

Our Lady of Victories Church

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

www.olvhp.org

WELCOME

To the Parish Family of
OUR LADY OF VICTORIES

(THE LITTLE CHURCH WITH THE BIG HEART)

Parish Office 201-768-1706

COME WORSHIP WITH US

Rev. Wojciech B. Jaskowiak
Pastor

Rev. Edmond P. Ilg
Parochial Vicar

Mr. Thomas Lagatol Mr. Albert McLaughlin
Deacons

Sunday, March 21, 2021 A.D.
*Fifth Sunday of Lent
In the Year of Saint Joseph*



Special
Palm Sunday OUTDOOR Mass
10:45AM
in our Parking Lot.
Please bring a folding chair.
That Mass will replace the Mass in the
Church and in the Gym.

Lenten Confession Schedule (in lower church)

Mon-Fri March 22 - 26
7:30AM - 7:50AM

Saturday March 27 - All Day
7:30AM - 6:00PM

Palm Sunday March 28 - All Day
6:30AM - 7:00PM

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 12:00Noon Mass

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION:
Mon.-Sat.: 7:30-7:50am. Saturday: 11:00-11:50am; 3:00-3:45pm

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.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS during Lent

EVERY FRIDAY: 11:30AM & 7:00PM -in Church



Address: OLV Rectory
81 Lynn St. (Mailing)
Phone: 201-768-1706
Email: olvrectory.hp@gmail.com

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

OLV Convent
145 Parkway
201-768-1705

OLV Church physical address: 150 Harriot Ave.

Fr. Wojciech's Corner

Yesterday our confirmation students had their Confirmation retreat. Let us keep them in our prayers as they are getting closer to their Confirmation day.

This week we will celebrate the great Solemnity of the Annunciation. On that day Blessed Virgin Mary conceived Jesus in her womb. And that is the day the Divine Son began His life on earth. God decided to start His life on earth from the womb not from birth. Thus, Jesus sanctified the life in the womb. Fitting are the words of the prophet Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you."

People today (sadly many Catholics as well) think that it is only a lump of tissue in the womb. I have encountered so many mothers who lost their children in the womb and I wonder how come they suffer if "that" is only a "lump of tissue". Life itself (reality) proves this notion wrong. Never mind science.

I would like to commend all those who are pro-life who defend life in the womb as sacred. To all those who decided to say yes to life and carry the pregnancy, thank you. To all who said yes and suffer the loss of a child, thank you.

I would like to invite the mothers who are pregnant or who lost their child to come and join us at 12 Noon for this special Mass on the Feast of the Annunciation where we will celebrate the YES of THE MOTHER and any mother and where we will celebrate the miracle of conception and the beginning of any life on earth.

Next weekend, we will celebrate Palm Sunday and with it the entrance to Holy Week. As a way of preparation for Holy Week we will have two entire days of confessions. Please see the schedule. There is no better way than prepare for Easter by confession. It was a normal custom for the Jewish people before the Passover to rid their homes of old leaven.

Considering the possible increase in numbers, I decided to make a special outdoor 10:45AM Mass for Palm Sunday. (All other Masses will remain as usual - no need to sign-up). It will be celebrated in the Parking Lot. I encourage those who wish to attend to bring their folding chairs, stay 6 feet distant. It will replace 10:45AM Masses in the Church and in the Gym.

... and he became a singing superstar.

Once upon a time, a frightened young bride was told that she was pregnant with a blind child and that she should abort him. She refused, and the boy grew up to become a musical superstar. It may sound like a fairytale, but it's true. During an episode of Italy's Sunday talk show "Domenica in"...Edi Alighieri, mother of Andrea Bocelli, described the dramatic circumstances under which she found out she was pregnant. As Bocelli himself revealed in 2009, when Alighieri was a young newlywed, she went to the hospital with terrible stomach pains, thinking she might have appendicitis. There she was told that she was pregnant, but the baby she was carrying was already seriously disabled. He had congenital glaucoma that would render him blind, doctors told her, from birth. "They told me to abort; I refused," she was reported as saying on the program. During the show, Alighieri revealed that it was Bocelli's blindness that led him to music in the first place. When he was staying in a hospital in Torino, undergoing treatment for glaucoma, Bocelli met a Russian man who listened to symphonies all day. It was love at first listen. "He no longer remembered being in care, he was fascinated by music," his mother recalled. Bocelli, who was born in 1958, became completely blind at 12 after an accident playing soccer. Today, he is one of the world's most famous classical singers. Bocelli himself is a firm advocate of unborn children's right to life.

