

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

14833 Kutztown Road - Kutztown, PA 19530

www.StMarysKutztown.com www.facebook.com/stmaryskutztown

Church, Business Offices, Meeting Rooms and Parish Office:

Phone: (610) 683-7443 - Fax: (610) 683-7625

Email: StMarysKtown@ptd.net

Religious Education Center: (610) 683-6454



PASTORAL MINISTRY

Pastor	Rev. Msgr. Walter T. Scheaffer
Permanent Deacon	Dcn. James Russo
Pastoral Assistant	Sr. Marie Clark, MSC
Coordinator of Religious Education	Mrs. Ann Pergosky
Coordinator of R.C.I.C.	Mrs. Carol Bogansky
Coordinator of Home-Based Religious Education	Mrs. Ann Pergosky
Director of Music Ministry	Mrs. Anne Sitarik
Parish Secretary	Mrs. Anne Sitarik

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

Baptismal Preparation	Mrs. Ann Pergosky
Building Committee	Msgr. Scheaffer
Faith Justice Committee	Mrs. Barbe Fogarty
Finance Committee	Msgr. Scheaffer
Ladies Auxiliary	Mrs. Loretta Augustin
Liturgy Committee	Msgr. Scheaffer
Men of St. Mary's	Mr. Tom Cengeri
Pastoral Council	Msgr. Scheaffer
Pro-Life Committee	Mr. John Tucker, O.P.
R.C.I.A	Msgr. Scheaffer
Scripture Study	Msgr. Scheaffer
Small Faith Sharing Groups	Mrs. Dottie Boyle

DIOCESAN INFORMATION

Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator:	Wendy S. Krisak Direct Telephone: (800) 791-9209
Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator:	Sister Meg Cole, S.S.J., M.S., LMFT, Telephone (610) 332-0442 xt. 2019



LITURGIES

Sunday	9:00, 11:00 AM
Saturday Vigil	4:30 PM
Daily Masses	8:15 AM

ADORATION

First Friday of the Month, 2PM-4PM
Third Wednesday of the Month, 7-8 PM

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM - Third Sunday of the month at 11AM Liturgy, except during Lent. Baptismal Prep Class required.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION - Saturday, 4:05 to 4:25 PM, before Masses, or by appointment.

SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK - Call the Rectory to make arrangements.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY - Contact the Rectory one year in advance. Couples must attend the Marriage Preparation Program or Engaged Encounter.

CERTIFICATES - Parishioners in full Communion with the Catholic Church may submit requests to receive sponsorship certificates (for the Rites of Baptism and Confirmation). Please allow two weeks to process requests. One is required:

- to attend Mass regularly.
- to have celebrated the Sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation.
- Married individuals should be validly married in the Catholic Church.

HOMEBOUND - Call the Rectory to arrange visitations, made once a month by a Priest and at other times by a Eucharistic Minister.

HOSPITALIZED - Call the Rectory to notify of someone in the hospital so we can pray for and possibly visit him or her. Each hospital in our Diocesan boundaries is either covered by a local parish or has a priest on staff at the hospital.

PARISH MEMBERSHIP - Welcome to St. Mary's Parish. Please register for Parish membership by calling the Business office. Please inform us if you are moving.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - Please call the business office for more information:

Center-based

- Levels Pre-K to 5 meet every week, Sunday mornings.
- Jr. High and Sr. High meet every 2nd Sunday evening.

Home-based

- Families share faith at home and come together several times a year.

First Sunday of Lent, February 18, 2018

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Mon	02-19	8:15a	Charles Regensburger
Tue	02-20	8:15a	Celeste Keller
Wed	02-21	8:15a	Shirley Esterly
Thu	02-22	8:15a	Patricia Callahan
Fri	02-23	8:15a	Souls in Purgatory
Sat	02-24	4:30p	George and Helen Malenda
Sun	02-25	9:00a	For the Parish
		11:00a	Christopher Lloyd

