

# Our Lady of Victories Church

(serving Harrington Park, River Vale and the Pascack/Northern Valley)  
150 Harriot Avenue, Harrington Park, New Jersey

www.olvhp.org

## WELCOME

To the Parish Family of  
**OUR LADY OF VICTORIES**  
(THE LITTLE CHURCH WITH THE BIG HEART)

### COME WORSHIP WITH US

Rev. Wojciech B. Jaskowiak  
*Pastor*

Mr. Thomas Lagatol Mr. Albert McLaughlin  
*Deacons*

#### PARISH OFFICE

Maria Hellrigel - *Parish Secretary*

**201-768-1706**

Religious Education (CCD)  
Susan Evarella Denise Coulter (*LSEC*)

**201-768-1400**

Sr. Elizabeth Holler, SC Sr. Mary Corrigan, SC  
*In Residence-Convent*

Selena Piazza  
Lesia Rossmann  
*Ministers of Music*

Elizabeth Gulfo  
Martin Coyne II  
*Parish Trustees*

Jorden Pedersen Esq.  
*President Parish Council*

Jon Fischer CFA  
*Chairman Finance Committee*

#### Special Masses:

**First Friday:** 6:00pm Confessions followed by Devotions & Mass

**First Saturday:** 8:00am Mass of Immaculate Heart of Mary

**First Saturday:** 12:00pm Mass for Souls in Purgatory

#### Novenas prayed after 8:00 a.m. Mass:

**Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal:** Monday

**St. Jude and St. Anthony:** Wednesday

**Infant of Prague:** 25th of the month

**St. Peregrine:** First Friday of the Month

**Rosary:** Recited M - Sat after 8:00am & after 12:00 Noon Mass

#### OLV Adoration Schedule

\* 2nd and 4th Tuesdays from after the 12 noon Mass until 3PM

\* Every Thursday Holy hour 7-8PM

\* Every Friday Adoration 12:30PM until 3PM

\* First Friday Adoration 12:30PM (after 12 Noon Mass),  
6PM confessions, 6:30PM devotions, concludes with 7PM Mass

**SUNDAY, March 22, 2020 A.D.**  
**4th SUNDAY OF LENT**



#### THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE/CONFESSION:

Monday - Friday 7:30am - 7:50am.

First Friday at 6:00pm - 6:50pm

Saturday at 11:00a.m.-Noon; 3:00pm -3:40pm

#### THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM:

To register for Baptismal preparation and Baptism,  
call the rectory.

#### THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION:

Call the Religious Ed Office for requirements/class schedule.

#### THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY:

Please call the rectory for an appointment.

#### THE SACRAMENT OF THE SICK/LAST RITES:

Sick calls at any time in emergency.

#### THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS AND VOCATIONS:

Anyone contemplating a vocation to the Priesthood or Religious  
Life should contact the Vocations Office at 973.497.4365.

**Latin Mass every Sunday 8:15AM**  
**Spanish Mass every Sunday 1PM**



Phone: 201-768-1706  
Address: 81 Lynn St.  
Email: olvrectory.hp@gmail.com

OLV Rectory  
201-768-3962

Religious Education  
201-768-1400  
155 Parkway  
olvhpccd@gmail.com

OLV Convent  
201-768-1705  
145 Parkway

### Fr. Wojciech's Corner

"For we are reduced, O Lord, (...) brought low". It's a quote from the reading from last Tuesday from the Book of Daniel. These words are words of prayer of the 3 young men in the fiery furnace during the time of Exile. How appropriate for these days are these words. **REDUCED! Our lives have become reduced.** As I am writing this corner, I do not even know if we will have Masses on the weekend. We are being reduced. Yet, as these 3 young men were praying from the midst of flames and from the midst of being exiled, from the midst of being reduced, they prayed **BLESSING God**. That prayer became so famous that still today in the catacombs you could find the depictions of these 3 young men WALKING in the midst of flames and blessing God. One of the lines of blessing was *fire and heat bless the Lord*. By blessing they knew they will submit all the curse of the flames to God. And guess what, God has delivered them. Their prayer brought them true freedom. The power of blessing takes curse away.

