

# Lent – A Time of Renewal & Grace, 2026

Saint Nicholas and Saint William Parish – Los Altos, California



*“Lent is marked by two themes, the baptismal and the penitential.”*

*-Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 109*

*Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you. Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see ... Make us your living voice ... Make us your bread ... shared until all are fed ... let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come.* - “Christ, Be Our Light,” Bernadette Farrell. This well-loved song expresses the mission statement of our Catholic Church, why it exists and what it’s about. Beginning on February 18, Lent the season each year when our Church asks us to renew our membership commitment to this mission.

Unfortunately, we often miss this communal purpose of Lent. It is right there in the Ash Wednesday scriptures. Any organization is only as authentic and effective as its members; in our first reading from the prophet Joel is urging an assembly to renew itself. Then, Paul tells the Corinthians that *we are ambassadors for Christ as if God were appealing through us*. And in our Gospel, Jesus tells us not to be hypocrites, but authentic disciples, whose good actions are not done to impress others but instead flow from a personal relationship with His Father.

Sin has a big place in Lent, and sometimes it may be overemphasized. Our new pope is an Augustinian, and St. Augustine (d. 430) shared helpful thoughts about sin. He perceives our discipleship journey as developmental. Our normal moral development moves toward God, toward holiness, and away from sin. It does this, Augustine said, because of God’s freely bestowed grace, which precedes any impulse of ours and accompanies us to sustain our efforts to love God and neighbor.

**PRAYER** is listening to and responding to God's daily call; prayer sustains and nurtures our relationship with our triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Without prayer, personal and communal, this relationship is diminished, sometimes to the point of complete silence on our part.

**FASTING** assists us in getting our own house in order. All of us must deal with areas of servitude, whether concerning smoking or alcohol consumption, misused sexuality, uncontrolled gambling, use of stimulants, immoderate use of the Internet, excessive amounts of television watching, or preoccupations with other forms of entertainment.

**ALMSGIVING** is the act of giving money, food, or goods to the poor and needy as a form of charity, often rooted in religious or ethical beliefs about mercy, love, and justice. It extends beyond money to include time, skills, and simple acts of kindness.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF SUNDAY MASS** Each Sunday Mass is a “little Easter” because it marks the Resurrection - Jesus’ victory over death. The Resurrection opens the possibility of our salvation and everlasting life. Jesus Christ becomes truly present in the Eucharist during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The bread and wine are not simply signs that lead us to Christ; they are his Real Presence - the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. We invite you to come to the Lord’s Table and fully receive him once again in Holy Communion.

**DAILY CELEBRATIONS OF THE EUCHARIST & ADORATION** At St. Nicholas Church, Attendance at daily Mass and the reception of Holy Communion is strongly encouraged during the season of Lent. Mass is celebrated Monday through Friday at 8:00 am, 12:10 pm. 8:00 am on Saturday, and 7:00 pm on Wednesdays. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is offered every Thursday after 8:00 a.m. Mass, concluding with Benediction at 12:00 pm.

**ASH WEDNESDAY – February 18** is the Church’s annual wake-up call. Our celebration of the Eucharist includes the blessing and distribution of ashes, will be at 8:00 am, 12:10 pm, and 7:00 pm at St. Nicholas Church and 12:10 pm, 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm (French) at St. William Church. A portion of our Ash Wednesday collection will be donated to Black and Indian Missions.

**THE LAW OF ABSTINENCE:** Ash Wednesday and all Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence from all meat (beast or fowl). Except for a serious reason, all people fourteen years old and above are bound by this law.

**THE LAW OF FAST:** Ash Wednesday (February 18) & Good Friday (April 3) are also days of fasting. This law binds all those between the ages of eighteen to the beginning of their sixtieth year. On these two days, one full meatless meal may be eaten. Two other meatless meals may also be sufficient to maintain strength; however, they should not equal a full meal. Liquids, including milk and fruit juices, may be taken between meals.

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)** offered on Saturday from 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm at St. William Church, and 6:00 pm on Wednesdays at St. Nicholas Church. Our Lenten Penance Liturgy is on Wednesday, March 25 at 7:00 pm at St. William Church. Confessions are also offered on Good Friday (April 3) at St. William Church from 9:00 am – 11:00 am.

**RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION** On the First Sunday of Lent, February 22, we celebrate the Rite of Sending

to Election with our catechumens at the 9:00 am Mass at St. William Church. On the Second Sunday of Lent, March 1, those who are preparing to be received in the Full Communion of the Catholic Church will celebrate the Call to Continuing Conversion at the 10:00 am Mass at St. Nicholas Church. On the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent (March 8, 15, and 22), we celebrate the Scrutinies with our elect at the 9:00 am Mass at St. William Church.

**CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES – RICE BOWL** This Lenten tradition for millions of Catholics who continue to answer the Gospel call of supporting families experiencing hunger worldwide. There is no one solution to breaking the cycle of hunger - but we can do our part through CRS Rice Bowl by answering Jesus' invitation to share bread for life with our sisters and brothers. 75% of the Rice Bowl collection goes to help our overseas programs that provide relief and build sustainable programs for many under-resourced people. 25% of the Rice Bowl collection supports grants for parish programs in our diocese that feed the hungry. **We will collect your Rice Bowls on Palm Sunday.**

**PARISH MISSION:** "Spiritual Renewal in the Body of Christ: A Lenten Retreat on Spiritual Gifts and Spiritual Freedom" Join us as we host Fr. Joe Kim, Pastor of St. John Vianney Parish for a Lenten Parish Mission on March 9, 10 and 11 at 6:30 pm at St. William Church. Monday: **Spiritual Charisms for the Building Up of the Body of Christ, the Church;** Tuesday: **Spiritual Gifts through the Body of Christ, the Family;** Wednesday: **Spiritual Freedom through the Body of Christ.** Confessions will be offered each evening. Hospitality will precede each evening on the patio. Fr. Joe will celebrate the 8:00 am Mass (Monday – Wednesday) at St. Nicholas Church, followed by a thirty-minute Scripture meditation (Lectio Divina).

**20 OUT OF THE BOX THINGS TO DO FOR LENT 2026 – Ascension Press** Are you tired of giving up chocolate for Lent? Here are some other creative ideas on what you can do for Lent 2026. Fasting and sacrifice are essential practices modeled and endorsed by Christ himself and are among the main actions that the Church calls us to during the Lenten season. Let's look at practices in the categories of prayer and almsgiving that can also make this Lent one for the history books. <https://ascensionpress.com/blogs/articles/20-out-of-the-box-things-to-do-for-lent-2026>

**PRAYER, FASTING, ALMSGIVING: THE FORTY DAYS WAY** As we approach the sacred season of Lent, we invite you to join the **Spring Campaign of 40 Days for Life**, running from **February 18th to March 28th**. This powerful initiative unites us in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to protect the unborn and support mothers in need. Whether you're a longtime participant or new to our cause, your presence can make a profound difference. To learn more about our local campaign, visit <https://www.40daysforlife.com/en/sanjose>

**SOUP SUPPER & STATIONS OF THE CROSS** will occur each Friday during Lent (February 20 – March 27) at St. William Church. We begin with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at 5:30 pm, continue with Stations of the Cross at 6:00 pm, and conclude with a vegetarian soup meal at 6:30 pm in St. William Hall. We will also pray the outdoor Stations of the Cross on Monday of Holy Week, March 30 at 7 pm at St. William Church.

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**TENEBRAE** (*From Light to Darkness*) is a liturgical service held during the last days preceding the Easter Triduum. It includes readings from the Book of Lamentations and a gradual extinguishing of candles, ending in total darkness. Join us on Spy Wednesday, April 1 at 7:00 pm at St. Nicholas Church.

**MORNING PRAYER (LAUDS)** Since there are no morning or afternoon Masses during the Easter Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday), we will celebrate Morning Prayer, the official prayer of the Church as found in the Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office) at 8:00 am each morning at St. Nicholas Church.

**HOLY WEEK** Begins with the Solemn Procession of Palms on Passion Sunday, March 29, continuing into the Easter Triduum: Holy Thursday's Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, April 2 at 7:00 pm at St. William Church; Good Friday's Celebration of the Lord's Passion, April 3 at 12:00 pm at St. William Church and 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm at St. Nicholas Church. The Easter Vigil (Liturgies of Word, Initiation, and Eucharist) is on April 4 at 8:00 pm at St. William Church.

**EASTER SUNDAY** is the "Feast of Feasts." The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "Beginning with the Easter Triduum as its source of light, the new age of the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance" (CCC 1168). Easter Sunday Mass at St. Nicholas Church is at 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 pm, and 5:00 pm (French). Easter Sunday Mass at St. William Church is at 9:00 am and 11:00 am. Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will follow the 9:00 am Mass at St. William Church.

The celebration of the Paschal Triduum of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection is the culmination of the liturgical year. We invite you to undertake a journey of preparation with the knowledge that our being conformed to Christ is a priceless gift of God's mercy. **We invite every parishioner to walk with us on the road to the Empty Tomb right here at Saint Nicholas and Saint William Parish.**