



**SACRED HEART of JESUS**  
**CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
❧ *Bethlehem • Founded 1833* ❧

**February 15, 2026**  
**Sixth Sunday Ordinary Time**

5742 State Route 61 S.  
Shelby, Ohio 44875  
(419) 342-2256

A Sister Parish with St. Joseph, Crestline.  
Member of St. Juan Diego Deanery

**Tuesday**

**6:30 pm - Mass at Sacred Heart**

*Mass Intention: Bob Niese*



**Ash Wednesday**

**8:30 am - Mass at Sacred Heart**

*Mass Intention: Living and Deceased of  
Henry Weaver Family*

**10:30 am - Prayer Service with  
Ashes at St. Joseph**

**6:30 pm - Mass at St. Joseph**

*Mass Intention: For the Sick and Their  
Caregivers*

**Thursday**

**5:30 pm - Confession at St. Joseph**

**6:30 pm - Mass at St. Joseph**

*Mass Intention: For Those Who Struggle  
With Disabilities*

**Friday**

**8:30 am - Mass at St. Joseph**

*Mass Intention: For Students, Parents  
and Staff of St. Joseph School*

**7:00 pm - Stations of the Cross  
Both Parishes**

**Saturday**

**3:30pm - Confession at SHJ**

**4:30pm - Mass at Sacred Heart**

*Mass Intention: Lawrence & Mary Alice  
Biglin, Yogi Moore & Mark Wolford*

**Sunday**

**7:00 am - Mass at St. Joseph**

*Mass Intentions: Agnes Hocker; Frank  
Miller*

**8:30 am - Mass at Sacred Heart**

*Mass Intention: For the People of Sa-  
cred Heart and St. Joseph Parishes*

**10:30 am - Mass at St. Joseph**

*Mass Intention: Lindsey & Lisa Anatra;  
Gladys Burkhart*

**Dear Friends,**

Each year, Catholics across Northwest Ohio are invited to participate in the Annual Catholic Appeal of the [Diocese of Toledo](#). This appeal is a concrete way we live out our faith beyond the walls of our parish by supporting ministries and services that no single parish could provide on its own. The ACA allows us to give to Diocese ministries while allowing others across the Diocese to put those gifts into action!

Through the Annual Catholic Appeal, our gifts help form future priests and deacons, support Catholic education and faith formation, assist struggling parishes, care for the poor and vulnerable, and strengthen ministries that serve families, youth, and those in need throughout the diocese. Participation matters more than the amount. Every gift—large or small—is a sign of gratitude to God and a commitment to the mission of the Church. Please join me in prayerfully considering a pledge to the Annual Catholic Appeal. Together, as one diocesan family, we can continue the work of Christ and ensure the Church's mission remains strong for generations to come.

Thank you for your generosity and faithful support.

To see more in-depth the good deeds done in the name of our Lord though the ACA ...please check out this website <https://www.acatoleado.org/> You can find the bishop's wonderful video in which he shares the hope the ACA brings to many lives. Checking out the video on your own time will spare us 5 minutes of time during Sunday Mass. As long as we keep getting close to our goal I'll spare us that "video time" during our Sunday service.

**In Christ,  
Fr. Jeff**

**COLLECTION:**

Feb 8, 2026  
\$ 5,264..35

Reg. Offertory  
\$ 4,105.35

Gen Maintenance  
\$ 50.00  
Latin America  
\$ 30.00  
Indian Missions  
\$ 40.00  
European Churches  
\$ 30.00  
Misericordia  
\$ 229.00  
Online  
\$ 780.00



**Thank you!**

Heart of Bethlehem  
\$ 125.00

**LITURGICAL MINISTERS**

**School Mass**  
**Wednesdays @ 8:30 am**

**Saturday, February 21**

**MUSIC MINISTER**

*Sean Beeson*

**SERVERS**

*Bridget & Rudy  
Belcik*

**OFFERTORY**

*Steve Gosser Family*

**EXTRAORDINARY****MINISTERS**

*Greg Keller, Kelsey Keller  
Joann Claytor*

**USHERS**

*Steve Gosser  
Robert Bell*

**LECTOR**

*Molly Belcik*

(Please check Ministry Scheduler Pro  
for the most up to date assignments)

