Fourth Sunday of Lent

Mass Intentions

Sunday, March 15	*Fourth Sunday of Lent*
8:00AM	**For the People of St. Francis Of Assisi**
9:30AM	**Joan Carpanini**
11:00AM	**James Power**
	John S. Quirke
	Rose Ayala
Monday, March 16	*Weekday*
9:00AM	**Rita & Ralph Maresca**
7:30PM	*Parish Mission*
Tuesday, March 17	*Weekday*
9:00AM	**Esther & Jerome Reinhardt**
7:30PM	*Parish Mission*
Wednesday, March 18	*St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop & Doctor of the Church*
9:00AM	**June Conlon**
7:30PM	*Parish Mission*
Thursday, March 19	*Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse Of the Blessed Virgin Mary*
9:00AM	**Sarah Leal**
Friday, March 20	*Weekday*
9:00AM	**Ana Delgos**
Saturday, March 21	*Saturday of the 4th Week of Lent*
9:00AM	**Purgatorial Society**
5:00PM	**Michael & Kathleen Devane**
Sunday, March 22	*Fifth Sunday of Lent*
8:00AM	**Viktor Maleschits**
9:30AM	**For the People of St. Francis Of Assisi**
11:00AM	**Cesar Augusto Rios**

Today's Readings

Fourth Sunday of Lent

1 Samuel 16:1b,6-7,10-13a
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38

As Jesus walked along, He saw a man blind from birth. Jesus spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And so they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out. Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when He found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen Him, and the one speaking with you is He." He said, "Lord, I believe." And then he worshipped Him.

Parish Prayer Intentions

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

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

Awyn Profit
Jack Orlando
Steven Joyce
John Wrenn
Augustin Cisneros
James Nunez
Vincent Wytak
John & Carol Ross
Jeffrey Hyans
Marie LoVolpe
Jessica St. Preux
Al Ciani
Alesha Moses
Nancy McCaffrey
Christoper 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
Rick Simonsen
Aubrey Madden
Madison Millett
Leonardo Di Marco
Michelle Yashita
The Polychronakis Family
Angel Garcia
Bob Bala
Anthony Fiorino
Joseph Klos
Assunta Di Benedetto

FOCUS:

You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

The lengthy exchange in today's Gospel between the formerly blind man and the Pharisees serves as a reminder that we are all born blind and are given our sight at baptism, when we are first able to see through the eyes of faith. As our Lenten journey continues, let us pray that God will continue to open our eyes to His truth.

Readings For The Week

Monday	***Isaiah 65:17-21*** ***John 4:43-54***
Tuesday	***Ezekiel 47:1-9,12*** ***John 5:1-16***
Wednesday	***Isaiah 49:8-15*** ***John 5:17-30***
Thursday	***2 Samuel 7:4-5a,12-14a,16*** ***Romans 4:13,16-18,22*** ***Matthew 1:16,18-21,24a***
Friday	***Wisdom 2:1a,12-22*** ***John 7:1-2,10,25-30***
Saturday	***Jeremiah 11:18-20*** ***John 7:40-53***

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37:12-14
Romans 8:8-11
John 11:3-7,17,20-27,33b-45

St. Francis of Assisi Scripture Study

Thursdays from 7:20PM-8:50PM,
Rectory Basement, St. Joseph Room

Dear SFA Family & Friends,
You are invited to join us on Thursday, March 19, in the St. Joseph Room of the Rectory from 7:20PM to 8:50PM. Our study for this week is Hebrews 12-13, "A Call to Persevere in Faith."

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witness, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfector of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Grow in Love & Knowledge of Scripture.
All are invited and all are welcome.

The Gospel readings and study are conducted using the Little Rock Scripture Study program. Study booklets will be provided. If you are interested in joining the Study Group, please call the Rectory Office at (718)-728-7801.

Memorials for The week of March 15, 2026

Altar Bread
In Loving Memory of
Mary Loud

Requested By:
The Dudek & Alarcon Families

From the Pastor's Desk:

My Dear Parishioners,

Anyone who wears a dark garment in a dark environment would be difficult to see. However, as the light improves, not only do they become visible, everything about them is revealed. Under intense light, even a speck of lint can be seen. Our life in Christ is similar, but in the *spiritual* sense.

The closer we become to God who has loved us into life, and the more time we spend in prayer and reflection on our life in Jesus, the more we become aware of the areas in our lives that need attention. The dynamic at work here is that as we struggle to become holy, the grace of God gives us renewed eyes of faith. Not only do we see the created wonder of the universe, but we are also brought face-to-face with the reality of our lives and of our own sinfulness.

