

**PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW**

**Stewardship Report – Treasure**

**WEEKLY COLLECTION**

**Budgeted Amount:** \$5,000.00

**Sunday Collection – 2/19/17:** \$3,550.00

**Parish Pav – 2/19/17:** \$ 616.00

**Total – Sunday Collection – 2/19/17:** \$4,166.00

**Sunday Collection – 2/26/17:** \$2,859.00

**Parish Pav – 2/26/17: (not reported yet)**

**Total – Sunday Collection – 2/26/17:**

Parish Pay ---is a convenient way for you to set up your weekly contributions - online – visit [ParishPay.com](http://ParishPay.com)

**2016 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN STATISTICS – AS OF 1/30/17**

**Total # of Families:** 442

**Total # Pledged:** 129

**% of Participation** 29.19%

**Total Amount Pledged:** \$38,065.00

**Total Amount paid:** \$33,310.00

**Average Pledge:** \$ 295.08

**% of Pledges Collected:** 87.51%

The Sanctuary Lamp is given this week:

**In memory of:** Walter Losiewicz

**Given by:** Theresa Losiewicz

**MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK**

- 3/6 MON: 9:00a Charles Burke  
Michael Wyssenski
- 3/7 TUES: 9:00a Dec. members of Futia family
- 3/8 WED: 9:00a No Mass today
- 3/9 THU: 9:00a Judy Ann Futia
- 3/10 FRI: 9:00a People of the Parish
- 3/11 SAT: 5:00p Robert Weiss
- 3/12 SUN: 8:00a Frank Rankl  
Virginia Matas  
10:00a George Fluhr  
Edward Losiewicz  
Robert Weiss  
Harold Johnston  
11:45a Edward Losiewicz  
Elizabeth Van Next

**SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK**

**Sunday** Gn 2:7-9, 3:1-7; Rom 5:12-19 or 5:12, 17-19;

Mt 4:1-11

**Monday** Lv 19:1-2, 11-18; Mt 25:31-46

**Tuesday** Is 55:10-11; Mt 6:7-15

**Wednesday** Jon 3:1-10; Lk 11:29-32

**Thursday** Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25; Mt 7:7-12

**Friday** Ez 18:21-28; Mt 5:20-26

**Saturday** Dt 26:16-19; Mt 5:43-48

**ST. MONICA’S CHURCH – Contact info**

Phone # 973-875-4521 Fax # 973-875-7538

**Parish office hours: 9:30– 1:30pm Mon-Fri**

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

**Email:** [stmonica@ptd.net](mailto:stmonica@ptd.net)

**Deadline for bulletin submissions:** Tuesday of each week for information to be printed on the following Sunday.

Email to [stmonica@ptd.net](mailto:stmonica@ptd.net)

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

**March 5, 2017**

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**COFFEE & DONUTS** – first Sunday of each month after the 8:00am Mass in the Church Hall. Join us!

**HELPING HANDS** – meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM in the rectory meeting room. Contact Terry Westdyke at 845-258-8051.

**SCRIPTURE REFLECTION** – every Wednesday at 6:30pm in the Rectory Meeting Room. Weekly reading/ reflection of the Sunday Scriptures – fellowship time & refreshments follow. Call Carol at 973-875-4521 for information.

**ST. MONICA’S LEISURE GROUP** - St. Monica's Leisure Group will meet in Wednesday, March 8, at 12:00 in the Church Hall. Beat the winter blues and join us for a good time. We look forward to seeing all of you again! Membership dues are \$10 a year. Please call Grace Casalino if you need further details. 973-702-8569.

**BOOK DISCUSSION** – Mon., March 20th – 7:30pm in the Rectory meeting room. We will finish the book Jesus, A Pilgrimage. Focus question sheets can be found on the table in the Church Hall. Please call Carol at 862-266-6626 if you plan to attend.

**ST. PATRICK/ST. JOSEPH CELEBRATION** – Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm. **If you can volunteer your time to make this event a success, please call the Rectory and leave your name & phone # if you can lend a hand.** Sign-up sheets for guests will be available after all Masses.

**LENTEN SCHEDULE**

**Mondays of Lent** – “Welcome Home to Healing” – confessions will be heard from 7:00 – 8:30pm in Church

**Fridays of Lent** – Stations of the Cross - 9:00am & 7:30pm.

**OPERATION RICE BOWL - ENCOUNTER LENT**

Join our faith community—and nearly 14,000 Catholic communities across the United States—in a life-changing Lenten journey of encounter with CRS Rice Bowl. Pick up your family’s CRS Rice Bowl from the table in back of the Church Hall beginning today – this Lenten Outreach project began on Ash Wednesday so don’t forget to pick up your Rice Bowl. May these 40 days better prepare us to encounter ourselves, our neighbors and our God.

