



**What St Paul Has to Say about Love
... and about How Demanding Real Love Really Is**

in today's Epistle Reading, 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Saint Bernadette Parish Saint Mary Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701
(740) 654 • 1893

602 Marietta Street
BREMEN, OHIO 43107
(740) 569 • 7929

the Fourth Sunday of the Year

January 31, 2016

Sacramental Life

BAPTISM

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnast will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. The next session will be Mar 16. Try to take the class before the child is born. If you are expecting, call Kathy to register for the class.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; they are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. Both godparents need to be practicing Christians, at least one a practicing Catholic. If you don't attend Sunday Mass regularly, there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass.

PENANCE

The priest is available for Penance

- at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
- at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

In addition to Advent and Lenten Penance Services, every Catholic priest is available whenever there is a need. We provide Penance opportunities for parochial school children several more times during the year so that they will learn the beauty of frequent confession. The Church's law requires us to receive the sacrament of Penance at least once a year.

ANOINTING AND CARE OF THE SICK

The Sick receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick when dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age.

We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you for "health of mind and body."

And, we are happy to bring Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the homes or hospitals of the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long since the sacraments were last available.

HOLY MATRIMONY

Couples wishing to marry should contact the parish office six months before they wish to celebrate the sacrament. Why so long? Because this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation. And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation.

The Church wishes to support couples through the years of their married life. For this reason our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn about these programs, watch the weekly bulletin.

Our Parishes

FATHER THOMAS KESSLER pastor
(614) 634-0499 wnthomaskessler@icloud.com

AT ST BERNADETTE PARISH

<http://stbernadetteparish.net>

MARK SCARPITTI 438-3970
deacon dcn.mark@frontier.com

JEFF CARPENTER 681-9918
deacon carpenter.277@osu.edu

ANN ESSMAN 653-9347
pastoral minister aessman001@att.net

STEVE HUBER 654-3137
facilities coordinator shuber57@yahoo.com

LIZ LATORRE 243-1872
liturgical music lizlatorre@gmail.com

The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.

Hours are: 9 AM-1 PM, MWThF; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu.
1343 Wheeling Rd NE,
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 (740) 654-1893

AT BREMEN ST MARY PARISH

BEN FACTOR
liturgical music b_factor@lancaster.k12.oh.us

JIM SCHMELZER
maintenance chair

TYNA FOX-SCHMELZER
religious education (614) 371-7702
coordinator schmelifax@earthlink.net

The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule.

Hours are 9-11 AM, Tu.
602 Marietta St,

Bremen, OH 43107 (740) 569-7929

AT BOTH PARISHES

NIKKI SCHMELZER 654-1893
bookkeeper businessmstbparish@yahoo.com

KATHY KEHNAST 654-1893
pastoral coordinator stbernparish@yahoo.com

ANGIE & KENT KERNS 654-2588
religious education kwkerns@gmail.com

JULIE & CHASE STALFORD 808-7294
youth ministry maristellaspirit@gmail.com

AT ST BERNADETTE SCHOOL

PAM ELTRINGHAM
principal peltring@cducation.org

BARB HUBER
secretary bhuber@cducation.org

Saint Bernadette School is located at
1325 Wheeling Rd, 654-3137
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 www.stbernadetteschool.com
stbernlan@cducation.org.

let us pray

PRAY WITH POPE FRANCIS DURING FEBRUARY

His universal intention concerns the care of creation:

That we may take good care of creation
—a gift freely given—
cultivating and protecting it for future generations.

His prayer for evangelization this month is especially for the mission of the Church in Asia:

That opportunities may increase
for dialogue and encounter
between the Christian faith and the peoples of Asia.

COLLECT FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY

Grant us, Lord our God, that we may
honor you with all our mind,
and love everyone in truth of heart.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.



both our parishes

ST VINCENT DE PAUL FIFTH SUNDAY

Today, members of the St Vincent de Paul Society will be present **to receive your donations** after Sunday Masses. Please continue your generous giving. They operate entirely on voluntary donations and income from their store.

