



FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF MARY MARCH 19 PAGE 2

LENT IS MORE THAN PREPARATION FOR EASTER PAGE 3

“A SPECIAL TIME OF PRAYER, PENANCE, SACRIFICE, AND GOOD WORKS” ENGAGING IN THE LENTEN SEASON PAGE 4

A LOOK BACK ON EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES AT ST. DOMINIC SCHOOL PAGE 6

ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA

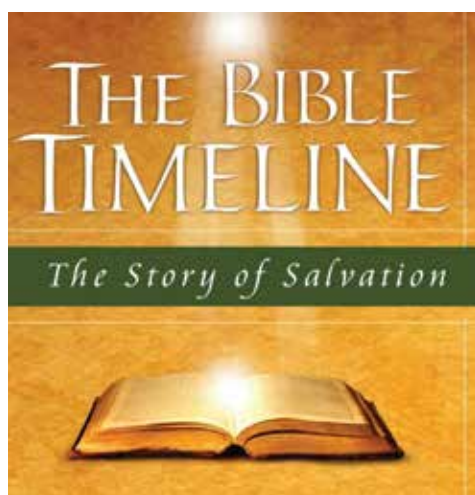
Adult Faith Formation Allows Us to Grow

As adults, we all learn new things, new information, every day. It's how we grow. But the most important thing we should be learning, according to Director of Religious Education Bonnie Nytes, is how to grow closer to God.

“There's no way any of us can learn all about God,” she says. “But the most important part of life is getting closer to God. We need to continue to learn. We're in a relationship with God, and because we're in this relationship, we want to continue to have it grow. When we're in a relationship, we don't want to stop learning about that person we love, and this is even more so with God. By learning about our faith, we do that – it's part of our growth.”

One way that we can learn more about our faith is to take advantage of information that is available online, but with a caveat.

“You have to be careful about what you find,” Bonnie says. “There are consistently good sources, and always courses online we can find and apps with new information. It's



important that we read. We can get good, reliable books and continue to learn. And we can take up the offerings when our church offers adult classes, like the series we're planning. This is an even better way to learn as a community.”

The series is the Jeff Cavins *The Bible Timeline*, which will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Quilting Room, beginning Feb. 1. The series will be held each Wednesday, with the exception of Ash Wednesday, and will run through April 26. The first half of the series will run this spring, and the second half in the fall.

Gail Grawe is leading the study, and is looking forward to the sharing and learning she expects to take place during the series.

“There is so much knowledge in St. Anthony,” she says. “I'm so anxious for them to share. Deacon Harry said he'd be there. I'm real excited!”

Although the series begins Feb. 1, those interested can join in at any time.

continued on back cover

Feast of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary

March 19

A traditional prayer to St. Joseph

O Blessed St. Joseph, faithful guardian and protector of virgins, to whom God entrusted Jesus and Mary, I implore you by the love which you did bear them, to preserve me from every defilement of soul and body, that I may always serve them in holiness and purity of love. Amen.

Devotion to St. Joseph began relatively late in Church history, primarily because his role of husband to Mary and head of the Holy Family was underplayed in early Christianity by many unauthenticated legends of Christ's childhood. These legends almost always portrayed Joseph as an old man, a simple guardian of Mary and Jesus.

Modern theology places Joseph in a much more important position. Because of his valid marriage to Mary, Joseph shared in Mary's parenthood – Joseph was a father to Jesus in every way except biological. Joseph appeared publicly as the natural father of Jesus, thus shielding the virginity of Mary and the reputation of Jesus. Joseph's fatherly love, authority and watchful service were all necessary circumstances in God's plan for the Incarnation.

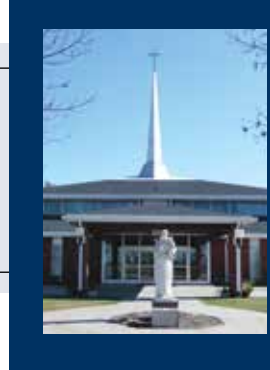
Joseph was born in Judea or Galilee in the first century B.C. Little is stated in the Bible about the influence Joseph had on Jesus. History tells us that he brought Mary and Jesus to the temple each Passover and taught Jesus the carpentry trade. He seems to be the silent family man who shows his love for his family by providing them with security. The very safety of Mary and Jesus was guarded by Joseph when he took his family into Egypt to avoid the massacre of male babies ordered by King Herod.

In the history of the Church, Western veneration of Joseph began with the introduction of the Feast of St. Joseph in the late 15th century.

