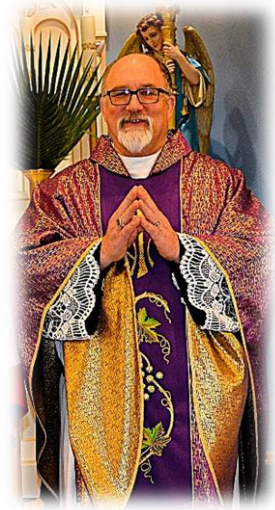


Dear Faithful and Friends of All Saints Parish,

As we continue our journey through the holy season of Lent, the Church lovingly invites us into a time of renewal, reflection, and deeper faith. These forty days are not simply about giving something up; they are about drawing closer to Christ, examining our hearts, and preparing ourselves for the great joy of Easter, which we will celebrate in April.



Our path to Easter leads us first to Palm Sunday, when we will gather with palms in hand, remembering our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. That joyful procession quickly turns toward the solemn events of Holy Week, reminding us that glory and sacrifice are inseparably united in the Christian life. Lent helps us walk that road with intention.

Each Friday during Lent, we are blessed with opportunities to pray together through Bitter Lamentations and the Stations of the Cross. These beautiful devotions allow us to meditate on the depth of Christ's love and the cost of our redemption. On Good Friday, Tenebrae will lead us into a powerful and reflective service as the lights are gradually extinguished, symbolizing the darkness of the Passion and inviting us to quiet contemplation before the hope of Resurrection dawns.

At the same time, our parish life during March and April is filled with warmth and fellowship. The making of pierogi and the preparation of kielbasa are cherished highlights. These gatherings are more than culinary traditions; they are moments of shared laughter, teamwork, and community spirit. Around the tables and in the kitchen, friendships are strengthened and memories are made.

I encourage each of you to take full advantage of these sacred and joyful weeks. Come to prayer. Invite someone who may be searching for hope. Join us for the devotions. Lend your hands and heart in our parish activities. As we walk together through Lent, may we arrive at Easter renewed in faith, strengthened in hope, and united in love as one parish family.

With gratitude and pastoral love,

Father Jim

All Saints Parish PNCC

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Veteran Military Friendly Congregations

(VMFC) is a program that promotes community, acceptance, and support for Veterans and their families. Faith is a proven and fundamental component to healing, recovery, and the mental health well-being of Veterans. As such, the mission of VMFC is to bring our servicemen and women closer to God and highlight the healing power of God. We work to provide crucial support and love to Veterans and their family members.

We stand ready to honor and recognizes Veterans for their service; Pray for our Veterans and Service members; Advocate for Veterans so they receive the benefits they need and want; and Increases awareness of Veteran resources.

The Youth Group had a great time at the Valentine's Day party. We enjoyed the food, games, and spending time together. It was a fun night, and everyone seemed to have a really good time.



We also had our first official Youth Group meeting. During the meeting, we voted for our officers.

Michael was elected President, Jacob was elected Vice President, and Nardin was elected Secretary. We are excited about our new leadership team and are looking forward to planning more activities together.



The Youth Group also held its first fundraiser to support FOSS. We organized a raffle and raised \$100. Thank you to everyone who bought tickets and helped make it a success.

We appreciate the support and can't wait to continue growing and serving as a group.

— **Michael Pharris**
Youth Group President

Greetings from the Mission and Evangelism Commission of the Polish National Catholic Church. We invite you to the 25th Mission & Evangelism Workshop, which will be held on Friday, May 29, through Sunday, May 31, 2026, at St. Joseph's Parish of the PNCC in Westfield, MA. We hope to see you there. Our goal for each Mission Workshop is that the faithful come away with a burning desire to bring the faith-driven work of the Workshop back to their parishes. Please consider participating in this event. Our hotel accommodation is at the Hampton Inn Westfield, 39 Southampton Rd, Westfield, MA 01085.

Installation of 2026 Parish Committee

On January 11, 2026, members of our newly elected Parish Committee formally took the Oath of Office, prayerfully committing themselves to faithful service on behalf of All Saints Parish. It was a proud and inspiring moment for our community. We are truly blessed with a gifted and dedicated team whose leadership reflects both deep love for the Church and a clear vision for the future.

With thoughtful planning already underway, the Committee has begun shaping both immediate goals and long-term initiatives to guide the continued growth and direction of our parish. Attention is being given to preparations for the celebration of our 100th Anniversary in 2029, as well as to strengthening the foundation of parish life for the decade ahead.



We gratefully recognize those who now serve:

President: Jeff Kotelnicki
Vice President: Dwight Berend
Recording Secretary: Pat Konrad
Financial Secretary: Carol Szydowski
Treasurer: Jennifer Kotelnicki

Directors: Sharon Stachurski, Donald Wechselberger, Marcia Berend

Parish Tribunal: Rody Yezman (2-year term), Pat Kotelnicki (1-year term), Larry Bawol (1-year term)

Auditors: Michael Szydowski, William Konrad, Ron Rogers

Please keep these parish leaders in your prayers as they begin this important work. Together, with faith and unity, we look forward to a vibrant future for All Saints Parish.

Thank you for serving our parish!

OATH OF OFFICE



I, **N. (and office)**, do solemnly swear before Almighty God and this congregation that I will live the Gospel of Christ; support the Constitution of the Polish National Catholic Church; and bear true faith and allegiance to the same. Under the authority of the bishop of this diocese, I will justly, honestly, faithfully,

impartially, and conscientiously perform all the duties of my office according to the best of my ability. So, help me God, one in the Blessed Trinity and all the Saints. Amen.

The Pastor will bless the new Parish Committee

with Holy Water.

Pastor: In the Name of God and under the authority of Father Senior Charles Zawistowski., and as Pastor of All Saints Parish, I install you, as the Parish Committee for the year of our Lord 2026.

Strategic Planning Retreat with

Father Senior John Kowalczyk

On Friday, January 9, the newly elected Parish Committee and members of the 2025 Committee gathered at the rectory for an evening of fellowship and reflection hosted by Father Jim. The gathering marked the beginning of a three-day retreat dedicated to prayer, visioning, and strategic planning for 2026 and the years beyond. The purpose was simple yet profound: to place all ideas on the table, speak candidly, and seek a clear and unified direction for the future of All Saints Parish.

Saturday, January 10, began with Lauds (Morning Prayer), grounding our work in gratitude and dependence upon God before entering the important conversations



ahead. We were blessed to have as our facilitator the Very Reverend John Kowalczyk, Pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish and Administrative Senior of the Central Seniorate, which includes parishes in Kewanee, Chicago, Ellisville (MO), and South Bend (IN). Father

Senior John is widely respected and frequently called upon to assist at seniorate, diocesan, and national programs and events. His steady leadership and thoughtful guidance helped focus our discussions and ensure that every voice was heard.

The central work of Saturday was a comprehensive SWOT analysis—identifying our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as a parish community.

What emerged was deeply encouraging. All Saints is, above all, a true church family. Fellowship, hospitality, inclusivity, and genuine care for one another stand as our greatest strengths. Members feel welcomed, supported, and spiritually connected. Our accessible facility, generous spirit, openness to new ideas, youth involvement, and outreach efforts confirm that we are not static—we are rooted in tradition while remaining open to growth.



At the same time, we acknowledged areas requiring attention. Questions surrounding dues structure, aging demographics, parish size, and geographic distance impact long-term sustainability and engagement. We also recognized the need to strengthen advertising, promotion, and consistent volunteer commitment. Clearer communication about who we are—and that we are open to all—will help address misconceptions and extend our reach.



The retreat also highlighted exciting opportunities: improved signage, enhanced social media presence, community events, facility enhancements, hall rentals, outreach to local industries, and welcoming diverse cultures. There is strong appreciation for stable pastoral leadership and a shared desire for greater

organizational clarity, including coordinated calendars, logo development, and intentional recognition of new members.

We also considered potential threats, including demographic shifts, financial stability, misinformation, secular pressures, and the risk of inaction. These reflections were not discouraging; rather, they demonstrated healthy self-awareness and a commitment to proactive planning.

In summary, the retreat affirmed that All Saints Parish is spiritually vibrant and relationally strong. The work before us is not to reinvent ourselves, but to align



structure, communication, and outreach with the powerful sense of family that already defines us. With prayerful unity and intentional planning, we move forward with confidence toward our centennial celebration in 2029 and into the next decade of faithful service.

The retreat weekend concluded beautifully on Sunday with the celebration of Holy Mass, concelebrated by Father Senior John Kowalczyk and Father Jim. Having spent the previous days in prayer, honest dialogue, and thoughtful planning, it was fitting that we returned to the altar—placing all of our hopes, ideas, and commitments before the Lord.



