

† Divine Mercy Parish †

(Founded 2010)

Saints Peter & Paul Church
Est. 1903

St. Anne Church
Est. 1882

St. Adalbert Church
Est. 1910

Three Rivers, Massachusetts

Rev. Stefan J. Niemczyk, Pastor

Rectory: 2267 Main Street (413) 283-6030

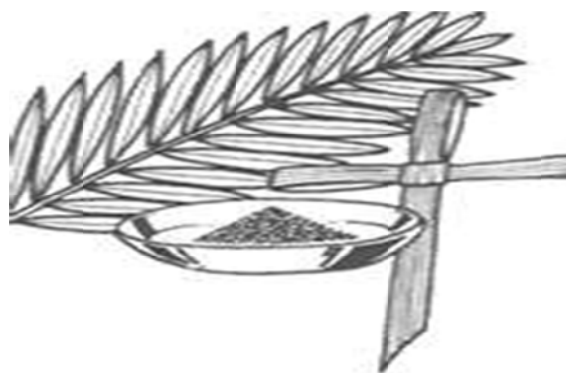
Office Hours: Mon. & Fri. 9 A.M. to 3 P.M.; Tues., Wed., Thursday 9 A.M. to 1 P.M.

Divine Mercy Religious School & Parish Hall – 283-4320

Email: stspeterpaulanne@gmail.com ~~~ Website: www.churchofdivinemeracy.org

March 6, 2011

LENTEN SEASON



~ Remember...That you are dust and into dust you shall...return ~



Vigil of Sunday – 4:00 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. - **Sunday** – 8:00 a.m.(Polish) and 9:30 a.m.

Daily Masses – 7:00 a.m. (except Tuesday) - Tuesday – Novena & Mass 5:30 p.m.

Holy Day Masses – Refer to Mass Schedule

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**SACRAMENT OF PENANCE** – Saturday 3:00 p.m. First Friday at 6:30 p.m.

**SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM & HOLY MATRIMONY** – Contact Rectory to make arrangements

**SACRAMENT OF THE SICK (ANOINTING)** – Contact Rectory when the need arises

**SICK CALLS** – Anytime

All items for the bulletin should be submitted no later than Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. in order for it to be printed in the upcoming weekend bulletin (please include your name and phone number). You may email your item, drop it off at the Rectory or mail it. Note there is editorial discretion on all items. Email: [stspeterpaulanne@gmail.com](mailto:stspeterpaulanne@gmail.com).

Co-Directors of Religious Education: Jean Brigham (283-4232)  
Parish Secretaries: Lydia McKee & Debra Ingalls  
Choir Director & Organist: Mark Narreau (583-8541)  
Organist: Mary Besko & Barbara Kelleher (596-2727)

### **WEEKLY CALENDAR**



#### **SATURDAY, March 5<sup>th</sup>**

- CCD Classes from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. for Grades K-5
- Confessions at 3:00 p.m.

#### **SUNDAY, March 6<sup>th</sup>**

- CCD Classes from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. for Grades 6-9
- Chalice of Strength – Prayers for Priests & Vocations – 4:00 p.m. in the church
- CCD Classes from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. for Grade 10 in the Kolbe Room

#### **MONDAY, March 7<sup>th</sup>**

#### **TUESDAY, March 8<sup>th</sup>**

- Choir Rehearsal – check with Mark Narreau, Director
- Men's Guild March Meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Center.

#### **WEDNESDAY, March 9<sup>th</sup>** ASH WEDNESDAY – LENT BEGINS

3:00 P.M. LITURGY OF THE WORD AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

6:00 P.M. MASS AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

- Alcoholic Anonymous – 7:00 p.m. – St. Maximilian Kolbe Room

#### **THURSDAY, March 10<sup>th</sup>**

#### **FRIDAY, March 11<sup>th</sup>**

6:00 P.M. - Stations of the Cross followed by Mass

#### **SATURDAY, March 12<sup>th</sup>**

- CCD Classes from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. for Grades K-5
- Confessions at 3:00 p.m.

