

St. Ambrose Parish

MARCH 15, 2020
BEEHIVE



The next time you come to church, you might want to turn off your phone. Political marketers are using cellphone data from churchgoers to target especially white Catholic and evangelicals in key states for the 2020 presidential election.

The practice is called “geofencing,” and it has become affordable and common, as retailers track shoppers at malls and political consultants harvest information from cell phones at demonstrations. It has now moved into Catholic churches, with the prize being information on Republican-trending Mass-goers.

Here’s how it works: Politically-minded geofencers capture data from the cellphones of churchgoers, and then purchase ads targeting those devices. That data can be matched against other easily obtained databases, including voter profiles, which give marketers identifying information such as names, addresses and voter registration status. Such information can be a gold mine — and more and more political campaigns have been finding it useful in the past decade.

At least one lobbying organization, CatholicVote.org, has boasted about the possibilities of using geofencing to help tip the presidential election toward Republican candidates.

“We are already building the largest Catholic voter mobilization program ever,” CatholicVote president Brian Burch wrote in a blog post last month, which boasted about his group’s efforts in geofencing. “With this mobile targeting, we are able to reach our fellow Catholics in the pews. And we can ensure that our fellow Catholic voters get the facts and hear the truth — not the latest lies peddled by the media,” he wrote.

Using geofencing, CatholicVote has already identified nearly 200,000 Catholics in Wisconsin who attended Mass at least three times in 90 days. By cross-referencing with other databases, they discovered that half of those Mass-goers are not registered to vote.

In Wisconsin — a key battleground state that Trump won by only 22,748 votes in 2016 — CatholicVote plans a “ground team” to encourage registration and voting among the Catholics identified through geofencing — with the confidence that “60-70% of them

are likely to vote like a *faithful Catholic*,” Burch wrote.

“The media is fond of talking about the generic ‘Catholic vote,’” he wrote. “But the real Catholic vote is made up of those who live the faith, and practice it. Meaning, they go to church regularly, and will bring their Catholic views on life, faith, and family with them to the ballot box.”

CatholicVote plans to use geofencing in Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Arizona and Florida in 2020, in much the same way it did in 2018 in Missouri to help defeat Democratic Sen. Claire McCaskill by calling her “anti-Catholic” for her stance on abortion.

The Ethics of electronic ‘outreach’

While targeting segments of the electorate — including religious ones — is nothing new, geofencing raises new ethical questions, especially since it treats churches like a public consumerist space and Mass-goers as subjects for potential marketing strategies.

“There is an invasiveness here that feels deeply wrong,” said Raúl Zegarra, a doctoral student in theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School. His concerns go beyond the broader issues of gathering data without real informed consent.

“We have to wonder if scrutinizing people’s spiritual lives and habits, our most trea-

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St. Joseph's Oratory in Detroit

I have been drawn often to a thought that Pope Francis expresses in his work on evangelization, *Evangelii Gaudium*. He observes that expressions of popular piety – such as novenas, pilgrimages to shrines, and other observances – often provide the faithful an opportunity to be missionaries: sharing their faith by inviting their family, friends and neighbors to participate with them in their favorite devotions. Our Holy Father exhorts forthrightly: “Let us not stifle or presume to control this missionary power! . . . Underlying popular piety, as a fruit of the inculturated Gospel, is an active evangelizing power which we must not underestimate: to do so would be to fail to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit” (§124, 126).

It is in this context that I joyfully share with you the news of the establishment of St. Joseph Oratory in Detroit as an Archdiocesan Shrine. Over the ages, countless men and women have flocked to St. Joseph – the patron of fathers, workers, and indeed of the whole church – and found him to be a constant and reliable friend and protector. With this designation, we recognize and celebrate the reality that the St. Joseph Shrine has been and will continue to be a sacred place of pilgrimage, a source of deep devotion to St. Joseph, and a welcoming place of rich liturgical life for all the faithful. More information about this special designation from the Archdiocese of Detroit may be found at aod.org.

In celebration of this occasion, I invite all members of the faithful to join me at 5 p.m. March 19 at St. Joseph Shrine, 1828 Jay Street in Detroit, as I read the official decree and subsequently lead the parish community, pilgrims, and all the faithful in an annual St. Joseph Day procession through the surrounding Eastern Market neighborhood. After the procession, at 7 p.m., a Solemn High Mass in the Extraordinary Form will be offered at the Shrine.