The liturgy served as both culmination and commissioning. What had been discussed in meeting rooms was now entrusted to God’s grace. The spirit of unity, collaboration, and shared purpose was palpable. There was a renewed sense that the Holy Spirit is actively guiding our parish as we prepare not only for the coming year, but for the years leading to our centennial celebration and beyond.



as we prepare not only for the coming year, but for the years leading to our centennial celebration and beyond.

It was truly an inspiring, Spirit-led weekend—one marked by prayerful discernment, courageous conversation, and genuine fraternity. We move forward strengthened, grateful, and confident in the Lord’s continued guidance for All Saints Parish.

A collage for the PNCC Youth Convo - Retreat 2026. It features a title "PNCC YOUTH CONVO - RETREAT 2026 AUGUST 3 - 7, 2026 - SAVE THE DATE! @ Camp Monadnock - Jaffrey, NH" and a logo with "TRUTH STRUGGLE WORK". The collage includes images of a priest, a sunset over a lake, a campfire, a group of people on a wooden deck, and a map of New Hampshire.

THE BLESSING OF THROATS

THE BLESSING OF THE TWO CANDLES

One of the quiet but beautiful moments in the life of the Church each winter is the Blessing of Throats in honor of Saint Blaise. It may seem like a small tradition—two candles gently placed at the throat—but it carries a powerful reminder: God cares about our whole lives, including our health, our fears, and even the simplest needs of daily living.



Saint Blaise, remembered as a bishop and martyr, became associated with healing of throat illnesses after saving a child who was choking. Over time, the Church began invoking his intercession each year near his feast day, asking God's protection from sickness and harm. In the middle of cold and flu season, this prayer feels especially timely.

But this blessing is about more than avoiding sore throats. It is a moment to pause and entrust ourselves to God's care. It reminds us that our voices—used for prayer, encouragement, singing, teaching, and proclaiming the Gospel—are gifts.

We ask not only for protection from illness, but for the grace to use our voices well: to speak kindly, to pray faithfully, and to proclaim Christ boldly.

When you come forward for the blessing, come with simple trust. Bring whatever concerns you carry—health worries, family needs, unspoken prayers. The Lord who healed in the Gospels continues to work through His Church, All Saints today.

Through the intercession of blessed Blaise, may God free you from all afflictions of the throat, and from all other ailments: In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

Holy Saturday Basket Blessing: Rediscovering the Heart of Easter

Bringing Easter Home



Holy Saturday is a quiet and sacred pause. The altar stands bare. The Church waits. We stand between the sorrow of the Cross and the joy of the Resurrection. It is a day of stillness, reflection, and hopeful expectation.

One beautiful custom observed in many parts of the Christian world is the blessing of Easter baskets. Families bring simple baskets of food to church on Holy Saturday to be blessed in preparation for Easter Sunday. The foods are often ordinary—bread, eggs, meat, salt—yet each carries deep meaning. Bread reminds us that Christ is the Bread of Life. Eggs speak of new life and Resurrection. Meat

reflects the end of Lenten fasting and the joy of celebration. Salt recalls preservation and covenant.

While this tradition has roots in various European cultures, its meaning is universal. It is not about ethnicity; it is about faith lived in the home. It is about bringing the fruits of our labor and the food of our tables before God and asking His blessing. It is about teaching children that Easter is not simply a holiday, but a holy day.

In a world that often rushes past sacred moments, the blessing of baskets invites us back to the basics. It slows us down. It connects the Church to the kitchen table. It reminds us that what we celebrate at the altar extends into our homes.

This Holy Saturday, consider bringing a basket—large or small. It does not need to be elaborate. A loaf of bread, a few eggs, perhaps something you will serve at Easter dinner. Bring your family. Bring a friend. Begin again, or continue a practice that may have faded over time.

Holy Saturday gives us space to prepare our hearts. The blessing of baskets gives us a simple, tangible way to do just that. As we await the proclamation, “He is risen,” let us gather in faith, gratitude, and joyful anticipation.

MARCH 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Lent 2 – Holy Mass 10:00 Coffee Hour and Sunday School	2 Father Jim in Chicago	3 Confirmation Class 7:00 pm WOG Study 8:00 Father Jim in Chicago	4	5 Confirmation at 7:30	6	7 Seniorate Lenten Retreat Parma at 10:30 AM
8 Solemnity of the Institution of the PNCC Holy Mass 10:00	9 	10 Confirmation Class 7:00 pm WOG Study 8:00	11	12 Confirmation at 7:30	13 Bitter Lamentations 7:00 pm Soup bread after	14 Private Auricular confessions 10:00am
15 Lent 4 Holy Mass 10:00 Coffee Hour and Sunday School	16 Confirmation Class at 9:00 pm	17 Confirmation Class 7:00 pm WOG Study 8:00	18	19 Confirmation at 7:30	20 PIEROGI PREP 5:00 pm	21 Pierogi MAKING 9:00am Youth Night
22 Passion Sunday Holy Mass 10:00 Coffee Hour, Sunday School and Pisanki	23	24 Confirmation Class 7:00 pm	25	26 Confirmation at 7:30	27 Stations of the Cross 7:00 pm	28 Kielbasa Making YMSofR
29 Palm Sunday Holy Mass 10:00 Coffee Hour and Cross Making	30	31 Confirmation Class 7:00 pm	1	2 Confirmation at 7:30	3	4

March 2-3 Father Jim will be in Chicago, IL at All Saints Cathedral to participate in the elevation of two subdeacons.

March 8th, Sunday = Daylight saving time



March 16-20 Father Jim will be in Scranton, PA at the Savonarola Theological Seminary and Institute and attending the ordination of four deacons.

Please remember Joel, Todd, David, John, Jason and Al in your prayers as they continue their vocational pursuit

Bitter Lamentations (*Gorzkie Żale*), a deeply moving 18th-century Polish Catholic Lenten devotion originating at Holy Cross Church in Warsaw, is being offered at our parish on **March 13th and March 27th**, inviting the faithful into a sung meditation on Christ's Passion and the sorrow of Mary through hymns, reflections, and prayer. This powerful devotion contemplates the agony in the garden, the trial, the crowning with thorns, and the crucifixion, drawing us into heartfelt repentance and deeper love for the Lord who suffered for our salvation.

APRIL 2026						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29 Palm Sunday Holy Mass 10:00 Coffee Hour and Sunday School	30	31 Blessing of Oils 4:00 pm Chicago	1 Bishop Hodur's Birthday	2 Maundy Thursday 7:00 pm	3 Good Friday Tenebrae 7:00 pm	4 Holy Saturday at 10:00 am followed by blessing of baskets. 4:00 pm
5 Easter Sunday Resurrection Mass at 10:00 am	6 Bright Week	7 Confirmation Class 7:00 pm	8	9 Confirmation at 7:30	10	11
12 Easter 2 Mass 10:00 am Coffee Hour and Sunday School	13	14 Confirmation Class 7:00 pm	15 TAX DAY	16 Confirmation at 7:30	17	18 Scholars' Conference See Father Jim
19 Easter 3 Mass 10:00 am Coffee Hour and Sunday School	20 Father Jim is at Savonarola Seminary all week. Confirmation 9:00	21 Confirmation Class 7:00 pm	22	23 Confirmation at 7:30	24	25
26 Easter 4 Mass 10:00 am Coffee Hour and Sunday School	27	28 Confirmation Class 7:00 pm	29	30 Confirmation at 7:30	1 Trivia Night Tournament	2

The Paschal Triduum, or Easter Triduum, is the sacred three-day celebration that brings Holy Week to its powerful conclusion and stands as the summit of the Church's liturgical year. It begins with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening (April 2, 2026, 7:00 pm), continues with the solemn Passion service on Good Friday (April 3, 2026, 7:00 pm), and culminates in the joy of Easter, concluding with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday (April 5, 2026, 10:00 am). These days are not separate commemorations but one unified celebration of the Paschal Mystery — Christ's life-giving sacrifice, death, and resurrection. Profound symbols mark each day: the washing of feet recalls humble service, the veneration of the Cross honors His saving sacrifice, and the lighting of the Paschal candle proclaims the triumph of light over darkness.

Founded in 1904 under Blessed Francis Hodur, the **Savonarola Theological Seminary** was established to form clergy for the Polish National Catholic Church. Beginning at St. Stanislaus Cathedral in Scranton, it later moved to a permanent South Scranton location in 1926, expanding to serve the growing Church. Recently revitalized, the Seminary now also offers a General Church Diaconate Formation Program and the Savonarola Institute, promoting lifelong theological formation for clergy and laity alike. There are over 20 men engaged with the seminary.

What to Do with All Those Extra Easter Eggs?



Froggie’s Pickled Beet Eggs Every year after Easter we’d have a mountain of hard-boiled eggs sitting in the fridge. Instead of letting them go to waste, we’d make pickled beet eggs — a recipe I learned from “Froggie,” one of my dad’s WWII buddies. He wasn’t fancy in the kitchen, but he sure knew how to make something simple taste amazing. These are sweet, tangy, and turn the most beautiful deep pink color.

