

**The Catholic
Community of**

Saint Joseph

Masses

Saturday – 4:00 p.m.
Sunday – 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Mass in Spanish
Sunday – 1:30 p.m.

Holy Days
Check inside of bulletin

Weekdays
Tuesday – 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Thursday & Friday – 8:15 a.m.

Confessions
By Appointment Only

Rev. James Hatfield, *Pastor*
Deacon Ronald Fondriest, *Retired*
Ms. Brenda Stilgenbauer, *Pastoral Associate*
Ms. Cindy Teynor,
Director of Religious Education
Mrs. Kateri Renicker,
Religious Education Secretary
Mr. Matthew Nadalin, *Director of Music Ministry*
Mrs. Jodi Lindberg, *Bookkeeper*
Mr. Coleman Boring, *Youth Minister*
Mrs. Betty Bidinger,
Coordinator of Family Life Center
Mr. Russ Clay & Mr. Coleman Boring,
Church and Cemetery Maintenance
Mr. Neal Kwasnicka, *Custodian*

“In the spirit of St. Joseph, we lovingly serve Jesus Christ and His people.”

Parish Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday-Friday

- ◆ **FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Mr. Brian Bauer, Mr. Chris Chaney, Mr. Mark Clemence, Mr. Jack Dooling, Mr. Dennis Gonano, Mr. Jan-Michael LaBrake, Mrs. Brenda Pope, Mr. Frank Rose, Mr. Joe Sciarretti.
- ◆ **MARRIAGES** – Arrangements should be made through the Parish Office at least eight months before any other planning.
- ◆ **BAPTISMS** – Baptisms are celebrated on Sunday at 12:30 p.m. (outside of Mass). Parents must attend the Baptismal Preparation Program. This is at 7:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month in the Family Life Center. Godparents are also welcome to attend. Please pre-register by calling the Parish Office.
- ◆ **BAUTISMOS** – Bautismo en español se celebran una vez al mes después de la Misa el Domingo. Los padres y padrinos deben recibir charlas de preparación en el Centro Familiar. Deben inscribirse llamando a las Oficinas de la Parroquia.
- ◆ **NEW PARISHIONERS** – Please register in person at the Parish Office or complete a registration form (available in church). Please return to Parish Office or put in collection.
- ◆ **BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Please have bulletin announcements to the Parish Office by 3:00 p.m. on Monday, or e-mail stjosephchurch@roadrunner.com.

Parish Office:
330-364-6661

**After Hours
Emergency Line:**
330-364-6662

Fax:
330-602-7488

Youth Ministry:
330-364-6661

Hispanic Ministry:
330-432-0811

**Tuscarawas Central
Catholic Elementary
School:**
330-343-9134

**Tuscarawas Central
Catholic High School:**
330-343-3302

St. Joseph Church
Dover, Ohio 44622
The First Sunday of Lent
February 20 and 21, 2021
Febrero 20 y 21 del 2021



Mass Intentions

Monday, February 22

No Mass

Readings: 535: 1 Pt 5:1-4/Ps 23/Mt 16:13-19

Tuesday, February 23

5:00 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration

6:00 p.m. Jim Schwartz

Readings: 225: Is 55:10-11/Ps 34/Mt 6:7-15

Wednesday, February 24

8:15 a.m. Liz Springhetti

Readings: 226: Jon 3:1-10/Ps 51/Lk 11:29-32

Thursday, February 25

8:15 a.m. Lorrie Phillips

9:00 a.m. Eucharistic Adoration

Readings: 227: Est C:12, 14-16/Ps 138/Mt 7:7-12

Friday, February 26

8:15 a.m. Rita McNeil

Readings: 228: Ez 18:21-28/Ps 130/Mt 5:20-26

Saturday, February 27

The Vigil of The Second Sunday of Lent

4:00 p.m. Orlando Doriche

Sunday, February 28

The Second Sunday of Lent

8:30 a.m. Denny Casady

11:00 a.m. Jim Zeigler

1:30 p.m. The People of the Parish

(Mass in Spanish)

Readings: 26: Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18/Ps 116
Rom 8:31b-34/Mk 9:2-10