It is fitting that this designation comes during the 150th year of St. Joseph's patronage of the Universal Church, as decreed by His Holiness, Pope Pius IX. As with the recent news about the Basilica of Ste. Anne, I hope that this recognition will stir up in our hearts a renewed commitment to the friendship in Christ we share with the saints, and challenge each of us to consider how we can deepen and foster these friendships.

+ *Blm H. Vigneron*

Geofencing

Continued from page 1

sured expressions of self and community, is not taking things to a whole different level,” he said in an email interview with NCR.

“People should feel free to attend Mass as a moment of pause, reflection and encounter with God and neighbor without feeling that it can become a commodity to be then sold to others for political purposes,” Zegarra said.

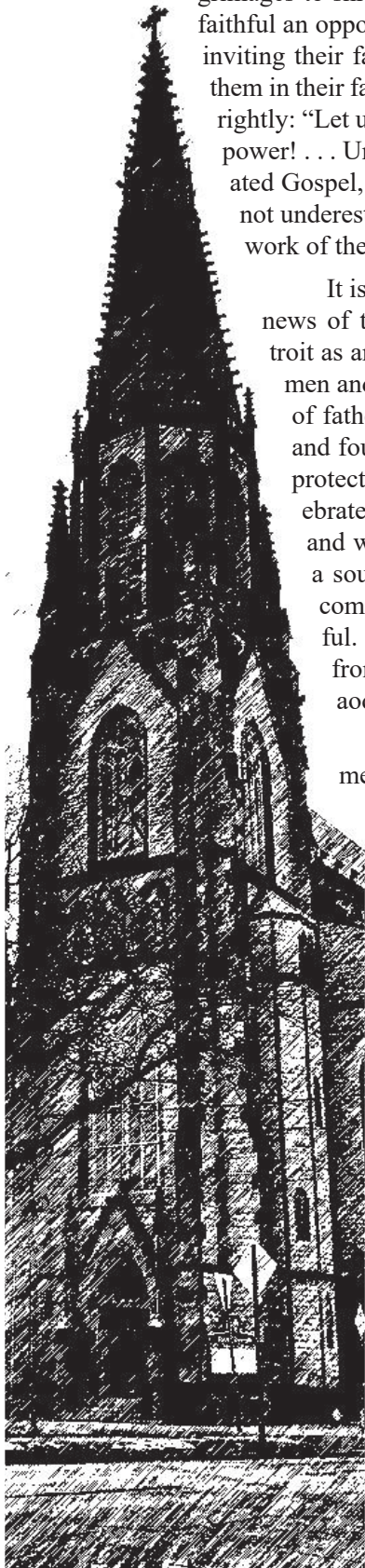
Zegarra also questions the narrowness of defining “active” Catholics only through regularity of Mass attendance and whether “faithful” Catholic voting is code for a selective set of values, such as opposition to abortion or gay marriage.

CatholicVote.org describes itself as non-partisan, though willing to take sides “if one candidate or issue is decidedly against the principles we hold dear.” Comprised of three legal entities, including a super PAC, it has primarily endorsed Republican candidates.

Zegarra accepts that faith and politics have always been related and will always be, but said the issue is how they should relate. “At bare minimum, we should expect consistency — that the Catholic opposes both abortion and anything that takes away people’s dignity; that they defend life, truly, from conception to death,” he said.

Favoring some values to the total detriment of others is not true Catholic voter outreach, he said. “It may in fact be the opposite: not a Catholic outreach that represents the universality of this faith, but a sectarian outreach that has reduced it to a political micro-morality.”

*By Heidi Schlumpf who is **The National Catholic Reporter's** national correspondent. Her email address is hschlumpf@ncronline.org. Follow her on Twitter @HeidiSchlumpf. A version of this story appeared in the Jan 24-Feb 6, 2020 print issue under the headline: ‘Geofencing’ captures Massgoers’ cell data. Check out the full document.*



All Things Considered

Every Friday of Lent is a day of abstinence from meat. In addition to giving our meat-heavy diets a break, fasting also brings us into solidarity with a hungry world. The most recent Catholic regulations on fast and abstinence are printed in this bulletin.

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Last Friday there were 260 people at our Fish Dinner. Only 5% made it to Stations of the Cross that evening. Want a devotion where you can easily practice safe “social distancing”? Come to Stations this Friday. This would be an excellent time to pray for the sick, the suffering and those who care for them.

