

RETURN TO ME

Every year as we celebrate Ash Wednesday, we hear God say to us through the Prophet Joel: "*RETURN TO ME WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning ...and RETURN TO THE LORD, YOUR GOD. For gracious and merciful is HE, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment.*" (Joel 2:12-13). This is a joyful way to enter into the 40 days of Lent. The Prophet Joel gives us HOPE. The kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem had just experienced a great disaster (locust invasion) and Joel announces the coming of a much worse, unprecedented disaster unless the people turn back to God. If Joel were alive today, would his message to us be the same? Most of us would say: Yes! We need to change. So many people have gone far away from God. God is being pushed out of our society through a growing secularization of our culture. We too need to cry out for help to the Lord. Like Joel, we too believe that THE LORD GOD will welcome us back and assist us.

Lent is a time for individual conversion, a time for spiritual renewal, a time for personal Reconciliation with God. We may not be able to make dramatic and rapid change in the less and less Christian culture of our society. But we can and we must make changes in our own personal relationship with God. We can and we must help our own families get closer to God. We can and we must help our family of families, our parish to go through a spiritual renewal.

How can we return with our whole heart to God this Lent?

FIRST, we must PRAY! Lent is a time of PRAYER. Prayer will help us to focus on what is essential in our life: to focus on God in the silence of our hearts. We are totally dependent on God. Our life on earth is very fragile and limited. Most of our attachments to the world are distractions away from the purpose of our life: to love and to be loved. We believe that GOD IS LOVE and that HE created us in HIS own image. God has sent to us HIS ONLY SON so that we may have ETERNAL LIFE. We all come from GOD and the purpose of our Journey on earth is TO RETURN TO GOD. TODAY can we all hear GOD's voice: "*Come back to me with all your heart!*" Yes, we all need a change of heart, we all need a loving heart.

SECOND: in the same way PRAYER restores our personal, loving relationship with God, we must restore our relationship of love with OTHERS. Lent is a time to GIVE ALMS, to turn our attention to

OTHERS, away from our continuous preoccupation with ourselves. Our society is about ME-ME-ME: if I choose to do something, what will I gain personally? ALMS-GIVING forces us to think about the needs of the others. The Church teaches the importance of WORKS OF MERCY. Almsgiving is one of the seven CORPORAL Works of Mercy, together with "*Feed the Hungry, Give drink to the Thirsty, Shelter the Homeless, Visit the Sick, Visit the Prisoners, and Bury the Dead.*" The Church also teaches about the seven SPIRITUAL Works of Mercy, and all seven of them are also fitting during Lent: "*Counsel the Doubtful, Instruct the Ignorant, Admonish the Sinner, Comfort the Sorrowful, Forgive Injuries, Bear Wrongs Patiently, Pray for the Living and the Dead.*" My suggestion this Lent is that each one of us choose to focus on one or two of the Corporal or Spiritual Works of Mercy.

THIRD: throughout Lent we need to FAST and REPENT. Fasting helps us to detach from our personal attachments to the world. The Church requires that we FAST two full days during Lent and Holy Week: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (while abstaining from meat during every Friday from now until Easter). But fasting goes beyond fasting from food, it also means fasting from our attachment to sin. Like the leper in last week's Gospel, we need to kneel down to Jesus and beg him: "If you wish, YOU CAN MAKE ME CLEAN". Like the leper we believe that Jesus can transform us. Through our sins, we are spiritual lepers. Jesus instituted the amazing Sacrament of RECONCILIATION (PENANCE/CONFESSION). During this Lent, Jesus invites all of us to come to HIM and ask for forgiveness of our sins. If there were ONE THING, only ONE THING we want you to focus on during this Lent, it would be to prepare yourself to go to confession: first, have a thorough examination of your past sins since your last confession, and second take the time to go to Confession. We have increased the number of hours for confessions. And if the times are not convenient to you, call the office and make an appointment with Fr. Ben or myself.

May the next forty days of Lent help all of us to climb the beautiful MOUNTAIN OF EASTER. May we all benefit from our Parish Lenten Retreat "*THE GIFT OF LOVE*", as we walk together with Jesus on the Way to the Cross. "*You can still sign up.*" *May God help all of us to be renewed and transformed through changing our hardened hearts into loving hearts.*

One in Christ,  
Fr. Alain

**Want to control your healthcare decisions?**

The Catholic Advance Health Care Directive is a tool to help you discuss your wishes, to designate who will speak for you, and to talk about the kinds of care you want. Pray about it. Talk about it. And write your wishes down. Visit [MDcatholic.org/endoflife](http://MDcatholic.org/endoflife) for more information.

**Taking care of the Creation  
(LAUDATO SÌ)**

Learn about the call for the faithful to care for our natural world.