Offertory for February 13 and 14, 2021

Loose Cash and Checks	\$ 2,540.00
Adult Weekly Envelopes	\$ 15,345.00
Online Giving	\$ 1,470.00
Total	\$ 19,355.00
Contributions needed each week	\$ 12,192.00

Other Funds:

Poor Fund	\$ 229.00
Capital Improvement	\$ 26.00
St. Joseph School Subsidy	\$ 90.00
Other Contributions	\$ 220.00

**Your contributions make the mission of St. Joseph
Parish possible and keep our parish financially sound.
Thank you for your generosity!**

Ministry Schedule

Tuesday, February 23 – 6:00 p.m. – Mary Salvo

Wednesday, February 24 – 8:15 a.m. – Jack Burnham

Thursday, February 25 – 8:15 a.m. – Jeannine Kennedy

Friday, February 26 – 8:15 a.m. –

February 27 and 28, 2021

4:00 p.m. Mass

Lector: Mary DeBois

Ushers: Steve DeBois, Kateri Renicker, Lyle Tope,

Roy Montan

Server: Peyton Olson

8:30 a.m. Mass

Lector: Keith Knestaut

Ushers: Chris Chaney, Kelly Chaney, John Karl,

Max Burnham, Ronnie Saffell, Doug Telle

Server: John Chaney

11:00 a.m. Mass

Lector: Mike Ernest

Ushers: George Kail, Patti DeVault, Christine Ayers,

Joe Sciarretti

Server: John Nguyen

The Church also will be open for individual prayer on:

Mondays from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Tuesdays from 1:00 p.m. until Mass begins at 6:00 p.m.

Wednesdays following 8:15 a.m. Mass until 1:00 p.m.

Thursdays following 8:15 a.m. Mass until 1:00 p.m.

Fridays following 8:15 a.m. Mass until 11:00 a.m.

Saturdays from 1:00 p.m. until

Mass begins at 4:00 p.m.

**Confessions are available by appointment. Please call the
Parish Office if you would like to schedule a time.**



Prayer Chain: To place your request on the Prayer Chain, please call the Parish Office or Charlene Herzig at 330-343-1063. If no one is available, please leave a message.

Please remember in your prayers all the sick, homebound, and recovering in our parish. Also, pray for those coping with physical or mental conditions.

Please include all those on our prayer lists who have asked for our prayers, and those who have no one to pray for them.

Spiritual Notes:

In Genesis, God establishes a covenant with Noah and his family and, by extension, all future humanity. It is a covenant of promise: "never again shall all bodily creatures be destroyed." This covenant binds God and creation and is symbolized by the bow in the sky. For the ancients, this bow, reminiscent of a hunter's bow, is a sign of God's promise to sustain life even in the face of sin. In First Peter, we are reminded that Christ suffered for sins...that He might lead you to God. Jesus' suffering reconciles us with God. The writer goes on to say that Jesus went to preach to the spirits in prison, who had been disobedient...in the days of Noah. This ties in with the ancient belief that between the time of His death and Resurrection, Jesus "descended into hell" which the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* interprets as "Christ went down to the realm of the dead. He opened heaven's gates for the just who had gone before Him." Mark's presentation of Jesus' temptation is minimal, as was his description of Jesus' Baptism. For Mark, these two episodes provide a transition to Jesus' public ministry. He does not narrate individual temptations, as we find in Matthew and Luke, but tells us that Jesus "remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan." Perhaps Mark does not detail the temptations because his Gospel contains many other encounters between Jesus and the devil, beginning with the exorcism in the Capernaum synagogue several verses later. What Mark's text emphasizes is that though Jesus was threatened among wild beasts, He was protected; angels ministered to Him. This serves as a reminder to us that God watches over us as well.

For reflection: Do I understand Jesus' temptation to be a "once-in-a-lifetime" event or something that happened more than once? How does this shape my understanding of Jesus and temptation?

Please keep in your prayers James Kennedy, age 59, who died on February 6, 2021. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. Please also keep his family in your prayers.



Bishop Brennan calls upon the Diocese of Columbus to Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist in a special way this Lent. Starting on Ash Wednesday, the Diocese will launch 40 Days of Adoration. Every day for 40 days, a different parish throughout the Diocese will host Exposition of the Eucharist of the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration throughout the day. Our day at St. Joseph will be Sunday, March 14th. There is a sign-up sheet in the Vestibule. Parishioners are encouraged to volunteer for shifts to pray before the Blessed Sacrament on our day. If you cannot commit to a specific time, you may come and join us in prayer at any time from 9:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m.



