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LENT IN THE COVID PANDEMIC - A REFLECTION

How devastatingly ironic is it that we have lost the familiar circumstances that often embody Christian culture during the midst of a key traditional religious season: Lent. An ancient tradition, Lent is 40 days before Easter in which Christians across nations reflect on Jesus' journey to death on the cross in prayer and fasting. The fast has traditionally been from food, but recent modern takes on fasting have included forgoing other common aspects of life, social media.

Lent is a time of grief, reflection, and penance over the brokenness in the world that made Jesus's sacrifice necessary. And with a little-understood disease plaguing nation, we cannot help but witness the visceral gravity of how sin has infected our world. To fast during Lent means to forgo some of what makes life comfortable, to choose to face and reflect on the core longings of the human heart, instead of being distracted by temporary gratifications. It is a time where we choose to see and grieve over the need for Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, a sacrifice that would ultimately lead to the fulfilment of those longings and the glorious restoration of our humanity.

A friend once told me that God uses fasting to expose not just the needs that we have, but also the longings of our hearts and bodies. As we feel the weight of these longings in periods of fasting, we see how God can give and sustain our faith so that we might be able to bear this weight. In this season of social-distancing for COVID-19, we have already seen an increase in levels of anxiety, chaos, selfishness, ignorance, and fear through public dialogue. Perhaps this is something that you have felt more deeply than others. The unwitting global "fast" from in-person social gatherings, free movement, and regular work routines is taking its toll on all of us. It is urgently clear that this world groans in bearing these struggles, that all are looking for a cure not just to COVID-19 but to some of the wounds of human existence - the hurt of yearning for intimate connection, material stability, and security in the future. And these wounds are especially magnified by what we have all been forced to give up. Those who follow Jesus identify with these groanings, particularly through forgoing modern comforts for the Lenten fast. However, there is a core difference: the longing of the Lenten fast does not lead to crushing despair and anxiety, but rather to the need for a Saviour, the call to rectify what is broken, and the joyful hope for a future of restoration, or in the words of today's Gospel, A Transfiguration.

Jesus's journey to the cross started the moment He came into the world, "fasting" from the comforts of heaven to be fully immersed in life, experiencing the pain of being human. During His time here, He "emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant" and "humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:7-8). In this time, Jesus did not sit idle but instead was moved out of a fierce love for people to counteract the injustices He witnessed. Our ultimate sharing in the Paschal Mystery is our physical death which brings us to enjoy the reality of the resurrection, everlasting life, transfigured life.

Shalom, Christopher+
Parish Priest

Pastor
Rev. Father Christopher Gerard Gillen P.P.
Diocesan Social Justice Office Rep.
Member of Ontario Bishops' Social Affairs Commission.
Spiritual Chaplain to Diocesan D&P
Spiritual Director to Acts Retreat Ministry Men & Women.
Intern to Mental Health/ Addiction Counselling Hamilton.

Sunday Masses in Lockdown
Saturday Vigil 5:00 pm
Sunday 9: 00 am.10:00 am. 11:00 am

Weekday Masses
See Schedule on the inside of the bulletin

In Office Hours
Tuesday & Thursday 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
CLOSED IN LOCKDOWN

Administrative Assistant
Financial Recorder
Sandy Johnson

Reconciliation/Confessions
By Appointment Only in COVID-19

Requesting Sacraments
Must be registered and practicing
Call office for details

St Martin Elementary School
Phone 905-957-3032

Cemetery
Ron Roscovich at 905-386-0648

Parish Organizations
Catholic Women's League
President - Carolyn Vaughan

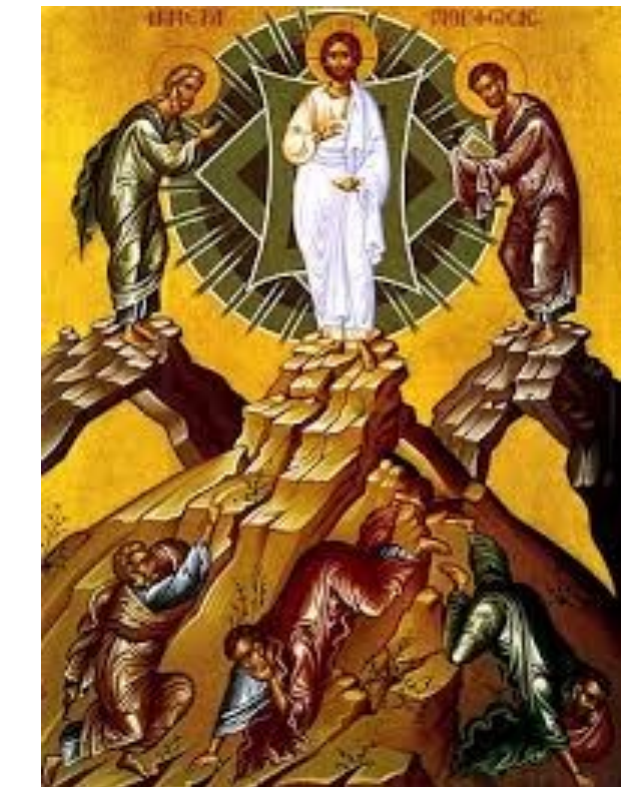
Knights of Columbus
Grand Knight - Pierre Paradis
koc.16421@gmail.com

