

The First Sunday of Lent

Mass Intention

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21– First Sunday of Lent

8:00 A.M. Richard Conlon
9:30 A.M. Serrovillo Family
11:00 A.M. For the People of St. Francis
12:30 P.M. Rocco Dimilta
Paul Carullo

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22 – The Feast of the Chair of St. Peter the Apostle

9:00 A.M. Frank DiDonato

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23 - WEEKDAY

9:00 A.M. Francis Gullotti

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24 - WEEKDAY

9:00 A.M. John Kilroe

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25 - WEEKDAY

9:00 A.M. Charlotte Lechner

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26 - WEEKDAY

9:00 A.M. Carmen Pierce

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27 - WEEKDAY

9:00 A.M. Purgatorial Society
Kevin Brothy

5:00 P.M. Emmanuel Asagba

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28– Second Sunday of Lent

8:00 A.M. For the People of St. Francis
9:30 A.M. Domenick Mezzatesta
11:00 A.M. Catherine Vento
12:30 P.M. Anthony Paul Carullo
Anna Cicolini Chille

Today's Readings

First Sunday of Lent

Genesis 9:8-15
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:12-15

Readings for the Week

MONDAY: 1 Peter 5:1-4
Matthew 16:13-19

TUESDAY: Isaiah 55:10-11
Matthew 6:7-15

WEDNESDAY: Jonah 3:1-10
Luke 11:29-32

THURSDAY: Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25
Matthew 7:7-12

FRIDAY: Ezekiel 18:21-28
Matthew 2:20-26

SATURDAY: Deuteronomy 26:16-19
Matthew 5:43-48

Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18
Romans 8:31b-34
Mark 9:2-10



Father, help me to see this holy season of Lent as a time of spiritual renewal, rather than a time of deprivation. Motivate me to reach a new level of experiencing your grace.



My Dear Parishioners,

A number of years ago there was a movie in which a man, who had been mugged and left in a coma for weeks, came out of it vibrant with life. *I feel reborn*, he tells his brother. *If you were a priest, I'd make a complete confession.* We may often find that distance from our daily routine can spark energy and provide us with a new perspective on everything. In somewhat the same way, Lent can provide us with a sort of distancing opportunity to look with new vigor at our spiritual lives. It can be a time to address our sinful habits and to follow Christ more closely.

Today's Gospel reading from Mark can provide us with help in doing that. After His baptism in the Jordan, Jesus goes into the desert, being led there by the Holy Spirit. Mark reminds us that Jesus remained *in the desert for forty days*. We might wonder why Jesus would spend so many days of his short life in such a place? What was the purpose of spending forty days in the desert?

We can see, however, that it was in the desert that Jesus was strengthened for the mission that lay ahead. It was there Jesus was tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts. In the desert, Jesus was tested, much as every person is tested in life, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Mark tells us that during his ordeal, angels served Jesus, again, much as angels minister to us if we are open to their help. When he left the desert, Jesus began to proclaim that the Kingdom of God was at hand. He began the work for which the Father had sent him.

This first Sunday in Lent invites us to journey into the desert with Jesus, as we begin our preparation for Easter. This is a time when each of us can confront the weaknesses in our hearts, our wayward habits. It is a time when we can allow the angels to minister to us and help us focus our lives on doing God's will. It can be a time of renewal, including fostering forgiveness, compassion and love, and confronting any weaknesses, like pride, envy or vengeance we may be harboring.

After his time in the desert, Jesus emerged fully prepared to begin his public ministry. He proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was at hand, but even more, he demonstrated that the Kingdom was breaking into the world through him. He did this by performing mighty deeds, such as restoring sight to the blind, curing the sick and casting out demons. All of this gives us an example to follow. As we gain strength through our Lenten experiences and sacrifices, we are to prepare ourselves to share the Gospel with others. We are not only to use our words to do this, but our every action, too.

Today, as we mark the first Sunday of this penitential season, we have the opportunity to begin distancing ourselves from the attitudes and objects that have gotten in the way of our relationship with God. We have the opportunity to find new strength and new vigor in our commitment to doing God's will. If we do these things, we are likely to find that, as we emerge from our Lenten desert experience, we are blessed with a renewed spirit, more fully able to experience the joy of Easter.