Stations of the Cross: Each Friday during Lent there will be Stations of the Cross at 7:00 p.m. in English and at 8:00 p.m. in Spanish.

Join Father Jimmy each Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturdays at 6:00 p.m. as he livestreams the Rosary and a Scripture study. You can find the links to the streaming on our Parish website stjosephdover.org.

Catholic Relief Services

In the Vestibule of the church, there are Rice Bowls for you to take home. These monies support Catholic Relief Services agencies that touch more than 100 million lives around the world, they provide food to the hungry, support displaced refugees, and Christ's love and respect for all people.

St. Joseph Soup Kitchen

Everyone is welcome!!

**We are currently passing out take-out meals
for all those in need.**

February 24, 2021 – Team H (Cindy Jones)

March 3, 2021 – Team I (Isabellas)

March 10, 2021 – Team L (Chrissie Hensel)

March 17, 2021 – Team M (Fran Mason)

**Please keep our guests and volunteers in your prayers.
Thank you for your support!**



Tuscarawas Central Catholic Elementary School

Be A Saint!

The Tuscarawas County Catholic Schools are now accepting applications for enrollment in the 2021-22 school year. Visit www.Be-A-Saint.org for more information and links to our school websites and application forms.

- Loving and supportive environment built on the Gospel Values and teachings of Jesus Christ.
- Small class sizes where students receive the individual attention they need to succeed.
- Dedicated and passionate teaching staff committed to student success.
- Opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities without getting lost in the crowd.
- Affordable tuition rates and EdChoice Scholarship program.
- Call us to arrange a visit and tour to meet our students and staff!

For a Catholic perspective, *The Catholic Times* weekly newspaper features insightful and informative news around our diocese, our country, and the world. Sign up for or continue receiving *The Catholic Times* for another year by placing your Catholic Times envelope, (or a plain envelope marked Catholic Times with your name and address) with a minimum donation of only \$17.00 into the regular Mass collection. Checks should be made payable to St. Joseph Church. As an evangelization tool, Bishop Brennan encourages every Catholic household to receive *The Catholic Times*.

Office of Social Concerns - Action Alerts!

For Action Alerts, visit

<http://socialconcerns.columbuscatholic.org>.

Care for the Unborn

Several pro-life bills calling for a reduction of abortions will work their way through the Ohio General Assembly and Congress. For updates, visit: www.ohiocathconf.org/I/AB/Abortion.htm.

Immigration Reform

With a new Congress, comes a renewed debate on immigration reform. The immigration system is broken. Visit the USCCB's Justice for Immigrants Campaign website for the latest action alerts and education resources, www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

St. Joseph Calvary Cemetery

If you are interested in purchasing lots, or if you have questions regarding rules and regulations. Please call Russ in the Parish Office, and he will be happy to assist you.



THE
CATHOLIC
FOUNDATION

"After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God..." - Mark 1:14

Do you ever think about how difficult it must have been for Jesus to come into Galilee, knowing that John had just been arrested for teaching the same message that Jesus was proclaiming? It must have taken great love and trust for Jesus to do what the Father had sent Him here on earth to do. In the same way, following a life of stewardship takes great love and trust from us. We must be willing to surrender completely to God, trusting that God will always give us all that we need to fulfill His plan for us.

Learn how you can show your faith by supporting your parish and contact The Catholic Foundation. Visit www.catholic-foundation.org/development for more information.



Other Information To Note:

Mass Intentions: Please be reminded that any parishioner is welcome to request Masses be celebrated for deceased or living loved ones. To schedule a Mass Intention, please contact the Parish Office.

Low-Gluten Hosts: If you are a person who needs to receive a **low-gluten host** because of wheat allergies or celiac disease, please call the Parish Office.

Bulletin deadline: The bulletin deadline is Monday at 3:00 p.m. Please include your contact information with phone number and email address. Bulletin notices may be in writing, faxed to 330-602-7488, dropped off, or emailed to stjosephchurch@roadrunner.com.



