Local Catholics witness at pro-life events

By Sarah DeMott

For 45 years March for Life in Washington D.C. has been the signature event for the cause noted as the largest pro-life peaceful protest. This year, Catholics from across the Diocese participated in national and local events to pray for an end to abortion.

Several groups from the Diocese braved the bitter cold in the Windy City and joined with an estimated 6,000 people for the March for Life Chicago, held January 14th.

Hundreds of thousands of peacefull protesters from around the country traveled to Washington, D.C. for the National March for Life, including groups from Hackett Catholic Prep, Lake Michigan Catholic High School and several parishes in the Diocese. On January 18 the Mass of the National Prayer Vigil for Life was held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. Rev. James Adams, Parochial Vicar at St. Monica Parish and Chaplain/Spiritual Moderator for Hackett Catholic Prep; Rev. Thomas McNally, Vice Rector at St. Augustine Cathedral; and Rev. Harold Potter, Parochial Vicar at St. Joseph Parish, St. Joseph consecrated the Mass.

More than a hundred people from around the Diocese joined Bishop Bradley for a Prayer for Life on January 21 in Bronson Park. Pastors and church leaders from several local churches also joined this ecumenical prayer for an end to abortion. Participants donated diapers and baby wipes as donations to Caring Network Alternatives of Kalamazoo. Catholic Charities also held an Ecumenical Prayer for Life Hour on Jan. 22, led by Deacon Louis Zemlick.

In addition to the March, January honors all human life on January 22 with the National Sanctity of Human Life Day. Masses are held around the country. Bishop Bradley celebrated Mass at St. Augustine Cathedral and asked all parishes throughout the Diocese to hold Mass as well with special dedication to praying for an end to abortion and a renewed focus on the innate value of all human life, from conception until death. This year a plenary indulgence was also obtainable if all conditions were met and a Mass for Life was attended.

Deepen your Lenten journey with CRS Rice Bowl activities

Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) Rice Bowl offers Catholics in the United States a way to encounter Lent, to encounter the causes of migration and displacement, and to learn about the challenges faced by families around the world in their Dioceses, parishes and homes.

CRS Rice Bowl, the agency’s flagship Lenten program now in its fifth decade, will begin once again on Ash Wednesday – February 14, 2018 – giving Catholics throughout the country an opportunity to encounter the stories of people in need around the world.

“From CRS’ work in more than 100 countries, we know that people do not want to leave their homes, that they do so because they feel they have no other choice,” said Joan Rosenhauer, executive vice president of Church Engagement.

“Lenten sacrifices contributed through CRS Rice Bowl help give them that choice by providing sustenance and livelihoods in communities around the world.”

Started as an ecumenical effort in the Diocese of Allentown, Pa., in 1975, CRS Rice Bowl soon spread across the country as it called on Catholics to perform a simple act of Lenten sacrifice — substitute a low-cost meatless meal for more expensive dining once a week during Lent and put the money saved in a cardboard rice bowl.

That concept remains at the heart of the program even as it has expanded to include broader Lenten faith enrichment through a wide variety of resources available for the millions of Catholics who participate. These include prayer resources, a daily Lenten calendar, weekly stories of hope that introduce families from around the world and recipes from various countries for meatless meals that can be enjoyed on Fridays during Lent.

Bishop Bradley to celebrate Mass and Anointing of the Sick at Borgess Hospital on February 12

Bishop Bradley will celebrate Mass with Anointing of the Sick in observance of the World Day of the Sick on Monday, February 12, 2018, at Noon in the Lawrence Education Center Auditorium at Borgess Medical Center, 1521 Gull Road Kalamazoo.

Bishop is shown right offering a blessing during last year’s Mass. World Day of the Sick, observed annually on February 11th was introduced by Pope John Paul II as a way for Christians to offer prayers for those suffering from illnesses. The day coincides with the commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes. All are welcome for this Mass.
FROM THE EDITOR
By Victoria Cessna

“Remember, that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.”

“Won’t you be my Valentine?”

For the first time in years, 73 to be exact, Ash Wednesday, the first day of the Lenten season, coincides with St. Valentine’s Day, a day generally devoted to candy hearts and true love.

But is it really so unusual for the two days to collide? What better day than the day synonymous with love to begin our 40-day Lenten journey focused on the greatest love story of all - the love God showed His children by sending His only Son as our Redeemer?

The Greeks understood the complexities of love — the many facets that go beyond the English four-letter word. Of the six to eight (depending on your Greek scholarly source) words for love the ancient Greeks used frequently, three stand-out to me as I reflect on the Lenten season: philia (friendship), pragma (enduring love) and agape (selfless love).

Philia is the love and affection we have for our friends. In fact the Greeks are said to have valued it over “eros”-romantic love because it was between equals, a love of sacrifice and giving.

Pragma is a mature love, between long-married couples or friends who’ve known each other for decades — a love seasoned with patience and tolerance.

Agape is a selfless love that you extend to all people and was later translated into Latin as caritas, which is the origin of our word “charity.” Each type of love valuable and each type an appropriate guide for your Lenten journey.

Recently Pope Francis made world headlines for performing another papal first — the first time a pope married a couple on a plane. On the flight from Santiago to Quito during his apostolic visit to Chile he blessed the marriage of Podesta and Ciuffardi, another papal first — the first time a pope married a couple on a plane. Francis has been basking in a serious illness since mid-January.