In 1870, at the end of the First Vatican Council, Pope Pius IX declared St. Joseph to be the patron of the Universal Church. He is also the patron of carpenters, workers, fathers, and a happy death given that he died in the presence of Mary and Jesus. The title of Joseph's March 19 feast day is "Husband of Mary." Pope Pius XII later declared May 1 to be the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, to counteract the Communist May Day holiday.



ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTORAL ADMINISTRATOR

Lent Is More Than Preparation for Easter

Dear Parishioners,

In 2013, Pope Francis issued his first significant work. It was what is called an “apostolic exhortation” titled *The Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium* in Latin). While Rome may use fancy words for some of these things, an “exhortation” of this sort does not change any official Church rules or traditions. However, it does offer advice and encouragement about how we should live our lives.

Pope Francis offers this kind of guidance on a regular basis, but this one in particular seems to present us with suggestions that are worthy of our consideration, especially during Lent. The pope called us to become missionary disciples: “The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 24).

Speaking about his exhortation, Pope Francis said, “One of the riches of the Second Vatican Council was to remind the Church of the two ‘lenses’ of the season of Lent: baptismal and penitential.” In fact, Vatican II noted specifically, “The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent – the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance – should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepared the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God’s word more frequently and devote more time to prayer” (*Companion to the Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1348).

It might be well for us to keep these in mind during Lent. There were vows made during our baptism, and this

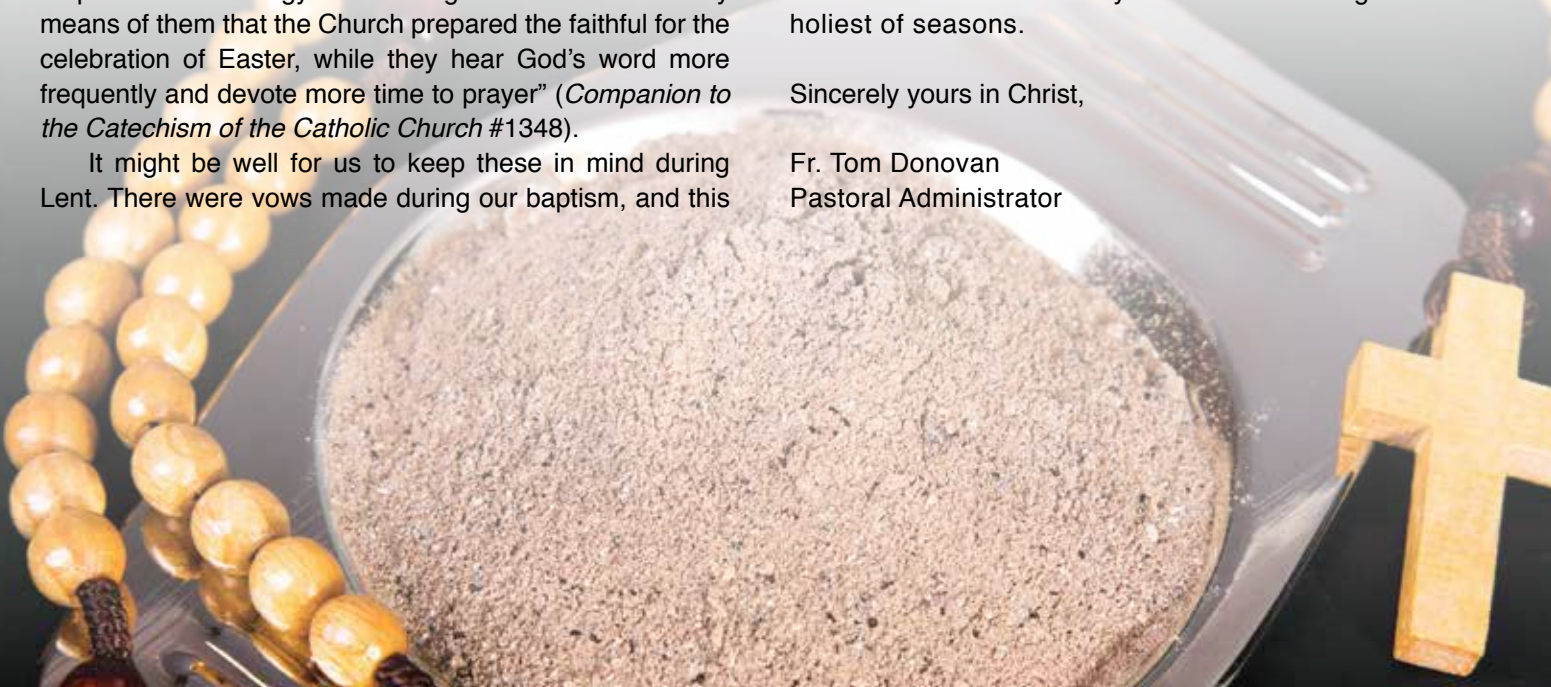
is the time of year to try to fulfill those vows, in addition to reaffirming them. We are given various opportunities to renew these vows, and we may tend to do it automatically without a thought. Now, however, is the time to think. Perhaps during Lent, we can renew these vows as families – and we must not necessarily do it in church or at a Mass. Then, we need to do something during Lent to help each of us understand what that renewal means.

