The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mass Intentions

SUNDAY, February 11 –The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00 A.M. Holy Name
9:30 A.M. Antonina Kos
11:00 A.M. Joseph Costanza
12:30 P.M. Alfonso Carlino
Rino Del Carro
Maria N. Scarlatto
Joseph F. Pepe
Giuseppina Felice Spiotta
Rosario Rosario Manganella
Giuseppe Iccari

MONDAY, February 12-Weekday

9:00 A.M. Anee Marusic

TUESDAY, February 13-Weekday

9:00 A.M. Daisy Helen O'Neill

WEDNESDAY, February 14– ASH WEDNESDAY

7:00A.M. Louis Leveque
9:00A.M. Florence Drob
7:30P.M. Mario Buccaran

THURSDAY, February 15-Weekday

9:00 A.M. Peter Geosits

FRIDAY, February 16-Weekday

9:00 A.M. Stephen Keiser

SATURDAY, February 17—Weekday

9:00 A.M. Purgatorial Society
The McHale Family
Josephine Costanza
John Philip Dugan Jr.
Mary Ethel McCann
Carlos Marin

5:00P.M. Lt. Robert B. Cruz

SUNDAY, February 18– The First Sunday of Lent

8:00 A.M. For the People of St. Francis
9:30 A.M. Michael Cilia
11:00 A.M. Harold Elmendorf
12:30 P.M. Tullia Caterina Mezzatesta
Rino Del Carro
Maria N. Scarlatto
Joseph Iccari
Pasquale Paccione

Today's Readings

The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Leviticus 13:1-2,44-46
1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1
Mark 1:40-45

Readings for the Week

MONDAY: James 1:1-11
Mark 8:11-13

TUESDAY: James 1:12-18
Mark 814-21

WEDNESDAY Joel 2:12-18
2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

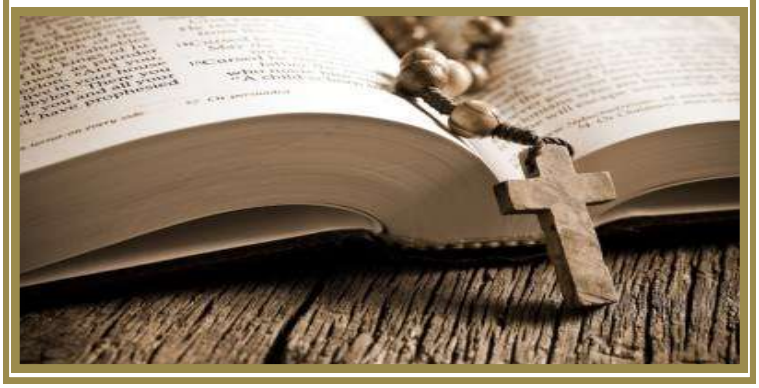
THURSDAY: Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Luke 9:22-25

FRIDAY: Isaiah 58:1-9a
Matthew 9:14-15

SATURDAY: Isaiah 58:9b-14
Luke 5:27-32

The First Sunday of Lent

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



My Dear Parishioners,

One of our most common human emotions is fear. Fear can be paralyzing, yet there is no doubting its reality and destructiveness, and even, at times, its irrationality. Today's Gospel gives us a picture of the fear that surrounded leprosy during the time Jesus lived. In fact, for much of the world's history leprosy has aroused great fear in people. Until recently, the only response was to isolate the sufferer for the protection of others. In both our first reading and our Gospel, we hear about the plight of people stricken with this disease. But when we look closer, what was often described as leprosy in Scripture was actually any type of skin disease.

Often, in sheer ignorance, the sufferer of any skin lesion, or even a common old boil, was considered contagious, and excluded from the community. This was at the very time the person likely needed support and assistance most. Here was the double whammy! They lost their place in the community, as well as access to any human contact and support. They became social outcasts, driven out by fear! Once outside, they were on their own, left largely to their own devices.

So, as we hear the Gospel today, we, in a sense, can come close to understanding what they suffered. We can imagine the scene: as the leper approaches, people draw back and flee in fear. Only Jesus is unafraid. When we add context for our first reading, we get a picture of Jesus as healer; One who has the power to bridge the divide that sin, illness and fear have brought into our lives. What courage it must have taken the leper to step forward and break the rules by falling at the feet of Jesus. His request is full of heartfelt hope, tinged with pain: *if you wish, you can make me clean.*

And of course, Jesus does desire to make the man well, and does so. However, ironically, as the leper is healed and restored to his life in society, Jesus is forced out into deserted places. As His fame grows, Jesus can no longer go about freely. In the end, He will be completely driven out and treated as an outcast, as He is put to death on the Cross.

