

# *Fourth* SUNDAY OF **LENT**

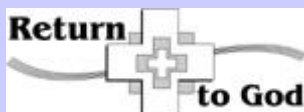
**One thing I do  
know. I was blind  
but now I see!**

JOHN 9:25

**St. Michael  
Netcong, New Jersey**



**The Church of Saint Michael**  
**March 19, 2023**  
**The Fourth Sunday of Lent**



Please remember in your prayers those who have died: Maryann Seegers

Please remember in your prayers the sick of our parish: May Lee, Special Intention, Lucy Pintos, Karlene Yaple, Joseph Conklin, Marysia Hancock, Bev Couter, Kathy Conklin, Charlie Raffay, Beth Couter, Special Intention, Carmen Pina, Joseph Sabatini Sr., Paula DiElsi

**Weekly Memorial**

Altar Bread & Wine: Chet Togno

**Readings for the week**

**Fourth Sunday of Lent**

**Sunday**

1 Sm 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Eph 5:8-14;

Jn 9:1-41 or 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

**Monday**

2 Sm 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22;

Mt 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Lk 2:41-51a

**Tuesday**

Ez 47:1-9, 12; Jn 5:1-16

**Wednesday**

Is 49:8-15; Jn 5:17-30

**Thursday**

Ex 32:7-14; Jn 5:31-47

**Friday**

Wis 2:1a, 12-22; Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

**Saturday**

Is 7:10-14, 8:10; Heb 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38

**Mass Intentions for the Week**

**Saturday, March 18, 2023**

10am John Bauer, Anthony Preziosi Sr.,  
Rosa Hernandez

5pm Grace Costanzo, Pauline & Carline Milone

**Sunday, March 19, 2023 Fourth Sunday of Lent**

7am Richie DiRenzo

9:30am William & Mary Alice Keenan

11:30am Intention of Margaret Armeno

1:30pm Special Intention

**Monday, March 20, 2023**

10am Chet Togno

**Tuesday, March 21, 2023**

10am Theresa Castaldi

**Wednesday, March 22, 2023**

10am Chet Verdi

**Thursday, March 23, 2023**

10am Special Intention

**Friday, March 24, 2023**

10am For All Deceased Parishioners

**Saturday, March 25, 2023**

10am For The Unborn

5pm Louis Castaldi, Silvia Ann Dachisen

**Sunday, March 26, 2023 Fifth Sunday of Lent**

7am Doris Hartman, Nancy Rosa

9:30am Joseph Fenton, Jimmy Johnson,  
Ronald E. Costanzo

11:30am John & Mary Mintz

1:30pm Special Intention

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## From Fr. Mike

Once we have passed through the “Dark Night of the Senses” we are prepared to enter into the Illuminative way. One of the best examples I have ever heard is the analogy of a boat that is on the shore. You are able to push the boat into the water and when the tide comes in, it makes it easier to move the boat; this is the Purgative Way. Sometimes it is really easy (the moment of grace) and other times it is more difficult (when we sin). But overall, we feel that we are actually doing something positive, that we are making headway in our lives.

The Illuminative Way is when the tide goes out and the boat gets stuck in the mud. You can see the water but you are not there yet. It becomes a struggle to move the boat; we experience dryness in our prayers, going to Mass without feeling anything, prayer becomes unclear and less passionate.

Saint John of the Cross describes this as “The Dark Night of the Soul” where God seems so distant to us. Father Mike Schmitz explains it as such:

*“The dark night of the soul is a state where consolation is gone everywhere, not just spiritually. There is no sight of God and a person perceives that there is no hope and no heaven. Yet, they choose God even if they begin to feel and think that He isn’t there or doesn’t exist. Here comes the point where one chooses God for Himself, not for what He does for us.*

*To grow through the dark night of the senses, patience and perseverance is required, as it is sometimes triggered by life-altering situations such as the death of a loved one, a divorce, or major financial loss—all of which may plunge one into a period of intense suffering, resulting in questions such as:*