-Dorothy Cummings McLean/LifeSiteNews .

The Annunciation

Often in life, we find ourselves doing the right thing at the wrong time, the wrong thing at the right time or the wrong thing at the wrong time. The Annunciation is a unique story about a woman who chose to do the right thing at the right time. When the Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be the Mother of Jesus, Mary questioned how such an event could possibly pertain to her. Mary did not judge the archangel; to judge, she believed, was God's responsibility. However, Mary used her free will to question Gabriel and to ultimately decide that she would give us Jesus as our Brother. Mary, God's special blessing to Anne and Joachim, was an intelligent woman of substance. Her deliberate choice to say **YES** to God has inspired countless artists and musicians throughout the ages. Through Jesus, Mary would become the Mother of us all. St. Luke, Chapter 1, vs. 38 records Mary's FIAT, "I am the maidservant of the Lord, may it happen to me as you have said." And the angel left her. Mary's unique partnership with the Trinity began with the Annunciation. We also celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation with each Hail Mary that we pray. Mary's FIAT coupled with the Magnificat she shared with her cousin, Elizabeth, can inspire each of us to make daily choices which reflect Mary's example of consciously and freely saying **YES** to God... "Now and always."

Day of the Unborn Child

Mary's fiat marks the exact moment of the incarnation, the Word Made Flesh. By the Incarnation, Christ, the Son of God, intimately united Himself to the entire human race and revealed, in the words of John Paul II, the incomparable value of every human person.

The International **Day of the Unborn Child is observed on March 25th**. It was established by Pope St. John Paul II to coincide with the Feast of the Annunciation. St. John Paul II viewed the day as "a positive option in favor of life and the spread of a culture for life to guarantee respect for human dignity in every situation" the born and unborn.

The Angelus

Leader: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
Response: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit. Hail Mary ...
Leader: Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Response: Be it done unto me according to Thy word. Hail Mary...
Leader: And the Word was made flesh,
Response: And dwelt among us. Hail Mary ...
Leader: Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
Response: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.
Leader: Let us pray.
Response: Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by His passion and cross be brought to the glory of His resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. A father is ill with syphilis; the mother has tuberculosis. They have four children. One has already died, one is blind, one is deaf, and one has tuberculosis. The mother is pregnant again. Would you recommend an abortion? If you answered "yes," you would have recommended the death of Ludwig Von Beethoven.
2. A baby is born crippled and a dwarf. If the outcome had been predicted in advance would you have recommended an abortion? If you answered "yes," you would have recommended the death of the poet Alexander Pope.
3. A white man raped a 13-year-old black girl and impregnated her. Would you recommend an abortion? If you answered "yes," you would have recommended the death of gospel singer Ethel Waters.
4. A poor teen-age girl is pregnant and unmarried. Her father disowns her and her child. She would name the child after its father and raise the child herself, while bearing the disgrace of illegitimacy. Would you recommend an abortion? If you answered "yes", you would have recommended the death of Fr. Joseph Mohr, the lyricist and composer of "Silent Night".
5. A teenage girl is pregnant. She is not married, and her fiancé is not the father of the baby. Would you recommend an abortion? If you answered "yes," you would have recommended the death of Jesus Christ.

Mother/Child Baby Item Collection March 20 & 21 - to benefit New Hope. Items needed: Diapers sizes 3,4,5 & 6; Pull-ups size 4-5T; A&D ointment, diaper rash ointment, baby shampoo, baby lotion, baby wash, AVENT baby bottles - please leave donations in the lower church. ALSO \$25 Shoprite gift cards may be dropped in the box in front of the Blessed Mother in Church.

Please donate First Communion Dresses, Suits shirts, headpieces or shoes. Please bring all articles, clean, on hangers, and covered in plastic, to St. John the Baptist Church, Hillsdale on April 17th from 10AM – 4PM, or call Kathy at 201-666-4185. Monetary donations will also be accepted. This collection will be held on One Day Only. If anyone may need an outfit, please contact Kathy. Thank You!

