

ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH

Neola, IA

Parish Office:
712.485.2750
office@stpatricksneola.com

Priest Office:
712.485.2753
priest@stpatricksneola.com

Faith Formation:
712.485.2754
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Parish Hall:
712.485.2433

Website:
www.stpatricksneola.com

St. Patrick Catholic Church
310 Avon Street
P.O. Box 127
Neola, IA 51559

Administrator: Rev. Julius Itamid
Deacon: Rev. Mr. Scott Brooks
Faith Formation Director: Shannon Nye
Business Manager: RaeShelle Jensen

MASS TIMES:

Weekdays: See page 2 for schedule
Saturday Evening: 5:30 PM (April to September)
4:00 PM (October to March)
Sunday Morning: 9:30 AM
Holidays: As announced in the bulletin
Reconciliation: First Saturday evening before Mass



ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Weston, IA



St. Columbanus Catholic Church
22720 Weston Ave
Underwood, IA 51576-3920
Served from Neola

MASS TIMES:

Sunday Morning: 8:00 AM
Holidays: As announced in the bulletin
Reconciliation by appointment

March 7/8, 2026 3rd Sunday of Lent

READING I Exodus 17:3-7
PSALM 95: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.
READING II Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
GOSPEL John 4:5-42

March 14/15, 2026 4th Sunday of Lent

READING I 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
PSALM 23: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
READING II Ephesians 5:8-14
GOSPEL John 9:1-41

Introduction to the Liturgy of the Day

Taken from "Pastoral Patterns" by GIA Publications, Inc.

Water plays a pivotal role in today's liturgy. In the Liturgy of the word, we hear Moses bring forth water in the desert when the Chosen People feared dying of thirst. In the Gospel, Jesus reveals himself as the source of living water, telling the woman at the well that whoever drinks of this water will never thirst again. Today we also celebrate the first scrutiny rite with those who are preparing for baptism, where they will receive the water of new life. Whether we have been baptized for many years or are preparing for baptism in just a few weeks, we thirst for the life-giving water that only our Lord, "the one called the Christ," can provide.

Introduction to the Liturgy of the Word

Taken from "Pastoral Patterns" by GIA Publications, Inc.

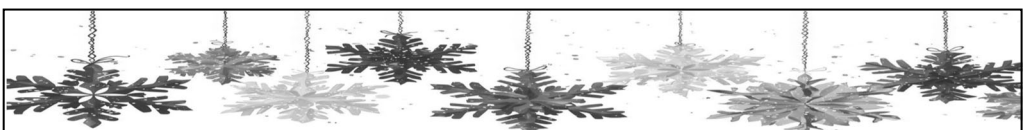
"Is the Lord in our midst or not?" This question is posed at the end of the first reading, but it could be asked in all three. First, we hear the Israelites complain to Moses about the lack of water in the desert. Paul proclaims to the Romans that our hearts are filled with the love of God, though we may not realize it. In the Gospel, Jesus reveals to the woman at the well that he is the Messiah, the Christ, the one who she and her people had been waiting for. The Lord is indeed in our midst, as for the Chosen People in the desert, as in the early church in Rome, and as with the woman at the well.

The God we encounter in the Torah does not hesitate to punish those who disobey or break the commandments. When the Chosen People complain to Moses, accusing him of bringing them to the desert to die of thirst, and Moses complains to God, God could have made them pay for their insolence. But instead God quenches their thirst by taking a rock as hard as their hearts appear to be and imbuing it with flowing water. Similarly, Jesus does not shame the woman for her many marriages or her current lifestyle, but offers her living water, water that within her will well up to eternal life. Paul points out that Jesus went on to die for us on the cross while we were still sinners, saving us rather than condemning us. May we realize that the life-giving water we receive in baptism is a gift most undeserved.

Question of the Week

Taken from "Pastoral Patterns" by GIA Publications, Inc.

How can the life-giving water I received in baptism flow through me to quench the thirst of others in need?



