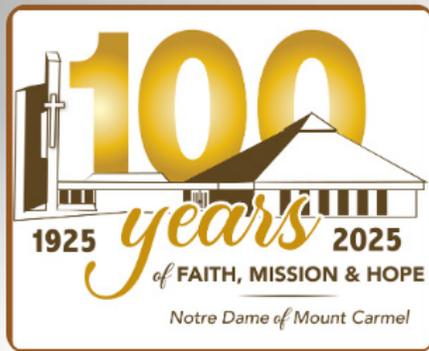


Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Church

# PARISH UPDATE

[www.ndcarmel.com](http://www.ndcarmel.com)



**NOTRE DAME  
OF MT. CARMEL CHURCH**

75 Ridgedale Avenue  
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927  
973-538-1358

[www.ndcarmel.com](http://www.ndcarmel.com)

**Parish Update: March 24, 2026**

**Let any one of you  
who is without sin  
be the first  
to throw a stone at her.**

John 8:7b NIV



[SeekGrowLove.com](http://SeekGrowLove.com)

# 2026 Lenten & Easter Schedule



PRAY

FAST

GIVE

Ash Wednesday,  
February 18

Masses w/ Distribution of Ashes: 7:30 AM, 12 PM & 5:30 PM  
Liturgy of the Word w/ Distribution of Ashes: 9:30 AM & 3:30 PM

Lenten Mass Schedule  
Thu. Feb 19 - Wed. Apr 1

Mon-Fri: 7:30 AM and 12 Noon  
Sat: 12 Noon; 5 PM Vigil  
Sun: 7:30 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM & 6 PM

Adoration of  
The Blessed Sacrament

Thursdays, 6 - 7 PM  
Fridays, 8 AM - 3 PM

Confessions

Mondays during Lent: 7 - 8:30 PM  
Saturdays (exc. Holy Saturday): 12:45 PM  
Tuesday, March 24, 7 - 9 PM

Stations of the Cross

Fridays: 12:40 PM

Palm Sunday, March 29

Sat. March 28: 5 PM Vigil  
Sun: 7:30 AM, 9:30 AM (Outdoor Procession at 9:15 AM)  
11:30 AM & 6 PM

Holy Thursday, April 2

Mass of the Lord's Supper: 7:30 PM  
Followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament  
through Midnight

Good Friday, April 3

Liturgy of the Passion: 3 PM  
Living Stations of the Cross: 8 PM

Holy Saturday, April 4

Blessing of the Food: 11 AM  
Easter Vigil: 8 PM

Easter Sunday, April 5

Masses at 7:30 AM, 9:30 AM & 11:30 AM  
(no Mass at 6 PM)

# *Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Staff*



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**Agnes Loughlin**



**Mary Malone**



**Sallyann Augello**  
*Database Administrator*  
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*In Confession, Jesus will heal you.  
In Adoration, Jesus will hold you.*

Fr. Mike Schmitz



*Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Church*  
**Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 7:00 - 9:00 PM**  
**Confessions & Adoration**

## **In the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

**Stories shared in Relevant Radio and LifeTeen**

*"For me, what comes to mind is just the experience of being on the other side of the screen. Being a priest who can be an instrument of God's mercy. And some of the most profound experiences I've had have been where somebody has come in saying, 'Father, I've never said this to anyone, I've been too embarrassed to confess this, I've held this back all these years.' Or 'I've been away for 40 years, and I'm not sure how to do this. How do I go to Confession? I don't think I can remember.' And to help that person unburden the load, to get rid of the things that have been weighing on their conscience, that they feel so ashamed of. For that person to go away relieved and at peace, knowing they have been forgiven, that for me is a great experience of being a priest." Fr. Kubicki*

*"I was away for many years, under the misunderstanding that at the beginning of Mass, the priest cleanses you of your sins. But when I came back after many years, during the Lenten mission, I had a friend who encouraged me to go, and all the priest said was, 'Welcome home.' And it was a wonderful feeling. I left the confessional, and I don't think I was even walking on the ground; I was floating."*