READING and CELEBRATIONS for the WEEK

Mon	02-19	Lv 19:1-2, 11-18; Mt 25:31-46
Tue	02-20	Is 55:10-11; Mt 6:7-15
Wed	02-21	Jon 3:1-10; Lk 11:29-32
Thu	02-22	1 P 5:1-4; Mt 16:13-19
Fri	02-23	Ez 18:21-28; Mt 5:20-26
Sat	02-24	Dt 26:16-19; Mt 5:43-48
Sun	02-25	Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Ro 8:31b-34; Mk 9:2-10

Collection Info from	Income	Expenses
Regular Collection	4,894.85	2,799.35
Building Fund	1,500.00	
Capital Campaign	1,229.00	
Other Regular Income	195.00	
Parish Partnership	--	

To sponsor the Blessed Sacrament candle in memory of a loved one during Lent call the parish office.

Please Pray for the Sick, and their loved ones:

Sylvia AusterMiller	Jim Fry	Barry & Sharon
Barbara Bellus	Sue Fry	Miller
Mary Beth Benedict	Eric Lee George	Elaine O. Miller
Betty Bennett	Sandra George	Loretta Montagner
Thomas Bennett	Garrett Goebel	Nikolette Nolte
Alayna Biltcliff	Jim Goebel	Joanne O'Connell
Sande Blankenbiller	Ken Gorski	Kathleen Parker
Kayla Brown	Marlow Graff	Mary Raymond
June Bruno	Jacqueline Hartz	Norma Roche
Ed Caffrey	Linda Haurus	Michelle Rodriguez
Nadia Cahill	Philip J. Haurus	Dawn Rosales
Meaghan Clark	Hayduk, Hannah	Nina Hertzog Rundle
Frank Daddona	Walter Heller	Richard Rusconi
Kolby Jos. Doerr	Kathy Henry	Mary Rutkosky
Christine Dougherty	Jane Hughes	Dannielle Sands
Annabeth Rose Ebert	Joan Hullinger	Karen Schinski
Dave Ebling	Allison Marie Innella	Rev. James Schlegel
Mandy Engleman	Lillian Karch	Mark Sidler
Floyd Falcone	Robert Klucharich	Faye Smith
Helen Falcone	Henry Kryeski	William Stadalnik
Patricia Farabaugh	Christopher Lengner	Amy Turko
Orchid Fajardo	Edward & Rosemary	Paul Vasko
Jeannette Fayewicz	Law	Phillip Vazquez
Niki Ferrizzi	Julie Lindsey	Randall Vresko
Kathleen Fink	Gloria Maturi	Susan Wechezak
Ruth Fitterling	Joceline Maldonado	
Chloe Flowers	Kail Maynard	

To update the prayer list, please contact stmarysec@ptd.net

THIS WEEK		NEXT WEEK
MUSIC MINISTRY		
4:30	Spanier, Chris Casey, Peggy	Sitarik, Anne Casey, Peggy
9:00	Youth Cantor Lazar, Anne	Spanier, Chris Cebenko, Steve
Youth	None	Bucci, Don
11:00	Pirnot, Tom Talarico, Tim	Henry, Kathy Klopp, Tom

EXTRAORDINARY EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

4:30	Shurilla, Donna Stadalnik, Arlene	Zawaly, Joe Zawaly, Sue
9:00	Kaskey, Richard Pergosky, Ann	Hilburt, Laura Klopp, Daryl
11:00	Morris, Shannon Neumann, Sue	Augustin, Loretta Pirnot, Ann

LECTOR MINISTRY

4:30	c-Hertzog, Darlene I-Sosik, Carm	c-Larash, Frances I-Zettle, Steve
9:00	c-Youth Reader I-Youth Reader	c-Phillips, Rita I-Pangrazi, Ron
11:00	c-Thomas, Cathy I-Kopchick, Karin	c-Hosterman, Ed I-Jones, Anne

ALTAR SERVER

4:30	Crossley, Carson Crossley, Evangeline Spanier, Amelia	Alaimo, Emmanuela Beals, Juliet Pritchard, Jessica
9:00	Sedlack, Luke Skoronski, Benjamin Skoronski, Joseph	Phillips, Makala Schlegel, Connor Touch, Lola
11:00	Gow, William Schermerhorn, Maren ?	Cook, Celeste Fortna, Jacob Fullington, Jesse