Last Sunday, as I was sitting in church all alone, too ALONE, I read a beautiful story about the plague in 591 Rome, see details below. And now we have in our Church the image of Mary that St. Gregory the Great brought around. Let us not forget she is **OUR LADY OF VICTORIES**. Now that we have no more excuse that we do not have time to pray, let prayer be our refuge. May She bring us victory with this particular enemy. One day even coronavirus will have to submit and bless God.

One great way to spend time is reading. There is a great article on <http://newadvent.org/> about a nun who for 29 years was social distancing. She gives great tips about staying home.

Several people have asked me what to do with collection. Please send your contribution via mail. Thank you for all your help.

We will be in touch by email or our parish website. Let us pray for each other, especially for our elderly.

### **SPECIAL ROSARY**

meditating on the 7 Sorrows of Mary

**Wednesdays-3:00PM** before Statue of Mary outside.

"All the greatest pains become sweet for whoever looks at Jesus Christ on the Cross." – **St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi**

**TRIP TO OUR LADY OF MT CARMEL SHRINE** scheduled for **March 27—CANCELLED**

**Spiritual Communion** composed by *Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val*

As I cannot this day enjoy the happiness of assisting at the holy Mysteries, O my God! I transport myself in spirit at the foot of Thine altar; I unite with the Church, which by the hands of the priest, offers Thee Thine adorable Son in the Holy Sacrifice; I offer myself with Him, by Him, and in His Name. I adore, I praise, and thank Thee, imploring Thy mercy, invoking Thine assistance, and presenting Thee the homage I owe Thee as my Creator, the love due to Thee as my Savior.

Apply to my soul, I beseech Thee, O merciful Jesus, Thine infinite merits; apply them also to those for whom I particularly wish to pray. I desire to communicate spiritually, that Thy Blood may purify, Thy Flesh strengthen, and Thy Spirit sanctify me. May I never forget that Thou, my divine Redeemer, hast died for me; may I die to all that is not Thee, that hereafter I may live eternally with Thee. Amen.



### **Plague in Rome 591**

**Plague in Rome ends after Pope St. Gregory the Great leads a procession with a painting of Our Lady by St. Luke (591)**

The Abbot Orsini wrote: "On this day, in the year 591, St. Gregory the Great, having had the picture of Our Lady, which was painted by St. Luke, carried in procession, the plague ceased at Rome."

The miseries that afflicted Rome in the year 591 were substantial. The Gothic War between the Byzantine Empire and the Goths had substantially depopulated Italy, so much so that a Germanic tribe of Lombards had entered the peninsula and established their own kingdom. They were pagans and Arians who did not respect Catholics, burning the famous Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino and pillaging the land at will.

The instability and warfare caused famine in large regions, though Rome was still able to obtain grain by sea. Then came earthquakes and flooding to further the suffering, and from this plague Rome was not immune. The banks of the Tiber overflowed, and when the waters did not recede, all of the low-lying lands became swamps that brought death and plague. The disease struck with such rapidity that the victim would often die shortly after realizing he had contracted the disease, although there were some who sickened but recovered. Our custom of saying, "God Bless you," to someone who sneezes came about at this time, for sneezing was one of the signs that someone had contracted the disease

Even the Roman Pontiff died of the plague on February 7th, 590. His successor was Pope Saint Gregory the Great, who was both a humble and pious man. It would be an understatement to say he did not want the honor of being the next pope, but he

did do everything in his power to try to save his people. He understood that the plague was a chastisement from God, and encouraged the faithful to repent of their sins and pray for deliverance while he and the religious cared for the people of Rome.

Finally, Saint Gregory called for a procession to take place at dawn on April 25th. On that day the faithful first assembled in their groups throughout Rome and then walked through the streets of the city praying and singing as they approached the church of Saint Mary Major. The plague was so potent at that time that eighty people collapsed and died as they walked toward the meeting place.