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It's been ten years now since an earthquake devastated large parts of Haiti. That disaster killed an estimated 220,000 people (4,382 people have died worldwide from the Corona Virus since last Wednesday) and injured more than 3,000,000. It left 1.5 million homeless. One of the organizations that grew out of the rubble of that earthquake was Kay Lasante “House of Health” which is a Haitian-operated health clinic and community outreach project serving the Petite Place Cazeau/Caradeux area of Port au Prince, Haiti.

Their mission is to provide health care services with dignity and respect for those who are marginalized and lack access to care. Our Lenten Coin Folders when completed will be sent to the people at Kay Lasante. Our Religious Ed students each received a folder. You can get a folder for yourself. They are in the back of church.

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Studies tell us that the single biggest factor determining whether or not a young Catholic will practice their faith in college and beyond is their parents. So the objective of any Religious Education program is really the family — working together with the parish inside and outside of the classroom.

I believe that Religious Education Director, **Kelly Woolums** and our catechists working along with parents can provide a lot of creative experiences that can be life-changing for young people. Our parish needs to be a sign that our youngsters and teens are loved and accepted — that can make all the difference in the world for them.

I recognize that we see most of our youth for an hour and a half a week in class 25 weekends a year, with sketchy mass attendance in many cases. We can do better by our kids. Anyone who is curious about being more involved in our religious education program is invited to attend a quick session after dropping off your students on March 29th. A good place to begin is by creating a deeper-field of teachers and classroom assistants.

Another place for involvement that I personally would like to see is getting a cadre interested in presenting a wide range of special activities for families and kids of different ages like we've done on Super Saturdays. For starters, it would be great if we could offer a Christmas and Easter special family program each year. But it certainly would not be limited to that — our Kayaking the Canals is an example about how we can think outside the box. Whether or not you have children, it's an important enough subject to give us a moment of your time, or drop us an email.

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The Catholic Church and a number of other service providers rely on the national Census to give us an accurate count of those in need. Nutrition assistance, Medicaid, housing vouchers, K-12 education, Title 1 and Special Education grants, and foster care and childcare grants all depend on the Census count.

Tom Hickson, Vice President for Public Policy at the Michigan Catholic Conference, will be here on Sunday, March 29th 9:45 to 11 a.m. to encourage us to approach the Census as a matter of social justice. As time permits, he will also talk about other pending Michigan legislation like the payday loan bill that is pending and will hurt the poor very badly. The Michigan Catholic Conference is our official lobby in Lansing. This would be a good time to put a face with those who advocate for us.

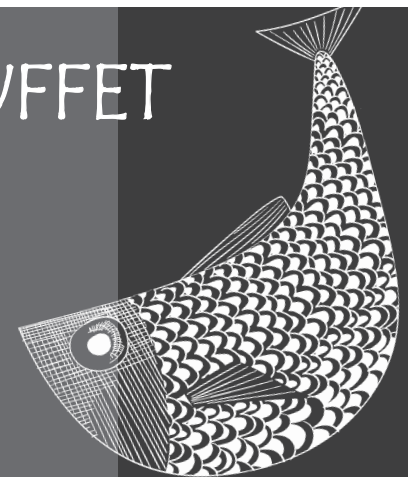
TRP

ST. AMBROSE LENTEN BUFFET

Join us in the ARK at St. Ambrose for dinner every Friday in Lent, February 28th through April 10th, from 4 to 8 pm.

The menu includes a salad bar, soup du jour, fried or baked cod, tater tots, macaroni with cheese, a weekly special entrée, along with rolls, vegetable, coffee and tea. Desserts and drinks are available.

\$17.95 per adult · \$10 for children aged 6 to 10 · Children 5 and under eat free.
Carry-out service available (313) 423-6284.



Prayer & Quiet

Reflective talks, conversation, dinner and prayer are hallmarks of this Lenten evening retreat on Thursday, March 26th from 6 to 8:30 pm at St. Paul of the Cross Passionist Retreat Center. The cost is \$35 per person. Payment in full is requested, and reservations are necessary. To register go to: stpaulretreat or call 313-286-2800. St. Paul of the Cross Passionist Retreat Center is located at 23333 Schoolcraft in Detroit. Contact Lynnette Marshall at lmarsshall@stpaulretreat.org.

