



ST. JOSEPH PARISH

NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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St. Joseph Parish
 200 Saint Joseph Drive
 Amherst, OH 44001
 (440) 988-2848
 stjosephamherst.com

Nativity of the BVM Parish
 333 South Lake Street
 South Amherst, OH 44001
 (440) 986-7011
 nativitysouthamherst.com

March 2017

Mary's Way of the Cross: *Seeing Calvary Through the Blessed Mother's Perspective*

Catholics have long held the tradition of commemorating Christ's suffering, passion, and death by praying the Stations of the Cross during Lent. Tradition holds that this practice was first begun by the Blessed Mother herself, who visited daily the scenes of her Son's passion. Like many parishes around the world, St. Joseph has adopted this beloved tradition. Each Friday in Lent, a different version of the Stations of the Cross is prayed at 7:00 p.m. in church. This year we will be starting with "Mary's Way of the Cross" on Friday, March 3rd. Plus our St. Joseph Parish School children will pray their versions of the Stations of the Cross on the following Fridays; March 10th, 17th, and 24th at 1:00 p.m. in Church.



The 10 women who helped lead Mary's Way of the Cross the first year it was introduced to St. Joseph Parish.

"Both are open to everyone," says parishioner Sue Cotton. "Each week, the Stations take on a different presentation – some traditional, while others more modern – allowing parishioners to enter in more deeply into the liturgical season."

A particularly special version presented each year at St. Joseph's is Mary's Way of the Cross. This uniquely Marian format was first introduced to the parish as a result of the Women's Renewal. Several ladies began gathering for a weekly study centered on the book *33 Days to Morning Glory*.

"One of our members said we should do the Mary's Way of the Cross," Sue says. "She had witnessed it at another parish once while traveling and thought it was something we should bring to our church. So a few of us pulled together and got permission from our pastor."

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A Letter from Our Pastor

A Lent Filled With the Blessings of God's Merciful Love

Dear Members of Saint Joseph and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parishes,

Are you struggling to see what Faith has to do with everyday life? Is Catholicism still relevant? What does this mean for our relationships and our families and our parishes? Get these answers...and so much more! At all of the Masses on the First Sunday of Lent, every household will receive a free copy of *The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic* by Matthew Kelly. This book promises to answer questions and stir a new energy within all of us.

The *Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic* is one of the great Catholic books of our times, but it is so much more than a book. The ideas and concepts that fill its pages want to change your life and transform our St. Joseph and Nativity Parish Families. This is a great opportunity to grow spiritually as individuals and as parishes during this Lent – and beyond.

I will base my Sunday homilies each week during Lent at St. Joseph and Nativity Parishes on this book, following the reading schedule that will be found in each Sunday's bulletin. As we read and study this book together, I hope that you will join in our efforts to encourage every member of St. Joseph

and Nativity Parishes to read this book. It will enable all of us to deepen our spiritual journey.

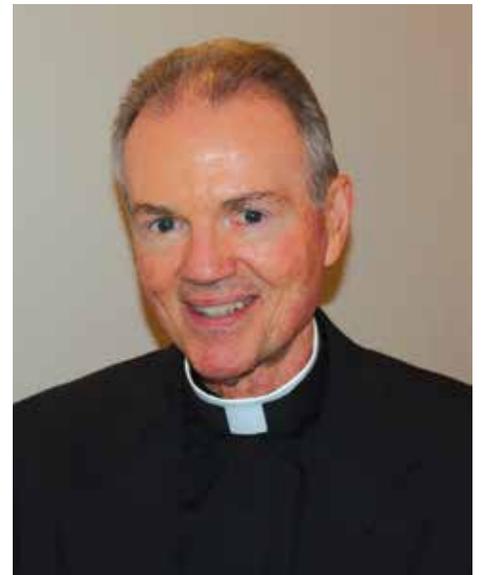
Also during Lent, I will offer a three-part study of the Mass for everyone at St. Joseph and Nativity Parishes, and anyone that you would like to invite. Sometimes, we presume that everyone knows how to pray the Mass. Not understanding what this prayer is all about can lead people to conclude that "Mass is boring." But unlocking the meanings behind the rituals, the vesture, the prayers, the Scriptures, the singing, the postures, the seasons, and so on can immerse us in the most fabulous prayer the Church has to offer and inspire us to keep coming back for more.