We are all sinful. Holiness can be found in the struggle between recognizing the wonder of the gifts God has given to us, and also recognizing and dealing with, our own sinfulness-those areas of darkness which pervade our lives. We all have the potential to be both sinner and saint, sometimes on the same day. Yet, when we ask God to touch our hearts that we may recognize both gift and darkness, we become self-aware. We gain some insight into how we can use our gifts for the good of all. We are better able to deal with our sinful inclinations as we strive to live the discipleship Jesus calls us to. Discipleship is not easy! Jesus said over and over that to follow him would be hard; that it would mean sacrifice, temptation, and possible persecution.

All three Scripture readings today are about *sight.* It is not a *physical* vision, but a *spiritual* vision that, through the eyes faith, the world should look different. In today's Gospel, Jesus spits on the ground and makes a healing balm of mud for the man born blind. Jesus helps this man physically, and us symbolically, to our beginning roots; to the very dust out of which we were created. Jesus brings us back to the most basic elements of life in order to free us of the things that prevent us from seeing with new eyes of faith: greed, power, status, wealth, gossip, pettiness, and these are just a few! In the end, none of these will save us, only our *faith in Jesus Christ will.*

A Blessed Lenten Journey to All,
Msgr. Maresca

CONFIRMATION

For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed." CCC 1285

CONGRATULATIONS to our 8th graders on receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

May the Holy Spirit pour into their hearts the gifts of the Spirit. May they be filled with grace, courage, and hope as they continue their faith journey.

Congratulations to the sponsors and the families of our Confirmation Students.

Let us continue to pray for our young people.

What Are You Doing For Lent?

To help us in our Lenten journey, the following opportunities will take place in our parish:

1. **Daily Mass** is celebrated each morning at 9:00AM Monday through Saturday.

2. **Eucharistic Adoration** occurs Monday through Saturday, 8:00AM to 8:50AM. We encourage everyone to make an effort to spend time in the presence of our Lord. The Blessings are countless.

3. **Stations of the Cross** will be held every Friday of Lent at 7:30PM. Make it a family event or come as you are to walk in the footsteps of our Lord's journey to the Cross.

4. Our **Parish Mission** will take place Monday, March 16th through Wednesday, March 18th. Fr. Frank De Siano will be joining us to preach at all Masses on Sunday March 15th. The Mission will take place at the 9:00AM Mass and again at 7:30PM on March 16th, 17th, & 18th. All are invited to join us as we renew our Spiritual Life.

5. **Our Parish is one of the Diocesan Station Churches during Lent**. Join us on Saturday, March 28th. The day will consist of Morning Mass at 9:00AM, the Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration, Stations of the Cross, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and Confessions. All are welcome at the 5PM Mass followed by Benediction to conclude the day.

6. **Reconciliation Monday** will be Monday, March 30, 2026. What a wonderful experience to meet Christ, who forgives our sins, who calls us to repentance, and loves us as His followers. Confessions will be heard from 2:00PM to 4:00PM & 6:00PM to 9:00PM.

In addition, confessions are heard every Saturday from 4:00PM to 4:30PM.

7. All are welcome to join the **Scripture Study** group which meets every Thursday from 7:20PM to 8:50PM. The group is for everyone who wishes to more fully understand the Word of God.

8. Download the **Lenten Pilgrimage App** from the App Store on your phone (both Apple and Android) and track your visits to the Stationary Churches in our Diocese. Visit 20 or more Churches and you will receive a special certificate in the mail from Bishop Brennan!