Vincentian Reflection

Today's Gospel asks us to focus on Jesus' words: "My food is to do the will of the One who sent me and to finish his work." Through your almsgiving you are doing the will of the Father and finishing the work of Jesus. When you support the Society of St. Vincent de Paul here at St. Ambrose you help build the kingdom by responding to our neighbors in need of food, clothing, beds and furniture, transportation and so much more,

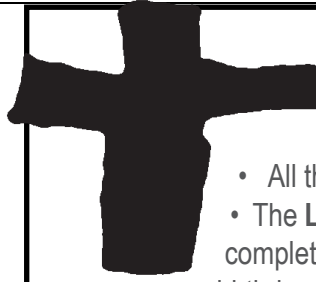
Anxiety and Depression

Life seems to change so quickly. One day we are in charge of everything, our families, career, social activities and then we blink and everything has changed. The kids are off to college, married and having children of their own. As we age, many changes occur; sometimes the changes are not what we were expecting. Feeling anxious or unsettled may be a new experience.

Karlene Harrison, LMSW with Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan can help us navigate this topic that may impact us or our loved ones.

The presentation will take place on Tuesday, March 24th from 7:30 - 9:00 pm in the Social Hall of St. Clare of Montefalco Parish. Come to discuss and share ways to recognize anxiety and depression as we age and how to better cope and combat them.

To RSVP, call St. Clare at 313-647-5060, or go to stclarem.org/anxiety-depression#.XmGF_MoqyJ8.email



Lenten Observances

- Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of *total* fast and abstinence from meat.
- All the Fridays of Lent are days of Abstinence from meat.
- The **Law of Abstinence** from meat binds persons from the completion of their 14th year — from the day after their 14th birthday, throughout life.
- The **Law of Abstinence** forbids the use of meat, but not eggs, milk or products or condiments made of animal fat. Permissible are soups flavored with meat, meat gravy and sauces.
- The **Law of Fasting** binds persons from the completion of their 18th year to the beginning of their 60th year, i.e., from the day after their 59th birthday.
- The **Law of Fasting** allows only one full meal a day, but does not prohibit taking some food in the morning and evening, observing as far as quantity and quality are concerned — approved local custom. The order of meals is optional; i.e. the full meal may be taken in the evening instead of at midday. Also: (1) the quantity of food taken at the two lighter meals should not exceed the quantity taken at the full meal. (2) the drinking of ordinary liquids does not break the fast.
- In keeping with the spirit and meaning of the Lenten fast, Catholics are encouraged to observe the Good Friday fast through Holy Saturday and until after the celebration of the Easter Vigil.



The Catholic Church has a rich tradition – and indeed a Gospel mandate – of caring for the most vulnerable in society. While individual Catholics and Catholic organizations have a responsibility to address local needs, government programs and funding also play a role in combatting poverty, educating children and providing support for the vulnerable. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has shared the significance of the census and its accuracy, a message the Catholic Bishops in Michigan also echo:

“Census data helps direct more than \$800 billion annually to key programs designed to advance the common good, strengthen families and reduce poverty. The Catholic Church and other service providers rely on the national Census to provide an accurate count in order to effectively serve those in need. We urge for all people to be counted in the Census, regardless of their citizenship... Our society, rooted in the strength of the family cannot risk missing opportunity to give children and parents the tools they need to succeed.”

On Sunday, March 29th in the ARK between masses please attend an important presentation by Tom Hickson, Vice President for Public Policy at the Michigan Catholic Conference. He will talk about the Census and what it means to us as Catholic faithful.

Faith Formation Station

“Confirmation is a sacramental outpouring of the Holy Spirit that leaves a permanent imprint on the soul, completes Christian initiation, and empowers us to be witnesses to Christ.” (CCC 1302-1305)

Our eighth grade candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation in 2021 have just begun their sacramental journey. During this journey, the students are given the opportunity to learn more about their Catholic faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. By the end of the preparation process it is our goal that they have a good understanding of whom God is and how the Catholic Church helps us to know, love, and serve God. We designed our programming to meet three main objectives:

- Develop a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ,
- Strengthen their faith and prayer life with the help of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Become a more active, visible sign of Christ’s love at home, school, and here at our parish through liturgical ministries, social activities, and special annual events.