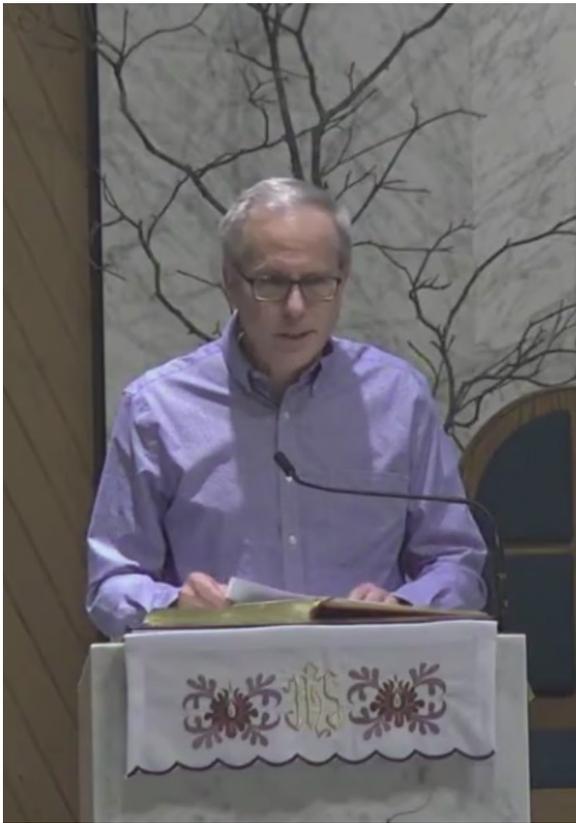
*"I filled like three or four notebook pages of everything I ever did wrong. And I went to Confession and told the priest, 'I know you're here as Jesus to forgive my sins. And I think Jesus died not just for some of my sins but for all of my sins. And I'm going to start naming them now.' And I was in there for about 15 or 20 minutes. And the priest was kind of blown away. Why take a shower and just wash your arm or your leg? Wash your whole body. Just ask for all of His forgiveness. It worked for me."*

*"In Confession I see my own weakness... The third thing a priest sees when he hears Confessions is his own soul. It is a scary place for a priest. I cannot tell you how humbled I am when someone approaches Jesus' mercy through me. I am not over-awed by their sins; I am struck by the fact that they have been able to recognize sins in their life that I have been blind to in my own. Hearing someone's humility breaks down my own pride. It is one of the best examinations of conscience. But why is Confession a scary place for a priest? It is frightening because of the way in which Jesus trusts me to be a living sign of His mercy. Archbishop Fulton Sheen once told priests that we scarcely realize what is happening when we extend our hands over someone's head in absolution. **We don't realize, he said, that the very Blood of Christ is dripping from our fingers onto their heads, washing the penitent clean.**" Fr. Mike Schmitz*

**Come anytime between 7 and 9 PM, and  
experience both:  
Jesus healing you and Jesus holding you!**

## **Parish Strategic Plan: Where is God Calling Our Parish Now?**

This past weekend, the congregation heard from our **Parish Pastoral Council Chair, Dan Balogh, and Vice Chair, Jen Qvotrup**, who encouraged all in our faith community to prayerfully review the recently published **Parish Strategic Plan**.



The Parish Strategic Plan reflects the work of our renewed parish Pastoral Council, which spent considerable time listening to the voices of our parish (through the Strategic Planning Workshop), leaned on prayer and discernment, and evaluated other resources, including Church and community documents. Most importantly, the voice of the Holy Spirit influenced the process, even through its final stages of preparation, making adjustments along the way in light of new insights.

**NOTRE DAME OF MOUNT CARMEL | OUR PARISH STRATEGIC VISION 2026 & BEYOND**

INVITE \* WELCOME \* GUIDE  
Each Other Into A Relationship With Christ  
GO OUT AND MAKE MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

**OUR SIX STRATEGIC PILLARS**

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>EVANGELIZATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the Gospel</li> <li>• Invite others to Jesus</li> <li>• Equip &amp; Inspire</li> </ul> | <p><b>STEWARDSHIP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow in Generosity</li> <li>• Serve with Time &amp; Talent</li> <li>• Support the Mission</li> </ul> | <p><b>DISCIPLESHIP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepen Faith</li> <li>• Faith Formation</li> <li>• Accompaniment</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>MINISTRY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve Others</li> <li>• Lead &amp; Support</li> <li>• Care for All</li> </ul>                      | <p><b>WORSHIP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate Mass</li> <li>• Grow in Prayer Life</li> <li>• Live the Sacraments</li> </ul>                  | <p><b>COMMUNITY &amp; FELLOWSHIP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect</li> <li>• Belong</li> <li>• Grow together</li> </ul> |

**MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER**

- ✓ Strengthen Our Faith
- ✓ Invite Others In
- ✓ Serve Those In Need
- ✓ Form Missionary Disciples

Scan to read the FULL STRATEGIC PLAN  
www.ndcarmel.com

While adjustments to the plan will surely be made as we journey forward, it is important for all of us to understand, even at a high level, our parish's priorities, hopes, and direction. Then we will be better able to support our present and future through our individual and communal prayer, our God-given gifts (time, talent, treasure), and the fruitfulness of worship celebrations, our ministries, and outreach efforts to share Christ's love with others.

## Hallow App Partnership Update

Prayer is at the heart of our journey as a parish. As we seek to make missionary disciples, we acknowledge that prayer is not simply one program or event among many—it is the foundation that allows us to listen to the Holy Spirit, discern, and respond generously to where God is leading us together on our mission. This is why nurturing and encouraging prayer in our community is essential to the fruitfulness of our mission. The Good News? There are no prerequisites to prayer! Regardless of where a person may be in their spiritual journey, prayer is the best next step!

On December 1, thanks to a generous donor, we partnered with Hallow App to offer a valuable resource to help our community deepen our prayer lives.



To date, 326 souls from our community have connected with Hallow and joined us at our parish page on the app. Thus far, we have shared **three of the five collections** that encompass our partnership through the end of 2026: Advent's "*Be Still*," "*14 Days of Prayer*," and, currently underway, "*Lent Pray40: The Return*." Beyond the collections shared, many have posted prayer intentions, prayed for others' intentions, shared reflections, and explored other content available through the partnership.



# FEEDBACK

*"I signed on to Hallow following the February Mass after hearing the praises of the App from Deacon John Davis and the benefits of joining. Prior to that, I had been getting continuing texts from Jonathan Roumie and Mark Wahlberg to try it out, but, as many of us do, procrastination took hold. It was easy to sign up, so I did, and thought using it would be an additional tool for prayer during the Lenten season. I was not wrong.*

*I now start my day with the one-minute prayer that leads into the Lenten theme for this season, the prodigal son, connecting this Gospel story to Dostoyevsky's novel, "The Brothers Karamazov." Procrastination #2 had set in because this book has been in my office for over a year (I stopped reading by page 20 due to the difficulty of learning about the Karamazov family and their Russian names, and not anticipating the 700 pages ahead would be easy). But as the story has unfolded each week through the wonderful words of Jonathan Roumie and Sister Miriam, I have gained so many new perspectives on what the prodigal son means to me. So, like many things God does, he prompted me to purchase this book, and now the time has come to end my second procrastination! Now on my reading list.*

*Besides the above, interviews with celebrities about their Catholic faith, and what got them to where they are now -- as well as stories each week of those of little or lost faith that have returned to the Lord under circumstances that you would not seem possible -- have strengthened my faith in the power of God. These include Sisters and Priests. There are so many other areas to delve into, whether dealing with grief, meditation, or learning more about the Bible, just to name a few. Those on Hallow for a much longer period can attest to my words, but as a newcomer, it has been an extremely rewarding experience." Dennis Fashano*

*"I signed up for Hallow at a table in the gathering space after Mass. I am now doing*

*"In one of the talks on the Pray 40 journey, impactful words that stood out to me were*

*three things for my routine: Daily Rosary, Daily Trivia, and Lenten Pray40. The Rosary is great; it sure beats trying to do it while reading instructions. It's the first time in my life I have done the Rosary more than one day in a row. I'm on day 23 now. The Daily Trivia is enlightening. It shows me how much I know about Catholicism in the first 2 questions and how good a guesser I am in the last 3 questions. The Lenten Pray 40 is a daily discussion leading up to Easter. I don't know what I'll do when it ends, but I plan to find a similar discussion program to replace it. I look forward to using Hallow each day and feel it's making me a better person. Here is my proposed marketing slogan: "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallow be thy app." Remember, you heard it here first." Parishioner 5278*