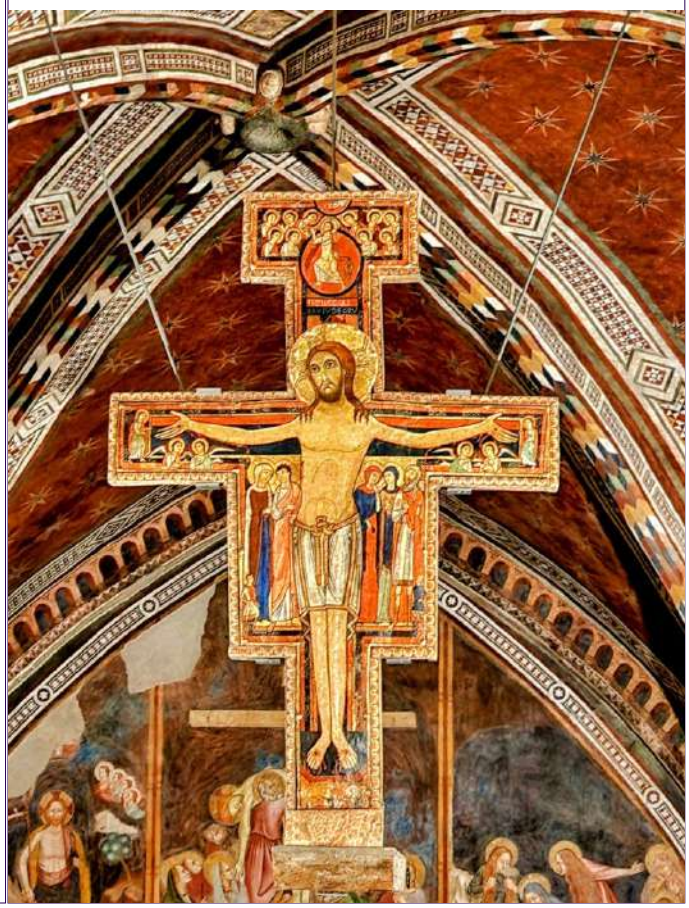
Lenten Pilgrimage
DeSales Media Group

A Prayer for Lent

Prayer Before a Crucifix

Said to have been written by St. Francis of Assisi, a plenary indulgence is granted each Friday of Lent to the faithful who, after receiving Holy Communion, devoutly recite this prayer before an image of Christ crucified. On other days of the year, the indulgence is partial.

Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus
while before Your face I humbly kneel,
and, with burning soul, pray and beseech You
to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments of
Faith, Hope, and Charity; true contrition for my sins,
and a firm purpose of amendment,
while I contemplate, with great love and tender pity,
Your five most precious wounds,
pondering over them within me
and calling to mind the words which David,
Your prophet, said to You, my Jesus:
"They have pierced my hands and my feet,
They have numbered all my bones."
Amen.



EASTER CANDLE DONATIONS

IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

ANTONIO CARULLO
MARIO CARULLO
ANTHONY CARULLO
MARINA & FIORELLO PINOTTI
ROSA & ANTONIO FILETTO
MARY K. LOUD
RITA & RALPH MARESCA
BISHOP THOMAS V. DAILY
REV. PETER D. GILLEN
EILEEN JASINSKI
UNCLE MARIO ESPOSITO

Parish Mission This Week!

Our Parish Mission will begin with Fr. Frank De Siano preaching at all Masses on the weekend of March 14th and 15th, and will continue with him leading the Mission on March 16th, 17th, and 18th.

Beginning on Monday, March 16th, the Mission will take place at the 9:00AM Mass each morning and again at a Prayer Service at 7:30PM.

The Mission will conclude on Wednesday, March 18th. All are invited to join in this week of prayer as we journey this Lent with Jesus to the Resurrection.

EASTER CANDLE

If anyone would like to make a donation and memorialize the Paschal Candle, please come to the Rectory and speak with Tara.

All Paschal Candle memorials will be listed in the Bulletin throughout the Lenten & Easter Seasons.

My Easter Gift to the Church

You may return your Easter Gift to the Church Envelopes in any collection. Please prayerfully consider your gift. Your Easter Gift will go toward the operation of our parish with all of its programs, services, and maintenance.

I am so appreciative of your generosity throughout the year. Thank you for your continued support of our parish.

Eucharistic Adoration Monday through Saturday 8:00AM to 8:50AM

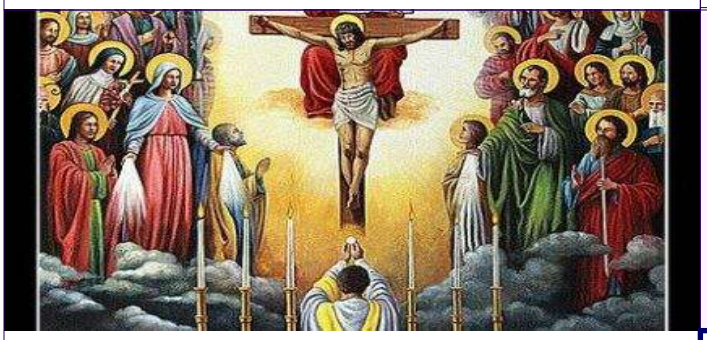
Eucharistic Adoration takes place Monday through Saturday, from 8:00AM to 8:50AM. As Pope St. John Paul II has said, "Christian life is expressed in the fulfilling of the greatest Commandment, that is to say, in the love of God and neighbor, and this love finds its source in the Blessed Sacrament….Eucharistic worship is therefore precisely the expression of that love which is the authentic and deepest characteristic of the Christian vocation. This worship springs from the love and serves the love to which we are all called in Jesus Christ. A living fruit of this worship is the perfecting of the image of God that we bear within us….We must always have this reality before our eyes."

