



OUR LADY OF CZĘSTOCHOWA CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Lent

PRAY. FAST. GIVE.

First Sunday of Lent -- February 22, 2026

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parish Family,

When Jesus withdrew into the wilderness for forty days, He entered not just a physical space of sand and stone, but a spiritual terrain where the voice of God could be heard with startling clarity. The desert strips away every excess, everything that distracts or numbs us to the gentle whisper of the Spirit.

The relentless noise that fills our days generates a tidal wave of notifications, obligations, conversations, entertainment, and a constant buzz of anxiety about what comes next. Even our prayers can become another item on our to-do list or a performance we're trying to perfect. But Lent offers us something radically different: permission to stop, to be still, and to create the interior silence where God's voice can finally reach us. Each practice creates a different kind of space for divine encounter, a different posture of receptivity before the God who longs to communicate with us.

Prayer, first and foremost, is the discipline of listening itself. When we commit to daily prayer during Lent, whether through the Rosary, Scripture reading, or simply sitting in silent adoration, we are training ourselves to recognize God's voice. Like learning to identify a beloved's footstep in the hallway or their particular way of knocking at the door, regular prayer attunes our spiritual senses to the ways God speaks. Sometimes it's through the sudden illumination of a Scripture passage we've read a hundred times before. Sometimes it's in the consolation or desolation we feel during meditation. Sometimes it's simply in the companionable silence of being present to the One who is always present to us. OLC's Lenten Retreat day is a great opportunity to immerse yourself in a few different types of prayer.

The key is consistency and patience. God rarely shouts. The prophet Elijah discovered God not in the earthquake, wind, or fire, but in "a still, small voice," or as some translations quote it, "the sound of sheer silence." We must create regular appointments with silence, trusting that even when prayer feels dry or difficult, something profound is happening beneath the surface of our awareness.

Fasting creates a different kind of listening space where our bodies and desires make room for the Lord to meet our needs. When we voluntarily abstain from food, phones, complaining, or from whatever comfort or distraction we've been using to fill the God-shaped void within us, we suddenly notice the void itself. This can be uncomfortable, and that is precisely the point. The discomfort of fasting teaches us how often we reach for something other than God to satisfy our deepest hungers.

But fasting is not meant to stop at discomfort. In the empty space created by our abstinence, we're invited to hear what our hearts are truly crying out for. The rumbling stomach becomes a reminder to hunger for righteousness. The impulse to check our phones becomes an opportunity to check in with our souls instead. Each pang of desire redirected toward God is a prayer, a listening for what He desires to give us, that no created thing can provide. Fasting also heightens our spiritual sensitivity. Just as our other senses sharpen when one is removed, our spiritual perception can intensify when we fast. Many saints and mystics have experienced God's presence more vividly during periods of fasting, not because God loves our suffering, but because we've finally stopped numbing ourselves to reality.

Almsgiving might seem the least connected to listening, yet it may be the most crucial practice of all. Sacrificing for others helps us to hear to the cry of Christ in the poor and marginalized. We're training ourselves to hear the voice of God speaking through human need, through justice, through the demand that we love our neighbor as ourselves.

Almsgiving also requires us to listen to our own hearts and notice where we are attached to our wealth, our security, or our sense of control. As we loosen our grip on material things, we often discover what we've really been trusting in. When we engage in acts of mercy and charity, we step into the very heartbeat of the Gospel. Jesus promises us that whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do for Him. In serving others, we encounter Christ Himself, and He speaks to us through their faces, their stories, their dignity.

As we enter this Lenten season, embrace these ancient practices as instruments carefully designed to help us hear the music of heaven breaking into our ordinary days. The God who created us, who knows every hair on our heads, who loved us into existence and sustains us at every moment, is speaking. He never stops. The question is, are we ready to listen?

This Lent, may we find the courage to enter the desert, embrace the silence, and open our hearts to the voice we've been longing to hear all along. God bless you this Lent, and please pray for me,

Fq. Bryan

MASS INTENTIONS

FEBRUARY 21 - MARCH 1

SATURDAY FEB 21	5 PM ROSA SORIANO FROM ANA CRUZ
SUNDAY FEB 22	10:00 AM MARIA CRUZ FROM ANA CRUZ 12:30 PM PEOPLE OF THE PARISH
TUESDAY FEB 24	12:30 PM BLESSINGS FOR KATIE NGUYEN FROM MARIA SESE
WEDNESDAY FEB 25	12:30 PM BLESSINGS FOR JONATHAN NGUYEN FROM MARIA SESE
THURSDAY FEB 26	12:30 PM. GOOD HEALTH FOR MARY LOURDES FROM ANDREA SELVARAJA
FRIDAY FEB 27	12:30 PM. GOOD HEALTH FOR MARY LOURDES FROM ANDREA SELVARAJA
SATURDAY FEB 28	5 PM MARCELINA SYQUIA FROM MARILYN & JOEL GERNSHEIMER
SUNDAY MAR 1	10 AM PEOPLE OF THE PARISH 12:30 PM FRANCIS MICHAEL FLANERY FROM ALEX & LAURA REYES

Sunday Scripture

February 22

Gn 2:7-9, 3:1-7

Rom 5:12-19

Mt 4:1-11

March 1

Gen 12:1-4a

2 Tim 1:8b-10

Mt 17:1-9

DONATIONS



OVER THE WEEKEND OF
FEB 14 & 15, 529 PEOPLE
ATTENDED MASS WITH
AN AVERAGE DONATION OF \$35.67.

