

# FIRST SUNDAY Of Lent



## Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish

3516 E. Monroe Rd.  
Midland, MI 48642-8824

March 9, 2025

### Weekend Liturgical Schedule

**Saturday: 4:30 p.m.**

**Sunday: 9:30 a.m.**

**Exposition/Reconciliation:**  
Wednesdays 7:15-8:15 p.m.

**Mass from Assumption** is LIVE streamed at our SUNDAY Mass, so keep an eye out for our Flocknote; you can also check out our Facebook page and website for a link.

See inside the bulletin for the weekday schedule of worship services.

### How To Contact Us

**Office Hours:** Mon - Thurs / 8:30 a.m.—4 p.m.,  
Fridays / 8:30 a.m.—noon

**Parish Office:** 989-631-4447

**Fax:** 989-835-9722

**Email:** [Assumption@AssumptionMidland.org](mailto:Assumption@AssumptionMidland.org)

**Website:** [www.AssumptionMary.org](http://www.AssumptionMary.org)

### Parish Staff

**Director of Parish Life:** John Graveline,  
Email: [john@assumptionmidland.org](mailto:john@assumptionmidland.org)

**Sacramental Minister:** Fr. Rick Filary,  
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**Office Manager:** Sandy Martinski,  
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**Director of Youth Ministry:** Kathy Russell,  
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**Children's Faith Formation:**

Wendy Graveline,  
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**Maintenance Specialist:** Brad Hill,  
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**"This is the time of fulfillment.  
The kingdom of God is at hand.  
Repent, and believe in the gospel."**



#### **MINISTRY TO THE SICK**

Those wishing to celebrate the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick prior to surgeries, hospitalizations, or because of health concerns are asked to please contact the parish office. Otherwise, please notify the parish office if you or a family member is ill, homebound or hospitalized.

#### **ALL ARE WELCOME!**

Please know that the church doors will be opened from **8:00am — 3:30pm, Mon thru Thurs** if anyone is in need of a quiet place to pray and/or meditate.

**BULLETIN DEADLINE: MONDAY at noon**



[www.assumptionmary.org](http://www.assumptionmary.org)



[@assumption.midland](https://www.facebook.com/assumption.midland)



[@assumptionmidland](https://www.instagram.com/assumptionmidland)



[@assumptionmidland](https://www.youtube.com/assumptionmidland)

## From our Director of Parish Life



*"Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins . . . Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received."—1 Peter 4:8-10*

Even during our Lenten observance, we continue celebrating the Jubilee Year of Hope. Today we commemorate the **Jubilee of Volunteers**. Where would our church and our human society be without the dedication and selflessness of volunteers? Increasingly, it seems that social relationships have become tilted toward being transactional: "What's in it for me?" The spirit of volunteerism opens our hearts beyond mere self-interest to see the needs of others and to consider how our gifts and talents can bring good to them, even if it brings a cost to ourselves. We are also moving toward a society of "us vs. them," clearly demarking limits of who does and doesn't fall within our circle of care: "We take care of our own!" But who is *our own*? Jesus shared his thoughts on this when he told the parable of the Good Samaritan in answer to the question, "who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29-37) In God's eyes, all people are our neighbors whom we are called to love and serve in God's name. Although we don't volunteer for this reason, any volunteer will tell you that they receive much more than they give.

Volunteers make our parish community, our society, and our world a better place. This parish is especially blessed with many, many volunteers that enrich our worship and liturgy, our evangelization and catechesis of youth and adults, our charitable outreach, our care for the sick and homebound, and many other life-giving ministries. **However you share your gifts of time and talent with Assumption parish, THANK YOU!** Your service is deeply appreciated! So many of you also serve in countless ways in our local Midland community. Our parishioners are key volunteers feeding the hungry at Open Door and at local

family centers, mentoring and coaching families and young people, serving the senior population, caring for and advocating for vulnerable people. Finally, our world is more compassionate and humane through volunteers who leave their homes and loved ones, at least for a period of time, to dedicate themselves to the difficult mission of human development in areas threatened by violence and economic instability.

To be truly life-giving, volunteerism must come from the inside out. Sometimes, volunteers can become disheartened, judgmental, and/or overwhelmed if they do not tend to the spiritual gardens of their hearts. Our good works become fruitful when the love of God flows through us in service for the good of our neighbor. We can then have proper perspective and detachment from our volunteer work, realizing that each person is in God's hands and on God's timetable and therefore the fruitfulness of our generosity is not solely dependent on our efforts. If we let our volunteerism become mere *activism*, we will eventually *burn out*, which can lead to bitterness and judgmentalism. Keeping our volunteerism rooted in our prayerful communion with Jesus can help us avoid this pitfall (Luke 10:38-42).