We encourage everyone to make an effort to spend time in the presence of our Lord. The Blessings are countless.

Receiving Holy Communion

For those who have difficulty walking up the aisle to receive Holy Communion, may I suggest that you sit in the front row on either side to save yourself some steps. The priest, deacon, or minister will come down to you in the pew and give you Holy Communion. However, if for some reason you need to sit towards the back of the Church, please let the usher know and they will inform the priest, deacon, or minister, and we will come back to you to give you Holy Communion when we finish those in line.

Thanks,
Msgr. Maresca



The March Lector & Minister Schedule **can be found by scanning this QR code, and then selecting the month you wish to view.**

2026 Mass Book

The 2026 Mass Book is now open.

Masses:
Masses are $20.00.

The Purgatorial Society has an enrollment for one year:
Purgatorial Mass Cards are $30.00.

Memorials:
Altar Bread,
Wine,
Sanctuary Lamp,
or Altar Candles
are $75.00.

Altar Flowers are $100.

Fourth Sunday Of Lent

March 15, 2026

"The Lord looks on the heart." Are you being called to do the deeds of Christ as a priest or in the consecrated life, proclaiming the reign of the loving mercy of God our Father?
Contact the Vocation Office at:

(718)-827-2454
vocations@diobrook.org

Diocese of Brooklyn Vocation Office

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.

March 7/8: **$4,521**

School Parents must use Church Envelopes.

Mass Attendance For March 7/8, 2026

5:00PM	**91**
8:00AM	**45**
9:30AM	**393**
11:00AM	**169**

Total: 698

St. Francis Preparatory School Honor Roll List

The following students in our parish have merited recognition for their academic achievement!

Christian Duran
Emily Naspud
Nicolas Nunez
Grace Rosique

Congratulations on the outstanding work!

Annual Catholic Appeal

The Annual Catholic Appeal for 2026 has begun in our Diocese. I first want to thank all those who supported the appeal last year. I appreciate your generosity.
This year our goal has been reduced to **$33,760.** The theme is: ***"One Church, Diverse Ministries. United Mission."***

I ask you to prayerful reflect on what you are able to contribute to support the appeal.
The monies contributed goes to Vocations, Care for retired priest, Faith Formation, Catholic Charities, Chaplaincies, Catholic Migration Services, and Catholic School Tuition Assistance.
Please make every effort to support this appeal and help us reach our goal.

I share the words of Jesus to His followers: "The measure you measure with will be measured back to you."

THANK YOU for all your effort.
God Bless,
Msgr. Maresca

Easter Novena Masses & Easter Flowers

You may return your Easter Novena Mass and Easter Flowers envelopes in any Collection.

The *Easter Flower Remembrances* will be printed in the Bulletin.

Please write the names legibly so we are able to Print them correctly.

The *Easter Novena Mass* Envelopes will be placed on the Altar during the Easter Season at all Masses.

There will also be envelopes available at the back of the Church.

Calendar of Events

This Week

March 15 - March 21

Sunday, March 15
9:30AM Pre-Communion Mass
3:00PM Confirmation Mass with Bishop Caggiano

Monday, March 16
9:00AM Mass/Parish Mission
12:00 NOON Golden Age - MCH
3:00PM Children's Choir - Church
7:00PM Adult Choir - Church
7:30PM Prayer Service/Parish Mission

Tuesday, March 17
St. Patrick's Day
9:00AM Mass/Parish Mission
6:30PM AA Meeting - Rectory Basement
7:30PM Prayer Service/Parish Mission

Wednesday, March 18
9:00AM Mass/Parish Mission
3:00PM Drama Club - MCH
6:00PM ACA Support Group - St. Joseph Room
7:30PM Prayer Service/Parish Mission
7:45PM Bereavement Group - St. Joseph Room

Thursday, March 19
St. Joseph's Day
School Stations of the Cross - Church
10:00AM Legion of Mary - SFR
6:00PM IACA Mission - SFR
7:20PM Scripture Study - St. Joseph's Room

Friday, March 20
PreK/3K Fashion Show - MCH
7:30PM Stations of the Cross - Church

Saturday, March 21

WEEK FOUR OF LENT

Next Week

March 22 - March 28

Sunday, March 22
9:30AM Children's Liturgy
12:00 NOON Baptisms - Church

Monday, March 23
12:00 NOON Golden Age - MCH
3:00PM Children's Choir - Church
7:00PM Adult Choir - Church

Tuesday, March 24
6:30PM AA Meeting - Rectory Basement

Wednesday, March 25
The Annunciation of the Lord
3:00PM Drama Club - MCH
6:00PM ACA Support Group - St. Joseph Room
7:45PM Bereavement Group - St. Joseph Room