BECOMING CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS

The Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) this year includes a prospective new member from each of our two parishes. While the beginning of a new school year is the ideal time to begin the process (which ordinarily leads to an Easter reception of the sacraments and an Easter season of orientation to the new reality), there is never a time that is not a good time for beginning the process. **Pray for them.** Intently.

YDISCIPLE: OUR YOUTH MINISTRY !

YDisciple, the youth program **for all our high school students at our two parishes**, directed by Chase and Julie Stalford, will soon meet again. If you are not sure where, contact Julie or Chase Stalford at 808-7294. The program is exciting. The young people are excited. Pray for this new ministry.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

To donate **flowers to adorn the sanctuary for a Sunday** during 2016 (excluding the Sundays of Advent and Lent, when we intentionally leave the sanctuary unadorned), contact the parish office. Your donation of \$40 may be placed in the collection basket at Mass.

IF YOU HAVE A MISERABLE VOICE

Sing anyway! Just sing softly. You may not be a good candidate for the choir or to be a cantor. That doesn't mean that you don't **need to sing when you come to Mass.** God made your voice. He only made a few voices of opera star quality, but he likes to hear all of them at worship. You can still sing softly. But **move your lips to the words and, when you don't know the words, take up the card or the book.** We all need to be involved in the liturgy. That doesn't mean we all have to be moving around or in charge of something. It does mean we have to participate in the effort.

SACRISTAN / USHERS

These are the people who make things flow smoothly during our Sunday (including Saturday evening) Masses. They

- get things ready,
- make sure all the other ministers are ready,
- help late arrivals find a seat with a minimum of disruption,
- take up a collection.

We need more of them, to distribute the joy more evenly. Would you like to help? Contact the parish office.

CHILDREN AT MASS

It is great to see very young people at Mass. Even to hear them. But parents need to train their children in the appropriate times to kneel, sit, stand, and face the altar. Sometimes, through no fault of yours or theirs, they make too much noise and have to be removed from the church **for a few minutes.** But **bring them back.** And **don't bring toys or finger food** to distract or pacify them. Those solve a short-term issue, but compound a longer-term problem.

Making sure they are entertained at all times in church sends the message that they are there to be entertained. We are grateful when they are not engaged in playing with toys, or eating and drinking. Those things get in the way of **teaching children that Jesus is there on the altar and how important it is to participate in the Mass.** Food and toys don't help. They are **ways to postpone teaching children about what really matters** in church.

at St Bernadette

OPEN HOUSE AT ST BERNADETTE SCHOOL

You are invited to an Open House at St Bernadette School next Sunday, Feb 7, from noon until 2 PM. Tour the building, meet the staff, and learn about registration and financial assistance. St Bernadette School offers preschool through fifth grade, before and after school care, specialized instruction by highly qualified staff, and one on one attention, all in a loving, faith-based environment.

SUNDAY MORNING ROSARY

Come pray the rosary together on Sunday at 10:35 (shortly before the 11 AM Mass). Pray for the peace that comes to our society from the conversion of our hearts to the Lord. For questions or if you are interested in **the Women's Faith Sharing Group** sponsoring this, contact Kara . Tencza @ gmail . com.

MARDI GRAS AT ST BERNADETTE

St Bernadette School staff, students, and parents are preparing for **the big annual Mardi Gras pre-Lenten party and fundraiser** on Saturday, Feb 6 beginning at 5 PM. This is not only our largest fundraiser to support the general operating budget of the school, but it is also a wonderful family night for all! After overwhelming applause last year, they will again be serving delicious **Fat Tuesday Sliders, French Quarter French Fries, Cole Slaw, Mini King Cakes, Pizza, Pretzels and more.** There will be a **large silent auction and live auction** for the adults, as well as **games and movies for the children.** The **whole parish community—and any friends you invite**—can come together to celebrate with friends, fun and food! \$10 **Raffle tickets** for the \$1000 Grand Prize will be sold after all Masses on Jan 23-24 and 30-31. Contact Mitzi Neighbor for information.

SANDWICH SATURDAY

Each month a different grade at St Bernadette School makes meat and cheese sandwiches for Foundation Dinners to distribute to their patrons. St Bernadette students are **learning that serving and helping others can happen at any age.** Donations of zipper sandwich bags, lunch meat, cheese and bread are always welcome.