The other important part of Lent pointed out by Pope Francis has to do with penance. Most of us have heard the traditional practices of Lent – fasting, prayer, reception of the Sacraments, and almsgiving. These are things that may bring us closer to Christ. By fasting, we may gain a greater understanding of the hunger the Lord feels for our souls; by increased prayer, we join in union with God; through the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, we become a greater part of that union with God; through giving alms, we empty ourselves in part, just as Jesus emptied Himself for us on the cross.

This is a time to do more than prepare for Easter. This is a time to change how we may approach living and our faith. God bless you now and throughout this holiest of seasons.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Tom Donovan
Pastoral Administrator



“A Special Time of Prayer, Penance, Sacrifice, and Good Works”

ENGAGING IN THE LENTEN SEASON



The Chapel of Calvary inside Church of the Holy Sepulchre



Inside the Chapel of Calvary – Christ Praying at Gethsemane punched silver painting



Inside the Garden of Gethsemane

Ashes offer a simple material reminder of our mortality and need for Christ. As we receive this reminder on Ash Wednesday, we enter the Lenten season, a time set apart to prepare ourselves for Holy Week – the pinnacle of the liturgical year.

“Lent is the preparation for our Lord’s crucifixion, death and resurrection for the salvation of all mankind,” parishioner Janice Pohlman says. “Christ died for our sins and our salvation, and Lent is a time for us to assist the Lord in our salvation.”

The practice of observing Lent originates with the Early Church. In the years 170 to 180, St. Irenaeus wrote to Pope Victor I commenting on the different Lenten practices emerging in the West and East.

At the Council of Nicea in 325, a discussion of Church Lenten teaching – particularly regarding the duration of the season – began. It wasn’t until the fourth century that 40 days became standard practice.

“Think about how it took almost 300 years for it to come together,” says Pete Pohlman. “Over the years, some modifications have been made to how Lent is observed. It is a special time of prayer, penance, sacrifice, and good works.”

Janice and Pete, longtime St. Anthony parishioners, strive to focus on these four basic parts of the Lenten

tradition – prayer, penance, sacrifice, and good works.

The tradition of making intentional sacrifices has been an integral part of the Lenten discipline. Pete, who attended St. Anthony’s grade school, remembers being quizzed by the sisters about what he was “giving up” for Lent.

“The last several decades have brought forth another idea about doing something proactive during Lent,” Pete says. “This could be daily Mass, praying the Rosary, attending the Stations of the Cross, reading the Bible, or spending five to 10 minutes a day reflecting on your own spiritual life.”

The Sacrament of Reconciliation offers us a particular means to enter deeper into Lent, for through this sacrament, we confess our weaknesses and receive the sanctifying grace to fortify us on our spiritual journey.

“Lent is about salvation and forgiveness and asking for forgiveness,” Pete says. “Everyone should go to confession as much as possible. Go to ask the Lord for forgiveness from your sins so that you may receive the salvation promised on Easter Sunday.”

There are many opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent at St. Anthony or one of the other parishes in our Catholic community.

ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



The monthly First Friday and First Saturday Communion of Reparation Devotion takes place throughout the year at St. Rose. Members of our community gather at 5:30 p.m. on Friday and at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday to say the Rosary and attend Mass while also having the opportunity to go to Confession.

“One thing people could do for Lent is commit to attending these devotions to reap the benefits of the promises of Our Lord for First Friday and Our Lady of Fatima for First Saturday,” Janice says.

Another way to engage more fully in the Lenten season would be to foster our relationship with God’s Word. To this end, St. Anthony’s is sponsoring a 12-week Jeff Cavins Bible study from Feb. 1 until April 26. The book will be offered at a discounted price, and no one will be turned away.

Over the years, Janice’s devotion to Lent has grown through her visits to the Holy Land, which have given her the blessing of being able to retrace the steps of Christ’s passion, beginning with walking through the Garden of Gethsemane, and then on the Via Dolorosa.

“I have been to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where Christ was laid in the tomb, and the Chapel of Calvary, where an altar was built over the place where the cross was set,” says Janice. “I knelt at the place of the crucifixion and then went down to the tomb.”

