

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, FEBRUARY 26, 2023

PARISH MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS

Mission (Purpose)

Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we the Catholic Community of St. Thomas More respond to our call to holiness.

Vision (Goals)

Empowered by Baptism, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and formed by the Word of God and the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, we live out our Mission by working together:

- To structure prayerful, vibrant, participatory, Sunday worship experiences.
- To provide Life Long Faith formation for all age levels.
- To care for the young, the old, the sick, the hurting and the needy, both inside and outside our parish.
- To promote faith sharing, prayer, support, learning and listening to one another as a model for nourishing and sustaining our faith community.
- To welcome back, with hospitality, those who have left our faith community.



Our Holy Father emphatically advocates how vital a welcoming ministry is to the visitor and stranger in our midst. God tells us to be welcoming many times in Sacred Scripture. A few examples are :

“Contribute to the needs of the saints. Practice hospitality.” Rom. 12: 13;

“Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another.” 1 Pt. 4:9;

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Heb. 13:2.

Can you think of other ways to show hospitality?

VISITATION AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Please call the parish office, 424-3212, if a family member is seriously ill or facing/recovering from surgery and would like to see a priest or receive the Anointing of the Sick. Holy Communion is also available to those who are homebound on an ongoing basis.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Please make arrangements for Baptism in advance through the parish office. Parents and godparents are required to attend a preparatory session.

MARRIAGE

Couples planning to marry will attend a marriage preparation program called Living in Love. Call office for appointment.

RCIA

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is a process of formation for full initiation into the Catholic Church. It is open to those never Baptized; those baptized in another faith; and Catholics who have not received First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

For more information, please contact Sister Ann Byrnes, RSM, Pastoral Associate, 424-3212 ext. 104.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Grades One through Eight - Sunday 9:30 AM—10:45 AM

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

New members are welcome in our community of faith. Please call, 424-3212, or come to the parish

BULLETIN DEADLINE

Please submit hardcopy and/or e-mail by 2 p.m. Monday.

CATHOLIC GRADE SCHOOL

St. John Paul II Regional School - (856) 783-3088
Principal: Mrs. Helen Persing



“If my people, who are called by My Name, **shall humble themselves**, and **pray**, and **seek My Face**, and **turn** from their wicked ways; **then** will I hear from heaven, and will **forgive** their sin, and I will **heal** their land.” *2nd Chronicles 7:14*

The collection for Sunday, February 19, 2023 was: \$ 6157.00 from 121 donations. The budgeted amount for this week was \$8500. A parish, like every family, runs on a budget.



Money coming in must be greater than money going out. It is through the consistent generosity of all of our parishioners that we are able to maintain a vibrant parish, keep up with maintenance, and plan long-term projects for the improvement of our parish buildings. **Thank You for your generosity.**

Stewardship Corner: 1st Sunday of Lent Stewards Follow

“It is written: ‘The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.’” MATTHEW 4:10

Tempted between the riches and power of this world and service to God, Jesus chose service to His Father. **If we, as His Stewards, wish to truly follow Jesus, we, too, must decide to turn away from worldly power and riches and put God at the center of our lives.** Lent is our time to prune ourselves of earthly things, and develop and nurture heavenly things. Lent

“During this Lent, let us all ask the Lord: Make our hearts like yours.”

-Pope Francis

is time to repent and let go of the other “gods” we have put before God.



From the Pastor's Desk Lent

Dear Parishioners,

Consider me strange, but I actually look forward to the beginning of **Lent** each year. I see it as an important time to be *introspective*, to evaluate where I am right now in my relationship with Jesus (and the entire Trinity), and to attempt to make some positive changes I hope will result in a growth in holiness. I also need to repent for my sins.

Traditionally, the practices recommended during this season are **prayer, fasting and almsgiving (charity)**.

How can I **pray better**? I can begin by *finding* and *keeping* a set time each day to pray. (My own preference is praying with the **Blessed Sacrament**.) I also should be reading and reflecting daily on the *Sacred Scriptures*, praying the *Holy Rosary*, making the *Stations of the Cross* and reading an inspiring Catholic book *regularly*. When I am driving in the car, I also like to put on an inspirational Catholic talk or discussion to listen to while driving. It certainly beats the garbage, sometimes called *music*, we often find on the radio. [Priests are also required to pray our *Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours)* daily.]