Today's readings give us a challenge as we go forth from this place of worship. The challenge is to imitate Christ, as Paul exhorts us. Let us not let fear be an obstacle to our reaching out to others, no matter who they are. We cannot allow fear to eat away at our humanity and at our faith, separating us from others. Instead, let us reach out in love to those in need, helping to bring healing to the world and glory to God.

All God's Blessings,
Msgr. Maresca

What are you doing for Lent?

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

1. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place each morning at 8:00AM Monday through Saturday.
2. Mass is celebrated each morning at 9:00AM Monday through Saturday.
3. Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday during Lent at 7:30PM and will conclude with Benediction.
4. Confessions are heard every Saturday from 4:00 to 4:30PM.
5. Reconciliation Monday is ***March 25th***. Every Church in our Diocese, the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Rockville Centre will be hearing confessions. We will be hearing confessions from
   3:00 to 5:00PM and 7:00 to 9:00PM.
   What a wonderful experience to receive the mercy of Christ in this great sacrament.
6. The Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Council will be hosting our Lenten Supper & Stations on Friday March 1st and Friday March 15th. Supper will be at 6:00PM in Msgr. Campbell Hall followed by the Stations of the Cross at 7:30PM in Church. Free will donation.
7. All are welcome to join the St. Francis of Assisi Scripture Study Group on Thursday nights at 7:20PM. The group is for anyone who would like to deepen their understanding of the Bible.
8. Our Parish Lenten Mission will take place from Monday, March 4th, to Thursday, March 7th. The Mission will take place at the 9:00AM Mass in the morning and again at 7:30PM. Fr. Lee Havey will be giving the Mission. All are invited.

The season of lent starts this Wednesday, Ash Wednesday. The word Lent means spring, a time when new life is bursting into bloom. I am sure all of us look forward to spring after this winter.

Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We receive a cross of ashes on our forehead to indicate our desire to spend Lent focusing on repentance, deepening and strengthening our relationship with the Lord.

During Lent we always ask ourselves the question what action, work, practice, do I want to do for Lent? May I make a suggestion that instead, we ask, what is God asking of me in this season of Lent?

God calls us to pray, to fast, and to share our goods with others. It is through these actions that we are led to a deeper relationship with the Lord, to a keener awareness of God's presence; to a more intense desire to respond to God's initiatives.

Let us pray during this season of Lent for ourselves and for one another, that we will readily say yes to all God asks of us

Ashes will be distributed at the following services:

7:00AM Mass
9:00AM Mass
12:00Noon Prayer Service
3:00PM Prayer Service
7:30PM Mass

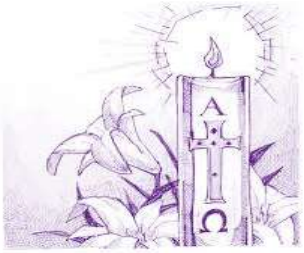
Parish Lenten Mission

Please mark your calendars for our
Parish Lenten Mission
which takes place beginning Monday,
March 4th, to Thursday, March 7th.