Ingredients

- 8–12 hard-boiled eggs, peeled
- 1–2 cans (15 oz each) red beets (save the juice!)
- 1 cup white vinegar
- ½–1 cup sugar (white or brown — adjust to your taste)

Optional (but really good):

- ½ onion, sliced
- 1–2 teaspoons pickling spice
- A bay leaf or two
- 8 cloves of fresh garlic
- A bit of crushed red pepper

1. **Make the brine.**

Pour the beet juice into a saucepan. Add the vinegar, water, sugar, and any spices you’re using. Bring it to a gentle boil and stir until the sugar dissolves. Let it simmer about 5–10 minutes.

2. **Layer it up.**

In a big glass jar, layer the eggs, beets, and onions.

3. **Pour and cool.**

Carefully pour the warm liquid over everything until the eggs are covered. Put the lid on and let it cool on the counter.

4. **Into the fridge.**

Refrigerate at least a day or two — but honestly, 3–5 days is even better.

They’ll turn a gorgeous magenta color and taste even better than they look. Keep them in the fridge and enjoy for up to three weeks — if they last that long.

Froggie would say, “Don’t rush ‘em — good things take a few days.”



Valentine's Day Celebration

What an extraordinary evening it was! Our fellowship hall was completely transformed into a vibrant space of gaming, dancing, and joyful celebration—radiating the fun, warmth, and unity of our parish family. From ages 3 to 90+, everyone joined in the festivities. Tables were filled with homemade delicacies lovingly prepared and shared. Laughter echoed through the room as children and adults alike participated in games and activities. The dance floor came alive as couples—some married for decades—shared a tender dance with that special someone by their side. It was a beautiful witness to friendship, commitment, and community. Truly, the evening reflected the spirit of St. Paul's words: faith and hope remain, but the greatest of these is love. Thank you to Mary and her family for planning and executing an amazing evening.



Ash Wednesday with the UAW



On Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026, members of the United Auto Workers in Sterling Heights were welcomed with prayer and the sign of the cross. Father Jim was present to distribute ashes to more than 200 employees and their family members, marking the beginning of the Lenten season with reverence and hope. As ashes were placed upon their foreheads, the solemn words were spoken: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return, but your soul returns to God.” It was a moving witness of faith in the workplace and a reminder of our call to repentance and renewal.

Bring Someone to the Table!

We invite you to share the joy of Christ’s love and fellowship. Bring a friend, a coworker, a relative, a neighbor—even a stranger—and join us at the Lord’s table. All are welcome to experience His Word, His presence, and His grace.

A New Light for Our Parish: LED Sign Coming Soon



We are pleased to share some exciting news for our parish family. In the coming month, a new LED sign will be installed on our church property. This updated sign will serve as a bright and welcoming presence to all who pass by, helping us communicate important events, liturgies, and

community activities in a clear and timely way.

The new LED display will allow us to highlight Mass times, seasonal devotions, parish gatherings, and special celebrations throughout the year. It will also provide a visible reminder to our surrounding community that our doors are open and that Christ's love is alive and active here.

This addition is not simply about technology; it is about outreach. It is another way to extend an invitation to those seeking a church home and to keep our parish family informed and connected.

Thank you for your continued support as we move forward together in faith and mission.

Weaving Faith: Join Us to Make Palm



Crosses



On **Palm Sunday, March 29th**, immediately following Holy Mass, the Altar Society is offering another beautiful hands-on teaching opportunity: learning how to weave palm crosses.



Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week and commemorates our Lord’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The Gospels tell us that the crowds welcomed Him by laying cloaks on the road and waving palm branches—symbols of victory, peace, and kingship. What began as a gesture of joyful praise has become one of the most meaningful days of the Christian year.

Over time, Christians began weaving blessed palm branches into the shape of the cross. This simple yet profound act connects the joy of Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem with the sacrifice that would soon follow. The palm cross reminds us that the road to resurrection passes through the Cross. It holds the entire story of Holy Week in the palm of our hands.

Across the world, believers have developed their own ways of crafting palms—some simple, others beautifully intricate. Many families take their blessed crosses home, placing them on crucifixes, in Bibles, or in special places as a sign of faith and devotion throughout the year.

Join us after Mass to learn this meaningful tradition. It is easy to learn, rich in symbolism, and a wonderful way to enter more deeply into Holy Week together.

March Birthdays		April Birthdays	
21	Andrea Pharris	11	Bill Konrad
30	Tracey Hill	12	Mary Chebaa
		18	Pat Filips
		19	Michael Pharris
		April Anniversaries	
		11	Judy/Andrzej Zaczek
		27	Pat/Bill Konrad



Additional Church and Affiliate Websites:

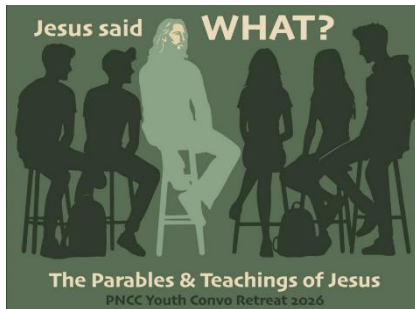
Polish National Catholic Church www.pncc.org

Western Diocese PNCC www.westerndiocese.org

National United Choirs <https://nucmusicscholarship.weebly.com/>

Polish National Alliance www.pna-znp.org

Spojnia Credit Union (SCU) www.spojniacreditunion.org



EASTERN DIOCESE YOUTH COMMISSION

POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

C/O BLESSED TRINITY PARISH

37 WINTHROP STREET

FALL RIVER, MA 02721

(508) 672-4854

To the Clergy and Parishes of the Polish National Catholic Church

Our 2026 PNCC Youth Convo – Retreat will be held from August 3-7, 2026, at Camp Monadnock in Jaffrey, New Hampshire. PNCC Youth age 8 and older are most welcome to attend. The Early Bird Registration fee is just \$150.00 per person due to the grant from our PNCC Supreme Council.

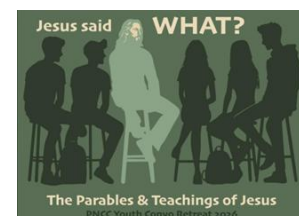
Completed registration and health forms with payment made payable to Eastern Diocese Youth Retreat should be sent by **April 30, 2026**.

For those forms received after May 1st the registration fee will be \$250. Registration forms will not be accepted after June 1, 2026. Please follow us on Facebook at: Eastern Diocese Youth. If you have any questions, please email: RobNem21@aol.com We thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration and support of our Youth Convo - Retreat. May God bless you and we hope to see you at Camp Monadnock.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich Jr., Eastern Diocese Youth Chaplain

Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, Bishop of the Eastern Diocese



Let's pray for our parish families every Wednesday at Noon



My Lord and my God, hear my prayers for the well-being of All Saints parish family. Grant us Your grace and all that is necessary for the spiritual growth and welfare of our congregation. Enlighten and guide Father Jim, our lectors, teachers, administration and all who minister to the needs of Your people. Strengthen and awaken in us a living faith; comfort and heal the sick, lonely, and brokenhearted; soften those who are contentious or stubborn; awaken the indifferent and rescue the fallen. Lord, help us to continue to proclaim Your truth. Unite us with Christ in like-mindedness of purpose. I ask this through Jesus Christ. Amen. *(from the PNCC Book of Devotions and Prayers)*

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.



PNCC Eastern Diocese Mission and Evangelism Commission



Learn the Art of Pisanki

Following Holy Mass on Sunday, March 22nd, you are warmly invited to remain with us for a special hands-on class in the beautiful and meaningful art of pisanki—traditional Easter egg decorating that connects faith, family, and heritage.

Pisanki are far more than colorful eggs. The word comes from the Polish verb meaning “to write,” because each egg is carefully “written” with wax in intricate designs before being dyed. Using a small stylus and beeswax, patterns are applied in stages, creating layered colors and detailed symbolism. This ancient wax-resist method—sometimes called batik—has been practiced for centuries and continues to captivate both children and adults alike.