SUPPORTING YOUR PARISH

The St Bernadette offertory collection for Jan 24 came to \$5,537.

YOU COULD GIVE AT MASS EVERY WEEK (OR EVERY MONTH)

In St Bernadette Parish you could use Electronic Funds Transfer as **a way to stabilize the level of your financial support.** This

helps the parish's cash flow by preventing unintended seasonal ebb and flow from your commitment to support the parish. Contact Nikki Schmeltzer in the parish office for details.

at St Mary in Bremen

HELPING OUR NEEDY NEIGHBORS

St Vincent de Paul members will be collecting donations after Mass next Sunday. Your generous support is always appreciated.

SUPPORTING YOUR PARISH

The collection at Bremen St Mary for Jan 24 netted \$1,413.

conferences, weekends, luncheons, galas ...

RESPECT LIFE CONFERENCE

The diocesan Respect Life Conference is Saturday, March 5, at St Joseph Church in Plain City. The theme is *Being Pro-Life in the Year of Mercy*. Keynote speaker is Fr Kevin Lutz. Additional conference topics include: practical parish resources to promote the Church's teaching on respect for human life, an overview of pro-life elements in Pope Francis' latest encyclical letter *Laudato Si' (On Care for our Common Home)*, community outreach programs offering hope and healing, and latest updates on legislation and advocacy efforts. The conference lasts from 10 AM to 3 PM. Registration is \$20, which includes lunch. To register, send a check payable to the Office for Social Concerns, 197 E. Gay St., Columbus, Ohio 43215. Call (614) 241-2540 or email at socmailbox@colsdio.org.

MEN'S CONFERENCE AND WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

These are big events coming in February you won't want to miss. At each of these Saturday events Bishop Campbell will celebrate Mass and there will be opportunities for Penance, as well as some entertainment and lots of fellowship with a thousand or two of the most interesting people in central Ohio.

- Women of our diocese will gather on Feb 20 for the 9th annual Conference with the theme of "*Mercy Changes Everything*"; they will listen talks by Jennifer Fulwiler, Fr Nathan Cromly, Sonja Corbitt, and Sarah Kroger.
- Men will meet on Feb 27 for the 19th annual Conference with a theme of "*Call to Discipleship*." They will hear Fr Larry Richards, Hector Molina, David Karam, and Doug Lessells.

Both events will take place at the Voinovich Center at the Ohio fairgrounds in Columbus. Call Pat Gins at (740) 536-7402 for information.

WORLD MARRIAGE DAY CELEBRATION:

All married couples are invited to the diocesan celebration of World Marriage Day, Sunday, Feb 14, from 1:30-4 PM at Immaculate Conception Church in Columbus. Dr Andrew Sodergren, a Catholic psychologist with Ruah Woods in Cincinnati, will discuss *Love, Marriage, and the Meaning of Life*: ways to strengthen your marriage relationship, blending Catholic theology and insights from psychology. This will be followed by a *Holy Hour for Marriage*. There is no charge but space is limited. RSVP by Feb 10 at <http://familylife.colsdio.org> or (614) 241-2560.

SPIRIT OF HOPE GALA

Catholic Social Services of the Columbus Diocese will have a gala event on Saturday, March 5, at 6:30 pm at the Columbus Museum of Art. This annual event benefits Catholic Social Services' fourteen programs designed *to strengthen individuals and families, provide crisis relief, and help seniors age with grace and independence* in the 23 counties of Central and Southern Ohio. To purchase tickets, contact Mackenzie Burton at (614) 221-5891 or mburton@colsess.org, no later than Feb 20.