Pope Saint Gregory met them upon their arrival, joining them in prayer as he took his place with them holding aloft the miraculous image of Our Lady painted by Saint Luke the Evangelist. As the procession neared the Vatican the participants all saw Saint Michael the archangel standing upon the cupola of Hadrian's mausoleum as he sheathed his flaming sword. It was a sign that the chastisement had come to an end, and at once the heaviness in the air abated and the air itself seemed to freshen and clear. Indeed, at that moment the plague ended as the faithful rejoiced and lifted up their voices to thank the Mother of God.

*"Regina Coeli laetare, Alleluia! (Queen of heaven, rejoice, Alleluia!)*

*Quia quem meruisti portare, Alleluia! (Son whom you merited to bear, Alleluia!) Resurrexit sicut dixit, Alleluia! (He has risen as He said, Alleluia!)*

Plague in Rome 591

**Pray for Those in the Military**

**US Army**

Captain Ben Clemente  
RRT Specialist James Crumb  
Specialist Peter Dippolito  
Major Michael Franson  
Sergeant First Class Charles Greene  
Captain Shawn Linn  
Lieutenant Gigi McElroy  
Colonel John McLaughlin  
Captain John G. Miele

**US Air Force**

Chief Master Sergeant Shawn Llewellyn

**US Marine Corps.**

Corporal Shanna Bennett  
Corporal Matthew Brady  
1st Lieutenant Ryan Colomeo  
Lance Corporal Thomas lafrate  
Corporal Joseph Levine

**US Navy**

Lt. Commander Julia Cheringal  
Ensign Jon Clemente  
Lieutenant Joseph Jaeger  
Lieutenant Andrew Jaeger  
OS2 Daniel T. LoVecchio

**Prayer for the Safety of Soldiers**

Almighty and eternal God, those who take refuge in You will be glad and forever will shout for joy. Protect these soldiers as they discharge their duties. Protect them with the shield of Your strength and keep them safe from all evil and harm. May the power of Your love enable them to return home in safety, that with all who love them, they may ever praise You for Your loving care. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**Pray for Our Sick**

**PRAY FOR OUR SICK:** Please *Pray* in the name of **JESUS**, the Healer, that the *sick of the Parish* may be restored to health and all those who *assist and care* for the sick will be given the *strength* to continue *God's Will*: baby Cordelia, baby Emmet Fischer, baby James Amicucci, baby Jonathan, Richard Bolton, Robert Brawley, Dominic Carini, Sal Cenicola, Helen Choma, Kevin Columbo, Marie D'Ascenzo, Maryann Dean, Lorraine Degerdon, Isabelle DeLeonibus, Vincent DePaola, Marge Devitt, Carl Falasca, Jay Filippone, Marie Filippone, Mary Foley, Leslie Handler, Amy Hartwell, Peter Kellar, Milan Krupa, Mary Lowe, James McGarry, Robert Milli, Gianna Moscatello, John Pal, Joyanna Peros, John Peterson Jr, Marie Piazza, Terry Pommert, Canice Prince, Louise Ricciardi, Vincent Ricciardi, Veronica Romanchuk, Beth Sacco, Mike Tobia, Eric Unger, Brian, Carla, Chris, Christina, Dierdre, Edward, Elba, Fiona, Jennifer, Joann, Lisa, Liz, Lucas, Lynn, Michael, Patrick, Paul, Peter, Robert, Roseann, Sean, Sharon.

**HOMEBOUND**

If you or anyone you know is homebound – even for a short duration of time - please contact the rectory so I or an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion can be scheduled to bring the Eucharist to the sick and homebound. **Let us not wait until the death of someone to look for a priest.**

**SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

We are constantly under attack and tempted by the forces of EVIL. Every Tuesday afternoon from 2:00-3:15PM members of OLV parish meet and pray the Marian Novena which focuses on this daily battle. All are welcome. Join us.