**Sunday, February 22**

**MUSIC MINISTER**

*Kate DiLullo*

**SERVERS**

*Oliviah Stilwell  
Sophie Keller*

**OFFERTORY**

*Matthew & JoBeth Finnegan Family*

**EXTRAORDINARY****MINISTERS**

*Deacon Steve Vogt, Lisa Myers  
Deb Schumacher*

**USHERS**

*Roger Niese & John Finnegan*

**LECTOR**

*JoAnn Krausman*

**COUNTERS**

*Sheila Vogt, Diane Sutter  
Steve Metzger*

**Bible Readings for the Week of Feb. 15, 2026**

**Monday** Jas1:1-11, Ps 119:67-68, 71-72, 75-76, Mk 8:11-13  
**Tuesday** Jas 1:12-18, Ps 94:12-15, 18-19, Mk 8:14-21  
**Wednesday** Jl 2:12-18, Ps 51:3-6b, 12-14, 17, 2Cor 5:20-6:2, Mt 6:1-6, 16-18  
**Thursday** Dt 30:15-20, Ps 1:1-4, 6, Lk 9:22-25  
**Friday** Is 58:1-9a, Ps 51:3-6b, 18-19, Mt 9:14-15  
**Saturday** Is 58:9b-14, Ps 86:1-6, Lk 5:27-32  
**Sunday** Gn 2:7-9, 3:1-7, Ps 51:3-6, 12-13, 17, Rom 5:12-19 or 5:12, 17-19, Mt 4:1-11

**BULLETIN SPONSORS OF THE WEEK:**

**Gwartz Foods**

Fresh Meat Case & Custom Processing

5001 St. Rt. 39 West  
Shelby, OH 44875  
419 - 342 - 6228

Monday - Saturday 9:00am to 6:00pm  
Closed Sundays

**Niese Farms**  
Crestline, Ohio

*Rich, Chad, & Casey Niese*

Office (419) 347-1204  
Cell (419) 295-5901

## Open House @ Sacred Heart School, Sunday, February 22, 2026

Join us for our annual Open House on Sunday, February 22nd. from 9:20-10:15 AM.

This is also a great way to meet our staff at Sacred Heart School! We will also be showcasing our students' projects throughout Sacred Heart School and we would be happy to answer any questions about our wonderful school

If you would like to schedule a tour outside of our Open House, please contact Mrs. Myers at 419-342-2797 or [Lmyers@shelbysacredheart.org](mailto:Lmyers@shelbysacredheart.org) to schedule an appointment.

### Help with Tuition at Sacred Heart School!

Ohioans can receive a dollar for dollar tax credit up to \$750 per person for donations to the Diocese of Toledo Scholarship Fund. Please designate Sacred Heart, Shelby as the recipient. Forms are in the back of church. Learn more at [www.dotsgo.org](http://www.dotsgo.org).



### Student Led Stations of the Cross

Sacred Heart Students will be celebrating Stations of the Cross on the following Fridays at 2pm. 2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/27 and Wednesday, 4/1 at 1:30pm. All are welcome!



### Fish Fry Season! Feb. 20, 27, March 6, 13, 20, & 27.

St. Joseph, Crestline Convocation Center. Dine-In or Drive-Thru starting at 5:00 pm until sold out.  
Fried Pollock: \$13 Baked Haddock: \$17  
All proceeds benefit St. Joseph School.



The students at Sacred Heart School had a great time snow tubing! Thank you, Sacred Heart PTO for organizing this event.



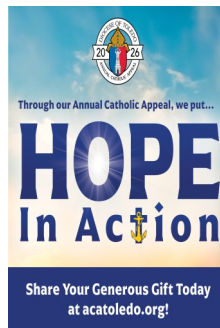
### Euchre Tournament March 1st.