Several people have asked where they can send cards/greetings to Fr. Charles. He has asked that a note be put in the bulletin that people should forward their mail to the Rectory and it will be sent to him along with his other mail that is being forwarded. Thank you!

**FOR CANCELLATION OF PARISH PROGRAMS/EVENTS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER, PLEASE VISIT**

<http://wsus102.3iheart.com> or tune in to WSUS102.3FM

**BAKE SALE**..... Thank you to all who supported the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Bake Sale AFTER THE 10:00 & 11:45AM for Heifer International! The total earned was \$240.00!! This will be an important contribution for families in need. Your generosity is very much appreciated!

**Needed** - dining room set with 6 or more chairs – please call the Rectory – 973-875-4521 and leave your name and phone #.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

### **DEPARTMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY**

visit is scheduled for Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. The sign up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board in the church hall. Please consider giving of your time to bring some cheer to these young adults. We guarantee that you will come away feeling very uplifted and rewarded.

**PHASE II CANDIDATES** – If you have not sent in your Confirmation Information Sheet or your completed Sponsor certificate please do so. I will check my records to see what I have and will forward another set to those of you who have not turned anything in yet. You should be receiving a letter within the next week or so.

### **CALENDAR**

**Saturday, Mar. 18<sup>th</sup>** - Visit to Dept. of Persons with Disabilities in Jefferson – leaving at 11am and returning by 2pm. More info to follow

**Saturday, Apr. 1<sup>st</sup>** - YM Class – beginning with the 5pm Mass, Phase I- Theme: “Relationships”  
Phase II – Theme: “Holiness is Possible”

**Saturday, Apr. 8<sup>th</sup>** - Ice Cream Social at Bristol Glen w/residents – Time: 1:30pm to 3:00pm

Saturday, Apr. 15<sup>th</sup>- Spring Roadside Clean Up – more info to follow

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – Grades 1-8**

### **CALENDAR FOR 2017**

#### **FIRST AND SECOND GRADE**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SESSION/GRADE(S)</u>
3/5	11th session
3/19	12th session
4/2	13 <sup>th</sup> session
4/23	14 <sup>th</sup> session

#### **THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SESSION/GRADE(S)</u>
3/5	11th session
3/19	12th session
4/2	13 <sup>th</sup> session
4/23	14 <sup>th</sup> session

#### **FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH & EIGHTH GRADE**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SESSION/GRADE(S)</u>
3/11	11th session
3/25	12th session
4/8	13th session
4/29	14th session

**Our Religious Ed year is moving by quickly – thanks to all parents for your tremendous cooperation!!!**

**CHILDREN’S LITURGY OF THE WORD** – this program is open to children in Grades 1-4 at the 10:00am Mass each week. The children are dismissed to listen to the Sunday readings with volunteer Catechists who read and reflect with the children. Please consider having your child participate each week.

-----Carol Bezak, Coordinator of ReligiousFormation

### **A NOTE FROM FR. JAN.....**

I want to update you about our parish’s goal for the 2016 Bishop’s Annual Appeal. To date \$6,058.00 has been pledged on our \$17,640.00 goal. I believe that our goal is attainable and so I am asking for your help. If you have not yet done so, please make a pledge so we can reach our goal and help thousands of people in need throughout our Diocese. Not one person can do everything, but I am confident that everyone can do something. Whatever you are able to do to help is a great blessing. Please know, too, that 50% of all cash received over our parish goal is returned to us for our own parish needs.

Please return your Appeal pledge card in the mail today or mail your gift directly to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal, 777 Valley Road, Clifton, NJ 07013. You can also make an on-line gift by going to [www.2016appeal.org](http://www.2016appeal.org). Thank you in advance for helping our parish reach its goal!

## **FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

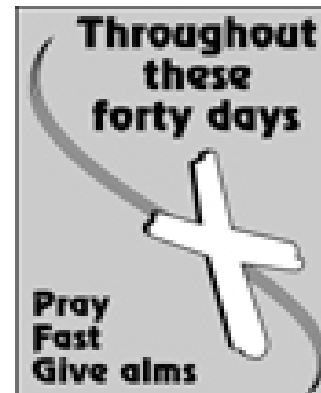
**His Word Today by Rev. William J. Reilly**

*“Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterward was hungry... For if by the offense of one man all died, much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ, abound for all.”*

Will you do yourself a favor? Begin this holy time with special fervor and devotion, for your spiritual benefit, the good of the church and those around you.