*"Jesus said, 'The Son of Man come not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'—Mark 10:45*

I can think of a couple of saintly Americans who inspire me in my volunteer work. One is **Blessed Michael McGivney**. He was a priest in Connecticut in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He saw



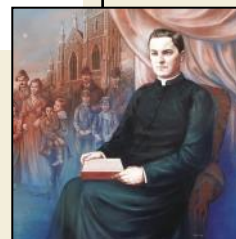
the needs of many orphans and widows, so he started the fraternal service order *Knights of Columbus* to address those needs. There are now 2.1 million Knights of Columbus around the world, doing charitable work for the good of the church and for the good of the overall society, especially looking out for the vulnerable. Both Assumption Parish and the Midland community are extremely blessed by our Knights of Columbus council! Also, **Servant of God Dorothy Day** was an inspiring volunteer figure. She lived in the early and mid-20th century. After her young adult years of disillusioning social activism, she was baptized into the Catholic Church. Her fiery spirit of concern for those left

behind by society continued through her co-founding of the *Catholic Worker* movement, providing houses of hospitality, solidarity, and charity where anyone could stay and be welcomed as Christ suffering among us.

In our own day and time, I see the spiritual heritage of Fr. Michael McGivney and Dorothy Day in the volunteer work of the *Guatemala Stove Team* and *Global Compassion, Inc.*, which brings people together in our own Midland community to care for those who are suffering the effects of violence, climate, and poverty.

On this Jubilee Day of Volunteers, I am reminded of a truth that I have seen over and over again throughout my ministerial career. The surest path toward happiness is to be grateful for and generous with the gifts that God has blessed you with. I give thanks for the great spirit of volunteerism here at Assumption Parish, and I pray that we continue to expand the light of Christ's compassion in Midland for many years to come.

*John*



### LENTEN BLACK BOOKS

You can receive the daily reflections through email by signing up on Flocknote. Go to <https://midlandabvm.flocknote.com/BlackBook> to sign-up or click the button in the weekly Flocknote that is sent out.

### Coffee, Donuts and Fellowship

will be served after Mass

Sunday, March 9.

Please plan to join in!




### FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

*"... I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O Lord, have given me."—Deuteronomy 26:10*

Giving of the "first fruits" can be difficult, especially in a society where material possessions and wealth are held in such esteem. But all that we have are gifts from God, and we are called to give back to Him in abundance. We are to give our "first" and "best" not our "leftovers."



 Worship Schedule	
ASSUMPTION	
<b>MON, March 10</b> Lev 19:1-2, 11-18 Mt 25:31-46	
<b>TUES, March 11</b> Is 55:10-11 Mt 6:7-15	<b>8:00a Mass</b> <b>8:30a Rosary</b> <i>Followed by Meditation</i>
<b>WED, March 12</b> Jonah 3:1-10 Lk 11:29-32	<b>6:30p Mass</b> <i>Followed by Exposition and Reconciliation</i>
<b>THUR, March 13</b> Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25 Mt 7:7-12	<b>8:00a Mass—Regina Graveline</b> <b>8:30a Rosary</b> <i>Followed by Scripture</i>
<b>FRI, March 14</b> Ez 18:21-28 Mt 5:20-26	<b>8:00a Mass</b> <b>8:30a Rosary</b> <b>3:30p Stations of the Cross</b>
<b>SAT, March 15</b> Dt 26:16-19 Mt 5:43-48	<b>4:30p Mass</b> <i>Jean Erdman</i>
<b>SUN, March 16</b> Gen 15:5-12, 17-18 Phil 3:17-4:1 Lk 9:28b-36	<b>SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT</b> <b>9:30a Mass</b> <i>People of the Parish</i>

*Please note that if the Midland Public Schools are closed or on delay, weekday morning Mass is cancelled!*



## V is for Vocation: Parish Volunteers

We give thanks for our parish volunteers who contribute in any number of ways including those serving on commissions and committees and serving as lectors, cantors, ushers, and sacristans. With the Jubilee for

Volunteering celebrated this weekend, we pray for all our volunteers.