Thursday, March 26
School Stations of the Cross - Church
10:00AM Legion of Mary - SFR
3:00PM Jiu Jitsu - MCH
5:30PM Mites Division Soccer Practice - MCH
6:00PM IACA Party - SFR
7:20PM Scripture Study - St. Joseph's Room

Friday, March 27
7:30PM Stations of the Cross - Church

Saturday, March 28
9:00AM Day of Prayer: Diocesan Pilgrimage
(Full List of Activities in the Bulletin)
Girl Scout Cookie & Bake Sale After All Masses

WEEK FIVE OF LENT

2026 Lenten Pilgrimage
At St. Francis of Assisi
Astoria, NY

Jubilee Year of St. Francis
Diocesan Station Church

Saturday March 28, 2026
9:00am - 7:00pm

Pilgrimage & Retreat Day Schedule

9:00am	Mass
9:30am	Rosary
10:00am	Silent Eucharistic Adoration
12:00noon	Angelus and Noon Mass
12:30pm	Stations of the Cross
1:15pm	Silent Eucharistic Adoration
3:00pm	Divine Mercy Chaplet
4:00pm	Confessions
5:00pm	Mass, followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
7:00pm	Benediction & Closing

This Pilgrimage & Retreat being held at our Parish is open to the entire Diocese of Brooklyn.

Come for a partial or full day!

For more information about the Diocesan Station Churches, download the Lenten Pilgrimage App from your App Store:

Lenten Pilgrimage
DeSales Media Group

Growing in FAITH™

Discovering **hope** and **joy** in the Catholic faith.

March 2026

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

One Minute Meditations

St. Turibius of Mogrovejo

Born in Mayorga, Spain, in 1538, St. Turibius studied law at the University of Salamanca. Known for his prudence and integrity as a judge, St. Turibius was nominated by King Philip II to be archbishop of Peru. After witnessing the need of the faithful in Lima, St. Turibius agreed and was ordained. He spent his office reforming the Peruvian diocese of corruption, founded schools, seminaries, and hospitals, and worked to protect the rights of the natives.

Lent is about love

Lent can feel discouraging. After all, we give up things we like and focus on suffering. Yet, in Holy Week, for which Lent is the preparation, we see God's response to us in our sins. He meets us in our mess. He returns our rejection with freely offered love, our selfishness with radical self-gift, and our suffering with unfathomable mercy. We give up things for Lent because Love gave Himself up for us.

"[Our Lord] is thinking about you and not only about you but about every hair of your head: this is an article of faith and you must not have the slightest doubt about it… you have no cause to doubt that he is looking upon you with love…" — St. Francis de Sales, *Selected Letters*

Create space for grace

Lent is not just a season of temporary sacrifice, but a call to lasting conversion. Consider choosing disciplines that reshape daily habits and create space for grace. Here are five meaningful ways to begin redirecting your path:

Practice trust. *"Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life?"* (Matthew 6:27). Concern is human, but persistent worry bears little fruit. When anxiety rises, turn it into prayer, "Jesus, I trust You, I place this moment and its outcome in Your hands." Trust grows through repetition.

Refocus your heart. Lasting fulfillment does not come from appearance or possessions, but from knowing God and resting in His love. Keep a daily record of blessings received. Review it often.

Create quiet. St. Teresa of Calcutta said, "God is the friend of silence." Silence begins by turning off what competes for attention. Place screens in another room. Silence notifications. Turn to God in the silence.

Give rather than acquire. Learn to distinguish between wants and needs. Limiting spending to what is truly necessary challenges the habit of seeking comfort or status in possessions. When we forgo nonessential purchases and redirect those resources to others, we cultivate detachment, strengthen generosity, and put our security in God.

"Do you wish your prayer to fly toward God? Make for it two wings: fasting and almsgiving."
St. Augustine

Choose mercy. Resentment binds the heart; forgiveness frees it. On the Cross, Christ chose mercy. This Lent, choose the same path toward healing and peace.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics practice prayer, penance, and almsgiving during Lent?

Prayer, penance, and almsgiving are grounded in the prophets' call to genuine conversion. Joel urges the people to return to God with their whole hearts, not merely with outward gestures. Isaiah makes clear that the fast God desires feeds the hungry and shelters the poor, linking worship with justice. Jesus deepens this teaching in Matthew 6. He assumes His followers will pray, fast, and give alms, but warns against practicing them for recognition.

When done in secret, these disciplines purify motives, reshape desire, and free us from attachment to possessions and approval. Properly embraced, they train the heart to seek lasting treasure in God rather than passing reward.