Facility Maintenance
Tom Diletti - tom.diletti@gmail.com

Parish Groups
Children's Liturgy. Youth Ministry
West Lincoln Loaf of Bread
Parish Events Group
Parish Financial Council
Responsible Faith Ministry
ACTS Retreat Teams

Diocese of St. Catharines
Bishop of the Diocese
Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Diocesan Website: www.saintcd.com

St. Martin of Tours Roman Catholic Church



SPECIAL YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH

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February 28, 2021
Year B
The 2nd Sunday of Lent

February 28, 2021

The 2nd Sunday of Lent - Year B

MASS TIMES, INTENTIONS, PARISH CALENDAR

Mon	Mar 1	9:00 am	LIVE + Christina Terpstra	by Pierre & Mary Ann Paradis
Tues	Mar 2	9:00 am	+Thomas Jasinski	by Mary & Dick Van Geest
Wed	Mar 3	9:00 am	For the health and healing of Andy Lipiec	by Julie Notarianni
		10:30 am	Gethsemane Centre Mass	Father Christopher
Thurs	Mar 4	9:00 am	LIVE + Christina Terpstra	by Andrew & Caroline Steger
		2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Centre for Mental Health (CMHD) Hamilton Zoom Meeting	Fr. Christopher
		7:00 pm	Lenten Confessions at St. Joseph Church Grimsby (Parishioners are invited to attend)	Father Christopher
Fri	Mar 5	9:00 am	For the health and healing of Edna Carbonara	by Julie Notarianni
		9:30 am	LIVE Lenten Devotional Stations of the Cross	
		10:30 am	1:00 pm Pastoral Home Visits to Our Seniors	Father Christopher
Sat	Mar 6	8:40 am - 10:00 am	That Man Is You - Zoom Seminar/Program	Fr. Christopher
			The 3rd Sunday of Lent	
		5:00 pm	+For the repose of the souls of John & Regina Newman	by the Newman Family
Sun	Mar 7	9:00 am	Pro Populo Dei - For the special intentions of St. Martin's Parish Family	by Sherri deWilde
		10:00 am	LIVE For the special intentions of Sherri deWilde	by Julie Notarianni
		11:00 am	For the special intentions of Fr. Christopher	

PARISH ON YOUTUBE

Go to St. Martin Church Smithville

Not every Mass or other celebrations will always Be Live. We are still learning how to Live Stream. Notices in the Mass schedule will note if the Mass is being lived streamed. Thank you.

ONLINE EUCHARIST

Cathedral of St. Catharine of Alexandria

Sunday Mass live stream at 11:30 am.

Visit the diocesan website for viewing:

www.saintcd.com or on YouTube

St. Joseph's Parish Grimsby.

Follow on Face Book or their website:

Stjosephgrimsby.ca

Vision TV: Sun - 8:00 am

Mon - Fri - 8:00 am & 12:00 pm

Sat - 8:00 am & 9:30 am

Salt + Light: Sun - 11:00 am & 10:30 pm

Mon - Sat - 6:30 am, 11:00 am,

3:00 pm, 10:30 pm

yesTV: Sun - 10:30 am & Mon - Sat - 1:00 pm

Internet : www.dailytvmass.com

www.youtube.com/dailytvmass

VIRTUAL/ONLINE WORLDWIDE

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE

March 5 – 7, 2021

In these stressful times, give your marriage a *booster shot!* Restore your loving communication with your spouse and rekindle the romance. The Marriage Encounter experience is a skill-building enrichment program where together, you, as husband and wife, learn how to be the best couple you can be. No group discussion. Based on Catholic values but open to couples of all faiths. Rediscover the love in your relationship! **Contact:** Marge & Gerard McCauley at:

gerard.marge@rogers.com or (905) 792-1925

Website: wwme.org

E-TRANSFERS

These transfers are often referred to as **e-Transfers** and done through your online banking, website or app. To transfer funds to St. Martin Parish e-Transfer to:

st.martinsdonation@gmail.com

Please do not enter a security question and answer. You will be informed that your transfer to "The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation" has been completed.