Nature-Faith

Family- Health

Be part of our workshop to learn about our natural world, how we are connected to it, and what we can do to be good stewards of the Creation.

Monday, March 1 in the Father Martin Hall at 7 PM. See you there!

**Community Outreach**

We are always collecting for the OLHOC "Sharing Sunday" box. All much needed, non-perishable food donated will be taken to the Food Bank and Women's Shelter.

Thank you, OLHOC, your generosity has been overwhelming! The next Outreach meeting is March 3, 2021 at 7p.m. on Zoom.

The next Shepherd's table is April 22.

**\*\*\* REMINDER \*\*\***

**-Sanitize your hands before coming into church**

**-Masks are mandatory**

**-Maintain at least a 6 ft distance**

**-If you feel ill, stay home and watch Mass on [www.olhoc.com](http://www.olhoc.com) -10 am on Sundays**

**Pray for Our Seminarians**

Please take a moment today to stop by the "Vocations Tree" on our website, [www.olhoc.com](http://www.olhoc.com) where you'll see cards for each of the seminarians of the Archdiocese of Washington. Choose one or more cards and pray for that seminarian each day during Lent. Make it a beautiful offering to the Lord this Lent to pray for those whom He calls to give their lives in service of His Church in our archdiocese.

**ALTAR GUILD**

*As parishioner are being led, by our Lord, to return to Him at Mass and in the Holy Eucharist, the Altar Guild is needing to return to His service. The Altar Guild is calling on parishioner to consider joining and participating in this dynamic ministry as our Lenten Season is upon us. Your support is needed - if you would like to join and/or have any questions, please contact Diane Spurgeon at [afbabe1@verizon.net](mailto:afbabe1@verizon.net) or 301-752-3930*

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

**Join us Fridays during Lent at 2:30 pm, and 7 pm.**

**CA/RCIA**

Interested in joining and learning about the Catholic Church for the first time? Want to complete a Sacrament (Baptism, Eucharist, and/or Confirmation)? Classes meet on Wednesday, from 7 pm -9 pm. You may chose to come to the Father Martin Hall or virtually via Zoom. For more information, or to sign up, please contact Deacon Rich at [deacon@olhoc.org](mailto:deacon@olhoc.org) or Diane and Mike Spurgeon at [RCIA.olhoc@gmail.com](mailto:RCIA.olhoc@gmail.com)

**The Gift of Love**

Thursdays during Lent

**Need a shed?**

The shed in the back of the church is available free for the first person that would like it. It will be given "as is, and will have to be picked up. Please call the office if interested

**We are asked to pray for:**

Julissa Barientos  
 Brandon Mack  
 Ana Maria Delmira Sibrian Escobar  
 Nestor Ermelindo Molina  
 James Thompson  
 Rebecca (Tess) Franch  
 Joseph Albrittain  
 Sid and Suszanna Marcus  
 Aleli Puzon  
 Patricia Delgado  
 Ann Marie Hobart  
 Larry McGraw  
 Ilene Custer  
 Derrick Webster  
 Julie Davis  
 David DeMarr  
 Dunnie Proctor  
 Amelia Vinceguerra  
 Lorraine Celijewski  
 Cren Wolden

Tabitha Barton  
 Maria Townsend  
 Chrystal Beauregard  
 Sheryl Carter  
 Alex Leon  
 Sharketer Butler  
 Steven Bowling  
 Edna Yarngo  
 Kathly Grimes  
 Sheny Padilla  
 Richard White  
 Victor Cordero  
 Georgiana Norgren  
 Marie Bottorf  
 Dorian Webster  
 Dionne Gause  
 Billy Dexter  
 Trena Price  
 Erick M. Knapp  
 Norm Green

Sarah Dixons  
 Grace Albrittain  
 Elaine Moses  
 Yvonne Buford  
 Karen Zimmerman  
 Steve Wyloge  
 Terri Elizabeth McAllister Burnette  
 Joanne Johnson  
 John Hoza  
 Mike Spurgeon  
 Mary A. Dyson  
 Kevin Viel Sr.  
 Ligia Lam  
 David Stanley  
 Jim McMahan  
 Drew Shuda

and all our military and civilians serving in harm's way.