#### **SUNDAY, March 13<sup>th</sup>**

- CCD Classes from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. for Grades 6-9
- Chalice of Strength – Prayers for Priests & Vocations – 4:00 p.m. in the church
- CCD Classes from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. for Grade 10 in the Kolbe Room



## Mass Intentions



### **Saturday - March 5<sup>th</sup> *Blessed Virgin Mary***

7:00 a.m. - For Living & Deceased Members of the Holy Rosary Sodality Group of Joann Stolar

4:00 p.m. - +Lorraine Perry ~Months Mind Mass~ Claire & Sue Rebello

+Clarence Lague and the Bobowiec & Shea Families – The Family

5:15 p.m. - +Dominick Machnik – M/M Charles Bates

+Richard Wawro – Maria & Rob Alexander

### **Sunday - March 6<sup>th</sup> *Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time***

8:00 a.m. - +Helen Starzyk – Her Sister Vera Gilbert

9:30 a.m. - +Marie and Delphis Legare – Their Daughter and Family

### **Monday - March 7<sup>th</sup> *St. Perpetua and St. Felicity, martyrs***

7:00 a.m. – Parishioners of Divine Mercy

### **Tuesday - March 8<sup>th</sup> *St. John of God, religious***

5:30 p.m. – +Stanislaw Kryczka – Teresa Sucharski

### **Wednesday - March 9<sup>th</sup> ~ ASH WEDNESDAY ~**

7:00 a.m. – +Peter & Julia Karcz – Their Family

3:00 p.m. – LITURGY OF THE WORD AND ASHES DISTRIBUTION

6:00 p.m. – MASS AND ASHES DISTRIBUTION

### **Thursday - March 10<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 a.m. - +Frances Swist – Daughter Irene and Son-in-law John Dyl

### **Friday - March 11<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 a.m. – +Jacqueline Janosz – Sts. Peter & Paul Rosary Sodality

6:00 p.m. – STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOLLOWED BY MASS

+Jozef Sucharski – His Wife Teresa and Family

### **Saturday - March 12<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 a.m. - +Father Norman Mailloux – June & Josie Slozak

4:00 p.m. - +John & Genevieve Janosz – Their Family

+Helen Izk – Their Son, Daughter & Family

5:15 p.m. – Nicholas Haskell and The Cavagnia Family – Lydia Tanne

### **Sunday - March 13<sup>th</sup> *First Sunday of Lent***

8:00 a.m. - +Andy Lucas – M/M Fred Orszulak

9:30 a.m. - +William, Josepnie & Bronislaw Kulis – Daughter & Family

+Henry F. & Henry S. Salamon – Their Sister

2:00 p.m. – GORZKIE ZALE ~ BITTER LAMENTATIONS & BENEDICTION

~~ **DIVINE MERCY SCHOOL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS** ~~

**Please note:** If it becomes necessary to cancel CCD due to inclement weather, it will be broadcasted on WWLP Channel 22 and on [www.wwlp.com](http://www.wwlp.com).

Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> Reconciliation at 9:00 a.m.  
Friday, April 1<sup>st</sup> Living Way of the Cross at 7:00 p.m.  
Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Communion at the 9:30 a.m. Mass

Any questions please call Jean Brigham at 283-4232.



~~ **ADORATION OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT** ~~

Wednesday – 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Thursday – 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Friday – 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Saturday – 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

*If you can give one hour, or substitute, please call Diana Roth @ 283-8709*

**Forgiveness**

**“No one heals himself by wounding another.”**

**St. John Chrysostom**

**For Reflection:**

**“ JESUS SAYS WHOEVER IS WITHOUT SIN CAN CAST THE FIRST STONE”**

**HOW MANY STONES WILL I CAST TODAY????**

**“ WHOEVER SAYS THEY ARE WITHOUT SIN CALLS JESUS A LIAR!”**



**PRIESTLY & RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS**

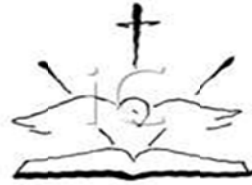
How blest with happiness are those who know they need God. Blest too are those who respond to God's invitation to announce His Good News as a priest, brother or sister. If you think God is calling you to that, call Fr. Gary Dailey at (413) 452-0811 or write [g.dailey@diospringfield.org](mailto:g.dailey@diospringfield.org)  
Website: [www.myvocation.com](http://www.myvocation.com)

~~ DONATIONS ~~

GENERAL FUND -

*SINCERE THANKS*

*For your generosity & support of our parish  
God Bless All*



~~ DIVINE MERCY NEWS ~~

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> – Men’s Guild ~ Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Communion at the 9:30 a.m. Mass

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Star 2010 – 2011 Your **February** contributions to the STAR Program may be deposited in the weekly collection basket or may be mailed to the Rectory. Please make your check payable to Divine Mercy Parish and include the applicable coupon so you will be properly credited and entered in the next drawing.