ATTENDANCE AT SUNDAY / WEEKDAY MASS

While the Province and Niagara live through this next phase of restrictions meant to curtail the spread of the coronavirus, we are permitted to have no more than ten people at Mass - radically reducing attendance. Please read and be informed.

- All must register for every Mass they wish to attend. You can do that by email or phone from Sunday afternoon until Thursday of each week. Thursday at 12 Noon is the Deadline. (Office is closed to the public)
- Full name and phone number are recorded for tracking purposes.
- Please do not call on the weekend or the morning of or day before as its too late for registration.
- Avoid Father's personal email or cell phone, text for Mass registration or for cancellation.
- Do not give another person your space. You, are registered and not that person.
- To reduce cleaning responsibilities, all are asked to sit as close to the front as possible and on the left side only.
- A reader is required for each Mass along with a volunteer to light the candles and prepare for the next Mass. One person required for sanitizing will be greatly appreciated.
- Other measures may be implemented as the parish pastoral team sees fit.
- Please show pastoral sensitivity in allowing others the opportunity to attend Mass. You might consider not attending every weekday Mass or weekend Mass. Currently, we have not turned anyone away.
- If you register and are unable to attend for whatever reason, please call the office asap and inform us. We can then offer your place to others.
- No walk-ins will be permitted as the government fines start at \$10,000.

CONFESSIONS DURING LENT

Please call or email the parish office for an appointment. Any time of day for confession will be accepted.

Come to St. Joseph this Thursday, March 4, for Confession at 7:00 pm.

COVID-19 AND PARISH STEWARDSHIP

While the situation of COVID-19 continues to develop in our lives and communities, it is increasingly evident that the pandemic has had, and will continue to have for some time to come, a far reaching impact on all of us. We appeal to your generosity as we need the weekly stewardship of one and all, to maintain our financial commitments.

A special thank you to those who send in their weekly/monthly stewardship. Also, to those who have begun with E-Transfers, we thank you. Stewardship Envelopes for 2021 are available for pickup at the front foyer of the church building. Call ahead to arrange a safe time for pickup.

Unfortunately, 68 stewardship boxes have not been picked up. Less than half of the parish is financially supporting us through the pandemic. Try and make an effort to support us weekly or monthly. Thank you.

LENTEN STATIONS OF CROSS

Due to Covid-19 protocols this Lenten devotion will take place after the morning Mass each Friday. It saves on another registration and another gathering - aids in keeping hydro and heating bills low.

DEVELOPMENT & PEACE CARITAS CANADA

For over 50 years, Development and Peace has been organizing its "Share Lent" campaign during the period of Lent. This time is an opportunity for our organization to raise awareness among parishioners on issues of international solidarity and invite them to practise almsgiving by donating to the special collection for Development and Peace. This collection helps our partners meet the immediate and sustained needs of some of our poorest sisters and brothers. This year's campaign theme, Share Love, Share Lent, is inspired by the message of love and social fraternity in Pope Francis' encyclical, Fratelli Tutti. Through this campaign, Canadian Catholics will discover how the work of Development and Peace is anchored in Catholic Social Teaching and how we can heed the Pope's call for solidarity and love for our neighbour. Donate online at: devp.org/sharelent

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

February 22, 2021

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are hearing a lot more about 'COVID fatigue' these days. It seems that people are becoming tired of being constantly bombarded with information about the pandemic. We have medical experts, and many others, who are constantly sharing facts, figures, and opinions about the coronavirus. The truth is, that what we are being told can be contradictory and misleading at times.

With so many voices, we can feel overwhelmed and confused. This is especially true when we consider what is being said about the coronavirus vaccines. What are we to believe?

As your bishop, I would like to add one more voice that I hope will help to bring some clarity to this situation. Since medical science is not my area of expertise, I will only speak about our Church's response to the ethical use of these vaccines.

From a moral perspective, there is a significant concern because all of the current vaccines have used abortion-derived cell lines in either testing or in production. Unfortunately, there are no other ethical vaccines available at the present time. It is hoped that in the near future, a vaccine can be produced that has no connection to abortion. We need to be strong advocates, lobbying pharmaceutical companies, if we want this to happen.

