

The Garden



Mark your calendar

Weekend of February 18 –
Hospitality/Blood Pressure Screening
after all Masses

February 22 – Ash Wednesday
Masses: 7:00 am, 8:30 am, 7:30 pm
Distribution of Ashes: 5:00 pm

February 24-26 – Men's Retreat

February 26 – Lenten
Pre-K/Kindergarten begins

February 27, 28, 29 –
Confirmation Interviews

March 10 – Midnight Run

March 17 – St. Patty's Day Party

April 1 – Palm Sunday

Holy Week

Holy Thursday, April 5 –
Easter Sunday, April 8
(see inside for Mass schedule)

April 15 – Confirmation Rehearsal
(Candidate only) 6 pm

April 20-21 – Antioch Weekend

April 25 – Confirmation Rehearsal
(Candidate & Sponsor) 7 pm

April 28 – Sacrament of Confirmation
11:00 am

Weekend of April 28 –
Hospitality after all Masses



What Ministry Really Means

When we hear the word ministry, most people would think of those select groups in our parish who do “church work.” Ministry can be that but it really means so much more. The actual definition of ministry is the act of serving. So yes, our parish ministries do serve but so do many others and they probably do so without actually knowing it. Our parish family ministers to the sick and the needy in every capacity. If we don't serve people directly, we support the act of ministering. No better story of ministering to people's needs came this Christmas when we collectively helped 56 families realize the joy of the Lord's goodness by the parish's donation of 648 gifts. This small act by many made a tremendous difference in the lives of these families. There also were items brought into the parish office as random charitable donations and then a phone call would come in with a need that fit that donation perfectly. That is God working in the midst of us. This past year was full of needs fulfilled by this parish and you probably don't even realize it. Here are a few highlights of how you ministered to God's people this year:

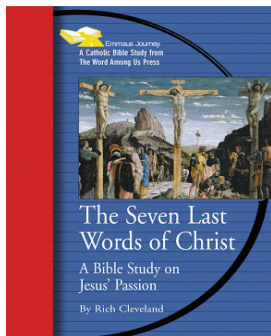
- Helped feed 1,071 families (3,665 people) through your donations to our Food Pantry.
- Donated food for 85 Thanksgiving baskets which provided food for 304 people.
- Cooked and delivered turkeys to the Alamo in Pine Island to feed 75 people their dinner for Thanksgiving.
- Donated brown bag lunches, breakfast food and seasonal clothing for the homeless in New York City to our Midnight and Breakfast Run Ministry.
- Hosted and supported with great generosity two fundraising events for a parish family in need.
- Donated the personal care and basic household items for our Mom-to-Mom Ministry so they could assemble kits and support the Mustard Seed Migrant Ministry in Pine Island, NY.
- Donated seasonal clothing to our Youth Ministry for migrant workers and their families.
- Donated all the items for our Religious Education Serv-A-Thon for students in Grades 1-6. The donations were delivered to the following area charities: DASI, Birth Haven, Sunrise House, Samaritan Inn and Harvest House. In addition, the 5th Grade created and sent 70 cards to our servicemen and women in Iraq along with snacks and personal care items.
- 4,481 rosaries were made and sent or given to various groups here and abroad.
- 50 prayer shawls were handmade and mailed or delivered to the sick in the hospital or at home; or anyone in need of a “warm hug”.
- 160 communion visits were made to the hospital and 100 communion visits to the homebound.
- Sheltered and fed 9 homeless people in our Hospitality Suite through our participation in the Sussex County Interfaith Hospitality Network.
- 40 meals were cooked and delivered through our Outreach Ministry for Meals.
- Donated/cooked the food to feed 108 teenagers on our Spring and Fall Antioch Weekends.
- Donated 12,000 pounds of gently used clothing, bedding, shoes and small household items through our partnership with Catholic Charities since May 2011.
- Helped 300 veterans navigate the VA system for claims and benefits through Chapter 1002 of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Let's keep it up this year and try to do even better and remember to pay attention to all the good things you do for others; it'll make your heart feel joyful.

Our Lenten Bible Study

The Seven Last Words Of Christ A Bible Study on Jesus' Passion

by Rich Cleveland



This Lent we will meditate and pray with Jesus as he endures the cross. We will learn to pray with Jesus, "Father, forgive them..." and hear his comforting words, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." Our hope is that this bible study will draw us closer to Jesus' Passion so that the real meaning of Easter comes alive!