WEB-SITE UPDATE – Please visit our church web-site www.churchofdivinemeracy.org. Paul Brozek is the person that updates the web-site; if you have any comments or would maybe like to see something added, please contact the Rectory. Weekly bulletin can be viewed there.

JUNIOR LECTORS are needed for Sunday Mass at 9:30. Grades 5 to 12. Boys and girls are welcome. You would be needed only once or twice a month to read. Any questions please call Cheryl Kozlik 283-2773.

FOOD SHARE – Please continue to assist with your donations to the Food Share program. All non-perishable items are accepted, including crackers, Jell-O, condiments, coffee, tea, jams, jellies, cake mixes, etc. Drop off donations in the box at church. *Thank you for your help!*

Divine Mercy News...continued

ST. CECILIA CHOIR MUSIC –

Our parish senior choir, named in honor of St. Cecilia, the patroness of music is offering Volume 2 of their hymns for sale, available now in both cassette and CD format. Vol. 2 contains English, Polish, and Latin hymns including selections from the Stern's Vespers which was sung at Forty Hours Devotions for several years at Sts. Peter & Paul Parish. Both formats are only \$5.00. Please contact treasurer Lillian Olearczyk at 323-5912, or any choir member. PLEASE NOTE that there are currently limited quantities of the CD version.

GIRL SCOUT WEEK is celebrated each March,

starting with Girl Scout Sunday and ending with Girl Scout Sabbath on Saturday. This year the Girl Scouts will be celebrating 99 years starting with **March 6th**. We will be recognizing Girl Scouts and Leaders at the 9:30

Mass. If you would like to participate, please meet in the sacristy, in uniform, at 9:15. If you have any questions, you can contact Pam Kosnicki @ 283-3242.

THE STS. PETER AND PAUL MEN'S GUILD will hold their March meeting on **Tuesday, March 8th**, at 6:30 P.M. in the Parish Center. All current members are invited to attend, as are any prospective members."

ANNUAL ECUMENICAL SERVICE FOR SCOUTS:

This service will be held at the First Church of Monson, 3 High Street, Monson, MA 01057 @ 2:00 p.m. on **March 13th**.

This service is for all scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venture Scouts. Come enjoy an afternoon of prayer, recognizing scouts who have earned their religious awards, learning about special patches the scouts and troops can earn as well as the religious medals programs, and some special surprises. There will be refreshments served. If you have any questions or if you want to recognize a scout, please contact Pam Kosnicki @ pamdkos@verizon.net or 413-283-3242.

CORNER BEEF AND CABBAGE DINNER –

The Men's Guild will be hosting a Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner on **Saturday, March 19th** with the social hour starting at 6:00 p.m. and dinner following at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

~~ AROUND THE AREA ~~

CONFESSIONS – Every Tuesday from noon to 2:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Sacred Heart on Boston Road in Springfield. English – Polish – Spanish. This is Father Tomasz Parzynski's Parish.

OPERATION FRIENDSHIP DINNER ~ CANCELLED ~ The Roast Beef Dinner that was to be held on **Saturday, March 5th** at Divine Mercy's Parish Hall at 6 p.m. has been cancelled. Please call Lisa at 283-8598 or email OFofPalmer@comcast.net with any inquiries.

TAX RETURN PREPARATION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS – AARP Tax Aids will be at your local Senior Centers to prepare simple tax returns for Senior Citizens. This is a free service provided by AARP for low-income seniors. You must call your local Senior Center to make an appointment as no walk in returns are filled out. Appointments start in February and continue through April 15th. This service is for senior citizens only. Most senior centers define seniors as those people 60 and older.

HOSPICE SERVICES OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS - Our agency is located in Feeding Hills and services Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin Counties. We are in need of volunteers to provide services (i.e. reading, friendly visits, running errands, etc.) to our patients in their homes and Nursing Facilities. If you can help call Natasha Dymnicki (413)786-4004.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO MAKE A RESOLUTION - Resolve to improve your spiritual life by sending in your reservation to the 2011 Catholic Women's Conference. It will be held **Saturday, April 16, 2011** at Cathedral High School in Springfield. It will feature Sister Olga of the Eucharist – a pint sized but powerful speaker who will make you want to be a better person. The other talk will be given by national columnist and author Antoinette Bosco who has endured much but kept the faith. Log onto www.diospringfield.org for a registration form or call 452-0812.