CHRIST PRESENT IN YOUR MARRIAGE

A *Marriage Encounter weekend* will help you to let your marriage be renewed as a sacrament, a sign of the Lord's presence in the world. The next two weekends in central Ohio are Feb 19-21 and Apr 22-24. For information or to register, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit www.wmwecolumbus.org

CATHOLIC MEN'S LUNCHEON CLUB

On Feb 5 the Luncheon Club and Bishop Frederick Campbell will honor the *2016 Catholic Man of the Year*, Jeff Bernard of Gahanna St Matthew parish. Attend at St Patrick Church in downtown Columbus beginning with Mass at 11:45 AM. For information, contact John Schechter, CMLC President at Schechter@sbcglobal.net.

in the deanery

K OF C FISH FRY

Lancaster *Knights of Columbus* will fry fish on Ash Wednesday (Feb 10) and on the Fridays of Lent (Feb 12, 19, and 26, and Mar 4, 11, and 18). After the fish, come to St Bernadette or Bremen St Mary for the Stations of the Cross. Cost (for the fish, not the Stations) for adults is \$8 and for children is \$6. The K of C hall is at 343 East Walnut Street.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION AT FISHER

There will be Eucharistic Adoration in the Fisher Catholic chapel on Friday, Feb 5, from 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM. Consider signing up for *an hour of Eucharistic Adoration (or a 1/2 hour)*. To sign up for a time slot, call Ms Kilbarger at (740) 654-1231.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Put your faith into action by *helping to feed our elderly neighbors*. Become a Meals on Wheels of Fairfield County volunteer. They have various volunteer opportunities and will work around your schedule. Deliver a good meal, a friendly smile, and a safety check to homebound seniors in your community. Call Anna Tobin at (740) 681-5050 or visit www.mowfc.org to make a difference in the life of an older adult.

and elsewhere

40 DAYS FOR LIFE

From Feb 10 to Mar 20, communities across the country will participate in the 40 Days for Life campaign. Faithful believers are *praying that this effort will mark the beginning of the end of abortion in America*. This *peaceful prayer vigil* will take place at an abortion facility. Participants are asked to volunteer and sign a statement of peace. For details about 40 Days for Life in the Columbus area, contact Greater Columbus Right to Life at (614) 445-8508 or visit www.40daysforlife.com/columbus.

PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES

Father Michael Dosch, OP, pastor of St Patrick in Columbus, invites you to join the 62nd US *National Rosary Pilgrimage to Lourdes*, June 23 to July 3, *accompanied by clergy and medical staff* to assist the needs of the pilgrims. Pilgrims will also visit *sites associated with the early Dominicans* in honor of the *Jubilee of the foundation of the Dominican Order in 1216*, celebrating 800 years of Our Lady’s entrustment of the Rosary to St Dominic and his order. Contact Fr Michael at pastor @ stpatrickcolumbus . com or the pilgrimage office at 1 (877) 276-7279 or lourdespilgrimageoffice @ comcast . net Read more at www . lourdes-pilgrimage . com; registration deadline is Mar 15.

THE SACRED HEART IN YOUR HOME

Bring Jesus back into the center of your lives through *Home Enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*. We are invited to draw close to Jesus, to have a home in His Heart and have His Heart in our home. Enthronement is rooted in Scripture. St John the Apostle clung to Jesus, resting on His chest at the Last Supper and became faithful to Him. Jesus wants to come into our homes, meeting us where we are, that we may rest in Him as we sanctify our homes, the epicenter of God’s love. We *demonstrate our intimacy* with Jesus by hanging a picture of the Sacred Heart. We vow to walk side by side with Him as we pray for each other and become active agents of evangelization. For information contact Sacred Heart Columbus, Fr Stash Dailey, director, at www . sacredheartcolumbus . org or Dan and Sharon Boyden at (614) 226-7327 or Donald and Diana Schooley at (740) 654-7841.

ELECTION 2016 :CONSCIENCES FOR FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

The bishops also have something to say about our Faith and political responsibility for the 2016 election. *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* presents their teaching on the political responsibility of Catholics. They provide guidance for Catholics in the exercise of their rights and duties as participants in our democracy. Pastors, lay and religious faithful, and all people of good will are urged

- to let this teaching help form their consciences;
- to teach those entrusted to their care;
- to contribute to civil and respectful public dialogue; and
- to shape political choices in the coming election in light of Catholic teaching.

when help is needed

SOMEONE TO TALK WITH

Suicide is a very bad choice. We can’t make judgments about anyone who has committed this sin—we can’t know if they were blinded by moral confusion or mental illness, or whether they may have repented for this great sin at the last instant before they died.