NEED BAPTISM, FIRST COMMUNION OR CONFIRMATION

If you want to become a Roman Catholic or complete your Initiation into the Church, the RCIA is for you! For more information, phone the rectory. *Adult Catholics* who have not yet celebrated *Confirmation* should also contact the rectory for preparation class information.

CONVALIDATION

Best way to start your married life is with God. In Sacramental Marriage God's own divine life can be experienced and lived. Were you married only civilly by a mayor or justice of the peace and would now like to be married in the Catholic Church? Call Fr. Wojciech for details.

Jesus asked one thing from us!!!

On His last night of earth (Holy Thursday) Jesus asked His disciples one thing – to stay awake with Him for one hour. OLV has Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Tuesday and Thursday - 8:30AM to 11:50AM.

2021 Annual Appeal Please prayerfully consider making a donation. To date OLV pledges total \$30,965 toward our goal of \$65,143. Appeal envelopes are available in church. Please submit your donations to the OLV rectory, so we can ensure that our parish receives proper credit - checks payable to 2021 Annual Appeal. Visit the Archdiocesan Website for information at 2021 Annual Appeal | Archdiocese of Newark (rcan.org). Link is available on our website.

Dominican College Virtual Information Session for Undergraduate & Graduate Degrees, Wednesday, March 24, 2021, 5:30-7:30PM. www.dc.edu.

Please join us at Immaculate Conception Church in Norwood for the musical meditation, **Solace: A Spiritual Journey Toward Easter in Song**, March 25 at 7PM. Limited seating and live-stream. To register or for info, email immaculateconception@iccnorwood.org. and include the number of people attending, your email and phone number.

2021 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, February 21, 2021 to the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity, May 30, 2021.** *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.*

Mass Intentions

Monday, March 22 - St. Nicholas Owen, Martyr

8:00 Joseph George Longo R/b the Bentivegna Family
12:00 George W. Smith R/b the Oakley Family

Tuesday, March 23–St. Turibius De Mogrovejo of Spain

8:00 Jorden Pedersen Sr. R/b the Pedersen Family
12:00 Irena Wozniak R/b Joan Crowley

Wednesday, March 24–St. Irenaeus of Sirmium, Bishop

8:00 Ante Markic R/b Michael and Barbara Fizulich
12:00 Marjorie Saari R/b Cathy Ryan

Thursday, March 25 – THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

8:00 Jack Romano R/b Debbie Romano
12:00 Anna Lucia Arias R/b Maria Arias

Friday, March 26–St. Braulio–Bishop of Saragossa, Spain

8:00 Fr. Edward V. Duffy R/b the Barrett Family
12:00 Nell, John and Michael Sullivan R/b Anne Thomson

Saturday, March 27–St. John of Egypt – Hermit

8:00 Mary Marlborough R/b the Barrett Family
12:00 Stanley Wisniewski R/b Sr. Elizabeth
4:00 Mr. and Mrs. James Laughlin R/b the Villavecchia Family
5:00 Liberato and Jenny Sogliuzzo and Family R/b Jean Avitable

Sunday, March 28 –PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

7:00 Stan and Peter Haring
8:00 Deceased priests of OLV
9:30 Evelyn Pedersen R/b the Pedersen Family
10:45 James Gaffney R/b Joan Gaffney
10:45 Gym John D. Kaberle Jr. R/b Tom and Ria Ragusa
12:00 John Scrivanich R/b the Busanic Family
1:00 People of the Parish
6:00 Lourdes Araujo R/b Tony and Mary Yorio

The Sanctuary Lamp will burn this week for the **repose of the soul of Ellen Keohane-4th Anniversary**, r/b Tim Keohane, Tish and Michael Oates and Family.

The Blessed Virgin Mary Votive Lamp will burn this week for the **repose of the soul of Ante Markic**, r/b Michael and Barbara Fizulich.