Traditionally all religious education programs offer a retreat as part of the final preparation for Confirmation. Retreats provide a unique opportunity for students to spend extended time in discernment and reflect on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, their relationship with God, and their faith life – usually with a little fun and fellowship mixed in. Through the years, St. Ambrose has offered one-day retreats at Old St. Mary’s, Subiaco Retreat Center, the Capuchin Retreat Center, St. John Center and Damascus Catholic Mission Campus.

This year our students participated in an all-day retreat last Friday with the students of St. Clare of Montefalco School and Religious Education program. The theme of this year’s retreat was **With Great Power** presented by NET Ministries. This theme explored the seven gifts given to us at Confirmation and the personal experience of young people who open themselves to the action of the Holy Spirit after Confirmation. With great power comes great responsibility! At Confirmation, the grace of Pentecost is unleashed and we receive greater access to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God can do incredible things with us if we are open to His action.

Twenty-eight students from St. Ambrose and about thirty students from St. Clare spent the day Friday engaged in retreat talks, small group discussions, Gospel-based games, skits and moving dramas, praise and worship, guided prayer time, recreational time, and confession and adoration. The retreat was led by ten trained NET missionaries: young Catholics aged 18-28 who leave behind their jobs, school, family, and friends to devote nine months to serving with the National Evangelization Team travelling across the U.S. to share the Gospel with young people and their families. Since 1981, NET teams have led over 34,000 retreats and ministered to more than 2.1 million young Catholics. NET Ministries is under the ecclesiastical vigilance of the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. They lead Confirmation retreats all over the Archdiocese of Detroit every year. Check out the St. Ambrose Facebook page to see some of the highlights from our retreat.

PROGRAM REMINDERS:

- **Lenten Family Prayer Challenge:** Take some special time this Lent to pray for your family! Join the AOD’s Lenten Family Prayer Challenge and receive daily prayer prompts to pray for different members of your family. Since prayer is the life-breath and heartbeat of a Christian home, it is one of the best ways to help our family thrive. Sign up today at www.52sundays.com/lenten-prayer-challenge.
- **Parent Information / Q&A Session – Sunday March 29th 9:50am @** our Catechetical Center (Merit Academy Bldg.). Anyone who is curious about being more involved in our religious education program is invited to attend this quick session after drop off. If you think you might want to be a catechist or a classroom assistant but want to know more about the program first, this is the meeting for you.

Kelly Woolums

The Beehive

is the parish weekly bulletin of the St. Ambrose Catholic Community Detroit/Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Pastor: Rev. Timothy R. Pelc
Pastoral Minister: Charles Dropiewski
Religious Education: Kelly Anne Woolums
Minister of Music: Louise Veltri
 Dr. Norah Duncan IV – on hiatus
Office Manager: Peggy O’Connor
Secretary: Mary Urbanski

Sacramental Celebrations

Masses: On the Lord’s Day –

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:30 and 11:15 a.m.

Baptism: Arrangements for both adults and infants to be made by contacting the rectory.

Penance: As announced and by appointment.

Marriage: Couples should contact the rectory office a minimum of six months in advance of the proposed date to make arrangements.

Funeral: Normally celebrated within one week after the deceased’s passing.

Directory

Parish Office: 15020 Hampton

Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230

Tel: (313) 822-2814 **Fax:** (313) 822-9838

Email address: stambrose@comcast.net

Religious Education: (313) 332-5633

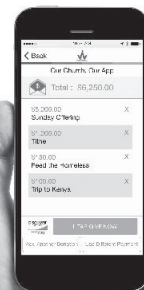
Pastoral Ministry: (313) 332-5631

Ark Scheduling: (313) 822-2814

Parish Website: stambrosechurch.net

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Liturgy Schedule for the Coming Week

Monday, March 16

8:30 a.m. - Morning Prayer

Tuesday, March 17

St. Patrick, bishop

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Bp. John Quinn,
Peter Van Opdenbosh, David White

Wednesday, March 18

8:30 a.m. - Morning Prayer

Thursday, March 19

7:00 p.m. - Mass - Bp. Joseph Imesch,
Mary Urbanski

Friday, March 20

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Karen Koch
7:00 p.m. - Stations of the Cross
& Benediction

Saturday, March 21

4:00 p.m. - Mass For All People

Sunday, March 22

Fourth Sunday of Lent

8:30 a.m. - Mass For All People
11:15 a.m. - Mass For All People



Scriptures for the 3rd week of Lent

Monday, March 16:

2 KGS 5:1-15AB
PS 130:5, 7
LK 4:24-30

Tuesday, March 17:

