752>

**GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE**

February 22, 2026: 1st Sunday of Lent, Matthew 4:1-11

In my second-to-last year of seminary, I woke up one September morning to devastating news: two beloved classmates had died in a car crash. I was overwhelmed with grief and anger like I had never known. I entered therapy for the first time and had intense conversations with my spiritual director. For months I felt lost in a spiritual wilderness. But something unexpected happened: I encountered Christ there. The fear and sorrow didn't destroy me. In fact, that spiritual desert was a time of intense growth in faith.

Today's Gospel begins: "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil" (Matthew 4:1). The word "led" denotes a gentle, humble submission to the Spirit. Jesus does not send himself into this desolate place where wild beasts roam and Satan tempts. Who wants to be around roaming, wild beasts? The Church Fathers saw them as symbols of our inner chaos: fears, temptations, wounds. The Spirit leads us there, sometimes against our wishes. But those same Fathers also saw that this deserted place is also where angels ministered to Jesus, amidst his great trial and temptation.

Lenten Challenge: This Lent and throughout life's struggles, the Spirit leads you and me into the wilderness. Name one "desert" into which the Spirit has led you: perhaps grief, fear, silence, change, disappointment. Ask for the grace to go there willingly. The beasts may be real, but they will not harm you. There, the angels are waiting to minister to the Christ living in you, who always goes where the Spirit leads.

— Father John Muir ©LPi



THE GABRIEL PROJECT

The Altoona Gabriel Project is a Catholic Pro-Life ministry dedicated to helping moms and babies with supplies, as well as providing spiritual and emotional support. Our parish has a collection crib at the alley entrance for non-perishable baby items (diapers, wipes, clothing, bibs, towels, blankets, etc.).

The Cathedral is a distribution site on Thursdays from 1:30-2:30 P.M..

If you know of moms who need help, call 814- 440-1021.

**Virtues, Explained: Understanding**

Understanding is the "food" of faith. "I believe, in order to understand," said St. Augustine. We must constantly ask the Holy Spirit for greater and more profound understanding, for though understanding proceeds from faith, it in turn nourishes that faith. I believe, in order to understand," said St. Augustine. "And I understand, the better to believe."

The virtue of understanding, which is a gift conferred by the Holy Spirit, shows us that there is no such thing as "blind faith." Faith, by its very nature, seeks to better understand the object of that faith.

It is important to know that understanding is a process — the Holy Spirit is always willing to give a gift over and over again! "The same Holy Spirit constantly perfects faith by his gifts, so that Revelation may be more and more profoundly understood," we read in Dei verbum, the dogmatic constitution on divine revelation.

Understanding is the "food" of faith. We must constantly ask the Holy Spirit for greater and more profound understanding, for though understanding proceeds from faith, it in turn nourishes that faith. "A more penetrating knowledge will in turn call forth a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love," says the Catechism (CCC 158).

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The Church of Altoona-Johnstown  
**THE CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

ONE CATHEDRAL SQUARE, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16601-3315

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, FEBRUARY 22, 2026**

**CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:**

The process of formation for those seeking God through membership in the Catholic Church. Call 814-944-4603

**INFANT BAPTISM:**

Arrange in advance for pre-baptismal instructions.

**CONFIRMATION:**

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

**RECONCILIATION:**

Wednesday: 7:00 PM, Saturday: 12:30 PM or by appointment, by texting or calling 814-937-8240

**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:**

Eucharistic Adoration - Normally, the First Wednesday 12:30 PM - 6:45 PM

Eucharistic Day - Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

**PRO-LIFE ROSARY**

Sponsored by the Christian Mothers on Thursdays after the noon Mass.

WEB

[www.altoonacathedral.org](http://www.altoonacathedral.org)

**Church Office:** 814-944-4603

**Msgr. Carson E-mail:**

[scarson@dioceseaj.org](mailto:scarson@dioceseaj.org)

**Secretary E-mail:**

[pclemens@dioceseaj.org](mailto:pclemens@dioceseaj.org)

**Fax:** 814-942-4337

**Mass Times**

<b>Sunday:</b>	<b>Weekday:</b>
5:00 PM (Vigil)	12:00 Noon
8:00 AM	
10:00 AM	<b>Saturday:</b>
5:00 PM	12:00 Noon

**Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, J.C.D., Bishop**  
**Reverend Monsignor Stanley Carson, Rector**  
**Paula Clemens, Parish Secretary**

**DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 12 - 814-312-7317  
Religious Education Office: Sundays - 814-943-7424  
E-mail: [claraia@dioceseaj.org](mailto:claraia@dioceseaj.org)

**DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY**

Mr. Bob Long 814-944-2044, [rlong@dioceseaj.org](mailto:rlong@dioceseaj.org)

**CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 814-944-4603**

**GABRIEL PROJECT-814-440-1021**

**MAIL MINISTRY TO ELDERLY, HOMEBOUND, SERIOUSLY SICK, AND GRIEVING - 814-944-4603**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:**

September through April: Pre-Kindergarten thru 12.  
Sunday morning 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM Pre-Kindergarten thru 8. Grades 9-12 Sunday evening at 6:15 P.M.

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*Serving the People of God in the City of Altoona Since 1851*