Online Giving

Online Giving. If you manage your bills online, we're sure you'll like giving to your church online. It's safe and secure, and you decide exactly when your gift is made and where it goes. To get started, please visit www.stjosephdover.org. If you have any questions or need assistance, please call the Parish Office.

The Holy Father's Prayer Intentions February 2021

Violence against women

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

For more information, the latest news, bulletins, and more, please visit our website at

www.stjosephdover.org

other useful and educational websites

www.colsdioc.org

www.usccb.org

www.catholic.org

www.americancatholic.org

www.vatican.va

"A parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration." - Pope Francis

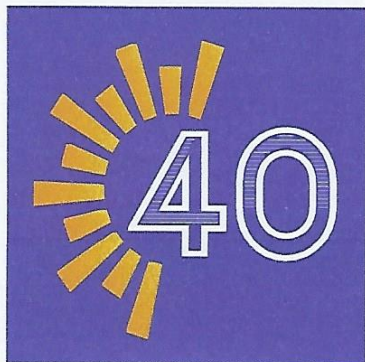
OUR ADVERTISER OF THE WEEK is **Bensons**. Please patronize our advertisers. They make our bulletin possible. Thank You! This bulletin is furnished to the parish without charge. The advertisements that appear, completely defray all publishing costs, with which the church would otherwise be burdened. Please patronize these sponsors as a thank-you for their kind generosity.



330-364-2259

207 North Wooster Avenue
Dover, OH 44622

Website: bensonsmc.com



REAL PRESENCE REAL FUTURE

March 14, 2021 from 9:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. at St. Joseph

Please join with the people of our diocese in prayer for the future of the local and universal Church.

Merciful Father,

You are the source of all goodness and blessing. You have formed us into your image and breathed your Spirit in us to give us life. When we were lost through sin, you sought us out by sending us your Son, Jesus Christ. It is through the Gospel that we have hope in our redemption and fervor to share this message of salvation.

We, your sons and daughters, come before you with hearts full of gratitude for the work of those who came before us establishing parishes, schools, apostolates and ministries to serve the Gospel. Today we look to the signs of the times as we fix our gaze on the Real Presence of your Son, Jesus Christ, in the Eucharist, asking for wisdom and understanding as we seek to renew these places and apostolates as centers of formation and evangelization for the third millennium.

Guide us from our familiar surroundings to the exciting horizons of missionary discipleship. Through personal prayer and the grace of the sacraments grant enthusiasm for the faith to all, confirm families in your love, raise up vocations to Holy Orders and religious life, and call back those who have strayed from you.

We ask this through Our Lady, Star of the New Evangelization, who is our intercessor and mother and St. Joseph our protector, through Christ Our Lord. Amen

columbuscatholic.org/40days

Come let us adore Him!

PREPARE FOR PRAYER

Acknowledge the thoughts and feelings that you are bringing with you, and offer them to God.
Seek to leave them in His keeping until you finish your prayer.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you quiet your mind, and to teach you how to pray.

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest," (Matthew 11:28.)

PLACE YOURSELF IN HIS PRESENCE

Remind yourself who is with you by lovingly repeating the titles of Jesus. For instance, Lord, mighty God, Good Shepherd, King of Glory, Savior, Beloved Jesus, Emmanuel, etc.

Let yourself simply enjoy being with Jesus, truly present in front of you.

"One thing I ask of the LORD; this I seek: to dwell in the LORD's house all the days of my life, to gaze on the LORD's beauty, to visit his temple," (Psalm 27:4.)

PONDER HIS LOVE

Ponder the love God has for you that He would choose to come under the appearance of bread to be present with you in this moment. What does this say about God's love for you?

Reflect on Romans 8:38-39: *"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

PRESENT YOUR HEART

Express your gratitude and praise to God for who He is and what He has done for you, as well as anything else on your heart.

You could choose a psalm from the Bible to pray.

"Bless the LORD, my soul; all my being, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, my soul; and do not forget all his gifts, Who pardons all your sins, and heals all your ills, Who redeems your life from the pit, and crowns you with mercy and compassion," (Psalm 103: 1-4.)

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

How will this time of prayer overflow into your life?

Make a small commitment to God as a response to this time with Our Lord.

"Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect," (Romans 12:2.)