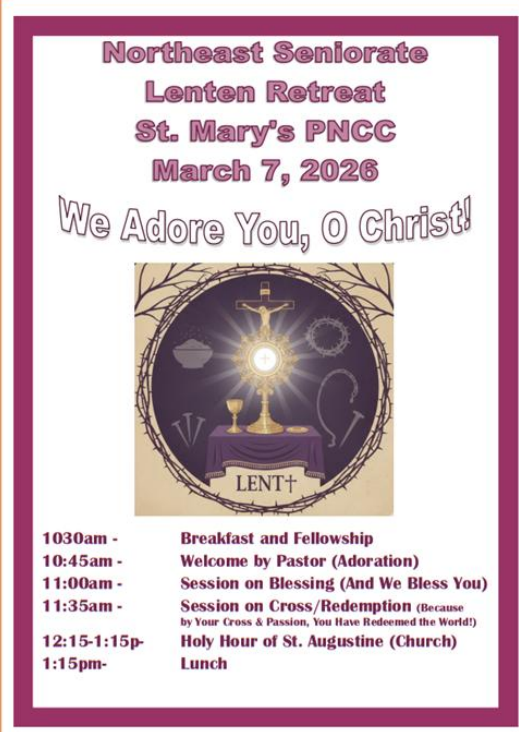
Long before modern dyes and plastic decorations, the egg was a powerful symbol of life emerging from darkness. With the coming of Christianity, that meaning deepened. The egg became a sign of Christ’s Resurrection—new life breaking forth from the tomb. Over time, symbols such as the sun, flowers, vines, and geometric designs were incorporated, reflecting themes of renewal, hope, blessing, and joy.

Today, decorated eggs remain an important part of Easter celebrations and are often included in the traditional blessing of food on Holy Saturday. They are shared with family and friends as signs of goodwill and new beginnings.

This class is designed for everyone—no artistic experience necessary. Whether you remember decorating eggs as a child or discovering this tradition for the first time, this gathering offered by the Altar Society for free, offers a meaningful way to prepare your heart and home for Easter. It is creative, prayerful, and surprisingly peaceful.

Come learn a skill that has been handed down through generations. Bring a friend, bring your children, and stay after Mass to experience a beautiful expression of faith in action. Let us prepare for the joy of Easter—one egg at a time.

Northeast Seniorate Lenten Retreat



**Northeast Seniorate
Lenten Retreat
St. Mary's PNCC
March 7, 2026**

We Adore You, O Christ!

LENT+

1030am -	Breakfast and Fellowship
10:45am -	Welcome by Pastor (Adoration)
11:00am -	Session on Blessing (And We Bless You)
11:35am -	Session on Cross/Redemption (Because by Your Cross & Passion, You Have Redeemed the World!)
12:15-1:15p-	Holy Hour of St. Augustine (Church)
1:15pm-	Lunch

The Northeast Seniorate Lenten Retreat will be held at St. Mary’s PNCC on March 7, 2026, under the theme, “We Adore You, O Christ!” The day will begin at 10:30am with Breakfast and Fellowship, followed at 10:45am by a Welcome from the Pastor, including Adoration. At 11:00am there will be a Session on Blessing (“And We Bless You”), and at 11:35am a Session on the Cross and Redemption (“Because by Your Cross and Passion, You Have Redeemed the World!”). From 12:15–1:15pm, participants will gather in the church for a Holy Hour of St. Augustine, concluding the retreat with Lunch at 1:15pm.

Lent and Easter 2026



- ASHES
- CROWN
- LIGHT
- PASCAL
- SORROW
- BREAD
- GLORY
- MERCY
- PASSION
- THORN
- CALVARY
- HOLY
- PALM
- PILATE

Word Jumble *(Unscramble the Letters)*

TNEL ○○○○

ITRLA ○○○○○

STAF ○○○○

OBDOL ○○○○○

YARP ○○○○

NGREDA ○○○○○○

YMREC ○○○○○

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Music at the Gazebo – Summer Evenings at All Saints

We are pleased to announce a new summer initiative for our parish family and friends: “Music at the Gazebo.” Mark your calendars for the last Thursday of June, July, and August, beginning at 7:00 p.m.



Imagine a warm summer evening, a gentle breeze, lawn chairs spread across the parish grounds, and the joyful sound of live music filling the air. This will be a relaxed, family-friendly, BOYB (Bring Your Own Basket) picnic on the parish lawn. Pack your favorite snacks, bring a blanket or chair, invite a friend, and enjoy an evening of fellowship and community.

Each evening will feature a local musician or performer. We hope to host a variety of talent—perhaps a pianist, guitarist, brass quintet, solo vocalist, small ensemble, storyteller, or even poetry reading. Our goal is to celebrate the gifts of the arts while creating space for parishioners and neighbors to gather in a welcoming and uplifting environment. During the evening, we will take up a free-will offering to appreciate the performer.

We are still in the planning stages, and this is where you come in. We do not yet have musicians scheduled, and we would greatly appreciate your help. If you know a talented performer—or if you yourself would be willing to share your gift—please contact Father Jim. Recommendations are welcome, and all ideas will be considered.

“Music at the Gazebo” is more than a concert series; it is an opportunity for outreach, fellowship, and joyful presence in our community. Let us come together this summer to enjoy music, friendship, and the beauty of God’s creation right here at All Saints.

Stay tuned for more details—and start thinking about who we might invite.

SERMON: Solemnity of the Holy Family

“The Lord Appeared to Joseph in a Dream.”

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14, Colossians 3:12-21, Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23



Christmas has a soundtrack all its own, bells ringing, choirs soaring, carols echoing the angelic proclamation: *Glory to God in the highest*. Yet behind the music and celebration, the Gospel of Matthew offers something just as profound: a God who speaks quietly, personally, and precisely, guiding His people one faithful step at a time. On the Solemnity of the Holy Family, this message settles gently into the center of our own lives—our homes, our parish, our hopes, and the decisions that shape our future.

The liturgy begins with the wisdom of Sirach, who speaks across the centuries with the voice of a father who has watched life unfold around the family table. He understands that honoring parents is not always easy or sentimental. At times, it is demanding and even heavy. It may require patience when we are tired, compassion when we would rather withdraw, gentleness when winning an argument feels tempting, or simple presence when distraction would be easier. Sirach does not romanticize family life; he tells the truth about it.

Yet he also reveals the deeper purpose behind the Fourth Commandment. God attaches a promise to honoring father and mother—a double blessing. The first is described as “riches,” not merely material wealth, but the stability of God’s provision resting upon a household. It is a security that is not easily shaken by uncertainty or circumstance. The second promise is “long life,” not measured only in years, but in the quality of days—marked by peace, dignity, and mercy. “Whoever reveres his father will live a long life,” Sirach teaches. Reverence becomes resilience. Compassion becomes a legacy passed from one generation to the next. What is done in love for parents is never lost; God sees it, receives it, and returns it with generosity.

Saint Paul then carries this teaching forward in his Letter to the Colossians, shifting the focus from commandment to character. Families may be preserved by rules, but they are formed by virtues. Paul urges believers to “put on love” as a garment—something visible, recognizable, and chosen daily. Compassion, kindness, forgiveness, and gratitude are not occasional gestures; they are meant to

become the language of the Christian home. A holy family is not one without strain, but one that continually chooses love as its response.

Matthew's Gospel brings movement and urgency to this vision through the story of the Holy Family itself. God speaks to Joseph in a dream, and a simple carpenter becomes the guardian of salvation. Joseph is not given the entire plan—only the next step. This is faith in its purest form: trusting the voice of God without seeing the whole road ahead. His obedience protects the Child who will one day redeem the world.

The flight into Egypt reminds us that God preserves His Son within community. Even in exile, the Holy Family would have found kinship, prayer, and belonging. Salvation grows within relationships, not isolation. And here lies the great hope of Christmas: Christ is born into a world that needs saving. The presence of darkness is not proof of God's absence, but of His decision to enter fully into our reality.

Finally, Matthew brings the message home—to our homes. The same intentions we lift at the altar echo in the domestic church of family life:

“I love you.”

“Thank you.”

“Please.”

“I'm sorry.”

These simple words are not clichés; they are the liturgy of daily living. They restore communion, protect dignity, heal wounds, and make room for Emmanuel—God with us—to dwell among us.

The Holy Family endured the night.

The Church has endured the centuries.

And Christ still sends us forward with hope.

The Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. May we, too, learn to listen—and to trust the gentle voice that leads us one faithful step at a time.



The Baptism of the Lord (Year A)

“This Is My Beloved Son, With Whom I Am Well Pleased.”

Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7; Acts 10:34-38; Matthew 3:13-17



Beloved in Christ,

Today, heaven speaks a sentence that must never become ordinary to us. It is not a whisper carried by sentiment, but the Father’s own voice—clear, intentional, and overflowing with love—spoken publicly over the waters of the Jordan: *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”* With those words, the Church brings the Christmas season to its fulfillment. Not by closing a story, but by unveiling its meaning. Not merely recalling that Jesus was born but proclaiming that God ensured the world would recognize who He truly is.

The Church presents us with three great manifestations of the Incarnation. The first unfolds in Bethlehem. There are no royal trumpets, no earthly announcements—only angels filling the night sky, as though God turned the heavens into a cathedral ceiling for a midnight hymn. The first to receive the news are shepherds: laborers of the night, overlooked by society, yet rich in wonder. God chooses them first to remind us that salvation is not delivered to status or achievement, but to hearts willing to receive it.

The second manifestation arrives at Epiphany. Wise men from distant lands follow a star across borders, cultures, and expectations. They kneel before a Child who is not merely King of Israel, but King of all nations. Their journey preaches without words: this Child belongs to the whole world. The light of Christ is not confined—it draws all peoples toward hope.