Learn more how you can volunteer at the parish:

<https://www.assumptionmary.org/community>

*Loving God, to be your prophet is my desire, but too often I am more concerned about the bottom line. I want to bring your message to the world as so many before me have done. My heart leads me to you, but I'm not always sure how to respond. Let me know what it is you are calling me to do and the life you are asking me to live. Give me the strength to share with others who are in need of the blessings with which you have enriched my life. Thank you, God, for hearing my prayer. Amen.*



## Stations of the Cross

### Friday afternoons at ABVM 3:30 p.m.

All are invited to enter more deeply into Lenten prayer through the communal praying of the Stations of the Cross and other Lenten devotionals.

*Please join us for prayer, reflection and song.*



### March 14: The Way of the Cross:

#### Praying the Psalms with Jesus

**March 21:** Reflections on the Seven Last Words of Jesus

**March 28:** Mary's Way of the Cross

**April 4:** Visual Way of the Cross

**April 11:** Scriptural Way of the Cross according to Pope St. John Paul II

### On March 14, A Light for My Path: Praying the Psalms on the Way of the Cross

*My Spirit is faith, my heart despairs, I stretch out my hands to you.*

*--Based on Psalm 143: 4, 6a*

During this Lenten season, all are invited to reflect on Jesus' Way of the Cross by using the same prayers Jesus used in his life: The Book of Psalms. During the prayer service, we will journey through the traditional fourteen Stations of the Cross, through scripture, the communal proclaiming of the psalms, and reflection.



## Knights of Columbus

Join your fellow parishioners in the Knights of Columbus and keep our parish strong!

### K of C Exemplification Ceremony

Wednesday, March 19 at 7:30pm  
in DuRussel Hall

For more info, contact Matt Glaccum  
(989-430-8622/md2141@mikofc.org)

Fr. Henry P. DuRussel Council 2141 – Over One Hundred Years of Service

## - This Week -

### Sunday, March 9 1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

9:30 am Mass  
O.C.I.A., C.L.O.W.  
CFF, YM

COFFEE AND DONUT SUNDAY  
K OF C PIEROGI SALES

### Monday, March 10

9:45 am Stitch and Prayer

### Tuesday, March 11

8:00 am Mass  
8:30 am Rosary followed by meditation  
3:30 pm Millions of Monicas  
5:30 pm Christian Service Meeting  
6:30 pm Young Life Meeting

### Wednesday, March 12

6:00 pm Choir Practice  
6:30 pm Mass followed by Exposition and Reconciliation  
6:30 pm CFF

### Thursday, March 13

8:00 am Mass  
8:30 am Rosary followed by scripture  
7:00 pm Choir Practice

### Friday, March 14

8:00 am Mass  
8:30 am Rosary  
3:30 pm Stations of the Cross

### Saturday, March 15

10:00 am Serving at Open Door  
4:30 pm Mass

### MS Youth Conference

### Sunday, March 16 2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

9:30 am Mass  
O.C.I.A., C.L.O.W.  
CFF, YM



Save the Date for



## Vacation Bible School June 9-12, 2025

**You're invited to participate in  
CRS Rice Bowl!**



CRS Rice Bowl is the Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services. Through CRS Rice Bowl, faith communities in dioceses throughout the United States put their faith into action through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Lenten alms donated through CRS Rice Bowl support the work of CRS in more than 100 different countries each year.

**25% of donations stay in the local diocese,  
supporting hunger & poverty alleviation efforts.**

?s contact Maria Coss at 989.797.6646

**PLEASE PICK UP A RICE BOWL IN THE  
GATHERING SPACE AND BRING IT BACK  
STARTING PALM SUNDAY WEEKEND.**

### CHILDREN'S WORSHIP BAGS

Just a reminder that we have Children's Worship Bags available for families with little ones that are too young to understand Mass yet.

Please be considerate and *take only one bag per family*. There are a variety of materials in each bag for your children to share. Please check to see you have returned all materials to the bag and place it back on the shelf as you leave Mass.

*If you have any comments or suggestions for the bags, please send them to*  
[CFF@assumptionmidland.org](mailto:CFF@assumptionmidland.org).

I hope your family and littles enjoy the bags!