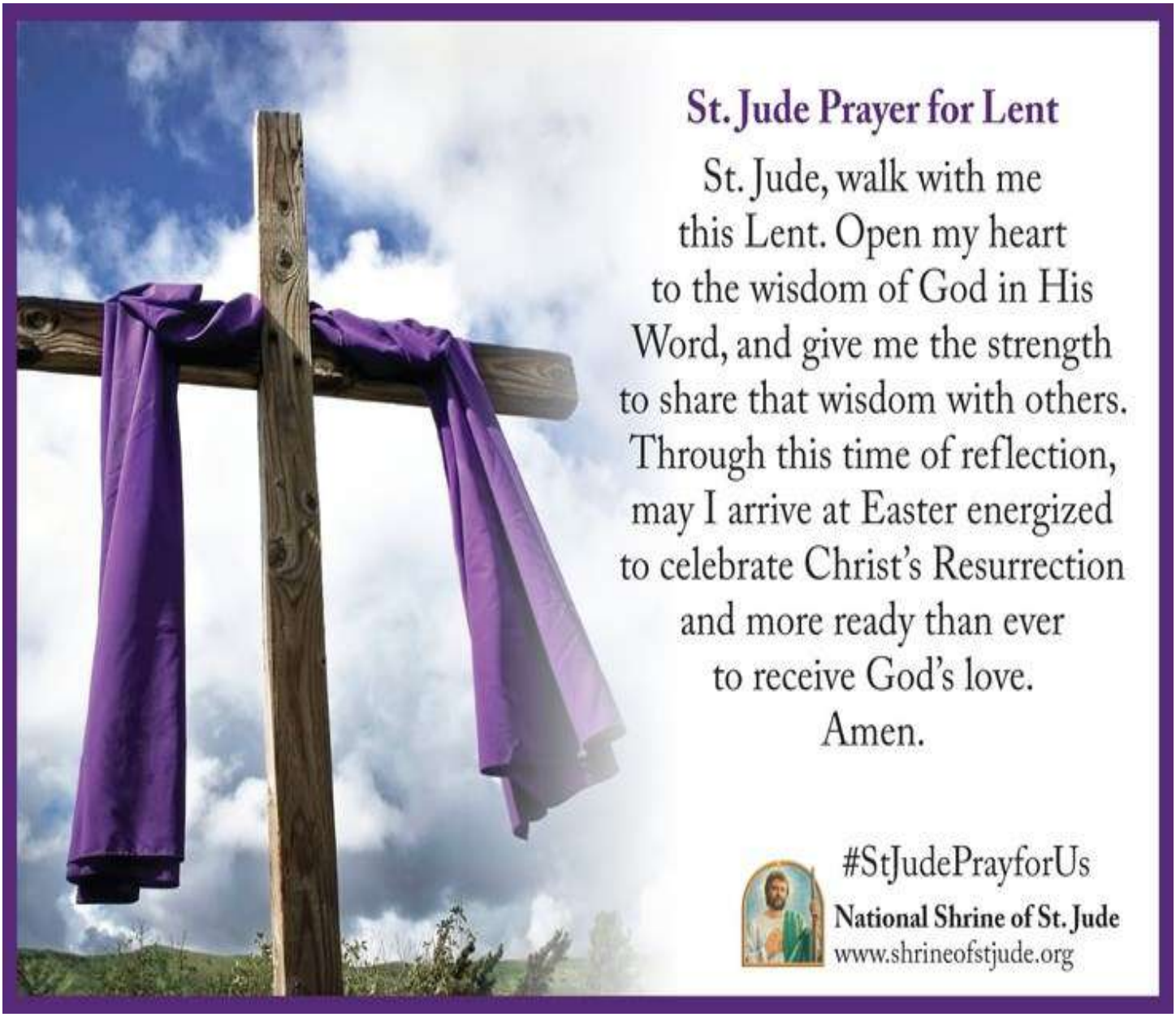
The mission will take place at the 9:00AM Mass in the morning and again at 7:30PM. Fr. Lee Havey will be giving the mission.

All are invited to join us.

Easter Candle



If anyone would like to make a donation or memorialize the ***Pascal Candle,*** please stop by the rectory and speak with Marybeth. As you know, the Pascal 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 our funerals during the year.



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

Jack Orlando, Steven Joyce, Judy Hanley-Brickner, John Wrenn, Augustin Cisneros, Thomas Leiter, James Nunez, Vincent Wytak, John & Carol Ross, Jeffrey Hyans, Marie LoVolpe, Jessica St. Preux, Al Ciani, Alesha Moses, Nancy McCaffrey, Connie Fontana Christopher Wojtalik, Theresa Pacheco, William Goss, Luke Pacheco, Vincenza Papa, Jim Schneggenburger, Anthony Criscuolo, Samantha O'Sullivan, Marilyn Miller, Pat Gravino, John Carmody, Rosario Duran, Vivian Papa, Joel Steinmann, Anna Governali, Tim Graham, Antonio Postiglione, Mario Tamburello, Christopher Araimo, Charles Principato, Jim Kreitler, Humberto Cordova, John Schakir, Margaret Culhane, Benedicto Randazzo, Angelo Niakas, Peter Lopez, Catherine Caravana, Alex Human, and Aubrey Madden.

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.

Pray
for Vocations

The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 11, 2024

"Do everything of the glory of God."

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

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.

FOCUS:

Do everything gor the glory of God.

Do everything for the glory of God. Paul's words are both commanding and encouraging. As Christians, whatever we do ought to reflect who we are: Children of the Most High God, adopted sons and daughters of the Lord. We are sisters and brothers of Christ, and our very identity should permeate all we say and do. We are encouraged in this endeavor, and aided by grace, so that we can glorify God for His sake, and for the sake of the world's salvation..

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place before the 9:00AM Mass. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed at 8:00AM each morning, Monday through Saturday, giving parishioners an opportunity for private prayer before the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. At 8:30AM the rosary will be prayed by parishioners before the Blessed Sacrament. At 8:50AM the Blessed Sacrament will be reposed. Jesus calls us to perseverance in prayer. "Pray without ceasing." "Watch and pray." Eucharistic adoration helps us discover the Real Presence of Christ.