At the present moment, many Catholics question whether they can receive this vaccine in good conscience. This is a serious matter, so the Church has offered some guidelines to assist in making that decision.

You will find information concerning the COVID-19 vaccines on our Diocesan Website (www.saintcd.com). The resource is entitled, "Directives Concerning COVID-19 Vaccines." This brief two-page document summarizes the essential criteria for reflection on this issue, and I hope that you will find it helpful. It also contains links to other Church documents that you should find useful.

One of those resources is from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. I wish to highlight one paragraph from that document that offers some important considerations regarding the COVID-19 vaccination.

"At the same time, practical reason makes evident that vaccination is not, as a rule, a moral obligation and that, therefore, it must be voluntary. In any case, from the ethical point of view, the morality of vaccination depends not only on the duty to protect one's own health, but also on the duty to pursue the common good. In the absence of other means to stop or even prevent the epidemic, the common good may recommend vaccination, especially to protect the weakest and most exposed. Those who, however, for reasons of conscience, refuse vaccines produced with cell lines from aborted fetuses, must do their utmost to avoid, by other prophylactic means and appropriate behavior, becoming vehicles for the transmission of the infectious agent. In particular, they must avoid any risk to the health of those who cannot be vaccinated for medical or other reasons, and who are the most vulnerable" (CDF, Note on the morality of using some anti-Covid-19 vaccines, #5, December 17, 2020).

In summary, I wish to state that from a moral perspective, if certain conditions are met, a Catholic can receive this COVID-19 vaccine in good conscience. Our Diocesan Directives Document helps to explain those conditions as clearly as possible.

In her wisdom, the Church has developed moral principles that assist us when faced with challenging personal decisions. They can assist us at this moment as we consider the use of the COVID19 vaccines.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will grant us wisdom and that Our Blessed Mother will lead us to what is good, true, and beautiful. May she bring us to her Son, Jesus Christ, who will give us peace during these trying times.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain

Yours sincerely in Christ,
Most Reverend Gerard Bergie,
D.D. Bishop of St. Catharines

Lent 2021

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

This past year has been very difficult as the world has had to deal with a pandemic. We have given up a great deal and endured many difficulties. In certain ways it seems that we have been living a 'long Lent' since March of 2020. So why would we want to embrace this penitential season that begins again on Ash Wednesday? Have we not done enough already?

The truth is that we have endured a great deal; however, many of the things that we have experienced have been more of a distraction than a source of spiritual growth. A number of people feel anxious and lack a genuine sense of peace in their lives thanks to the coronavirus.

Father Jacques Philippe in his book, *Searching for and Maintaining Peace – A Small Treatise on Peace of Heart*, states: "Often, we cause ourselves to become agitated and disturbed by trying to resolve everything by ourselves, when it would be more efficacious to remain peacefully before the gaze of God and to allow Him to act and work in us with His wisdom and power, which are infinitely superior to ours." Father Philippe reminds us that when we are troubled, we need to humbly turn to the Lord if we want peace. When we only rely on ourselves, we are bound to fail and feel frustrated.

We know that after his baptism, Jesus entered the wilderness for forty days and nights. He found peace in this isolated place as he united himself with the Father. Satan tried to distract him; however, Jesus remained steadfast in his response. In his human nature, by his acts of self denial, Jesus became even more dependent on the love of his Heavenly Father. It was doing the will of the Father that gave Jesus the greatest peace.

During Lent we are called to follow the example of Jesus in the wilderness. Through our prayer, fasting and almsgiving, the three pillars of Lent, we are able to focus on God and others. The more we abandon ourselves to the love of God, the greater the peace in our lives. We do not need to worry or be afraid because we know that the Lord will look after us. We pray with greater confidence, "Thy will be done."

Despite the difficulties of this past year, let us use this Lent as a time to cultivate a peaceful heart. May we not allow ourselves to be troubled as we keep our gaze on the Lord. During this time of uncertainty, be confident in the love of God which always brings hope and healing to our anxious world.

Yours sincerely in Christ,
Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Bishop of St. Catharines

CHOOSE LIFE NIAGARA

The annual general meeting will be held "virtually" on Saturday, March 6 (7:30 pm). All members are invited to attend. Members are those who subscribe to our guiding principles and who have made a donation to Choose Life Niagara in the last two years or contributed as a volunteer to the work of the association. Registration in advance is required to take part in the business meeting. Please phone 905-684-7505 or email info@chooselife.ca to register.

INCOME TAX RECEIPTS FOR 2020

Are now available for pickup in the front foyer. Please call the office to arranged a safe pickup time.