What the Christian community can do is help us find people with the skills to help to put things into a wiser perspective. *There is someone who can help*. We can talk with a priest, a family member, or any trustworthy person. And there are other resources to help prevent suicide, including these:

- Adolescent Suicide Hotline: (800) 621 4000
- Suicide Prevention (614) 221 5445
- 24-Hour Suicide Prevention Teen Questions (614) 294 3300

There is a local Mental Health Crisis Line in Lancaster for all sorts of mental health crises. Call when you need to: (740) 687-TALK.

BETHESDA HEALING MINISTRY

Christ invites each of us to come to Him for healing and hope, even *from an abortion of long ago*. He is waiting! Bethesda Healing Ministry (614) 309-0157 or (614) 309-2651.

CRISIS PHONE LINE

Many people become *depressed during this season* of wintery darkness. Be a beacon of light and a source of hope to someone who is ill, alone or going through a difficult patch in life. Let them know about the local mental health crisis line answered 24 hours a day at 687-TALK (8255).

PORNOGRAPHY

The US Catholic Bishops have been teaching about pornography in a new essay *Create in Me a Clean Heart*. They provide

- basic catechesis on human sexuality and chastity,
- an explanation of why the production and usage of pornography is a sin,
- an overview of its effects in our society,
- a closer look at its effects on men, women, children, young people, marriages, and families, and
- a word of hope and encouragement to those who have been harmed by pornography use or in its production.

Their first audience is Catholic leaders and parents, but they also want to help those who struggle with pornography use and all people of goodwill who want to work together for *a culture of purity and respect for all women and men*. To *read the text* of *Create in Me a Clean Heart* along with other USCCB resources on pornography, visit <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/pornography/index.cfm>.

HELP WITH PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION

My House is a local initiative that works to protect, support, and prevent this plague. It is

- a resource for the protection of families,
- an avenue of healing and support for those who have been harmed by pornography’s destructive effects, and
- a deepening understanding of the beauty of our sexuality.

Visit www.myhousecolumbus.net or call the confidential hotline at (888) 989-9886.

Ash Wednesday Masses			The Fairfield / Hocking / Pickaway Deanery		Lenten Penance Services			Stations of the Cross
8 AM		7 PM	Lancaster	St Mark	Tuesday,	Mar 1,	7 PM	Friday at 6
10 AM		7 PM	Logan	St John	Monday,	Feb 22,	7 PM	Friday at 2:30 & 7
8:20 AM	noon		Lancaster	St Bernadette	Sunday,	Mar 13,	3 PM	Friday at 7
	noon	7 PM	Sugar Grove	St Joseph	Tuesday,	Mar 15,	7 PM	Friday at 7 (not 2/27)
7 AM, 9 AM		7 PM	Lancaster	St Mary	Thursday,	Mar 10,	7 PM	Friday at 7
		6 PM	Bremen	St Mary	Sunday,	Mar 20,	3 PM	Friday at 7
	1:35 PM		Fisher Catholic HS		Wednesday,	Mar 16,	1:30 PM	
9AM		7 PM	Circleville	St Joseph	Sunday,	Mar 20,	4 PM	Friday at 7

readings, feasts, and memorials for this week

Saturday,	Jan 30								
Sunday,	Jan 31	4th Sunday in the Year	Jeremiah 1:4-19	1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13	Psalm 71	Luke 4:21-30			
Monday,	Feb 1		2 Samuel 15:13-16:13			Psalm 3	Mark 5:1-20		
Tuesday,	Feb 2	The Presentation of the Lord	Malachi 3:1-4	Hebrews 2:14-18		Psalm 24	Luke 2:22-40		
Wednesday,	Feb 3	St Blaise, St Ansgar	2 Samuel 24:2-17			Psalm 32	Mark 6:1-6		
Thursday,	Feb 4		1 Kings 2:1-12			1 Chronicles 29	Mark 6:7-13		
Friday,	Feb 5	St Agatha First Friday	Sirach 47:2-11			Psalm 18	Mark 6:14-29		
Saturday,	Feb 6	St Paul Miki & Companions First Saturday	1 Kings 3:4-13			Psalm 119	Mark 6:30-34		
Sunday,	Feb 7	5th Sunday in the Year	Isaiah 6:1-8	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	Psalm 138	Luke 5:1-11			