What a wonderful way to begin our day praying before the Blessed Sacrament in silence or praying the Holy Rosary.

Please make every effort to take advantage of this time with the Lord. We are living in challenging times and we all need the Lord to strengthen our faith and give us the courage to live each day.

Memorials for the Week of February 11, 2024

SANCTUARY LAMP

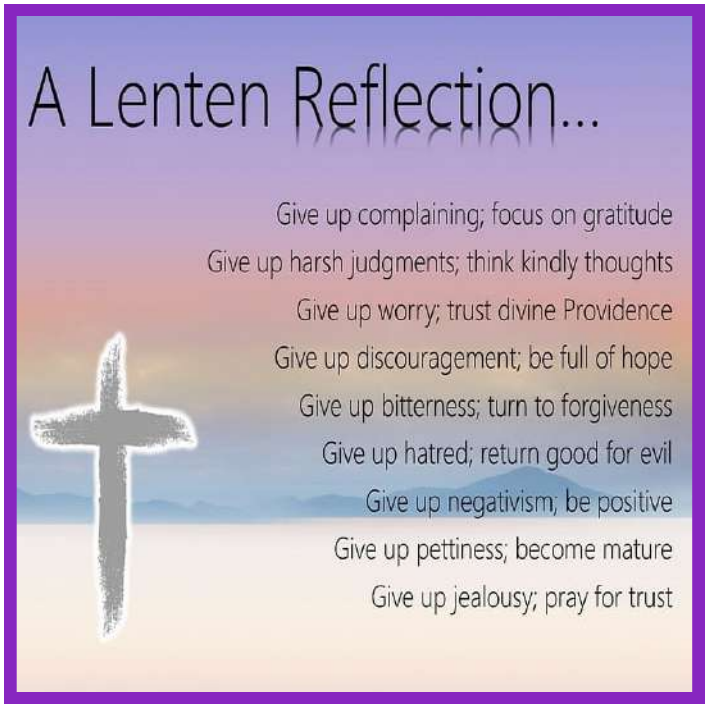
In Loving Memory of
Anne & William Thompson

Requested By:
The Thompson Family

Mass Attendance for the Weekend of February 3 - 4, 2024:

5:00pm	106
8:00am	51
9:30am	144
11:00am	101
12:30pm	36

Total in Attendance: **438**



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCRIPTURE STUDY

"The Words I have spoken to you are spirit and life." John 6:64

Dear SFA Friends and Family

The Scripture Study group will meet on Thursday, February 15th from 7:20-8:50pm in the St. Joseph Room of the Rectory. This week's study is on St. Paul's Letters to the Galatians 5:1-6:18.
Join us as we **Grow in Knowledge and Love of Scripture**.

"Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap a harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of faith" **(Galatians 6:9-10)**

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

If you are interested in joining the study group or would like further information, please contact us through 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 Invited … ALL ARE WELCOME!

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

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.

Sunday 2/3-4/24: **$5,230.00**

School parents must use church envelopes.

BUILDING
Our Mission to the Missions

The Black and Indian Mission Collection (BIMC) exists to help diocesan communities to build up the Church and preach the Gospel of Jesus among the African American, Native American, and Alaska Native people of God.

Next weekend, February 17th and 18th, the second collection will be for Black & Indian Home Missions.

Please be as generous as your means allow.

Thank you for your continued support.

Mid-Winter BREAK

The Rectory office will close at 5:00PM during the mid-winter break. (February20th to February 23rd)

NO evening office hours.

Annual Catholic Appeal 2023
DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN

THANK YOU to all who supported the Annual Catholic Appeal. I am so grateful for your sacrifices in helping us reach our goal. As of January 22nd, we have pledged $44,442 and paid $43,527 towards our goal of $41, 679. We have surpassed our goal and so the monies over goal will come back to the parish and will be deposited in the operation account of our parish.
The appeal was supported by 108 families of our parish which is 22.78% of our parish.
Please know each of you will be remembered in prayer.

Msgr. Maresca

Associated Vincentian Charities of Brooklyn
Money goes back to your local parish
My Car Went To Heaven
DONATE YOUR AUTO
Running or Not
• IRS Tax Deduction • Free Towing
• Any Condition • Any Model
718-491-2525
Visit Us at svdpauto-brooklynqueens.org

Dear Fellow Parishioners,
Since 2014 alone, the Associated Vincentian Charities of Brooklyn Donation Program has given back over $400,000 to local parishes throughout the New York Metropolitan Area. Your donation has helped many individuals in need in your neighborhood. Only through the generosity of countless parishioners are we able to make a difference. Please help us to continue to make a difference by spreading the word to anyone you know that would like to donate a vehicle, running or not leaving a review on Google, and liking us on Social Media. Together we can continue our mission in helping the less fortunate.