The Saint Joseph Votive Lamp will burn this week for the **souls in Purgatory.**

My Parish - COVID-19 - My Responsibility

We thank all those who so generously continue to support our parish by mailing in your donations. At the same time, we understand that some have been laid off from their work or experiencing decreased income and are unable to continue their donations at this time. *Donations/offering envelopes may be mailed to: OLV Rectory, 81 Lynn Street, Harrington Park, NJ 07640. Thank you for your generosity.*

NEW TO THE AREA? If you are, why not join our ever-growing Parish family. You may register via our parish website olvhp.org. Go to tab "About" and then "Parish Registration". PLEASE, if you change your address or phone number, let us know!

Clothing Bins: Please donate clothes, small appliances, shoes, linens, sheets, towels, stuffed animals, novels, knickknacks, toys, and children's books. Please place your donations **INSIDE** the bins (sometimes you have to push it in).

Do not leave items outside.

Array of Hope-Awakening Hearts

Check out all that we have been up to on social media & follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to stay up to date! Tune in to our *Instagram Live* Monday thru Friday @3pm for a LIVE daily *Divine Mercy Chaplet* !

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
Private First Class Sean Keohane
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
Sergeant Matthew Brady
1st Lieutenant Ryan Colomeo
Lance Corporal Thomas Iafraite
Captain Stephen Ikalowych
Corporal Joseph Levine
2nd Lieutenant J.P. Maher

US Navy

Lt. Commander Julia Cheringal
Ensign Jon Clemente
Lieutenant Joseph Jaeger
Lieutenant Andrew Jaeger

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

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, baby Joseph, 5-year old Quinn, Michael Baruch, Richard Bolton, Robert Brawley, Dominic Carini, Sal Cenicola, Helen Choma, Kevin Columbo, Paul Corbett, Marie D'Ascenzo, Maryann Dean, Lorraine Degerdon, Roseann Dennehy, Vincent DePaola, Marge Devitt, Frank Diller, Mike Donohue, Carl Falasca, Michael Fallon, Jay Filippone, Marie Filippone, Christine Flatt, Mary Foley, Leslie Handler, Amy Hartwell, Peter Kellar, Mary Lowe, James McGarry, Robert Milli, Gianna Moscatello, Natalie Niebergall, Adelaide Pakingham, John Pal, Tom Paskewich, Joan and Buddy Phalon, Marie Piazza, Canice Prince, William Ragu, Debra Rendon, Bruce Michael Ricciardi, Louise Ricciardi, Vincent Ricciardi, Veronica Romanchuk, Beth Sacco, Peggy Shedden, Aileen Vassar, Mary Warner, Maria Williams, Brian, Carla, Chris, Christina, Dierdre, Edward, Elba, Jennifer, Joann, Karen, Lauren, Lisa, Lou, Lucas, Lynn, Patrick, Paul, Peter, Robert, Sean, Sharon, Tina W., Tom.

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.

SICK OR "HOMEBOUND"

If you are sick or "homebound" (or know someone who is), and would like to have Communion, please contact the Rectory at 201-768-1706.

Suggested things to GIVE and GIVE UP during Lent

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

Litany of Humility

Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val, Secy. of State for Pope Saint Pius X

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, Hear me.

From the desire of being esteemed,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being loved...

From the desire of being extolled ...

From the desire of being honored ...

From the desire of being praised ...

From the desire of being preferred to others...

From the desire of being consulted ...

From the desire of being approved ...

From the fear of being humiliated ...

From the fear of being despised...

From the fear of suffering rebukes ...

From the fear of being calumniated ...

From the fear of being forgotten ...

From the fear of being ridiculed ...

From the fear of being wronged ...

From the fear of being suspected ...

That others may be loved more than I,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I ...

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease ...

That others may be chosen and I set aside ...

That others may be praised and I unnoticed ...

That others may be preferred to me in everything...

That others may become holier than I,

provided that I may become as holy as I should...

A Little Humor ...

Teacher: Maria, go to the map and find North America.

Maria: Here it is.

Teacher: Correct. Now Class, who discovered America?

Class: Maria.

Teacher: Clyde, your composition on "My Dog" is exactly the same as your brother's. Did you copy his?

Clyde: No Sir, it's the same dog.

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.

Relevant Radio—1430 AM

"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 Godparent. 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?