And now we come to the third manifestation: the Baptism of the Lord. This moment does not reveal a birth, but a beginning. The Jordan is not the end of Christmas; it is the threshold of mission. The Child of Bethlehem now stands revealed as the Servant of salvation.

John’s baptism was a public act of repentance. People stepped into the water confessing sin, longing for mercy, choosing a new direction. So why does Jesus stand among them? Why does the sinless Son enter waters stirred by human brokenness?

Because Jesus never distances Himself from the wounded. He enters the Jordan not because He bears sin, but because He bears us. He does not identify with guilt—He identifies with need. Compassion places Him there. As He will later stand on Calvary, He stands here unashamed to be near sinners, willing to be counted among them if it means drawing them back to God.

Yet the Jordan is not about His cleansing; it is about His commissioning. And the Father’s voice interprets everything: *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”* Not correction, not hesitation, not conditional approval—but complete affirmation. These words are not applause; they are authorization. The Son is sent because He is loved, and He is loved without reserve.

Isaiah’s prophecy echoes this truth. The Messiah will not shout to prove His power. He will not crush what is fragile or extinguish what still flickers. He comes not to discard the weak, but to restore them. His strength is not threatened by human frailty; His holiness is not compromised by human wounds. His mission exists precisely because of human need.

This revelation, however, turns our attention inward—not only to Christ’s baptism, but to our own. Too often, baptism is reduced to a summary of effects: sins forgiven, grace received, membership conferred. All of this is true, yet incomplete. Baptism is not a moment sealed in the past; it is a living covenant. It is not spiritual isolation, but incorporation into the Body of Christ. It is not only cleansing but calling.

Like Christ, we rise from the waters anointed—not for spectacle, but for witness. Not simply forgiven but claimed. Not only reborn but sent. Baptism is not merely something the Church does for us; it is something God continues to do through us.

So, as the Christmas and Epiphany season draws to a close, Christ does not recede. He advances. We do not simply admire Him, we carry Him. We do not merely remember Him—we proclaim Him. The Father’s voice still echoes, not only over the Jordan, but overall, who share in the Son’s mission:

“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”





SERMON: Ordinary 2A

“A Man Is Coming After Me Who Ranks Ahead of Me.”

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6, 1 Corinthians 1:1-3, John 1:29-34

There is something profoundly human about seeking reassurance when life feels uncertain. Like the quiet rhythm of “*she loves me, she loves me not,*” we look for signs, explanations, and guarantees—anything that assures us we are safe and moving in the right direction. Today’s readings meet us precisely in that space of longing. They do not overwhelm us with spectacle or noise; instead, they offer a steady and hope-filled truth: God is already at work, and Someone greater is already on the way.

In the first reading from the Book of Isaiah, we hear words spoken centuries ago that remain alive with promise. Isaiah presents one of the Servant Songs, but this time the message is not turned inward toward Israel alone. It is proclaimed outward, to the nations. God reveals His Servant as the means through which His glory will be made known. From the very beginning, God’s plan was never small or contained. His love was meant to expand, to reach beyond boundaries, to shine into every corner of the world.

The Lord speaks tenderly of restoration—Israel gathered, Jacob made whole. These are not abstract ideas or poetic wishes. They are promises grounded in God’s unwavering faithfulness. And we know how this promise takes flesh and form: in Jesus Christ, the Servant formed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. His coming is not accidental, symbolic, or temporary. It is God’s decisive response to division, brokenness, and longing. Through humility and grace, God draws His people together again.

Yet Isaiah makes something strikingly clear. Restoring Israel alone is “too small a thing.” God’s vision stretches beyond borders, histories, and identities. The Servant is given as a light to all nations, so that salvation may reach the ends of the earth. This reading is not only about what God once did; it is about what God continues to do through Christ—and through those who belong to Him.

In the second reading, Saint Paul writes to the Corinthians, a community marked by tension and division. He does not begin with criticism or correction. Instead, he begins with identity. He reminds them who they are and whose they are. They belong to Christ, and therefore they belong to one another. Paul addresses them as saints—not because they are flawless, but because they have been claimed by God.

Holiness, Paul teaches, is not a reward for perfection; it is a gift rooted in belonging. Through Baptism, we are united not only to Christ but to a Church that spans cultures, places, and generations. Faith is never meant to be lived in isolation. Paul's greeting is simple yet profound: "Grace to you and peace." Grace reminds us that everything begins with God's initiative, not our effort. Peace is what grows when grace shapes our relationships. This unity—formed by grace and sustained by peace—is what the Church is called to reflect to a world still searching for hope.

In the Gospel, we return to the waters of the Jordan, hearing the testimony of John the Baptist as told by the Apostle John. John is clear and honest: everything he has done has had one purpose—to point beyond himself. His preaching, his baptizing, his entire life has been directed toward recognizing and revealing the One who was coming.

When Jesus appears, John does not announce a conqueror or a ruler. Instead, he proclaims, "Behold, the Lamb of God." For us, these words are familiar and comforting, echoed at every celebration of the Eucharist. But for those who first heard them, they were startling. A lamb is gentle, vulnerable, and offered. In this single image, John gathers the entire story of salvation. Jesus will give Himself. His strength will be revealed through sacrifice. His victory will come through love poured out.

There is a scene many parents know well: a child frightened in the quiet of the night, shadows growing larger, silence heavier. A parent enters, turns on the light, and reassures the child. Often, it is one simple sentence that brings peace: "God is with you." Nothing dramatic changes, yet everything feels different. Fear loosens its grip—not because the room has changed, but because the child knows they are not alone.

That is the heart of today's Gospel. John points not to someone distant or threatening, but to God with us—gentle, present, trustworthy. When we recognize Christ's presence, fear gives way to peace. We realize we are not left to carry the weight of the world on our own. Someone greater is already here.

And John teaches us one final lesson: true faith always points beyond itself. He does not cling to attention or status. He understands that his greatness lies in faithfully pointing to the One who truly matters. That is our calling as well—to live so that others can recognize Christ through us; to trust that God's plan is larger

than our limits; and to remember that salvation does not rest on our shoulders, because Someone greater is already at work.

And so we end where the Gospel gathers us, with words that still echo with confidence and hope: *“A Man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me.”*



SERMON: Ordinary 3A

“Walking By the Sea of Galilee, He Saw Two Brothers.”

Isaiah 8:23–9:3; 1 Corinthians 1:10–13, 17; Matthew 4:12–23

Our Gospel unfolds quietly, almost gently, yet it carries the power to reshape everything. No crowds gather. No dramatic announcement is made. Jesus is simply walking along the Sea of Galilee. The waves roll in. Nets are being cast and mended. Ordinary work fills an ordinary day. And then the Gospel tells us something that deserves our full attention: “Walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers.”

Jesus does not begin His public ministry with a grand sermon or by confronting those in power. He begins by seeing. And what He sees is not merely fishermen, not simply future disciples, but brothers—men bound together by shared history, shared labor, shared joys, and shared tensions. From the very beginning, relationship matters to Jesus.

Saint Matthew places this scene at a decisive moment. John the Baptist has been arrested. Darkness seems to be closing in. Yet this is precisely when Isaiah’s promise is fulfilled: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.” That light does not first shine in Jerusalem or in the halls of authority. It appears along the edge of daily life. Jesus goes to Galilee, and there He begins to form a community.

He does so by calling two sets of brothers: Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John. In this choice, Jesus forms the nucleus of a new family—a spiritual household that will become the Church. By calling brothers, He shows that the Kingdom of God is not built on isolated individuals, but on relationships transformed by grace.

Siblings hold a unique place in our lives. Brothers and sisters are often our first companions—and our first rivals. With them we learn how to share, how to compete, how to forgive, and how to endure. Long before adulthood shapes us,

siblings help form our character. They are often the only people who truly remember what it was like to grow up in our family, who know our stories from the beginning, and who recognize both our strengths and our flaws without explanation.

Careers change. Friendships come and go. Even parents, whom we love deeply, belong to a different generation. But siblings often walk beside us across the seasons of life. In adulthood, they can become sources of quiet understanding, steady support, and lasting companionship. And yet, these bonds are sometimes overlooked or taken for granted, when in truth they shape us profoundly.

Jesus understands this human reality. Simon and Andrew are already working side by side, casting their nets. James and John are mending theirs with their father, Zebedee. These men already know how to cooperate, how to persevere, how to read one another without words. Fishing was demanding work—physical, patient, and dependent on trust. Jesus does not discard these qualities; He redeems them. “Follow me,” He says, “and I will make you fishers of people.”

For James and John, the call is especially costly. They leave their boat and their father. This is not a rejection of family, but a reordering of allegiance. Following Jesus may require sacrifice, even painful letting go, yet it always leads into a deeper belonging. Christ does not abolish family; He expands it.