**Will you GIVE UP your Time to Adore the Lord this Lent?**

Thursday Holy Hour at 7PM & Friday 12:30PM-3PM.

When great masterpieces of art are restored, layers and layers of the overlay are removed before the real painting is found. So it is with our sins. We ask God to take off one coat after another of sin and pretense until His real image is visible again. - **Mother Mary Francis from A Time of Renewal**

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**PSALM 91 vs COVID19**

“Even if the world were to capsize, if everything were to become dark, hazy, tumultuous, God would still be with us.”

- Padre Pio

**Mass Intentions**

**Monday, March 23–St. Turibius De Mogrovejo of Spain**

8:00 Jorden Pedersen Sr. R/b the Pedersen Family  
12:00 Stanton and Vollmers Family R/b the Foley Family

**Tuesday, March 24–St. Irenaeus of Sirmium, Bishop**

8:00 Walburga Gansleben R/b Monika Senicar  
12:00 Anna Lucia Arias R/b Maria Arias

**Wednesday, March 25 – The Annunciation of Our Lord**

8:00 Jack Romano – 10th Anniversary R/b Debbie Romano  
12:00 Irene Ulisse R/b Don Ulisse

**Thursday, March 26–St. Braulio–Bishop of Saragossa, Spain**

8:00 Roy Kaelber R/b Tom and Jeanne Hennessey  
12:00 Intentions of Fr. Wojciech Jaskowiak R/b Joan Crowley

**Friday, March 27–St. John of Egypt – Hermit**

8:00 Stanley Wisniewski R/b Sr. Elizabeth  
12:00 Marie Romano R/b Tenafly Paras

**Saturday, March 28 –St. Tutilo of France – Monk**

8:00 Evelyn Pedersen R/b the Pedersen Family  
12:00 James Gaffney R/b Joan Gaffney  
4:00 Mr. and Mrs. James Laughlin R/b the Villavecchia Family  
5:00 Angela and Dominick DeVito R/b Olsen and Strasser Families

**Sunday, March 29 – St. Joseph of Arimathea**

7:30 Anna Lucia Arias R/b Maria Arias  
8:15 Intentions of Fr. Paul Prevosto and Staff  
9:30 Bernard Kenny III R/b Jorden Pedersen  
10:45 Rev. Jerry Ikalowych R/b OLV CCD  
12:00 Assunta Kelly R/b Kathryn Sutter  
1:00 People of the Parish  
6:00 Marie Quirk R/b the McLarnon Family  
7:00 Michael B. Ryan R/b Dennis and Kathleen Falotico

**Sanctuary Memorials**

**The Sanctuary Lamp** burns this week for the **repose of the soul of**

**Michael Torre**, r/b Jim and Lois Toolen.

**The Blessed Virgin Mary Votive Lamp** burns this week for the **repose of the soul of Marie Heil**, r/b Bob and Dolores Cavagnet.

**The Saint Joseph Votive Lamp** burns this week for a **special intention**, r/b Julia Dalton.

**Sanctuary Offerings**

**The Bread and Wine, Bl. Virgin Mary and St. Joseph Votive Lamps, and Sanctuary Lamp** in Church may be dedicated on a weekly basis. And the Altar Flowers may be memorialized. Call OLV rectory for information 201-768-1706.

**New to the area?** If you are, why not join our ever-growing Parish family. Stop by the Rectory any weekday and meet Maria and register to become a member of the OLV family.

**PLEASE**, if you change your address or phone number, let us know!

**STEWARDSHIP My Family—My Parish—My Responsibility**

Did you ever notice that the price of a movie is now over \$10, milk is almost \$3 a gallon, and there is no longer such a thing as penny candy? The price of everything around us has increased, but has your weekly donation to the Church ever increased? That one dollar donation doesn't buy as much as it once did. As your expenses increase, so do those of the Church, but we rely on your generosity to meet our expenses. Please be generous. Thank you.

“Don't spend your energies on things that generate worry, anxiety and anguish. Only one thing is necessary: Lift up your spirit and love God.”