***All God's Blessings,
Msgr. Maresca***



*Monday February 22, 2021
The Feast of The Chair of
St. Peter the Apostle*

Today we celebrate the feast of the [Chair of Saint Peter](#). We are not celebrating a piece of furniture, but the role and office of Peter within the Church. And that office, presently held by Pope Francis, has been around for over 2,000 years and is both a source of authority and unity as well as a cause of significant tension among the followers of Jesus. So why celebrate it?

We celebrate the feast for several reasons. First, it is a day when we recognize who and what the chair stands for. The chair of Peter is not the chair of a local bishop, for the chair of the Bishop of Rome is in his cathedral of John Lateran. So, while the present occupant of the Chair of Peter is Pope Francis, we are not focusing on his role as the local bishop of the diocese of Rome. Rather, we're celebrating his role as shepherd or bishop of the universal Church, a role that is intricately one with, but not identical to, his position as bishop of Rome. So the chair of Peter is, first, a stand-in for the pope as bishop of the world-wide Church.

We are also celebrating the authority of the universal bishop. It's the authority given by Jesus to Peter to lead and guide the Church in Jesus' place. For Jesus told Peter that "you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church . . ." (Mt 16:18). In his Letter to the Galatians, we see Saint Paul acknowledging this fact by seeking Peter's approval for his ministry, for he recognized Peter as the first among the apostles (Gal 1:18). This authority and role, we believe as Catholics, is passed down and exercised by the pope, just as the authority and role of the apostles is passed down and exercised by the bishops in union with the pope.

"(Lent) is a period of spiritual 'combat' which we must experience alongside Jesus, not with pride and presumption, but using the arms of faith: prayer, listening to the word of God and penance. In this way we will be able to celebrate Easter in truth, ready to renew the promises of our Baptism."

-Pope Benedict XVI



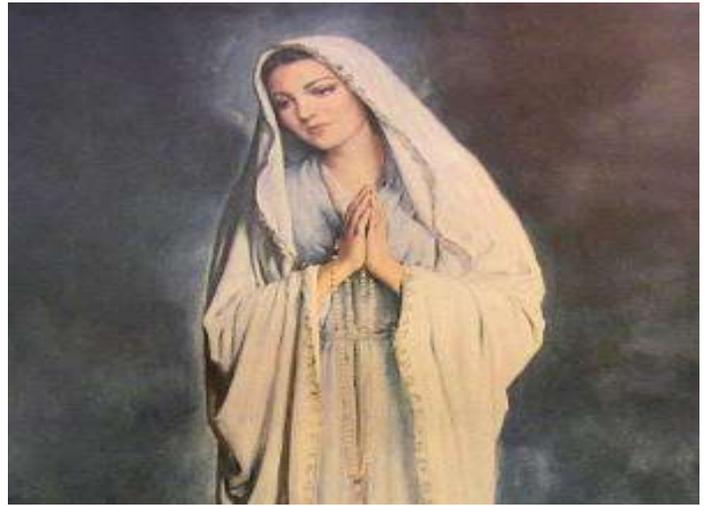


EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is taking place every Monday through Saturday from 8:00 AM to 8:50 AM. The rosary is prayed at 8:30 AM each morning. All are invited to stop by and spend some time in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Whether it's for one day a week, 5 minutes a visit, or just a stop in to Church, it's a wonderful way to begin our day.

During the Season of Lent find time to spend in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Time spent in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament will bring countless blessings to you and our parish.



PRAYER TO MARY DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANADEMIC

O Mary, you shine continuously along our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the Cross were near to the pain of Jesus, keeping your faith firm.

You, salvation of the Roman people, know what we need and we trust that you will provide for those needs so that, as at Cana of Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us. He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and took up our sorrows to bring us through the Cross to the joy of the Resurrection Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despose our pleas - we who are put to the test - and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.



Welcome to Our Church

If you wish to register as a parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi Church, please stop by the Rectory Office during regular business hours. There you can pick up a census card which can be filled out at that time or returned by mail or in the Sunday Collection Basket. You can even download the census card on line. Just check our website at:

stfrancisofassisiastoria.org

You will then begin to receive weekly offering envelopes.