Part One, on Monday, March 13, will be a "show and tell" and examine up-close the church building and the items that we use for the Mass such as vestments, vessels and books.

Part Two, on Monday, March 20, will be about the Liturgy of the Word.

Part Three, on Monday, March 27, will look at the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

I will present this study of the Mass twice on each date – at 1 p.m. and then



a repeat session at 7 p.m. All will take place in St. Joseph Church.

We will have all-day Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the Chapel at St. Joseph's on all of the Mondays of Lent. I will expose the Blessed Sacrament at the conclusion of the 9 a.m. Mass. Benediction and closing prayers will take place at 6:30 p.m. Sign-up opportunities for adoration throughout the day will be available.

So many of our parish meetings at St. Joseph take place on Monday evenings at 7 p.m. Coming a little

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A Letter from Our Pastor

A Lent Filled With the Blessings of God's Merciful Love *continued from page 2*

early to pray before the Blessed Sacrament and celebrate Benediction would be an excellent way to prepare for the meetings to follow.

Our annual diocesan "Evening of Confession" will take place on Wednesday, March 15, from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. in the parishes of our eight-county diocese. You may go to any parish where there is a resident priest and celebrate the Sacrament of Penance that evening. I will be available in my reconciliation room in St. Joseph Church that night.

When you come to St. Joseph Church on the First Sunday of Lent, you will notice some very beautiful items inside. The statues of Mary, Joseph and the Sacred Heart of Jesus will have been restored and installed. They were originally located in our first church on Tenney Avenue and now will take up residence in our present church.

The crucifix that was in the sanctuary of our second church – which is now St. Joseph Parish School gymnasium – has also been restored and it will be installed in the sanctuary of our present church.

You will also notice 14 Stations of the Cross that were crafted by the same studio that made our statues of Mary, Joseph and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as well as the crucifix. They had been located in a church in the Diocese of Toledo

that was closed. We were able to obtain them for St. Joseph Church and have them installed in time for Lent.

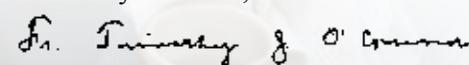
The Stations of the Cross are a wonderful devotion and now we will be able to actually make that pilgrimage of Jesus' Way of the Cross as we walk from Station to Station around the perimeter of the church.

Stations of the Cross – in some different formats – will be prayed every Friday evening of Lent in St. Joseph Church at 7 p.m., following the Fish Fry. So, you may come for a great Lenten dinner and stay for some great Lenten Prayer. Stations of the Cross will also be prayed on the Friday evenings of Lent in Nativity Church.

