

February 2015



ST. JAMES CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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Making A Difference For You

A Prayer for Lent

God, heavenly Father,
look upon me and hear my prayer
during this holy Season of Lent.

By the good works You inspire,
help me to discipline my body
and to be renewed in spirit.
Without You I can do nothing.

By Your Spirit help me to know
what is right and to be eager
in doing Your will.

Keep me from sin, and help me live by
Your commandment of love.

Lord, during this Lenten Season,
nourish me with Your Word of life
and make me one with You
in love and prayer.

This we ask in the Name of Jesus,
Your Son Our Lord. Amen

A Journey - Mardi Gras To Easter



Our journey to Easter Sunday begins with Mardi Gras, a long-standing tradition of the Catholic Church, although more secularized today than was its original intent.

In earlier days, since Catholics didn't want to be tempted during Lent by sweets, meat and other distractions in the house, they cleaned out their cabinets. They used up all the sugar and yeast in sweet breads before the Lent season started, and fixed meals with all the meat available. It was a great feast!

Today Mardi Gras - "Fat Tuesday" or "Shrove Tuesday," as it is called by some - is celebrated as the last day to "eat, drink and make merry" before Lent begins the following day.

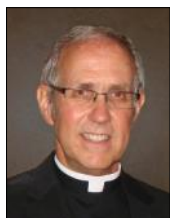
Ash Wednesday begins The Season of Lent, a period of prayer, penance, reflection, and fasting that prepares us for Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday. On this day our foreheads are marked with ashes symbolizing fragility and mortality and the need to be redeemed by God's mercy.



The distribution of ashes is an age-old ceremony in which Christians who had committed grave faults performed public penance. On Ash Wednesday, the Bishop blessed the hair shirts which they were to wear during the forty days of penance, and sprinkled ashes over them. Later, all Christians, came to receive ashes out of devotion.

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From Your Pastor



Greetings to you,

During the month of February, we embark upon a busy time for our community of St. James.

As we prepare for Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lenten season, we know it is a time to reflect on the 40 Days prior to the celebration of New Life at Easter. May we take the opportunity to reflect on our own relationship with Christ, and what the Paschal Mystery means in each of our own lives – the Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Christ.

We have many opportunities for spiritual growth throughout the Lenten season, so we invite you to come and join us as we journey towards the Cross, and the Power of Jesus' saving Love in our lives.

We are grateful to all who have been such good stewards of all God's gifts! Our new parking lot has certainly enhanced our parish and more folks are coming to join us at weekend Masses. Hopefully, if we all can do our part, our new church will become a reality over the next few years!

Don't forget that during this Lenten season, we have several opportunities for celebration – the St. Joseph

Table, which has become a custom here at St. James to honor St. Joseph and at the same time to help the poor and needy, and our Lenten Fish Fry's hosted by the Knights of Columbus. Come and join us as we celebrate this holy season by supporting some very worthwhile causes.

May you and your families be blessed and know God's goodness and Love as we prepare to journey through this Lenten season.

Peace,

Father Mike Roach

Looking Ahead

Saturday, February 14

Valentine's Day

Tuesday, February 17

Mardi Gras

Wednesday, February 18

Ash Wednesday

Masses: 6:30am, 9:00am, 7:00pm

Prayer Service: 12:15pm & 5:30 pm

Saturday, February 21

Altar Society Retreat

Our Lady of Mercy - Tighe Hall

11:00am - 3:00pm

Monday, February 23

Meditation & Prayer

5:00pm - 6:00pm in the church

Wednesday, February 25

Prayer Service & Soup Supper

5:30pm - Church & Social Hall

Friday, February 27

Knights of Columbus Fish Fry

5:00pm - 8:00pm in the Gym

Wednesday, March 4

Prayer Service & Soup Supper

5:30pm - Church & Social Hall

Wednesday, March 11

Prayer Service & Soup Supper

5:30pm - Church & Social Hall

Friday, March 13

Knights of Columbus Fish Fry

5:00pm - 8:00pm in the Gym

Tuesday, March 17

St. Patrick's Day

Saturday, March 21

St. Joseph Table - Social Hall

Viewing: 3:00pm - 8:00pm

Meal: 5:30pm - 8:00pm

Sunday, March 22

St. Joseph Table - Social Hall

Meal: Noon - 6:00pm

Friday, March 27

Knights of Columbus Fish Fry

5:00pm - 8:00pm in the Gym

Sunday, March 29

Palm Sunday

Triduum

Holy Thursday, April 2

The Mass of the Lord's Supper - 7:00pm

Good Friday, April 3

Stations of the Cross - 3:00pm

Hispanic Stations of the Cross - 5:00pm

Good Friday Service - 7:00pm

Holy Saturday, April 4

Easter Vigil - 7:00pm

Easter Sunday, April 5

Mass - 8:00am & 10:30am

Both Masses in Church & Gym

Sunday, April 12

Divine Mercy Sunday Celebration

2:00pm - 4:00 in the church

Monday, April 20

Sacrament of Confirmation - 7:00pm

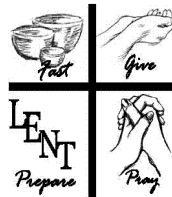
Tuesday, May 5

Ladies' Event

6:30pm - Church & Social Hall

A Journey - Mardi Gras To Easter (continued from Page 1)

The Lenten season – the 40 day period, excluding Sundays, before Easter – has its roots in scripture. 40 is the traditional number of judgment and spiritual testing in the Biblical books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and Jonah. It also bears particular relationship to the 40 days Christ spent fasting in the desert before entering into his public ministry.