Remember in your prayers all those in our parish who are sick, that they may find health and comfort:

Steven Joyce, Ana Balint, John Wrenn, Rose Williams, George Behringer, Augustin Cisneros, Martha Calado, James Nunez, Vincent Wytak, Carol Ross, Jeffrey Hyans, Marie LoVolpe, Jessica St. Preux, Al Ciani, Alesha Moses, Nancy McCaffrey, Christopher Wojtalik, Marie Guerriero, Theresa Pacheco, William Goss, Luke Pacheco, Vincenza Papa, Jim Schneggenburger, Anthony Criscuolo, John Ross, Samantha O'Sullivan, Marilyn Miller, John Carmody, Rosario Duran, Vivian Papa, Joel Steinmann, Anna Governali, Antonio Postiglione, Mario Tamburello, Christopher Araimo, Charles Principato, Jim Kreitler, Humberto Cordova, John Schakir, Louise Joyce Mastromarco, Margaret Culhane, Benedicto Randazzo, Theresa Unter

Also remember in your prayers all the deceased of the Parish. Please remember to continue to pray for vocations to the priesthood, religious life, diaconate, and married life.

FOCUS:

If we go into the desert with Jesus this Lent, His grace will move us forward in our life of faith.

Lent isn't an end unto itself; we go into to the desert with Jesus in order to advance in holiness and in our spiritual life. All the blessings and trials in our lives are not closed events. They are precursors to more: greater trust in God, deeper union with Him, and a greater sense of our mission to proclaim the kingdom of God.



Parish Mission Statement

St. Francis of Assisi Parish is a Catholic community that is centered in Jesus, gathers in worship and witnesses the Gospel message. The parish values and welcomes each person's gift of time, talent and treasure. As a faith-filled community, we are committed to minister to the spiritual, educational and material needs of all people.

SFA SCRIPTURE STUDY

ALL ARE WELCOME

"Not by bread alone shall man live, but by every word of God"

Join us in our virtual scripture study. We meet every Thursday at 7:30pm. The **February 25th** meeting will cover **John, Chapter 16 through 17**. "Scholars designate Chapters 13:1-20:31 as the **Book of Glory** because they describe the glorification and his return to the Father."

We are using Zoom as our platform. Technical assistance will be provided by Ellen Vento for accessing and using the program.

The Gospel readings and study will be conducted using the Little Rock Scripture program. Study booklets will be provided.

If you are interested in joining the study group or would like further information, please contact us through our email at sfascripturestudy@gmail.com or call the rectory at (718) 728-7801. Please be sure to leave your name and contact information.

Grow in Knowledge and Love of Scripture--
All Are Welcome!

For information contact:
sfascripturestudy@gmail.com

The First Sunday of Lent
February 21, 2021



"The Kingdom of God is at hand."

Consider a vocation as a priest, deacon or in the consecrated life.

Contact the Vocation Office at
(718) 827-2454 or
email: vocations@diobrook.org

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

Just a reminder when coming up to receive Holy Communion, and after receiving Jesus, one should be thinking of the wonderful privilege as a Catholic to receive Jesus, that special time we have with our Lord and Savior. It is not a time to allow oneself to be distracted by looking all around, waving, or speaking with the person on the end of the pew.

The Roman Missal states that,
"one should prepare by praying quietly, so that one may fruitfully receive the Body and Blood of Christ".



Next weekend, February 27/28, the second collection will be for Black & Indian Missions.

Please be as generous as your means allow.

St. John's University Speech and Hearing Center

The St. John's University Speech and Hearing Center will be offering "Hearing Aid Help" from February 8, 2021 to May 4, 2021. This is a **free** service and is available for anyone who has a hearing aid and may be experiencing some difficulty caring for it or using it.

Please call the center at (718) 990-6480 to schedule an appointment.

The Speech and Hearing Center is located at:

152-11 Union Turnpike
Flushing, NY 11367



Ensuring the Future of Your Church

Saint Francis of Assisi Parish relies on your goodness and generosity to ensure that the ministry of Jesus continues here in Astoria. A charitable bequest is an excellent way to create a lasting memorial. Many of our parishioners use their wills or living trusts to make their most generous gifts. Please remember us when you create yours.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish Weekly Offering

Thank you for your continued generosity of giving each week. Your weekly offering helps us pay our monthly bills.