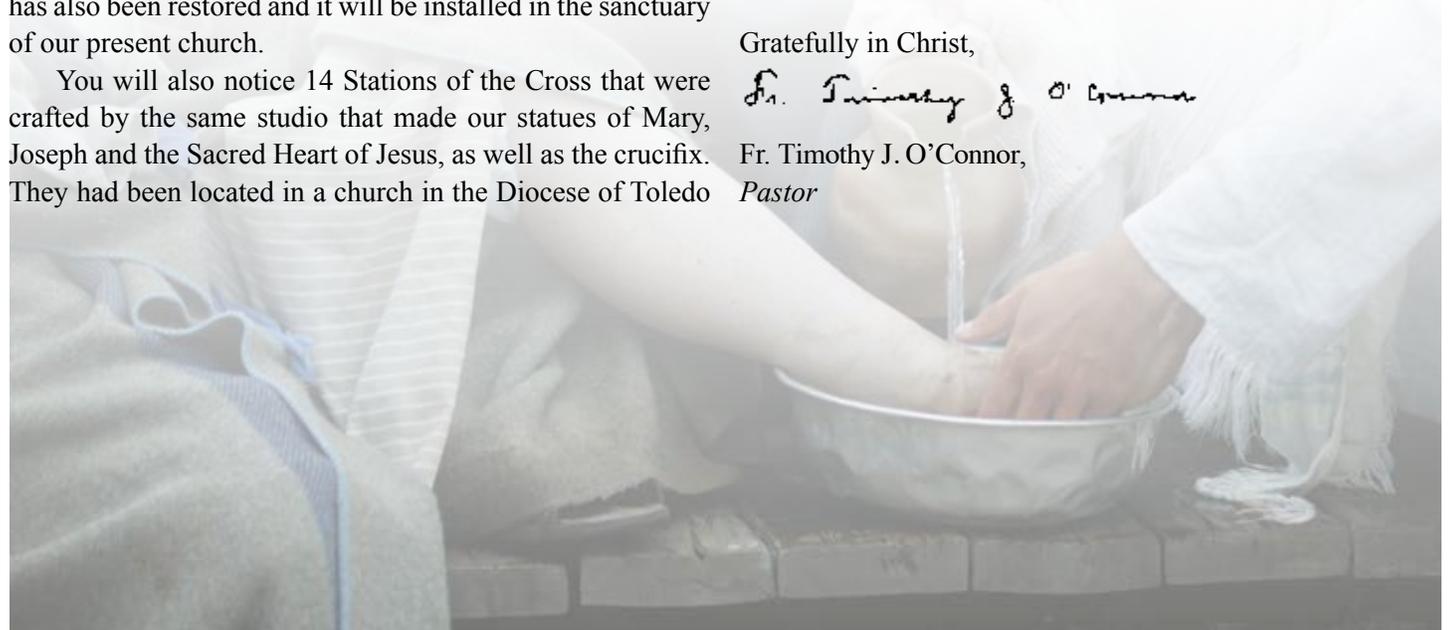
Please check out other great opportunities for Lent at St. Joseph and Nativity Parishes in the "Upcoming Activities and Events" section of this newsletter.

I pray that we all may have the best Lent ever, filled with the blessings of God's merciful love.

Gratefully in Christ,



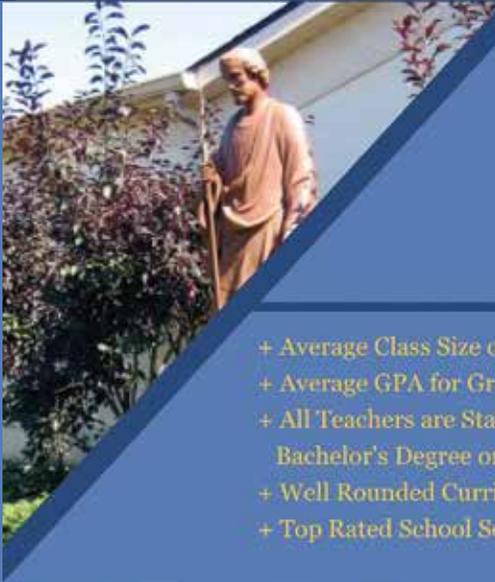
Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor,
Pastor





St. Joseph Parish School

Amherst, Ohio
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175 St. Joseph Dr. Amherst, OH 44001
Please Call Principal Karen Casper-Linn at 440-988-2848
Enrolling K-8

Healthy All Year Long



The Health Ministry/Parish Nursing Program serves the parish by providing screenings, along with offering health and wellness education.

For many people, diet, exercise, and health-related resolutions are at the top of their New Year's lists. Unfortunately, by the time February rolls around, most goals have already been dismissed and things are generally back to "business as usual."

However, as Catholics, we have a special responsibility to care for our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. And while that may seem a daunting idea, the St. Joseph's Health Ministry/Parish Nursing Program is here to help you.

This program, which began as an initiative of Mercy Hospital, has served local parishes since the mid-1990s, with the mission of "extending the healing ministry of Jesus by improving the health of the community, with the emphasis on the poor and underserved." Initially focused on various parish-based health initiatives, the ministry has evolved to focus mainly on health screenings, as well as moving into offering health education opportunities within the parish.

Kathy Northeim, an RN who worked for 24 years in diabetes education, began serving with this ministry shortly after its formation. She now serves as the ministry leader at the parish, helping to coordinate all health and wellness efforts.

The main focus of the Health Ministry/Parish Nursing Program is to offer blood pressure screenings once a month, on Hospitality Sundays. They also provide twice-annual instant blood sugar screenings, in March and November.

