

Parish News...

There is a lot happening in our Parish and well as other Catholic Churches in our area. I know there is a lot to go through this week but there is a lot happening.

We are now in the Season of Lent. During **Lent**, we as Catholic Christians observe a period of fasting, repentance, moderation, self-denial, and spiritual discipline. The purpose of the Lenten season is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ—to consider his suffering and his sacrifice, his life, death, burial.

As we prepare for Lent here is the schedule for how your family can participate here in our Parish

Daily: 12:10 Mass Monday thru Friday & Stations of the Cross on Fridays 6pm

Fridays are days of abstinence from meat for all who are 14 years of age and older.

Other Lenten activities in other Parishes in Utica

From St. Mary of Mount Carmel/Blessed Sacrament, in Utica:

‘Stations of the Cross from the Eyes of Mary’

Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament, 648 Jay St., Utica, offers Stations of the Cross every Friday at 12:15 p.m. At 5:15 p.m. on Friday, March 18, there will be a special “Stations of the Cross from the Eyes of Mary.” This service will be followed by benediction. The 12:15 p.m. Stations of the Cross will not take place. Visit www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com for information.

Jim Krisher scripture sharing planned for March 31

Jim Krisher, director emeritus of the Spiritual Renewal Center and adjunct faculty member in the Religious Studies Department at Le Moyne College, will offer a Lenten scripture reflection titled “The God Who Pursues: Good News from Luke’s Gospel” at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 31, in the Salerno Room at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Parish, 648 Jay St., Utica. There is no fee to attend, but reservations are required. To reserve your spot, call the parish office at 315-735-1482 between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday, or contact Anne Elacqua at 315-941-7447 or email her at aelacqua@syrdio.org. Visit www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com for information.

Jazz vespers and night prayer by Chelsea Opera April 5

The Chelsea Opera will host a special evening of “Night Prayer and Vespers” at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 5, in church at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Parish, 648 Jay St., Utica. Plan to attend this uplifting evening of music and prayer that will touch your heart and bring healing.

Visit www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com for information.

Anthony/St Agnes Utica begin on February 25th and end on April 15th their Fish Fries. Hours are from 4pm-7pm. You may either walk in or call in your order -call 315 732-1177 after 3pm on Fridays. Dinners will be TAKE OUT ONLY. Menu: Fish Dinners, (Haddock, either fried or baked) \$14; Shrimp dinners \$15. All dinners include potatoes (fried or baked) Coleslaw, dinner roll and condiments

Ukraine Support in Eastern Region (All the Catholic Church's in the Utica area)

Please have been asking what we can do as Parish for the people of Ukraine. The people of Ukraine are still in the Ukraine and are in need of supplies to survive. Many families have been displaced in many different countries surrounding Ukraine. They are in need of our prayers and support.

For support there are events happening in the Eastern Region that will help support Ukraine. Please read below:

1) Ukrainian Humanitarian Effort at Notre Dame Jr/Sr. and Elementary. The schools are collecting the following items at their locations until 3/28:

Warm clothing for all Hygiene products; Baby items (diapers especially); Blankets and bedding; Disposable tableware; First Aid kits; Medical supplies; Candles; Sleeping bags, Containers for liquids (10 to 20 liters)

In special need right now:

Children's activities such as coloring books and crayons. Children's vitamins, Pain relief medication, Warm socks, gloves and hats for men.

2) A meeting with the faith formation leaders for our PCA and we have decided to collaborate a fundraiser for Ukraine to be held at Notre Dame Senior School for all the Catholic Community of Eastern region. This will be a family event with all family members welcome to walk. More information to follow in next week's newsletter.

This week we celebrate 2 Saints: St. Patrick-March 17th and St. Joseph-March 19th

St. Patrick's Day: March 17th and he is the patron saint of Ireland. The day commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, and celebrates the heritage and culture of the Irish in general. Celebrations generally involve public parades and festivals, céilís, and the wearing of green attire or shamrocks.