Fr. Lipka was born January 12, 1941, in Władysława (Kukulskia) and Marianna Lipka in the Polish town of Gasewo. He attended Minor Seminary and Major Seminary in Plock, Poland, and graduated from Catholic University in Lublin, Poland. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 13, 1965 in Makow, Mazowiecki, Poland.

Fr. Lipka’s last pastoral assignment was as Parochial Vicar for Holy Family Parish, Decatur where he spent just a few months before leaving due to his declining health. Previous to that he was the Parochial Vicar for St. Monica Parish, Kalamazoo from 2001 to 2016. He provided pastoral ministry at a number of Parishes throughout the Diocese and also was an emergency on-call Chaplain for local hospitals. Fr. Lipka was well-known in the local Polish community and celebrated a monthly Mass in Polish while he was able [see “Priestly Assignments” for additional information].

“Father Lipka courageously battled cancer over these 18 months but he carried his cross with joy and grace,” said Bishop Bradley. “He remained full of hope and acceptance throughout, with a clear mind and a ready wit.”

Visitation and Mass of Christian Burial was held at St. Augustine Cathedral, Kalamazoo. Fr. Lipka was interred at Mt. Olivet Catholic Cemetery, Kalamazoo.

**Priestly Assignments:**
- **Diocease of Plock (Poland)**
  - 1965-1966: Associate Priest – St. Stanislaus Parish, Biezun, Poland
  - 1966-1967: Associate Priest – Holy Mary Parish, Winnica, Poland
  - 1967-1969: Associate Priest – St. Catherine Parish, Leg, Poland
  - 1969-1970: Associate Priest – St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish, Plock, Poland
  - 1970-1972: Associate Priest, St. Ann Parish, Zale, Poland
  - 1972-1973: Associate Priest, St. Adalbert Parish, Raciaz, Poland

Bishop Bradley releases call to stand up against racism

Bishop Bradley released the following statement in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 15th and the National Day for Racial Healing on January 16th.

“The important observances of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day and the National Day for Racial Healing present us the opportunity to renew our steadfast commitment to stand up against racism. We celebrate Dr. King because he worked tirelessly to promote justice and equality for all people, while encouraging a culture of nonviolence and love of one another as brothers and sisters in the human family. Inspired by Jesus’ Gospel message of love for all, Dr. King said: “Now there is a final reason I think that Jesus says, ‘Love your enemies.’ It is this: that hate has within it a redemptive power. And there is a power there that eventually transforms individuals.” *

“Recent acts of violence and hatred in many parts of our country are clearly motivated by racial bigotry. No matter who we are, or what position we hold, we must ensure that our words and deeds reflect civility, grace and mutual respect for all people. I join with Cardinal DiNardo, the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, who said in his statement that we must bring Dr. King’s teachings into the present moment in a way that inspires lasting change. He quoted Dr. King’s teachings to promote justice and equality for all people, while encouraging a culture of nonviolence and love of one another as brothers and sisters in the human family. Inspired by Jesus’ Gospel message of love for all, Dr. King said: “Now there is a final reason I think that Jesus says, ‘Love your enemies.’ It is this: that hate has within it a redemptive power. And there is a power there that eventually transforms individuals.” *

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The Bishop's Perspective
Welcoming an early “Spring”

February doesn't always rank high on people's list of favorite months but in reality there are many great reasons to embrace this time of year. It's the month that brings the frigid, first month of January and the third month of March which not only celebrates the two great and well-loved Saints, Joseph and Patrick, but is also the month when winter officially ends and spring begins. And of course, February is normally the month of Super Bowl parties and Valentine's Day celebrations; though, this year, since Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day collide, we will all need to plan ahead and have our Valentine's Day celebrations before or after Ash Wednesday because of the obligatory fast and abstinence required of us on that solemn day. Ash Wednesday begins our annual 40-day Lenten journey which, though the actual date of Ash Wednesday changes every year, always begins sometime in February.

Does Lent qualify as one of the reasons why February, for me, is one of my favorite months? It certainly does, because Lent brings us an "early Spring"; and Springtime is (at least for me) the best season of the year.

Now, I do realize that the first day of meteorological Spring is on March 1st, and the first actual day of Spring is not until March 21st, but for us, Lent begins our spiritual springtime. The very word “Lent” is derived from an Old English word meaning "springtime". Just as spring awakens nature to new life and growth, so each Lent issues a renewed invitation to us as people of faith to awaken to the Paschal Mystery, which brings hope to the world.

As I write this month's article, it seems very clear to me that the entire world is very much in need of that virtue of hope, and therefore could benefit from this early spiritual springtime of Lent. The political divisions among our leaders, and their constituents, seem to be deeper than ever; the acrimony among people in general seems very strong; the ability for us as a people to have civil discourse and discuss issues rationally seems to have gone by the wayside. Whatever the topic of the day, tensions are high, emotions are strained and patience is in short supply. Aside from political divisions, or perhaps because of them, social movements are picking up in intensity; but sadly with an "if you don’t agree with the way I see things, you’re an awful human being" attitude, which actually creates greater divisions and decreases the likelihood of mutual understanding. We hear accusations of racism and sexism leveled at every level of society. We witness the tragedies of increased senseless acts of violence and brutality in school shootings and even among family members.