"I've always thought, if you found even one person who had an elevation of something and you caught it in time, it was worth it," Kathy says. "Blood pressure and glucose are two things that don't necessarily give any symptoms and someone's blood pressure may be so high that they end up having a stroke or it does damage to your heart, and diabetes affects every part of your body. The earlier somebody gets a screening – sometimes this might be a wake-up call to take better care of yourself."

The Health Ministry/Parish Nursing Program allows for parishioners to get valuable health information, in a comfortable setting and at little or no cost.

"People feel more comfortable to come to screenings at their own parish," Kathy says. "People are taking advantage of this benefit, because sometimes their co-pays or deductibles are high. I think it's such a valuable service that this program provides to the community."

Parish and school organizations are invited to utilize the Health Ministry/Parish Nursing Program as a resource providing speakers and presenters on various health-related topics, from physical health, to mental and emotional health.

Kathy also hopes to expand this program to Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as soon as there is enough of a response

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Taking Time Out for Faith and Fellowship at a Formal Tea

Remember the story from the Gospel of Luke that describes Jesus' visit to the home of sisters Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42)? Mary sits and listens at the feet of the Savior, while her sister is busy preparing something to eat and drink for her guest. When Martha complains to Jesus that Mary is not helping her, he tells her that Mary has chosen the better part by quietly spending time with Him. Many of us can probably sympathize with Martha – after all, it's not easy being a "Mary" in a "Martha" world. When it feels like our to-do list grows with each day, it can be difficult to take time out to stop, rest and spend time recharging our faith life.

Each year, the Women's Tea Planning Team at St. Joseph puts on an event bringing women together for this special chance to explore their faith in the peaceful and elegant setting of a formal tea.

"It gives people a day of sanctuary and friendship, and the chance to focus on women's spiritual issues," says Dale Weber, who has served on the Women's Tea Planning Team since the group held their first tea six years ago. "In the



social hall, we have this lovely authentic tea with fine china and floral centerpieces. There is music when people arrive, we have opening prayers, and then a guest speaker and lunch before concluding with prayer. A lot of our attendees say it is a restorative afternoon, and we all need that."

This year's tea just happens to fall on the first Sunday of Lent, March 5 – the perfect time to refocus and bring our faith to the forefront of our daily lives. Spiritual director Sr. Mary Ann Burke will be speaking on the beauty of the Lenten season.

Over a dozen women serve on the Women's Tea Planning Team, and they are thankful for all the additional help they receive: parish women who bake the delectable desserts, men who help out with the set up and take down of tables, and young women – often from our parish Confirmation class – who volunteer as servers. The tea can accommodate up to 120 women, and the event has become so well-loved that tickets always sell out quickly.

Each year without fail, the women who organize the tea end up enjoying the event just as much as their guests do, and this special time of faith and fellowship has led to many friendships being formed both within and across different parishes.

"It really is a joy," Dale says. "We do love it as much as our guests do. It's a good mix of people – attendees come from both St. Joseph and Nativity, and a lot of us bring relatives who are members of other parishes. One year, I had two extra seats open up at my table at the last minute, and two ladies joined the table – and now we've become dear friends. It's wonderful to have your friends at your table, but God also

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Are you ready to experience a "Mary" moment in this "Martha" world? The Women's Tea takes place on Sunday, March 5, from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Ticket information for this event will be available in the church bulletin. Anyone interested in purchasing tickets from the limited number available should contact Phyllis Kowal at 440-988-8773. Anyone interested in joining the Women's Tea Planning Team for future teas should contact Sue Cotton at 440-986-1725.

Taking Time Out for Faith and Fellowship at a Formal Tea *continued from page 6*

plants these little surprises in your day! It's just really great fellowship."

Over the years, Dale – like so many others who have attended this event – has come to cherish this unique opportunity to grow in faith and fellowship in the setting of an elegant and peaceful formal tea.

"I'm one of the people who needs this sense of sanctuary," she says. "I tend to be a 'Martha,' and I spent the first couple of years worrying about the details rather than the environment. By the third year, I felt a difference inside my-

self. I was more focused on living the experience of the tea while we're there.

"I go in with a much quieter, more open heart than I used to," Dale continues. "I'm clearly one of the people that needs to sit down and stop counting and organizing, and start modeling Mary and experiencing the love and peace and all the things that staying close to Christ give us."