St. Joseph's Day, also known as the Feast of Saint Joseph, is the feast day for St. Joseph – which falls on March 19th each year. This is an annual celebration in honor of Saint Joseph. St. Joseph was the legal guardian of Jesus Christ and was venerated by the Catholic Church as a patron saint of workers. in honor of Saint Joseph. The traditional way of celebrating the feast has to wear the color red and give food to the needy and observe fast on this day.

Adult Catechism: Adult Catechism continues on the first Sunday of every month @ 10AM. Classes will be held in the Cow Palace for all interested in learning to love & grow in faith. A different topic will be discussed each month related to the teaching of the Catechism.



Mask Update: With the Governor lifting the mask mandate for children and the Dioceses following the same, Mask wearing will be an option for children. This will be at the discretion of the parents if they still want their child to wear a mask in the classroom.

First Communion Families: These Sacraments are fast approaching. It is extremely important the children not miss any further classes unless due to illness. Also, if your child was not baptized at Sacred Heart/St Mary's and you have not provided the Parish with a copy of the Baptismal Certificate, please provide to me as soon as possible.

First Communion Banners: Due to the large number of children in the class, I will have two (2) when the children may come in to pick up the banner material. This will be on March 16 & 17th from 5:30 to 6:30. If your child has not given the teacher their favorite color for the banner, please do so this Sunday. Banners are due no later than April 16th.

The Blessing Cup meal is scheduled for April 23rd from 12-2pm. A form will be sent home with children in the near future so I have counted the number of families attending.

CONFIRMATION STUDENTS 10th Grade: It is important that all students attend classes in order to make Confirmation on May 19th. The attendance has been reviewed and a number of students have missed a number of classes. Students will be allowed 2 absences from class unless due to illness. If more than 2 more are missed, the student may not be able to make Confirmation.

Confirmation Retreat is this Saturday March 19th @ St. Paul's Church Whitesboro. It will be from 10am until after 4pm Mass. Please mark your calendar to attend.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday @ 3:15pm prior to Mass and the 1st Thursday of the month after the 12:10 Mass

Mass Schedule

Saturday 4pm

Sunday 7:30 AM, 8:30AM, 10AM Polish Mass and 11am

Let's remember that as Catholics, it is important to attend Sunday Mass. At Mass we are able to stand mystically at the foot of the cross and witness for ourselves the same self-sacrifice of Jesus, in an unbloody manner. Mass is a celebration of this sacrifice. It is the active participation of all that come together in the place of worship. While Faith Formation before the 11AM Mass, all families are welcome to this Mass. If unable to attend this Mass, please attend the Church Masses. Faith Formation Classes alone do not teach your children about their faith. It is important they see their faith in the Mass.



While I have found these wonderful reflections on the Gospel readings, it is not meant to take the place of the Sunday Mass. Remember to attend Mass to hear Fr. Arthur or Deacon Kirk's a much better spiritual teaching of the Gospel reading.

Sunday Readings

Second Sunday of Lent

First Reading: GN: 15:5-12, 17-18

-Responsorial Psalm: Ps 27: 1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14

Second Reading: Phil: 17-4:1

Gospel: Luke 9:28b-36 (Transfiguration)



The transfiguration of Jesus follows immediately on the scene where Peter confesses Jesus to be the Christ, the Messiah (Luke 9:20).

That scene ends with Jesus' teaching on the coming glory of God's kingdom to be experienced by the disciples (9:26-27). The transfiguration scene provides a dramatic confirmation of Peter's confession and a foretaste of the glory to be experienced when God's kingdom is fully present.