Contents: Chapter 1: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." Chapter 2: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." Chapter 3: "Woman, here is your son... Here is your mother." Chapter 4: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Chapter 5: "I am thirsty." Chapter 6: "It is finished." Chapter 7: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

TOP TEN LIST

Things You Can Try For The Lenten Season

10. **Try an electronic fast.** Give up TV, Guitar Hero, texting, tweeting, e-mail and all things electronic for one day every week. (or everyday of Lent!) Use the time to read & pray.
9. **Start a prayer rhythm.** Say a prayer every time you brush your teeth, hear an ambulance, or check your e-mail. Before you text someone, pray for them.
8. **Read one chapter in the Bible each day.** (Matthew's a good book to start with. Psalms, too.)
7. **Forgive someone who doesn't deserve it** (maybe even yourself.)
6. **Give up soft drinks, fast food, tea or coffee.** Give the money you save to help folks in Haiti or others in crisis.
5. **Create a daily quiet time.** Spend 30 minutes a day in silence and prayer.
4. **Cultivate a life of gratitude.** Write someone a thank you letter each week and be aware of how many people have helped you along the way.
3. **Be kind to someone each day.**
2. **Pray for others you see** as you walk to and from classes or drive to and from work.
1. **Volunteer one hour or more each week** with a local shelter, tutoring program, nursing home or parish ministry.

Fun this Lent for Pre-K and Kindergarteners

Beginning February 26th, our Religious Education Office will begin its Lenten Pre K and Kindergarten Sunday Program that will run for five weeks through March 25th. The program is intended to help the young children of the parish learn about Jesus, His great love for us, and how we can show our love for Him. Age appropriate stories, songs and crafts should make each morning an enjoyable one for all.

PARISH LENDING LIBRARY

Did you know that St. Francis had a library of books that people have borrowed from for years? Well, now that secret treasure has been renewed. The new parish library ministry has worked hard over the summer months to organize and categorize books, accepted new donations and created a lovely reading environment for the entire parish family. Our library officially opened after its dedication on October 16th. The library currently has 26 categories of books including spirituality, self help, fiction, prayer, Jesus, Mary and the Saints and many more. Additionally, there is a developing media library as well as periodicals and magazines. There are religious CD's by Lighthouse Catholic Media which are for sale for a small contribution. The library is also home to the gift shop. A small amount of items were for sale during the Christmas holidays and we are looking to re-develop the shop for the Spring.

The library is currently open after all Masses on Saturday and Sunday. There will also be hours during the week but this has not been determined as of yet. Please check the parish website and bulletins for more information regarding additional hours. There are plans to have a children's reading hour and possibly an adult book club in the future. The library is always looking for volunteers so that we can offer more hours to the parish community.

We look forward to many parishioners taking advantage of this wonderful new ministry.

Why not take advantage of the many books on prayer and spirituality which can enhance your Lenten experience.



Lenten reading suggestion from our library:
The Passion & Resurrection Narrative of Jesus/A Commentary
by Stephen J. Binz

This work is a commentary on the heart of the Gospels – the passion and resurrection of Jesus. It explains each scene of the narratives from all four Gospels and gives reasons for the differences in the four accounts. Studied together with the biblical text, this commentary will enrich the reader's understanding of the heart of the Christian faith.

A BRIEF HISTORY ON THE SEASON OF LENT AND FASTING

Lent probably originated with the pre-Easter baptismal rituals of catechumens, although the number of days set aside for fasting varied according to region. St. Irenaeus (AD 180) testifies to the variety of durations of pre-Easter fasts in the second century. Tertullian (AD 200) suggests that Catholics fasted two days prior to Easter, but that the Montanists (a heretical sect that Tertullian later joined) fasted longer. However, the number forty, hallowed by the fasts of Moses, Elijah, and especially Jesus, probably influenced the later fixed time of 40 days. The Canons of Nicaea (AD 325) were the first to mention 40 days of fasting. Initially the forty day Lenten fast began on a Monday, and was intended only for those who were preparing to enter the Church at Easter. Lent still begins on a Monday in many Eastern Churches. Eventually the West began Lent on Ash Wednesday, and soon the whole Church, and not just catechumens, observed the Lenten fast. The East has no equivalent to Ash Wednesday.