That's why I say I think we are all in need of "an early spiritual springtime" and a good season of Lent. Lent gives us 40 days to cleanse ourselves of whatever hold sin has on us, that which distracts us from following God's ways. Lent is that time, as we are all reminded on Ash Wednesday when blessed ashes are placed on our forehead in the form of a cross to remember our mortality — that one day, at a time none of us know, our life in this world will end; and to turn away from sin and believe in the Gospel/saving Word of Jesus, rather than the messages that are barked so loudly by the divisions political, or perhaps because of them, social movements are picking up in intensity; but sadly with an "if you don’t agree with the way I see things, you’re an awful human being" attitude, which actually creates greater divisions and decreases the likelihood of mutual understanding. We hear accusations of racism and sexism leveled at every level of society. We witness the tragedies of increased senseless acts of violence and brutality in school shootings and even among family members.

What is wonderful about Lent is that it comes to us every year as an annual opportunity which can make a life-changing difference within us. If we approach it as just another 40 days that come and go, with no difference and no change, then we've missed an enormous opportunity. With each Lent we are encouraged to practice the ancient and powerful spiritual practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving/works of charity. But what is different each year is us; we are in a different place, with different needs, and different specific sins from which we need to be forgiven so we can move forward in hope.

Pope Francis, in his beautiful Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium" (The Joy of the Gospel) opens with these words: "The Joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept His offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, Joy is constantly born anew." (#1) Isn’t that exactly what we all want — to be set free from sin, sorrow, emptiness and loneliness? Isn’t that exactly what we all need? Lent provides us with that opportunity, as long as we embrace these 40 days and are open to the "new life" that we can find in Jesus. As is the case in every season of Lent, we are able to accomplish that by prayer, fasting and almsgiving/works of charity.

Prayer: While some people like to paint Lent as a time of deprivation and self-de-nial, prayer can lead us to find the joy and renewed hope we long for through our deeper encounter with Jesus. Nurturing our relationship by dedicating time in the morning to reading the Bible and Lenten reflections, attending Mass as often as possible during the week in addition to our Sunday obligation, praying the rosary as often as possible, and spending time in Eucharistic Adoration when available to be in prayerful union with Jesus Himself — all of these are ways to encounter Jesus and invite Him into our daily lives to help us turn away from sin and believe in the joy of the Gospel) opens with these words: "The Joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept His offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, Joy is constantly born anew."

"Waiting in Joyful Hope"

La Perspectiva del Obispo
Dando la bienvenida a una “primavera” temprana

Febrero no siempre ocupa un lugar destacado en la lista de meses favoritos de las personas, pero en realidad hay muchas buenas razones para laarenas de febrero. La primera es que ese mes está entre el primer mes de enero y el tercer mes de marzo, que no solo celebra a los dos grandes y queridos Santos, José y Patricio, sino que también es el mes en que el invierno oficialmente termina y comienza la primavera. Y, por supuesto, febrero es normalmente el mes de las fiestas del Super Bowl y las celebraciones del Día de San Valentín; sin embargo, este año, dado que el Miércoles de Ceniza y el Día de San Valentín coinciden, debemos planear y celebrar el Día de San Valentín antes o después del Miércoles de Ceniza debido al ayuno y la abstinencia obligatorias que exigimos en ese día solemne. El Miércoles de Ceniza comienza nuestro viaje anual de Cuaresma de 40 días que, aunque la fecha del Miércoles de Ceniza cambia todos los años, siempre comienza en algún momento de febrero.

¿La Cuaresma califica como una de las razones por las cuales febrero, para mí, es uno de mis meses favoritos? Ciertamente sí, porque la Cuaresma nos trae una “primavera temprana”; y la primavera es (al menos para mí) la mejor estación del año.

Ahora, si me doy cuenta de que el primer día de la primavera meteorológica es el 1 de marzo, el primer día real de la primavera no está hasta el 21 de marzo, pero la Cuaresma comienza para nosotros nuestra primavera espiritual anual. La misma palabra “Cuaresma” se deriva de una antigua palabra en inglés que significa “primavera.” Así como la primavera despierta la naturaleza a una nueva vida y crecimiento, cada Cuaresma nos invita nuevamente como personas de fe a despertar al Misterio Pascual, que trae esperanza al mundo.

Mientras escribo el artículo de este mes, me parece muy claro que el mundo entero tiene una gran necesidad de esperanza y, por lo tanto, podría beneficiarse de esta primavera espiritual de la Cuaresma. La Cuaresma nos da 40 días para limpiarnos de cualquier posibilidad que el pecado tenga sobre nosotros, lo que nos distrae de seguir los caminos de Dios. La Cuaresma es ese momento, como a todos nos recuerda el Miércoles de Ceniza cuando se colocan cenizas benditas sobre nuestra frente en forma de cruz para recordar nuestra mortalidad — que un día, en una hora que ninguno de nosotros sabe, nuestra vida en este el mundo terminará; y alejarnos del pecado y creer en el Evangelio/la Palabra salvadora de Jesús, en lugar de los mensajes que el mundo vocifera tan fuerte que crean una mayor ira y divisiones más profundas.