Help Spread the Word to help Those in Need!

Please Visit Us at svdpauto-brooklynqueens.org
Leave a Review on Google &
Like us on
Follow us on
With Much Thanks and Many Blessings,
Jim Shea
Associated Vincentian Charities Car Program Coordinator

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THIS WEEK

February 11—February 17

Sunday, February 11
8:00AM-Holy Name Mass
9:30AM-Children's Liturgy
10:40AM-12:00 Noon—CCD

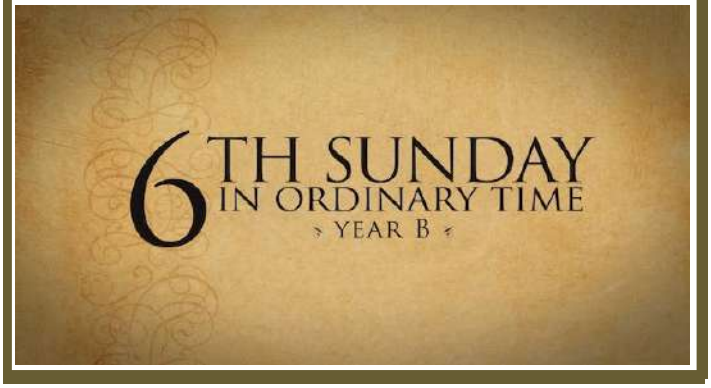
Monday, February 12
12:00-3:30PM - Golden Age Meeting—MCH
3:00-3:45PM Children's Choir-Church
7:00PM Adult Choir-Church

Tuesday, February 13
6:30PM AA Meeting
8:00PM-Knights of Columbus Meeting

Wednesday, February 14
3:00-4:30PM-Drama Club
ASH WEDNESDAY
7:00AM Mass
9:00AM Mass
12:00 Noon– Prayer Service
3:00PM-Prayer Service
7:30PM Mass

Thursday, February 15
10:00-11:30AM-Legion of Mary
3:30-4:30PM Jiu Jitsu-MCH
6:00PM-I.A.C.A.
7:20PM Scripture Study

Friday, February 16



NEXT WEEK

February 18—February 24

Sunday, February 18

Monday, February 19
PRESIDENT'S DAY
Rectory Office Closed

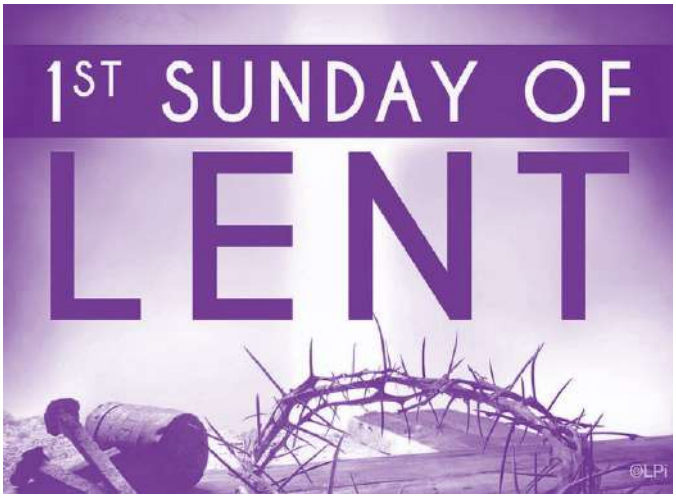
Tuesday, February 20

Wednesday, February 21

Thursday, February 22
10:00-11:30AM-Legion of Mary

Friday, February 23
7:30pm-Stations of the Cross

Saturday, February 24



St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Msgr. Ralph J. Maresca V.F., Pastor