The earliest fasts of Lent tended to be very strict, allowing one meal a day, and even then meats, eggs, and other indulgences were forbidden. The Eastern Churches follow this today. Now, in the Western Church, only Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are enjoined as strict fast days, but Fridays are set aside for abstinence from meat. Sundays are not a part of the Lenten fast, because Sunday is always a feast of the resurrection. However, the Sundays of Lent are still a part of the Lenten liturgical season in the Western Church, and the worship services tend to be more simple and austere than normal. They lack the *Gloria*, and the joyous "alleluias" of the Easter season. The Western liturgical color of Lent is violet, symbolizing royalty and penitence. Like Sundays, other major solemnities, such as the

feasts of St. Joseph and the Annunciation, take precedence over Lenten observances in the Church calendar. These days provide a break from the Lenten fast. However, at least in the current Western Church, Lent nearly always trumps the observances of minor feast days. Too many festivals take away from the simple and penitential spirit of the Lenten season.

Specifics regarding fasting—the Western Rite of the Catholic Church requires its members age 18 to 59 to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, unless a physical condition prevents otherwise. This means only one full meal is permitted in a fast day. The Fridays of Lent are days of required abstinence, meaning meat, and soups

or gravies made of meat, are not permitted. Abstinence is required of those age 14 and older. When we "give something up" for Lent, we are embracing a form of fasting, an excellent spiritual discipline. Some people choose to give up sins (gossip, drunkenness, etc.) for Lent. In this way, Lent represents a spiritual training time to overcome evil. Some give up things they have an inordinate desire for, e.g. sweets, caffeine, etc. By giving these up, the person fasting learns to control a particular part of his or her life, which leads to greater self-discipline even when Lent is over. As such in Lent we are able to learn, examine, and get under control our material excesses. Whatever you decide to fast from, remember, as Steven Clark likes to say: "Lent is more than a diet." Lent is about spiritual results, not material ones. So, while losing a few pounds may be a nice side benefit, all fasting should be done for God's glory and spiritual growth.

In support of the rules on fasting on Fridays during Lent, our parish will be hosting soup suppers after Stations of the Cross on Friday evening from February 24th through March 30th.

SOUP SUPPERS after Stations of the Cross on Friday evening February 24th through March 30th

"Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God."

Joel 2:12-13

2012 Easter Triduum Schedule

Palm Sunday, April 1

Masses: 5:00 pm (Saturday)
8:00 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 noon (Sunday)
Palms will be distributed and blessed at all Masses

Holy Thursday, April 5

Mass of the Lord's Supper
8:00 pm, followed by
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament until Midnight



Good Friday, April 6

Stations of the Cross – 3:00 pm
Good Friday services – 8:00 pm

Holy Saturday, April 7

Blessing of Food – 10:30 am
Easter Candlelight Vigil – 8:00 pm

Easter Sunday, April 8

Masses: 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 noon

Our Mission Statement

As a parish family of St. Francis de Sales Church, we are committed to stewardship as our way of life. We place God first in all things. Centered in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, we devote ourselves to proclaim the Gospel. We are dedicated to grow as a faith community to holiness through prayer, sacraments and service to all God's people.



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Say a Prayer for Life



For you created
my inmost being
You knit me together
in my mother's womb
I praise you because
I am fearfully and
wonderfully made

Psalms 139: 13, 14

Religious Ed Serv-A-Thon

During the week of March 25th through the 31st all of the Religious Education classes from Pre-school to Sixth grade will participate in a community service week-long Serv-A-thon. Each class works with a local charity to provide needed items. What better way to prepare ourselves for Jesus' Resurrection than to sacrifice our own time, talent and treasure to help those less fortunate?

Pre-K and Kindergarten will make flower centerpieces for the Homestead Nursing Home.

First Grade will create and fill Friendship boxes for D.A.S.I. for displaced children.

Second Grade will collect change in baby bottles to help pro-life pregnancy center purchase infant car seats.

Third Grade will collect toiletries and personal care items for Sunrise House.

Fourth Grade will decorate and fill school bags with supplies for Samaritan Inn.

Fifth Grade will write letters and collect items for deployed soldiers.

Sixth Grade will make disposable napkin rings and collect kitchen items for Harvest House.