DN 3:25, 34-43
JL 2:12-13
MT 18:21-35

Wednesday, March 18:

DT 4:1, 5-9
JN 6:63C, 68C
MT 5:17-19

Thursday, March 19:

2 SM 7:4-5A, 12-14A, 16
ROM 4:13, 16-18, 22
MT 1:16, 18-21, 24A

Friday, March 20:

HOS 14:2-10
MT 4:17
MK 12:28-34

Saturday, March 21:

HOS 6:1-6
PS 95:8
LK 18:9-14

Sunday, March 22:

1 SM 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A
EPH 5:8-14
JN 9:1-41 or Jn 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38
4: 5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 21st and March 22nd

4:00 p.m. - **Celebrant:** Bp Gumbleton **Lector:** Mary Urbanski
Eucharistic Ministers: Beverly Bennert, Maria Cox- & Adam Borkowski
Altar Servers: Jack Hern

8:30 a.m. - **Sunday - Celebrant:** Fr. Bede **Lector:** Bob Gatzke
Eucharistic Ministers: Colleen Drummond, Colleen Gatzke, Joan Jackson,
Colleen Jogan, Bob Jogan, Steve Linne, Bernadette Pieczynski
Altar Servers: Alyssa Flores, Dailey Jogan

11:15 a.m. - **Celebrant:** Fr. Pelc **Lector:** Norman Cure
Eucharistic Ministers: Michele Hodges, Joe Hugh, Pat & Michael Mocerri,
Darryl Swiatkowski, Patty Yaden
Altar Server: Shea Vatalaro, Sonny Fillmore

Your Envelope Speaks ... the Inside Story

To operate, each week our parish requires a *minimum* of..... \$10,100.00

On Sunday, March 8, 2020

in envelopes we received \$6043.50
in the loose collection \$2,419.00
in electronic donations \$3,391.00
for a total of..... \$11,853.50
Over budget for the week..... \$1,753.50
Number of envelopes mailed 900
Number of envelopes used 135

Spending Spotlight

Did you know that St. Ambrose pays Our Sunday Visitor **\$332.87 each month** to print and mail out offertory envelopes? While it is true that one generally must spend money to make money, the notion of paying to print and mail donation envelopes seems more than a little ironic now that a variety of electronic giving options are easily available. Check out Givelify.com or go to the parish website, stambrosechurch.net, and click on the "Make a Gift" tab to learn more.

Our Sick

Please pray for those who are seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat Blake, Karen Culver, Ann Sullivan Kay, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Jeanne Noto, David Schumacker, Matthew Elias, George Bucec, Emilie Kasper, Darby O'Toole, Anna Noto Billings, Vilma Rivers, Vilma Marone, Eileen O'Brien, Martha Luna, Dina Engels, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Betty Greenia, Alexandra Cullen, Charmaine Kaptur, Frank Gregory, Alex Billiu, Gladys Bogos, Wayne Wallrich, Jerry Hansen, Jackie Walkowski, Kristen Kingzett, Denise DiBiancha, Valerie Dryden, and Maria Simcina.

52 Sundays

52 Sundays offers simple and insightful ways for your family to spend time together each Sunday learning more about the Catholic faith and having fun while you're at it. Materials are available for download online or you may sign up to receive the weekly email at www.52sundays.com/

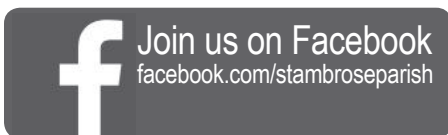
Lenten Prayer at St. Ambrose

On the Thursdays of Lent, our morning Mass shifts to a 7 p.m. time slot in order to give more people an opportunity to attend the liturgy during the weekdays of Lent – leading up to Holy Thursday.

Preceding Thursday night Masses (at 6 p.m.), as well as preceding Saturday afternoon Masses (at 3 p.m.), confessions will be heard.

This year Lent once again includes Friday night Stations of the Cross at 7:00 p.m. and our popular Fish Dinners which run from 4 to 8 p.m. Try this at least once this Lent: come for an early dinner and stay for Stations of the Cross. Or, come to Stations of the Cross and then enjoy a later dinner.

Good food and grace abound! Sample a serving of both here at St. Ambrose.



Coronavirus Concerns and Cautions

We are receiving a lot of contradictory and confusing information regarding COVID-19 so that it's difficult to sort out what will help as opposed to what is hype.

