

# Breath of Life

THE PASTORAL CARE NEWSLETTER  
OF MATULATIS HOME

## LENT Pray + Fast + Give

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When you hear that we will be entering the Lenten season, what comes to mind? I think it is safe to say that many would respond: asking "What will I give up this year?", planning meatless dinners for Fridays, and Stations of the Cross. While these are a great place to start, Lent can be a much richer experience than just bare bones requirements and the same old routine! Perhaps if we dig in together, we can help one another experience this as a fruitful season of growing in our faith and relationship with Jesus. [So what is it all about?](#)

Lent is the 40 days leading up to Holy Week and Easter during which Christians dedicate themselves to shedding the habits of sin in their lives and paying special attention to deepening their faith and developing new habits to grow in holiness. It is a time when we can enthusiastically recommit to our faith as we "repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15).

This is accomplished through the three central components of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving/works of love.

It can be easy to slip into the trap of focusing so much on what one decides to "give up" for Lent that we forget the whole point of fasting in the first place: clearing away distractions,

recognizing our need and hunger for relationship with God, and what our sacrifices free us to do or give to serve God and others.



Blind Ash Wednesday

### Ash Wednesday—

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, this year falling on February 14<sup>th</sup>, which is an obligatory day of fasting for Catholics – the very young, infirm, and elderly are exempt from this requirement; all others are obliged to abstain from meat and consume only one full meal and two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. We fast as a sign of repentance, in imitation of Jesus, who fasted and endured temptations in the desert for 40 days (Lk 4:1-13; Mt 4:1-11), and to remind us of our dependence on God, of our need and hunger for what only God can provide. Ash Wednesday is also observed through the practice of ceremonially receiving ashes in the form of the Cross on one's forehead, accompanied by the exhortation to "Repent and return to the Gospel" or "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return" – calling us to reflect upon our relationship with God, remembering who we are to God and who God is for us. The ashes in the form of a Cross represent Christ's victory over death; they are not a sign of death, but a promise of life!

Trappist Monk and spiritual writer Thomas Merton explains: "It is necessary that at the beginning of this fast, the Lord should show Himself to us in His mercy. The purpose of Lent is ...a preparation to rejoice in His love.

Let today be the day you give up who you've been for who you can become

And this preparation consists in receiving the gift of His mercy – a gift we receive in so far as we open our hearts to it, casting out what cannot remain in the same room with mercy."

("Ash Wednesday," *Worship* 1959, pg. 166.)



## Celebrate Lent & Easter

### Lent & Easter Services

- 2.12.18** World Day of the Sick & Caregivers Prayer Service 2pm Center Court
- 2.14.18** Ash Wednesday Holy Mass 10:30am Ashes distributed during and following Mass in the Chapel
- 2.16.18** Stations of the Cross 4pm Chapel  
**\*every Friday during Lent\***
- 3.2.18** Stations of the Cross 3:30pm Chapel (note time change)  
First Friday Holy Hour with Benediction 4pm Chapel
- 3.11.18** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Lenten Devotions 3pm Chapel  
**\*Sundays during Lent – 3/18 and 3/25\***
- 3.21.18** Communal Reconciliation Service in preparation for Easter 1:30pm Chapel
- 3.23.18** Holy Mass with Sacrament of the Sick 10:30am
- 3.25.18** Palm Sunday Holy Mass 10:30am
- 3.29.18** Holy Thursday Holy Mass 4pm
- 3.30.18** Stations of the Cross 10:30am Chapel
- The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy will be prayed following the Stations of the Cross, initiating our **Divine Mercy Novena**. A chaplet will then be prayed each day following Mass until the novena concludes on Divine Mercy Sun.
- Good Friday Service 3pm**
- 4.1.18** Easter Sunday Holy Mass 10:30am
- 4.8.18** Divine Mercy Sunday Holy Mass 10:30am Novena will be concluded following Mass.

### Prayer – Putting God First

While Lent is generally associated with "giving something up," this fasting should create room in our lives for the next step; to add something in. If one finds they typically "don't have time for prayer," Lent is a good time to re-prioritize and use that space and time that one's fasting creates to draw closer to God by growing deeper in prayer. Popular speaker Fr. Larry Richards shares thoughts on putting prayer and relationship with God at the center of our lives: "The key to balance is to 'seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you' (Matthew 6:33). Too many try to fit God and prayer into their lives instead of building their lives around God. Now that does not mean that someone has to spend hours in prayer every day, but it does mean that they start with prayer and a listening obedient heart, and God will show them what to do next. He knows all about how busy we are, and He still says put Him first."<sup>\*</sup>

### Lenten Day of Reflection – All are Welcome!

- Join us for a day of reflection and renewal...
- Re-energize your spiritual life with presentations, group sessions, and quiet time for reflection and prayer...
- Re-connect with your faith, inner peace and joy...
- Opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and attend Mass with other retreatants...(optional)
- Lunch provided...
- All are welcome regardless of faith background!...
- Free of charge (donations encouraged)

**Saturday February 24<sup>th</sup>  
9:30am-4:30pm**

Confession – 3pm  
Mass – 4pm

**Immaculate Conception  
Spiritual Renewal Center**

† Register by Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> †  
860-928-7955 x 105





## Fasting & Almsgiving – Works of Love

*"Fasting makes sense if it ... benefits someone else, if it helps us cultivate the style of the good Samaritan, who bent down to his brother in need and took care of him."*

-Pope Francis



We don't fast just for the sake of fasting; it's a spiritual practice, not a diet. We "give up" so that we can give – give charitably to others and give ourselves more freely to God.