Please join us for the Sacred Heart PTO Euchre Tournament **March 1st**. \$20 per team Doors open @ 12:30 P.M. Play begins @ 1:00 P.M. 50/50 drawings, food and drinks for sale. Sacred Heart Parish Hall. Pre-registration required. Please sign up before **February 23rd**. Call or text Kelsey Keller at 419-565-1241 to sign up your team.

Thank you for supporting Sacred Heart PTO!



### High School PSR February 25 & March 4, 11, 18, & 25.



Countless lives are touched by the ministries of the Diocese funded by the Annual Catholic Appeal. Seminary education and formation, children, sick and aged, the needy—they all depend on our generosity. Thank you to all that pledged today to help meet our parish goal and assure the continuation of these efforts.

28th ANNUAL DIOCESAN CELEBRATION OF

## CATHOLICS *With* DISABILITIES

With the Presentation of the 2026 Open Arms Awards



Principal Celebrant  
Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas  
Bishop of Toledo  
June 6, 2026 at 4:00 pm  
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish  
6149 Hill Ave, Toledo, OH 43615



Contact: Lynn Priest  
Accessibility Ministries Specialist  
419-214-4886, [lpriest@toledodiocese.org](mailto:lpriest@toledodiocese.org)



### 28th. Annual Open Arms Award

Nominate someone in your parish who is living with a significant disability (caused by a vision or hearing impairment, paralysis, chronic illness, intellectual disability, or mental illness) and despite any limitations, models Christian service to their parish community and beyond? Perhaps you know of a parishioner who is a caregiver and/or advocate for a person or persons living with disabilities. If you would like to nominate them for the Open Arms Award please submit their name(s) and why you are nominating them for the 2026 Open Arms Awards. These awards will be presented by Bishop Daniel E. Thomas at the 4:00 pm Saturday Mass on June 6, 2026, at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, 6149 Hill Ave, Toledo OH when our Diocese celebrates the gifts that Catholics living with disability bring to our Church.











# LENT 2026



= a day of fasting and abstinence from meat



= a day of abstinence from meat

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



# PARISHIONER NATE METZGER

BETHLEHEM – Growing up in the Settlement, Nate Metzger always had someone to talk to.

“Lots of brothers and sisters at home,” Nate proudly shared. His parents, Tom and Diane Metzger, live with him and instructed him in the faith.

“Nate has a lot of faith, reverence, respect,” Diane lovingly shared. “He marvels Tom and I with how he follows along beautifully in the Mass, responses and even tries to sing along.”

Attending Mass is a highlight for Nate. “I like it,” noted Nate. “All the people. Talk with them. See where they are.”

Ministers are scheduled weeks in advance and the church bulletin keeps everyone updated on their responsibilities. Lectors and cantors, for example, are aware of their schedule online through Ministry Scheduler Pro or reading the bulletin from the week prior. Nothing gets past Nate.

“He has an amazing memory and will specifically ask people why they had to switch their ministry to another date or why they couldn’t make it. Nate ushers, takes up Offertory with our family and takes pride in doing all that – He makes sure other parishioners are doing their ministries,” Diane smiled.

Parishioners may see Nate working at different places like The Pickwick Place in Bucyrus, for example. Or you may see him with his girlfriend of two years, Olivia, square dancing.

What’s his favorite music?

“Country,” he said. “Different songs.”

Favorite band?

“REO Speedwagon,” he noted, without missing a beat.

Nate’s 39-years-old and the proud uncle of 15 nieces and nephews. He shares his love with them by “playing with them – board games like Monopoly, UNO.”

He’s a big fan of sports.

“Nate has enjoyed playing basketball at Crestline St. Joe’s gym when they had Thursday night ‘barn ball games’ and would always enjoy playing on Fr. Jeff’s team,” Diane shared.

Baseball, America’s pastime, is Nate’s favorite sport, though.

A highlight was going to Cooperstown, New York, home of the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Nate used to play baseball in Mansfield. “Stopped playing (about 5 years ago),” Nate said. Noting his former position as the shortstop, he said it was his favorite position.