Saint Paul echoes this truth when he pleads for unity in a divided community: “That there be no divisions among you.” Christ is not divided, and neither should His people be. The Church is meant to live as a family—bound together not by preference or perfection, but by shared faith in Jesus Christ.

Many of us know that sibling relationships are not always easy. Brothers and sisters know how to test our patience precisely because they know us so well. Yet those same relationships often become places of profound growth. Through siblings—and through those who become like siblings to us—we learn how to navigate conflict, extend grace, and remain connected even when life is complicated.

Think of a child learning to ride a bicycle. A parent may watch carefully from a distance, but it is often a sibling who runs first—sometimes to laugh, sometimes to help, sometimes to do both. That blend of honesty and care, challenge and love, is how resilience is learned. That is how growth happens. Jesus chooses brothers because discipleship is learned that way—together.

Jesus still sees us through the relationships that shape us. He often calls us through the voices of those closest to us—family by blood and family by choice. Through them, we come to recognize His presence and hear His invitation.

Holiness grows in the ordinary: in shared work, shared meals, and shared lives. Jesus still walks along the shorelines of our days. He looks upon us with love. And He still calls us, just as He did then:

“Walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers.”



SERMON: Septuagesima Sunday

“We Speak a Wisdom to Those Who Are Mature.”

Sirach 15:15–20; 1 Corinthians 2:6–10; Matthew 5:17–37;

As the Church enters the season of lent, we find ourselves standing at a quiet but meaningful threshold in the liturgical year. Often overlooked, this period known as Pre-Lent serves as a gracious invitation to pause, reflect, and prepare our hearts before the more demanding disciplines of Lent begin. It is a season marked not by urgency, but by wisdom—an opportunity to awaken our faith and to grow in spiritual maturity.

Saint Paul captures the spirit of Septuagesima when he writes, “*We speak a wisdom to those who are mature.*” Pre-Lent assumes that faith is meant to deepen over time. It invites us to move beyond a faith of habit or routine and toward a faith shaped by reflection, honesty, and intentional growth. This wisdom is not reserved for a select few; it is offered to all who are willing to listen, examine, and mature in their relationship with God.

The Gospel proclaimed during this season reinforces that call. Jesus states clearly that He has not come to abolish the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them. In doing so, He reveals that God’s commandments were never meant to be followed merely on the surface. They were always intended to shape the heart. Jesus repeatedly says, “*You have heard it said... but I say to you,*” leading us beyond external obedience and into interior conversion.

Anger, contempt, lust, broken promises, careless words—these are not minor issues in the eyes of Christ. They are the places where faith is either lived authentically or quietly compromised. Septuagesima prepares us to hear these teachings without defensiveness. It helps us recognize that holiness is not about appearing faithful, but about becoming faithful from within.

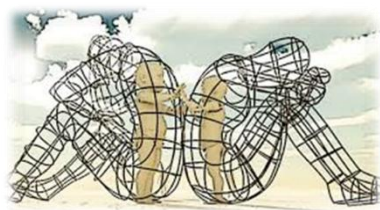
One of the most striking teachings in this Gospel is Jesus' insistence on reconciliation. "If you bring your gift to the altar and remember that your brother has something against you, go first and be reconciled." Here, Jesus reminds us that worship and relationships are inseparable. Our prayer, our offerings, and even our Lenten practices lose their meaning if our hearts remain divided. Pre-Lent gently encourages us to examine our relationships, our words, and our attitudes before we attempt greater spiritual discipline.

This is precisely why the Church gives us Pre-Lent. Before asking us to fast, she asks us to reflect. Before asking us to give something up, she asks us to consider what we may need to set right. Septuagesima creates the space needed for honesty—honesty about our habits, our struggles, and our need for God's grace.

Spiritual maturity, as Saint Paul suggests, is not about perfection. It is about humility and openness. It is the willingness to let the Gospel challenge us, refine us, and lead us forward. Pre-Lent does not demand immediate change; it invites thoughtful preparation.

As we move through this season, we are encouraged to ask simple but meaningful questions: Where am I in my spiritual life? What needs attention before Lent begins? How is God inviting me to grow? Septuagesima assures us that growth is possible and that grace is already at work.

In this quiet season of preparation, the Church speaks gently but clearly, reminding us that faith is a lifelong journey of becoming, and offering us once more the invitation of Saint Paul: "*We speak a wisdom to those who are mature.*"



SERMON: Sexagesima Sunday

"You Have Heard It Said..."

Leviticus 19:1-2,17-18; 1 Corinthians 3:16-23; Matthew 5:38-48

Jesus opens His teaching today with words that sound familiar—almost comfortable. *You have heard it said.* These are the phrases of tradition and common sense, the wisdom we inherit and the logic that feels fair. They shape our instincts and guide our reactions. They are the rules we grow up with.

An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth.

In other words: do not start the conflict—but if someone does, be sure you finish it.

If we are honest, this way of thinking still lives quietly within the human heart. We may not say it aloud, but we feel it. We justify it. We rehearse it internally. *I will forgive, but I will not forget. I will be civil, but I will keep my distance. I will not retaliate—unless it is really deserved.*

Jesus knows this. That is why He begins where we already are: *You have heard it said...*

And then, with unmistakable authority, He continues: *But I say to you...*

That turning point—*but I say to you*—is where the Gospel becomes demanding, and where Sexagesima Sunday does its quiet but serious work. The Church places us here, just weeks before Lent, not to scold us, but to prepare us. Not to overwhelm us, but to reorient us. Before we take on fasting or extra prayer, Christ asks us to listen differently.

The reading from Leviticus reminds us that holiness is not abstract or vague. God does not simply command, “Be holy,” and leave us guessing. He immediately shows us what holiness looks like in daily life: do not hate your brother in your heart, do not seek revenge, do not hold grudges—love your neighbor as yourself.

Holiness, then, is not measured by how often we speak about God, but by how we treat one another—especially when doing so costs us something.

Saint Paul deepens this truth in his letter to the Corinthians by appealing not first to behavior, but to identity: *You are God’s temple, and the Spirit of God dwells in you.* Not someday. Not ideally. Now.

That reality changes everything. If the Spirit of God dwells in us, then our words matter. Our attitudes matter. Our grudges matter. The temple of God is not built of stone; it walks, speaks, listens, forgives, and sometimes struggles. Paul warns the community to stop boasting and stop dividing themselves. “All things are yours,” he tells them. There is nothing to defend, nothing to prove, nothing to win. When we cling to resentment or rivalry, we behave as though Christ has given us too little—when in fact He has given us everything.

Then Jesus returns once more to that familiar phrase: *You have heard it said...* And again, He leads us beyond instinct and into transformation.

Turn the other cheek. Walk the extra mile. Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you.

This is often the point where we quietly object. *Lord, I was comfortable with holiness. I even liked being told I am Your temple. But this—this feels excessive.*

Jesus anticipates that response. That is why He explains it so plainly: loving those who love us back requires no conversion. Anyone can do that. What reveals the heart of God is love that interrupts the cycle of retaliation—love that refuses to return harm for harm, love that mirrors the Father who lets His sun rise on the good and the bad alike.

Sexagesima Sunday reminds us that Lent is not about becoming harsher with ourselves or others. It is about becoming whole—*perfect*, as Jesus says—not flawless, but complete in love. This kind of love does not come naturally. It is learned. It is practiced. It is prayed into being. It begins not with heroic gestures, but with small, deliberate choices: restraint instead of revenge, prayer instead of bitterness, mercy instead of keeping score.

God does not expect us to master this today. But He does invite us to begin—to listen more carefully, to hear not only what has been said before, but what Christ is saying now.

As we stand at the threshold of Lent, the Church gently asks us to examine which voice we follow: the familiar voice of instinct, or the transforming voice of Christ. Holiness begins when His words replace our reflexes, His mercy reshapes our sense of justice, and His love becomes our measure.

We are not being condemned; we are being invited—by one phrase that must echo in our hearts and draw us forward into deeper discipleship:

“You have heard it said... but I say to you.”



SERMON: Quinquagesima Sunday

“Seek First the Kingdom of God!”

Isaiah 49:14-15; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Matthew 6:24-34



As we arrive at Quinquagesima Sunday—standing at the doorway of Great Lent—the Church, in her wisdom, does something remarkable. She does not begin with fasting schedules or disciplines of penance. Instead, she directs our attention to something deeper and more foundational: trust. Before we discipline the body, we must examine the heart. Before we give something up, we must ask a more searching question: What truly governs my life? Whom do I serve?

If we are honest, many of us live with a quiet undercurrent of worry. I freely admit that I have spent seasons of life concerned about matters large and small—many of them beyond my control. Leadership responsibilities, planning, financial realities, health concerns, and the constant stream of obligations that fill our calendars can easily occupy the mind long after the day has ended. Yet each of us carries our own list: employment, the economy, children and their choices, aging parents, physical well-being, and the steady arrival of bills. Beneath all of it lies a question that hums softly but persistently: Do I have enough?

