

FROM THE BISHOP: In Lent, we watch, we pray; then we try again

Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M., dedicated his 2020 Lenten reflection on the story of Peter's role in Christ's Passion. Excerpts follow:

Except for Jesus, no figure receives more attention in the Passion narratives than Peter. The evangelists differ in recounting many significant details about Jesus' final days – what he said at the Last Supper, who was present at his Crucifixion, what words he spoke from the Cross – but the four Gospels agree in relating that Peter denied Jesus three times. Nowhere else in the Passion narratives do all the Gospels so specifically converge.

... Peter's story is meant to encourage Christians who were already suffering persecution by the time the Gospels were written. His Death as a martyr, somewhere around the year 64 A.D., stood as a clear witness that, having failed initially, he eventually took up his Cross with courage and followed Jesus. Surely, in difficult times, many early Christians, like Peter, experienced their own weaknesses and failed, as we do. But the evangelists assured them that there is hope: change, growth, conversion are always possible. Can great weakness, grave failures and repentant love coexist within the same person? Peter's story says yes.



... The challenge posed to us as we begin this holy season of Lent: "watch and pray." Peter figures so prominently in the Passion narratives that he becomes a symbol of and a model for our own relationship with Christ ... Permit me to close with a prayer in the words of the second letter attributed to Peter in the New Testament: I ask the crucified and risen Lord to strengthen all of us in these days, so that we might keep our eyes fixed on him

constantly as "on a lamp shining in a dark place until the first streaks of dawn appear and the morning star rises in your hearts" (2 Pt 1:19).

Visit TrentonMonitor.com and click on FAITH & CULTURE>SEASONS & CELEBRATIONS to read the full text of the Bishop's reflection; the 2020 Lenten regulations; and lots of great ideas for a fresh take on Lent.

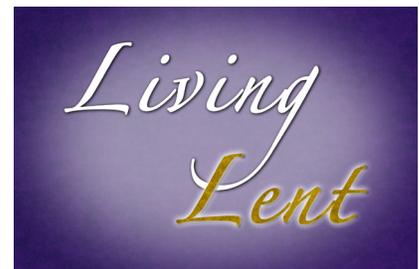
WATCH FOR DIOCESE'S NEW LENTEN VIDEO SERIES

Ten priests of the Diocese will share reflections for a new diocesan video series entitled "Living Lent."

Produced by the Department of Multimedia Production, the project will feature 2-3 minute reflections from each priest offering viewers a deeper understanding of the upcoming Penitential season.

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, the Diocese will post one new reflection in English and Spanish on each of the first five Wednesdays of Lent. The videos can be viewed on **TrentonMonitor.com** and **DioceseofTrenton.com**, as well as across diocesan social media.

The featured priests and the order in which they will appear follow: (Week 1) Msgr. Richard D. LaVerghetta/Father Javier Díaz-Muñoz; (Week 2) Father James Grogan/Father Rene Pulgarín; (Week 3) Msgr. R. Vincent Gartland/Father Neiser Cardenas; (Week 4) Father Michael Kennedy/Father Miguel D. Valle, and (Week 5) Father William J. Lago/Father Carlos Florez.



YOUTH OF DIOCESE FIND INSPIRATION AT DYC

Young Church, are you ready to be inspired today? Say Amen!"

"Amen!"

The resounding affirmation came from the more than 600 teens, youth ministers, two dozen

OVER ►

THE MONITOR NEWS UPDATE

priests and others who converged Feb. 8 on Donovan Catholic High School, Toms River, for the daylong Diocesan Youth Conference.

This year's DYC had as its theme: "Inspired – You are the light of the world," from Matthew 5:13-16. The event featured keynote addresses, a service project, lunch, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Confession and Mass with Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M.

In his homily, Bishop O'Connell encouraged the youth to be an inspiration to the world at large.

"God has inspired you, has breathed his life and love into your hearts. He has inspired you to be a 'light in the darkness' as our First Reading [Isaiah 58:7-10] reminds us 'to share your bread with the hungry, to shelter the oppressed and the homeless, to clothe the naked and not turn your back on your own' so that 'your light shall break forth like the dawn.' This is a different message than the world wants you to believe," the Bishop said.

"Today, let's all make the decision to be inspired and to live that way. Sometimes later becomes never. Do it now," he said.

INSPIRED: DYC 2020 will be featured in the March issue of The Monitor Magazine. For multimedia coverage, including photo highlights, go to TrentonMonitor.com>NEWS>YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS.

▶ **FROM THE AP'S DESK: Online and in print, Catholic press reports on a very active Church**

As any reader might observe simply from the page count of the February magazine, the first few months of the new year are a very busy time in the Church.



Setting the beginning of Lent aside for a moment, not only do we have the traditional and long-standing annual observances and commemorations – the March for Life in Washington; Catholic Schools Week; World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life; World Day of the Sick, and World Marriage Day – we now have a new day instituted by Pope Francis: Sunday of the Word of God, which was celebrated Jan. 26.

The Monitor has provided in-depth coverage on most of these special events – both in print and on the website – which leads me to point to another annual observance in the Church: Catholic Press Month. This is the first Catholic Press Month that the Diocese is promoting as a magazine, after moving away from our newspaper of 65 years this past fall. Regardless of the change in format, Catholic Press Month reminds us that the mission remains the same – to deliver authentic Catholic-based news and perspective to our diocesan community.

The upcoming March issue will be the sixth edition of this new magazine, and we are very grateful to all the readers who made this journey with us. So many of you have taken the time to reach out and let us know that you like the magazine format and the kind of content we are producing. On behalf of our team here, I can tell you that this has been very encouraging and instructive. We ask you to keep the feedback coming, and for those of you who have not yet subscribed Celebrate Catholic Press Month by ordering home delivery of the magazine and unlimited access to the website. **Visit dioceseoftrenton.org/monitor-subscriptions or call our Circulation Desk at (609) 403-7131. Thank you and be assured of our prayers for you and yours this Lent.**

– Rayanne Bennett, Associate Publisher