GREETERS

4:30	Galantino Family	?
9:00	Elementary Class Youth	Osenbach Family
11:00	Cook Family	Kern Family

9:00a-CHILDREN'S LITUGY of the WORD

Leader	~NONE~	Moore, Christine
Reader	Elementary Class Mass	Costello, Ann Neeka

ROSARY LEADER - SATURDAY

4:05	Zettle, Steve	Arentz, Stephanie
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WEEKLY MEMORIALS: Remember a loved one by sponsoring the altar flowers (\$30) or Blessed Sacrament candle (\$10). Contact parish office at 610-683-7443 or stmarysec@ptd.net



ONLINE GIVING: Visit www.StMarysKutztown.com to sign up for Online Giving and begin donating to the church automatically. Use this secure, convenient process to donate on its own or along with offering envelopes. Visit the parish website and follow the Online Giving link.

EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Sun 02.18 **FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**
 2nd Collection - Catholic Home Missions
 Miller Keystone Bloodmobile, 8a-12n
 Breakfast served, 9-11a
 Children's Liturgy of the Word, 9a
Youth Mass, Lvl 3 Enrollment, 9a Mass
 Adult Formation, 10:45a
 Senior High ministry, 6:30p
- Mon 02.19 Be My Witness mtg. 7p
- Tue 02.20 Faith Sharing, 9:30a
 Prayer Shawl ministry, 7p
- Wed 02.21 Adoration and Reconciliation, 6p
 Lenten Devotion, Stations of the Cross, 7p
- Thu 02.22 Fish dinner prep & dessert drop off, 6-8p
 Choir practice, 7p
 Scripture Study, 7p
- Fri 02.23 Fish dinner prep, 1:30-4p
 Fish dinner served, 5-7:30p
- Sat 02.24 Pray the Rosary, 4:05p
 2nd Collection - Parish Partnership

NEXT WEEK

- Sun 02.25 **SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**
 2nd Collection - Parish Partnership
 Children's Liturgy of the Word, 9a
Elementary Relig. Ed., 10:30a
Lvl 2 Parent meeting, rescheduled to 10:35a
Junior High ministry, 6-8p
- Tue 02.27 Faith Sharing, 9:30a
 Men's Spirituality group, 7p
- Wed 02.29 Adoration and Reconciliation, 6p
 Lenten Devotion, Stations of the Cross, 7p
- Thu 03.01 Fish dinner prep and dessert drop off, 6-8p
 Choir practice, 7p
 Scripture Study, 7p
- Fri 03.02 Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 2-4p
 Fish dinner prep, 1:30-4p
 Fish dinner served, 5-7:30p
- Sat 03.03 Pray the Rosary, 4:05p
 2nd Collection - Easter flower memorials

BULLETIN DEADLINE: For Sunday publication please submit items by 12 noon of the prior Monday. Submit full-page information a full two weeks in advance.

PROJECT HOPE February contact: Laurel Delaney: 610-682-5882. Info/join HOPE: LOLCSW@ptd.net

WATCH or VISIT WFMZ TV Stormcenter for parish event cancellations in the event of inclement weather.

ENCOUNTER MAJD: In Iraq, we encounter Majd and his family, people forced to flee violence, searching for stability. How are we called to welcome the stranger in our midst? How can you support those, worldwide, who are forced to flee their homes to find safety or better opportunities? Visit crsricebowl.org for more.

GET READY FOR FISH DINNERS : During Lent, as we abstain from meat on Fridays, the Ladies Auxiliary will sponsor two fish dinners. This year the dinners are February 23 and March 2. There are many opportunities for volunteer help with preparation and serving of the dinners. Visit volunteer sign-up sheets, and purchase tickets, after Masses Feb. 10/11 and Feb. 17/18. Tickets: Adults (13-64) \$9; Seniors (65 & older) \$8; Children (5-12) \$6; Children (Under 5) Free. We look forward to working with you and sharing a Lenten meal together.



Be My WITNESS

Thank you for responding to our December "Sunday Matters" Survey. We are still analyzing the results and will share them with you soon.