We have the tendency to commemorate events in traditional ways. The fourth of July, we became free, raise flags and shoot fireworks. At Thanksgiving, we express gratitude and have some sort of feast. The page is turned on a new year and we party. The traditions are special.

Lent is not just a period to remember, but to realize that it is a time for us to grow, deepen our relationship with the Lord, and become holy, yes, to work at being a saint. The ashes we received this week, the stations we recall on the road to Calvary and our customs should become more meaningful. Our Holy Father insists that we can and are to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. If my game plan for lent is to achieve this goal, then I put aside the baggage which weighs me down through my prayer, sacrifice and good works. Thus the grace of God and His gracious gift will be ours.





My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,  
Nothing is more startling and, at the same time, more consoling than the truth for which Jesus lived and preached and died. It is this: God is love. As the Psalmist says, "The Lord is a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger, most loving and true" (Ps 86:15).

Throughout his public ministry, Jesus shows the face of God as compassionate and merciful in his healing miracles and exorcisms. Even before Jesus issues the summons to repent, he announces, "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk 1:15). The kingdom is nothing other than the presence of God making his love known and felt in our lives.

Jesus opens us to the profound meaning of the kingdom with his parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15: 11-32). It is found at the very center of Luke's Gospel. It is the very heart of the gospel itself! The son who takes his inheritance, squanders it away and finds himself unfulfilled is each of us. We take the gifts that God gives us and use them against God's will. We are the ones left empty, longing and desiring more than our sinful lives can give.

As in the parable, so in life. God is the Father who sees us, runs to us and embraces us. He takes our feeble confession of sin and turns it into a moment of great rejoicing. Our sins strip us of our dignity. God clothes us with his grace and peace. Nothing can make God stop loving us. In fact, as Paul says, "God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Rom 5: 8).

When Jesus preached such great love to sinners, the self-righteous took scandal. But not the tax-collector and the prostitutes (cf Mt 21: 31). They recognized in his ready forgiveness of even their worst sins that God was drawing them back to Himself. The self-righteous would not acknowledge their sins. They did not accept the free gift of God's forgiveness offered in Christ. But others, like Zacchaeus and the woman caught in adultery, did and found peace.

Through the ministry of the Church, God offers us his forgiveness in Christ Crucified and Risen. In the great sacrament of Reconciliation, God is already running to meet us. He wants to welcome us. He wants to exchange our dirty rags of prideful self-indulgence with the righteousness of Christ Crucified. He wants to bring us back into the joy of his home and into the fellowship of his Church. He longs to see us reconciled with Himself and with others.

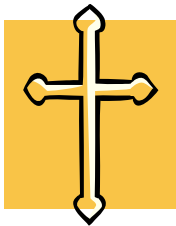
Like the prodigal son barely able to confess his sins, we, at times, are ashamed and even afraid to name those evils that separate us from God who loves us so much. But the Father is not ashamed to recognize us as his own son or daughter. He longs to wrap his arms around us. He is waiting to welcome us to home. Now is the time to meet the Lord in Confession and know the joy of coming home. May the Lord who calls us to be one with him lead us through repentance into the embrace of his love.

<http://welcometohomehealing.org>

+ Arthur J. Serratelli

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## LENTEN REGULATIONS – FAST AND ABSTINENCE FOR THE 2017 LENTEN SEASON



With the beginning of the Holy Season of Lent, the Church proclaims anew Christ's call to penance and conversion of Life. "Any who wish to come after me, must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me." (Mt 16, 24)

The entire season of Lent, from Ash Wednesday, March 1, 2017 to the Mass of the Lord's Supper exclusive, April 13, 2017 is a penitential season, a time for self-denial, prayers and Christian charity. (*Instruction on the calendar and Liturgical year (ICEL translation)*).

"The Easter Triduum begins with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil and closes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday." The Fast of Good Friday differs from that of Ash Wednesday. As a paschal Fast required by the Church, the instruction recommends that it extend past Friday to the Easter Vigil. "On Good Friday and, if possible, on Holy Saturday until the Easter Vigil, the Easter Fast is observed everywhere.

During this season Catholics are encouraged to celebrate Eucharist frequently, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, participate in Lenten Devotions and the Stations of the Cross, read the Scriptures prayerfully and perform acts of self-denial, charity and works of mercy.