*'Find what you're looking for.' I am always looking for ways to find a more powerful and personal connection to Jesus, and I found it in the "Jesus I Trust in You" meditation. It is only one minute long, but in that one minute, as I fervently, over and over, repeat the words Jesus I trust in You, I fully trust that Jesus hears me. And then it is very freeing and healing for me to intentionally let go of all that is weighing on my heart.*

*For the Prayer Requests, I have been touched and comforted by all who have been praying daily for my intention, and I for theirs. What a lovely connection." Margie Sullivan*

All content shared through our partnership is free to our community - you may revisit past collections or experience them for the first time if you recently joined our page on the app.

**If you have yet to join, simply download the Hallow App, create an account, and bypass payment (x at the top of the screen). Then tap Church at the bottom, search for our parish (Zip 07927), and join!**

**If you wish to go deeper in your prayer journey by exploring the full content available through the app,** you may redeem a Hallow premium subscription with a 25% discount directly on our parish page: 1) Open the Hallow App 2) Tap "Church" to go to our Parish Page 3) At the top of the screen and beneath our church name, scroll through the options of Info, Members, Invite, etc. until you reach "Claim Subscriptions." Tap on it; no code needed.

# Postmarked from Jerusalem

By Diane Byrne, Elementary Family Faith Coordinator



On Sunday, families received another letter from Peter. He wrote about how a week that began with a celebration ended with the crucifixion of Jesus.



The activities families are asked to complete this week include making a cross out of sticks and a crown of thorns from crackers, pretzels, and peanut butter.



*From previous letters...*



## Called & Gifted: Small Group Discernment

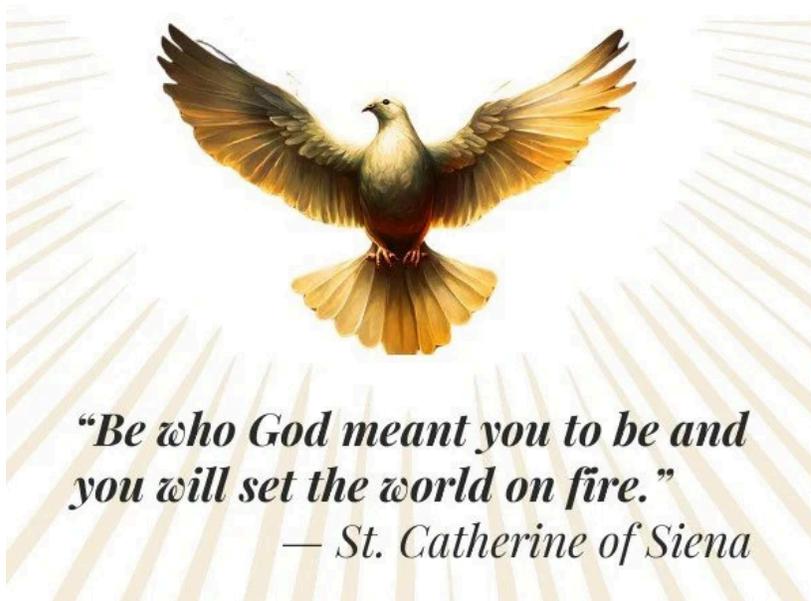
We have recently shared about two of the three small groups journeying through deeper charism-discernment. This week, we share an update on the third small group of eight who completed their 8-week journey last Thursday.