## Children's Faith Formation & Youth Ministry

### CHILDREN

Mar. 9, 16, 23 CFF and CLOW  
12, 19, 26 Wednesday CFF  
30 No CFF & No CLOW—  
Spring Break  
Apr. 2 No Wednesday CFF



If you have any questions about Children's Faith Formation or Children's Liturgy of the Word, please contact Wendy Graveline at [cff@assumptionmidland.org](mailto:cff@assumptionmidland.org)

### YOUTH MINISTRY

Both Middle School and High School YM meets at Blessed Sacrament on Sunday evenings from 6-8 pm! **ALL ARE WELCOME!!!**

Mar. 9, 16 YM meets  
15 MS Anchor Retreat  
23 **YM Final Session**  
Apr. 26-27 Y2Y Retreat (HS)  
June 1 **Graduation Mass**  
16-21 YES (Youth Encounter Service) HS  
23-27 ND Vision (9th-12th grade)  
July 7-11 ND Vision (9th-12th grade)  
Nov. 20-23 NCYC (HS Save the Date)



*Have questions about YM or events,  
please contact: Kathy Russell ([kathyr@assumptionmidland.org](mailto:kathyr@assumptionmidland.org))*



*fully rely on God*

A weekend retreat designed *by teens, for teens!* Step away from the stress of school and home, and discover a space where you can truly be yourself. Bring a friend or come ready to make new ones—it's going to be a weekend you'll never forget! Let the journey begin at the **Youth 2 Youth Retreat**—we can't wait to see you there!

*Questions....contact Kathy Russell*

*Calling all  
high school students....*

**Youth 2 Youth  
Retreat**

**April 26-27**

**Camp Rotary**

**Cost: \$70**

Scan the QR code  
to register online!







## Men's Conference

The Saginaw Catholic Men's Conference will take place on **Saturday April 5th** at **Holy Spirit Catholic Church** from **8:00AM – 3:00PM**

The conference will feature talks given by Bishop Robert Gruss, Bear Woznick (EWTN), and Dr. Marcus Peter (Ave Maria Radio). There will be private confessions along with the chance to grow in your faith and build lifelong friendships. Purchase early bird tickets for \$30 by March 25th at [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com). Walk-up registration starts at 7:30AM, admission is \$35 paid at the door. Premier Event Sponsor: Jolt Credit Union.

For more details at [www.thecatholicmen.com](http://www.thecatholicmen.com) or email us [thecatholicmensaginaw@gmail.com](mailto:thecatholicmensaginaw@gmail.com)

## SafeTALK

**Suicide Alertness Training** prepares anyone, regardless of their experience or training, to become suicide alert. In this half day training, you will learn how to assist someone who may have thoughts of suicide by recognizing signs, engaging someone, and connecting them to an intervention resource for support. Join us on:

**Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup> from**

**9 am – 1 pm at Assumption Parish's Holy Grounds**

for this workshop that will help break down the stigma around suicide, teach people to recognize when others are struggling, and lead them to further help. Seating is limited. Continental breakfast and a light lunch will be served.

Cost: \$20 for materials.

For questions, please contact Kathy Russell @ [kathyr@assumptionmidland.org](mailto:kathyr@assumptionmidland.org).



# SUNDAYKIDZ

## 1st Sunday of Lent

B	J	N	S	W	D	E	S	E	R	T
T	R	S	E	R	V	E	K	O	Q	Z
V	D	E	K	P	O	E	U	O	D	V
X	E	B	A	F	O	L	X	X	N	W
M	P	J	O	D	E	L	G	W	Z	O
L	A	G	I	L	F	O	R	T	Y	R
X	R	Q	P	W	S	T	O	N	E	S
N	T	M	W	W	C	Z	I	T	T	H
Z	E	R	T	Q	O	K	Q	S	R	I
T	Z	J	X	A	N	G	E	L	S	P
B	C	Y	K	I	N	G	D	O	M	S

Desert Forty Stone Bread Kingdoms  
Worship Serve Temple Angels Depart

©Diocesan



## DONATE BLOOD

**Monday, March 17**  
**1:30-6pm**

**Assumption Knights of Columbus**  
**Council #2141**

Blood Drive Location: Holy Grounds  
3516 E. Monroe Rd.  
Midland, MI

Schedule your appointment today:  
-Scan the QR Code OR  
-Call 866-642-5663



\*Walk ins welcome, as schedule allows.\*

Help achieve hospital needs goal of 15+ donations while impacting 45 lives in Michigan Hospitals!

For eligibility questions call 866-642-5663



Helpful tip:  
Make sure to eat a healthy meal and drink plenty of water before donating.





REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONE WITH AN

# Easter Lily

**Please fill out an envelope indicating:**

- Your name
- The name of the person you wish to honor (to be printed in the bulletin)
- Whether you would like to take a lily home

**We are requesting donations of \$30**

RETURN ENVELOPES TO THE PARISH OFFICE OR TO THE DONATION TABLE AT WEEKEND MASSES BY MARCH 23

Questions? Contact Jim Renfer at  
jim@assumptionmidland.org

## New Podcast with Father Andy LaFramboise Explores the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Starting on Ash Wednesday, Father Andy LaFramboise will host a new podcast called "Finding and Burying Again." This podcast is a thematic journey through the Catechism of the Catholic Church, spanning over 40 weeks with 160 episodes during the Jubilee Year of Hope. Each week, four episodes will be released with the goal of deepening our understanding and love for our Catholic beliefs.

Episodes will be available on the Diocese website at: <https://saginaw.org/finding-burying-podcast> and on podcasting platforms.

Father Andy LaFramboise serves as pastor of St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Beal City and director of priestly vocations.

## Jail and Prison Ministry

Inviting those who are interested in visiting Jesus through the inmates at the jails and prisons located within the Diocese of Saginaw. The depth of faith is alive in the incarcerated. The seeds sown are in need of laborers to nourish the harvest for the Lord. Training is provided.

Please call Beth at 989.797.6655 if you have questions or are interested in volunteering.



## California Wildfire Relief

As the recent wildfires have brought devastating, life-threatening conditions to communities across southern California, Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), the official domestic relief agency of the Catholic Church in the U.S., has launched a dedicated disaster relief. All funds raised will assist those displaced or suffering because of the fires. In response to the devastation, the Diocese of Saginaw is collaborating with Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA).

Donations may be made by scanning the QR code, by going online to Online Giving or by check made payable to Assumption with 'California Wildfire Relief' in the memo line.

Please direct questions to Maria Coss at 989.797.6646.



# FISH FRY

130 W Larkin Street, Downtown Midland

## 4 Fridays During Lent

4:30 to 7:00 p.m. March 7, 14, 21, 28



Proceeds benefit Saint Brigid Catholic School.



**ABVM Faith Formation Commission**  
*Minutes of Meeting / February 18, 2025 - 5:30 p.m.*

**Attendees:** Linda Brown, John Graveline, Wendy Graveline, Jane Labby, Kathy Russell, Marcia Schneider, Mary Smith

**Actions and Discussions:**

*We opened with the Faith Formation Commission Prayer.*

**1) Adult Faith Formation – John Graveline**

- a. Thursday morning scripture reflection continues to have good participation.
- b. Book Study – sessions are being held on Wednesday afternoons or Monday evenings. There is a smaller group on Monday. The study is winding down and will be finished prior to Lent.
- c. Year 3 of *Living the Eucharist* will be offered during Lent. Sign-ups begin this weekend.
  - i. A person does not have to have participated in the past two years to participate in Year 3.
  - ii. Mary Smith will lead a group on Wednesday afternoons. The Thursday morning scripture reflection group will use the study. The men's group will offer it on Saturdays. Other small groups are encouraged to form.
- d. One infant was baptized last week and there will be a couple more baptisms after Easter.
- e. The Rite of Election will be held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent.
- f. There are 2-3 people who may be ready for the Rite of Acceptance before Lent.

**2) Youth Ministry – Kathy Russell**

- a. Two youth will offer invites to Y2Y at masses this weekend. Registration is now open.
- b. Two youth have signed up for the middle school retreat titled "Anchor", to be held on March 15th in Grand Rapids.

**3) Children's Faith Formation – Wendy Graveline**

- a. There are eight (8) sessions left. Participation has been good.
- b. Sacramental Preparation – There is one more mini-retreat and 2 big retreats left.
- c. Preparations are being finalized for Mardi Gras to be held on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

**4) Future Planning**

- a. Kerygma: Created, Captured, Rescued, Response – Discussed the possibility of doing a program for 4-5 weeks with or without a retreat day or a parish mission format within one week to capture these four parts.
- b. Prayer cards could incorporate dates and times for events.
- c. John will ask the Pastoral Council if they would like to discuss the program with the Faith Formation Commission on March 4<sup>th</sup>.
- d. Bishop Gruss wants to visit every parish to share his message of "A Diocese on Mission" incorporating the three pillars of 1) Love and Support a Unified Presbyterate on Mission, 2) Build Disciples to be Sent on Mission, and 3) Go After the Lost Sheep.
- e. YM and CFF are trying to determine the best way to incorporate the diocesan program "Circle of Grace".