- Padre Pio

**2020 LENTEN REGULATIONS**

The days of both Fast and Abstinence during Lent are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil (on Holy Saturday night) as the "paschal fast" to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, and to prepare ourselves to share more fully and to celebrate more readily His Resurrection. The other Fridays of Lent are days of Abstinence.

On a day of Fast, only one (1) full meal is permitted, and **two (2) smaller meals, which, if added together, would not exceed the main meal in quantity.** Those between the ages of 18 and 59 are obliged to fast.

On a day of Abstinence, no meat may be eaten. Those who have reached the age of 14 are obliged by the law of abstinence.

The obligation to observe the laws of Fast and abstinence "substantially", or as a whole, is a serious obligation.

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.

The time for fulfilling the Paschal Precept (Easter Duty\*) extends from the **First Sunday of Lent, March 1, 2020 to the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity, June 7, 2020.**

\*Canon 920, §1. *All the faithful, after they have been initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, are bound by the obligation of receiving Communion at least once a year.*

**Annual Appeal - Shining the Light of Christ**

Your gift supports ministries and programs including Family Life Office, international Missions, Catechetical Office, Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Catholic Charities, hospital and Prison Chaplaincy, Ministry with Persons with Disabilities, Respect Life Office, seminarian education, priest health care, continuing education and formation for priests. Our 2020 parish goal is \$58,285.

**Arrivederci OLV, Ciao Roma**

Interested in our parish pilgrimage to Italy this October? Contact Deacon Al at [deaconalatolv@gmail.com](mailto:deaconalatolv@gmail.com).

**Relevant Radio—1430 AM**

Tune in to Relevant Radio, the largest Catholic radio network in the nation. Listen online [www.relevantradio.com](http://www.relevantradio.com) and on the free mobile app.

"Know that even when you are in the kitchen, our Lord moves amidst the pots and pans." **St. Teresa of Avila**

**Televised Mass**

Mass is televised live by EWTN Sunday and every morning at 8AM then reruns it at Noon. Catholic Faith Network televises Mass live on Sunday at 11AM and weekdays at 8:30AM.

**Kidz Korner Answers**

1. An angel came to Mary to announce she was chosen to be the Mother of Jesus.
2. Gabriel
3. Nazareth.
4. Her cousin Elizabeth.
5. St. John the Baptist.

Remember ... crisis  
not only an obstacle, also an opportunity.  
— **Fr. Wojciech**

**2020 Wedding Anniversary Masses:** The Archdiocese of Newark is preparing the annual tradition of honoring those couples who will celebrate five, twenty-five and fifty years of Christian marriage in 2020. Couples deserving of such recognition are urged to participate. These liturgies will be celebrated at 3pm at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark: Sunday, April 19 - 5 & 25 years / Sunday May 3 - 50 years. Call OLV Rectory to register 201-768-1706.

**Family Promise Super 50/50 Cash Raffle.** For info or to purchase a ticket visit [www.bergenfamilypromise.org](http://www.bergenfamilypromise.org) or call 201-833-8009.

**Breakfast Cereal Collection** during March. Benefits St. Cecilia Food Pantry. Donations may be left in church or rectory garage.

**First Communion Dresses/Suits Needed.** Please help to make a child's First Communion Day one that will be cherished by donating any Communion dresses, suits, head pieces or shoes. Please bring all articles, clean, on hangers, and covered in plastic to St. John the Baptist Church in Hillsdale by April 1st or call Kathy at 201-666-4185. Monetary donations also accepted. If you or anyone you know may need an outfit, please contact Kathy.

**40 Days for Life:** Please consider giving one hour per week during Lent to join us in prayer at a modified vigil for the *40 Days for Life* this Lent on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, 7AM-2PM at 10 Zabriskie St., Hackensack. To sign-up please contact Margaret at 201-805-0937.

**Candlelight Prayer Service for Life,** April 9, 11:15PM-12:15AM (Holy Thursday into Good Friday), at Women's Choice, 10 Zabriskie St., Hackensack, NJ, led by Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. For details contact Margaret Scully: 201-805-0937 or [scullyfam@yahoo.com](mailto:scullyfam@yahoo.com).

