

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 14, 2021

Saturday, February 13

8:30 am - St. John – NO MASS
 9:00 am - 9:30 am – Confessions at St. John
 3:15 pm - 3:55 pm – Confessions at St. John
 4:00 pm - St. John – Mass for the people

Sunday, February 14th Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

7:30 am - 7:55 am – Confessions at St. John
 8:00 am - St. John – Giovanna “Van” Belanger by children
 9:35 am - St. Elizabeth – Ruth Blake by Lucie and Bradley Collette
 11:30 am - Queen of Peace – Anthony & Irma Rivard by M/M Moe Rivard
Confessions at QP before Mass (time permitting) or following Mass as needed
 5:00 pm - St. Elizabeth – Traditional Latin Mass

Monday, February 15th

8:30 am - St. Elizabeth – John Wall Jr. by his estate

Tuesday, February 16th

8:30 am - St. John – Robert Stern by SFO

Wednesday, February 17th Ash Wednesday (Day of Fast & Abstinence)

8:30am - St. John – Special Intention
 10:15am - St. John – GSCS Mass
 12 Noon - St. John – Jerry Fournier by Deacon/Mrs. Pete Gummere
 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm – Holy Hour of Adoration with Confessions at St. John
 5:15pm - St. John – Special Intention

Thursday, February 18th

8:00 am - St. John – Toto del Castillo by Mary Lou Sales

Friday, February 19th

8:30 am - St. Elizabeth – Intentions of Brianna Waesche & Kids by Chris Hahr

Saturday, February 20th

8:30 am - St. John – Mass for the Parishioners
 9:00 am - 9:30 am – Confessions at St. John
 3:15 pm - 3:55 pm – Confessions at St. John
 4:00 pm - St. John – Mrs. Richard (Mary) Handy by Isabelle Handy

Sunday, February 21st First Sunday of Lent

7:30 am - 7:55 am – Confessions at St. John
 8:00 am - St. John – Gabriele “Gib” Handy by Priscilla Messier
 9:35 am - St. Elizabeth – Jerry Fournier by Wellman/Danforth Families
 11:30am - Queen of Peace – George Washington, father of our country by Ed Hahr
Confessions at QP before Mass (time permitting) or following Mass as needed
Please keep our parishioners in mind who are ill & in need of your prayers, especially: Pam Austin, Charlene Chase, Connie Lapage, Martin Fortin, Charlie Weis, & Randy Thomas, Dick and Anita Bedor

2/21/21	St. John	St. Elizabeth	Queen of Peace
LECTORS:	4pm M. Noyes	9:35am B. Gessner	11:30am D. Rivard
	8:00am H. Robertson		

The **FORMED** program is available to everyone in our parish. To start enjoying this free gift, please visit the FORMED website:

1. Go to: nekatholic.formed.org
2. Click on REGISTER to create a personal account

THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, Corpus Christi Conference offers assistance in name of Jesus to the needy in our community. To contact us call: Patrick McWilliams: 274-3542 Ann Lovett: 751-8187; or the Rectory: 748-8129 We will arrange a visit to see if we are able to serve you!

PARISH EVENTS

Feb. 14th: Confirmation Class 6pm-7:30pm FLC

FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal Year: 7/1/20-6/30/21 Budgeted Regular Collection: \$243,650
 Reg. Collection Year-to-date: \$71,974.20 + On-Line: \$48,243.59

Collections & Receipts: January 31, 2021 Reg .Offertory:\$2109.20
 February 8, 2021 Reg .Offertory:\$2505.00

Ash Wednesday Almsgiving Collection: There will be a special collection on Ash Wednesday to support Vermont Catholic Charities.

Please consider using the Online Giving tool for your weekly donations. Visit our website at: nekatholic.com and click “Give Online” to sign up!

NEW OFFICE HOURS: Sue is taking some time away from the office for personal issues, while she’s away the regular office hours will be Monday – Friday from 9:30am-1pm. If no one is in the office the phone calls will be forwarded to Fr. Hahr’s cell phone where you will be able to leave a message. Thank you in advance for your patience.