Find our NEW, 2nd survey, "Welcome Matters", online with a new link Feb. 10-25 at: www.StMarysKutztown.com or www.facebook.com/stmaryskutztown

Remember, one device per survey. Paper copies will be available in the gathering space Feb. 10-11, Feb. 17-18.

In order to have a better balance in the demographics, we encourage more men to respond, more people under 40, & occasional Church goers. We want to hear your voice! St. Mary's is our faith community and we are in this together!

A Word About... *Strengthening the Church at Home*

Support the Catholic Home Missions Appeal **today!** Right now, over 40 % of dioceses in the United States are considered home mission territory; they are unable to fund essential pastoral work needed in their communities. Your support funds programs, such as religious education, seminary formation, and lay ministry training, to build vibrant faith communities right here in the United States. Please be generous. Find more info: www.usccb.org/home-missions

We welcome into the family of God, and the family of St. Mary's, who was baptized last Sunday

Hugo Jose Lopez Posso

May we all share our faith with him.



SCRIPTURE REFLECTION: THE DESERT IS A HOSTILE PLACE. The Spirit drove Christ into the desert there to be tested by the devil, the hostile natural environment and wild animals. It is a place where Christ had to face himself, his calling and a vision of what the future of his life would be like. Despite all the good Christ did many times it was a challenge to do the healing, casting out demons and forgiving sin. Each time he did good works it seemed like someone was criticizing him or challenging him. So it will be in our lives when we try to follow his way. Lent is a time for us to establish our identity and strengthen ourselves to do as Christ did with prayer, fortitude and love.

Please Pray for these persons serving our Nation.

Keenan Albright	Timothy DeVall	James Knight
Kyle Albright	Anthony DiPietro	Nick Marakovits
Michael Barron	Charles Douglass	Melissa Marks
Andrew Barthol	Timothy DuShaw	Laura Miller
Frank M. Bieda	Keith Essig	Heather O'Donnell
John Boyer	Michael Allen Haak	James Quinn
Matthew Boyer	Diane Henry	Phillip Talarico
Jonathan Cardé	Joshua Joseph	Steve Ziegler
Eric Cunningham	Dan King	

Call the office to add/remove names from this list

"Wisdom is seeing with God's eyes." - Pope Francis

It's not too late to join us this **Sunday, February 18** for "**Wisdom: God's Vision for Life**" at **10:45** in room 117.

Through Scripture and the Tradition of the Catholic Church we will see how it provides an abundance of wisdom, though it can often be challenging to apply it to our lives.

We are continuing for 6 more Sundays, and conclude on April 8th. (no session on February 25th)

The 30-minute videos, presented by Jeff Cavins, will guide you through a variety of themes drawn from the wisdom literature of Scripture. ***This Sunday's theme is Finances, *next Sunday's is Relationships: with God, at home and at work.**

Wisdom invites you to experience the transforming power of taking time to apply God's wisdom to your own life. You will learn to see with his vision, experience the peace of knowing God cares for you, and see how God—and only God—can show you a path through any circumstance.

For more info: Ann Pergosky at 610-683-6454 or stmaryreled@ptd.net

ENCOUNTER MAJD: In Iraq, we encounter Majd and his family, people forced to flee violence, searching for stability. How are we called to welcome the stranger in our midst? How can you support those, worldwide, who are forced to flee their homes to find safety or better opportunities? Visit crsricebowl.org for more.



ST MARY'S SPRING HOAGIE DATES: The Men of St Mary's will make hoagies this Spring: Wed. March 14 and April 25. Put the dates on your calendar and check with family, neighbors or coworkers. Hoagie sale profits benefit the good works of the Men of St. Mary's.

CHILDREN'S BOXED ENVELOPE SETS: available for pickup in the gathering area. **Level K thru 5 Relig. Ed. youth will receive envelopes in class.** Don't see a box with your Level 6 - 12 child's name on it? Take a blank box, fill in the label info and leave in the drop-box to help up know whom to credit with the offerings.



LADIES AUXILIARY NEWS: The annual Holiday Bazaar, on the 1st Saturday in November is an excellent opportunity to showcase parishioner talent. Consider making handcrafted items to be sold at the Ladies Auxiliary craft table. Any handcrafted items - made from fabric, wood, paper, yarn, etc. will be accepted for the table. Use materials you already have in your stash.