Up at the plate, he said he was good at batting. “Yeah, I think I was,” Nate said. He sometimes stole bases.

Nate follows the Ohio State Buckeyes, Cleveland Browns and Cleveland Cavaliers sports’ teams, but he’s not one dimensional.

“Nate enjoys showing Jesus’ love in our family, at his dayhabs and work, at church and in our community,” said Diane.

Nate was recently spotlighted by the Crawford County Board of Developmental Disabilities in their Horizons Newsletter.

March 6, 2026 marks Developmental Disabilities Awareness and Advocacy Day at the Ohio Statehouse; parishioners are invited to register online to show their support for Nate and others.

“This event is funded by a grant from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (ODDC). The Council is one of a national network of state councils, committed to self-determination and community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities,” according to organizers.

Nate is focused on one thing in these cold months.

“Going on a big vacation. Florida,” noting he’s been there before.



Photo submitted by Joe Di Lullo | Settlement Spotlight





# ***The Heart of Bethlehem***

## **NEWSLETTER**

—February 2026—



**SACRED HEART of JESUS**  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

~ Bethlehem • Founded 1833 ~

### **Sacred Heart Parish & School,**

We sincerely appreciate you taking the time to complete our survey once more. We have carefully considered all the valuable feedback provided and have implemented changes to address as many of your concerns as possible. The final plan for the school addition will be presented at the town hall meeting on **February 28th at 9:30am** in the Sacred Heart Hall.

#### **What will happen to the current Parish Center?**

At this time, our primary focus will remain exclusively on the school addition. The school addition is deemed necessary, and the parish center can be addressed at a later date.

#### **How much will the addition cost?**

Our budget for this addition is 2.9 million dollars. The Heart of Bethlehem diligently sought the most economical price to ensure ample space for Sacred Heart to continue its educational and Catholic mission for many future generations. We are committed to maintaining low costs throughout the entirety of the project.

#### **Why does Sacred Heart Schools NEED this addition?**

Sacred Heart has been operating with limited space for several years. The mobile unit was initially intended as a temporary solution to address the lack of available space. This mobile unit is presently in continuous use throughout the day, which suggests a persistent need for additional room. Furthermore, the preschool and kindergarten classes currently share the basement facilities. The combined increase in noise levels is becoming problematic for the students. In addition to this, the frequent trips up and down the stairs for these young students to access the restroom facilities are proving to be quite challenging for both staff and students alike.

The workspaces provided for staff are quite compact, restricted, and not conducive to the increasing workload associated with operating a school. Sacred Heart has achieved its high ranking in education due to the exceptional efforts of its staff on behalf of the students. It is essential that they are provided with adequate space to continue their outstanding work. The work of nurturing disciples who grow in knowledge, care deeply for others, and grow in their love of Jesus.



## Will this addition lead to a large increase in the number of students at Sacred Heart?

The plan is not to increase Sacred Hearts student numbers but to improve functionality and safety. This addition is designed to accommodate the average number of students Sacred Heart has educated over the last decade, approximately 100 students a year. Currently, 66% of Sacred Heart's student body consists of parishioners.



## New School Addition Plans

←Front of the School-South

## Will this addition accomplish all of Heart of Bethlehem goals?

YES! The new plan will relocate all students from the basement and mobile unit to the main floor of the campus. We will have a secure double-door entrance with an office space that will allow staff to work more efficiently and freely. Father will finally have an office within the school.

Enhancing and modernizing the restrooms will facilitate a more efficient daily schedule for the entire school. The preschool will be equipped with a private restroom within the classroom, which is anticipated to be a significant enhancement for our Preschool program.



# Survey Results

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1. Are you satisfied with the renovations that have been completed to enhance the Sacred Heart campus in the last 3 years?  
**YES- 120 NO- 1 Unaware-8**
2. Do you support a campus expansion that would involve relocating Kindergarten and Preschool from the basement, removing the mobile unit, enhancing restroom facilities within the building to ensure ADA(Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance for all age groups and establishing a unified campus? (Option "A")  
**YES-125 NO-4**
3. If you responded YES to question 2, do you support the relocation of the parish office into the school addition, provided it has secure and independent access separate from the school?  
**Yes-97 NO-29**

**Thank you Sacred Heart for your wonderful feedback!!**

## Mark Your Calendars for a Town Hall Meeting

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We invite you to join us for coffee and a Q&A session on **February 28th at 9:30 AM** in Sacred Heart Hall!