REAL PRESENCE, REAL FUTURE

Iglesias San José

Ministerios Hispanos

Primer Domingo de Cuaresma

21 de Febrero del 2021



Calendario Litúrgico: Misas en Español

Domingo Febrero 28 1:30 p.m.
Domingo Marzo 7 1:30 p.m.

Confesiones con cita previa.

Misas en Ingles

Sábados 4:00 p.m.
Domingos 8:30 a.m. y 11:00 a.m.

Vía crucis "Estaciones de la Cruz"
Febrero 20, 27, y Marzo 5, 12, 19 y 26
8:00 p.m. en Español

La Cuaresma: Es un tiempo de Oración, penitencia y ayuno. Cuarenta días que la iglesia nos pide un cambio a nuestras vidas. El ayuno consiste en hacer una sola comida al día y la abstinencia es no comer carne. Este es un modo de pedirle perdón a Dios por haberlo ofendido y decirle que queremos cambiar de vida para agradecerle siempre.



Ya está abierta la registración para la escuela TCCES, si usted tiene niños en edad escolar o conoce a alguien que le interese registrar a sus niños, por favor llame a la oficina de la escuela.

Intenciones de Oración del Santo Padre Febrero 2021

Violencia contra la mujer

Recemos por las mujeres que son víctimas de la violencia, para que sean protegidas por la sociedad y para que su sufrimiento sea considerado y escuchado.

Creo, Jesús mío,
que estás real y verdaderamente en el cielo
y en el Santísimo Sacramento del Altar.
Os amo sobre todas las cosas y deseo vivamente recibirte
dentro de mi alma, pero no pudiendo hacerlo
ahora sacramentalmente, venid al menos
espiritualmente a mi corazón.
Y como si ya os hubiese recibido,
os abrazo y me uno del todo a Ti.
Señor, no permitas que jamás me aparte de Ti.
Amén.

Notas Espirituales:

En Génesis Dios establece un pacto con Noé y su familia y, por extensión, de toda la humanidad futura. Es un pacto de la promesa: "no volverán las aguas del diluvio a destruir la vida." Este pacto se une a Dios y la creación, y es simbolizado por el arco iris en el cielo. Para los antiguos, este arco iris, que recuerda a la proa de un cazador, es un signo de la promesa de Dios para sostener la vida, incluso en la cara del pecado. En Primera de Pedro nos recuerda que "Cristo sufrió por los pecados..." que te puede llevar a Dios." El escritor continúa diciendo que Jesús" fue a predicar a los espíritus encarcelados, que habían sido desobedientes... en los días de Noé." Esta enlaza con la antigua creencia de que durante el momento de su muerte y resurrección, Jesús "descendió a los infiernos," que el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica interpreta como "Cristo descendió al reino de los muertos. Abrió las puertas del cielo para los justos que han pasado delante de él." La presentación de Marcos de la tentación de Jesús es mínima, al igual que su descripción del bautismo de Jesús. Para Marcos, estos dos episodios proporcionan una transición a la vida pública de Jesús. Él no narra las tentaciones individuales, como encontramos en Mateo y Lucas, pero nos dice que Jesús "se quedó en el desierto cuarenta días, siendo tentado por Satanás." Quizás Marcos no detalla las tentaciones porque su Evangelio contiene muchos otros encuentros entre Jesús y el diablo, comenzando con el exorcismo en la sinagoga de Cafarnaúm varios versículos más adelante. Lo que el texto de Marcos enfatiza es que aunque Jesús fue amenazado "entre las bestias salvajes", estaba protegido: "los ángeles le servían." Esto sirve como un recordatorio para nosotros que Dios vela por nosotros también. *Para reflexionar: ¿Entiendo la tentación de Jesús para ser una sola vez en toda la vida o algo que sucedió más de una vez? ¿Cómo afecta esto a dar forma a mi comprensión de Jesús y de la tentación?*



Por favor, recuerde en su oración, a todos los enfermos, al salir de casa, y la recuperación de nuestra parroquia. Además, orar por aquellos que sufren de condiciones físicas o mentales.



Lectio Divina

SCRIPTURE READING + MEDITATION + PRAYER + CONTEMPLATION

“What page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life?” ~Saint Benedict, from the *Rule of Saint Benedict* (73:3)

“The spiritual life is first of all a life.