Deacon Baker Temporary Assignment: Following a period of consultation, Bishop Coyne has asked Deacon Baker to provide pastoral assistance to Fr. Miller, who has been addressing some health issues recently, at Most Holy Trinity Parish in Barton. This assignment will begin immediately and continue for the coming months. The Bishop is grateful for Deacon Baker’s willingness to assume this responsibility.

World Day of Marriage-February 14: As the church celebrates World Marriage Day, let's give thanks to God for the beautiful vocation of marriage. May all married couples in the parish, from newly married to the couple who has been married the longest, love and cherish each other in the years to come "till death do us part." ~ God bless, Diane Bailey, Vocation Ministry. *St. Joseph, pillar of families, pray for us.*

Feeding the Hungry: The Lyndon Area Food Shelf, located on Elm Street in Lyndonville, would like to begin again providing "to go" meals for those in need each week. The prepared meals would be dropped off at the Food Shelf on Wednesday mornings by 10am and would be distributed for takeout that day by the Food Shelf volunteers. We are looking to set up a schedule of persons who would be interested in providing meals. For further info or to sign up, please call either Lawrie Easterbrooks at 751-5255 or Sandy Amadon at 274-5285. Thank you.

Praying for an End to Abortion: 40 Days for Life begins Ash Wednesday. Please join us in praying the Rosary each day outside of St. John’s church, at the monument to the unborn, as a public witness of our support for life. A group is planning to pray together after the morning Masses, but we hope to leave the banner up for those who want to give prayerful witness at other times throughout the day.

A Prayer for Pregnant Mothers

O Blessed Mother, you received the good news of the incarnation of Christ, your Son, with faith and trust. Grant your protection to all pregnant mothers facing difficulties. Guide us as we strive to make our parish communities places of welcome and assistance for mothers in need. Help us become instruments of God’s love and compassion. Mary, Mother of the Church, graciously help us build a culture of life and a civilization of love, together with all people of good will, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life. Amen.

Spiritual Weapons: Fasting by Sam Guzman

(adapted from: <https://catholicgentleman.net/2014/04/spiritual-weapons-fasting/>)

“Fasting gives birth to prophets and strengthens the powerful; fasting makes lawgivers wise. Fasting is a good safeguard for the soul, a steadfast companion for the body, a weapon for the valiant, and a gymnasium for athletes. Fasting repels temptations, anoints unto piety; it is the comrade of watchfulness and the artificer of chastity. In war it fights bravely, in peace it teaches stillness.” – St. Basil the Great

Are you struggling with a sin? I mean a sin that you just can't seem to get rid of; a sin that keeps you in a constant state of guilt and despair. You've prayed, you've frequented the sacraments, but you just can't seem to break its hold. We've all been there at one point or another, and such struggles are part and parcel of the spiritual life. But it doesn't have to be that way. If you want to energize your spiritual life, if you want to slay a sin that has you in bondage, if you want to grow in union with God, take up the holy weapon of fasting. For as Jesus said, there are some demons that *“cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.”*

From her earliest days, the Church has taught the need for asceticism in the life of every Christian. For our purposes, asceticism can be loosely defined as self-denial with the ultimate goal of self-control. And this self-denial most often takes the form of fasting, or some other bodily penance/sacrifice.

Asceticism is necessary for everyone because of our passions—intense fleshly desires, which are sometimes referred to as concupiscence. Experience teaches us that we often lead about by these desires in a way we can barely control. St. Paul tells us that *“the impulses of nature and the impulses of the spirit are at war with one another.”* This war is so intense that our passions often lead us to do things we don't want to do, and we find ourselves saying, *“My own actions bewilder me; what I do is not what I wish to do, but something which I hate.”*

Keep in mind that the passions of our flesh are not necessarily wrong, but because of our fallen nature, they are out of control and they want to dominate us. Left unchecked, our passions will lead us to soul destroying behavior like gluttony, hatred, disordered sexual acts, or addictions of all kinds. Eventually, their dominion will lead us to hell. *“The sinful passions...yield increase only to death,”* explains St. Paul.