The Heart of Bethlehem committee is excited to present the new school addition plans. Based on your feedback, we have adjusted these plans to address the concerns and needs of our school community. Please join the committee and the Sacred Heart family for a coffee bar as we plan for the future of Sacred Heart School.

**We look forward to seeing you there!!!**

## Soft Donation Pledges

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We are continuing to gather data for our presentation of this project to the diocese.

For those who were previously unable to complete the donation section of the survey due to budget uncertainty, we can now confirm the project budget is \$2.9 million. We hope this information assists in your decision-making. Once you have determined your contribution, please submit a new survey using the QR code provided and include your donation details.



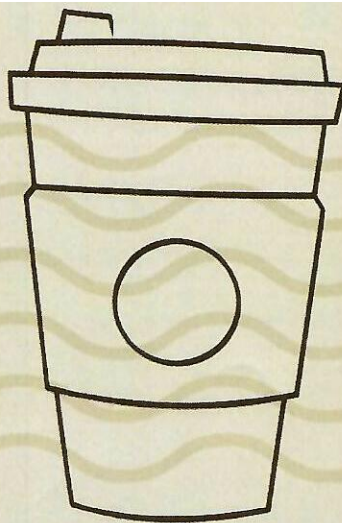
If you have not yet had the opportunity to complete the survey, we would greatly appreciate it if you could do so now.

**Thank you!**

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**Contact us at:**  
**[heartofbethlehem@sacredheartshelby.org](mailto:heartofbethlehem@sacredheartshelby.org)**





# COFFEE & QUESTIONS

HEART OF BETHLEHEM IS EXCITED  
TO SHARE THE PLANS FOR OUR  
SCHOOL ADDITION & ANSWER  
YOUR QUESTIONS!

**02-28-26 9:30AM**

Sacred Heart Hall



JOIN US FOR A COFFEE BAR & LET'S PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF  
SACRED HEART SCHOOL!!

# Growing in

# FAITH™

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

February 2026

Rev. Jeff Smith, Pastor

## One Minute Meditations

### St. Onesimus

Born in Phrygia, St. Onesimus was enslaved to Philemon of Colossae in present-day Turkey. He encountered St. Paul during the apostle's imprisonment in Rome, where Onesimus had fled after stealing from his master. Moved by Paul's witness, he repented, was baptized, and later gained his freedom. Onesimus became a trusted companion and co-worker of St. Paul and was eventually martyred for the faith during the persecutions under Emperor Domitian.

### God's Valentine to us

If God sent a Valentine, it might sound something like this: *"My darling child"* (Jeremiah 31:20), *"You are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you"* (Isaiah 43:4). *"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love"* (John 15:9). *"Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends..."* (John 15:13-14). *"Do you love me?"* (John 21:16) That makes the Bible the world's longest love letter.

"God is not the enemy of our freedom but its ground. That is something we ought to relearn in these days. Only love that is almighty can ground a joy that is free from anxiety." Pope Benedict XVI

## "What do you seek?" (John 1:38)

Have you ever felt restless or quietly dissatisfied, sensing that something in your life needs changing? Lent offers that opportunity. It is a spiritual reset, inviting us to reorient our hearts toward Christ, the true source of peace, joy, purpose, and meaning. Here are practical ways to deepen your encounter with God and His love this Lent.

**Faith is relational, not informational.** The first disciples were not content with simply hearing about Jesus. They wanted to be with Him and to know Him personally. Christ extends that same invitation to us today. We respond by making room for Him through prayer and meditation, regular participation in Mass, and time with Scripture, not as duties to complete, but as ways of choosing a living relationship with the One who loves us most.