The specific discipline of the Church of the United States regarding penitential days is as follows:

1. The days of fast and abstinence are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
2. The Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence.
3. The Fridays of the year, outside of Lent, are designated as days of penance, but each individual may substitute for the traditional abstinence from meat some other practice of voluntary self-denial as penance. This may be physical mortification or acts of religion, charity or Christian witness.

Those between the ages of 18 and 59 are obliged to fast; by this obligation the individual is permitted only one full meal in the day. From the age of 14 all are obliged to abstain. The law of abstinence forbids eating meat, but not eggs, milk products, or condiments of any kind even though made from animal fat.

The obligation to observe the laws of fast and abstinence "substantially" or as a whole is a serious obligation. Failure to observe any penitential day in itself is not considered serious. It is the failure to observe any penitential days at all or a substantial number of such days, which is considered serious. The time for fulfilling the paschal precept (Easter Duty) extends from the First Sunday of Lent, March 5, 2017 to Trinity Sunday, June 11, 2017.

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## Is Lent all about repentance and fasting?

Lent is meant to be a season that prepares our hearts for the celebration of Easter, much like Advent prepares us for Christmas. Traditionally, such preparation has been sought through focusing on repentance and fasting, which often makes people think that Lent is a sad or depressing season...and nothing could be further from the truth! Repentance and fasting should lead us to joy in Jesus! Lent should lead us to the joy of Easter! But, how exactly does that work?

At the beginning of the Lent Season a priest puts ashes on our forehead. The Ashes remind us of our sins and its penalty, death...but, using them to make the sign of the cross reminds us that we have a Savior to turn to who has defeated sin and death! We use dust, the sign of our deserved death, to make a cross, the sign our death is defeated. It is a beautiful picture of the Gospel. It is a beautiful reminder that repentance is meant to lead us to the cross...to Jesus...to joy in him.

Repentance reminds us that we are sinful and in need of a Savior. Without a Savior, we would be left under the just penalty of sin...which is death. We need someone to repay for our sins by dying in our place...and...we need that person to defeat death by rising again. In other words, we need Jesus. We also need to follow Jesus in the way of the cross in order to share in the joy of victory of Christ's death and resurrection.

Fasting seems like an outdated ascetic practice reserved for medieval monasteries. How does fasting engage our hearts and reveal our need for Jesus? Fasting, typically, involves removing something that is normally present in our life. Most commonly it is food, but people also fast from social media, surfing internet, watching television..., nearly anything..., but the point is we remove something that leaves a void. We notice that it is gone, and yet, life goes on without it. Our life didn't depend upon that thing after all. Fasting reminds us that we are not truly dependent on the things we think we are and helps us realize that we are truly dependent on Jesus! As our body hungers for food to satisfy our stomach, we are reminded that the only thing that can truly satisfy our deepest hunger, the hunger of our souls, is Christ! He is the one we need...the one who died and rose again to quench the thirst of our hearts and satisfy the hunger of our spirit with Him! So by practicing fast we realize that it detaches us from our comfort, and our ego and it opens us for Jesus who is our Savior and who can grant us true joy of Easter!

In this season of Lent, we should not forget about almsgiving that opens us for the need of the poor. All human beings were created in image of God and Jesus died for all people so whenever we help poor we serve Jesus who dwells in this person. So almsgiving reflects on our brotherhood with the poor of Jesus' family and reminds us that Resurrected Christ is all our treasure.

Repentance, fasting and almsgiving should be supported by the prayer that purifies our intentions and relates all we do to God. Through the prayer, Jesus gives us spiritual strength and increases the growth in love of God and others.

Let this season of Lent increase our faith, strengthen our love and lead us to the joy of Easter!

.....Fr. Jan

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### **PIZZA NIGHT WITH BISHOP!**

If you are a young man in high school or college, or even older, come join Bishop Serratelli and priests from the Diocese of Paterson for adoration, reflection, fellowship...and of course, pizza on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 at Pope John XXIII High School in Sparta from 7:00 – 9:00pm. For more information, please contact the Vocation Office at 973-777-8818 ext. 711.

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### **FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

#### **First Reading: Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7**

This passage from Genesis narrates the creation of man, the temptation by the serpent, and the fall of Adam and Eve.

#### **Second Reading: Romans 5:12-19**

Paul tells the Romans that Adam's disobedience brought sin and death to the world, but Christ's dying on the cross for us will bring us salvation and life.

#### **Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11**

In preparation for His ministry, Jesus goes into the desert to fast and pray for 40 days. There He is tempted by the devil to give evidence of His miraculous powers, but Jesus resists the devil saying, "Away with you Satan! You shall do homage to the Lord your God; Him alone shall you adore."