That question shapes more of our lives than we realize. It influences what we purchase, how we save, the risks we take, and even how freely we love. Modern studies confirm what we already know from experience—anxiety affects our sleep, our peace, and our daily decisions. Into that restless space, our Lord speaks with clarity: “You cannot serve two masters.”

Jesus names the rival master as “mammon.” While often translated simply as money, the word reaches further. Mammon represents whatever we depend upon for security and identity. It may be wealth, but it may also be control, reputation, success, or the illusion of self-sufficiency. Anyone who has ever tried to answer to two authorities at once knows how impossible divided loyalty becomes. Eventually, one voice grows louder, and the other fades.

That is why Jesus continues, “Do not worry about your life.” He does not dismiss the real needs of food, clothing, or shelter. Rather, He reminds us that these are not ultimate. We are more than our possessions, more than our productivity, more than our financial standing. Worry promises protection, but it produces very little. It cannot add a single hour to our lives. It can, however, steal hours of peace.

Our Lord gently points us toward the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. Creation itself bears witness to divine care. If the Father tends to sparrows and flowers, how much more does He care for those made in His image? The prophet Isaiah gives voice to our deepest fear, “The Lord has forsaken me.” Yet God responds with tenderness beyond imagination: even if a mother could forget her child, He will not forget His people. Anxiety whispers abandonment: faith proclaims fidelity.

Saint Paul adds another layer of perspective. We are stewards, not owners. Everything entrusted to us: time, resources, talents—comes from God. Stewards are called to faithfulness, not fear. Final judgment belongs to the Lord, not to our

anxious self-assessment. That truth alone can free us from much of the pressure we place upon ourselves.

So how do we replace the space that worry has long occupied? Jesus answers with a single, luminous sentence: “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you.” To seek the Kingdom first does not mean neglecting responsibilities. It means ordering them rightly. It means allowing God—not fear—to determine our priorities.

When God’s reign governs our hearts, security becomes trust. Comfort becomes gratitude. Possessions become instruments of service rather than measures of worth. As Lent approaches, perhaps the invitation is not only to fast from certain foods or habits, but to fast from anxious control. Perhaps we surrender the constant need to manage everything and rediscover the grace of reliance upon God.

We will never find lasting peace by serving lesser masters. Yet when we seek the Kingdom first, we often discover that what we truly needed was present all along—God’s faithful love. As we step toward Lent, may we loosen our grip on fear and place our lives again into the hands that have never forgotten us. Let us *seek first the Kingdom of God.*



SERMON: Ash Wednesday

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return, but your soul returns to God.”

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

Ash Wednesday stands at the doorway of the holy season of Lent. It is not merely a date on the calendar, but a sacred summons. The Church, in her maternal wisdom, gathers us and gently but firmly reminds us of who we are, why we are here, and where we are going. In a world that constantly urges distraction, self-promotion, and noise, this day calls us back to humility, repentance, and grace.

The history of Ash Wednesday reaches deep into the life of the early Church. From the first centuries, Christians marked the beginning of penitential seasons with fasting and public repentance. Those who had committed serious sins would wear sackcloth and ashes as a visible sign of sorrow and conversion. Over time, what was once reserved for public penitents became a universal sign for all believers. For in truth, every one of us stands in need of mercy. The ashes placed upon our



foreheads are made from the palms blessed on Palm Sunday of the previous year—a powerful reminder that the same crowds who once cried “Hosanna” also cried “Crucify Him.” Our hearts, too, can be divided. Lent invites us to integrity.

Ashes in Scripture symbolize both repentance and human frailty. In the Book of Job, the righteous sufferer repents “in dust and ashes.” The prophet Jonah calls Nineveh to repentance, and the people respond with fasting and sackcloth. The sign of ashes is not about shame; it is about truth. It is about recognizing that we are creatures, not the Creator. We are dependent, not self-sufficient. The ash cross traced upon our forehead is not a mark of despair, but of hope—because it is made in the shape of the Cross of Christ.

Catholic teaching emphasizes that Lent is a season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These are not arbitrary practices. Prayer restores our relationship with God. Fasting disciplines our appetites and frees us from slavery to lesser things. Almsgiving turns our hearts outward in charity. Together, they shape a path of conversion. Ash Wednesday does not condemn us; it invites us. It tells us that change is possible, that grace is real, and that the mercy of God is greater than our failures.

The ashes are placed where the world can see them. This is intentional. We are not meant to hide our faith. Yet Christ also reminds us in the Gospel that our repentance must be sincere, not performative. The outward sign must reflect an inward reality. Lent is not about impressing others with sacrifice; it is about allowing the Holy Spirit to renew us from within.

As we begin this sacred journey, we do so with sober clarity and radiant hope. We are reminded of our mortality, yes—but not in fear. Rather, in perspective. Life is fragile. Time is precious. Eternity is real.

And so, as the ashes are placed upon us, we hear the solemn and saving words:

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return, but your soul returns to God.



SERMON: Lent 1A

“Get Away, Satan!”

Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11



There are moments in life when everything seems to rest on a single decision. A glance. A word. A small choice made in passing. Often those moments feel insignificant, almost harmless. Yet they can shape far more than we ever intended.

Temptation rarely announces itself with drama. More often, it slips quietly into the ordinary rhythm of our day.

An old story illustrates this well. In the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, Orpheus descends into the underworld to bring back his beloved wife. Moved by his grief, he is granted permission to lead her back to the world of the living on one condition: he must not look back at her until they reach the light. Trust is required. Patience is demanded. Yet just before they emerge, doubt overtakes him. He turns to look—and in that instant, she is gone forever. One glance. One surrenders to fear.

The story endures because we recognize ourselves in it. We know the tension between trust and doubt. We know how quickly fear can override obedience.

Sometimes, however, our temptations are far less dramatic. Before Great Lent, I made a serious resolution to lose weight. I even changed my driving route to avoid passing my favorite bakery. That was my plan for discipline. And yet one morning I arrived with a box of fresh, sugar-dusted *paczki*. The question came quickly: “Father, weren’t you dieting?”

I had a ready explanation. By habit, I had driven past the bakery. There they were—warm and inviting. So, I prayed, “Lord, if You want me to have one, let there be a parking space right in front.” On the fifth trip around the block, one opened up.

It is humorous—but revealing. How easily we “circle the block” in our own lives. We can justify almost anything if we try hard enough. Temptation does not always overpower us. Sometimes we simply keep negotiating until we get the answer we want.

The first reading from Genesis takes us back to the Garden. Adam and Eve were surrounded by abundance. They were not deprived. They were loved. Yet a whisper suggested, “You will be like gods.” The issue was not fruit. It was control. It was independence. It was the temptation to define good and evil for themselves.

In that moment, they chose mistrust over obedience. And that single act rippled through history. St. Paul reminds us that through one man’s disobedience, sin entered the world. We still feel its effects—in broken relationships, wounded hearts, and restless souls.

But Paul does not leave us in despair. Where Adam failed, Christ was faithful. Where disobedience fractured communion, obedience restored it. Grace now speaks louder than sin.

The Gospel leads us into the desert with Jesus. The desert is not punishment; it is purification. It is the place where distractions fade and truth becomes clear.

Jesus is hungry, and the tempter suggests bread. “Turn these stones into loaves.” It sounds reasonable. Yet Jesus refuses to reduce His mission to self-satisfaction. “One does not live by bread alone.”

Next comes spectacle. “Throw yourself down.” Force God to prove His care. But trust does not manipulate. Jesus refuses.

Finally, power and glory are offered—at the price of misplaced worship. The ancient temptation returns: put something other than God at the center. This time Jesus speaks firmly: “Get away, Satan!” No negotiation. No rationalization. A clear and decisive refusal.

My dear family of All Saints, Lent is our desert. Not to weaken us, but to strengthen us. Not to shame us, but to free us. Our temptations may not be dramatic. They may be resentments we hold onto, habits we excuse, distractions we cannot put down, apologies we postpone, calls we avoid making.

The struggle is real—but so is grace.

Christ does not watch us from a distance. He stands beside us in the desert. He has faced what we face. He has conquered what we fear. And He shows us the way.

- Pray—even when it feels dry. Be faithful at Mass. Open the Scriptures. Sit quietly before God.

- Fast—not only from food, but from whatever dulls your spiritual life.
- Go to Confession. Do not carry burdens Christ longs to lift.
- Forgive. Ask forgiveness. Reach out to someone. Invite someone back to church. Stop circling the block.

We will not do this perfectly. But we can do it sincerely. We do not battle temptation alone. We stand with Christ. And with Christ, we have victory.

When the whisper comes, when rationalization begins, when doubt creeps in—stand firm.

With faith and courage, say it clearly:

Get away, Satan!