ONE TIME
GIFTS AND
VISITORS



THANK
YOU FOR
ALL OF
YOUR
SUPPORT

CONSISTENT
SUPPORT AND
PARISHONERS



St. Joseph's Shrine
Sterling, NJ

LENTEN DAY OF RENEWAL

Join us for a weekend of reflection,
worship, and renewal.
Let your heart rest, your mind clear,
and your spirit be refreshed.

MARCH 7
8:30 AM TO 5 PM

Transportation Provided



REGISTER TODAY
SUGGESTED DONATION \$45
FOR MORE INFO GO TO
OLCJC.ORG/RETREAT

OLC Kids' Bulletin



St. Polycarp

Feast February 23rd

Saint Polycarp was one of the first Christians. He became a Christian after John the Apostle shared the good news of Jesus with him. He knew the people who knew Jesus, but was younger and helped lead the church when it was new in the world. He became a bishop, or leader, in the church where Turkey is located today. When he was old, he was asked to give up his faith in Jesus. He refused, and gave his life, becoming a martyr. We can pray to saints like St. Polycarp to help us through discomfort as we challenge ourselves this Lent and continue to pray to better know and love God.

The Chair of Peter

Feast February 22nd

Saint Peter is considered the first pope. The Pope today lives in Vatican City and is also called the Bishop of Rome.



Saint Peter's Chair is a real wooden chair in Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, but it may not have been as old as the time of Saint Peter himself.

The church has feast days for saints, so you might be asking, why a chair?

The chair represents the role of the Pope in leading the church, and his connection to the history Saint Peter began.



The Chair of Peter First Week of Lent

"Nothing great is ever achieved without much enduring." – St. Catherine of Siena

Journey to Freedom

40 days or 40 years in the desert

When Jesus celebrated the Passover with the apostles, they were celebrating the journey of the ancient Israelites from slavery to freedom.

Before that, when Jesus wandered the desert for 40 days, He was tempted by the devil but honored God and overcame the temptations.

Lent is a time to remember how God wants us to be happy and free. But that means sometimes saying no to things we love, to remind us of what we have to love the most: God, and each other.

Three things help us do that for the next 40 days: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Take a moment and write down or ask someone to talk to you about each of these. At Easter, look back at what you wrote, or talk again and see how far Lent took you.

Prayer: How will you pray every day this Lent? Will you sing songs, or read the Bible?

Fasting: What will you give up to make more room for God? Videos, sweets? Almsgiving: what good deeds or generosity will you share with others? Will you clean something before you are asked, or share what you normally keep to yourself?

"Apart from the cross, there is no other ladder by which we may go to heaven." – Saint Rose of Lima

"Do you wish your prayer to fly toward God? Make for it two wings: fasting and almsgiving."

– Saint Augustine

Children's Liturgy

The Leaven

**February 22nd
10 AM Mass**



OLC CHURCH

COME AND JOIN US

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Every Friday at 7PM

Followed by Lent friendly soup supper and community

I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and
you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you
welcomed Me - **Matt 25:35**



Be a donut hero!



Bring delicious donuts to share after the Sunday 10 Mass!

Email donuts@olcjc.org
to find out how.

Meet your fellow parishioners!

Enjoy Krispy Kremes,
guilt-free! (No calories on
Sunday.)

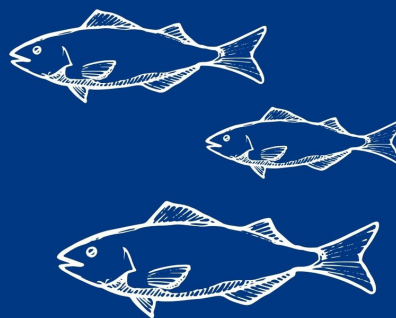
Sometimes you get
a free hat!



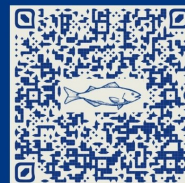
OLC CHURCH

FISH FRY 2026

• FRIDAY, MARCH 20 @ 7PM •



**\$30 ADULTS
\$15 KIDS**



**LIVE MUSIC W/ PET IN THE MIDDLE
BEER AND WINE INCLUDED
GREAT FOOD
OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY**

236 Van Vorst Street, Jersey City

LENTEN **2026** REGULATIONS

**FAST ON ASH WEDNESDAY & GOOD FRIDAY:
ONLY ONE FULL MEAL IS PERMITTED,
ALONG WITH TWO SMALLER MEALS,
WHICH, IF ADDED TOGETHER, WOULD NOT
BE LARGER THAN THE MAIN MEAL.
AGES 18-59.**

**ABSTAIN FROM MEAT ON
ALL LENTEN FRIDAYS.
AGES 14 AND OVER.**

**ONCE YOU HAVE MADE YOUR FIRST HOLY
COMMUNION, YOU ARE OBLIGATED TO RECEIVE
BETWEEN FEBRUARY 22 AND MAY 31, 2026.
(EASTER DUTY.)**

**OUTSIDE OF LENT, FRIDAYS ARE DESIGNATED
DAYS OF PENANCE. YOU MAY ABSTAIN FROM
MEAT OR PRACTICE ANOTHER FORM OF
SELF-DENIAL AS PENANCE.**

Easter is on Sunday, April 5.