Crafty persons (adult or teen) are needed to help sort donations before the bazaar and help sell them the day of the bazaar. Items can be brought to the Religious Ed Center the week before the bazaar. Please contact Frances Larash (610-683-3675) with any questions.

ST MARY'S EASTER EGG HUNT: Please deposit candy & prize donations for St. Mary's Easter Egg hunt in gathering area or social hall boxes. Cash offerings to purchase supplies are also welcome. Come help fill eggs after 9a Palm Sunday Mass, in the Parish Center. Questions? Call Sue Zawaly 610-944-7313. Thanks.

STATIONS of the CROSS... Praying from a different perspective. On Feb. 28, follow Jesus' journey to Calvary through the eyes of our suffering world today. These Stations of the Cross are based on those written by the Social Justice students in Ms. Mary Koss' classes at Catholic Central HS in Grand Rapids, Michigan. They are used with the permission of the Education for Justice

BAPTISMAL WORKSHOPS scheduled at 7p in the Parish Center for **March 05 & 12**. To register: 610-683-6454.

Baptisms are not scheduled in Lent (March). Baptism may take place Easter Sunday, 04-01, and then resume the 3rd Sunday of the month.



DON'T LET LENT SLIP BY Wednesdays in Lent (Feb. 21-March 28) come to St. Mary's 6p Adoration and Reconciliation followed by 7p Stations of the Cross. Make your Lent a time of change with your community of St Mary's faithful family.

God said: "I set my bow (rainbow) in the clouds to serve as a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth," (today's first reading). You can deepen your Covenant of Marriage by attending a **WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER** weekend. For info: 1-732-904-9636 or www.AWeekendForYourMarriage.org



CHRIST SPOKE of the talents each one of us has, talents which must not be buried. Our calling is to take those talents, develop them fully, and then use them in establishing His kingdom on earth. Are you using your talents to fulfill your vocation to service? Take some time today to reflect on how you might use your special talents in the service of the Kingdom. **HOW** will you work out your life response to God?

WORD of LIFE: "Many parents want perfect children. Our culture is obsessed with perfection—a superficial perfection. Photos are airbrushed, and social media sites depict seemingly perfect lives. God calls us to seek perfection, too. He does not call us, however, to perfection of appearance or abilities, but to perfection in love." ~ USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities "A Perfect Gift," www.usccb.org/perfect-gift

FREE ONLINE NON-CREDIT COURSE FOR LENT:

offered by the Salesian Center for Faith & Culture: "*Finding Our Way in the Wilderness.*" Self-enrollment is easy! Work at your own pace and join people from your community and around the world for this journey through the season of Lent. www.desales.edu/Salesian

Questions? Contact Lore McFadden at 610.282.1100 x 1244 or lore.mcfadden@desales.edu

IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED AN ADVERSE PRENATAL DIAGNOSIS... You are not alone. There is help. The Diocese of Allentown has a network of concerned parents and professionals who have experienced or worked closely with issues surrounding adverse prenatal diagnosis. Sr. Janice Marie Johnson, jjohnson@allentowndiocese.org or 610-289-8900 x 2280

HIDDEN FIGURES film featured 7p, Feb. 20 in the Air Products Room of Trexler Library, DeSales Univ., as part of the Historical Film Series. This biographical drama about three female African-American mathematicians who fight against systemic injustice who play a vital role in the nascent U.S. space program is based on a true story. A discussion will follow the film. Free admittance and popcorn. Raffle prizes will be given. The film is rated PG.

NIGHT of HEALING w/ FR CLIFTON BISHOP & KATHLEEN MCCARTHY- 7-9p, Feb 20 at Our Ladies Missionaries of the Eucharist, Birdsboro. The evening includes Reconciliation, Adoration, Mass, anointing and prayer over Individuals, and Benediction.

Fr. Bishop is the Bishop's liaison for Charismatic renewal. Kathleen McCarthy has been a Catholic lay evangelist for over 40 years and is a Retreat Director at Malvern Retreat House, involved in healing ministry for decades.