LENT 2024

= a day of fasting and abstinence from meat

= a day of abstinence from meat

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
"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 in fasting and prayer" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*). **February**			14 *Ash Wednesday* Attend Mass and receive ashes. Prayerfully choose Lenten offerings of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.	15 Set aside an empty jar for loose change. When it's full, donate it to the poor box at church.	16 Offer up every time you're tempted to have meat for those who can't afford to have meat regularly.	17 Adopt a seminarian or consecrated religious to pray for this Lent. Check your diocesan website to see who is in discernment.
18 Scroll through your phone contacts and offer your Communion for whichever person you land on.	19 Keep custody of the thoughts: give up complaining, rash judgement, and negative self-talk. See holiness -- and productivity! -- increase.	20 Pick a saint to accompany you during Lent. Learn more about them and ask them to pray for you.	21 Find a pro-life pregnancy center near you and ask how you can help them support the women and their babies.	22 Put out an empty box. Throughout Lent, fill it with gently used items in good condition that you no longer use.	23 Observe a screen fast (from recreational use) from noon to 3, recalling the 3 hours Jesus hung on the Cross.	24 Make up bags of socks, oranges, and bottled water to offer people who are homeless.
25 Stay after Mass and pray for the intentions of the pope.	26 Ask God to remind you of His love for you today -- it's a prayer He loves to answer. Thank Him tonight before bed.	27 Make a small sacrifice today for souls, e.g., no cream in your coffee, no snacks before dinner.	28 Give up worry. Write down what worries you and leave it before an image of Jesus, surrendering it to His care.	29 Stop by the parish office and ask what upcoming events you can volunteer with (e.g. setting up St. Joseph's Table).	1 **March** Attend Daily Mass and/or spend some time before the Blessed Sacrament in honor of Jesus' Sacred Heart.	2 Our Lady urged praying the Rosary to bring peace. Pray a Rosary in honor of Mary's Immaculate Heart.
3 Meditate on today's Gospel (John 2:13-25). Where can you "clean the temple" of your heart to make more room for God?	4 Learn something new about your Faith: skim the glossary of the Catechism for an unfamiliar term and learn more about it.	5 Check out Catholic Relief Services at www.crs.org to see how you can help support any of their projects.	6 Meditate on Scripture on-the-go. Copy down a favorite Bible verse and carry it with you all day. Pray with it whenever you have to wait.	7 Catch up with a friend you haven't heard from in a while.	8 Attend a Stations of the Cross service or pray them on your own. Find them here: www.usccb.org.	9 Give others the gift of your presence: ask about their work, interests, or family, and listen attentively while they speak.
10 *Laetare Sunday* Rejoice! Have some holy fun after Mass today.	11 This whole week, give up recreational screen time after 9PM and give that time to God.	12 Renew your commitment to your Lenten promises.	13 Do a thorough Examination of Conscience, then go to Confession to be freed of your sins and experience God's mercy.	14 Today, choose kindness. Resolve to smile at everyone you meet.	15 Make an additional, small sacrifice of your choosing and pray for the unborn children and their mothers.	16 Volunteer at a retirement community. Call ahead and ask how you can serve (e.g., reading to the residents, donating needed items).
17 Consider offering your Communion at Mass for missionaries, teachers, and catechists -- anyone who passes on the Faith.	18 Until the end of Lent, only buy essentials, like food, medicine, etc.	19 *St. Joseph's Day* Happy Solemnity! Enjoy pastries today to celebrate. Prayerfully entrust husbands and fathers to St. Joseph's protection.	20 Drop off the box of clothes at its destination.	21 Find time today to visit the Blessed Sacrament, even if briefly. Pray that everyone has a safe and spiritually fruitful Holy Week.	22 The King is coming! Clean the house in preparation for Palm Sunday.	23 Praying for the dead is a work of mercy. Visit a cemetery and pray for the souls there.
24 *Palm Sunday* During the Gospel readings at Mass, imagine you're in the scene. How would you respond?	25 Offer extra prayers today for those coming into the Church at Easter.	26 Evaluate your Lent. Where did you see spiritual growth? What would you do differently next year?	27 Today recalls Judas' betrayal of Christ. Ask forgiveness from those you have hurt. Forgive those who have hurt you.	28 *Holy Thursday* Today, Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist and the Priesthood. Send a priest a thank-you card for all the ways he's served you.	29 *Good Friday* Read Mark 15 and reflect on Jesus' love for you. Name one way you'll return His love.	30 *Holy Saturday* Light a candle and renew your baptismal vows to remain faithful to God this coming year.

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Lent

As the start of Lent draws near on Ash Wednesday (February 14), in the hope of assisting the faithful of the Diocese of Brooklyn to celebrate this season of preparation for Easter in a fruitful manner, Bishop Robert Brennan wishes to call attention to the following:

ABSTINENCE: All the faithful who have reached 14 years of age are required to abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday (February 14) and on all the Fridays of the Lenten Season.

FASTING: All the faithful between the ages of 18 and 59 (inclusive) are bound to fast on Ash Wednesday and on Good Friday (March 29) by limiting oneself to one full meal and avoiding food between meals. Light sustenance may be taken on two other occasions during the day.

EASTER DUTY: After having been initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, the faithful are obligated to receive holy Communion at least once a year, this precept to be fulfilled during the Easter Season, unless it is fulfilled at some other time for a good reason. In the United States, the period for fulfilling this precept is extended from the First Sunday of Lent (February 18) until Pentecost Sunday (May 19).