It is not merely something to be known and studied, it is to be lived.”

EXCERPTED FROM “THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE” BY FR. THOMAS MERTON, OCSO

Monday, February 22 ~ First Week in the Season of Lent
Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter, Apostle

Holy Gospel: Matthew: 13:16-19 When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Meditation: Jesus tests his disciples with a basic, yet crucial question: “Who do men say that I am” followed by “who do you say that I am?” Jesus was widely recognized in Israel as a mighty man of God, even being compared with the greatest of the prophets -- John the Baptist, Elijah, and Jeremiah. Peter, always quick to respond, exclaimed that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. No mortal being could have revealed this to Peter; but only God. Jesus then confers on Peter authority to govern the church that Jesus would build, a church that no powers would overcome. Jesus plays on Peter's name which is the same word for “rock” in both Aramaic and Greek. To call someone a “rock” is one of the greatest of compliments. The ancient rabbis had a saying that when God saw Abraham, he exclaimed: “I have discovered a rock to found the world upon”. Through Abraham God established a nation for himself. Through faith Peter grasped who Jesus truly was. He was the first apostle to recognize Jesus as the Anointed One (Messiah and Christ) and the only begotten Son of God. The Lord Jesus tests each of us personally with the same question: “Who do you say that I am?”

Prayer: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that no tempests may disturb us, for you have set us fast on the rock of the Apostle Peter's confession of faith. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Jesus Christ also asked each one of us: “Who do you say that I am?” Obviously your personal response has life-long, even eternal ramifications. A wonderful response to come not only from your lips, but from deep from within your heart would be: “Lord Jesus, I profess and believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. You are my Lord and my Savior. Make my faith strong and help me to live in the victory of the cross by rejecting sin and by accepting your will.” Your response to Jesus' question requires sincere thought and discernment. But more importantly it requires action in how we think, speak, and live out our daily lives. Does your life reflect that of an authentic disciple of Christ?

About the Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter: This feast brings to mind the mission of teacher and pastor conferred by Christ on Peter, and continued in an unbroken line down to the present Pope. We celebrate the unity of the Church, founded upon the Apostle, and renew our assent to the Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, extended both to truths which are solemnly defined *ex cathedra*, and to all the acts of the ordinary Magisterium.

Tuesday, February 23 ~ First Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Matthew 6:7-15 Jesus said to his disciples: “In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows

what you need before you ask him. "This is how you are to pray: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. "If you forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions."

Meditation: We can approach God confidently because he is waiting with arms wide open to receive his prodigal sons and daughters. That is why Jesus gave his disciples the perfect prayer that dares to call God, Our Father. This prayer teaches us how to ask God for the things we really need, the things that matter not only for the present but for eternity as well. We can approach God our Father with confidence and boldness because Christ has opened the way to heaven for us through his death and resurrection. When we ask God for help, he fortunately does not give us what we deserve. Instead, he responds with grace and mercy. He is kind and forgiving towards us and he expects us to treat our neighbor the same.

Prayer: Look upon your family, Lord, that, through the chastening effects of bodily discipline, our minds may be radiant in your presence with the strength of our yearning for you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Consider this day in Lent what Saint John Cassian wrote about the Lord's Prayer and the necessity of forgiving others from the heart: "The mercy of God is beyond description. While he is offering us a model prayer he is teaching us a way of life whereby we can be pleasing in his sight. But that is not all. In this same prayer he gives us an easy method for attracting an indulgent and merciful judgment on our lives. He gives us the possibility of ourselves mitigating the sentence hanging over us and of compelling him to pardon us. What else could he do in the face of our generosity when we ask him to forgive us as we have forgiven our neighbor? If we are faithful in this prayer, each of us will ask forgiveness for our own failings after we have forgiven the sins of those who have sinned against us, not only those who have sinned against our Master. There is, in fact, in some of us a very bad habit. We treat our sins against God, however appalling, with gentle indulgence: but when by contrast it is a matter of sins against us ourselves, albeit very tiny ones, we exact reparation with ruthless severity. Anyone who has not forgiven from the bottom of the heart the brother or sister who has done him wrong will only obtain from this prayer his own condemnation, rather than any mercy." Thus we need to honestly ask ourselves: do I treat others as the Lord has instructed me -- with mercy, steadfast love, and kindness?