Mass intentions and ministers this week at St Mary

			intention	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday,	Jan 31	8:30 AM	<i>for the people</i>	Susan Foltz	Spencer Conrad Isaac Schmelzer	Susan Foltz, Damian Schmelzer, Tyna Schmelzer-Fox	John Schoenlaub family	Damian Schmelzer
Tuesday,	Feb 2	8:20 AM	<i>Lulamae Wolfe</i>	Jim Schmelzer				Jim Schmelzer
Sunday,	Feb 7	8:30 AM	<i>for the people</i>	Paul Kunkler	Caelie Bell Brooke Holt	Neil Boch, Irene Kunkler, Jim Schmelzer	Paul Kunkler family	Jim Schmelzer

Mass intentions and ministers this week at St Bernadette

			intention	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion
Saturday,	Jan 30	4 PM	<i>Nick Wolfinger</i>	Marguerite Grimm	Mallory, Mason & McKenzie Ortiz	Tara Craaybeek, Mary Steyaert, Shelia Taylor, Kathy Wagner, Julia Whitehead, Darlene Yarnesch
Sunday,	Jan 31	11 AM	<i>for the people</i>	Patrick Gins	Collin McCrady, Caroline Messerly, Makaila Moses	Nancy Griffith, Lee Guinan, Ben Peters, Teresa Scarpitti, Mary Jane Vajen, Amy Woo
Monday,	Feb 1	8:20 AM	<i>Helen Henry</i>	Mary Jane Vajen	Addy Myers, Cady Tipple	Patricia Dreyer, Kathy Kehnast
Wednesday	Feb 3	8:20 AM	<i>Paul Dreyer</i>	Bob Christy	Addy Myers, Emeline Neighbor	Mary Guinan, Mary Jane Vajen
Thursday,	Feb 4	6 PM	<i>Louise Young</i>	Kathy Kehnast	Kendall Cox, Ava Ewing	Paul Lonergan
Friday,	Feb 5	8:20 AM	<i>Edward Marque</i>	Robin Sanders	Emma McCrady, Avee Solt	Jim & Rita Merk
First Saturday,	Feb 6	9 AM	<i>Cora Kilbarger</i>	Kara Tencza	Jack Tencza, Daniel Turner	Jim & Rita Merk
Saturday,	Feb 6	4 PM	<i>Ray Wolshire</i>	Martha Rose	Samantha Kerns, Dominic Neighbor, Daniel Turner	Teresa Carpenter, Kathy Kehnast, James & Rebecca Kuhn, Sandy Landefeld, Denise McGuire
Sunday,	Feb 7	11 AM	<i>for the people</i>	Scott Wood	Isabelle Gentile, Aaron & David Wood	Patricia Dreyer, Jim & Rita Merk, Larry Sanford, Valerie Shaw, David Shonk

Confessions and weekday Masses each week in the deanery

confessions	the parish	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8 AM Sunday	Bremen St Mary		8:20 AM				
5:30 Thursday & 3 Saturday 8:30 AM on 1 st Saturday	Lancaster St Bernadette	8:20 AM		8:20 AM	6 PM	8:20 AM	1 st Saturday 9 AM
4-5 Saturday	Lancaster St Mary	7 AM	9 AM	7 AM	9 AM		
5:30 Saturday	Lancaster St Mark	8 AM	8 AM	6 PM	8 AM	8 AM	
½ hour before each Mass	Sugar Grove St Joseph	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	
4-4:45 Saturday	Logan St John	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM		8 AM	9 AM

Why to Observe Lent Faithfully ... and Ideas about *How* to

There are plenty of good reasons to take Lent seriously. Some people talk about this season as a kind of “spiritual spring cleaning.” A little austerity never hurt any one. So fasting and abstaining—which aren’t really very big efforts any more—won’t do any harm. Giving up candy or sugar in your coffee is not a bad idea. A very small dose of a fitness course, to make up for the New Year’s resolutions that you didn’t keep, might be just the thing.