Faced with the reality of the passions, it can be easy to become discouraged and think we can never overcome them. We cry, *“Pitiable creature that I am, who is to set me free from a nature thus doomed to death?”* Fortunately, that's not the end of the story, and we are not left as helpless slaves to concupiscence. *“The spiritual principle of life has set me free, in Christ Jesus, from the principle of sin and death.”* Through the grace of God, and by walking in the new life purchased for us by Jesus Christ, we can overcome and subdue our passions. We can live as children of God, free from the law of sin that leads to death. So how do we find this freedom practically speaking? Again, St. Paul explains:

“Nature has no longer any claim upon us, that we should live a life of nature. If you live a life of nature, you are marked out for death; if you mortify the ways of nature through the power of the Spirit, you will have life.” *“Those who belong to Christ have crucified nature, with all its passions, all its impulses.”* In other words, we find freedom from the passions by mortifying them, putting them to death, through the practice of grace-empowered asceticism—specifically, fasting. Fasting helps us tame the wild stallion of our flesh and bring it under the bridle of self-control.



How to Fast: A Practical Guide

1. Start with the basics – The first step in fasting is obeying the law of the Church—fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, abstaining from meat on Fridays, and observing the Eucharistic fast (do not eat or drink one hour before communion).

Regarding abstaining from meat on Fridays *outside of Lent*, it's true that it is technically not required in the U.S., but some sort of food-based penance or sacrifice is still required. But instead of trying to invent some new penance, why not just stick with what Catholics have always done? Give up your flesh for Christ on Fridays, because Christ gave up His Flesh for you on a Friday. So, start with the basics and obey the law of the Church without grumbling or complaining.

2. Add more – We should never be satisfied with the bare minimum. We should seek to constantly pursue a deeper conversion. St. Francis de Sales gives some good advice in this regard: *“If you are able to fast, you will do well to observe some days beyond what are ordered by the Church, for besides the ordinary effect of fasting in raising the mind, subduing the flesh, confirming goodness, and obtaining a heavenly reward, it is also a great matter to be able to control greediness, and to keep the sensual appetites and the whole body subject to the law of the Spirit; and although we may be able to do but little, the enemy nevertheless stands more in awe of those whom he knows can fast.”* Accordingly, once you've begun to follow the law of the Church, build on that foundation to include fasting in other ways.

Skip one meal extra a week, like breakfast or lunch. In addition to Fridays, Wednesdays are traditional days of fasting, so that might be a good day to start with. Deny yourself dessert on set days. Skip salt on your food. Fast from soda. Skip the alcohol – even if it's just that last sip, or cigarettes – that last puff. Don't eat between meals. It sounds easy, but try it, you may find it's quite hard. Include things besides food. For example, fast from all technology one day a week. Drink only water. Fast from hot water showers, take them cold. You don't have to fast from all of these things all of the time. It is best to choose set days for fasting, like the Wednesdays or Fridays; doing so helps keep our fasting consistent.

3. Fast from sin – Of course.

4. Pray – Fasting is not simply a matter of will power. Grace is absolutely necessary. While fasting energizes prayer, prayer energizes fasting. Both are weak without the other. As you fast to conquer your passions, pray constantly for the grace of God to flood your soul, beg for the virtues in which you need to mature, and ask for strength.

5. Beware of Pride – With any kind of self-discipline, penance, or fasting comes a temptation to pride. We face the danger of believing that we are superior to others because we fast, or thinking that fasting is an end in itself. But fasting itself is never the goal, nor does it make us perfect or more spiritual than others. Rather, fasting is an aid, a training tool in our ascent toward perfection, which is found in a pure, self-giving love of God and neighbor. *“Be on your guard when you begin to mortify your body by abstinence and fasting,”* says St. Jerome, *“lest you imagine yourself to be perfect and a saint; for perfection does not consist in this virtue. It is only a help; a disposition; a means though a fitting one, for the attainment of true perfection.”*

JESUS also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Hence, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.

~ Hebrews 13: 12-14