The Collection/Donation for the weekend:

Collections 2/13-14	\$4,444.00
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School parents must use church envelopes.

CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

for tax purposes are available upon request.

Please call the Rectory at (718) 728-7801 if you would like a statement mailed to you.

REMINDER

Every other pew in Church is closed in order to observe social distancing and keep everyone safe. I have noticed some people disregarding the closed off pew and moving the sign and sitting in the row. Please **DO NOT** do that. I want people to be safe and to observe social distancing. As soon as we are able we will open the closed off pews. However, until that time they must remain closed and no one is to sit in them. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in this matter.

Msgr. Maresca

ATTENTION

PARENTS

Please DO NOT allow your child/children climb the snow mounds in the schoolyard or around the property. We don't want anyone to get hurt and it only makes a mess after Andrea and Mario spend hours shoveling the snow to clear the sidewalks and schoolyard.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Associated Vincentian Charities of Brooklyn

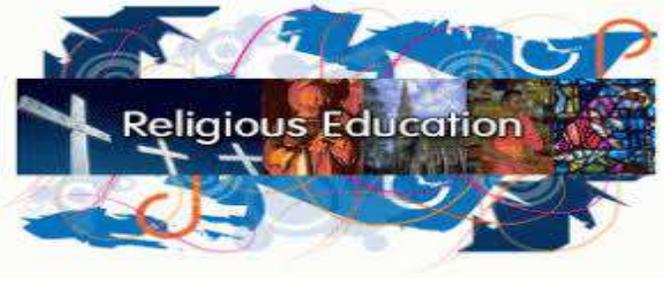
For each car, truck or van, running or not, The Associated Vincentian Charities of Brooklyn will give back to St. Francis of Assisi \$50/100 per vehicle. Maybe you don't have a vehicle, but a family member, friend or neighbor has an old or neglected vehicle in their driveway that they would like to dispose of.

Call the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at
(718) 491-2525.



During this time of Covid-19, if you are not feeling well, have a temperature, or have a cough, please stay home and watch the mass on television. There are a number of stations that carry Sunday Mass for you to watch. Please know this is for your health and the health of others. Remember to continue to wear a mask and maintain social distancing while attending Mass.

Thank you for all your cooperation with the guidelines.



If you have a child beginning first grade in public school, it is time to register for Religious Education. Diocesan guidelines require *two years* of instructions prior to the reception of a Sacrament. If your child is already in the first grade and missed this year, call the Office of Religious Education to set up an appointment to discuss the options.

Anthony Perrelli, Director of Faith Formation,
[\(718\) 278.0259](tel:7182780259) or dre@sfaacademy.org



ARE YOU SOMEONE OR DO YOU KNOW
SOMEONE WHO...

Has expressed an interest in becoming
Catholic?

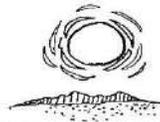
Was baptized Catholic as a child, but has not
celebrated the Sacraments of
Eucharist and/or Confirmation?

Then **RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)**
is what you're looking for!

Sessions focus on the teachings and
experience of the Church as well as prepare
individuals to celebrate the Sacraments of
Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist during the
Easter season.

For information please contact our
Director of Faith Formation, Anthony Perrelli at
[\(718\) 278.0259](tel:7182780259) or dre@sfaacademy.org.