THE SOLEMNITIES OF SAINT JOSEPH AND THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD: The liturgical solemnities of Saint Joseph (March 19) and the Annunciation of the Lord (March 25) are to be celebrated with due solemnity even though they fall within the Season of Lent.

RECONCILIATION MONDAY: Reconciliation Monday is observed in the Diocese on the Monday of Holy Week (March 25). Observance of this day allows the faithful to experience the grace of forgiveness and mercy in the Sacrament of Penance. Those conscious of grave (mortal) sin are obligated to confess before receiving holy Communion.

TIME OF CELEBRATION OF THE EASTER VIGIL: Sunset in Brooklyn on Holy Saturday, March 30, is at 7:19 pm. Therefore, the celebration of the Liturgy for the Easter Vigil should begin after that, realistically at 8 p.m. or later, and must end before dawn on Easter Sunday.

Please take note of the following, as well:

MUSIC: During Lent, the "Alleluia" is not sung or said. Musical instruments are to be used at liturgical celebrations only to give support to the singing.

CHURCH DECORATIONS: The church should not be decorated with flowers during Lent.

HOLY WATER: Holy Water is not removed from the fonts during Lent. It is only removed immediately before the Celebration of the Lord's Supper and replaced at the Easter Vigil with water blessed at that celebration.

FUNERALS: Funeral masses are not permitted during the Paschal Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday). The rite to be used at funerals during those days is the rite for Funerals Outside Mass.

Praying with Body, Mind, and Voice

In the celebration of Mass we raise our hearts and minds to God. We are creatures of body as well as spirit, so our prayer is not confined to our minds and hearts. It is expressed by our bodies as well. When our bodies are engaged in our prayer, we pray with our whole person. Using our entire being in prayer helps us to pray with greater attentiveness.

During Mass we assume different postures—standing, kneeling, sitting—and we are also invited to make a variety of gestures. These postures and gestures are not merely ceremonial. They have profound meaning and, when done with understanding, can enhance our participation in the Mass.

STANDING

Standing is a sign of respect and honor, so we stand as the celebrant who represents Christ enters and leaves the assembly. From the earliest days of the Church, this posture has been understood as the stance of those who have risen with Christ and seek the things that are above. When we stand for prayer, we assume our full stature before God, not in pride but in humble gratitude for the marvelous things God has done in creating and redeeming each one of us. By Baptism we have been given a share in the life of God, and the posture of standing is an acknowledgment of this wonderful gift. We stand for the proclamation of the Gospel, which recounts the words and deeds of the Lord. The bishops of the United States have chosen standing as the posture to be observed for the reception of Communion.

KNEELING

In the early Church, kneeling signified penance. So thoroughly was kneeling identified with penance that the early Christians were forbidden to kneel on Sundays and during the Easter season, when the prevailing spirit of the Liturgy was one of joy and thanksgiving. In the Middle Ages kneeling came to signify homage, and more recently this posture has come to signify adoration, especially before the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It is for this reason that the bishops of this country have chosen the posture of kneeling for the entire Eucharistic Prayer.

SITTING

Sitting is the posture of listening and meditation, so the congregation sits for the pre-Gospel readings and the homily and may also sit for the period of meditation following Communion. All should strive to assume a seated posture during the Mass that is attentive rather than merely at rest.

PROCESSIONS

Every procession in the Liturgy is a sign of the pilgrim Church, the body of those who believe in Christ, on their way to the Heavenly Jerusalem. The Mass begins with the procession of the priest and ministers to the altar. The Book of the Gospels is carried in procession to the ambo. The gifts of bread and wine are brought forward to the altar. Members of the assembly come forward in procession—eagerly, attentively, and devoutly—to receive Holy Communion. We who believe in Christ are moving in time toward that moment when we will leave this world and enter into the joy of the Lord in the eternal Kingdom he has prepared for us.

MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

We begin and end Mass by marking ourselves with the Sign of the Cross. Because it was by his death on the Cross that Christ redeemed humankind, we trace the Sign of the Cross on our foreheads, lips, and hearts at the beginning of the Gospel, praying that the Word of God may be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts. The cross reminds us in a physical way of the Paschal Mystery we celebrate: the death and Resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ.

BOWING

Bowing signifies reverence, respect, and gratitude. In the Creed we bow at the words that commemorate the Incarnation. We also bow as a sign of reverence before we receive Communion. The priest and other ministers bow to the altar, a symbol of Christ, when entering or leaving the sanctuary. As a sign of respect and reverence even in our speech, we bow our heads at the name of Jesus, at the mention of the Three Persons of the Trinity,

at the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and at the name of the saint whose particular feast or memorial is being observed (see GIRM, no. 275).