Lo maravilloso de la Cuaresma es que nos llega cada año como una oportunidad anual que puede marcar una diferencia que cambia nuestra vida. Si nos acercamos a ella como solo 40 días más que van y vienen, sin diferencias y sin cambios, entonces hemos perdido una gran oportunidad. Con cada Cuaresma, se nos anima a practicar las antiguas y poderosas prácticas espirituales de oración, ayuno y li-
mosa / obras de caridad. Pero lo que es diferente cada año somos nosotros; estamos en un lugar diferente, con diferentes necesidades y diferentes pecados específicos de los cuales debemos ser perdonados para poder avanzar en la espe-
ranza.

El Papa Francisco, en su hermosa Exhortación Apostólica “Evangelii Gaudium” (La alegría del Evangelio) comienza con estas palabras: “La alegría del Evangelio llena los corazones y las vidas del ano. Es el mes que hace muer...” Aplicados a nosotros que aceptan su oferta de salvación son liberados del pecado, la tristeza, el vacío interior y la soledad. Con Cristo, la alegría siempre nace de nuevo. “(#1) ¿No es eso exactamente lo que todos queremos, ser liberados del pecado, la tristeza, el vacío y la soledad? ¿Es eso exactamente lo que todos necesitamos? La Cuaresma nos brinda esa oportunidad, siempre que aceptemos estos 40 días y estemos abiertos a la “nueva vida” que podemos encontrar en Jesús. Como es el caso en cada tiempo de la Cuaresma, podemos lograr eso mediante la oración, el ayuno y la limosna / obras de caridad.

Oración: Mientras que a algunas personas les gusta describir la Cuaresma como un tiempo de privación y abnegación, la oración puede llevarnos a encontrar la alegría...
Bishop expresses gratitude for inspirational giving

On the Feast of the Epiphany Bishop Bradley wrote a letter to the Faithful expressing his gratitude for the generous response to disaster-relief efforts as well as “second collections” — additional requests for monetary support of Church needs throughout the national and the world. In his letter, Bishop wrote: "Certainly 2017 was a year of great challenges and tragic circumstances in our country and various parts of the world, from natural disasters, to horrific acts of violence, to economic uncertainty for many. What remained constant, as well as a source of great inspiration, is the overwhelming generosity shown by you, the Faithful of our Diocese, to those in need. Your generous response is a reflection of the Father’s unconditional love for those members of our human family in need here in the nine counties of our Diocese, and beyond.”

Bishop Bradley detailed the financial amounts for each collection (see following). He expressed particular gratitude for the generous response to the Priests Retirement Fund which raised more than $600,000 since its introduction in 2014. "This incredible financial response has now made our Diocesan Priests Retirement Fund healthy, which will secure support for our retired diocesan priests who have served and ministered so selflessly to the Faithful of our Diocese. In fact, because of this more-secured Pension Plan, we are now able to slightly increase the monthly pension benefit for our currently retired priests for the first time in 10 years…"

He also committed to enhancing the understanding and information about Bishop’s Annual Appeal. "I also wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your generous support of the Bishop’s Annual Appeal, which makes possible all the Diocesan ministries, services and programs which benefit the entire Diocese. We are committed to continually finding improved ways to inform our Faithful people how those funds are making a difference in the lives of those we serve.”

The letter was distributed in parishes and may be found on the diocesan website: www.diokzoo.org.

The Bishop’s Perspective

Continued from page 3

Gospel/the Saving Word of Jesus. As Pope Francis wrote in his 2018 Lenten Message: “By devoting more time to prayer, we enable our hearts to root out our secret lies and...find the consolation God offers.”

Fasting: While it’s a great spiritual practice to ‘give up’ certain foods or beverages that we like as an act of self-denial (not just to lose a few pounds), what if we also “faste” from words that hurt, from comments that divide, from expressions that are disrespectful, from arguments that are one-sided and mean-spirited. As my mother used to always to say to us children: “If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all.” Needless to say, we had a lot of quiet times, but she had the right idea. As Pope Francis writes in his Lenten Message: “Fasting weakens our tendency to violence; it disarms us and becomes an important opportunity for growth...it makes us more attentive to God and our neighbor, and revives our desire to obey God.”

Almsgiving/Works of Mercy: The basic teachings about right and wrong are learned early in life by understanding, and even memorizing, the 10 Commandments, sometimes known as the “10 Don’ts.” The Good News of Jesus focuses our attention, not only on those acts which are told “don’t” do, but on all those that we are told to “do”, most especially the Beatitudes — the eight “Do’s” of the Gospel. We are also urged to “do,” that is put into daily practice in our lives, the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. As Pope Francis reminds us in his Lenten Message: “Almsgiving sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbor as a brother or sister. What I possess is never mine….When we give alms (perform works of charity/mercy), we share in God’s providential care for each of His children.”

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ, Lent is the favorable season for renewing and deepening our relationship with Christ and with one another. May this 40-day Season of Grace truly be an early springtime. May our spiritual preparation to celebrate once more the Paschal Mystery of Jesus’ suffering, death and Resurrection for us bring a spiritual springtime to our weary spirits.

God bless you, now and always.

y la esperanza renovada que anhelamos a través de nuestro encuentro más profundo con Jesús. Alimentando nuestra relación, dedicando tiempo en la mañana leyendo la Biblia y las reflexiones de la Cuaresma, asistiendo a la Misa tan a menudo como sea posible durante la semana, además de nuestra obligación del domingo, rezando el rosario tan a menudo como sea posible, y pasando tiempo en Adoración Eucarística cuando esté disponible para estar en unión con Jesús mismo; todas estas son formas de en- contrar a Jesús e invitarlo a nuestra vida diaria para ayudarnos a alejarnos del pecado y creer en el Evangelio / la Palabra Salvador de Jesús. Como escribió el Papa Francisco en su Mensaje Cuaresmal de 2018: “Al dedicar más tiempo a la oración, permitimos que nuestros corazones eliminen nuestras mentiras secre- tas y … encuentren la consolación que Dios ofrece.”

