

LENT AT ST JOSEPH PARISH / MISHAWAKA, IN IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ✠ TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY FOUR ✠

The Lenten Season begins on Ash Wednesday (**14 February**) and ends with the beginning of the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday (**28 March**) and has a twofold character: to prepare both Catechumens (those preparing for Baptism) and the Faithful (the baptized) to celebrate the **Paschal Mystery** (*the work of salvation wrought by the death and resurrection of Jesus*). **Catechumens**, with the Rite of Election, the Scrutinies, and Catechesis, prepare for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation at the Solemn Easter Vigil. The **Faithful**, by being more attentive to prayer and to the Word of God, prepare by penance for the renewal of their own baptismal promises at Easter. The three works of Lent held out to both are **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving**.

PRAYER: The center of the Church's entire liturgical year is the **Sacred Triduum**, one feast comprising three days, which invites us to experience, in the greatest depth, the Paschal Mystery. The entire Lenten season is devoted to the preparation for this great celebration of the Paschal Mystery. You will note that Lent is marked by a starkness and simplicity: few if any decorations or flowers adorn the church, there is no *Gloria* at Mass, and the *Alleluia* is omitted

As we renew our commitment to the **stewardship of time as prayer**, we are invited to set some practical goals for **daily prayer**. Our commitment to daily prayer will bear tremendous fruit in our ability to enter more deeply into Sunday Mass. If an intentional time of daily prayer is currently not part of your routine, it is recommended to start small - even 10-15 minutes or so - and then being resolutely faithful, every single day. Regularity and consistency here will naturally engender organic growth and increased vitality. You will likely want to find a place in your home that is conducive to prayer, perhaps a particular chair with some sacred art nearby, and which you *only use for prayer*.

Some other practical considerations: **Daily Mass** (e.g. join Wednesdays at 5:30pm and stay for the Soup Supper, Ash Wednesday through **20 March**) / **Stations of the Cross** / **Confession** / the **Magnificat Daily Companion** (will help by providing a reflection on the daily Mass Gospel-so keep this with a Bible and read the Gospel cited on each day's reflection too!) / the **Rosary**, a time-tested devotion which is also a great communal and/or family prayer / the **Hallow** app has many resources / the **Liturgy of the Hours** (visit divineoffice.org or see 'iBreviary' app) / **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**, which is the worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass, an incredibly fruitful way to spend time in personal prayer as we gaze upon the Lord Jesus present in the Eucharist and he gazes upon us / **personal prayer in Church** at other times.

We are especially praying for our catechumens (those preparing for Baptism) and candidates (those already baptized and seeking full communion with the Catholic Church) as they enter into proximate preparation for full initiation into the Church at the Solemn Easter Vigil. The catechumens will undergo the traditional **Scrutinies**, which are a form of pre-baptismal (minor) exorcisms. And the candidates participate in a **Penitential Rite** to help prepare them to profess the faith.

Regular Year-Round Daily Masses (~25-30 mins)

M-Sat 7am

Weds 5:30pm (with St. Joseph Novena after)

Soup Suppers

After Wednesday 5:30pm Mass, Ash Wednesday through 20 March.

Lenten Day of Recollection

Saturday 17 February from 9am-12:30pm. Visit stjoemish.com or call 255.6134 to register.

Stations of the Cross

Fridays at 6pm. Followed by Confessions until last heard.

Individual Confession / Penance / Reconciliation

M-Sat 7:30am

Tues 5:30-6:15pm

Wed 5-5:20pm

Sat 9:30-10:15am

For Lent only: Fridays after Stations of the Cross and until last heard.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Monday-Saturday 7:30am-8:30am

Tuesdays 5:30-6:30pm (w/ Benediction)

Church Open for Personal Prayer

M-F 6am-7pm

Sat 6am-after 4:30pm Mass

Sun 6am-7pm

Sacred Triduum

28 March - 7pm - **Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper** (Confession available after)

29 March - 1pm - **Good Friday Service of the Lord's Passion** (Confession available after)

29 March - 6pm - Stations of the Cross (Confession available after)

29 March - 9pm - Tenebrae

30 March - 9pm - **Solemn Easter Vigil Mass**

Easter Sunday Masses

31 March - 7:15am, 9:15am, and 11:15am

FASTING: Central to the Church's Lenten tradition is the ancient practice of fasting. There are many ways to approach this tradition, but one of the most spiritually fruitful would be to see, in our voluntary choice to do without something (or things) we enjoy, the opportunity to allow the Lord to fill that space in our hearts with a deeper longing for Him - and for heaven - recognizing that only He can satisfy the deepest longings of our hearts. There are only **two obligatory fast days** in the Church's calendar: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. **All Catholics age 18 to 59 are required to fast** - to eat only one full meal on these days, and may supplement this with one or two smaller meals (together not equaling the size of the full meal). **Abstinence from meat is obligatory for every Catholic age 14 and older on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays of Lent.** Some form of penance is also required on every other Friday of the year, too. Some individuals, following the more ancient custom, abstain from meat throughout the entire season of Lent, as well. Within the tradition, when fasts were more severe, Sunday was a day on which sacrifices made during Lent could be relaxed (**read Isaiah 58**). The **Paschal Triduum** (from the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper to the Solemn Easter Vigil Mass) affords an opportunity for an even greater opportunity of fruitful fasting in the savoring of the mystery of the Lord's victory over sin and death by dying on the Cross and rising from the dead.

ALMSGIVING: The third ancient pillar of Lenten renewal is almsgiving: the gift of support, monetary and otherwise, to the poor and those in need. Genuine almsgiving gets us out of ourselves and militates against our otherwise fallen tendency toward selfishness and self-centeredness. Our regular sacrificial giving to the parish supports the **almsgiving of the parish** - 4% of our offertory income - which is used for a variety of charitable work (while the remaining 6% automatically goes to the work of the diocese). While our individual efforts of a stewardship of sacrificial giving is seen first in relation to the parish, we are also invited to individually consider supporting some charitable organizations ourselves, which we are obliged by our share in the Eucharist (**Read Luke 16**). Some ideas here: the St. Vincent de Paul Society (our parish's, or regionally), Hannah's House (home for pregnant women just down the street), the Women's Care Center, Our Lady of the Road, and many others.

Lastly, non-monetary support of the poor permits us a creative use of our time and talents - **our parish conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society** has been welcoming many new members over the past several months. Perhaps we would like to visit nursing home residents or homebound parishioners or neighbors or volunteering in some other way. We need only ask the Lord in prayer to help us to see how we may be better able to love others - and then have the courage to do what He prompts us!