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Jane Labby (2/23/2025)*

Next meeting: **Tuesday, March 18, 2025 - 5:30 p.m.**

ASSUMPTION PARISH  
PRESENTS

# THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST

*BY THEODORE DUBOIS*

**SUNDAY, MARCH 23**  
**3:00 PM**

Encounter Jesus' powerful words from the cross through the music of this poignant work for orchestra, choir, and soloists.

**NO CHARGE**

*Free will offerings welcome*

*Are you interested in financially supporting our upcoming spring concert?  
Or are you interested in sponsoring an instrument for our concert series?  
Please reach out to Jim for questions and/or more information.*





# God's Word, Our Delight

Scripture's first home is the liturgy. From the earliest days of Christian history, before it had even been decided which books would be included in the Bible as we know it, believers met in their homes to celebrate the Eucharist.



The first part of their gathering, the second-century writer Justin Martyr tells us, was spent reading the Hebrew Scriptures and the memoirs and writings of the Apostles. Then they would celebrate the Eucharist.

## THE WORD IS ALL AROUND US

In the Mass, the prayers, instructions, acclamations, and songs constantly draw on our treasure trove of scriptural images, vocabulary, theology, and stories. We sing psalms and scriptural canticles. The inspired words of prophets, evangelists, Apostles, and others ring out in our prayers, hymns, and chants. Images and words from Scripture adorn our sacred space. From floor to rafter, the Word is with us. Even the doors and windows echo the great story of divine revelation, sacred history, and God's promises, that the Word records. We praise, petition, glorify, and lament in the same key as our forebears in faith, who were speaking through these sacred texts.

Many actions, postures, and gestures of the liturgy are likewise rooted in the Bible. Whether we kneel or raise up our hands, break bread or lift a cup of wine, light lamps or lay on hands, anoint with oil or wash with water, you can be sure someone in the Bible did it first. The Scriptures themselves reflect the liturgy of early Christians, as well as liturgical prayers and rituals practiced by God's people throughout the ages. We, as Catholic believers, stand in a

great tradition of Word and worship, and make it our own in each generation, as we celebrate the liturgy today.

## DIALOGUE WITH THE WORD

The Word of God surrounds us in the liturgy, and the "materials" of Scripture make our house of worship noble and simple, beautiful and solid. But that's not all. The Word is also proclaimed within that house—welcomed as an honored guest—with integrity. The event of reading, hearing, and responding to the Word forms the first great portion of the Mass: the Liturgy of the Word.

The Liturgy of the Word is an encounter and a dialogue: an encounter with Christ and a dialogue with him. When the Scriptures are proclaimed, we respond to what we hear. Our outward response is generally in the form of song and acclamation. Yet our inward response is what such outward signs point to—our "yes" to God's revelation and the resolve to live the message we have heard.

Pope John Paul II put it well when he wrote:

"[T]he liturgical proclamation of the word of God, especially in the Eucharistic assembly, is not so much a time for meditation and catechesis as a dialogue between God and his People, a dialogue in which the wonders of salvation are proclaimed and the demands

of the Covenant are continually restated. On their part, the People of God are drawn to respond to this dialogue of love by giving thanks and praise, also by demonstrating their fidelity to the task of continual 'conversion'" (*On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy*, 41).

## JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S WORD

Shining through the many words of Scripture is the one Word: Jesus Christ. He is the Incarnate Word of God. As St. John tells us so beautifully at the outset of his gospel account: "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). In the Word, we encounter Jesus himself.

God's Word, Jesus, speaks to us through both the Old and the New Testaments, unifying their witness. Both attest to the one revelation of God, and both support and instruct us on our journey as disciples. Christ is truly present in the Word. "Christ is still proclaiming His gospel" today in our midst, as the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council affirmed (*The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 33).

## LISTENING: DELIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY

We would be poor hosts indeed if we invited someone to our house, seated them in a place of honor, but then did all the talking ourselves. Yet this is what happens if our minds are filled with distractions and our hearts not prepared to receive the Word of God. We must therefore practice a discipline of hospitality to the Word, giving Christ present in the Word our full attention. We must prepare the ground of our heart for the "good seed" of the Word, through prayer, so that, receiving that Word in faith, our lives will yield a fruitful harvest. When we prepare to hear the Word, the experience of listening becomes a delight. The Liturgy of the Word becomes like a table at which we are fed. Our inner dialogue grows richer.

The Liturgy of the Word presumes some general knowledge of the Bible, and basic orientation to the historical context and literary form of the readings we hear. This knowledge can be acquired through catechesis, Bible study, commentaries, teachers, and other resources. Good preaching whets our appetite for the Word, and makes us eager to spend time with the Scriptures on our own. If our own personal foundation in Scripture has not been strong, however, we need to take responsibility for building it up.