Jesus' Identity and Glory

The emphasis throughout the episode is on the dazzling attestation of Jesus' identity. We are first given the description of his transformed appearance (verse 29). The change in the appearance of his face is reminiscent of Moses' face becoming radiant upon experiencing the presence of God in Exodus 34:29-35. But the description of the change in Jesus' clothes distinguishes him from Moses significantly: Jesus' clothes become "dazzling white," words Luke uses to describe the appearance of angelic figures in Luke 24:4 and Acts 1:10. Jesus' transformed appearance is thus not merely because he is experiencing God's glory (like Moses) but rather because he is the very source of divine glory. The point is made explicit when the three disciples are said to see Jesus' glory in verse 32.

Jesus, Moses, and Elijah

The appearance of Moses and Elijah in verse 30 adds to the attestation of Jesus' identity. The two are commonly interpreted as embodying "the Law and the Prophets," which is no doubt a significant point. The risen Jesus himself will later assert that Moses and the prophets point toward him (Luke 24:25-27, 44-46). Luke tells us in our scene that Moses and Elijah "were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (verse 31), surely meant to anticipate Jesus' teaching that he is the ultimate fulfillment of scripture.

Yet this is not the only significance of Moses and Elijah. That Jesus was the “prophet like Moses” predicted by Moses himself is emphasized throughout Luke and Acts (seen most clearly in Acts 3:22-23, interpreting Deuteronomy 18:15). And Elijah’s appearance was associated with the coming of the day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5). Their appearance thus points to Jesus fulfilling specific prophecies associated with them as well as the more general notion of Jesus as the fulfillment of all of scripture.

The Voice and Presence of God

The most dramatic attestation of Jesus’ identity comes with the voice of God in verse 35. The basic message echoes the divine words spoken at Jesus’ baptism (3:22), but there are notable differences:

- The message at Jesus’ baptism was spoken directly to Jesus (“You are my son”), but here the message is for the disciples’ ears (“This is my son”).
- At the baptism the adjective describing Jesus’ sonship was “beloved” — again, a message directed at Jesus — but here it is “chosen,” further describing Jesus’ relationship to God from the disciples’ perspective.
- The message of Jesus’ sonship here is given an imperative implication: “Listen to him!” Jesus’ sonship is not a matter of abstract theology but requires the obedient response of the disciples to Jesus’ message. Jesus’ most recent teaching emphasized the costly demands made on those who would follow him, i.e. denying themselves and taking up their cross (verse 23), and that is surely the primary message meant to be listened to and obeyed here.
- Whereas the voice at the baptism came “from heaven,” here it comes from the very cloud in which the disciples are already enveloped. This suggests a rather intense experience of God’s close presence! It also is again reminiscent of Moses’ own experience of God’s presence at Sinai (see Exodus 24:15-18), the most formative revelation of God in the history of Israel.

The Experience of God in Prayer

One of the significant details of the story that is unique to Luke’s account of the transfiguration is that it occurs in the context of prayer. Neither Matthew nor Mark mentions that Jesus had gone up on the mountain specifically to pray (verse 28), and neither mentions that Jesus was praying when the transfiguration occurs (verse 29). It is clearly a point that Luke wants us to note.

Prayer is, in fact, a significant theme throughout Luke’s writings. Luke is the only Gospel author to tell us of Jesus praying on other momentous occasions, too:

- Following his baptism, the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus while he is praying (3:21-22);
- Jesus’ selection of the twelve apostles occurs after spending an entire night in prayer (6:12-16);
- Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Messiah occurs in the context of Jesus’ praying (9:18-20).

Other key places where Luke shows Jesus praying include in the garden before his arrest (22:39-46) and on the cross (23:34, 46).

A point that we may especially observe in the transfiguration account, but which is also present in some of these other places, is that prayer for Jesus involved, at times, a dramatic encounter of God’s

presence. Prayer was not merely speaking words to God but was a truly spiritual experience of God. Lest we think that such a possibility of divine encounter is limited to Jesus, we see the same thing with a variety of characters in Acts, Luke's second volume. To give just a few of many examples:

- The gathered early church experienced a dramatic divine response to their communal prayer (4:23-31).
- The centurion Cornelius's prayers result in an angel being sent to him and in him being chosen by God as the first Gentile Christian (10:1-8).
- Paul and Silas are freed from prison by God while praying (16:25-34).
- Paul experiences an encounter with the risen Christ while praying (22:17-21).