Beginning with Ash Wednesday, the liturgical season of Lent invites us to reflect on each stage of Christ’s passion and death and to foster our faith lives with intentionality.

“Each person, in his or her own way, needs to embrace the season of Lent and the need for prayer, penance, sacrifice, and good works,” Pete says.

“Lent is about salvation and forgiveness and asking for forgiveness. Everyone should go to confession as much as possible. Go to ask the Lord for forgiveness from your sins so that you may receive the salvation promised on Easter Sunday.”
– Pete Pohlman



Along the walk from Gethsemane to the prison pit



The prison pit

If you would like more information about opportunities to engage in the Lenten season, please reach out to the parish office at 217-222-5996.

A Look Back on Events and Activities...

The winter months have been a busy time for our St. Dominic School students — from Christmas-themed activities at the end of 2016, to our Catholic Schools Week 2017 celebration this past January. And as we proceed through the season of Lent, St. Dominic students will have opportunities to grow in faith through formation, prayer and reconciliation.



In December, students gather in the gym to make Christmas cards for residents of local nursing homes and the veterans home.



Our sixth-grade students at their D.A.R.E (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program graduation.



Making Christmas cards.



The Catholic Schools Week Opening Prayer Service – students display American flags on which they wrote how they will shine their lights for others.

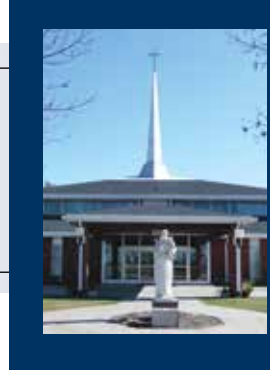


The Christmas card project in December.



Catholic Schools Week, playing Bingo in our gym.

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...at St. Dominic School



Catholic Schools Week, fourth-graders at Casino Lanes.



Gathered outside by our flagpole on the first day of Catholic Schools Week, praying for our nation.



Catholic Schools Week Community Service Project – students painting bowls for Horizon's Empty Bowl fundraiser



Catholic Schools Week Community Service Project – students painting bowls for Horizon's Empty Bowl fundraiser



Catholic Schools Week, third-graders enjoy bowling at Casino Lanes.



Catholic Schools Week, first and second-graders and Mrs. Stroot at Casino Lanes.



Catholic Schools Week, an eighth-grade student with his invention at our Invention Convention during Catholic Schools Week.



A third-grader with her invention at our Invention Convention during Catholic Schools Week.

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DAILY MASS: MON, TUE, & THU - 7:30 A.M.

SATURDAY: 4:00 P.M. & 6:30 P.M.

SUNDAY: 8:00 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.

CONFESSIONS: SATURDAY 5:15 - 6:15 P.M.

Adult Faith Formation Allows Us to Grow *continued from front cover*

The series took shape when Gail went to the first stewardship meeting because she wanted to get more involved in parish life.

"I told the group that what we needed to get was an adult Bible study," Gail recalls. "Father said, 'You can do it.' And I'm looking forward to it."

Gail learned about the Jeff Cavins materials when she was attending St. Peter Parish.

"We had that series, and it was really interesting," she says.

Gail joined the Church in 1989, and her husband is a lifelong Catholic and St. Anthony parishioner. She learned much about the Catholic faith at that time, but with the series, she finds the prospect exciting of continuing to learn.

Those attending the series will be able to better share their faith with others.

"They'll get more information about their faith, and be able to share it," Gail says. "And when someone talks about our faith, for example, if Fr. Tom talks about something in his homily, I'll know what he's talking about."

Bonnie says *The Bible Timeline* series is starting during Lent because the seasons of Advent and Lent tend to make us more open to learn more about our faith.

"We're more willing to do something extra during Lent," she says. "We've been taught that it is the season for renewal and refreshing. Our reasons for having it in Lent are two-fold – it's the appropriate thing to do in Lent, to grow, and second, we're more likely to do it at that time of year."

Bonnie encourages other parishioners to volunteer to lead Adult Faith Formation classes.

"So many adults think, 'I'm not a teacher, so I can't lead,'" she says. "But when you step out of your comfort zone and get the material in hand, and the people to work with, it's one of the best ways to learn is to be a leader. I've learned the most when I step out to lead a group. I see such great potential, but people feel unable. The Holy Spirit will fill in those gaps if we're willing to step up and do it."

Anyone wanting more information about the Jeff Cavins series, or to volunteer to lead an Adult Faith Formation group may call Bonnie Nytes at 217-222-5996.

To learn more about stewardship at St. Anthony of Padua, please contact the Stewardship Committee at stanthonystewardship2015@gmail.com.