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The right time is now

When is the right time to proclaim the Gospel, live the faith with greater intention, and renew our commitment to God's plan? During a January Angelus address, Pope Leo said, "God is at work at all times; every moment is 'God's time'." The call to discipleship is not reserved for a future time when life feels more settled. It is meant for us today.

God works in uncertain moments. The Gospels show that Jesus did not wait for favorable conditions. Matthew records that His public ministry began after John the Baptist's arrest, a moment marked by instability and threat. Rather than withdraw, Jesus proclaimed, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 4:17). What seemed like a setback became the starting point of His mission. If we postpone necessary change until circumstances improve, we may never act. Every moment, even a difficult one, can become the moment of conversion because God is always at work.

God draws close. Jesus also chose an unexpected location. He began not in Jerusalem, the religious center, but in Galilee, a region known for cultural and religious diversity. His mission made clear that God's grace is not confined to a single place or people. As Pope Leo explained, the Gospel reveals a God who draws near to all. No environment is beyond His presence. In our own lives, this means that God's invitation unfolds in ordinary settings. He calls us to deeper friendship, lasting conversion, and faithful witness wherever we are.

from Scripture — Matthew 26:14-27:66, God turns suffering into glory

In this passage, we read Matthew's account of the Passion, which begins with Judas agreeing to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and continues through the preparations for the Last Supper. At that meal, Jesus institutes the Eucharist, giving His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity to His disciples. The contrast is striking. While Judas pursues his own self-interest, Jesus gives Himself in total self-offering.

In Gethsemane, the contrast deepens. As Jesus endures profound anguish, He asks His closest companions to remain with Him in prayer. They fall asleep. Soon after, Judas arrives with an armed crowd and identifies Jesus with a kiss. Jesus is then bound, falsely accused, mocked, and beaten. By the next day, He is scourged, condemned, crucified, and laid in the tomb.

Through these events, Matthew highlights Jesus' trust in the Father and His commitment to the Father's will. The Passion is not a sign of divine abandonment. It reveals the depth of God's mercy. In Christ's willing sacrifice, suffering becomes the means of redemption, grace is poured out, and death itself is conquered. Holy Week shows that God can transform even the darkest hour into the path to glory.

Feasts & Celebrations

March 1 – St. David of Wales (c. 601). St. David is the patron saint of Wales. He was born into Welsh nobility, but instead chose to become a priest. He was later consecrated a bishop. He is best known for founding an ascetic monastery, and ridding the area of the Pelagian heresy, which states that we must earn our salvation. He was known for his inspiring preaching, penitential life, and kindness to the poor.

March 4 – St. Casimir of Poland (1483). Born to King Casimir IV of Poland, St. Casimir became known for his piety and integrity at a young age. When the prince was older and his father sent him to conquer Hungary, Casimir assessed the odds against winning the war and turned back out of concern for his troops. He resolved never to be involved in war again. He died of illness when he was twenty-five.

March 19 – St. Joseph, Husband of Mary (1st Century). Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.

March 29 – Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion (1st Century). On Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, when He was greeted by crowds waving palms and cheering. This Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week.

Q & A — Does repeated failure change how God loves me?

It can be discouraging to struggle with the same sins repeatedly. The pattern may feel discouraging. Yet discouragement should never become despair. The central truth of the Christian life is that when repentance is sincere and there is a real desire to improve, God always receives us. As Pope Francis said, "He does not tire in forgiving. We are the ones who tire in asking for forgiveness." His mercy does not diminish with repetition.

At times, God may permit ongoing struggles to deepen our humility. Repeated weakness can protect us from spiritual pride, which blinds us to our faults and keeps us from seeking grace. Humility, however, recognizes imperfection without losing trust. A humble person is not shocked by failure but returns to God with greater dependence.

If you feel anxious about Confession, whether for a new sin or a familiar one, remember the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son. He waits, watches, and runs to meet his child. This is how God receives us. In every sincere confession, we encounter not frustration, but mercy renewed.

Our Mission
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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the *Revised Standard Version* and the *New American Bible - Revised*)