**Choose trust over control.** "Let Him lead and guide you," Pope Leo has urged. God's invitation to deeper friendship is renewed each day, and Lent is a privileged time to respond with intention. Begin each morning by

offering your day to God, placing your work, relationships, and uncertainties in His hands. This simple act of trust opens the door to genuine freedom.

**Share what you have received.** A true encounter with God naturally leads to what Pope Leo called "missionary

*"If you sense the Lord calling you, do not be afraid...He alone knows the deepest, perhaps hidden, longings of your heart — the path that will lead you to true fulfillment."* (Pope Leo XIV)

zeal," the desire to share with others what we have received. After meeting Christ, St. Andrew simply brought his brother, Simon Peter, to Him. Likewise, sharing your faith is often as simple as an honest conversation with a friend about the source of your hope. You are not persuading or performing; you are inviting someone you care about to meet the Friend who has changed your life.

This Lent, let renewal take root. Choose presence, trust, and generosity, and allow God to do the rest.

## Why Do Catholics Do That?

Abstaining from meat on Fridays in Lent is not merely a rule, but a reverent sacrifice rooted in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice on Good Friday. By giving up something we enjoy but do not need, we unite a small, bodily sacrifice to His offering on the Cross.

## Why do Catholics give up meat on Fridays in Lent?

This "prayer of the body" strengthens the prayer of the soul, training our hearts in discipline and gratitude. It keeps our focus on Christ and serves as a quiet, outward sign of faith. For the same reasons, the Church encourages Friday penance throughout the year.



# When things go wrong, choose charity

When difficulties arise, our instinct is often to complain, assign blame, or turn inward with harsh self-criticism. These reactions rarely solve the problem. More often, they weaken charity, cloud judgment, and strain relationships. A more constructive response is to choose kindness deliberately, in thought, speech, and action.

**Practice kindness in thought:** When self-pity, resentment, comparison, or harsh self-judgment appear, treat them as temptations rather than truths. Pause and redirect your thinking. Replace them with a steady reminder such as, "This is difficult, but I can respond well." Offer yourself the same patience you would give a friend.

**Practice kindness in speech:** Before speaking, ask whether

your words will help or simply vent frustration. If you would not say something to or about someone you love, refrain. When emotions run high, bring your complaints to prayer first. Naming them before God can bring clarity and restraint.

**Practice kindness in action:** Focus on what you can do rather than what you cannot control. Choose one concrete act of goodwill: express gratitude, offer help, listen attentively, or perform a small, unnoticed kindness. These simple actions restore perspective and soften difficult moments.

Responding with kindness does not ignore problems. It creates the conditions for peace, clearer judgment, and constructive action to take root.

## from Scripture

### Matthew 4:1-11, He chose us

In this passage, Jesus is tempted by the Devil. First, Satan tempted Jesus to satisfy His hunger with a miracle – to put physical needs above spiritual needs. Jesus showed us that spiritual needs come first, and to entrust both to God's care. Next, Satan commanded Jesus to jump from the temple roof, forcing God's hand. Again, Jesus refused: serving God means doing things God's way.

Finally, Satan offered to surrender all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would worship him. While horrible, it

promised a "painless" way to save the world. Jesus rejected it, choosing the Cross because it was the only way to save us. He chose us. When tempted to do what's "easy" versus what's morally right, ask for the strength to choose what's right.

The season of Lent is a powerful opportunity for spiritual renewal and growth in love. We can take comfort knowing Jesus faced the same temptations we do and conquered them. If we stay close to Jesus, He will lead us to victory.

also a day of abstinence from meat and fasting – one regular meal and two small meals that together don't equal a full meal.

**February 22 – St. Margaret of Cortona (1297).** St. Margaret's conversion came after the sudden death of the man she was having an affair with. Shaken, she repented and became a Franciscan tertiary. She founded a hospital and an order of Tertiary sisters — *le Poverelle* — to operate it.

**February 22 – The Chair of St. Peter.** Today marks St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See, the "seat" of authority, in Rome. We thank God for His Church and pray for its holy preservation.

