



ST. MARGARET PARISH



Dear Friends,

I cannot believe that I am talking about Lent just after we have taken down our Christmas decorations. However, this year Lent begins on February 14 with Ash Wednesday, one of the earliest times that Lent can begin. We need to refocus our lives again to begin this great spiritual journey.

Lent should help us to stand before God on our own two feet. We meet God and we meet ourselves. The weeks of Lent are not a time of fluff, shallow prayer, or vague dreams of holiness. They are a time for change in the depth of one's spirit. The task is so serious that when Lent has ended, one's life should never be the same.

The Lenten experience leads to a personal renewal of our baptismal vows in the Easter liturgy. The forty days focus on the renewal of our faith commitment to the Lord Jesus. Are we being more like Christ? Are we loving our God and our neighbor as Scripture calls for? To take this public renewal lightly would be to mock God. We must profess our faith with utmost seriousness.

To help all of us begin this spiritual journey, St. Margaret Parish is offering our Lenten schedule with times for Ash Wednesday Masses and services, Stations of the Cross, and the Holy Week liturgies. Please keep this schedule in a visible place for your information.

I also invite you to participate in our Parish Lenten Mission with Msgr. Jay O'Connor as our Mission Director. We will be focusing on ***The Eucharist, A Communion of Belonging, and Faith, Forgiveness, and Mission***. The Mission begins on the Third Sunday of Lent with Msgr. O'Connor preaching at all of the weekend Masses. The Mission talks will begin on **Monday, March 4 at 7:00 pm and will continue Tuesday, March 5 and Wednesday, March 6 at the same time**. Please join us as we journey with the Lord.

We will be starting off our Lenten Mission with a concert from our Fine Arts Series, *Ensemble Lafayette*, an organ and harp duo, on **Sunday, March 3 at 3:00 pm** in the church. Let us journey together with the Lord this Lent.

God Bless,

February 14, 2024 | Masses & Services

CHURCH

6:30 am (Mass) • **8:30 am** (Mass) • **12:15 pm** (Service) • **7:00 pm** (Mass)

MISSION

5:00 pm (Service) • **7:00 pm** (Mass)

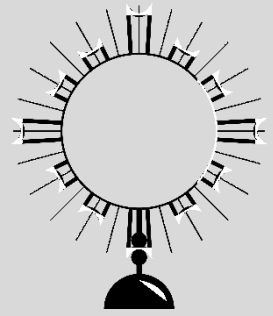
Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. It is a season of prayer, almsgiving, and fasting which prepares us for Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday. On Ash Wednesday, ashes are placed on the foreheads of the faithful to remind them of death, of the sorrow they should feel for their sins and of the necessity of changing their lives. Our foreheads are marked with ashes to humble our hearts and remind us that life passes away on Earth. The priest or minister, dipping a thumb into ashes previously blessed, marks the forehead of each with the sign of the cross, saying the words, "**Repent and believe in the Gospel.**"

The ashes are made from the blessed palms used in the Palm Sunday celebration of the previous year. The ashes are blessed with Holy Water. While the ashes symbolize penance and contrition, they are also a reminder that God is gracious and merciful to those who call on Him with repentant hearts. His divine mercy is of utmost importance during the season of Lent, and the Church calls on us to seek that mercy during the entire Lenten season with reflection, prayer, almsgiving, and fasting.



WHEN SHOULD I FAST?

- **Abstinence from all meat** is to be observed by all Roman Catholics 14 years of age 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 18 - 59 years of age. Roman Catholics over the age of 60 are exempt.
- **All Fridays in Lent are Days of Abstinence** (No meat)



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

WHY DO WE FAST?

Christ fasted for 40 days and 40 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 are hungry, we have a heightened sense of awareness. When we fast, we have that feeling of alertness. It is purifying for the soul 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, you become aware of how weak and far away from God we can be. Fasting is a tool that God has given us to become spiritually stronger so that we can go on our spiritual journey with Him. When you fast, you will find yourself being humbled. As He leads you to recognize and repent, you will experience special blessings. 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.

PARISH LENTEN MISSION

Eucharist: A Communion of Belonging

MARCH 3
Concert
3:00 P.M.

MARCH 4
Talk
7:00 P.M.

MARCH 5
Talk
7:00 P.M.

MARCH 6
Mass
7:00 P.M.