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

LENT 2026

= a day of fasting and abstinence from meat = a day of abstinence from meat

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 in fasting and prayer" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*).			18 *Ash Wednesday* Attend Mass and receive the cross of ashes — a sign of humility and repentance.	19 Fast from social media for one evening each week.	20 Remember to abstain from meat today. Pray for those who can't afford to have meat.	21 Spend five minutes in silent prayer each morning or night during Lent.
22 Stay after Mass and pray for a spiritually fruitful Lent.	23 Pray the Morning Offering before checking your phone.	24 "Peace begins with a smile" (Mother Teresa). Resolve to smile at everyone.	25 Pray for one specific person by name today.	26 Worry closes the heart. Replace it with trust, "Jesus, I trust in You."	27 Even when things go wrong, be patient, starting with yourself.	28 Fulfill a commitment or promise you've been putting off.
1 **March** Read Matthew 17:1-9. Where does God want to transform your heart, prayer, and life?	2 Today, pray for the Holy Souls in Purgatory, who always need our prayers.	3 Read the daily Gospel and meditate on one line that stands out to you.	4 Today, choose silence instead of complaining.	5 Pray for Christians experiencing persecution. Pray for a conversion of heart for the persecutors.	6 Return love for Love. Visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, where He waits in love.	7 Avoid gossip and change the subject when it starts. If it's untrue, unkind, or confidential, don't say it.
8 Read John 4:5–42. Where do you go when life feels messy? What if Jesus met you there?	9 If your responsibilities permit it, choose one weekday this week to attend Daily Mass.	10 Practice patience intentionally with one difficult person.	11 Skip a meal and donate the money saved from fasting to the poor box.	12 First thing today, tell God, "Thy Will be done!" — and really mean it!	13 Give up a small luxury - drive-thru coffee, streaming, take-out meals - just for today for God.	14 Do a hidden act of service without seeking thanks.
15 *Laetare Sunday* The priest wears rose for the halfway point of Lent. Enjoy a small treat to celebrate.	16 Holy Week and Easter are busy times for parishes and ask how you can help.	17 *St. Patrick's Day* Pray for missionaries and catechists who, like St. Patrick, bring the faith to every corner of the world.	18 Experience God's mercy and attend Confession this week.	19 *St. Joseph's Day* Say an extra prayer for your father. Don't forget the priests — spiritual fathers.	20 Buy food or hygiene items for a local pantry.	21 Take a mini-retreat. Reserve time to silence your phone, light a candle, and be with Jesus.
22 Stay after Mass and pray for the intentions of the Pope and your bishop.	23 Give the gift of a spiritual bouquet — a note recording prayers said for someone who needs them.	24 Think before you speak, especially before responding in annoyance or anger. recall the presence of God.	25 *The Annunciation* We celebrate Mary's "yes," which opened the way for Christ's coming. Pray the Rosary in her honor.	26 Set out a box and fill it with gently used items, books, or clothes. When it's full, bring it to its destination.	27 Abstain from recreational screen-use between 12:00pm and 3:00pm in honor of Jesus' final hours on the Cross.	28 Visit a church or chapel for 10 minutes of quiet if possible.
29 *Palm Sunday* Read Matthew 27:11-54, accompanying Jesus through His trial, Passion, and Death.	30 This whole week, practice the Heroic Minute and get up the moment your alarm rings.	31 Say grace slowly and intentionally, with gratitude, before meals today.	1 **April** Today is the day, Judas plotted to betray Christ. Take time to seek forgiveness or to extend it, if needed.	2 *Holy Thursday* Visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Thank Him for the Eucharist, the Mass, and the Priesthood.	3 *Good Friday* Pray the Stations of the Cross. Your presence and love today consoled Him then.	4 *Holy Saturday* Thank God for His blessings this Lent. Consider which practices you will continue.

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Lenten Prayer for Spiritual Renewal

God, heavenly Father, look upon me and hear my prayer during this holy Season of Lent. By the good works You inspire, help me to discipline my body and to be renewed in spirit.

Without You I can do nothing. By Your Spirit help me to know what is right and to be eager in doing Your will. Teach me to find new life through penance. Keep me from sin, and help me live by Your commandment of love. God of love, bring me back to You. Send Your Spirit to make me strong in faith and active in good works. May my acts of penance bring me Your forgiveness, open my hear to Your love, and prepare me for the coming feast of the Resurrection of Jesus.

Lord, during this Lenten Season, nourish me with Your Word of life and make me one with You in love and prayer.

Fill my heart with Your love and keep me faithful to the Gospel of Christ. Give me the grace to rise above my human weakness. Give me new life by Your Sacraments, especially the Mass.

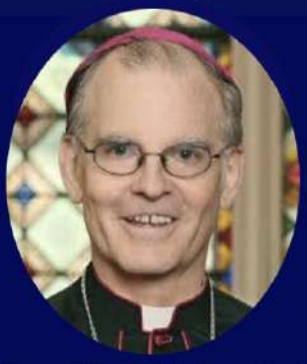
Father, our source of life, I reach out with joy to grasp Your hand; let me walk more readily in Your ways. Guide me in Your gentle mercy, for left to myself I cannot do Your Will.