ICF 104 The Sacraments: This fully online course teaches The Sacraments are intimate, personal encounters between God and His people. This course will present an overview of these signs of God's love for us, by which He makes a personal connection with us and conveys grace - His very life within us. Course dates: Feb. 26-Mar. 25. Info and register at www.allentowndiocese.org/icf

ONE-DAY RETREAT W/FRANCISCAN FRIARS of the RENEWAL: 9a-2p, Feb. 28 at Our Ladies Missionaries of the Eucharist, Birdsboro. Includes 2 conferences, reconciliation, Adoration, and Mass. The Community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, begun in 1987, desire to work for personal and communal reform within the Catholic Church. olme@olme.org 610-582-3333 www.olme.org

ANNUAL CATHOLIC CHARITIES GALA: March 4, 5:30p at DeSales University Center. Honorees: Monsignor John B. McCann, pastor of Immaculate Conception BVM in Douglassville and past Executive Director of Catholic Charities, and the Honorable William and Mrs. Rosemary Ford. For reservations, sponsorship or advertising, please contact Julie Scheck, Advancement Director, 610-435-1541, ext. 328, or jscheck@allentowndiocese.org Visit www.CatholicCharityAD.org for more info.

RACHEL'S VINEYARD: March 9-11. Are you carrying the emotional hurt associated with a past abortion? God in his mercy wants you to experience forgiveness and peace. Come to a Rachel's Vineyard retreat sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Allentown on the weekend of March 9-11. Please call 610.332.0442 (x2019) or 1-866-3Rachel or email: projectrachel@allentowndiocese.org Registration deadline is Feb. 26.

SCHOLARSHIP awarded by Victor Emmanuel, II Lodge to a Berks Co. Senior of Italian descent. Find applications and info at HS guidance counselor offices and Victor Emmanuel's club. Send completed application by 15 March to: Victor Emmanuel, II, 311 Hazel St, Reading, PA 19611

DE SALES UNIV. ACCOUNTING STUDENTS PROVIDE FREE TAX PREPARATION ASSISTANCE thru March 28.

DeSales Univ. junior & senior accounting students provide tax preparation assistance free of charge to senior citizens and those w/lower incomes. Students must pass an IRS exam to receive certification to participate in the program. Call 610-282-1100, ext. 1868 and a DeSales student will call to schedule your appointment. Take all printed tax info and federal, state and local documents with you. Sponsored by the IRS, the program was initiated at DeSales in 2001.

PROLIFE: "Taking proper care of our health, respecting others and showing respect for the dead are all matters covered by the Fifth Commandment's demand that we reverence God's most precious gift — human life." Archbishop Robert J. Carlson

OCTOBERFEST in APRIL: 6p, April 20 at Stokesay Castle, Reading. Our Religious



Sisters have done so much for so many! Support their efforts and show your appreciation by attending the new benefit hosted by and for the Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Enjoy Live Music and Dancing

with the Josef Kroboth Band, an authentic German meal and the announcement of our \$10,000 raffle prize winner. Help us raise a glass to toast our award recipients Fr. Michael Camilli, MSC and his fellow MSC Fathers. Reservations \$65 pp (under 18 \$30) Reservations or to support our cause, visit www.mscreading.org; call 610-929-2802; or cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org. Proceeds benefit our retired Sisters and their missions.

REFLECTION... by Rev. Leonard N. Peterson
Last December, a 49 year old American female tourist was killed in a shark attack off the coast of Costa Rica. It was described as an extremely rare incident. Less rare but equally deadly were the hurricanes that swept into Texas and Louisiana earlier last Fall, which destroyed lives and property. Both the creatures that live in the oceans and the oceans themselves can be so deadly.

But water has another power. It is life giving and life preserving. Dehydration is deadly for our bodies. This is true in a higher realm. This leads to a consideration of the water of Baptism. That takes us to the heart of the annual Lenten season that is upon us. One could say that Lent is all about baptism.

Lent as we know it had a gradual development. In the early days of our Church, it was a period of penance and preparation for new catechumens, those seeking Baptism and entrance to the Church. As the living Church evolved, Lent became an observance for the whole Christian body, already part of the Church but in need of reform and renewal.