Fasting includes *food* but should go beyond simply *not eating*. The only two fast days (one simple meal) required by the Church during Lent are *Ash Wednesday* and *Good Friday*. Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent are also days of *abstinence* (no meat). However, we additionally can fast from things like the TV, the computer/internet, video games, the radio, from smoking or drinking, from superfluous shopping, etc. In essence, we can do *without*—*make an act of self-denial*—and try to incorporate into our lives something more spiritually beneficial instead.

How **charitable** am I? Do I regularly contribute to and support my church? Do I have some other favorite charity to which I give? Do I volunteer my time or my skills to help others *without seeking compensation or recognition*? Do I visit and help the sick or the elderly? Do I volunteer at the hospital? Do I think of *others* more than myself?

The practices I observe for Lent can really become an opportunity to change my way of living. I can incorporate more permanently various ways of behaving that open my heart and my life more completely to God. I can turn my life over to **Jesus** and *take up my cross daily* and *follow Him*. (See Luke 9:23)

I realize I am a sinner continually in need of the *mercy of God*. Like all humans (except Jesus and Mary, of course!), my past life has its share of sin. I am not proud of this. Therefore, I should seriously consider some acts of penance during Lent in reparation for my sins. Making a thorough, heartfelt *sacramental confession* of my sin is a good way to start.

We should be spiritually mature enough to realize that the more we keep trying and letting God control our lives, the more we open ourselves to His grace of *conversion*. **Conversion** is a lifelong process of turning *away from sin* and turning *towards the Gospel message*. We turn our lives over to God.

On Ash Wednesday, when the ashes are placed on our foreheads, do we actually intend *to change*, or is this just an act of *empty show*? Only God knows what's in our hearts and how much we really do love Him.

Please make this **Lent** a time of deep, spiritual conversion.

Fr. Ed Namiootka, Pastor

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, FEBRUARY 26, 2023

Ministry Schedule for March 4/5

	Presider	Music	Extraordinary Minister	Lector	Altar Server
4:30 PM	Fr. Namiotka	Music Ministry	E. Beckman	J. Cepeda	E. & E. Shim
8:30 AM	Fr. Namiotka	Music Ministry	B. Massey	D. Miller	T. Kenny E. Bresani
11:00 AM	Fr. Namiotka	Music Ministry	J. De Michele	C. Musso	L. & G. Hutchinson



The Liturgical Season of Lent has just started. There are many thoughts about this special season. But the real thought is to take this time to consider JESUS and his sacrifice on the Cross, his humiliations, his sorrow. He did it for each of us, to save us. Yet so many just can't even fathom that suffering and the suffering of so many people on this earth. Many of us just live in our comfort zone and make great effort to protect it. There is nothing wrong with protecting our comfort zone, especially if it took so much effort to acquire it. We want to protect it. Yet Jesus is inviting us for Lent to step out of our comfort zone, of our routine of stubbornness and melt a bit of our hardness. Look around and see the needs under our own roof, in our family, in our work place, in our neighborhood. Lent is no longer to be seen as a time of "giving up", but a time of doing, sharing our talent, time, and treasure. Remember the three "Ts" **Time, Talent, Treasure**. Here in this part of the world, so often Lent is seen as giving up something for a personal purpose. The whole idea of "sacrifice" sounds almost ridiculous. But this is what LENT IS ABOUT, sacrifice, doing for others that may be costly for me in time and effort; make a difference for someone else by giving something needed, like love, forgiveness, understanding, compassion, time, listening, support. We all have areas of our life where we know we need to improve: laziness, lack of willingness, and imposition of our ideas on others, we could go on and on. Sometimes we feel so good and perfect comparing ourselves to others. But the Saints never felt that way, they always saw their sinfulness, their hidden stubbornness. It is of no use going to look for something extravagant that will make no difference and at the end of the season of LENT, we find ourselves at the same point where we started. To make a real difference for us we need to be serious about our choice and then we need to entrust it to JESUS, asking for his grace day by day accompanied by our endless effort and willingness.