Father of love, source of all blessings, help me to pass from my old life of sin to the new life of grace. Prepare me for the glory of Your Kingdom. I ask this though our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

10 YEARS

2026
GIFT OF LIFE WALK-NYC
25TH OF MARCH

REBECCA KIESSLING
Keynote Speaker
Founder, Save The1



Grand Pro-life Marshal
Archdiocese NYC Bishop Peter Byrne

MASSIMO GUERRIERO
Legal studies
Turning Point USA

JOHN RITCHIE
Director, TFP
Student Action &
Marching Band

REV. MAKS OGAR, OSPPE
National Shrine
of Our Lady of Czestochowa

11:00 AM FOLEY SQUARE PARK
101 WORTH STREET. NY. NY 10013

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HOMEOWNERS, TENANTS & BUSINESS
ASTORIA
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ASTORIA HOMEOWNERS, TENANTS & BUSINESS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY PUBLIC SAFETY NIGHT

JOIN US AND TELL ALL YOUR NEIGHBORS
AND FRIENDS ALL ARE WELCOME!

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18TH @ 7PM

Pistilli Grand Manor 45-02 Ditmars Blvd,
Entrance on 45th St.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Melinda Katz
District Attorney,
Queens County

Representative of the 114th Precinct

718-721-3690 betterastoria.com 45-02 Ditmars Blvd., Astoria, NY

St. Francis of Assisi Church – Bereavement Support Group

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." – Psalm 34:18

Wednesday evenings
Resuming September 10, 2025
With a new time of
7:45pm – 8:45pm

St. Francis of Assisi Church
Rectory Meeting Room
21-17 45th Street
Astoria, NY 11105

Please enter through
The basement back door.
(Accessible by the side gate. Follow the signs)

If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, you are not alone. St. Francis of Assisi Church invites you to join a compassionate and supportive bereavement group. Together we will reflect, share, and find comfort through prayer and community. This group is open to all—parishioners and non-parishioners alike.

Come as you are. All are welcome.

Contact Carol Hickey at SFAparishcouncil@sfaacademy.org
or inquire with the rectory for more information.

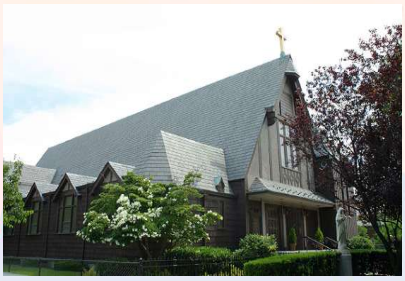
ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS/ DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES

Reclaiming Ourselves: Feel, Talk & Trust in Astoria

Wednesdays 6:00PM –7:15PM

Join us anytime.

All are welcome.



St. Francis of Assisi Church
St. Joseph Room in the Rectory

The Legion of Mary

The Legion of Mary is a prayer group consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, who is our Mother in the order of grace. Members entrust themselves to Mary to sanctify souls and to better a troubled world, for she is a sure path to Christ. In the words of Pope St. Leo X, we pray that Mary may "restore all things in Christ."

Members meet every Thursday at 10:00AM in the Rectory Basement.
Everyone is welcome to come and join in the Mission and the Fellowship.

DO YOU LOVE TO SING?
WE HAVE CHILDREN'S AND ADULTS' CHOIR ON MONDAYS IN THE CHURCH!

3:00PM CHILDREN'S CHOIR
7:00PM ADULT CHOIR

THE GOLDEN AGE CLUB
MONDAYS FROM 12:00PM TO 3:30PM

If you are 65 years of age or older, we have a great community and we would love for you to join us! Bingo is played each week, and some members play Cards or Pockeno.
Refreshments are served as well. We celebrate all Holidays and Birthdays!
We celebrated our 54th Year Anniversary Mass and Luncheon in November.

IACA - Italian American Catholic Action
Meeting on Thursdays at 6:00PM in the Rectory Basement

Religious Education Registration

Those who have not yet registered for Religious Education classes can do so Sunday at the School. Classes have begun but registration is open.

For any questions, please contact Sr. Francesca via email or phone:
dre@sfaacademy.org 718-278-0259 ext. 121

Catechist Needed

We are currently in need of a Catechist for our 7th Grade Class.

If you are interested, please contact Sr. Francesca at
718-278-0259, ext. 121, or dre@sfaacademy.org

OCIA
Order of Christian Initiation for Adults

Are you someone, or do you know someone who:

...has expressed interest in becoming Catholic?

...was baptized as a Catholic as a child but never received the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Communion, or Confirmation?

The Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA) focuses on learning about the Church and teachings of the Faith to prepare individuals to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation during the Easter Season.

For more information, please contact Sr. Francesca at 718-278-0259, ext. 121, or dre@sfaacademy.org