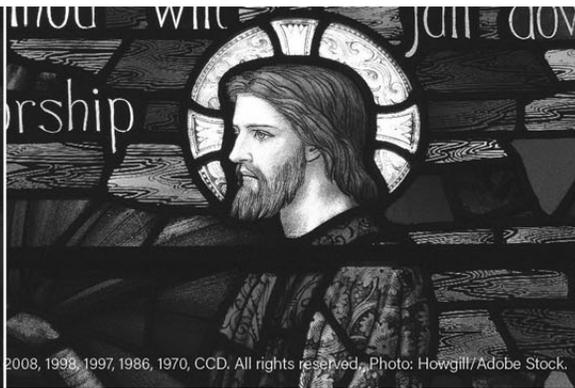


The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

MARK 1:12-13

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BAPTISM

Today's readings suggest two different meanings and experiences of baptism. The second reading (from 1 Peter) makes an analogy between Noah's ark and Christian baptism: just as Noah and his family were saved from death by going through the waters of the flood in the ark, Christians are saved from sin and death by going through the waters of baptism. The first reading, from Genesis, portrays the world after the flood: washed clean of its prior wickedness, embraced by God's promises that the world will never again be destroyed by water. The psalmist expresses a desire to follow the ways of God, as if re-establishing the harmony between God and humanity destroyed by sin. This peaceful scene is very different from the drama and urgency in Mark's description of Jesus after his baptism. Jesus battles demons, receives sustenance from angels, and begins preaching: "Repent. The kingdom of God is at hand."

GOOD MORNING! WELCOME TO LENT!

You probably did not get that greeting from your priest today, and you probably did not expect it. Isn't Lent a time of reflection and repentance? Somber purple, no "Alleluias"? Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving; attending to one's relationship with God?

True enough; however, there are Lenten practices that have a festive air woven into these penitential elements. One example is in the Church's retrieval of ancient Lenten practices that made up the final preparation of persons elected to receive the Easter sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist. Jesus' urgent preaching in today's passage from Mark comes soon after his own baptism and reminds us that these sacraments still signal a dramatic change in a person's life: they have responded to Jesus' preaching of the kingdom and are now publicly professing themselves to be disciples of the Lord and fully initiated members of his visible church. The prayer, fasting, and almsgiving during Lent were part of that preparation. Repentance was then, and remains today, important also for those already fully initiated; the work of repentance, of prayerfully examining our lives and making changes in anticipation of God's reign, is an ongoing aspect of our life in Christ.

A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION

Other changes with baptism are more subtle and personal. When Noah and his family emerged from the ark, they saw that the floodwaters had receded after cleansing the world of human sinfulness. Everything was clean and fresh—a new creation, with a rainbow to guarantee God's promise to never again destroy the world with water. So, too, will the newly baptized emerge from the font and be anointed with chrism. Like the earth after the great flood, they are a new creation. Washed clean of sin and anointed with chrism, they are renewed in the embrace of the God of covenant love.

This is why Lent is always a festive anticipation of Easter and always about baptism, just as it is always about the repentance that draws us more deeply into God's kingdom.

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: 1st Sunday of Lent; Rite of Election; Rite of Calling the Candidates; to Continuing Conversion; Rite of Sending
Monday: The Chair of St Peter the Apostle
Tuesday: St. Polycarp
Friday: Abstinence
Saturday: St. Gregory of Narek

FIRST LENT

SUNDAY OF

FEBRUARY 21, 2021

Immaculate Conception Parish

Immaculate Conception Church & St. Joseph Church

Pastor: Rev. James J. Ward • Deacon: Mr. Jack Mroz

Immaculate Conception Rectory: 570-325-2791 • iccjt@ptd.net • www.iccjimthorpe.org
St. Joseph Rectory: 570-325-3731 • stjosjt@ptd.net • www.saintjosephchurch-jimthorpe.org

St. Joseph Church side entrance is open daily for private prayer

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Tuesdays after 8 a.m. Mass, & Wednesdays, 6:30pm @ ICC;
Thursdays after 8 a.m. Mass @ St. Joseph Church (call Rectory for evening individual confession appointment)

Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator: Wendy S. Krisak, MA, NCC, LPC **Direct** Phone: 800-791-9209; Diocesan Secretary for Youth Protection: Pamela J. Russo, MSW, MS Phone: 610-871-5200, Ext. 2204; Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service: If you have an allegation of abuse against a bishop, please contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service ReportBishopAbuse.org or by calling 800-276-1562.

First Sunday of Lent



**Prayer
Fasting
Almsgiving**

Sat. Feb. 20

4:30 pm (ICC)

Adam LaRizzio (Donna O'Donnell & Kristin Herman)

Sun. Feb. 21

9:00 am (SJC)

Irene Milan (Clete Milan & Family)

Mon. Feb. 22

(private)

Bernadine Kattner (Jean McElmoyle)

Tues. Feb. 23

8:00 am (ICC)

Karyssa Schatz (Jen Nederostek)

Wed. Feb. 24

(private)

Sarah Straubinger (Thomas & Kathleen Straubinger)

Thurs. Feb. 25

8:00 am (SJC)

Paul Brown, Jr. (Brown Family)

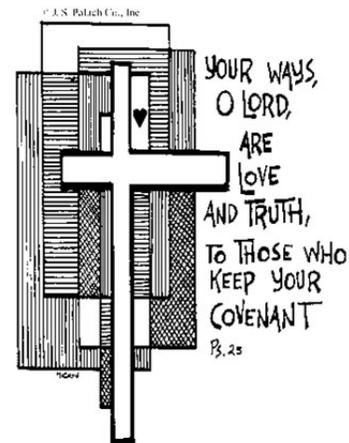
Fri. Feb. 26

(private)

**In Thanksgiving to Our Lady of Light /
All Parishioners, Living & Deceased**

6:00 pm (SJC)

Stations of the Cross



Second Sunday of Lent

Sat. Feb. 27

9:00 am (SJC)

Rosary for Life

4:30 pm (ICC)

Margaret Dugan (Hugh & Fran Dugan) /
Ed & Lucy Wildoner (Charlie)

Sun. Feb. 28

9:00 am (SJC)

Margaret Martino (Family)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM ~YOUR WAYS, O LORD, ARE LOVE AND TRUTH TO THOSE WHO KEEP YOUR COVENANT.