OFFICE HOURS
Monday - Thursday 9:00AM to 3:00PM
or by appointment



2021 Lent Calendar

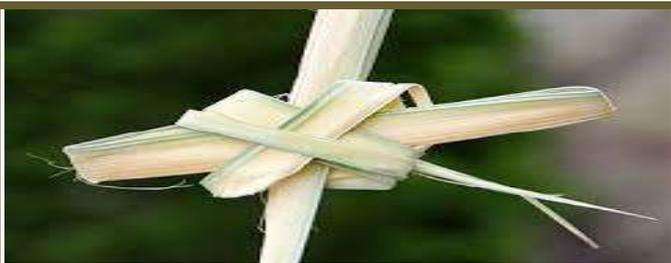
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
February "Lent is the liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (Easter Triduum). Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying" (Catechism of the Catholic Church).			17 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> If possible, attend an Ash Wednesday liturgy and wear the cross of ashes. If not, stream it.	18 Choose Lenten offerings of prayer, penance, and almsgiving.	19 Abstain from eating meat today, and make your meals truly penitential.	20 Pick a saint to learn about and imitate. Ask for his or her special help and protection during Lent. 
21 After Mass, decide what you need to move aside in your life in order to truly experience Jesus during Lent.	22 Raise the level of your prayer and really think about the meaning of the words you are saying.	23 Put a cross, crucifix, or other image of Jesus in each room of your home to help keep you focused. 	24 As an extra Lenten offering, give up something you enjoy — just for today.	25 Resolve to say only positive things about yourself today.	26 Pray for the people in the world who can't afford to have meat as a regular part of their diets.	27 Make a list of the ways you can support the poor and resolve to do one activity each week.
28 Choose someone who has passed away or needs extra help as your Mass intention today.	1 March Pray an extra Rosary today and every day this week. 	2 Forgive someone who has hurt you.	3 Ask Jesus to heal whatever separates you from feeling God's bountiful love.	4 Read the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) and renew your commitment to keep them. 	5 Eat a meatless meal and remember why you are abstaining.	6 Adopt a local nursing home. Make cards for the residents, and offer prayers for each of them.
7 Take one idea from today's Gospel reading or homily to implement during the coming week.	8 At the end of the day, make an examination of conscience. Resolve to amend your life.	9 Look for evidence of God at work in your life today.	10 Deal with anyone in your life who may be interfering with your relationship with God.	11 Try to find the time to read an entire Gospel at one sitting. 	12 Make a fresh start on your Lenten journey today. Renew your Lenten observances.	13 Attend a parish Reconciliation Service, if you feel safe, or go to Confession on your own. 
14 <i>Laetare Sunday</i> Celebrate the halfway point of Lent. Do something fun after Mass today.	15  Go to a private room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret.	16 Ask God for a new grace today that will bring you closer to him.	17  Resolve to go the entire day without judging or criticizing anyone.	18 Pick one way you can simplify your lifestyle to make more room for God.	19 Figure out how much money you saved by not eating meat today and give it to the poor.	20 Trim down your possessions and give what you don't need to the poor.
21 Look around your neighborhood today for signs of new life. 	22 Get up an extra 15 minutes each day for the next two weeks and spend that time in prayer.	23 Call Catholic Relief Services (877-HELP-CRS, www.catholicrelief.org) to see how you can help.	24 Make a conscious effort to see everyone with loving eyes today.	25 Today, pray for someone you don't like. 	26 Eat pretzels today as a reminder that Catholics used to fast from milk, butter, eggs, cheese, cream, and meat.	27 Perform some act of service for your parish. Ask at the rectory for suggestions.
28 Place Palms around each of the images of Jesus in your home. Welcome the Messiah into your heart.	29 Recite the Profession of Faith or the Apostle's Creed each day this week.	30 Notice someone who may be hungry for love or attention and satisfy that hunger.	31 Try to find a reasonable explanation for some offense you may have suffered and let God be the final judge.	1 April Look for someone who is poor or homeless and share your food.	2 Meditate on the Stations of the Cross today. Try to imagine yourself at the scene of each one. 	3 Think about a way in which you might have betrayed Jesus today. Ask his pardon.

LENT

prayer • fasting • almsgiving

To help us during our Lenten journey, the following opportunities will be taking place in our parish.

1. Mass is celebrated each morning at 9:00 am Monday thru Saturday.
2. Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday of Lent in Church at 7:30 pm. The Stations of the Cross will conclude with Benediction.
3. Adoration takes place Monday Through Saturday , 8:00am to 8:50am. The rosary is prayed each morning at 8:30am. Many times Jesus went off to pray alone or pray with His disciples. During Lent make time in your morning schedule to stop by the church and be with Jesus for some time. Use Lent as an opportunity to renew your relationship with Jesus and strengthen your prayer life.
4. Scripture study and reflection will be held every Thursday at 7:30pm. The group is using Zoom as their platform. Technical assistance is provided by Ellen Vento for accessing and using the program. Discover the deeper meaning of the scriptures to help us live our calling as followers of Jesus.
5. Reconciliation Monday will be Monday, March 31st. Confessions will be heard here in St. Francis of Assisi from 3:00pm to 5:00pm and 7:00pm to 9:00pm. What a wonderful experience to meet Christ who forgives our sins, who calls us to repentance and loves us as his disciples. In addition confessions are heard every Saturday from 4:00pm to 4:30pm in the sanctuary of the Church, right side.



