



# *Saint Leonard of Port Maurice Parish*

**March 1, 2020 ~ First Sunday of Lent**



## *Mass Schedule*



### **Saint Leonard Church**

**Saturday:** 5:00PM  
(Confession 4:00 -5:00 PM)

**Sunday** 9:00 AM  
10:30 AM (Italian)  
12:00 Noon  
**Monday - Friday** 12:05PM



### **Saint Stephen Church**

**Saturday:** 4:00PM  
**Sunday** 11:00 AM  
**Thursday and Friday**  
(Masses will resume on March 12, 2020)



**Sacred Heart Church**  
**is temporarily closed**



### **Saint John School**

**School Hours**  
**Monday - Friday** 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
**Tel:** 617-227-3143



**Saint Francis Gift Shop**  
**Manager:** Brother Gabriel Aceto

## **PASTORAL STAFF**

**Pastor:** Rev. Michael Della Penna, OFM  
**Parochial Vicar:** Father Claude Scrima, OFM  
**Guardian:** Brother Gabriel Aceto, OFM  
**Saint Stephen Rector:** Rev. David Costello  
**Saint John School: Principal:** Claire Cassidy

## **Parish Office**

**Business Manager:** John Kutch  
**Secretary:** Rita Ingersoll

## **Office Hours:**

**Monday - Thursday:** 9:00 AM - 4:00PM  
**Closed Friday and Weekend**

**Phone:** 617-523-2110, **Fax:** 617-367-0456

**Address:** 320 Hanover Street 02113

**Email:** [admin@saintleonardchurchboston.org](mailto:admin@saintleonardchurchboston.org)

**WWW:** [saintleonardchurchboston.org](http://saintleonardchurchboston.org)

## **DEVOTIONS**



### **ROSARY**

**Monday - Friday** 11:30 AM  
(Saint Leonard Church)



### **NOVENA TO** **SAINT ANTHONY**

**Tuesday** 12:05 PM  
(Saint Leonard Church)



### **EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION**

**Friday after 12:05 PM Mass**  
(Saint Leonard Church)



### **CHAPLET OF** **DIVINE MERCY**

**Friday at 3:00 PM Mass**  
(Saint Leonard Church)

**Parking** 136 Blackstone Street, Boston (Enter on New Sudbury Street) There is validated\* parking for visitors to the North End at the Parcel 7 parking garage, located on the corner of New Sudbury Street and Congress Street. Enter on New Sudbury Street next to the Haymarket "T" entrance. Validated parking tickets are good for \$1 for up to 2 hours of parking, and \$3 for up to 3 hours of parking. If you park for longer than 3 hours, the validation is void and regular rates apply. \*For the discount, parking ticket must be validated by a North End store, church, attraction, restaurant, business or organization.

## **Mass Intentions March 1 - March 8**

**February 29 – Saturday**

**5:00pm.** John (Jack) Daley

**March 1- Sunday**

**9:00am** Deceased Members of the Frank Barassi Family; Deceased Members of the DePasquale Family; Deceased Members of the Varano Family; Susan Hetic; Enrico Ricci; Panfilo Federico

**10:30am.** Rocco & Filomena Pezzano

**12:00pm.** Dino DiRamio & Deceased members of the Tavilla Family, Anne & Joseph Luongo; Anna & Stephen Lynch

**March 2 – Monday**

**12:05pm.** Giovanni Martignetti  
**7:00pm**

**March 3 – Tuesday**

**12:05pm** Vincenza Raspa  
**7:00pm**

**March 4– Wednesday**

**12:05pm** Special Intention  
**7:00pm**

**March 5-Thursday**

**12:05pm.** Dina D'Alto Malgeri  
**7:00pm**

**March 6– Friday**

**12:05pm.** Arthur Grabale  
**6:00pm** Stations of the Cross  
**7:00pm**

**March 7 – Saturday**

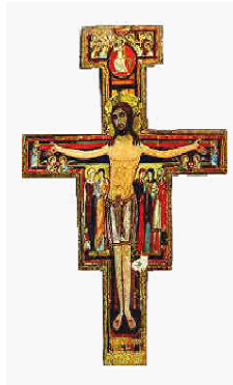
**5:00pm.** Bob Agrippino; Ralph and Angie Tricomi; The Cataldo & Merola Families

**March 8- Sunday**

**9:00am** Deceased Members of the DePasquale Family; Deceased Members of the Varano Family; Susan Hetic

**10:30am.** Domenico & Sestilia Federico; In onore Di San Ciriaco

**12:00pm.** Josephine Buscemi; Anne & Joseph Luongo; Rita DeRienzo



### **SECOND COLLECTION**

This weekend's Second collection will be for church maintenance

## *Pastor's Message*

### **BREAKING OUR FAST FROM FASTING**

There seems to be many good reasons not to fast. At least that's how I felt for many years. Besides not really understanding the whole concept of how fasting really works, I just found it too difficult and worse, fasting would sometimes leave me with a headache and therefore acting less charitable to others, defeating the whole purpose. Since I had never read anything that convinced me about the benefits or necessity of fasting, I decided it wasn't of any value in my spiritual practices; after all, how could not eating chocolate really get me closer to Jesus anyway? Moreover, I figured my daily life offered me more than enough penitential opportunities without going out of my way to pile on more; I need only embrace the crosses I encountered. The Church itself, as far as I could tell, didn't place much importance on fasting or take it too seriously; on the contrary, it relaxed its observance of fasting after Vatican II, even removing the language of the "serious obligations" of fasting.

