

Saturday, February 13

5 p.m. +Members of the Kuharick Family
By Family

Sunday, February 14

8:00 a.m. +James Kane
By Susan Reynolds

10:30 a.m. +Concetta and Sabastiano Gallo
By The Gallo Family

Monday, February 15

8:45 a.m. Parishioners of St. Theodore Church

Tuesday, February 16

8:45 a.m. Blessings of Health for Keira Hedges
By Grammy Rupell

Wednesday, February 17 Holy Founders of the Servite Order

8:45 a.m. Birthday Blessings for Ludwik Tomiczek
By Father Damian

Thursday, February 18

8:45 a.m. Special Intentions
By Father Damian

Friday, February 19 NO MASS

Saturday, February 20

5 p.m. +John A. Haines
By Vicki and Alex

Sunday, February 21

8:00 a.m. +John A. Haines
By Bill and Mary Supple

10:30 a.m. Parishioners of St. Theodore Church

- *Divine Mercy Chaplet Devotion and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 3 p.m. Fridays during Lent*
- *Stations of the Cross and Eucharistic Adoration 7 p.m. Fridays during Lent*

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. All other Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence only. The obligation to fast applies only to Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59: one full meal a day, so as to experience hunger. Abstinence means to abstain from meat.

What is Lent?

By definition, the season of Lent is the time of preparation for Holy Week, leading up to Easter. For many, it is a time to give up something like candy or smoking. It may be a time for more frequent Mass attendance for others. The following is a brief reflection leading up to what may be a better view of Lent for some.

Lent owes much of its spirit to the forty days Jesus spent in the desert preparing for his ministry. We say he was tempted there, but a more accurate translation may be "tested." The Jewish view of the desert was an abode of demons, especially that part of the desert where winds would howl around tall, rough stone. It must have been terrifying at night: dark, looming shapes, unearthly wailing of wind, and nothing else. In this place, Jesus was offered the opportunity to be the wrong kind of messiah. He rejected each possibility.

When the Hebrews were led from Egypt to the Promised Land, they refused to go in because they did not trust God's promise. God led them into the desert for forty years, until they learned the trust they lacked. During this time, all the ones that had refused to cross the Jordan died. In this way, God's people were purified.

During Lent, we have the opportunity to hear voices that are usually lost in the din of pleasure and meaningless talk. We can enter into a private desert even in the midst of the world and face our own demons. We can tear down false idols only to be heartbroken at finding others behind them. If we are brave, we can run through this desert trying to find the real God amid the gods.

During Lent, we use abstinence from meat and acts of penance as metaphors. In a very small way, they model the rejection of illusions about what we need, who we are, and who God is. In this life, we try to make some progress in discarding our "disordered attachments."

We must remember that through all of this, God is with us. He may not offer comfort now, but He promises no trial beyond our ability to succeed. He offers us no truth we cannot accept if we become as children. When Jesus had finally driven off the devil, angels came to wait on him. When, through Jesus, we have rejected illusion and self-deception, we can be sure of continued graces from God. These are not the rewards of virtue but those gifts which are available only to real people.

Diocese of Metuchen Lenten Instructions 2016

1. The days of **fast and abstinence** are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
2. **All other Fridays** of Lent are **days of abstinence**.
3. From the **Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday** until the celebration of the **Easter Vigil on the evening of Holy Saturday**, the **Easter fast** should be

observed so that, with uplifted and welcoming hearts, we may be ready to celebrate the joys of the Resurrection. This ancient tradition intimately connected with the *Rites of Holy Week* and the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*, is encouraged, especially in those places baptizing catechumens at the Easter Vigil.

The obligation to **fast** applies only to Catholics **between the ages of 18 and 59**. To fast in the Catholic tradition means to limit oneself to one full meal during the day so as to experience hunger. The obligation of **abstinence** affects all Catholics who have **reached the age of 14**. Abstinence in the Catholic tradition means to abstain from meat and all meat products.

The obligation of fast and abstinence, as a whole, is a serious obligation. While failure to observe **any** penitential day in itself many **not be considered serious**, the failure to observe **any** penitential day at all, or a **substantial number** of them **without good cause**, would be considered a **grave matter**. Those unable to abstain for a valid reason on any given Friday of Lent are asked to perform **some other penitential act**, or to **abstain on another day**.

Weather Conditions and Sunday Mass Obligation

In light of the blizzard of two weekends ago, the Bishop has prepared the following statement offering guidance for occasions when serious weather conditions fall on a weekend. He asks that you kindly disseminate the statement by means of your weekly bulletin and website now and throughout the year.

Given the difficulty of communicating with all the faithful of the Diocese on short notice, Bishop Bootkoski offers the following guidance for those occasions when weather conditions might present a hazard walking or driving to church for Sunday Mass.

A Message from Bishop Paul G. Bootkoski
Catholics are **not** obliged to follow the precept to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation when weather conditions could make roads, sidewalks, and parking lots unsafe. When judging whether travelling could be dangerous, one should use common sense and always err on the side of caution.

When unable to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, the faithful still are encouraged to observe the Day of the Lord (Sunday). A practical approach may be to read and reflect on the Gospel of the day and, if living with others, you may discuss ways the Gospel message can be lived out in your own household, the Domestic Church. You may also consider praying together the Responsorial Psalm of the Day.

Finally, pastors and administrators are reminded that canon law enables you to dispense your parishioners from their Sunday Mass obligation "in individual cases" (c. 1245), which includes a single situation involving many persons.

Our Offering: \$2,429 Last Year: \$2,502.25

The following dates are available for your intentions. Mass intentions can be for the living, as well as the deceased. Blessings for Healing, Birthdays, Anniversaries and Special Intentions are wonderful ways to express how much you care. We have Mass openings on the following dates: **Feb. 22, 23, 25, 29. Mar. 1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 16, 17, 21.** Call Mary to reserve a Mass 689-8318, ext. 1



Pascal Candle and Matching Altar Candles: if you would like to donate funds for either the Paschal candle or the Altar Candles (or all of them), in *Loving Memory Of*, or in *Honor Of* a loved one, please call Mary, 689-8318, ext. 1 . (Paschal Candle \$180; Altar Candles Set \$105)

Church Announcements

- **During the Fridays of the Holy Season of Lent**, please join us at 3 p.m. for the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy; Confessions at 6:30 p.m., Stations of the Cross at 7 p.m. and Eucharistic Adoration at 7:30 p.m.
- **Confessions** will be heard 30 minutes before the start of every Mass—weekends, as well as daily Masses.
- **Home Visitations:** Every First Friday beginning at 10:30 a.m. Call Mary at the Parish Office to be put on the list.
- **Special Collection:** February 13/14: National Collection for Humanitarian and Church Needs for Severe Weather Relief in the United States **has been postponed until April 10.**

Religious Education Schedule

Feb.15: No School: Presidents' Day

Feb. 19, 7 pm: Grades 1 thru 4: At Church for Stations of the Cross

Feb. 22: All grades at School

Feb. 26, 7 pm: Grades 5 thru 8: At Church for Stations of the Cross

Feb. 29: All grades at School



Please pray for: Stephen, Elizabeth Ondroczyk, Rosaria Incantalupo, Anthony Vitale, Bridget M., Savannah Paine, Bobby Gross, Michael Dante,

Keira H., Maryann Vaughan, Charlie Guerriere, Sr., Robert Dicheck, Peter, Zachary, Logan Peter Saksa, Anna Saksa, Lauren Lane, Jay Mildrum, Philip Kinney, Mary D., Eleanor D., Kerry Kraft