

Our Lady, Help of Christians

Parish Newsletter & Announcements

O Mary, powerful virgin, thou art the mighty and glorious protector of the Church; thou art the marvelous help of Christians; thou art terrible as an army in battle array; thou alone hast destroyed every heresy in the whole world. In the midst of our anguish, our struggles and our distress defend us from the power of the enemy, and at the hour of our death receive our souls in paradise. Amen.

Prayer to Our Lady, Help of Christians composed by St. John Bosco

– The Lenten Ember Days are February 21, 22, 24 –

Four times a year, during each season (winter, spring, summer and fall), the Church sets aside three days to fast and abstain with the intention of recognizing the seasonal elements of nature as good, while pointing to God as the Creator of the natural world. Ember Days (and Rogation days) are the only days in the liturgical calendar that are tied to the natural seasons and encourage good stewardship of God's creation.

The Lenten Ember days are considered Spring Ember Days; the Church's designation places the Lenten Ember days on the first week of Lent, and since Lent is variable, the Ember Days don't divide into even quarters every year. Thus, years in which Lent comes early, the Spring Ember days can fall outside of the natural season of Spring. The Spring, or Lenten Ember Days, were the last to be added to the Church Calendar, but by 492 AD, Pope Gelasius I mentions all four sets of Ember Days as established.

Ember days retain the penitential nature of Lent: Wednesday and Saturdays are days of fast and partial abstinence; Friday is a day of fast and complete abstinence.

The Church sets a different seasonal focus for each set of Ember Days so that our prayers and the Catholic culture we seek to breathe into our homes may reflect the heart and mind of the Church. The seasonal focus of the Lenten Ember days are :

- 1) To ask blessing on the upcoming growing season and offer thanksgiving for the gift of light.
- 2) To provide reminders to persevere with Lenten penances.
- 3) To pray for priests and seminarians, particularly those about to be ordained (Saturday is a traditional day of ordination).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Father Mackey has outside commitments on Thursdays of this month, therefore, there is no Mass scheduled. However, if Father's duties allow, there may be a last minute change and an added Mass on Thursday. This will be decided on a weekly basis, and Father will announce it or the announcement may go out as a parish email.

Candlemas is February 2. Father will bless candles after Mass on February 2. Candles should be at least 51% beeswax (traditionally they were 100% beeswax). If you would like to have candles blessed, place them on the table in church (near the hall entry door) before Mass.

Ash Wednesday is March 14. Fr. Mackey and Fr. Shannon will distribute ashes at the both Mass times for the day. (*see calendar*)

Stations of the Cross will take place every Friday of Lent at 5:30 pm followed by Benediction. Father will offer confessions before Stations of the Cross from 5:00 - 5:20 pm.

Father Shannon Collins of the Missionaries of St. John the Baptist (www.msjb.info) will return again this year to offer a parish mission. Father Shannon will preach at both Masses on Sunday, February 11. The mission will take place from February 12 - 15. Each day of the mission there will be 9:00 am Mass followed by a catechism class (suitable for children and adults) in the hall after Mass. Each evening there will be confessions at 6:00 pm followed by a conference talk given by Fr. Shannon in the church at 7:00 pm. Following the final mission talk on Thursday evening there will be Benediction and a light reception in the hall.

**NOTE* – Father Mackey will offer additional Mass times Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Please see the March calendar for those Mass times.*

OUR LADY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS PARISH INFORMATION

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LENTEN FASTING AND ABSTINENCE REQUIREMENTS

- * Abstinence requirements apply to those age 14 +
 - * *Traditional abstinence requirements apply to those age 7+*
- * Fasting requirements apply to those age 18 - 59
 - * *Traditional fasting bound all Catholics age 21 - 59*

The law of Abstinence forbids the use of meat, but not of eggs, the products of milk, or condiments made from animal fat. The law of fasting allows only one full meal a day, but does not prohibit taking some food in the morning and evening, observing - as far as quantity and quality are concerned - approved local custom. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids, including milk and fruit juices, are allowed. Fish and all cold-blooded animals may be eaten.

Pope St. Leo I (461 AD) on the purpose of fasting: fasting is a means and not an end in itself; its purpose is to foster pure, holy, and spiritual activity. "What we forego by fasting is to be given as alms to the poor."

Key:

- * Current fasting and/or abstinence requirements (following the 1983 code of canon law) ————— indicated by **(current)**
- * Traditional Fasting or abstinence requirements (following the 1917 code of canon law) ————— indicated by **(traditional)**

Fasting and COMPLETE abstinence from meat. No meat is consumed for the entire day. One is allowed one full meal a day; taking a small amount of food at the other two meal times is allowed. No eating between meals.

- * Ash Wednesday and Good Friday **(current)** & **(traditional)**
- * All Fridays of Lent **(recommended in current)** **(traditional)**
- * Good Friday **(traditional)**
- * Holy Saturday (until noon) **(traditional)**
- * Ember Fridays **(traditional)**

Fasting and PARTIAL abstinence from meat. Meat is allowed at one meal - the principal meal. One full (principal) meal a day; taking a small amount of food at the other two meal times is allowed. No eating between meals.

- * Ember Wednesday **(traditional)**
- * Ember Saturday **(traditional)**
- * All weekdays of Lent including Saturdays **(traditional)**

No Fasting nor Abstinence on Sundays of Lent.

No Fasting nor Abstinence on the Solemnity of St. Joseph (March 19).

Note: liquids (including milk and juice) may be taken at any time on a day of fast but other works of charity, piety and prayer for the Pope should be substituted to compensate for this relaxation.

NOTE: The attached calendar for this month, beginning in Lent, has small designations in the bottom right corner which may be helpful in noting the day's designation for fasting and abstinence from meat. The key is printed on the calendar and is included here as well:

- * **FA** - indicates a day of required fast and abstinence from meat **(current)** & **(traditional)**
- * **TF** - a *traditional* day of fast is recommended, but not required **(traditional)**
- * **TFA** - a *traditional* day of fast and abstinence from meat is recommended, but not required **(traditional)**
- * **TFPA** - a *traditional* day of fast and partial abstinence from meat is recommended, but not required **(traditional)**