Ayuno: Si bien es una gran práctica espiritual “aban- donar” ciertas comidas o bebidas que nos gustan como un acto de abnegación (no solo para perder al- gunas libras), ¿qué pasaría si también “ayunáramos” de las palabras que lastiman, de comentarios que divi- den, de expresiones que son irrespetuosas, de argu- mentos que son unilateralis y mezquinos. Como mi madre solía decirnos siempre de niños: “Si no puedes decir nada bueno, no digas nada en absoluto.” Obvia- mente que tuvimos muchos momentos en silencio, pero ella tenía la idea correcta. Como escribe el Papa Francisco en su Mensaje de Cuaresma: “El ayuno de- bíliza nuestra tendencia a la violencia; nos disuelve y se convierte en una oportunidad importante para el crecimiento ... nos hace más atentos a Dios y a nuestro prójimo, y reaviva nuestro deseo de obedecer a Dios.”

Limosna / obras de misericordia: Las enseñanzas bá- sicas sobre lo correcto y lo incorrecto se aprenden temprano en la vida mediante la comprensión, e in- cilita la memorización, de los 10 mandamientos, a veces conocidos como los “10 no hacer,” La Buena Nueva de Jesús centra nuestra atención, no solo en aquellos actos que dicen “no” hacer, sino también en todos aquellos que se nos dice que debemos "hacer," especialmente las Bienaventuranzas: las ocho “Hacer” del Evangelio. También se nos insta a “hacer,” o sea poner en práctica diariamente en nuestras vidas, las Obras Espirituales y Corporales de Misericordia. Como nos recuerda el Papa Francisco en su Mensaje de Cuaresma: “La limosna nos libera de la avaricia y nos ayuda a considerar a nuestro próximo como her- mano o hermana. Lo que posee nunca es mío... Cuando damos limosna (llevamos a cabo obras de ca- ridad / misericordia), compartimos el cuidado provi- dencial de Dios para cada uno de Sus hijos”

Mis queridas hermanas y hermanos en Cristo, la Cuaresma es el tiempo propicio para renovar y pro- fundizar nuestra relación con Cristo y con los demás. Que este Tiempo de Gracia de 40 días realmente sea una primavera temprana. Que nuestra preparación es- piritual para celebrar una vez más el misterio pascual del sufrimiento, la muerte y la resurrección de Jesús nos traiga una primavera espiritual a nuestros espíri- tus cansados.

Dios los bendiga, ahora y siempre.
Lent offers opportunity to deepen faith

By Nicole L.V. Mullis

Fasting. Praying. Almsgiving. These are the action-words of Lent.

However, plopping spare change into the Rice Bowl, catching Mass on Ash Wednesday, and forgoing burgers on Fridays is only skimming the surface of this beautiful season. Dig deeper and make Lent the heart-changing, soul-mending, Easter-morning-glory season it can be.

FASTING

Fasting reminds us we are dependent on God for our strength. Restricting what we eat is one way to fast, restricting what is eating our time, treasure, and talent is another. Maybe it’s social media, drive-thru coffee, free two-day shipping, or those oh-so-binge-able television series on Netflix. Maybe it’s gossiping, complaining, nursing a grudge, or indulging in a “harmless little vice.” Make a personal fast and offer it to the Lord. If you fail, offer the failure up to the Lord. Ask him for the strength to try again.

Fasting lends itself well to the other actions of Lent. If it’s stopping a bad habit, make a point to say a quick prayer when the urge arises. If it’s stopping a bad habit, make a list of people who need prayer or with whom you struggle. Pray the Rosary or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, remembering them to the Lord.

Keep a prayer journal. Every day write a prayer of praise, another of thanksgiving, and another of intercession. Be specific. These prayers don’t have to be long or formal. Remember, you are a child of God writing your heavenly Father from your heart.

Make a list of people who need prayer or with whom you struggle. Pray the Rosary or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, remembering them to the Lord.

Weave prayer into your work. Pause before each task, offering it to the Lord for a special intention.

ALMSGIVING

The Catholic Relief Services’ Rice Bowl is the 24-hour charity that fits on your kitchen table. Did you know 75 percent of the money raised helps needy people around the world, while the remaining 25 percent helps needy people right here in our Diocese (see related article, cover)? Consider donating a percentage of your weekly food budget. Instead of going out or ordering in, give that money to the rice bowl and make yourself a sandwich. Donate your coffee-shop money and brew your own coffee.

Make Lent a second Christmas. Christmas makes charitable giving easy, but all those same places are in need of aid, especially during the last days of winter. Donate to your local homeless shelter or food bank. Collect coats and gloves for the poor and needy. Visit the homebound and those in nursing homes. Volunteer at the local soup kitchen or hospital. Contact your parish to see what outreach programs they support or contact Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo at www.ccdok.org for donation and volunteer opportunities.

ATTEND DAILY MASS. It can be one day a week or every day for a week. Enjoy the intimacy of receiving the Lord in this smaller setting.

