

Lent is the season that teaches us that darkness may seem to overtake us but cannot overcome good, as long as we refuse to give in, as long as we refuse to become the very things we say we hate. Whatever may be the grief of Good Friday, however much evil in our world seems to be winning, in the end the apostles rally, the women witness, the unbelievers are converted, the living witnesses attest to the life of Jesus.

Commitment to hope is what Lent is about. There are two simple questions that Lent asks: In what ways do our lives give witness to hope? How will we refuse to give in to the fear that sometimes tempts us to despair?

This year our Lenten reflections deal not just with the sufferings that come in our lives, even as painful as these can be. This Lent challenges us to hold on to the hope that has been the strength for people like St. Francis of Assisi, Joan of Arc and modern day heroes like Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day and Oscar Romero.

Jesus reminds us in the Gospel that it is in dying that we live. To live for only the lesser things of life is to not live at all. Real life demands risk: to spend all the energy we have for our one great belief: life that is forever.

And so whatever we do in life should take place in the context of the truth of Easter as the final page of the story. Jesus reminds us to never forget that he has brought us from sadness to joy.

We are invited to renew our faith in the Good News of God's promise of hope for new life. The words of a song entitled "Do Not Fear To Hope," which we will use as our Sending Song all during Lent, says it best.

*Do not fear to hope  
though the wicked rage and rise,  
Our God sees not as we see,  
success is not the prize.  
Do not fear to hope  
for though the night be long,  
The race shall not be to the swift,  
the fight not to the strong.*

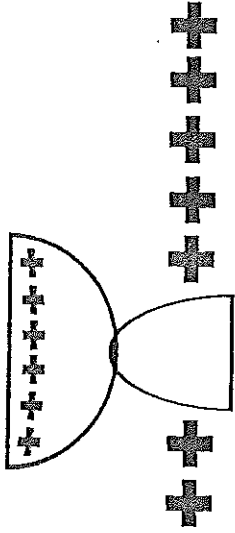
## Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is our Parish Day of Prayer. Together we begin to see the world through the eyes of faith. It is a time for each of us to reflect on how we can let hope come alive and make a difference in our lives. The time we are willing to give for quiet and listening prayer will allow God to touch our hearts as we begin this season of grace. We ask each parishioner to spend as much time as you can during the part of the day that your schedule allows. Jesus says to us, as he said to the apostles, "Could you not watch with me one hour?"

Ashes will be distributed every hour on the hour during a short prayer service and during both Masses. The day will begin with a 6 AM and a 7 AM prayer service, Mass is at 8 AM and prayer services each hour until 5 PM. Evening Mass will be at 6 PM with a prayer service at 7 PM. The prayer services will be led by members of the parish staff.

Each of these hours will be dedicated to one of the fourteen intentions of our Lenten Prayer of the Faithful. A reflection book will be available that describes each of the fourteen intentions with a modern day saint whose life reflects that intention.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession will be available during the entire day. This process of conversion can be a wonderful opportunity to begin this great season of our Lenten journey. The children who have prepared for their First Penance will be individually presented by their parents.



## Reconciliation

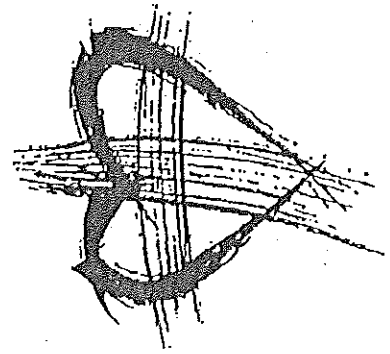
Our theme this year, "Do Not Fear to Hope," invites us to accept God's love and mercy through the great Sacrament of Reconciliation. There will be a confessor for the sacrament all day on Ash Wednesday. This will allow all an opportunity to begin the healing that the Lord offers and to receive as individuals the peace of mind that is meant to be God's gift.

Each Saturday at 11:30 AM, confessions are available in the Reconciliation Room. This is another time set to come as an individual to be forgiven and blessed by the Lord's grace.

On Friday, March 26, at 7 PM, we will celebrate a Communal Penance Service called "Can You Drink the Cup?" As was done during Advent, the same service will be available in other Catholic parishes in the area. All are welcome to gather with brothers and sisters for one of these communal celebrations. Their purpose is to acknowledge that all of us are in need of a change of heart.

## Lenten Symbol

The anchor has been the traditional symbol in Christian art standing for the virtue of hope. On Ash Wednesday, this symbol will be available as a reminder that we are called to be people of hope. A wonderful Lenten practice would be to try to be a positive sign of hope all during the season of Lent. "Do not fear to hope for though the night be long, the race shall not be to the swift, the fight not to the strong."



## Holy Week

The Catholic Community of the Southern Tier (St. Bonaventure's, St. John's and St. Mary of the Angels') are combining together to celebrate the great Paschal Triduum.