LENTEN REGULATIONS 2023

Roman Catholics must fast and abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023 and Good Friday, April 7, 2023 obligatory from age 18 until age 59. Fasting means a person is permitted to eat one full meal. Two smaller meals may also be taken, but they are not to equal that of a full meal. Additionally, they must abstain from meat on **all Fridays during Lent**. The rule of abstinence from meat is binding upon Catholics aged 14 and onwards. Lent is a 40 day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. **During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting.** We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully. Many know of the tradition of abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, but we are also called to practice self-discipline and fast in other ways throughout the season. In addition, the giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts—not only **through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents.**

Attention Senior Citizens

Haddon Township Housing Authority, 25 Wynnewood Ave., Westmont, NJ, 856-854-3700
 Short Waiting List— must be 62 or over.
 Income under \$59,000 (single person).
 Rent is 30% of your income. Utilities included with the rent (except for air conditioning).
 Must be able to live independently.
 Application : Haddontownshiphousingauthority.com

A long time parishioner needs assistance caring for her husband. She is seeking help for 6 hours a week. Call Geri at 856-424-0727 for more information.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, FEBRUARY 26, 2023

Weekly Intentions



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

4:30 PM Dorothy Cerone
r/b Connie Janik

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

8:30 AM Fr. Richard Milewski
r/b Bob & Jessica Lane

11:00 AM Angelo Di Giacomo r/b Clare

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27

9:00AM People of the Parish

9:30AM—12 NOON Eucharistic Adoration-Chapel

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

9:00AM Gary Scarpa r/b Greta

9:30AM—12 NOON Eucharistic Adoration-Chapel

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

9:00AM Ann & Joe Primwhere r/b Jeannine

9:30AM—12 NOON Eucharistic Adoration-Chapel

THURSDAY, MARCH 2

9:00 AM Living & deceased members of Morgan family in Ireland

9:30 AM-12NOON Eucharistic Adoration-Chapel

FRIDAY, MARCH 3

9:00 AM Edward Boyle r/b Gerri Boyle

9:30 AM-12NOON Eucharistic Adoration-Chapel

7:00 PM Stations of the Cross

SATURDAY, MARCH 4

9:00 AM Don Kreal r/b Dolores & family

4:30 PM Dorothy Cerone
r/b Blaise Cona & Krista Hutz

SUNDAY, MARCH 5

8:30AM Intentions of Sr. Clare, St. Thomas More Catechists and Assistants

r/b St. Thomas More Women's Club

11:00AM John Hyer r/b Joan Hyer

**Pope Francis' February Prayer Intentions:
For parishes**

We pray that parishes, placing communion at the center, may increasingly become communities of faith, fraternity and welcome towards those most in need.

**Spring Benefit Dinner Dance
3-7PM Sunday, March 5, 2023**

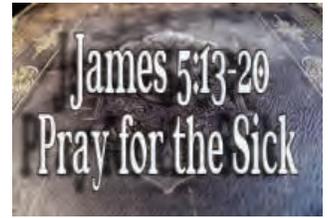
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Auletto's Caterers, 1849 Cooper Street, Almonesson
Music provided by *The Juliano Brothers Band*

Tickets: \$75 per person- This is a No Smoking Event
For tickets, please contact Sr. Maria at: 856-283-5554
or fmijmdr@yahoo.com
Checks payable to FMIJ Sisters

**PLEASE REMEMBER
IN YOUR PRAYERS:
THE SICK...**

Kristina Acevedo, Caroline Bancheri, Jim Beaney, Jim Beaney, Jr., Pat Beaney, Ray Chuisano, Elva Clark, Grace Cobin, Joseph Console, Marie Corcoran, Mary Cowan, Catherine Diana, Fr. George Donfurtang, Elizabeth Garber, Eileen Gerie, Eileen Goodwin, Marjorie Graham, Maureen Howe, Helen Kane, Marion Kapischke, Michael Kapischke, John B. Kennedy, John Lane, Bob Lento, Marie Manalo, Tina Petrone, Helen Protzman, John Ravena, Jacob Rivera, Jaxson Rivera, Eleanor Rizzo, Dom Sacca, Carlos Santiago, Teddy Shaffer, Jean Smyth, Claire Spence, Dick Spence, Dale Strack, Stacia Strack, Michael Suralik, Pat Suralik, Roy Targonski, Ann Vigrass, Sarah Warner.



**PRAY FOR THOSE IN THE
ARMED
SERVICES...**

SPC Jordan Beckman,
Captain Patrick J. Bones,
USMC, Major Anthony R. Cosentino, USAF, SSgt John P. DeYoung, Lt. Nicholas G. Iannuzzi, SSgt. Kris Knaup, Lt. Christopher Mawn, Lt. (j.g.) Jacqueline A. McCabe, SN Christian Mele, PFC Sonny Morrison, Lt. Col. Louis J. Papa, Sisi Tyrrell, USMC, SPC Nicole Williams, and *all those serving our country.*

Lenten & Holy Week Masses SJ Catholic Cemeteries

Join us in celebrating Mass for Lent & Holy Week in our Chapel Mausoleums.