The three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence and Fridays are obligatory days of abstinence. It is common practice to "give up" (or fast from) something for Lent. However, instead of or in addition to fasting during Lent, some add a spiritual exercise or discipline to their life such as joining a Bible study group or participate in an act of kindness such as feeding people at a homeless shelter. Other acts of charity and almsgiving are also encouraged as we prepare our hearts for the celebration of the resurrection.

As we continue our journey to Easter, we arrive at Palm Sunday (also known as Passion Sunday), the beginning of Holy Week. On this day we commemorate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem by processing into the church with our palms. This day is called Palm Sunday because of the palm branches that were laid on the road as Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem. The name Passion Sunday refers to the reading of the Passion this Sunday.

The final three days of Lent are known as the Paschal Triduum. The Mass of the Lord's Supper is held on Holy Thursday, celebrated in the evening because Passover began at sundown. The worth that God ascribes to the humility of service is remembered by the washing of feet as Jesus did for his disciples. When the Mass ends, the consecrated Host in the monstrance is carried in solemn procession to the "Altar of Repose" remaining 'entombed' until the communion service on Good Friday. Finally, there is the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament by the people during the night, just as the disciples stayed with the Lord during His agony on the Mount of Olives before the betrayal by Judas.



On Good Friday, the focus is on the cross, beginning mid-afternoon with the Stations. The Church is stripped of its ornaments, the altar bare, and the door of the empty tabernacle stands open - as if in mourning. During the evening service (no Mass is celebrated this day), we venerate the large cross held at the foot of the altar by touching, kissing, and/or kneeling before it. The Passion is read and we receive the pre-consecrated host.

Although celebrated Holy Saturday evening, it is the dramatic Easter vigil liturgy that marks the beginning of Easter. The service begins outside the church. A new fire is lit and blessed and a Paschal Candle symbolizing Christ, the Light of the World is prepared. The candle is processed through the church; everyone lights their candle from the Easter candle and continue in procession until the whole church is alight. Seven Old Testament readings helping us meditate on the wonderful works of God for his people since the beginning of time are read. The Easter water is blessed, new members are brought into the Church through baptism, the Litany of the Saints is sung, followed by a blessing with water and renewal of baptismal vows. The Mass continues and ends with the glorious "The Mass is ended, go in peace, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia - Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia."



A
BIG
THANK
YOU !!

The landscaping and irrigation system in our new parking lot have been finished thanks to the expertise and hard work of parishioners Mike Kromeich and Wally McCubbin. The donation of their time and talent is much appreciated. We invite all parishioners to look for opportunities to volunteer and share their time and talents with their St. James Parish Community.

St. Joseph Table

St. Joseph has long been regarded as the protector of families. He is one of the most beloved saints among Italian-Americans who honor him on (or near) March 19, his feast day.

One of the traditions honoring him is the St. Joseph Table. The table design is dignified, solemn, yet festive, grand and inspiring. One of the special customs calls for the selection of children to portray members of the Holy Family — Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The table, blessed by a priest, has three tiers (or steps), symbolizing the Most Holy Trinity. The "steps" represent the ascent from earth to heaven. A statue of St. Joseph surrounded by flowers is on the top tier. The other tiers hold flowers, candles, figurines, and symbolic breads and pastries that may be shaped like a monstrance, chalices, fishes, doves, baskets, St. Joseph's staff, lilies, etc.

This tradition began following a severe famine in Sicily that caused considerable suffering and starvation. The people prayed. They pleaded to St. Joseph, their patron, for relief. Their prayers were answered. When the famine ended a special feast of thanksgiving was held in commemoration of the Saint. This celebration became tradition.

The first St. Joseph Table set up on the Island of Sicily was a small one, but over time the tradition took hold and the flamboyant nature and creative spirit of the Italians caused the altars to grow larger and more ornate.

This is the third year that St. James has had its own St. Joseph Table. The blessing of the table will take place on Saturday afternoon, March 21, followed by the viewing of the table. A traditional St. Joseph Table meal consisting of Spaghetti, with or without sardines in the sauce, frittata, bread, salad and dessert will be served on both Saturday and Sunday. All attending will receive a small loaf of bread for protection from storms and Fava Beans for prosperity. There is no charge for the meal, but free will offerings are encouraged. Money collected is donated to those in need in our community.



Last year's St. Joseph Table at St. James



Divine Mercy Sunday



The Divine Mercy is a devotion to the endless merciful love of God towards all people. The devotion is due to the apparitions of Jesus received by Saint Faustina Kowalska.