A generation ago religious leaders (that usually meant priests back then) would sometimes say, “Forget about giving things up for Lent. What are you going to *do* for Lent?” But one of the nice things about being Catholic is that, in choices like that, *we don’t need to decide “either / or”; we are better off with “both / and”*: Do something *and* give up something. That combination has been around since the time of Jesus who spoke (in the Sermon on the Mount, no less) about prayer, fasting, and almsgiving as the great works of religious living.

When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. —Matthew 6:3-4

When you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. —Matthew 6:6

When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to others to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you. —Matthew 6:17-18

He wasn’t talking about Lent or even about Christian living. *Jesus just presumed that God’s devotees would be doing prayer, fasting, and almsgiving*; these are *things anyone who wants to please God would do*. The new thing that Jesus talked about was that when we do these things it should be *in a God-focused way* — instead of doing them for the attention and respect we would get if we could get people to notice us doing them.

The Church invented *Lent as a time for renewing the practices of the godly life in preparation for the celebration of Easter*. And *Easter is the day for baptizing and for being renewed in our own birth to new life in baptism*. So Easter is the day for being born again, and Lent is the season for rediscovering what it means to come alive in the Lord. *Just as the Church gets us ready for a good celebration of the Lord’s resurrection each Sunday by inviting us to die to ourselves on the previous Friday*, so she also has a Good Friday to prepare for Easter Sunday, and also forty days of Lent to prepare for a fifty day season of Easter.

Catholics have been doing something extra for Lent for a very long time. Saint Benedict (480-547), the father of Western monasticism, tells his monks in his “little Rule written for beginners” about keeping Lent.

The life of a monk ought always to be a Lenten observance. However, since such virtue is that of few, we advise that during these days of Lent he guard his life with all purity and at the same time wash away during these holy days all the shortcomings of other times. This will then be worthily done, if we restrain ourselves from all vices. Let us devote ourselves to tearful prayers, to reading and compunction of heart, and to abstinence.

— *The Rule of Benedict, Chapter 49, On the Keeping of Lent*

And in chapter 48, Benedict also says something about spiritual reading during Lent.

During the Lenten season let them be employed in reading from morning until the third hour During these days of Lent let all receive books from the library, and let them read them through in order. These books are to be given out at the beginning of the Lenten season.

— *The Rule of Benedict, Chapter 48, Of the Daily Work*

Saint Benedict knew that the Lenten preparation for the Easter renewal of Baptism had to be shaped by *the spiritual purification of self-sacrifice* (done in the company of other Christians) and had to be informed by *a renewed awareness of the spiritual teaching* of the Scriptures and the Fathers.

Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—together they are a good idea. Printed below are some suggestions for Lenten practices I found in the weekly newspaper, *The National Catholic Reporter*. See if some of them might not fit you.

— *Father Kessler*

FASTING

- Fast with one full meal, no snacks, one day a week.
- Skip meat an extra day (or two) a week.
- Give up alcoholic beverages.
- Give up coffee (or reduce to one cup a day).
- Give up all desserts.
- Give up all unnecessary shopping.
- Fast from music in the car.

PRAYER

- Begin (or begin again) the daily Rosary.
- Meditate for 10 minutes a day. (Daily meditations can be found at Catholic . net.)
- Choose one extra devotion per week during Lent: Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic adoration or a weekday Mass.

ALMSGIVING/CHARITY

- Visit a nursing home with your children.
- Forgive someone and patch things up in a visit, or, if necessary, by phone or letter.
- Give up gossip, judging or profanity.
- Say a kind word to everyone you meet.
- Pay a significant compliment to each of your children every day.
- Visit an elderly friend or relative.
- Save up a significant amount of money for a deserving charity or apostolate.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- Do chores without complaining.
- Restrict your TV, Internet or music time.
- Restrict your phone time.
- Send a letter or picture to a grandmother, aunt or godparent.
- Make a new friend outside your “crowd.”
- Be a friend to a shy person.
- Give up that bad place, person or thing.
- Choose a favorite toy, book or piece of clothing and put it away until Easter

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