The annual tea is a true blessing to the women in our faith community, and we thank the Women's Tea Planning Team for all of their hard work!

Healthy All Year Long *continued from page 5*

from nurses and other health-related professionals willing to become involved.

Not only are nurses needed to help with this ministry, but also anyone who serves in the field of medicine, health and wellness – physical therapy, nutrition, exercise, etc. – is welcome to use their expertise and talents. Kathy also encourages those who are passionate about having a healthy lifestyle to come and serve with this program.

"Serving in the Health Ministry/Parish Nursing Program is a Corporal Work of Mercy, being holistic in nature, caring for the body, mind and spirit – all aspects that can affect overall health," she says.

Kathy reminds us that, as Catholics, we believe in the union of the body, soul, and spirit – thus, caring for our physical health is an important part of caring for our spiritual wellbeing.

"You're not just taking care of your physical self – it's your mental health and spiritual health too," she says. "It's all connected."

Kathy encourages people to spend time improving their physical and spiritual health at the same time.

"I think if people are more attuned to faith or thinking of their body as a temple of God, they take better care of themselves," she says. "People could listen to something spiritual while walking, or just pray – pray the Rosary, or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy."

"Look for free things to do, find somebody to do it with, or find someone to hold you accountable," Kathy adds. "Set small goals and you're more apt to be successful if you do something a little bit at a time."

Now *that* sounds like a recipe for health success all year long!

For more information on the Health Ministry/Parish Nursing Program, to learn how you can become involved, or if you would like to sponsor a health and wellness-related event for your group, please contact Kathy Norheim at 440-984-3366 or 2weln@jetnet.org. Beginning in April, blood pressure screenings will be held the first weekend of each month, after the 4 p.m. Vigil Mass on Saturdays, and after the 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses on Sundays at St. Joseph. We hope to offer screenings at Nativity in the near future.

St. Joseph Players "Reminiscing" as Annual Tradition Continues

Sometimes, it's good just to do something for fun. The St. Joseph Players have been doing just that since the early 1990s. Theirs is a ministry unlike any other. It spans generations, helps maintain an important part of our parish, and provides a lot of fun and fellowship this time of year.

This year's annual appearance by the Players is entitled *Reminiscing*. It will feature songs and acts from some of the cast member's fondest memories.

"The acts are based on either something that's important to the cast member or a fun memory – for instance, an old TV show theme song or something like that," says St. Joseph Players Coordinator and Show Director Cathy Sekletar. "There will be something you will remember, no matter your age."

This year's program will mark the 24th show in the past 27 years. With the performers ranging in age from 87 to their mid-20s, the variety show is older than some who will be performing!

"There's a handful of us who have been doing this since day one," Cathy says. "It started out as a simple *American Bandstand* kind of thing. We started as a lip sync show, but we do have some who do live singing or guitar playing, so it's a bit of a mix now. I write the script every year based around the acts that the cast members choose to do. It's a group effort."

That group effort is a major aspect of what has made the show such a popular event over the years, and the proceeds from ticket sales have helped keep the social hall looking nice.

"The funds we raise have always been earmarked for the maintenance and improvement of the social hall," Cathy says. "In the past, we have purchased all the new chairs, the curtains on the stage, the chandeliers – that's been all done with money that we've earned over the years. That's our little mission towards the parish."

"We figure our ministry is on the less spiritual side," she continues. "You have to have some fun too. And since everything we do takes place in the hall, we feel that that's a good place for us to put our energy toward maintaining that part of the parish."

Cathy says any parishioner is welcome to join in the fun of this unique social tradition. She recommends that would-be performers who haven't seen the show should come enjoy it this year, and then contact her if they think they'd like to take part in next year's performance.

"We usually don't start meeting until October, so there's plenty of time to think about it," Cathy says.



Two members of the St. Joseph Players, Tracy and Kelly, at last year's performance, "Amherst's Got Talent." This year's theme, "Reminiscing," will take the audience on a journey through the past in song.

Reminiscing will be held Saturday, March 11, at 7:30 p.m. with doors opening at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are \$15 per person, and food, wine and beer will be available for purchase at this adults-only performance. An all-ages dress rehearsal of the show will be held Friday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m. immediately following the fish fry. Tickets are free with any fish fry purchase or \$5 for those who are not eating. "Come for the fish fry and stay for the show at no additional cost," Cathy Sekletar says. While a ticket lottery will be held Feb. 12, Cathy says those who may have missed it can call her at 440-320-6818.