*Pictured above (L-R): Mike Carrubba, Beth McNeilly, Alicia Bozza, Christa Cottone, Cathy Piccoli, Bob Smith (not pictured: Geetha Fernandes and Annette Tracy)*

*"Our Called and Gifted discernment group focus was a truly a beautiful experience for me. Meeting in our home created a space that felt safe, welcoming, and deeply personal—perfect for honest reflection and spiritual growth. Through prayer, Scripture, and meaningful conversation, I began to recognize how uniquely God has gifted each of us. It was powerful to witness how the Holy Spirit moved within the group, gently revealing charisms not only in myself but in each person present.*

*This experience renewed my sense of purpose. I walked away with greater confidence in how God is calling me to serve, as well as a deeper appreciation for the beauty of community. Discerning charisms in this small group setting wasn't just an exercise—it was an encounter with God's love and a reminder that we are each intentionally equipped to build up the Church and serve others." Cathy Piccoli, Facilitator*



***“Be who God meant you to be and  
you will set the world on fire.”***  
— *St. Catherine of Siena*

*“We had a terrific, faithful group that we hosted in our home. The program really helped us better understand how God may be working through the unique gifts and desires He has placed in my life. Through prayer, reflection, and group discussion, I think we all gained clarity about how we might serve the Church and others more intentionally. The program combines spiritual discernment with very practical guidance. The conversations and follow-up reflection made the discernment feel both personal and grounded in faith. Called and Gifted is a powerful way to discover how the Holy Spirit may be calling you to use your gifts for the good of others.” Bob Flynn*

*“The group members and I connected quickly, thanks in large part to meeting in someone’s home. The relaxed atmosphere fostered open discussion, guided by the Holy Spirit. Each group member discerned a different charism, and each person’s experience helped me overcome challenges I faced in my experimentation. I admired the faithfulness I witnessed. Each person was passionate about using his or her charism, even if he or she was unsure why that charism appeared in his or her top six. I was inspired to discern the charisms I had discounted before the group began. Called and Gifted reminded me that my gifts point others to God.” Christa Cottone*

*“My experience in the small group was exceptional. God truly led me to just the right people. Then, I needed to help myself. The experience encouraged me in my walk with Christ. I am happy to have participated with this beautiful group and look forward to seeing how friendships will continue to blossom. I am grateful for the guidance that I received through God while in this group.” Alicia Bozza*

## Annual Easter Ham Drive

Through our Annual Easter Ham Drive, we collected **89 hams and \$255 in monetary donations**. Thanks to the generous hearts who shared from their treasure for the Easter celebrations of those in need who are served through the Interfaith Food Pantry.



**The gift of Time!** We offer a special shoutout to **Joe Casano**, who stood in the parking lot collecting hams both Saturday and Sunday!

# OCIA: Presentation by Deacon Joe & Karen Harris

By Laura Balogh, Director of Family Faith Formation

This Lent, our seven OCIA candidates have been undergoing a **Period of Purification and Enlightenment** (*a time of intense spiritual preparation and interior reflection rather than formal catechetical instruction*), as the final, 6-week spiritual preparation for their reception of the sacraments at the Easter Vigil Mass on Saturday, April 4.

This past Sunday, Deacon Joe & Karen Harris visited the group and provided a presentation on Catholic Social Justice and morality.