Give a good confession. Prepare with prayer, asking Jesus to reveal where pride, jealousy, and the inability to forgive has led you astray. Take these to the confessional and let the Lord heal you.

Attend Adoration and the Stations of the Cross, embracing these sacred traditions of the church.

Keep a prayer journal. Every day write a prayer of praise, another of thanksgiving, and another of intercession. Be specific. These prayers don’t have to be long or formal. Remember, you are a child of God writing your heavenly Father from your heart.

Make a list of people who need prayer or with whom you struggle. Pray the Rosary or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, remembering them to the Lord.

Weave prayer into your work. Pause before each task, offering it to the Lord for a special intention.

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Plato de Arroz de Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

El miércoles 14 de Febrero del 2018 se celebra el miércoles de ceniza y se da inicio a la Cuaresma. En ese día también están disponibles en las parroquias cajitas llamadas “Plato de Arroz.”

El Plato de Arroz es el programa de Cuaresma de Catholic Relief Services (CRS) para las familias y comunidades de fe en los Estados Unidos que quieren poner su fe en acción. A través del Plato de Arroz, se invita a los participantes a escuchar historias sobre sus hermanos y Hermanas necesitados en todo el mundo, y dedica sus oraciones, ayuno y donativos de Cunas para cambiar la vida de los que sufren en la pobreza en diferentes países del mundo. Los participantes realizan su jornada durante los 40 días de la Cuaresma. En las cajitas de cartón, su familia va depositando la cantidad de dinero que desea donar y se devuelven las cajitas a la parroquia el domingo de Ramos, 25 de marzo. Este dinero es coleccionado para CRS para ayudar a los pobres en todo el mundo. Se llama “Plato de Arroz” porque si todos colaboramos, de arroz en arroz podemos alimentar a centenares de personas.

El lema para este año 2018 es “Salir al Encuentro: Compañeros en el Camino.” Estamos llamados a ser compañeros en el camino y la Cuaresma es un tiempo de encuentro, un encuentro con nosotros mismos; un encuentro con nuestro prójimo: y un encuentro con nuestro Dios. A través de la ORACIÓN, encontramos a Cristo en nuestra vida y en cada miembro de nuestra familia humana. A través del AYUNO, encontramos los obstáculos que nos impiden servir a Dios y a nuestro prójimo. A través de los DONATIVOS, encontramos el amor de Dios y lo compartimos con nuestros hermanos y hermanas necesitados.

El Plato de Arroz de CRS te invita a ti, tu familia y comunidad a caminar al lado del Buen Samaritano, para reflexionar sobre la pregunta: ¿Quién es mi prójimo? Muchos de nuestros hermanos están en movimiento: migrantes, refugiados, personas desplazadas internamente, viajeros. El buen samaritano — un viajero el mismo, alguien en movimiento — nos muestra lo que significa encontrarse con el desconocido, acompañar a alguien, necesitar y convertirse en un compañero en el camino.


“La Cuaresma es el tiempo propicio para renovar nuestro encuentro con Cristo, viviendo en su Palabra, en los sacramentos y en nuestro prójimo.”

– Papa Francisco

Omisión de Cuaresma

Dios del camino. Cuando nos tropezamos en el camino de la vida, nos acompañas. Tu amor nos hace levantarnos y comenzar de nuevo. Que tu presencia, ayuno, y donativos de Cunas sean un encuentro con tu misericordia. Que nuestra experiencia con tu amor nos inspire a ir y hacer lo mismo, como compañeros para nuestro prójimo más necesitado, y para cada miembro de nuestra familia humana. Amén.

Encuentro Diocesano Pre-Matrimonial: Matrimonio Lleno de Alegría

Por Veronica Rodriguez

Comenzando en el 2018 la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano estará colaborando con la Oficina de la Iglesia Doméstica para proporcionar la formación de parejas basándose en el Programa de Matrimonio Lleno de Alegría. Este es un fin de semana de reflexión, el Matrimonio Lleno de Alegría en el 2018 es de 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. en las siguientes fechas:

Sábado 17 y Domingo 18 de Marzo en el Centro Pastoral Diocesano, Kalamazoo.
Sábado 9 y Domingo 10 de Junio en el Centro Pastoral Diocesano, Kalamazoo.
Sábado 4 y Domingo 5 de Agosto en el Centro Pastoral Diocesano, Kalamazoo.

Las parejas que quieran casarse, recuerden que primer los deben hablar con su párroco (por lo menos 6 a 9 meses antes de la fecha que deseen celebrar la boda). También recuerden que deben participar en la formación de parejas. A través de la ORACIÓN, encontramos a Cristo en nuestra vida y en cada miembro de nuestra familia humana. A través del AYUNO, encontramos los obstáculos que nos impiden servir a Dios y a nuestro prójimo. A través de los DONATIVOS, encontramos el amor de Dios y lo compartimos con nuestros hermanos y hermanas necesitados.

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BISHOP BRADLEY’S CALENDAR

Feb. 11 – Closing Mass for The Presence, Hackett Catholic Prep, 11 a.m.

Feb. 12 – World Day of the Sick and the Dying, Borgess Hospital, 11 a.m.

Feb. 14 – Ash Wednesday Mass, St. Augustine Cathedral, Noon

Feb. 18 – Rite of Election, St. Augustine Cathedral, 3 p.m.