“We adore You, O Christ”

Father Jim’s presentation at the Lenten Retreat, Parma, Ohio

“We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You, because by Your cross and passion You have redeemed the world.” These familiar Lenten words, prayed during the Stations of the Cross, draw us into the mystery of Christ’s sacrificial love. We kneel before the crucified Lord who freely gave His life for our salvation. Yet the same Jesus whom we venerate along the Way of the Cross does not remain only in memory. He abides with us still—truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament, waiting in the quiet of our churches throughout the entire year.

There was a time when Eucharistic adoration flourished in many parishes. Chapels were filled, families were strengthened, vocations were nurtured, and communities were renewed by time spent before the Lord. Today, however, hours once devoted to prayer often pass in silence and emptiness. Christ’s invitation has not changed. He remains. The question is whether we will return to Him, not sporadically, but faithfully and with urgency of heart.

Eucharistic adoration is not a new or optional devotion. It is a sacred inheritance flowing directly from the Holy Mass. In the Eucharistic sacrifice, Christ gives Himself; Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. The Church has always professed that His presence does not cease when the liturgy ends. He remains in the tabernacle, abiding among His people. This is not a symbol or a pious reminder. It is the fulfillment of His promise: “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” If

He is truly here, then our response must be reverence, love, and a desire to remain with Him who has chosen to remain with us.

Adoration is both simple and profound. To adore Christ is to kneel in faith and confess with our lives that He is Lord. We enter the church conscious that we are stepping into holy ground. In a world saturated with noise and distraction, adoration offers sacred silence—a space where hearts open and God speaks gently. Before the Blessed Sacrament, we listen. His Word penetrates our fears and questions, bringing light and peace.

In His Eucharistic presence, the entire Gospel becomes vivid. The One who healed the sick, fed the hungry, calmed storms, and conquered death is not a distant figure of history. He stands before us in humility and love. We contemplate His Cross and rejoice in His Resurrection. Like the Apostle Thomas, we whisper, “My Lord and my God.” Reading Scripture in His presence becomes a living encounter, like Mary of Bethany sitting at the feet of Jesus, choosing what is truly necessary.

Adoration is also a time to speak heart to Heart. We bring gratitude and grief, strength and weakness, hope and anxiety. Nothing is too small or too broken for Him. Hidden under the appearance of bread, He sees us completely and loves us without measure. In His presence, we find rest and healing.

It is also a privileged place of intercession. We carry our families, our parish, the sick and struggling, and those far from faith, placing them at His feet. We pray for unity in the Church, for courage in proclaiming truth, for peace in a divided world, and for a culture that reverences life. Even when words fail, our silent gaze becomes prayer. Grace flows in ways unseen, bearing fruit beyond what we can imagine.

Though deeply personal, adoration is never isolated. Before the Blessed Sacrament, we are united with believers across the world. Our prayer joins the unceasing worship of the Church universal. In every chapel and cathedral, in every nation, Christ gathers His people into one communion of love.

In that stillness, Jesus forms us. He purifies our intentions, strengthens our resolve, and prepares us for mission. Authentic Christian service begins at His feet. From adoration flows renewed zeal. Just as He sent the apostles forth, so He sends us, transformed by the love we have encountered.

Adoration flows from the Mass and leads us back to it with deeper hunger. Time spent before the Lord intensifies our longing for Holy Communion. The Mass

remains the supreme prayer of the Church, the living memorial of the Paschal Mystery. Adoration prepares our hearts to receive Him worthily and gratefully, awakening in us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.

The early Church grasped this truth. Saint Augustine taught that no one receives the Flesh of Christ without first adoring. Reverence in adoration must shape how we participate in the Mass—our attention to the Word, our devotion in receiving the Eucharist, and our charity toward one another. At every altar, heaven opens, and we recognize with humility: it is the Lord.

Especially during Lent, the Church calls us back to this heart of faith. Eucharistic adoration is not reserved for the spiritually advanced; it is a lifeline for ordinary disciples. Our presence before the Lord strengthens not only us but our entire parish community.

Yet excuses arise. We feel too busy, too tired, unsure what to do for an hour. The time seems inconvenient. But the gentle question of Christ in Gethsemane echoes still: “Could you not keep watch with me one hour?” He does not demand perfection—only presence.

Adoration extends Holy Communion. It is love lingering. It is faith made visible. To gaze upon Christ and allow Him to gaze upon us is the personal unfolding of what we receive at the altar. God waits in the tabernacle. How tragic if He waits in vain while we hurry past what is essential.

In an age marked by distraction and indifference, the Church and the world urgently need Eucharistic worship. As believers who profess Christ truly present, our time before Him proclaims what we believe. When we give Him our time, He gives us grace—abundant and transforming.

The Lord is here. He waits. And it is time to return to Him with faithful and loving hearts.

SERMON: Lent 2A



“Rise, and Do Not Be Afraid”

Genesis 12:1-4 2; Timothy 1:8-10; Matthew 17:1-9



As we continue our Lenten journey, the Church places before us readings filled not only with challenge, but with promise. Lent is not a season of despair. It is a season of movement. A season of ascent. Echoing through it all is the gentle yet commanding voice of Christ: *“Rise, and do not be afraid.”*

In the First Reading from Genesis, we encounter Abram at a decisive turning point. The Lord says to him, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” There is no map. No detailed explanation. Only a promise: “I will bless you... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Consider the courage this required. Abram was not young. From a human perspective, his future appeared limited. Yet God asked him to leave behind familiarity and security and step into the unknown. And Abram rose and went.

That is the essence of faith. Faith is rising when you cannot yet see the destination. Faith is trusting that the God who calls you forward will also provide what you need along the way.

Lent is our own call to “go.” Go deeper in prayer. Go further in repentance. Go beyond routine faith. That invitation can feel unsettling. We are creatures of habit. We cling to what feels safe. Yet growth in holiness always requires movement.

The Psalm reminds us, “Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.” Notice the order. We place our trust in Him, and His mercy surrounds us. Trust opens the door to grace.

In the Second Reading, Saint Paul writes to Timothy, a young pastor facing hardship. “Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.” Paul does not pretend that discipleship is easy. He acknowledges struggle and suffering. But he anchors everything in hope.

“For he saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace.” That truth is essential during Lent. We are not saved by how perfectly we fast or how disciplined we become. We are saved by grace. Our sacrifices are responses to love, not attempts to earn it.

Paul proclaims that Christ “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” The greatest fear of the human heart has been conquered. The final word over our lives is not loss, not failure, not decline—but life.

Then we come to the Gospel: the Transfiguration. Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain. There He is transfigured before them. His face shines like the sun. His garments become dazzling white. The Law and the Prophets stand beside Him, fulfilled in His presence. And the Father’s voice declares, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him.”

The disciples fall to the ground in fear. They are witnessing glory, yet they tremble. Confronted with divine majesty, they feel overwhelmed.

We often react the same way. When God begins to change us, purify us, or call us higher, we become afraid. Afraid of what transformation may cost. Afraid of letting go of old habits. Afraid of surrendering control.

Yet the Gospel gives us a tender image: Jesus came and touched them. He did not remain distant. He did not rebuke them. He touched them and said, “Rise, and do not be afraid.”

Those words unite the readings. Abram—rise and go. Timothy—rise and endure with strength from God. Peter, James, and John—rise and do not fear the glory of God.

And to us: Rise.

Rise from discouragement. Rise from complacency. Rise from fear about your future or regret about your past. Some may feel bowed down by health concerns, financial pressures, family struggles, or uncertainty about the world. Lent may even reveal weaknesses we would rather avoid. We may feel tired.

Hear Christ’s voice personally: Rise.

The Transfiguration was given before the Passion. Jesus allowed His disciples to glimpse His glory before they would witness His suffering. He wanted them to remember the light when darkness came.

Lent works in the same way. We acknowledge sin. We practice penance. But always with the promise of glory ahead. The Cross is real—but so is the Resurrection.

The end of this journey is not ashes. It is alleluia. The end is not fear. It is radiance. The end is not death. It is life everlasting.

Abram stepped forward in trust and became the father of nations. Timothy endured hardship, and the Gospel spread across the world. The disciples trembled on the mountain, yet they would one day proclaim Christ boldly to the ends of the earth.

Transformation begins with rising.

So in these Lenten days, do not remain on the ground. Do not let fear define your faith. Do not allow temporary struggle to obscure eternal promise.

Place your trust in the Lord. His mercy will be upon you.
Accept the holy calling given to you. His grace will sustain you.
Listen to His Son. His glory will strengthen you.

When He touches your heart in prayer, in Scripture, in the Eucharist—respond.

Rise. Do not be afraid.

For the One who calls you is faithful. The One who saves you has conquered death. And the One who leads you through Lent is already crowned in glory.

We are walking toward Easter.
We are walking toward light.
We are walking toward life everlasting.

Rise, and do not be afraid.