### Holy Thursday, April 1

- 9 AM Morning Prayer  
(At all three parishes)
- 6 PM Mass of the Lord's Supper  
(At St. Bonaventure's)
- 8-10 PM Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament  
(At all three parishes)

### Good Friday, April 2

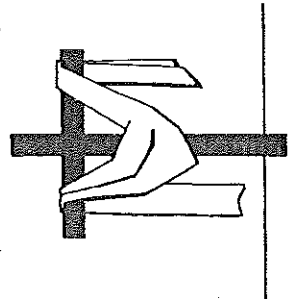
- 9 AM Morning Prayer  
(At all three parishes)
- Noon Cross Walk
- 6 PM Liturgy of the Lord's Passion  
(At St. John's)
- 8 PM Tenebrae  
(At Transfiguration)

### Holy Saturday, April 3

- 9 AM Morning Prayer  
(At all three parishes)
- Noon Blessing of Easter Food  
(At all three parishes)
- 8 PM Easter Vigil  
(At St. Mary of the Angels')

### Easter Sunday, April 4

- 7 AM Easter Sunrise Mass  
(In Franchot Park)
- 8:30 AM Easter Mass  
(At St. Bonaventure's)
- 11 AM Easter Mass  
(At St. Bonaventure's)



## Lenten Fish Suppers

Ash Wednesday is a traditional day of fast and abstinence. There will be a Lenten Supper that day, February 17, from 4 PM to 7 PM in Memorial Hall. The cost of this baked or fried fish supper is \$10 for adults and \$8 for children. Take-outs will be available until 7 PM. Proceeds from this supper will benefit the Outreach Program of the parish and will be placed in the Safety Net Fund administered through The Bridge. Sheila Darrow will provide the supper that night. There will be no Friday night suppers at St. Bonaventure and so we encourage you to go to "Sheila's Two Boots & Scoops." Sheila will also provide for us the "St. Joseph's Table" on Saturday, March 20.

## Parish Mission

This year the Catholic Community of the Southern Tier (St. John's, St. Bonaventure's and St. Mary of the Angels') are combining to present an inter-parish Mission.

The presenter of the Mission will be Fr. Raphael Bonanno, OFM, a friar from the Franciscan Ministry of the Word. Each evening will begin at 7 PM. The purpose of the Mission is to come together to awaken our faith in these challenging times.

**Sunday, February 28: St. John's**

**Monday, March 1: St. Bonaventure's**

**Tuesday, March 2: St. Mary of the Angels'**

Each evening will reflect on the Gospel message of Jesus. How we are called to respond? How is God present to us? And how do we live his message of love and forgiveness?

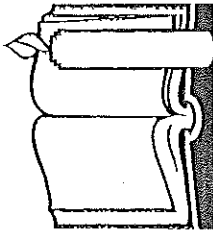
All are invited to come to one, two or all three evenings to be renewed and restored to life through the love, the healing and the forgiveness of Jesus.

## Toiletory Totes

During Lent, please remember those in our world who are homeless. There will be a list of acceptable items printed in the bulletin that can be brought to Mass and offered instead of groceries. Our Confirmation candidates will separate these items and place them in travel kits that can then be offered to people who find themselves on the street. The idea of this project is to remember that our Lenten journey is a call to reach out as good Samaritans to those who have come upon hard times.

## Easter Baskets

During Lent, the bulletin will contain a list of items that can be put together by those who would like to provide an Easter basket for a St. Luke's child. Easter baskets will be collected during Mass on the weekend of March 27 and 28, Palm Sunday. They will be delivered that Sunday to St. Luke's.



## Lectio Divina

Each Monday morning from 9 AM to 10 AM beginning February 15, we will reflect on the Gospels of the Lenten Sundays. Held in Room 104 there will be coffee and a light breakfast provided at 8:30 AM. The group will gather for an hour of reflective silence and the sharing of God's Word called "Lectio Divina." This ancient prayer would be an excellent way to delve into the deep meaning of the readings for the Lenten Sundays.

## Lenten Evenings

On the following dates, there will be special Lenten evenings of reflection. Each evening will be unique.

### February 26: "A Festival of Faith"

A night to listen and learn from three representatives of different faiths who share an insight into their faith traditions.

### March 5: "The Magic of Scripture"

Fr. Phillip Houghton, pastor of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, will offer a reflection on the Lenten Scriptures with his own brand of a magical mystery tour.

### March 12: "St. Luke's Mission of Mercy"

A group of missionaries from St. Luke's, our sister parish, will share their work with the poor of South Buffalo. The evening will end with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

### March 19: "Living Stations"

Once again, the young people from our own Religious Education Program witness their belief and help us to experience the power of the Cross of Jesus.

### March 20: "St. Joseph's Table"

Sheila Darrow will provide us with our first traditional St. Joseph's Table. This is an Italian tradition that includes many specialty dishes.

### March 26: "Lenten Penance Service"

Our communal reconciliation service is called "Can You Drink the Cup?". The purpose of this evening is to acknowledge that all of us are in need of a change of heart.

