



Dear Sisters & Brothers in Christ,

As we prepare to begin our celebration of the holy season of Lent with **Ash Wednesday this week**, please take a moment to read how this ritual **will be a little different** this year (and how much it will be the same). Please take some time to **pray for Fr. Lambert, his sister Madeline**, and their extended family as she **passed to the Lord this week** after a time of serious illness. Details on both of these are below, as well as a link to my column this week that also announces my formal **petition to the Cardinal to be reappointed as Pastor** at St. Martha Parish and St. Mary Parish when my current term ends this June.

In the Love of Christ who comforts us and helps us grow,  
*Fr. Joe*

### **Ash Wednesday - February 17, 2021**

*The same words*, “Repent and believe in the Gospel,” or “Remember you are dust, and to dust, you shall return,” will be said (but only once), and blessed ashes will still be placed (silently) on the head of each of us who presents ourselves as a repentant sinner, in need of God’s mercy and grace. Due to the pandemic, however, this year Rome has called for us to sprinkle a few ashes *on top of people’s heads* (as is the practice in some countries every year). In a spirit of openness, perhaps we can think of this adaptation in light of the Ash Wednesday gospel, where Jesus calls us to perform our religious acts “in secret” because of our interior longing for God to heal, forgive, and restore us. Other than combining the afternoon Prayer Services into one location, we will follow basically the same schedule as last year:

**Ash Wednesday Schedule for PWC 2021**  
7:00 am Mass at St. Martha, Plainville  
9:00 am Mass at St. Mary, Wrentham  
4:00 pm Prayer Service at St. Mary, Wrentham  
6:00 pm Mass at St. Martha, Plainville  
7:00 pm Mass at St. Mary, Wrentham

You are encouraged to go to our [special signup page](#) to reserve a seat and streamline your check-in, as we maintain social distancing and *we do not know how many people will be attending Ash Wednesday this year*. We plan to livestream the 9am and 6pm Masses on our usual YouTube channel and Facebook pages for those unable to attend in person (links at [www.PWC.church](http://www.PWC.church)).

### **What if I am unable to attend church Ash Wednesday because I’m vulnerable to the virus?**

We *normally* distribute ashes only as part of a Mass or prayer service to keep them connected to the faith and readings of God’s Word. *However*, for those attending online or otherwise unable to receive the ashes in church, **we will offer ashes at both parish offices** (just inside or outside the door, as you prefer) during the following hours:

**St. Martha offices: 8 am - 5 pm**  
**St. Mary offices: 10 am - 7 pm**

### **Funeral for Fr. Lambert’s Sister, Madeline Nkilusa Saturday Feb. 20, 2021**

Our collaborative parishes will celebrate a Funeral Mass for one of Father Lambert’s sisters who passed to the Lord in the Congo after a period of serious illness. Since Fr. Lambert is not able to travel to the Congo due to the pandemic, we will offer a funeral here on Saturday, February 20 at 10:30 am in St. Mary church. There will be a special signup for those who wish to attend this funeral. People can also participate by livestream on YouTube and FaceBook. Links to this funeral signup and these videos will be posted on our website [www.PWC.church](http://www.PWC.church) early in the week.

*May Our Father welcome Madeline into his heavenly home, where Christ has prepared a place for her, and may the Holy Spirit - the Consoler - be with Madeline's husband and son, with Fr. Lambert and their siblings, and with all those who love her.  
Amen.*

**A Friendly Reminder: The Importance of Fresh Air in Church and Dressing Warmly**

In addition to sanitizing surfaces after each use, fresh air is also an important part of minimizing the aerosols we breathe. Even in colder weather, **we must continue to allow some fresh air in whenever people are gathered in church - so please dress warmly.** We will try to be consistent with *which* windows are left partly open so you can decide where to sit based on whether you prefer more fresh air or more warmth. As people leave, fans are used to replace the air in the room, then the empty church is sealed to warm that air before we open up for the next celebration.

**Fr. Joe Mozer Requests Reappointment as Our Pastor**

While it is not guaranteed, Fr. Joe has taken the first step in seeking reappointment as pastor of both parishes in our Plainville-Wrentham Catholic Collaborative when his current term ends this June. Read about the process (and more on Ash Wednesday) in [Fr. Joe's column this week called, "The More Things Change..."](#).