*“Why me?” “Why this?” “For how long?” “Is God listening or watching?” Unable to comprehend their painful circumstances and the reason for it, an individual enters a period of desolation—a state of suffering and loneliness, often finding that it is hard to pray or hear God’s voice. In this state, consolation does come but only after a long period of silence.*

*In the dark night of the soul, one asks questions such as: “Does God exist?” “Why can’t I feel or sense God’s presence anymore?” “What have I done wrong?” “What’s the point of following His will?” and “How can I persevere in such darkness?” In this state, there is a temptation to abandon the will of God because there is an inability to sense His very presence or believe in His existence. In this time, it becomes*

*difficult to hope or seek out the good during this unspecified period of suffering.*

*When a person encounters either of these two states, there is an opportunity to come through spiritually stronger and nearer to God. The dark night of the senses can occur at any time, while the dark night of the soul is initiated by God, who seemingly withdraws his presence to purify the soul. So that one may not be caught unaware by this experience, it can be helpful to learn from the experiences of the saints.”*

It is easy to give up and believe that there is no hope, no heaven and maybe even no God. But we still can persevere, we can still just push through the difficulties that life seems to send our way. During this time, God purifies our soul even more. It is when we choose Him in the darkness of our lives, that our lives, love and intentions are purified.

This is not God teasing us, even though there are times that we do not feel anything. Again, we have to have trust in God and choose Him anyway. It is when we love God for who He is and not for what we get from Him. We choose Him just for being who He is: God. We must remember that God is not teasing or testing us, but He is trying to purify our hearts and souls so that we truly, authentically and more purely love Him. We have learned through her diaries that Saint Mother Theresa of Calcutta was in the Dark Night of the Soul for Twenty years. Unfortunately, we all have to pass through this stage, whether in this life or the next, to gain entrance into heaven.

So, if you find yourself in this dark night of the soul, do not give up! This is the time to lean into God even more. Spiritual desolation and depression are NOT the same thing; the first has to do with only your spiritual life; the latter casts darkness over every aspect of your life. So even if you are experiencing a dryness in your spiritual life, it does not mean you are clinically depressed.

Trusting in God even when we do not “feel” His presence is when our faith is the strongest. For let us remember the words of Jesus: “Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed” (John 20:29b).

Jesus makes it possible for us to be one with Him and His Father. We have to continue to choose Jesus even when we do not “feel” His presence in order to love Him forever in this life and in the life of the world to come. This is how our heart becomes the type of heart that can truly love God forever. So, keep pushing the boat; He will give you

the strength to lead you through this. Remain faithful with a heart that is even more loving, one that is truly purified, then our lives will be ready to be with God and see Him face to face. Let us remember that Jesus promised us "I am the Light of the world; whomever follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life" (*John 8:12b*).

### Adoration Chapel

If you're looking for something to "give" — not "give up" for Lent, consider giving an hour of peace to yourself by signing up for an adoration hour. We have the following hours in need:

Monday - 2:00 p.m. soon to be an open hour

Monday - 3:00 p.m. Partner

Of course, any hour can be taken. Contact:

Andrea 201-874-8769; Marie 732-885-7972



### YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth Ministry meetings are on Mondays at 7:00pm in the Youth Ministry room.

If you would like to join or if you have any questions, please email me at

[youth.ministry@stmichaelnetcong.org](mailto:youth.ministry@stmichaelnetcong.org)

-Nicole

### FAITH FORMATION

#### Confirmation I, II and NET:

Service forms due:

- For Confirmation I: forms for service completed in Jan, Feb, March due 3/31
- For Confirmation II and NET: forms for service completed monthly through Feb.28 are due now

#### Confirmation II and NET groups:

Important Sponsor and Candidate meeting 3/19 at 3pm. All are to attend. If a sponsor cannot be present, a parent is asked to attend in their place. There is no make up for this meeting!

