

2021 Lenten Opportunities

Dear Friends,

I hope this email finds you well and full of anticipation for the Lenten journey we are about to begin.

As I type this greeting to you, I can't help but be reminded of how last year's Lent was interrupted by the coronavirus. It was just two days after our 2020 Lenten Mission that the Governor issued the stay-at-home order. If you would have told me then that 11 months later we would still be responding to this pandemic and that life would not be 'back to normal', I would not have believed you. Yet, here we are.

Over these past 11 months we have adjusted and adapted how we worship, gather, and grow in our faith as best we can. *God provides ~ the Spirit leads.*

With that as a backdrop, we are very excited to share some of the many opportunities for us to come together (both in-person and virtually) during this season of preparation.

Please share this information with family, friends, and members of your faith sharing groups and Bible studies. There are many of you that I have not seen for quite some time. Wishing you many blessings along your Lenten journey. Be assured of my prayers for you.

Peace,
Michelle Sullivan

COVID protocol is in place for all in-person events.

Morning of Reflection: Franciscan Spirituality **with Friar Chris Dudek**

February 20th 9:15 - 11:45 am ~ St. Mary Magdalen Mission
(email mksullivan@stmargaret.org to register)

This is a great way to begin our Lenten journey! If you have had the opportunity to attend one of the weekend Masses where Friar Chris has been the presider, then you know what a treat it will be to have him for the whole morning!

Attend: In-person at St. Mary Magdalen Mission (1716 Churchville Rd. Bel Air, MD 21015) or virtually. The event will be live-streamed on our YouTube Channel: ["St. Margaret Parish Bel Air"](#)



Rosary Rally - Sunday, February 21 and March 21 ~ 1:30 pm
Outside St. Margaret Church



Intersections of Justice:

Racial Justice and the Mission of Catholic Charities

A Virtual Workshop on Racial Justice

Sunday, March 7th ~ 1:15 – 2:45 pm on Zoom

This workshop is presented and facilitated by Catholic Charities of Maryland. It is sponsored by a newly forming group of parishioners whose focus will be offering opportunities that bring awareness of Catholic Social Teaching and issues of justice. If you are interested in joining them in their efforts, email mksullivan@stmargaret.org.

Lenten Mission with Fr. John Collins CSsR:

Reclaiming God's Dream: "That we may all be one"

March 22, 23 and 24 ~ 7:00 pm in the Church

We are very excited to welcome Fr. John Collins to our parish as he leads us on a three evening Lenten Mission. I have attended a retreat with Fr. John and he is AMAZING!

Fr. John currently serves as the Director of San Alfonso Retreat House in Long Branch, NJ. In addition to retreat programming and workshops, Fr. John has served the Church in many different contexts including parish and campus ministry.

In-person and live-streamed on our parish's YouTube Channel: ["St. Margaret Parish Bel Air"](#)

Way of the Cross: Fridays during Lent

Walking with Jesus during his final hours is a powerful way to enter into the love of God and share in Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. Share in this ancient yet timeless prayer experience on Fridays during Lent. Praying the Stations of the Cross is an excellent way to pray with your family or prayer group.

12:15pm and 7:00 pm in the Church
Good Friday (April 2nd): noon in the Church

Stations of the Cross is also available on our YouTube Channel: ["St. Margaret Parish Bel Air"](#)

Please give us a call, 410-937-6572, visit the website, or see the bulletin for more details on these events and other ways to prepare this Lent.

Birthright Baby Bottle Project

During Lent, we will be having our Baby bottle project to support Birthright. This is a wonderful almsgiving effort during Lent. We can fill our bottles daily with loose change or bills, and as we do, we can pray for the unborn. This money is used to support mothers and fathers with an unexpected pregnancy and to help them bring this life into the world. Birthright does this with kindness, care, education and support.

Bottles will be available outside the doors of the church/mission after all the Masses during Lent as well as outside the parish office and mission. Please return them to crates by the doors at the church or mission when attending Mass or drop them off to the lobby of the parish office (not at the mission). Please return your bottle during Lent thru Palm Sunday.

Thank you for your efforts and your support of the unborn. We can make a difference.

Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me. Matthew 25:40

Through this Lenten season, we will be collecting items to benefit a different local organization each week. Know that your donation, no matter how small, will make a huge difference and change lives.



Lenten Almsgiving

February 20/21 - Harford Community Action Agency

Toiletries for adults & children to include: Body wash, shampoo, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, lotion

February 27/28 - Char House-Half way house for women

Laundry detergent and cleaning supplies

March 6/7 - Anna's House

Kleenex, small & large trash bags, Clorox wipes, dish soap, all-purpose cleaner, Lysol, face masks adult & children

March 13/14 - Mason Dixon Community Center

Jiffy muffin mix, brownie mix, large cans of sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, stuffing mix, baked beans

March 20/21 - Covered Bridge-Half way house for women & men

Laundry detergent and cleaning supplies

March 27/28 - Harford Family House

Shower curtains, liners, shower curtain rings, twin bedding such as sheets, blankets and comforters, bath rugs, bath towels and wash clothes

When & Why Fast?

When

Days of Fast & Abstinence

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday

(Only one full meal, two small meals, no snacks and no meat on these days.)

All Fridays in Lent are Days of Abstinence (No meat)

Lenten regulations begin with Ash Wednesday, February 17

The current regulations concerning Lenten fasting and abstinence for Roman Catholics in the United States generally are as follows.

Abstinence from all meat is to be observed by all Roman Catholics 14 years old and older on Ash Wednesday, all Fridays in Lent and Good Friday.

Fasting is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by all Roman Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 60.

For Roman Catholics whose health or ability to work would be negatively affected by fasting and/or abstinence, the regulations above do not apply.

WHY

Christ fasted for 40 days and nights to prepare Himself for the time that He would come face-to-face with Satan, because He knew He would need His Father's strength. To fast is to do without food. Its purpose is to experience the effects of not eating. It also serves to be a penance or a sacrifice - for the purpose of strengthening us. When we don't eat, for even a little while, we get hungry. When we get hungry, we have a heightened sense of awareness. When we fast, we have a feeling of alertness. It is purifying and prepares us to pray more deeply.

You may think you don't need to fast, but after you have fasted and felt the closeness of God and His strength in you, then you will see how weak and how far away from God you really are. Fasting is a tool that God has given us to use to become spiritually stronger so that we can go on our spiritual journey with strength and power from God. When you fast, you will find yourself being humbled. As He leads you to recognize and repent, you will experience special blessings from God. When you fast you will empty yourself, opening yourself up to accept God more honestly. A renewed closeness with God and a greater sensitivity to spiritual things are usually the results of a fast.

Current Canon Law requires that on the days of fasting, Catholics may eat only one full meal during the day. Additionally, they may eat up to two small meals or snacks. Church requirements on fasting only relate to solid food, not to drink, so any amount of water or other beverages may be consumed.