## REFLECT

How strong is my own foundation in Scripture?

Consider this question in three dimensions:

intellectual strength (knowledge, understanding),  
spiritual strength (prayer, virtue, contemplation),  
moral strength (decision-making, guidance for living). Which of these areas would I like to strengthen during this time of Lenten renewal?

## ACT

Make a commitment to read the Sunday readings, either before or after you go to Mass. Take time just to "be" with the Word. Allow your own inner dialogue with God to continue beyond the celebration.

## PRAY

Holy Spirit, breath of God, through Sacred Scripture you reveal who you are, and who we are called to be. Breathe on us. You enter the house of our worship, and speak lovingly to each of us. Help me to listen with my whole heart.

**AUTHOR** ■ Rita Ferrone is an award-winning writer and speaker in the areas of liturgy, catechesis, and renewal in the Roman Catholic Church.

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# Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

March 2025

## Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish



### Thoughtful Moments

#### St. Agnes of Bohemia

St. Agnes was born a princess of Bohemia, expected to marry another royal. She was offered in marriage to kings and an emperor, but her heart belonged to the King of Heaven. With the help of Pope Gregory IX, she was freed to enter religious life. In 1236, Agnes joined seven noblewomen in entering a Poor Clare monastery in Prague. She became known for her dedication to prayer, obedience, and humility. Her religious sisters valued her kindness.



#### St. Joseph, pray for us!

Although Scripture preserves his silence, St. Joseph's actions speak volumes about faith, courage, and devotion. Chosen by God to safeguard His Son and the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph's quiet strength and humble obedience inspire us to follow his example of faith, devotion and integrity.

"I have never known anyone who ... honored [St. Joseph] by particular services who did not advance greatly in virtue." —St. Teresa of Avila



## Guide children to "the way, the truth, and the life"

For children, penance can feel like punishment—a chore they'd rather skip. But Lent isn't about punishment; it's about beginning a journey that leads to the joy of Easter. To help children rethink the gift of Lent, try framing it as a path to discovering "the way and the truth and the life" that leads to Heaven (John 14:6). Jesus showed us how.

**The Way** – Invite children to map out their own 40-day Lenten adventure. Instead of one long sacrifice, let them choose several short-term challenges. Plan days of "fasting" from a favorite snack or screen time, days of "abstaining" from habits like arguing or complaining, and days focused on

prayer and good deeds. This keeps the journey dynamic and meaningful.

**The Truth** – Explore the true meaning of discipleship by discovering stories of those who followed Jesus wholeheartedly. Read about saints or biblical heroes who allowed God to work through them, transforming ordinary lives into extraordinary legacies. These stories can inspire children to see God's potential in themselves.

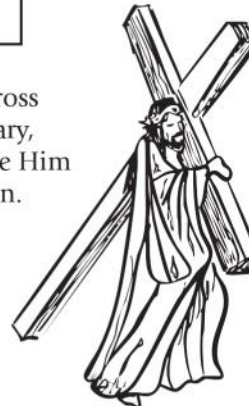
**The Life** – On Easter, Jesus opened the doors to Heaven, offering us new life. Every Mass is a chance to receive that life in Holy Communion. Encourage children to carry their Lenten lessons forward—speaking kindly, helping others, and deepening their prayer life—to preserve and celebrate their "new life" in Christ.



### Why Do Catholics Do That?

#### Why do Catholics pray the Stations of the Cross?

The Stations of the Cross trace Jesus' steps to Calvary, inviting us to walk beside Him and reflect on His Passion. This "mini pilgrimage," especially meaningful during Lent, reveals the cost of our sins and the depth of God's love



(John 3:16). As we meditate on Christ's suffering, we are called to unite our own struggles with His redemptive sacrifice. In this shared journey, pain finds purpose, and death is transformed by the promise of Resurrection and eternal life.



## Avoiding the slippery slope of gossip

Gossip is a common problem — even among children. It destroys reputations and relationships, sometimes beyond repair. As Christ's followers, we are called to speak charitably, whether the other person is around or not. Teach children to fight the destructive sin of gossip:

**Avoid complaining about others:** It's fine to "let off steam" — for example, "I'm tired of having to remind Katie about our group project" — but it's a slippery slope to detraction and gossip: "Katie is such a ditz."



You'll want to avoid working with her." Encourage children to focus on problem solving rather than blaming. It's unproductive and never ends well.