Fr. Larry Richards proposes a way of prioritizing what we give our time, talent, and resources to so that we can, as Pope Francis describes it, "cultivate the style of the good Samaritan":

**"I am Third" is a way to make sure that we get our priorities right. God is first. Others are second. I need to be third. This was the way that Jesus lived and thus it must be the way we live. He said: 'I did not come to be served but to serve' (Mark 10:45)."**

How will your Lenten practices help you to live this more fully, with greater sincerity of heart? What can you do this Lent to put God and others before yourself?

\*(Knights of Columbus Book Club Chat with Fr. Larry Richards, 30 March 2010, <https://koc.org/un/chat/findChatInfo.action?broadcastChatId=1064>.)

**A Lenten Prayer:** *"How often have I lived through these weeks without paying much attention to penance, fasting, and prayer? How often have I missed the spiritual fruits of the season without even being aware of it? But how can I ever really celebrate Easter without observing Lent? How can I rejoice fully in your Resurrection when I have avoided participating in your death? Yes, Lord, I have to die—with you, through you, and in you—and thus become ready to recognize you when you appear to me in your Resurrection. There is so much in me that needs to die: false attachments, greed and anger, impatience and stinginess. ... I see clearly now how little I have died with you, really gone your way and been faithful to it. O Lord, make this Lenten season different from the other ones. Let me find you again. Amen." --Henri Nouwen, A Cry For Mercy: Prayers from the Genesee*

## Holy Week

**Palm Sunday** – "When they drew near to Jerusalem... Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. Those preceding [Jesus] as well as those following kept crying out: 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (Mk 11:1, 7-9)



### Holy Thursday –

"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.'" (Mt 26: 26-28)



### Good Friday –

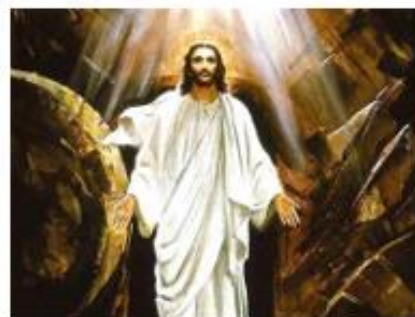
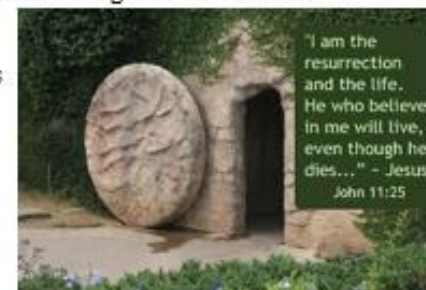
"When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him ... Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.'" (Lk 23:33-34)



## Easter: What It Means & Why It Matters

Easter is the most important Christian holiday, the reason for our hope and faith. Easter is the day we remember and celebrate Jesus' Resurrection from the dead, fulfilling God's promises throughout Scripture. It is through the Resurrection that we have the hope of heaven and life eternal. Without the Resurrection, Jesus would just have been a good man, a moral teacher and healer, a prophet; and while He is these things, it is through the Resurrection that we also know Him to truly be the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, and that we have hope for life in and through Him. This is truly a day for rejoicing, raising our voices in joyful "Alleluias"!

We may profess faith in Christ, claim Him as our Lord and Savior, but what does that mean for you and me in our day-to-day lives? Has the passage through the Lenten season to the joy of this Easter celebration brought us closer in friendship with Jesus? Have we come to know Him more intimately, our God who knows what it is to live, to have friends, to celebrate, to suffer, to grieve and cry, to die, and to rise to eternal life? Jesus knows all that we carry in our hearts, all the joy and grief of human life, and I pray that you open yours to know and be known by Him. May the joy and hope of this season remain with you always!



*We pray that your hearts be filled with hope and joy this Easter, and that Jesus' promise remain with you:*

**"Behold, I am with you always."** (Mt 28:20)

*Wishing you a Blessed and Happy Easter!*

*We thank God always for you!*

*From all of us on the  
Spiritual Care Team:*

*Olivia, Father Sadauskas,  
Sister Bernadette, and Christina*



Check out our website:  
[www.matulaitisnh.org](http://www.matulaitisnh.org)



**Matulaitis Home**  
10 Thurber Road  
Putnam, CT 06260  
Phone.....860-928-7976  
Fax.....860-963-1920