OPERATION FRIENDSHIP is sponsoring a bus trip to New York City on **Saturday, May 7th**. Cost of trip is \$45/person (tip included). Bus will leave Converse Middle School at 7:00 AM with drop off in the city. Return trip to start at 7:00 PM with pick up in the Times Square area. Payment in full **MUST** be received by **April 18th**.

For more information contact: Lisa at 283-8598.



**PRAYER ON ASH WEDNESDAY
MARCH 9TH**

*O Jesus, in honor of the forty days
you spent in the desert praying and fasting,
we begin this season of Lent.*

*During this holy time of sacrifice, prayer, and good works
may we prepare our hearts, our souls, our minds and bodies
for the greatest feast in the Church,
the feast of Your Resurrection.*

*May we follow in Your footsteps
as we journey with You to Jerusalem.*

*At each Mass that we participate in during this Lent,
may we be reminded of the Last Supper
and Your gift of Eucharist.*

*May we continue with You to Calvary,
accepting the crosses that are given to us each day.*

*May we stay with Your Mother Mary
as she stands by Your Cross.*

*We ask You to forgive us our sins
and thank You for the sacrifice You have made for us.*

*Grant us, O God, the perseverance
to strive each day of this holy season of Lent
to become better Christians.*

*May our preparation for Easter
make us one with the Risen Christ on Easter
and every day of our lives.*

Amen.

Welcome Home, Welcome Lent

There will probably be an influx of people attending one daily Mass this week, specifically **Ash Wednesday**. It's always good to welcome more worshippers. Unfortunately, some of that number will be there for a reason only remotely connected with the Church season we are about to enter, i.e., to come and *to get something*.

Along with **Palm Sunday** (taking home a blessed palm frond), Ash Wednesday is a day to *get something*, or more properly, *receive* something, namely the ashes smeared on our foreheads. But the ashes and the palms are merely symbols of something far more important. And the need for the annual Lenten journey cannot be overstated.

Now, it's clear that if *to get something* brings one more person into the church, then that's great. It may just be the beginning, or spark, needed for an individual to discover the Church for the first time, or for one who has been away from the practice of the faith to re-connect, to make a real and permanent return. The bottom line is that our motive must be sincere: admit God has been missing in your life, and come home.

We know that people who occasionally come to church or don't practice any faith at all will often turn to God in times of crisis (e.g., illness, accident, national/world catastrophes). They want Him to respond and help at that critical time, but otherwise, they have little time for God. Attending to our spiritual nature, our faith life is critical and must be a part of the daily routine if it is to have any significant impact. The Gospel according to **St. Matthew (7:21-27)** is an excellent reminder that we just can't wait for crises to look for God: ***“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father.”***

We must strive, every day, to conform our wills more closely to God's will. After all, He created us and only in union with Him will we be truly happy. By turning to Him (His will), and away from our own (sin), He gives us the grace needed for that continually developing conformity. Through our prayer, acknowledgement of sins, and repentance, then we'll truly *get something*: we'll more readily hear His words and act on them.

Lent is that time when we should look deeply into ourselves. We need to acknowledge that, through prayer and fasting, there are areas in our lives that need improvement. This will sometimes mean relinquishing acquaintances and habits that pull us away from hearing God's words, and which lead us from light to darkness.

We may ask: Why should I care about sin? What's the big deal? It's my private affair, right? **Wrong.** My sin affects everyone, not just me alone. Remember, we are each members of the Body of Christ. Imagine if every single person on the face of the earth honestly acknowledged his/her sinful condition, asked for forgiveness and sought true conversion. Wars would cease. Politics would become civil and honorable again. Abortions and other sins against life would cease. Vocations would flourish as more people would offer their lives in selfless service rather than for selfish motives.

These possibilities should encourage us to welcome this Lent, and take full advantage of this time of repentance. Change for a better world begins in each heart.