Wednesday, February 24 ~ First Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Luke 11:29-32 While still more people gathered in the crowd, Jesus said to them, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it, except the sign of Jonah. Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. At the judgment the queen of the south will rise with the men of this generation and she will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and there is something greater than Solomon here. At the judgment the men of Nineveh will arise with this generation and condemn it, because at the preaching of Jonah they repented, and there is something greater than Jonah here."

Meditation: The Lord Jesus came to set us free from slavery to sin and hurtful desires. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit he pours his love into our hearts that we may understand his will for our lives and walk in his way of holiness. God searches our hearts, not to condemn us, but to show us where we need his saving grace and help. He calls us to seek him with true repentance, humility, and the honesty to see our sins for what they really are – a rejection of his love and will for our lives. God will transform us if we listen to his word and allow his Holy Spirit to work in our lives. Ask the Lord to renew your mind and to increase your thirst for his wisdom. James says that the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity (James 3:17). A double-minded person cannot receive this kind of wisdom. The single of mind desires one thing alone – God's pleasure. God wants us to delight in him and to know the freedom of his truth and love. Do you thirst for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14)?

Prayer: Look kindly, Lord, we pray, on the devotion of your people, that those who by self-denial are restrained in body may by the fruit of good works be renewed in mind. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: In your busy life do you pay careful attention to warning signs? Do you pay attention to these signs at all? Many fatalities could be avoided if people paid attention to such signs. When the religious leaders demanded a sign from Jesus, he gave them a serious warning to avert spiritual disaster. It was characteristic of the Jews that they demanded "signs" from God's messengers to authenticate their

claims. When the religious leaders pressed Jesus to give proof for his claims he says in so many words that he is God's sign and that they need no further evidence from heaven than his own person. The Ninevites recognized God's warning when Jonah spoke to them, and they repented. And the Queen of Sheba recognized God's wisdom in Solomon. Jonah was God's sign and his message was the message of a merciful God for the people of Nineveh. Unfortunately the religious leaders were not content to accept the signs right before their eyes. They had rejected the message of John the Baptist and now they reject Jesus as God's Anointed One (Messiah) and they fail to heed his message. Simeon had prophesied at Jesus' birth that he was "destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that inner thoughts of many will be revealed" (Luke 2:34- 35). Jesus confirmed his message with many miracles in preparation for the greatest sign of all – his resurrection on the third day.

Thursday, February 25 ~ First Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Matthew 7:7-12 Jesus said to his disciples: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asked for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asked for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him. "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets."

Meditation: Those who know and trust in God's love, pray with great boldness. Saint John Chrysostom, a Father of the Church, had this to say about the power of prayer: "Prayer is an all-efficient panoply [i.e. 'a full suit of armor' or 'splendid array'], a treasure undiminished, a mine never exhausted, a sky unobstructed by clouds, a haven unruffled by storm. It is the root, the fountain, and the mother of a thousand blessings. It exceeds a monarch's power. ...I speak not of the prayer which is cold and feeble and devoid of zeal. I speak of that which proceeds from a mind outstretched, the child of a contrite spirit, the offspring of a soul converted – this is the prayer which mounts to heaven. ...The power of prayer has subdued the strength of fire, bridled the rage of lions, silenced anarchy, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, enlarged the gates of heaven, relieved diseases, averted frauds, rescued cities from destruction, stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt. In sum prayer has power to destroy whatever is at enmity with the good."