### Confessions during Lent

Mondays from 7-8:30pm & Saturdays 4-4:30pm

Friday, March 24th

7pm Bilingual Stations followed by  
Soup Supper in the Hall

Come Pray the Rosary

Monday through Saturday

9:30am in Church, before the 10am Mass

### Knights of Columbus

#### " FORTY CANS FOR LENT"

Thank you to our fellow parishioners for helping the Knights of Columbus in our Forty Cans for Lent project. Because of your generosity, the parish food pantry has collected over 1,700 canned goods and other nonperishable food items. But, the need remains great. Please continue to donate as part of your Lenten sacrifice.

This week, peanut butter, jelly, pasta, pasta sauce, rice and box and packaged potatoes are especially needed. Thank you.

### Ecumenical Cross Walk

will be held on Friday, April 7th, 2023 at 11 AM. Please join us as we walk with our Protestant brothers and sisters through the streets of Stanhope and Netcong reliving the Passion of our Lord. At each station there will be a brief hymn and reading. We will begin at the First Presbyterian Church in Stanhope at 11:00am and walk to the Stanhope UMC and then on to St. Michael Church for the conclusion. There will be five total stops and the procession will last around 90 minutes. Please see Deacon Russ or Father Mike if you have any questions.

### CUARTO DOMINGO DE CUARESMA

Domingo

1 Sm 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Eph 5:8-14;

Jn 9:1-41 or 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

Lunes

2 Sm 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22;

Mt 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Lk 2:41-51a

Martes

Ez 47:1-9, 12; Jn 5:1-16

Miércoles

Is 49:8-15; Jn 5:17-30

Jueves

Ex 32:7-14; Jn 5:31-47

Viernes

Wis 2:1a, 12-22; Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Sábado

Is 7:10-14, 8:10; Heb 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38



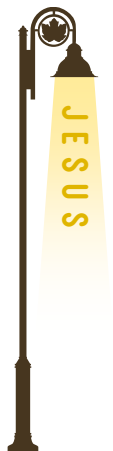
A man, born blind, was healed by Jesus. The blind beggar's eyes were opened to our world but also, more importantly to Jesus - the Light of the World. When the townspeople did not believe Jesus healed the blind man, Jesus asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" *John 9:35* The man replied, "I do **believe**, Lord", and he worshiped Him. *John 9:39*

# Believe... Jesus is the light of the world

He shines the light of His love on us so we don't live in darkness or sin.

## BIBLE WORD SEARCH

Find all the words... left, right, up, down or diagonally.



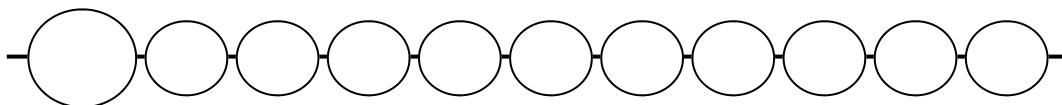
Life	Importantly
Heart	Jesus
Lent	Born
Love	Worshiped
Darkness	World
Believe	People
Man	Town
Light	Healed
Shine	Blind
Eyes	Lord

J E S U S H E A R T B E S  
B D H E B E E L P H O L S  
E V O L O L Y S R G R W E  
L R A W P L M E B I N O N  
I M P O R T A N T L Y E K  
E S E R L M N I D E I P R  
V P S L Y O U H E F L N A  
E E R D W O R S H I P E D  
T R H E A L E D L L E N T

## The Fourth Sorrowful Mystery - The Carrying of the Cross

Think about how Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry the cross.

The blind man is no longer living in the dark - he has new eyesight and in his heart a new life in Jesus, he says, "I do \_\_\_\_\_, Lord".



Some people call struggles or difficult life situations a "cross to bear". Believe that Jesus, the Light of the World, will help you like he helped & healed the blind man. How can you be like Jesus & help others?

**This week:** Say an Our Father and color the large bead - say 10 Hail Mary's and color each small bead. End with Glory Be to the Father.

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