Thus, while we should no doubt not expect to have experiences like that of Jesus in the transfiguration on a regular basis in prayer, the transfiguration along with these other scenes should challenge us to seek something higher in prayer than speaking mere words in the hope that God might possibly somehow listen to us. Prayer should be seeking the powerful presence of God in our lives. We must also remember, with the disciples in this scene, that dramatic experiences of Christ's glory come with the call to listen and follow in costly obedience.



Theme

Meeting Jesus on the mountaintop is not a stopping place, it is a starting point.

Object

A flashlight

Scripture

Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)

Have you ever had a day that was so wonderful that you wanted it to last forever? (Pause for response. Invite kids to share about a special day.) Did you know that Jesus' disciples had days like that, too? Our Bible lesson today is about one of those days.

One day, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him up onto a mountain to pray. As Jesus was praying, something very strange happened. (Hold the flashlight under your chin.) The Bible says that the appearance of His face began to change and that His clothing became as bright as a flash of lightning. Then Moses and Elijah, two men who had gone to heaven a long, long time ago, appeared with Jesus. They were talking with Jesus about how He was going to die.

When Peter saw this, he could not believe his eyes. How could Moses and Elijah be here, standing and talking with Jesus. The whole thing was so incredible, Peter told Jesus that he thought that they should stay up there on the mountain and build three tents -- one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

Peter didn't understand that this wonderful experience on the mountain was not meant to last. It was not a place to stop and set up camp, but a starting place for God's greatest gift -- the gift of salvation. Following this moment on the mountain, Jesus died on a cross, was buried, and rose from the grave so that you and I could have eternal life in heaven. If they had stayed on that mountain, they would have missed out on everything that was still to come.

You and I will have many wonderful experiences as we follow Jesus. There is a song that says, "Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before." How true that is! When we have a great "mountaintop experience" like Peter did in today's lesson, we may wish that it would never end. But remember, when we follow Jesus and accept Him as our Lord and Savior, the best is yet to come!

Heavenly Father, we thank You for all of the wonderful experiences You allow us to enjoy as we walk each day with Jesus. Help us to follow Him wherever He leads us. In Jesus' name, amen.

**As we continue to pray and reflect on the season of Lent, attached is a prayer for families to say.
This week's prayer is for Lenten peace in the world.**





Lenten Retreat with Bishop Lucia: Christ Our Spiritual Rock - March 15th @6:30pm. Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception Syracuse. Livestream [youtube.com/syrdio](https://www.youtube.com/syrdio)

The ***Office of Catechesis and the Office of Youth Ministry*** are joining together to pray the Luminous Mysteries every Thursday during Lent and offering intentions for the children and youth of our diocese. Join our prayer initiative with your team at a time that is convenient for you! Our prayer intentions can be found at <https://bit.ly/children-and-youth-rosary> and in today's attachment.

Two Attachments - FB Post image & Rosary Intentions

From Mary, Mother of Our Savior Parish, Utica:

Mary at the Cross: Come follow Mary along the way of the Cross at Mary, Mother of Our Savior Parish, 2222 Genesee St., Utica on Friday, March 25 at 7:00pm. Musical reflections will be offered by parish choirs under the direction of Scott Rutledge with Dominic Fiacco, organist. A free will offering will be taken for our suffering brothers and sisters in Ukraine.

Attached please find the flier for A Lenten Retreat for Catholic Women on April 2, 2022 at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Syracuse. There is a \$25 registration fee. RSVP to swc@syrdio.org

From the Office of Liturgy and the R.C.I.A.: Attached please find a flier for Lent March 2nd to April 14th Liturgical Supplement from the Diocese of Syracuse. It is a table of Liturgical days.

Please see attachment for additional information.

Have a Blessed and Safe Week

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