Prayer: Bestow on us, we pray, O Lord, a spirit of always pondering on what is right and of hastening to carry it out, and, since without you we cannot exist, may we be enabled to live according to your will. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: Without a doubt God hears our prayers. Esther's prayer on behalf of her people is a model for us. She prayed for help according to God's promise to be faithful to his people. God wants us to remember his promises and to count on his help when we pray. Jesus wanted to raise the expectations of his disciples when he taught them how to pray. Jesus' parable of the father feeding his son illustrates the unthinkable! How could a loving father refuse to give his son what is good; or worse, to give him what is harmful? In conclusion Jesus makes a startling claim: How much more will the heavenly Father give to those who ask! Our heavenly Father graciously gives beyond our expectations. Jesus taught his disciples to pray with confidence because the Heavenly Father in his goodness always answers prayers. That is why we can boldly pray: Give us this day our daily bread. Prayer flows from the love of God; and the personal love we show to our neighbor is fueled by the love that God has poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). Jesus concludes his discourse on prayer with the reminder that we must treat our neighbor in the same way we wish to be treated by God and by others. We must not just avoid doing harm to our neighbor, we must actively seek his or her welfare. In doing so, we fulfill the law and the prophets, namely what God requires of us — loving God with all that we have and are and loving our neighbor as ourselves. The Holy Spirit is every ready to transform our lives in Jesus' way of love. Do you thirst for holiness and for the fire of God's love?

Friday, February 26 ~ First Week in the Season of Lent

Holy Gospel: Matthew 5:20-26 Jesus said to his disciples: "I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the Kingdom of heaven. "You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment. But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, *Raqa*, will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery

Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny."

Meditation: Have you seen sin or anger mastering your life at times? The first human to hate his brother was Cain. God warned Cain: "Why are you angry? ... Sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Genesis 4:6-7). Sin doesn't just happen; it first grows as a seed in one's mind and heart. Unless it is mastered by God's grace, the seed of sin grows like a weed and chokes the fruitful vine. Jesus addressed the issue of keeping the commandments with his disciples. The scribes and Pharisees equated righteousness with satisfying the demands of the law. Jesus showed them how short they had come. Jesus points to the heart as the seat of desire and choice. Unless forbidden and evil desires are eradicated, the heart will be corrupted. Jesus points to forbidden anger with one's brother. This is a selfish anger that broods and is long-lived, that nurses a grudge and keeps wrath warm, and that refuses to die. Anger in the heart as well as anger in speech or action are equally forbidden. What is the antidote to anger and rage? Mercy, kindness, and forbearance spring from a heart full of love and forgiveness. God has forgiven us and he calls us to extend mercy and forgiveness towards those who cause us harm and grief. In the cross of Jesus we see the supreme example of love and the power for overcoming evil. Only God's love and grace can set our hearts and minds free from the tyranny of wounded pride and spiteful revenge. And so during this Lent ask yourself: Do I harbor any anger towards others? And are you quick to be reconciled when a break has occurred in your relationships with family, friends, co-workers, classmates, neighbors? Ask God to set you free and to fill your heart and mind with his love and truth.

Prayer: Grant that your faithful, O Lord, we pray, may be so conformed to the paschal observances, and the bodily discipline now solemnly begun may bear fruit in the souls of all. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemplation: We would all do well this day of Lent to learn from one of the Fathers of the Church, Saint Eusebius, who offered the following prayer as instruction for his fellow Christians: "May I be no man's enemy, and may I be the friend of that which is eternal and abides. May I never quarrel with those nearest me: and if I do, may I be reconciled quickly. May I love, seek, and attain only that which is good. May I wish for all men's happiness and envy none. May I never rejoice in the ill-fortune of one who has wronged me. When I have done or said what is wrong, may I never wait for the rebuke of others, but always rebuke myself until I make amends. May I win no victory that harms either me or my opponent. May I reconcile friends who are angry with one another. May I never fail a friend who is in danger. When visiting those in grief may I be able by gentle and healing words to soften their pain. May I respect myself. May I always keep tame that which rages within me. May I accustom myself to be gentle, and never be angry with people because of circumstances. May I never discuss who is wicked and what wicked things he has done, but know good men and follow in their footsteps."

Scripture passages (NAB translation) courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops;
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information about saints, solemnities, feasts and memorials courtesy of Catholic Culture.

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This Lent and beyond learn about and put into practice the Works of Mercy.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry + Give drink to the thirsty + Clothe the naked + Shelter the homeless
Visit the sick + Visit the imprisoned + Bury the dead

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

Admonish the sinner + Comfort the Sorrowful + Bear wrongs patiently
Forgive all injuries + Pray for the living and the dead + Instruct the ignorant + Counsel the doubtful
(*The last two Works are extremely pertinent as so many people today have become confused by what they think or believe to be Church teaching based on hearsay or faulty reports.*)

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