Mary's Way of the Cross *continued from front cover*

Written by Fr. Richard Furey, Mary's Way of the Cross is an attempt to help us see what Jesus endured for our salvation through the eyes of His beloved mother. Each station contains a meditation on the station itself as well as a practical application to our lives.

"It really is powerful," Sue says. "It allows us to see through Mary's eyes what Jesus was going through on Calvary. We've always had women present it, and it is led by women from all different ages and stages of life – mothers and grandmothers who have lost children, to women who have no biological children of their own."

The actual Friday that Mary's Way of the Cross is presented on varies from year to year. However, it is always advertised in the bulletin and flyers are displayed in the days leading up to it. Over the years, the women involved in Mary's Way of the Cross have continued to grow. And though each woman has her own connection to the prayers

and her own way of leading them, each has been unified by the personal growth gained from the experience.

"I think we find strength through Mary, through her sorrow and pain that she went through with her Son," Sue says. "It touches our journey and our faith, and gives us strength in our own crosses. Mary has a perfect spirit of surrender. She knew this had to be, and so she continued on. There are many things in today's world that we may not physically be able to do anything about, but we can always hope and pray, trusting in our Savior."

The women are also interested in the possibility of taking this beautiful devotion out to other parishes in the future, helping others draw closer to Christ through Mary. Please look out for future bulletin announcements on this year's Mary's Way of the Cross and consider experiencing for yourself this beautiful presentation of Christ's passion and death.

If you would like to learn more about Mary's Way of the Cross, please contact Sue Cotton at 440-984-2018 or sue.cotton.44001@gmail.com.

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Fr. Tim O'Connor Serving Both Parishes

Mass:

Monday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*
Tuesday, 8:00 a.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*
Thursday, 7:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*
Friday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*
Saturday, 4:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*
5:30 p.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*
Sunday, 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

Confession at St. Joseph:

Thursday - Individual Reconciliation 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Saturday - Individual Reconciliation 11:00 a.m. - noon

Eucharistic Adoration (Chapel) at Nativity of the BVM:

Monday-Friday 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Joseph Parish:

Chapel Every Monday in Lent following the 9:00 a.m. Mass
closing at 6:30 p.m. with Benediction..

ST. JOSEPH & NATIVITY of the BVM PARISHES Upcoming Activities and Events

Month of March 2017

Ash Wednesday, March 1st, Mass Schedule

9:00 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph Parish
12:00 Noon Mass at Nativity B.V.M. Parish
7:00 p.m. Mass at St. Joseph Parish

Women's Renewal Group presentation of "Mary's Way of the Cross" Friday, March 3rd, 7:00 p.m. at St. Joseph Church

Fish Fries – Every Friday in Lent

5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish Social Hall

Complimentary Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, March 5th, 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. at St. Joseph Parish School gym. Served by the Men's Renewal Team and members of the past renewal teams.

Women's Tea

Sunday, March 5th, 1:00 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish Social Hall

St. Joseph Players' Show "Reminiscing"

Saturday, March 11th, doors open at 6:00 p.m. Show at 7:30 p.m. Dress Rehearsal Show on Friday, March 10th, following the Fish Fry.

Fr. Tim's Lenten Talks on "How to Pray with The Mass"

Monday, March 13th, 20th, and 27th at 1:00 p.m. and at 7:00 p.m. at St. Joseph Church

Diocesan Wide Evening of Confession

Wednesday, March 15th from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at St. Joseph Church

New Life Hospice Spring Memorial Service

Wednesday, March 29th, 6:30 p.m. at St. Joseph Church

Stations of the Cross during Lent

7:00 p.m. every Friday at St. Joseph Church.
7:00 p.m. every Friday at Nativity of the BVM Parish.

Stations of the Cross with St. Joseph Parish School Students

1:00 p.m. at St. Joseph Church on Friday, March 10th, 17th and 24th.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Joseph Parish Chapel Every Monday in Lent following the 9:00 a.m. Mass closing at 6:30 p.m. with Benediction.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Nativity of the BVM Parish Weekdays, Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.