PRESENTER: MSGR. JAY O'CONNOR

March 1, 5:00 pm

Lenten Fish Dinner

School Hall

March 3, 3:00 pm

Ensemble Lafayette Concert

Church

March 4 – 6, 7:00 pm

Lenten Mission

Church

We are all baptized in a communion of faith and a communion of forgiveness, Christ taught us, "Do this in memory of me." We are also baptized in a communion of mission, which we hear at the conclusion of the Mass, as we are told to go forth and preach the Gospel. This year's Lenten Mission will help us to reflect on our roles in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Reconciliation will be available in Church at the following times during the Lenten Mission:

Monday, March 4: 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Tuesday, March 5: 7:00 pm

Wednesday, March 6: 9:30 – 10:30 am

LENT & HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Fridays during Lent • 12:15 pm in the **Chapel** and 7:00 pm in the **Church**

Individual Confessions will be available after 7:00 pm Stations of the Cross

Good Friday, March 29 • 12:00 pm in the **Church** and 5:30 pm at the **Mission**

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturdays (excluding Holy Saturday) • **Church** • 2:00 – 3:00 pm

Tenebrae Service

Sunday, March 10 • **Church** • 7:00 pm

Tenebrae (meaning darkness or shadow) is a service that has been celebrated since the Middle Ages. Come join us for this scripture and music oriented liturgical service as we prepare ourselves for Christ's death and resurrection.

Living Stations of the Cross

Friday, March 22 • **Church** • 7:00 pm

The Living Stations of the Cross is an opportunity this Lenten season for us to accompany Jesus' walk through the narrow streets of Jerusalem. We will journey with him on his way to Calvary through scripture, reflection, acting, and song.



Palm Sunday of the Passion of Our Lord

Saturday, March 23 • **Church** • 4:00 pm

Sunday, March 24 • **Church** • 8:00 am, 10:00 am, Noon

Sunday, March 24 • **Mission** • 9:00 am, 11:00 am



Holy Thursday

Thursday, March 28 • *Morning Prayer* • **Church** • 8:30 am

Thursday, March 28 • *Mass of the Lord's Supper* • **Church** • 7:00 pm

Adoration will take place in the **Church** until 9:00 pm, concluding with **Night Prayer**.



Good Friday (No Confessions on Good Friday)

Friday, March 29 • *Morning Prayer* • **Church** • 8:30 am

Friday, March 29 • *Traditional Stations* • **Church** • Noon

Friday, March 29 • *Celebration of the Lord's Passion* • **Church** • 3:00 pm

Friday, March 29 • *Contemporary Stations* • **Mission** • 5:30 pm



Holy Saturday

Saturday, March 30 • *Morning Prayer* • **Church** • 8:30 am

Saturday, March 30 • *Blessing of Food* • **Mission** • Noon

Saturday, March 30 • *Easter Vigil* • **Church** • 7:00 pm



Easter Sunday, The Resurrection of Our Lord

Sunday, March 31 • **Church** • 6:30 am (*quiet*), 8:00 am, 10:00 am, Noon

Sunday, March 31 • **Mission** • 9:00 am, 11:00 am

LENTEN ALMSGIVING

PRAY FAST GIVE

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

February 17 – 18

Harford Community Action Agency

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

February 24 – 25

Char Half-Way House & Homecoming Project

Laundry detergent, paper towels, toilet paper, and all cleaning supplies

March 2 – 03

Anna's House

Paper towels, toilet paper, diapers size 3 & 4, pull ups size 4, 5, & 6, laundry detergent, dish & hand soap, trash bags, Kleenex tissues, shampoo, and conditioner.

March 9 – 10

Welcome One Center

10" paper plates, 12 oz. paper bowls, 8 oz. hot paper cups, 10 oz. plastic cups, ground coffee, toilet paper, paper towels, 13 gal. kitchen trash bags, and laundry pods.

March 16 – 17

Brandon's House & My Daughter's House

Laundry detergent, paper towels, toilet paper, and all cleaning supplies

March 23 – 24

Harford Family House

13 gallon white trash bags, large contractor black bags (Walmart/Home Depot), bleach, laundry detergent, paper towels, and toilet paper.

Easter Weekend, March 31

St. Margaret

Outreach

Gift Cards for ShopRite, Walmart, or Target



During Lent, we will have the Baby Bottle project supporting "Choose Hope," formally known as Birthright. This is a wonderful almsgiving cause 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 who have an unexpected pregnancy and to help them bring this life into the world. *Choose Hope* does this with kindness, care, education, and support. The bottles will be passed out on the first Sunday of Lent (**February 17 – 18**) at all the Masses and collected on Palm Sunday weekend. (**March 23 – 24**)

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