VOTIVE LAMP INTENTIONS

1.+Edna Burns – daughter Patty. 1.+Piotr I Anna Majka – syn. 1. Zsp. Joseph & Frances Swist – daughter. 1.+Earl McKee – wife Lydia. 1.+Frank & Mary Falk – daughter & son-in-law. 1.+Felix & Catherine Misiaszek – son Peter & daughter-in-law. 1.+Phyllis Misiaszek – brother Peter & sister-in-law birthday – Ed 1.+Sister Josephine – Niece. 1.+St. Anne special blessings on grandchildren. 1. St. Anthony for a special favor. 1. +Joseph Misiaszek Peter & sister-in-law. 1. Zsp. Deceased members of Salamon & Marcinkiewicz families. 1. +Deceased members of Gut & Yurkunas family. 1.+Helen & Francis Ford – Pat. 1.+Rusty Nowak – wife & son. 1. Zsp. Jana Wasiuk – od zony z rodzina. 1. Thank you God, for prayers answered & continued blessings & good health – B.R. 1. God's blessing & continuing recovery for Eleanor – Charlie. 1.+Michael A. & Mary Wojnilowicz – son Michael. 1. Pray for world peace – Holy Rosary Sodality. 1. For a friend's health. 1.+Edward Ziobrowski – family. 1. For all members of the military – Rosary Sodality. 1. For an end to abortion – Rosary Sodality. 1. Health for our sick parishioners – Rosary Sodality. 1. For Priestly and Religious vocations – Rosary Sodality. 1. +Darryl Tyburski – love Mom, Dad, sister Betty & brothers Tom & Ray. 1.+Edward Godek – wife Pat. 1. Health & God's blessings for Irene Orluk – Sophie. 1.+Nancy Szostek – Gloria Nowak. 1.+Kowalczyk family – family. . 1. Healing for Susan B – LJF. 1. Rest in peace Michael – LJF. 1. God's blessings & health for Edward J. Zoladz – Virginia Galuszka. 1. God's blessing & good health for Gloria Hughes – Leokadia Wasiuk. 1. Health & God's blessing for daughter & family. 1. Healing for Lorraine P. - LJF. 1. Zsp. Franciszka I Wojciecha Frydryk – Syn. 1. Zsp. Stella I Leo Pulaski – J.F.. 1. Zsp. Anne I Michala Zbylot – J.F.. 1. Zsp. Edna I Frank Pytka – J.F.. 1. Zsp. John I Michael Boronski – J.F.. 1. Zsp. Patricia Kohler – J.F.. 1. For Mom & Dad's health – TKNE. 1. Eugene Beauchemin for a quick recovery – Ernie & Pearl Charland. 1. +Edward Zerdeclo – wife & family. 1. To St. Lucy for special intentions. 1. To Pope John Paul I for good health of Blanche Wostena – her children. 1. Zsp. Joseph Wostena, Jr. – wife & children. 1. God's blessings – Mickalina & Cheryl. 1. +Henry Stefanowich – Anna. 1. To St. Lucy for a special favor. 1. Thank you St. Anthony for prayers answered. 1. +Sophie & Joseph Socha – Barbara. 1. +Frank Miskiewicz – Barbara. 1. God's blessings – Auden Vigneux. 1. Living & deceased members of Lemanski & Vaz families. 1. +Genevieve Vaz – Lori. 1. healing & strength. 1. St. Anne bless my son with good health. 1. "Jesus I Trust In You" family health & strength. 1. The Lemanski family – S.. 1. A.J. & Joanne Lemanski – S.. 1. +Geneveive Vaz & Julia A. Machnik – S.. 1. Zsp. Ann Nedeau – John & Irene Dyl. 1. Birthday blessings for John Y. – love, Mom. 1. +Joseph Palmero – 1st anniv. – Wojnilowicz family. 1. Safe travel for daughters. 1. Blessed Mother – blessings & good health for daughters & granddaughters. 1. +Mary Roman – Vera Gilbert.

1. God's blessings for Jacob Mastalerz on his 8th birthday – Cioci Connie & Uncle Chick. 1. +Frances Swist – C. Misiaszek. 1. God's healing & strength for Lilly – Babci & Dziacziu. 1. +Richard Wawro – love, wife Barbara. 1. +Stefan Rosinski – Sallie R. 1. +Louis Zglobicki – wife & family. 1. +Anthony Zieminski – wife & family. 1. +William Gilbert. 1. +Eleanor