The undisputed caution is when you exhibit flu-like symptoms, like running a temperature, stay home. Even if you *think* you feel sick, stay home. Don't go to work, shopping, school or church.

I doubt that most Catholics today need permission from their bishop or pastor to excuse themselves from weekend Mass. But in case you do, please know that our Archbishop has excused the sick from their weekly mass obligation: "...an individual does not commit any sin by avoiding Mass to protect others from potential spread of illness."

Undisputed is that we need to practice hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and social distancing. These things are not unique to the current virus. These are the basics taught to children. Adults need to learn them as well.

Although ample hygiene should make hand-shaking safe, congregants in some places are being asked to greet each other with gentle bows and to avoid holding hands with others during prayer. This will be difficult as will greeting your friends and family without a hug or a kiss on the cheek. The "no touch and keep your distance rule" will greatly subdue the "Greeting of Peace". These courtesies, of course, are practices we are being asked to avoid not only in religious settings, but in all situations. "Fist" and "elbow-bumps" are being practiced not just by the cool kids now.

Reception of the host in the palm of one's hand remains safe – certainly safer than receiving change in the supermarket checkout line. And remember, we at St. Ambrose always have hand sanitizer available at each of the entrance vestibules of our church – no matter what the season.

That's because viral and/or bacterial episodes are likely to be traced to the door handles, edges of the pews, etc. rather than to the reception of Communion. Also, the incubation period for various communicable infections would make it challenging to ascribe the chalice as the proximal cause of an upper respiratory illness. In addition, any pathogen that may be contracted orally is likely neutralized in highly acidic gastric contents.

Alcohol content and careful wiping of a chalice renders the common cup safe, according to multiple studies and the medical experts with whom I have consulted. Practice seems to bear that out. But we live in a time when we are not trusting "experts" or at least don't know "whom to trust."

Medical evidence to the contrary, some Catholics have had concerns with the "common cup" ever since its restoration to the liturgy in 1970. Withholding the chalice from the laity began in 1416 for a lot of different reasons – clericalism and an exaggerated interpretation of the "Real Presence" being just two of them.

Eastern Churches never did remove it from their liturgy, and the Protestants insisted on it. It took all the scholarly

might of the Second Vatican Council to restore the chalice to the laity. The sacramental principal is that all the baptized have the right and privilege of access to the Precious Blood at Communion time.

During the recent COVID-19 outbreak, different Christian denominations are handling concerns over the common cup at Communion different ways. The most severe is to eliminate it all together.

That hits at one of the most sacred practices of our Catholic life, and ignores Jesus' command to "Take and eat and take and drink." Because of that I want to move slowly on that drastic option for now.

Our Parish Pastoral Council had a protracted discussion on the advisability of completely removing the option of receiving from the chalice at our liturgies. They *unanimously* and strongly recommend we retain our current liturgical practice.

Of course you know that you don't have to drink from the Communion chalice – and if you feel sick, you shouldn't. Christ is present in both species. **That being the case, it's my studied pastoral decision to treat the members of our congregation as reasonable persons, capable of making their own choice on the reception of Holy Communion – be it to drink from the chalice or not.**

Should the current medical situation become dire, obviously we would revisit the subject of the common cup as well as the practice of receiving the host on one's tongue – which has always been a far more "iffy" procedure.

For now, let's tighten our practices of social hygiene. Washing our hands often and avoiding touching your face is a great start. If you're using a tissue, do not dispose it by leaving it in a pew. Take your song sheet home after mass.

Spending time disinfecting some of the most handled areas of our building seems like a reasonable thing for us to do. **Before Saturday mass, we will have disinfected the door hardware and surfaces of our pews where you rest your hands. With volunteer help, we will do this after each weekend mass – preparing the building for the next group of worshippers.**

We have survived SARS, West Nile, H1N1, Swine and Avian Flu and a return of Measles. These have taken a terrible toll in human life. Thank God we now have at least a methodology, if not all the cures, for dealing with these awful outbreaks.

Praying is another powerful methodology as well. Pray for calm. Pray for those who are ill throughout the world. Pray for medical researchers. Fight hysteria/anxiety with science and common sense. Be compassionate.

Religious leaders of multiple denominations in the United States, myself included, are doing our best to keep worship services open and public – offering the strong comfort of gathering together to pray as a family in these anxious times. Help us do that.