Everything changed however, after I meditated seriously on Isaiah's challenge of what true fasting is, found in chapter 58: 6-14, which reveals God's idea of fasting.

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice

and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter –when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

"If you do away....with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed."

Here fasting is not done in isolation but combined with almsgiving, so that rather than just refraining from food, we are also invited to perform acts of charity and justice at the same time. St. Augustine wrote that together, both fasting and almsgiving form the "two wings" which enable our prayer to reach God. I realized then, that I had not only been trying to fly with one wing, but that I really didn't know what fasting was all about.

Benedict XVI helped me see that I had missed the deeper significance of fasting when he wrote fasting is not about the food we fast from but rather "is directed to eating the "true food," which is to do the Father's will (cf. Jn 4,34)" and so "allows Him to come and satisfy the deepest hunger that we experience in the depths of our being: the hunger and thirst for God."

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Fasting then allows us to get in touch with the true and deepest hunger of our heart, our soul's need to be fed with the super substantial daily bread of the Word of God which alone can satisfy and fulfill our deepest longings. John Henry Newman writes:

"They alone are truly able to enjoy this world who begin with the world unseen. They alone enjoy it, who have first abstained from it. They alone can truly feast who have first fasted; they alone are able to use the world who have learned not to abuse it; they alone inherit it, who take it as a shadow of the world to come, and who for that world to come relinquish it."

Isn't that the real reason we fast an hour before Mass? It is in order to awaken our real hunger, our deepest hunger, the hunger of our souls for God, and thus be prepared to feast on the Eucharist, the true bread of life. Fasting therefore is not so much saying 'no' to a good thing but rather an overwhelming resounding 'yes' to a better thing, in fact, the best thing; reminding us we do not "live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

The Bible holds a number of surprising truths about fasting. How had I missed learning that fasting was the primary form of penance mentioned in almost every single book of the Old Testament. How did I miss the obvious fact that the Bible even begins with a fast, *the very first commandment* to fast from the fruit of the tree? The practice of fasting continued in the New Testament and was expected of all Christians, as Jesus himself reveals *how* we should fast not *if* we should fast in Mt. 6:17. He also states how the disciples *will* fast when He, the bridegroom, is taken away in Mk 2:20.

In continuing to read the Bible, I found one of the most convincing reasons why fasting is so important. Mark 9:29 relates the account of Jesus' explanation of why his disciples could not expel a certain type of demon: "But this kind [of demon] can be cast out in no other way except by prayer and fasting." I knew then, that I needed to take even a deeper look at fasting and try to understand how the sacrifice we offer to God by curbing our appetite helps those we pray for and could also help us experience the feast of graces Isaiah speaks of:

"Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear....Then you will call, and the Lord will answer...he will satisfy your needs...and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail....then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to *feast* on the inheritance of your father Jacob."

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This is the true goal of the penance of lent; being able to share in the happiness and joy of doing God's will. Fasting allowed St. Francis to experience a divine freedom from his disordered attachments and gave him a deep sense of peace. Fasting can help us to be freed from the slavery of our ego, and most importantly, the dictatorship of our own self will. Emptied and freed from self-centeredness, we open ourselves to receiving all as gift and in turn can make ourselves a gift to God, neighbor and all creation.

Lent is a special time of grace in which we are challenged to deny ourselves by giving up or sharing some of our possessions, time, and food. The practice of fasting and almsgiving invites us to "let go" of any interior attachment and lead us to a deeper sense of freedom and new life. Benedict XVI reminds us "Freely chosen detachment from the pleasure of food and other material goods helps the disciple of Christ to control the appetites of nature, weakened by original sin, whose negative effects impact the entire human person."

So, what are the good reasons to fast? Few other spiritual practices allow us to personally experience this type of participation in the paschal mystery: a participation in the self-emptying and dying to self our Lord experienced, a stripping of our own wills, our own desires, and our own wants, etc. Fasting empties us in order to fill us, breaks and tears us down, in order to restore and build us back up again. Fasting makes of us an interior dessert, in order that God transform us into a well-watered garden, "like a spring whose waters never fail." Fasting thus helps us rise above our self-referential egos and so gain some objectivity from our often blind, unbridled self-absorption. It is an exercise in loosening the chains that enslave us so that we are no longer dragged along by the pleasure principle, which seeks only immediate gratification of our desires. In this way, the craving to satisfy the worldly desires of the "flesh" dies interiorly and "passes over" into new life; we make ourselves a tomb in order to become a temple in which the spirit may dwell. In purifying ourselves we are able to create a sacred space that becomes *vacare deo* (vacant for God).

Why is this so vital today? Because we live in a world fueled by so much greed and the self-indulgence of consumerism, and yet are deprived of little or nothing. St. Thomas Aquinas proposed fasting (1) to restrain the desires of the flesh; (2) to raise the mind to contemplate sublime things; (3) to make satisfaction for our sins. Benedict XVI went as far as saying "Without fasting we shall in no way expel the demon of our time." Fasting is therefore the antidote to our culture of addiction, and as some have called it, a chemotherapy for the deepest entrenched sins we have. Our Lady of Medjugorje has said that fasting can even stop wars and make us unafraid of evil and Satan.



**SAINT ANTHONY NOVENA**  
**Beginning Tuesday, March 17th, after**  
**the 12:05 Mass, the Saint Anthony**  
**Novena will begin and will continue for**  
**13 Tuesdays following the 12:05 Mass.**



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