ST. JOSEPH CHURCH CANDLES

SAINT JOSEPH: In Remembrance of *our brother, Joe Martino* (Requested by John, Patty, & Family)

BLESSED MOTHER: In Loving Memory of *Mary Milan* (Requested by Family)

PARISH STEWARDSHIP: 1/31/21: \$4,448.03
Pro-Life (*sent to Mary Shelter*) \$861.00; additional \$200.00 collected given to Divine Mercy to help with needy; Diocese of Allentown Catholic Relief: \$1,072.00.

Thank you for your continued support & generosity.



LENTEN RECONCILIATION: Fr. Ward has added an extra Sacrament of Reconciliation time for the Lenten Season. Beginning this Wed. Feb. 24th, individual confessions will also be heard at 6:30pm at Immaculate Conception Church, & will continue every Wednesday of Lent through March 31.



LOOKING FOR A FEW CHURCH CLEANERS: St. Joseph Church is looking for a few folks to help lighten the duties of cleaning church on Fridays usually 9am start. We dust, mop floors, empty garbage cans, etc. If anyone can give an hour or two a week to help it would be greatly appreciated. Please call St Joseph Rectory office at 570-325-3731.

SAINT JOSEPH ECUMENICAL FOOD PANTRY Located on the corner of 6th & North St will be open Wednesday, Feb. 24, from 9am to 11am.



OLD BLESSED PALMS @ SJC: Please bring your old blessed palm and place them in the basket in the vestibule of St. Joseph church. These palms will be burned and used for ashes next year.

MEN'S MISSION: You are making a difference with your donations! The collection cans to help the children of Tanzania will be at the doorways to St. Joseph Church this Sunday.

OPERATION RICE BOWL

Join our faith community—and more than 14,000 Catholic communities across the United States—in a life-changing Lenten journey with CRS Rice Bowl & reach out in solidarity with those who suffer from hunger & poverty through **prayer, fasting, learning, & giving** during the Lenten season. Your prayers, sacrifices, & generous donations support Catholic Relief Services' food security projects overseas as well as local hunger & poverty alleviation efforts in your diocese. During the 40 days of Lent, we will reflect on the challenge of global hunger and how it affects our human family. For more info please visit csrcricebowl.org

OPERATION RICE BOWL INVITES YOU TO:

- 1) Eat a special sacrificial meal on a designated day each week during Lent.
- 2) Deposit the money saved by eating less in a small rice bowl while family is at the table.
- 3) Offer this meal & sacrifice in an atmosphere of family prayer and devotion. Discuss poverty & those less fortunate.

HUNGER IN OUR WORLD Jesus told us that whatever we did for one of these least brothers of his we did for him. Reflect on the challenge of global hunger— it is a reality for millions of our sisters and brothers. What will you do to support the hungry in our community and around the world? Visit csrcricebowl.org/recipe for Meatless Meals from Around the World.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR LENT THIS YEAR?



Ask Catholics what they're doing for Lent this year, and they'll probably tell you that they are giving up a favorite food, a favorite pastime or anything else they really love but isn't essential in their lives. Giving up something for Lent fosters self-discipline and tempers our desires. It is a form of fasting. It is a form of penance. It promotes spiritual growth. If you're giving up something for Lent, that's great. But think also about the possibility of doing something positive to bolster your spiritual life and make the world a better place. Look for ways that you can increase your knowledge of your faith, strengthen your spiritual life or perform special acts of mercy and kindness at home, at work, in your parish or in your community.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP 2021 LENTEN PASTORAL LETTER

Strive for peace with everyone, and for that holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one be deprived of the grace of God, that no bitter root spring up and cause trouble, through which many may become defiled. Hebrews 12:14-15

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The quote above from Hebrews is not frequently cited in Lenten reflections. This Lent, however, these words especially strike me as we embrace this Season as a time of reconciliation which comes as the fruit of penance.

True repentance includes reconciliation with God, the Church, neighbor, and self. The many manifestations of division that we have seen so clearly in our Church and Nation enjoin us to the repentance that leads to true reconciliation with God, the Church, and our brothers and sisters.

It is often said that we create the times in which we live. We determine through our thoughts, words, and actions whether our individual and societal lives will be created by a preference for division or a preference for reconciliation. Through prayer, fasting, and charitable works, we can more easily see our neighbor, in the light of God's precious creation, like ourselves rather than as an adversary to vanquish by words, violence, or pre-judgments.

Finally, we cannot achieve the reconciliation desired without our faith, devotion, and reception of the Most Holy Eucharist which is the Sacrament of unity and charity. Our real presence at Mass and reception of Holy Communion, the Real Presence of Christ, is the bedrock of any true peace and reconciliation that begins within us.

May we accompany one another this Lent with prayer, fasting, good works, and reception of the Holy Eucharist to build a Church and Nation of reconciliation.

*Sincerely yours in Christ,
Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
Bishop of Allentown*