Starzyk. 1. +Helen Starzyk. 1. +Betty Bielaska. 1. God's blessing & good health for KDJ. 1. +Helen Izyk – 15th anniv. – daughter & family. 1. +Alice Marhelewicz – love Julie & Carol. 1. God's blessings & good health for Lewis Kapinos, love, Julie & Carol. 1. +Fred Mastalerz – love, Julie & Carol. 1. Special intention. 1. +Frank Zabawa – his wife. 1. God's blessings & good health for all our families. 1. Jesus please help us overcome depression. 1. Jesus I Trust In Thee. 1. +John Olearczyk – wife & family. 1. God's blessings & health for daughter-in-law Donna. 1. God's blessings & special intentions for Karen – Mom. 1. +Kathie Dupre – family. 1. +Joe Misiaszek – Cis & family. 1. +Husband & son – love – A. Pietrewicz. 1. +Mary Roman – Alice Pietrewicz. 1. God's blessing & healing for Jake. 1. god's blessings for our family. 1 +Dad Richard Wawro – love Deb & Pete. 1. +John E. Janosz, Sr. – love, Jack, Reg & family. 1. +Arthur Charron – John & Marion. 1. +Stephen & Sophie Noga – son Stephen. 1. +Bernice Wawrzonek – Frances Bukowski. 1. +Victor Bukowski – wife Frances & family. 1. +Mary Roman – Frances Bukowski. 1. +Walter Smola – wife Alice. 1. +Grace Kulpa – husband Ed. 1. Health & God's blessings for my grandson – Babci. 1. God's help & guidance for my son – D..1. Zsp. Rodzicow Witkowskich – od corki. 1. Special intention for D.T.. 1. In loving memory of Grace Kulpa – daughter Debbie. 1. God's blessings, good health & continued success for Rep. Todd Smola – EK&GK. 1. Dear Lord, please help Dylan Tallman – love Luanne. 1. Miracle of strength for Little Ben 0 Pat & Linda. 1. Special intention for Father Stefan – S.. 1. +Edward Rudnick – family. 1. +Victor Bukowski – R.C.. 1. Health & happiness of K.T.E.N. – M.P.. 1. God's blessings & health for J.J.P.B.J. – M.P.. 1. +Wilfred A. Dorsey – 28th anniv. – wife Elizabeth. 1. Blessings & good health for daughter & son & their families. 1. +John Mastalerz – wife & family. 1. For strength, guidance & good health for our shephard Father Stefan – L.R.. 1. For intentions of the prayer line – L.R.. 1. For David M. for a permanent cure for a heart defect – L.R.. 1. For peace & strength for Amy as she struggles with her recent losses – L.R.. 1. For a blessed, holy, spiritually fruitful Lent for all – L.R.. 1. God's blessing & good health for Debbie.

Dear friends in Christ:

This year Lent lives up to its original meaning – the time when the days lengthen. Ash Wednesday is late, March 9th.

Whenever it begins, however, the Lenten season calls all Christians to reflect on their relationship with Christ and their relationship with each other. Lent calls us to works of sacrifice and charity. Lent is a time for us to look into ourselves and work on those faults and failings that each of us have, because they prevent us from being all God is calling us to be. Lent is a time for the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that we may put things right with God and others. To that end I am asking parishes to designate additional times for the Sacrament of Penance each week of Lent. Ash Wednesday is a time for acts of penance and alms giving, helping those who are less fortunate than ourselves. A visible sign of our Lenten practices comes on Ash Wednesday when the ashes mark a sign of the cross on our forehead to remind us that our frail human nature needs the saving power of Christ.

During Lent, Catholics who are between the ages of 18 and 59 undertake two days of fasting: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. To fast means to take just one full meal with two smaller meals and no eating between meals. Additionally, every Catholic 14 years and older is to make Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent meatless days – days on which no meat of any kind is eaten, days of abstinence.

The imposition of ashes, fasting and abstinence from meat are outward signs of the work we seek to do during Lent: to make our interior dispositions more of what Christ would have us be. Each of us is asked, as well, to undertake particular prayers, actions, alms giving, mortifications, and self-sacrifice to help us grow in our understanding of all God has done for us.

May this Lent be for each of us a time of growth in our relationship with Christ and with others and may it be a time that we find ourselves more fully in concert with all that God calls us to be.

With every best wish,

In Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy A. McDonnell
Bishop of Springfield

GUIDELINES FOR LENT

Ash Wednesday, March 9th , and Good Friday, April 22nd are days of fast and abstinence. ***Fridays of Lent*** are also days of abstinence.

~ On days of fast, when only one full meal is allowed, two other meatless meals may be taken according to one's needs, but together they should not equal another full meal.

~ The other Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat.

~ The obligation to abstain from meat begins at fourteen (14) years of age.

~ Obligation to fast begins at eighteen(18) years of age and ends at fifty-nine(59) years of age.

~ Although the faithful may excuse themselves for a just cause from these laws of fast and abstinence, there is an obligation to substitute another penance and no Catholic should lightly excuse himself/herself from this obligation in the Lenten season.