**Stephanie Cywinski-O'Brien Scholarship** Applications are now being accepted from parish 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students attending a Catholic grammar school, as well as Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors (secondary consideration) attending a Catholic high school and continuing their education at a Catholic school. Applications and eligibility requirements are available at the parish office and/or on the parish website. Applications are due April 10 with decisions due on or about May 1.

**Clothing Bins**

Please help Catholic Charities to continue our mission by contributing to the donation bins on the church grounds. We need all forms of used clothing, small appliances, shoes, linens, sheets, towels, stuffed animals, novels, and children's books. Thank you!

**Save Used Eyeglasses**

The Knights of Columbus collects used and old eyeglasses for the less fortunate. Any donations may be left in the basket in the back of Church.

**Suggested things to GIVE and**

**GIVE UP during Lent**

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Give</b> thanks              | <b>Give up</b> complaining             |
| <b>Give</b> compliments         | <b>Give up</b> harsh judgments         |
| <b>Give</b> forgiveness         | <b>Give up</b> revenge                 |
| <b>Give</b> encouragement       | <b>Give up</b> negativism              |
| <b>Give</b> hope                | <b>Give up</b> despair                 |
| <b>Give</b> attention to virtue | <b>Give up</b> sin                     |
| <b>Give</b> time to prayer      | <b>Give up</b> wasting your time       |
| <b>Give</b> respect             | <b>Give up</b> prejudice               |
| <b>Give</b> help                | <b>Give up</b> selfishness             |
| <b>Give</b> time to God         | <b>Give up</b> what keeps you from God |

"Hold your eyes on God and leave the doing to Him. That is all the doing you have to worry about." **St. Jane Frances de Chantal**

## The Sacrament of Reconciliation Penance or Confession

Become a **better Catholic Christian** by confessing your sins in the Sacrament of **Penance** or **Reconciliation** – aka ‘**Confession**.’ While only all **mortal** sins **must** be confessed, this Rite’s sacramental grace also purges us of our lesser or venial sins. It serves as a “check-up”, helps nip sinful habits in the bud before they bloom into full-blown sins, and strengthens us against temptation and other distractions. Those guilty of mortal sin may **NOT** receive Holy Communion until they confess them to a Priest. Confession is also encouraged in *Lent* and *Advent*, before a Baptism, First Communion, or Wedding, or serving as a Sponsor or God-parent. The 4 parts are:

### CONTRITION.

To be contrite or remorseful we must know our sins, so we examine our conscience by shining God’s divine Light, found in Gospel values, the Ten Commandments, Precepts of the Church, Beatitudes and Seven Deadly Sins, into **every** aspect of our life. **If you can’t come up with any sins, ask your family or friends to help ... they know your sins!**

### CONFESSION.

Priests not only speak for God and the Church; as ‘**doctor of the soul**’ they help cure sick souls, as medical doctors help heal bodies – but only if we are totally open and honest. Begin with “**Bless me, Father, for I have sinned**” or simply say, “**Please help me**” from behind the screen or face-to-face. We may remain anonymous, but should tell our state in life (married, single, ordained, a parent, etc.), and approximate date of our last confession. List all grave, serious mortal sins **by number and kind**: abortion, adultery, etc.; a **general admission** (I’m impatient, rude, insensitive, etc.) covers all lesser sins. An **Act of Contrition** card is available in the confessional; at Penance Services we recite it from a printed program; don’t let not knowing the Act of Contrition keep you from this Sacrament of Healing!

### ABSOLUTION.

Listen as the Priest prays; make the Sign of the Cross on yourself as he imparts it on you at the end of the beautiful **Prayer of Absolution**.

### PENANCE.

To express our gratitude and offer a token of our willingness to try to avoid future sins, we perform a penance: a prayer, good deed or other sign.