Masses will be held at 10:00 AM

- 2/27 All Saints Cemetery -Newfield
- 3/22 Holy Cross Cemetery -Mays Landing
- 4/3 Sacred Heart Cemetery -Vineland
- 4/4 Calvary Cemetery -Cherry Hill
- 4/5 New St. Mary Cemetery- Bellmawr

For more information, contact:

CatholicCemeteriesSouthJersey.org

**Support the 2023 South Jersey
Catholic Ministries Appeal.**

www.camdendiocese.org

Your support of the 2023 South Jersey Catholic Ministries Appeal ensures the vitality of essential Diocesan ministries and programs that sustain the healing, teaching, and redemptive Presence of Jesus Christ throughout Southern New Jersey. ****St. Thomas More goal: \$89,700** We need your help to meet this goal.**



FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, FEBRUARY 26, 2023

Small Christian Community Faith Sharing

Please note that we put the following week's Gospel passage in this space so you can prepare all week for Proclamation of the Gospel the following Sunday. Faith Sharing helps ordinary people connect their faith with everyday life experiences

Excerpt from the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Lent, March 5, 2023 - Matthew 17:1-9

Jesus took Peter, James, and John, his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. A bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

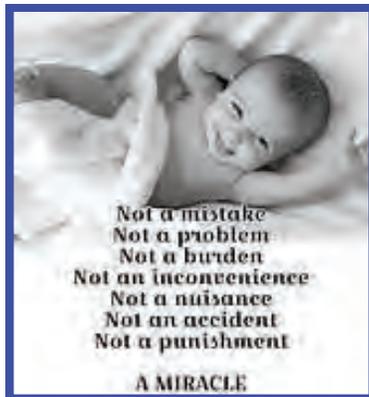
Commentary:

Jesus looks very different to his friends on the mountaintop. What has changed: his outward appearance, or their ability to see Jesus clearly? Sometimes, miracles are in the eye of the beholder, or perhaps more accurately in the heart. We think we know what's going on around us, but a shift in perspective can make all the difference in what we actually perceive. When his friends look at Jesus on this occasion, they literally see the light. What about us? Do we see the pain in a co-worker's or family member's face? Only if we want to. Are we sensitive to racism, sexism, and prejudice of every kind? If we pay attention. Do we participate in and benefit from systems of injustice? If we open our eyes and our minds, we can find plenty of evidence in our lifestyles to support this conclusion. Our ability to see has a lot to do with how much light is admitted to the eyes. If we close our eyes to things we'd rather not see, our vision of the world and ourselves may be more comforting, but increasingly unreal.

Questions for Reflection and Sharing:

1. What is God saying to me in this Gospel passage?
2. What word or phrase in this Gospel speaks to me?
3. What word or phrase in the Reflection resonates with me?

Pro-Life Corner:



Join Bishop Sullivan and Fr. Hughes in Greece—
October 20th—30th- \$4499ppdo (single supplement
+\$949) from PHL. For more information or to register
visit www.pilgrimages.com/frhughes

Eucharistic Congress Saturday, March 25, 2023
9:00 AM—3:00 PM Doors open at 8:00 AM
Freedom Mortgage Pavilion
1 Harbour Blvd Camden, NJ
Free Admission and Parking
eucharisticrevivalsouthjersey.org

Free will offering of shelf stable foods (canned or boxed
foods) is appreciated to support the FaithFULL Food Drive.



Mercy Justice



Working together in hope to make Christ's Mercy real, Use the link below to receive Sisters of Mercy Action Alerts for Justice Issues. This webpage makes it easy to contact your legislators and let your voice be heard on critical justice matters.

Mercy Justice Team

[https://sistersofmercy.org/mercy-for-justice/
action-alerts/](https://sistersofmercy.org/mercy-for-justice/action-alerts/)

Diocese of Camden Eucharistic Congress Youth
& Family Night St. Anthony of Padua Church,
St. Mary of Mt. Carmel Parish, Hammonton,
NJ March 23, 2023 6:30 PM. Register for free:
Jose.Rodriguez@camdendiocese.org
or call 856-583-2908.

2022 Contribution statements for income tax may
be obtained by calling the office (856-424-3212).

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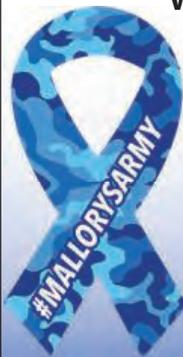
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