GENUFLECTING

As a sign of adoration, we genuflect by bringing our right knee to the floor. Many people also make the Sign of the Cross as they bend their knee. Traditionally, Catholics genuflect on entering and leaving church if the Blessed Sacrament is present in the sanctuary of the Church. The priest and deacon genuflect to the tabernacle on entering and leaving the sanctuary. The priest also genuflects in adoration after he shows the Body and Blood of Christ to the people after the consecration and again before inviting the people to Holy Communion.

ORANS

The priest frequently uses this ancient prayer posture, extending his hands to his sides, slightly elevated. *Orans* means "praying." Early Christian art frequently depicts the saints and others standing in this posture, offering their prayers and surrendering themselves, with hands uplifted to the Lord, in a gesture that echoes Christ's outstretched arms as he offered himself on the Cross.

PROSTRATING

In this rarely used posture, an individual lies full-length on the floor, face to the ground. A posture of deep humility, it signifies our willingness to share in Christ's death so as to share in his Resurrection (see Rom 6). It is used at the beginning of the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday and also during the Litany of the Saints in the Rite of Ordination, when those to be ordained deacons, priests, and bishops prostrate themselves in humble prayer and submission to Christ.

SINGING

"By its very nature song has both an individual and a communal dimension. Thus, it is no wonder that singing together in church expresses so well the sacramental presence of God to his people" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sing to the Lord*, no. 2). As we raise our voices as one in the prayers, dialogues, and chants of the Mass, most especially in the Eucharistic Prayer, as well as the other hymns and songs, we each lend our individual voices to the great hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Triune God.

PRAYING IN UNISON

In the Mass, the worshiping assembly prays in one voice, speaking or singing together the words of the prayers. By saying the same words at the same time, we act as what we truly are—one Body united in Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism.

BEING SILENT

"Silence in the Liturgy allows the community to reflect on what it has heard and experienced, and to open its heart to the mystery celebrated" (*Sing to the Lord*, no. 118). We gather in silence, taking time to separate ourselves from the concerns of the world and enter into the sacred action. We reflect on the readings in silence. We may take time for silent reflection and prayer after Holy Communion. These times of silence are not merely times when nothing happens; rather, they are opportunities for us to enter more deeply in what God is doing in the Mass, and, like Mary, to keep "all these things, reflecting on them" in our hearts (Lk 2:19).

CONCLUSION

The Church sees in these common postures and gestures both a symbol of the unity of those who have come together to worship and also a means of fostering that unity. We are not free to change these postures to suit our own individual piety, for the Church makes it clear that our unity of posture and gesture is an expression of our participation in the one Body formed by the baptized with Christ, our head. When we stand, kneel, sit, bow, and sign ourselves in common action, we give unambiguous witness that we are indeed the Body of Christ, united in body, mind, and voice.

REFERENCE

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*. Pastoral Liturgy Series 4. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2007.

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Saint Marguerite d'Youville
Foundress of the Grey Nuns

Marguerite's Pantry
25-02 80 St
East Elmhurst, NY 11370

January 28, 2024

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
21-17 47th Street
Astoria, N.Y. 11105

Dear Monsignor Maresca,

This past year your parishioners at St. Francis went above and beyond in helping those in need who came to Marguerite's Pantry. It's amazing to know that in spite of the difficult times so many families are facing, the parishioners of St. Francis continue in their legacy of generosity.

Besides the regular toy collection in December, we had asked and received an overwhelming response for children's clothes and warm coats. This was needed especially for the children who are living in shelters in our community. After speaking to the DOE liaison at the largest shelter in NYC, located near La Guardia Airport, it became evident that, before the children could start school they needed clothes. With the outstanding help of Mary Beth in the rectory and the Knights of Columbus Boris and Peter your parishioners helped collect many new and gently used coats and clothes for these children. We now have a separate area station set up on distribution day for mothers and small children to come and receive baby supplies and clothes and when possible strollers. As we see the young mothers carrying the babies in a blanket on their backs, we try to help when we can with donated strollers.

As you can imagine, December is always a busy time at our pantry as those in need try to provide a memorable holiday for their families. More than 500 families came to us for food in December and all received food including fresh meat and produce, and some--- baby supplies as well as toys! On behalf of our families we are grateful for all those who helped them celebrate this season.

Please convey our heartfelt gratitude to all in your parish who respond so generously to the needs of the poor in our community. Also, be sure they know that the people of St. Francis are remembered in our prayers as we gather with all the volunteers at the beginning of each pantry distribution. Much peace and happiness to you and all those at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in 2024.

Sincerely,

Sr. Anne Marie Beirne, GNSH