## MORE EXCELLENT WAY

A brother said to an old man: “There are two brothers. One of them stays in his cell quietly, fasting for six days at a time, and imposing on himself a good deal of discipline, and the other serves the sick. Which one of them is more acceptable to God?” The old man replied: “Even if the brother who fasts six days were to hang himself up by the nose, he could not equal the one who serves the sick.” Here we learn that love is above fasting, that we must not presume to put our fasting above “the more excellent way,” the “new commandment” to love one another. **Desert Fathers**

### Cell Phones vs BIBLE CELLS

I wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phone? What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets? What if we flipped through it several time a day? What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it? What if we used it to receive messages from the text? What if we treated it like we couldn’t live without it? What if we gave it to kids as gifts? What if we used it when we traveled? What if we used it in case of emergency? This is something to make you go...hmm...where is my Bible? Oh, and one more thing. Unlike our cell phone, we don’t have to worry about our Bible being disconnected because Jesus already paid the bill. Makes you stop and think “where are my priorities?” And no dropped calls!

## Prayer, Fasting and Mercy

by St. Peter Chrysologus, *Early Church Father*

*One of the greatest preachers of the early church explains the key penitential practices of Lent - prayer, fasting, and almsgiving or mercy. St. Peter Chrysologus declares that prayer knocks at the door, fasting obtains, mercy receives. He shows how prayer, mercy and fasting are one, and they give life to each other. This reading is used by the Roman Catholic Church for the Office of Readings for Tuesday of the 3rd week of Lent and it excerpted from Sermo 43: PL 52, 320, 322. St. Peter Chrysologus was the bishop of Ravenna, Italy in the middle of the 5th century. His sermons were so inspiring that he was given the title "Chrysologus" (Greek for "Golden-worded") and was eventually declared a "Doctor of the Church."*

There are three things, my brethren, by which faith stands firm, devotion remains constant, and virtue endures. They are prayer, fasting and mercy. Prayer knocks at the door, fasting obtains, mercy receives. Prayer, mercy and fasting: these three are one, and they give life to each other.

Fasting is the soul of prayer, mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. Let no one try to separate them; they cannot be separated. If you have only one of them or not all together, you have nothing. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others, you open God’s ear to yourself.

When you fast, see the fasting of others. If you want God to know that you are hungry, know that another is hungry. If you hope for mercy, show mercy. If you look for kindness, show kindness. If you want to receive, give. If you ask for yourself what you deny to others, your asking is a mockery.

Let this be the pattern for all men when they practice mercy: show mercy to others in the same way, with the same generosity, with the same promptness, as you want others to show mercy to you.

Therefore, let prayer, mercy and fasting be one single plea to God on our behalf, one speech in our defense, a threefold united prayer in our favor.

Let us use fasting to make up for what we have lost by despising others. Let us offer our souls in sacrifice by means of fasting. There is nothing more pleasing that we can offer to God, as the psalmist said in prophecy: *A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; God does not despise a bruised and humbled heart.*

Offer your soul to God, make him an oblation of your fasting, so that your soul may be a pure offering, a holy sacrifice, a living victim, remaining your own and at the same time made over to God. Whoever fails to give this to God will not be excused, for if you are to give him yourself you are never without the means of giving.

To make these acceptable, mercy must be added. Fasting bears no fruit unless it is watered by mercy. Fasting dries up when mercy dries up. Mercy is to fasting as rain is to earth. However much you may cultivate your heart, clear the soil of your nature, root out vices, sow virtues, if you do not release the springs of mercy, your fasting will bear no fruit.

When you fast, if your mercy is thin your harvest will be thin; when you fast, what you pour out in mercy overflows into your barn. Therefore, do not lose by saving, but gather in by scattering. Give to the poor, and you give to yourself. You will not be allowed to keep what you have refused to give to others.

## KIDZ KORNER

1. What is the Annunciation?
2. What was the name of the angel who appeared to Mary?
3. Where did the angel appear to Mary at the Annunciation?
4. Who did Mary visit after the Annunciation?
5. Elizabeth gave birth to which Saint?