

# Breath of Life

THE PASTORAL CARE NEWSLETTER  
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We may know that Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, and we might think about “giving up” something like chocolate or coffee until Easter, but what is this season really all about?

Lent is the period of 40 days leading up to Holy Week and Easter during which Christians dedicate themselves with greater intensity to deepening their relationship with God, shedding habits of sin, and developing new habits for growing in holiness. It is a time for reflection and conversion of heart, recommitting to our faith as we “repent and believe in the Gospel” (Mk 1:15).

Jesus spent 40 days in the desert praying, fasting, and enduring temptations (Lk 4:1-13, Mt 4:1-11), and Lent is our opportunity to join Him there through our own practices of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and works of love and charity. “It is a time for ‘giving things up’ balanced by ‘giving to’ those in need. Yet whatever else it may be, Lent should never be morose – an annual ordeal during which we begrudgingly forgo a handful of pleasures. Instead, we ought to approach Lent as an opportunity, not a requirement” (from the introduction to *“Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter”*).

*How can you embrace this season of Lent as an opportunity and make it a meaningful experience for growing closer to Christ?*

## Journey into the wilderness with Jesus.

“During the season of Lent we renew our commitment to the path of conversion, making more room for God in our lives.”

- Pope Benedict XVI

*Pray - Fast - Give*



# Lent

A SEASON OF PREPARATION

**Daily:** Holy Mass, 10:30am in the Chapel. Memorial Masses are offered for all residents who have died here; dates are posted at the Reception Counter, Center Court, and the Family News bulletin board.

**Weekly:** Hymns & Prayers program is offered at 2:30pm on Mon. and Thurs. Bible Study meets every Wed. at 1pm.

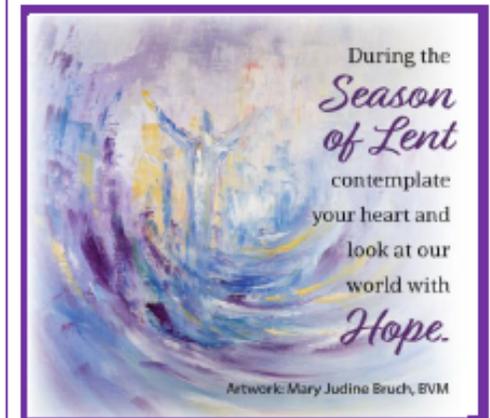
- 2.18.26 Ash Wednesday**  
Holy Mass 10:30am  
Ashes distributed during & following Mass  
Bible Study  
1pm D-Lounge\***every Wed.\***  
Spiritual Film 2:30pm A-Lounge
- 2.20.26 Stations of the Cross**  
3:15pm Chapel
- 2.22.26 Sunday Spiritual Cinema**  
“The Chosen” Season 5  
1pm A-Lounge  
\***Sundays during Lent\***
- 2.27.26 Stations of the Cross**  
3pm Chapel  
\***every Friday during Lent\***
- 3.6.26 First Friday**  
Adoration & Benediction  
3:30pm *after Stations of the Cross*
- 3.13.26 13<sup>th</sup> of the Month Rosary Club**  
1:30pm Chapel *Monthly*
- 3.15.26 Lenten Adoration & Benediction**  
3pm Chapel  
\***also Sundays 3.22.26 and 3.29.26\***
- 3.19.26 Feast Day of St. Joseph – Chaplet**  
1:30pm Chapel
- 3.26.26 Communal Preparation for Reconciliation Service**  
2pm Chapel
- 3.27.26 Holy Mass with Sacrament of the Sick 10:30am Chapel**
- 3.29.26 Palm Sunday – Beginning of Holy Week**

## Prayer: Putting God First

For those who find they “don’t have time for prayer” or whose prayer life has become stale and repetitive, Lent is a good time to re-prioritize and go deeper. This can mean spending more time in personal prayer – praying with Scripture, practices like praying the Rosary or the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – and participating more regularly in communal worship – attending Mass, Stations of the Cross, prayer groups, and other church services.