Pope John Paul canonized Sister Faustina on April 4, 2000 (making her St. Faustina), and also on the same day, surprised the entire world by establishing Divine Mercy Sunday as a feast day for the entire Church. The feast day falls on the Second Sunday of the Easter season. In 2002, the Pope entrusted the whole world to Divine Mercy when he consecrated the International Shrine of The Divine Mercy in La-giewniki, a suburb of Krakow in Poland.

Faustina Kowalska was a Polish nun who joined the convent of Our Lady of Mercy in Warsaw, Poland in 1925. In her diary, which was later published as the book *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul*, Faustina wrote about a number of visions of Jesus and conversations with him.

Faustina stated that while in her cell on the night of Sunday, February 22, 1931, Jesus appeared to her as the "King of Divine Mercy", robed in a white garment. She wrote that Jesus' right hand was raised in a sign of blessing and the other was touching the garment near his breast, and that from beneath the garment slightly down, aside his breast, emanated two large rays, one red, the other white. She said that Jesus told her: "Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: 'Jesus, I trust in You'. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and then throughout the world. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish."

Not knowing how to paint, Faustina arranged for the first painting of the image. Her diary relates the rays of light within the image to life and salvation, stating that she was told by Jesus: "The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls.. These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross."

In a later apparition, Faustina stated that Jesus asked her to pray specific prayers for mercy, now known as The Chaplet of Divine Mercy, and instruct others to do so. Thus, the chaplet's prayers for mercy are threefold: to obtain mercy, to trust in Christ's mercy, and to show mercy to others

Divine Mercy Sunday was not a new feast established to celebrate St. Faustina's revelations. Indeed, it is not *primarily* about St. Faustina at all - nor is it altogether a *new* feast! The Second Sunday of Easter was already a solemnity as the Octave Day of Easter liturgically centered on the theme of Divine Mercy and forgiveness. Nevertheless, the title "Divine Mercy Sunday" does highlight and amplify the meaning of the day. In this way, it recovers an ancient liturgical tradition, reflected in a teaching attributed to St. Augustine about the Easter Octave, which he called "the days of mercy and pardon," and the Octave Day itself "the compendium of the days of mercy."

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A Tale of Two Saints

Of the several thousand saints that the Catholic Church venerates, two names are readily recognized by both Catholics and non-Catholics alike – St. Valentine and St. Patrick. Both of these early century saints have secular holidays named in their honor.



The history of who St. Valentine really was is cloaked in mystery. He is known to be a real person who died around the year 270. But who he really was remains an enigma. In fact, enough confusion surrounds his true identity that the Church discontinued liturgical veneration of him in 1969, though his name remains on its list of officially recognized saints.

One legend says that he was a priest in Rome during the reign of Emperor Claudius II who decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families and outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of this decree, continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret and thus was condemned to death.

Other stories suggest he was killed for helping Christians escape persecution. Yet another describes Valentine as the Bishop of Terni, also martyred by Claudius. Whatever the case, he was beaten with clubs and stoned and ultimately beheaded on February 14.

Another legend says, while waiting to be executed, Valentine restored the sight of his jailer's daughter and, on the eve of his death wrote a farewell note to her, signing it, "From your Valentine." In the year 496, Pope Gelasius I questioned his true identity. However, because the similarities of these accounts led him to think they may refer to the same person, he referred to the martyr and his acts as "being known only to God" and declared February 14 as St. Valentine's Day.

The truth behind the Valentine legends is murky but the stories all emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and, most importantly, romantic figure. And, because the heart symbolizes love, it has also become symbolic of Valentine's Day.

There are many legends and stories about St. Patrick. Perhaps the most well known is the legend that he drove all of the snakes out of Ireland. However, all evidence suggests that post-glacial Ireland never had snakes.



In his early teens he was captured by Irish raiders in his birth-country of Scotland and taken to Ireland as a slave to tend sheep. During his captivity, he turned to God in prayer. Patrick's captivity lasted until he was twenty, when he escaped after having a dream from God in which he was told to leave Ireland by going to the coast. There he found sailors who took him back to Britain. He had another dream in which the people of Ireland were calling out to him "We beg you, holy youth, to come and walk among us once more."

He studied for the priesthood and was ordained. Later, he was ordained a bishop, and returned back to Ireland to establish the church. Though the task was difficult and dangerous, he persisted and was able to build a strong foundation for Christianity. The Irish people were very receptive to his teachings especially since that he was able to take several of their Celtic symbols and Christianize them. The most prominent of these is the green shamrock. He used this plant, which was held sacred by the Druids, as a symbol of the Trinity. .

Patrick preached and converted all of Ireland for 40 years, working many miracles and writing of his love for God in Confessions. After years of living in poverty, traveling and enduring much suffering he died March 17, 461.

Patrick was a humble, pious, gentle man, who had total devotion to and trust in God. He feared nothing, not even death, so complete was his trust in God, and of the importance of his mission.