March 5 – Reading Month Activities, Immaculate Conception Catholic School, Three Rivers, 9 a.m.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS WITH BISHOP

March 2 – Our Lady of the Lake, Edwardsburg, 7 p.m.

March 16 – St. Stanislaus, Dorr, 9:30 a.m.

Activities around the Diocese

Feb. 8 – Good Neighbors and Brews, 7-9 p.m. at Arcadia Brewing Company, Kalamazoo. Dynamic speakers, engaging topics, and fellowship for married and single young adults from throughout the area.

Feb. 16 – Gaudium Christi, St. Joseph Parish, Battle Creek, 7:30-9 p.m. Time for Eucharist Adoration, live worship music, Gospel reflection. Contact: Tim McNamara, tmcnamara@diokzoo.org.


Feb. 23–25 – New Life Retreat, St. Bernard Parish Center, Benton Harbor; 6-9 p.m. Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday. Must attend all three days. Suggested cost: $40. Includes materials and meals (2 Saturday, 1 Sunday) Contact: 269-925-2425 or register at sjohnandbernard.org.

March 15 – KDCWW Lenten Day of Renewal, St. Mary Parish, Kalamazoo, 8:15 a.m. – 3 p.m. Theme is “Pray, Fast, Give.” Light breakfast and lunch provided. Cost: $20. Contact: Carolyn Morrison, 517-617-5682, carolynmorrison@hotmail.com.

March 16 – Gaudium Christi, St. Joseph Parish, Battle Creek, 7:30-9 p.m. Time for Eucharist Adoration, live worship music, Gospel reflection. Contact: Tim McNamara, tmcnamara@diokzoo.org.

Outside the Diocese

May 19 – Matthew Kelly, New York Times bestselling author and internationally acclaimed speaker, presents “Living Every Day with Passion & Purpose” at the DeltaPlex Arena in Grand Rapids at 7 p.m. Tickets are $39 and available at dynamiccatholic.com/passion-and-purpose-live-grand-rapids-mi-may-19-2018.

Diocesan Trauma Recovery Program begins new session this month

Do you have childhood memories that are painful? Do you have a history of abuse, neglect or other trauma? Are you currently struggling in your relationships, social functions, work situations? You may be eligible for this free program, to help you find the tools that will enhance your quality of life. Currently, the Diocesan Trauma Recovery Program is accepting participants for the winter/spring series of classes, which begin at the end of February. For further information or to register, please call the Trauma Recovery Program @ 269-903-0134 and leave a message.

Sisters of St. Joseph host “Brunch with the Nuns” on February 25

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph invite all interested people to “Brunch with the Nuns” on Sunday, February 25 at Nazareth, 3427 Gull Rd., Kalamazoo. Mass begins at 9:30 a.m. in Holy Family Chapel, followed by brunch and conversation. Women and men of all ages are invited to learn about the various relationships with the Congregation, as associates or as members of religious life. Please RSVP to Sr. Bernie Dean at 269-967-1195.

Catholic Women host Lenten Day of Spiritual Renewal

All are invited to attend with the Kalamazoo Diocesan Council of Catholic Women on Thursday, March 15th for a Lenten Day of Renewal – “Pray, Fast, Give,” at St. Mary Parish, Kalamazoo. The day will include speakers, prayer, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Mass, Newman’s Bookahope, The Way of the Cross meditations, morning refreshments, lunch, and more.

Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat

February 23-25, 2018. This retreat will be held at the Kalamazoo area. For more information or to register, call (616) 340-1824 or toll free 1-800-808-6284 or email: mwallish@cwcestmi.org. All inquiries are strictly confidential. Financial assistance is available. The retreat is sponsored by the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

Intentions from Pope Francis

Please remember the Holy Father Pope Francis’ intentions in prayer throughout the month February:

Universal: Say “No” to Corruption That those who have material, political or spiritual power may resist any lure of corruption.

Lenten Fish Fries

Baked & Fried Cod Fish Dinners include: French Fries, Mac-n-Cheese, Cole slaw and roll. Your meal also includes coffee, water and punch. Beer, wine, pop & desserts also available for additional cost.

Families of 5 or more $45.

$9 Adults, $5 Children ages 6-12; Under 5 free.

Doors open at 4 pm; dinner served 5-7 pm.

Fish Fry dinners are served every Friday through Lent: February: 16 & 23 • March: 2, 9, 16, 23

KNOTHILLS OF COUNCIL 1616

St. Joseph Catholic Church 936 Lake St., Kalamazoo

Located at Bennett Building

For more info check out: www.kfc1616.com or call 269-345-4695

“Waiting in Joyful Hope”

Diocesan Annual Open Retreat

March 10-11

Join us for the 2018 Diocesan Annual Open Retreat March 10-11 at Transformations Spirituality Center. This year’s theme is “The Heart of the Desert: Discernment of Spirits.” The facilitator will be Elizabeth Green, author of “Movements of the Heart” Retreat Ministry. The retreat begins with a 9 a.m. Mass on Saturday, March 10th and concludes after the 9:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, March 11th. Attendees can choose to stay overnight or commute. The cost is $125 for double occupancy, $150 for single occupancy. $85 for those commuting, if paid by February 23rd. After that there is an additional $20 added on and rooms given on a first come, first serve basis. All registrations are due by March 2nd. For more information or to register, please contact Tim McNamara at tmcnamara@diokzoo.org.