Popular speaker Fr. Larry Richards offers some provocative thoughts on putting relationship with God and prayer at the center of our lives:

**“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.”\***



## 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*

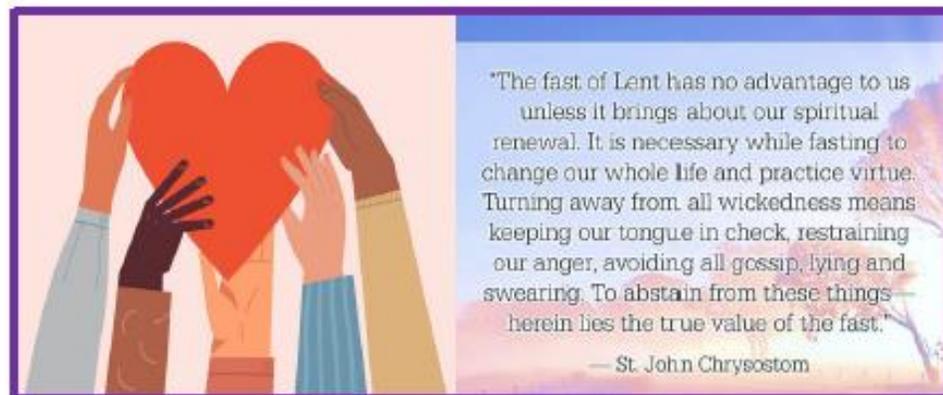
We don't fast just for the sake of fasting; it's a spiritual practice, not a diet or second chance at our New Year's resolutions. It can help us to grow in self-control, strengthening us to resist temptation, and our hunger reminds us of our true, deeper hunger for God in our lives.



Furthermore, we "give up" so that we can *give* – give charitably to others and give ourselves more freely to God. Fasting reminds us of our own need and dependence on God and also helps us to recognize and respond with greater tenderness to the needs of others by freeing us to share our time, talents, and resources more generously. "Lent is the season in which we ought to be surprised by joy. Our self-sacrifices serve no purpose unless, by laying aside this or that desire, we are able to focus on our heart's deepest longing: unity with Christ" (from the introduction to *"Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter"*).

Fr. Larry Richards suggests a way of prioritizing to help us cultivate this spirit of generosity and service:  
**"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)."**\*

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



## Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross are a popular Lenten devotion referring to a series of 14 images depicting Jesus on the day of His Crucifixion along with accompanying prayers.

They originated in pilgrimages to Jerusalem and a desire to reproduce the Via Dolorosa or "Way of Sorrows," the actual path that Jesus walked on His way to Mount Calvary, for the many faithful who couldn't make the journey to Jerusalem. Whether actually processing from one station to the next within a church or along an outdoor path, or prayerfully contemplating images of the stations, this devotion is meant to help Christians make a spiritual pilgrimage by contemplating Jesus' Passion.

Saint Francis of Assisi held the Passion of Jesus in special veneration and, in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, his religious congregation, the Franciscans, began to build outdoor shrines in Europe representing pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land. Over the centuries, these stations began to be erected within churches and in 1731 the number of stations was fixed at 14. Today, thanks to the prayerful dedication of the Franciscans over hundreds of years, Stations of the Cross can be seen in nearly every Catholic Church.

The images accompanying each of the 14 stations can vary in form and style: they may be plaques or paintings placed around the interior of a church, life-sized statues along an outdoor path, or something in between. The Stations of the Cross along the interior walls of the Matulaitis Home chapel were created in a modern style along with the Altar, stained glass windows, and other interior art by the Lithuanian artist Vytautas Jonynas.



The prayers, reflections, and hymns accompanying each station may also vary depending on the demographics of the participants. A verse from the beautiful 13<sup>th</sup>-century hymn known as the "Stabat Mater" is often sung during the procession from one station to the next. The title of this song is taken from its first lines, *Stabat mater dolorosa juxta Crucem lacrimosa*, which means "The Sorrowful Mother was standing beside the Cross weeping." This moving hymn has been translated and set to music by various composers over the centuries. *Join us in this beautiful tradition!*

***Join us making the Stations of the Cross and accompany Christ along the way of His Passion every Friday of Lent at 3pm!***

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



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