Its hallmarks remained prayer and fasting leading to reform of one's life. All this leading to a glorious rebirth in celebrating the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ in Holy Week.

In the recent past, of the generations before us, a collective groan may have been heard across the Catholic landscape, as six weeks of fasting and abstinence of meat loomed on the horizon.

"What are you Lentening on?" became a familiar question friends asked one another. Cigarettes and alcoholic beverages were put aside by many people, which still remain a good idea. There was a rule that specified, for all the days of Lent except for Sundays, only one full meal and two other light meals for all those aged 21 to 59. Now such fasting and abstinence from meat is required only on Ash Wednesday and the six Fridays of Lent.

Conscientious people wrestled with what the fast meant for them. Cooks called on their creativity to come up with meatless meals. Macaroni and cheese contested with pizza as Friday night staples, before we headed out to church for the evening "Stations of the Cross."

The rigid rules are gone, which can be seen as a good thing. The younger generations that grew up with the "personal choice" concept of Lenten penance nevertheless do so without the constraint of multiple rules. Fortunately, the beautiful devotion of the Stations, lost for a time, has survived and is making a comeback.

The accent is slowly shifting to observing the kind of fasting Scripture recommends, as Isaiah chapter 58 describes: fasting from injustice to others; sharing one's food with the hungry; and giving clothing and shelter to the homeless poor. The goal and the hope is that we all find ourselves at the end of Lent not just six weeks older but better at keeping our baptismal promises. We are then sprinkled with life giving water at Easter Liturgies.

Of course, our Lenten resolve has to be genuine and never half-hearted because Jesus proved on the cross His whole hearted love for each of us. So we shouldn't want to be like the critically-ill lawyer who was found frantically leafing through the Bible in his hospital room. When asked the reason, he replied, "I'm looking for loop holes."



OUR LENTEN OBLIGATION



Church law considers every Friday and the season of Lent as penitential days and times. The practice of penance is a part of our faith and Christian life. When we do penance, we imitate Jesus, who Himself recommended it as necessary to His followers, and gave them the example of His prayer and fasting.

The Lenten obligation, as determined for Catholics in the United States by our bishops, requires that fasting be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The law of abstinence is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent.

➤ **Who must fast?**

All Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59. The obligation ceases when one begins his/her 60th year on his/her 59th birthday.

➤ **Who must abstain?**

All Catholics who are 14 years and older.

➤ **What does fasting mean?**

The observance of fasting means that those obliged may take only one full meal on the day of fast. Two lighter meals (not equal to another full meal) may be taken to maintain strength according to one's needs.

➤ **What does abstinence mean?**

The law of abstinence forbids the eating of meat, including poultry. Voluntary abstinence refers to refraining from lawful pleasures in a spirit of penance.

➤ **Can anyone be dispensed or excused from fast and/or abstinence?**

Individuals for a just cause may be dispensed by their pastor or by a priest with the faculty to do so. In our Diocese all priests may dispense individuals who are committed to their pastoral care. Those who are ill, or have a similar serious reason, are excused from the observance of fast and abstinence. Catholics are reminded that they should not lightly excuse themselves from this obligation.

➤ **Are there other obligations that we should fulfill?**

Catholics are obliged to fulfill what has been called their "Easter Duty." They are required to receive Holy Communion during the Easter time. In the United States this obligation can be fulfilled from the First Sunday of Lent until Trinity Sunday (March 9 until June 15, 2014). Those conscious of serious sin are reminded of the obligation to confess their sins once a year during this time.

Catholics also are encouraged to make Lent a time of more intense prayer and to practice almsgiving and other works of charity. Parishes are encouraged to continue participation in Operation Rice Bowl

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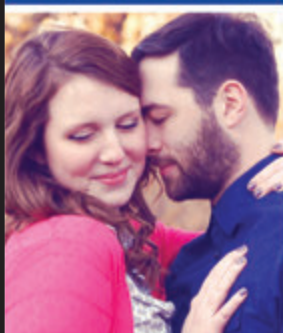
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