**Keep confidences:** When youngsters are asked to keep something a secret "between you and me," nine times out of ten, it needs to stay that way (unless it's an emergency). Good friends keep confidences.

**Stand up for others:** No one deserves to be bad-mouthed behind their backs. Coach children on how to respond when conversations turn to gossip: they can change subjects, politely ask to stop, or leave.

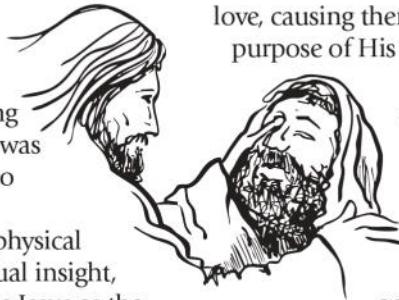
### Scripture LESSON

### John 9:1-41, Faith is spiritual vision

When Jesus met a blind beggar, His disciples asked if the man's suffering was due to his sins or his parents' sins, believing suffering was always a punishment. Jesus corrected them, explaining that the man's blindness was not for punishment but to reveal God's power. Jesus restored the man's physical sight and gave him spiritual insight, allowing him to recognize Jesus as the Son of God. His faith inspired others to believe in Jesus.

However, the Pharisees were divided. Some were impressed because they saw God at work in Jesus, while others

condemned Him for healing on the Sabbath. Their strict focus on the Law blinded them to God's mercy and love, causing them to miss the true purpose of His Commandments.



*What can a parent do?* In Baptism, we receive the gift of faith—the ability to trust God's love and plan, even in suffering. The more

we follow Jesus, the more we see as He does. Regular Mass, Confession, and daily prayer help us strengthen this spiritual vision and better understand God's purpose in our lives.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**March 3 – St. Katharine Drexel (1955).** A Philadelphia heiress, Katharine Drexel became a nun and used her inheritance to establish the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament to minister to African and Native American peoples.

**March 5 – Ash Wednesday:** The first day of Lent. Ashes of old palms are placed on the forehead, as a sign of penance. It's also a day of abstinence from meat and fasting – one regular meal and two small meals that together don't equal a full meal.

**March 7 – Saints Perpetua and Felicity (203).** Perpetua was a young mother and Carthaginian noblewoman who refused to renounce her faith. Felicity was a slave and expectant mother who also refused to deny her faith in Christ. Both were martyred.

**March 17 – St. Patrick of Ireland (c.461).** Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped by pirates and brought to Ireland as a slave. He escaped but later returned to become the first bishop of Ireland. He is credited for having established the Church there.



### Parent TALK

Lent had become routine for our family. We'd given up chocolate, TV, and video games so many times that it felt more like a chore than a spiritual journey. We needed a fresh approach.



Then, inspiration struck: a good deeds competition. I bought a giant roll of tickets and set up

four jars—one for each of us. The rules were simple: do a good deed, earn a ticket. Make it anonymous, earn two.

Halfway through Lent, we counted the tickets. The person who had the most chose where we went for Sunday brunch. We repeated this on Easter Sunday.

It was a game-changer. Lent became a season of sacrifice, kindness, and generosity. The kids were excited to find ways to help each other secretly, and our home was filled with unexpected acts of love. It turned out to be one of our most meaningful and fruitful Lenten seasons.

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# Christ's Mission APPEAL

## Christ's Mission Appeal 2024-25

We are getting closer to our goal. Please give careful consideration about how you will respond. Fill out the pledge card and return it to the Diocese of Saginaw or put it in the collection basket. **Remember, checks should be made payable to the Diocese of Saginaw, not our parish.**

You can also give online on the Diocese website at [www.saginaw.org/appeal](http://www.saginaw.org/appeal), through the weekly Flocknote or scan the QR Code.



One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

## Weekend Offerings

### March 1/2, 2025

Weekly Envelopes .....	\$4,591
Online Giving (2/24-3/2) .....	\$3,762
Donations .....	\$2,000
Weekend Total .....	\$10,353
Weekly Goal .....	\$9,231
Overage/(Shortfall) .....	\$1,122

### Month of February

Weekly Envelopes .....	\$13,673
Online Giving .....	\$10,040
Donations .....	\$17,300
Weekend Total .....	\$41,013
Goal .....	\$36,924
Overage/(Shortfall) .....	\$4,089



**THANK YOU** so much for your continued support in getting your contributions into the office.

*Please make out a separate check for the special collections.*



## Online Giving

It is easy to sign up, just go to our website at:

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