

Wednesday, February 17th, 2021



During Lent, we are asked to devote ourselves to seeking the Lord in prayer and reading Scripture, to service by giving alms, and to practice self-control through fasting. Many know of the tradition of abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, but we are also called to practice self-discipline and fast in other ways throughout the season. In addition, the giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts—not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents. As St. John Chrysostom reminds us: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2446).



**Ash Wednesday**, the official start of the Lenten season, will look *markedly* different this year! Distribution of ashes will be within the 8:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. mass. Last year's Ash Wednesday Masses were celebrated just weeks before the coronavirus pandemic hit the United States, so our services followed the usual tradition. It wasn't until the third week of Lent that dioceses began lifting Sunday Mass obligations and temporarily stopping public Masses. COVID-19 has altered life as we know it — and this year that means Catholics will mark Ash Wednesday differently.

Following a decision from the Vatican about the distribution of ashes, parishes will follow these new guidelines this year. Typically, as the ashes are being imposed on each person, the priest says "repent and believe in the Gospel" or "remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return". This year, Msgr. Gilbert will pronounce this reminder once — to the entire congregation — prior to the beginning of the distribution of ashes. He will sprinkle ashes on each person's head in silence. This is a variation from the customary practice of tracing a sign of the cross on the person's forehead in ashes. (The sprinkling of ashes on the top of people's heads is not something new, but is a customary practice at the Vatican and in Italy.) These changes are being implemented due to COVID -19 safety protocols. Yes, Ash Wednesday will have a different look, but it will be the same message!



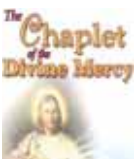
**Daily mass** will be celebrated on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 8:00 A.M. On Wednesdays, Mass is celebrated at 7:00 P.M. This provides an opportunity for the people who work to attend Mass during Lent, in addition to attending on Saturday evening/Sunday morning.



**Fridays—Stations of the Cross (7:00 P.M.)** including Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 5:00 to 7:00 P.M. with Divine Mercy Chaplet at 6:45 P.M.



**Adoration of the Cross** will be held daily following morning mass and rosary until 3:00 P.M. This year we will have a special grotto within the church for your private meditation.



**"Chaplet of the Divine Mercy"** - Saturdays/Sundays during Lent, before the 4:00 P.M. Mass (around 3:40); before the 8:30 & 11:00 A.M. mass (around 8:10 & 10:40 A.M.) We will sing the "*Chaplet of the Divine Mercy*". *The Divine Mercy Chaplet will be recited before the 6:00 P.M. Mass on Saturday and before the 7:00 A.M. Mass on Sunday.*

**Penance Services Schedule** - *Because of the pandemic, there will be no regional penance services.* Confessions will be heard our normal time—Saturday's from 3:00 to 3:30 P.M. Confessions will also be heard every Friday - 5:00 to 6:30 P.M. **Holy Week Confessions** – Monday & Tuesday – 8:30 to 9:30 A.M.; Wednesday – 5:00 to 6:45 P.M.



**A five-week Lenten Reflection**—There are two different times to choose—Monday mornings—9:00 A.M. (beginning February 22nd) or Thursday evenings—7:00 P.M. (beginning February 25th). You can also do the study at home option. If you have any questions or would like more information, please call Melissa at 724-230-4450. Registration may be done on our

website: [www.stmaryfreeport.com](http://www.stmaryfreeport.com) - under the "Events" tab or you may call Melissa.



All parishioners should plan to attend a *Lenten Reflection Program* on Sunday, February 28th at 2:00 P.M. in our Church. *Fr. Adam Potter* of the Pittsburgh Diocese will be offering a program that will focus on observing Lent in a meaningful way leading to a more fulfilling Easter celebration. All information will be in our weekend bulletins. This program is sponsored by FORGED.

## Lenten Regulations

- **Ash Wednesday** and **Good Friday** are *days of fast and abstinence*. The Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence.
- The obligation of abstinence (refraining from eating meat) begins at the age of 14. The law of fasting (limiting oneself to one full meal and two lighter meals) are for those between the ages of 18-59.
- Those individuals who have a medical condition in which fasting may be considered harmful are not obliged to fast, but should perform some other act of penance or charity.
- No one should lightly excuse themselves from these obligations during the Lenten Season.
- Everyone is encouraged to do acts of penance and charity during Lent beyond what is prescribed by Church Law.

## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

### *Holy Wednesday*

*Mass will be at 7:00 P.M.*

### *Holy Thursday*

*Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:00 P.M.*

*Adoration until 11:00 P.M.—Night Prayer at 11:00 P.M.*

### *Good Friday*

*Liturgy of the Word/Veneration of the Cross/Communion Service at 1:30 P.M.*

*Tenebrae at 8:30 P.M.*

### *Holy Saturday*

*Blessing of the Easter Food Baskets at 12:00 Noon*

*Easter Egg Hunt at St. Mary Cemetery (weather permitting) at 1:00 P.M. (tentative)*

### *Easter Vigil*

*8:30 P.M.*

### *Easter Sunday*

*Mass at 7:00, 8:30 & 11:00 A.M.*

*Divine Mercy Sunday—April 11th*

*3:00 P.M. (details to follow)*



The Diocese of Greensburg men's conference, *THE WELL*, has been expanded to two events in 2021; a virtual seminar March 20th and an in-person Men's Conference on September 25th. The virtual seminar, scheduled for 9:00-11:30 A.M., is free to anyone who wishes to attend and will be available on the Diocese of Greensburg website and Facebook page. The theme of the event is "Jesus is Knocking, Open the Door!" Two dynamic speakers will be featured: *Mike Aquilina* of Bridgeville, an award-winning author of more than fifty books on Catholic history, and *Father Boniface Hicks, O.S.B.*, Director of Spiritual Formation at St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe. Interested men are asked to register for this free event so they are able to receive detailed information. Registration can be found at: [www.dioceseofgreensburg.org/THEWELL](http://www.dioceseofgreensburg.org/THEWELL). Men who registered for the 2020 conference and want to remain registered for the in-person 2021 conference do not need to take any action; they are automatically registered for both the virtual seminar and the in-person conference. Each will be contacted ninety days prior to confirm their attendance. New registrants are encouraged to email: [www.dioceseofgreensburg.org/THEWELL](mailto:www.dioceseofgreensburg.org/THEWELL) for more information. Men who want a refund of their 2020 registration fee are asked to email: [THEWELL@dioceseofgreensburg.org](mailto:THEWELL@dioceseofgreensburg.org) or call 724-552-1812. The diocese's Men's Ministry Team, which is planning the conference, felt a call from God to connect with men virtually next spring due to the continuing spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). "We have had conversations with many men who do not want to wait until we can gather in-person to have an opportunity to enhance their faith," said Chuck Boyer, co-chairman of THE WELL. "With these two events we can help take care of the spiritual health of men, which is also of the utmost importance."