## Q & A What to do with dryness in prayer

**A** God never leaves us, yet our experience of prayer can ebb and flow. There are times of joy and peace, and others marked by dryness and difficulty. While dry seasons can be discouraging, that is often when our faith can grow the most. Don't avoid them, but live them well.

**Ask why.** Dryness in prayer can point to areas that need attention. Chronic stress, lack of rest, constant busyness, excessive screen time, or unresolved sin can weaken our attentiveness to God. Examine your habits and ask what may be interfering with prayer.

**Remember the good times.** When times are tough, memory sustains love. Follow Mary's example, who "*kept all these things, pondering them in her heart*" (Luke 2:19). Recall the ways God has acted in your life. Remembering His faithfulness restores confidence.

**Renew your "yes" daily.** Mary's consent to God's will was a daily surrender, even amid suffering. Resist the temptation to abandon prayer. Each day, echo her words: "*Let it be done unto me according to your word*" (Luke 1:38).

## Feasts & Celebrations

**February 5 – St. Agatha (c.251).** Born to a noble Sicilian family, St. Agatha dedicated herself to God at the age of fifteen. The governor Quintianus was determined to marry her and threatened her if she refused him. She kept her vow despite torture, and imprisonment. God sent her a vision of St. Peter to comfort her, heal her, and fill her dungeon with heavenly light.

**February 18 – Ash Wednesday.** The first day of Lent. The ashes of old palms are placed on the forehead in the shape of a Cross, as a sign of penance. It's

### Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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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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**The Catholic Women's Club** of the St. Juan Diego Deanery offers a scholarship to a qualified Catholic girl in her Senior year.

She should graduate in 2026 from high school and plan to attend college or trade school. She does not need to be attending Catholic High School, or to attend a Catholic college to apply.

See your parish office, youth director, or the President of CWC, Brenda Starr-Jude for the application form and requirements.

Submit the application by mail before **April 8, 2026** to:  
Brenda Starr-Jude, President CWC  
182 Foxcroft Rd., Lexington OH 44904  
PH: 419-610-8251



### **Lenten Enrichment Opportunities:**

#### **Lenten Retreat: Come Away Beloved**

Saturday, February 21st. 9:00 am – 2:45 pm

Sorrowful Mother Shrine, Bellevue

Call the Shrine office at 419-483-3435, option 4 to register.

\$25.00 Registration Fee. Lunch provided.

#### **Men's Discernment Retreat:**

Saturday, March 7th. 9:00 am-3:00pm

Our Lady of Lourdes, Toledo

Fr. David Kidd: [dkidd@toledodiocese.org](mailto:dkidd@toledodiocese.org)

#### **Adventures in Marriage:** March 20, 21, & 22

5:30 - 8:30 Friday & Saturday and 1:00 - 5:00 on Sunday

St. Bernard Catholic Church, New Washington

Child care provided (419) 492-2295

#### **The Terror of Demons:** The Virtues of St. Joseph

Thursday, March 19th 6:30pm

St. Joseph Catholic Church, Crestline

Mass, light meal, presenter and author John R. Wood

#### **Night of Healing:** March 24th. 7-8:30pm

St. Bernard Catholic Church, New Washington

**Pilgrimage Opportunity!** The tri-parish group of the Mansfield area invites you to consider joining us on a trip to Italy October 12-23, 2026. We will spend several nights in each of Assisi, Florence, and Rome, visiting many basilicas, and other historical and faith-related sites. Mass will be celebrated each day, and we will have a local guide accompanying us throughout the trip. If the Holy Father is in Rome, we will attend the weekly papal audience. You can find additional information about this trip at [catholicfaithjourneys.com](http://catholicfaithjourneys.com) or by contacting Kathy Wilkinson at 419-989-8513 or by email to [kmadams58@gmail.com](mailto:kmadams58@gmail.com).

***F.I.S.H. food pantry most needed items: decaf tea, vanilla pudding, small cans of chicken, and 15oz cans of spaghetti sauce.***

***Thank you for your generous continued support!***