Young Adult Retreat heads to Pretty Lake March 16-18

All young adults are invited to spend a weekend in prayer, reflection and fellowship during the 2018 Young Adult Retreat. This year’s theme is “Becoming a Great Saint in Everyday Life!” and the retreat will be held at Pretty Lake Camp in Mattawan. The retreat begins at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 16 and concludes on Noon on Sunday, March 18. Cost is $50 and includes all meals and snacks. In addition to time for reflection and fellowship, there will be Mass, Adoration, Reconciliation, guest speakers and presentations. For more information or to register, contact Tim McNamara, tmcnamara@diokzoo.org.

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Sisters host services for Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking

The Sisters of St. Joseph have worked tirelessly to raise awareness for the issues surrounding human trafficking. This month they are hosting two prayer services at Holy Family Chapel, Nazareth. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General has designated February 8 as an annual day of prayer and awareness against human trafficking. February 8 is the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery in Sudan and Italy. Once Josephine was freed, she became a Canossian nun and dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the poor and suffering. She was declared a Saint in 2000 by Pope John Paul II.

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph will host a prayer service at 6 p.m. on February 8th at Holy Family Chapel at Nazareth. An additional prayer service has been planned earlier in the week on February 6th at 4 p.m. also at Holy Family Chapel. All are invited.

Additional resource: www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program

Local couple has their marriage blessed by Pope Francis

Mark and Sharon (Alexander) Voege were married on December 22 at Immaculate Conception Church, Three Rivers. The couple then traveled to Rome where they attended a papal audience on December 27th. Along with close to 100 couples they were invited to the conclusion of the Rite of Election. The couple then traveled to Rome where they at-

Catholics brave Chicago in January for national conference

DENVER, Jan. 6, 2018 — One of the largest gatherings of Catholics around the topic of evangelization, SLS18: Inspire & Equip, hosted by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), welcomed more than 8,000 participants to Chicago Jan. 2 – 6, 2018. Attendees, most of them college students, honed evangelization skills through training and practice sessions. SLS18 had more than twice as many attendees as SLS16, hosted two years ago. Recordings of several speaker talks and dozens of event photos are available at facebook.com/FOCUSCatholic.

The conference included three tracks; a Collegiate Track for the more than 5,000 college students who came from 410 campuses, the Campus Ministry Track for more than 500 chaplains and campus ministers and a Lifelong Mission Track for over 1,000 lay ministers, parishioners, seminarians, parish priests, FOCUS alumni and benefactors. Additional attendees included others wishing to transform their parishes, communities and workplaces, as well as more than 800 FOCUS staff.

Jim Caveziel, who played the role of Jesus in “The Passion of the Christ,” was a surprise guest during the Wednesday evening keynote. Caveziel, who stars in the upcoming film, "Paul, Apostle of Christ," encouraged attendees to be warriors animated by faith. Keynote speakers for SLS18 included Bishop Robert Barron, Sr. Bethany Madonna, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Lisa Brenninkmeyer, Jason Evert, Curtis Martin, Dr. Edward Sri, Kelsey Skoch, Sarah Swafford and Mike Sweeney. SLS18 included daily opportunities for Mass, adoration, confession and discernment.

More than 200 priests concelebrated daily Mass and heard approximately 4,000 confessions over the course of the five-day event. Celebrants included Cardinal Blase J. Cupich (Archdiocese of Chicago), Archbishop George Lucas (Archdiocese of Omaha), Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio (Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA) and Archbishop John J. Myers (Archbishop emeritus of Diocese of Newark).

Many world-renowned Catholic speakers shared perspectives on current faith issues, including experts such as Helen Alvare, Fr. Philip Bochanski, Dr. Mary Healy, Fr. John Kartje, Harry Kraemer, Jr., Dr. Jonathan Reyes. Entertainment included singer and songwriter Matt Maher, illusionist Mark Cook and performance painter Mike Debus. FOCUS alternates years with hosting its national events: SEEK and SLS. Last year, SEEK2017 inspired nearly 13,000 attendees in San Antonio, Texas. Registration is now open for SEEK2019, which will be in Indianapolis, Indiana, Jan. 3 – 7, 2019, at www.seek2019.com. More than 700 people have already signed up.

Sisters host services for Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking

On February 18th Bishop Bradley will celebrate the annual Rite of Election at St. Augustine Cathedral, Kalamazoo. This annual Liturgy of the Word celebration welcomes the candidates and catechumens from around the Diocese. After the conclusion of the rite catechumens, those who will be baptized and confirmed at the Easter Vigil on March 31, 2018, will be known as “the Elect.” The candidates will be known as the “Illuminati,” those who will be enlightened by being received into full communion with the Church. Shown above is Barbara Vincent, St. Mark Parish, Niles, from the 2017 Rite of Election.

Join Fr. Robert Creagan of the Kalamazoo Diocese for a Pilgrimage to Rome

November 8th-16th, 2018

There will be an informational meeting for this trip on Thursday, February 15th at 6 pm at St. Augustine Cathedral Church, 542 W Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007 Meeting Location: Crowely Center.

For more info or to RSVP please call: 269-657-5529 • info@sealandairtravel.com

A $500 deposit is required by March 15, 2018. Collette is offering additional travel options. Call for more information.

For the Good News: 810-269-6577