**Mass Intentions this Week**

- Saturday, February 20, 9:00AM: Maxima Salting Joaquin (+)
- Saturday, February 20, 5:00 PM: Lorraine Card (+)
- Sunday, February 21, 8:30 AM: Emmett Boyner
- Sunday, February 21, 10:00 AM: Jose & AnnaMarie Gonzales & family
- Sunday, February 21, 11:30 AM: OLHOC parishioners
- Sunday, February 21, 7:00 PM: Catalina Del Cid
- Monday, February 22, 9:00 AM: Joseph Tonye Tonye (+)
- Tuesday, February 23, 9:00 AM: Agnes Moussi (+)
- Wednesday, February 24, 9:00 AM: Juan Torres (+)
- Wednesday, February 24, 7 PM: Patricia Margaret Disney (+)
- Thursday, February 25, 9:00 AM: Father Alain
- Friday, February 26, 9:00 AM : Lissade & Jn Louis Family (+)

**Pregnant? Help is Available**

Call 1-800-712-4357, text HELPLINE to 313131, or visit [optionline.org](http://optionline.org) to find the nearest pregnancy resources near you.

Lent is a 40 day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by [giving alms](#); and we practice self-control through [fasting](#). We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ.

**Tuesday Scripture Study**- Join us on Tuesday mornings after the 9 am Mass to study the readings for the next Sunday.

**Friday Scripture Study**- The Friday night scripture study is now online. Please call the office for information on how to join us.

**First Friday**- The first Friday of each month the evening Mass is dedicated to promoting the Priesthood. Following evening Mass, devotion to the Alliance of the two Hearts.

**First Saturday**- Join members of the Marian Group on the first Saturday of the month after the 9 am Mass. Learn more about consecrating your life to Jesus through Mary.

**Divine Mercy**- Join us on the first Saturday of each month as we pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet as a community at 3 PM.

**OLHOC Prayer Chain**

If you have a prayer request, please call the parish office or send email to [office@olhoc.org](mailto:office@olhoc.org).

**Mass Readings for February 28, 2021**  
*2nd. Sunday in Lent*

**\*First Reading**

**Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18**

**\*Second Reading**

**Romans 8:31b-34**

**\*Gospel**

**Mark 9:2-10**

[www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)



## 33 Day Consecration to St. Joseph February 15– March 19



Let's walk together as a parish for 33 days with St. Joseph, the foster Father of Jesus. We will begin 2 days before Ash Wednesday, and conclude on his feast day, March 19. The daily prayers can be found here:

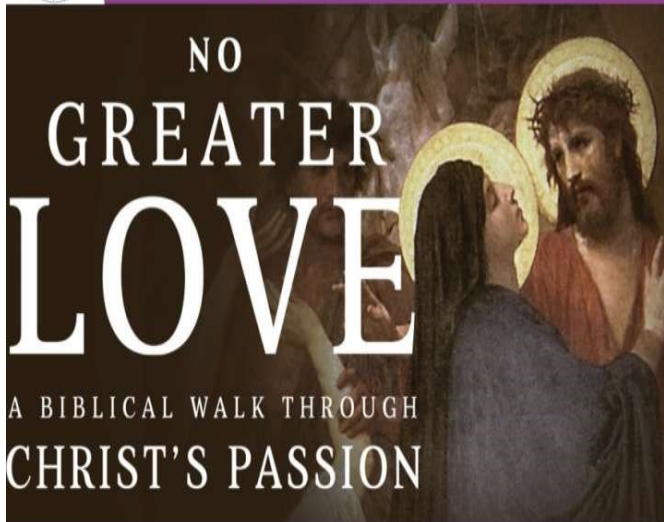
[https://www.unleashthegospel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/33-Days-of-Prayers-and-Daily-Challenge\\_ENGLISH.pdf](https://www.unleashthegospel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/33-Days-of-Prayers-and-Daily-Challenge_ENGLISH.pdf)

*“With the phrase “guardian of the mystery of God” used to describe St. Joseph’s role in salvation history, Pope St. John Paul II has left us with a sure point of departure as we begin our 33-Day Consecration to St. Joseph. It is for us, all of us, to become a new creation, to become people who, having been knit together by the Holy Spirit, are now focused and bidden to draw life from the Mystery of God, from the mystery made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, the one who bids us to come after him, called to become faithful guardians of the mystery of God.”*

— Bishop Gerard Battersby



## Parish Lenten Retreat: The Gift of LOVE (A Biblical Walk Thru Christ's Passion)



**6 Sessions**

**Thursdays: February 18 - March 25**

**6:45 pm - 8:30 pm**

**Study, Music & Fellowship**

**Location: OLHOC Fr Martin Hall or  
via Zoom Meeting**

**Thousands sought Jesus during his life. Only a few followed him to Calvary.  
What will you do?**

**This Lent, commit to a sacrifice of time and invest in your spiritual life.**

**Filmed on location in the Holy Land, “No Greater Love” is a biblical pilgrimage that reveals Christ’s amazing love for us. Walk step-by-step with Jesus from the garden of Gethsemane to Mount Calvary.**

**Join fellow parishioners by signing up today:**

**[www.olhoc.org/lent2021](http://www.olhoc.org/lent2021)**

**or call the parish office 301-645-7112**