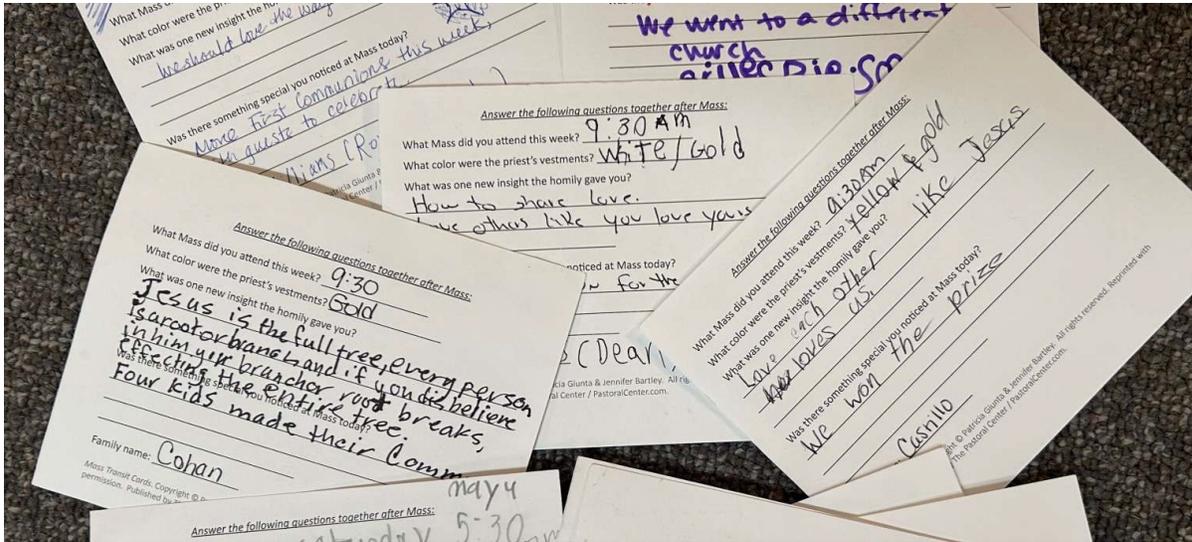


Deacon Joe and Karen also provided their personal witness to their life of service during their marriage, through many ministries, including Operation Appalachia and Guatemala Outreach. During the meeting, they encouraged the candidates to reflect on how they can similarly provide service to the world after Easter, using their spiritual gifts to bring Jesus and His love to the world.

Thank you, Deacon Joe and Karen, for all that you do for our faith community!

We ask that you continue to keep each of our candidates in prayer in these last days of Lent!

# Mass Transit Cards



## What was one insight the homily gave you?

"God is the light of the world and look for the good in everyone."  
"After death there is resurrection."  
"God is with us, no matter what."  
"Jesus brought his friend back to life."  
"Jesus always loves us when things are good and bad."  
"Father Patty prayed for the Spirit to come to him before giving the homily."  
"Let the Holy Spirit help you."  
"God is always there. Lean on him in good times and in tough times."  
"Always pick the bright side on things."  
"Life after death."  
"After death there is eternal life when you believe and have faith in Jesus."  
"Jesus wept when his friend died."  
"Jesus is Divine from God and Human from Mother Mary."  
"Eternal life comes to those who welcome Jesus."  
"The four very important people are Mary, Jesus, Martha and Lazarus."

## Was there something special you noticed at Mass today?

"There was a different priest today."  
"The cross is covered in purple."  
"Sitting with our friends."  
"Betsy is an altar server."  
"5th Sunday of Lent."  
"Father Paddy was at mass."  
"Palm Sunday next Sunday!"  
"The priest played a special song after mass."  
"Today was one of the kids' birthday. He shouted it out when Father Vidal did the homily."  
\* **"Why did they cover Jesus?" (Scroll down for the answer!)**  
"It was a full house - lots of people."  
"It was that girl's birthday. I forgot her name."  
"Sebastian was altar server."  
"We brought Fr. Vidal the gifts, and I got to hand out the scrolls!"  
"My dad wasn't playing the drums today."  
"The decorations match the priest's vestments."

## This Week's Mass & Lamp Intentions

## Parishioner Announcements

### *Memories that Share Our Story...*

#### *Family Mass*





# *A Final Thought...*

*There is a moment in Lent when something subtle (or maybe not so subtle) changes. You walk into church and notice that something feels different. The statues are covered or put away. The crucifix is hidden behind a purple veil. The sanctuary feels quieter and more restrained. We have entered **Passiontide**.*

***\*"Why did they cover Jesus?"***



*The answer comes from the Gospel itself. In John 8:59, we read that Jesus “hid himself and went out of the temple.” As opposition to Christ intensified, He no longer walked openly among the people...*

***Passiontide** begins on the Fifth Sunday of Lent (this past Sunday), and continues through Holy Week until the Easter Vigil. These final two weeks intensify the Church’s focus on Christ’s suffering and death. We are invited to contemplate the Passion itself, the moment when Christ reveals the depth of God’s love through suffering.*

*The Church removes these visual comforts so that our attention can rest more fully on the mystery unfolding before us. In a sense, the veils remind us that faith often means trusting God when His glory seems hidden.*

*During these final days of Lent, we are invited to accompany Christ more intentionally. Because only by walking through the shadow of the Passion can we fully understand the light of Easter morning. **Passiontide** reminds us that before the Resurrection comes the Cross. Hidden within the suffering of Christ is the greatest mystery of all. The love of God, poured out for us.*

*Source: The Simple Catholic*