PALMS

If anyone would like to make a donation to defer the cost of the palms that are distributed on Palm Sunday, please stop by the Rectory and speak with Marybeth.

Thank you for your support.



Easter Candle

If anyone would like to make a donation or memorialize the PASCHAL CANDLE, please stop by the rectory and speak with Marybeth. As you know, the Paschal Candle is blessed and lighted at the Easter Vigil and remains in the sanctuary, until the feast of Pentecost. It is then used for all of our funerals during the year.

LENTEN REGULATIONS

Once again, the celebration of Christ's Passion and Resurrection draws near. In our preparation for Easter, the Church invites us to observe the penitential and grace-filled season of Lent which commences on February 17, 2021 with the observance of Ash Wednesday. Lent is a time of renewal for the entire Catholic community. It is also a time of spiritual accompaniment as we assist the catechumens and candidates—who will be welcomed into communion with the Church during the Easter Season. In order to assist the faithful we wish to draw attention to the following:

Abstinence — All the faithful who have reached 14 years of age are required to abstain totally from meat on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent.

Fasting — All the faithful between the ages of 18 and 59 inclusive are bound to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. This practice involves limiting oneself to a single full meal and avoiding food between meals. Light sustenance may also be taken two other occasions during the day.

Easter Duty — After they have been initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, all the faithful are bound by the obligation of receiving Holy Communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season, unless for a good reason it is fulfilled at another time of the year.

Reconciliation Monday — Our diocese will once again celebrate Reconciliation Monday on March 29, 2021, the Monday of Holy Week. As in recent years, this initiative provides generous opportunity for the faithful to experience God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. After having reached the age of discretion, members of the faithful are bound to confess once a year grave sins which have not already been absolved.

The obligation to observe, as a whole or substantially, the penitential days specified by the Church, is a serious one. Days of penance are not merely individual exercises—they are observed by the whole Church, as the Body of Christ.

The faithful are encouraged to celebrate the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance frequently during the Lenten season. Additionally, reading the Word of God, praying the Stations of the Cross, prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and showing generosity toward the poor are all means of intensifying our spiritual lives during the Lenten season.

Pastors and parents are responsible to see that young persons, who are not bound to the above requirements, are educated in an authentic sense of penance.

In prayerful pilgrimage with the catechumens and candidates for full initiation, let us accompany our Lord on His way to the cross and to the empty tomb. May we use this time of Lent to be more closely united with Christ in His Death and resurrection.





Annual Catholic Appeal 2021

DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN

In his annual World Day of Peace message, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, spoke of “A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace.” He called on Catholics to care for one another as we promote human dignity, seek the common good, develop solidarity among people and nations, and care for and protect creation itself. By taking action, we can become the compass pointing to a common path for peace and a more humane future.

This year, you can be part of the “Culture of Care” by participating in the 2021 Annual Catholic Appeal and directly impacting thousands of lives in Brooklyn and Queens. Your donation will allow us to build a better future for the Church while addressing the present needs of those in our communities, which no one parish or parishioner can do alone.

Our goal this year is \$41,697. Please make every effort to help us reach our goal. Thank you for your support and sacrifices.

I am the Church, you are the Church, we are the Church, together!

2021 Annual Appeal Catholic Prayer

**God and Father of all gifts, we praise you, the source of all who we are.
Teach us to acknowledge always with generous gratitude the many
good things your infinite love has given us, as together we support the
work of the Church in Brooklyn and Queens.**

**Open our hearts that we may answer your call to follow the message of
the Gospel as disciples in love and service, so that all may come to know
You by example of our
faith and good works.**

**We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit, on God, for ever and ever.**

AMEN