Weekday Masses

- Mar 9 - No Mass
- Mar 10 - St Patrick Parish - Fritz & Vel Wellman 8:30 AM
- Mar 11 - St Columbanus Parish 6:00 PM
- Mar 12 - No Mass
- Mar 13 - St Patrick Parish - Joan Justice 8:30 AM

Weekend Masses

- Mar 14 - St Patrick Parish - Ray & Loretta Stinn 4:00 PM
- Mar 14 - St Columbanus Parish 6:00 PM
- Mar 15 - St Patrick Parish - Pat Peters 9:30 AM

MARCH 14, 2026 - 4:00 PM

- Lector - David Mann
- Servers - None
- EME - Scott Brooks
- Bonnie Wredt
- Norm Baker

MARCH 15, 2026 - 9:30 AM

- Lector - Vivian Gross
- Servers - Kaden Kozeal & Ali Leaders
- EME - Emily Leaders
- Angie Kozeal
- Max Kozeal

MARCH 21, 2026 - 4:00 PM

- Lectors - Max Michels
- Servers - None
- EME - Scott Brooks
- David Mann
- Maureen Mann

MARCH 22, 2026 - 9:30 AM

- Lectors - Rita Heinen
- Servers - Jack Murphy
- Natalie Scriven
- EME - Geri Bjorling
- Eric Busch
- Shannon Nye

MARCH 28, 2026 - 4:00 PM

- Lectors - 3 Volunteers Needed
- Servers - None
- EME - Scott Brooks
- 2 more needed

MARCH 29, 2026 - 9:30 AM

- Lectors - Corey Hough & 2 more needed
- Servers - Ben & Henry Fischer
- EME - Scott Brooks
- 2 more needed

TITHE COUNTERS

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Mar 8 - Diane Rodenburg | Dani Baxter | Roger Hall |
| Mar 15 - Sue Stenlund | Anne Brummett | Jim Mahlberg |
| Mar 22 - Roberta Morse | Cecilia Powell | Peggy Thielen |
| Mar 29 - Kevin Nye | Diane Rodenburg | Dani Baxter |

COMMUNION TO SHUT-INS

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Mar 8 - Carolyn McDermott | Samantha Nye |
| Mar 15 - Roberta Morse | Norm Baker |
| Mar 22 - Jeannie Disalvo | Liz Lyons |
| Mar 29 - Jennifer Fischer | Samantha Nye |

40 HOURS DEVOTION: We need your help manning the 40 Hours Devotion beginning at 4:00 pm on Palm Sunday (March 29th) and ending at 8:00 am on Tuesday, March 31st, followed by Mass at 8:30 am. We need at least one person for every hour & would really like to have two for the hours over night. If you would like to sign up, please see the link below.

The 40 Hours Devotion is a solemn Catholic devotion involving 40 continuous hours of intense prayer and Eucharistic Adoration before the exposed Blessed Sacrament, usually held over three days. It represents the time Jesus spent in the tomb, honoring His sacrifice and offering reparation for sins. Key Aspects of the 40 Hours Devotion:

Purpose: To deepen the faithful's relationship with Jesus, foster adoration, and offer prayers for the community, conversion of sinners, and specific intentions.

Origin: Originated in Milan, Italy, around 1530 to promote prayer, and was later popularized in the U.S. by St. John Neumann in the 1850s.

Symbolism: The number 40 signifies a significant period of preparation or penance, reminiscent of the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert or 40 hours in the tomb.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A4DAAAD2AA1F4C25-62740439-40hour#/>

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES: Next week our parishes will take up the Catholic Relief Services Collection. Funds from this collection provide food to the hungry, support displaced refugees, and bring Christ's love and mercy to vulnerable people here and abroad. Next week, please give generously to the collection and reveal Christ's love to those most in need.

Calendar of Events:

- Mar 11 - Stations of the Cross, St Columbanus, 5:30 pm
- Confirmation Class, 7:00 pm
- Mar 13 - Stations of the Cross, St Patrick, 5:00 pm
- Fish Fry, St Patrick, 5-7 pm
- Mar 14 - St Columbanus Mass & Potluck, 6:00 pm
- Mar 14/15 - Catholic Relief Services collection
- Mar 15 - Faith Formation Classes, 10:35-11:35 am
- Rooted Families Class, 10:35-11:35 am
- Fundraiser for Brielle & Hazel, parish hall, 11:00 am
- High School Class, 6:30 pm
- Mar 17 - St Patrick Day Mass & Soup Supper, 5:30 pm
- Mar 18 - Stations of the Cross, St. Columbanus, 5:30 pm
- Pastoral/Finance Council Meeting, St Columbanus, after Mass
- Mar 20 - Stations of the Cross, St Patrick, 5:00 pm
- Fish Fry, St Patrick, 5-7 pm
- Mar 22 - Faith Formation Classes, 10:35-11:35 am
- Faith Formation Reconciliation, 11:00 am
- Mar 24 - Finance Council Meeting, St Patrick, 6:00 pm
- Mar 25 - Communal Penance, St Columbanus, 5:00 pm
- Confirmation Class, 7:00 pm
- Mar 27 - Stations of the Cross, St Patrick, 5:00 pm
- Fish Fry, St Patrick, 5-7 pm
- Chrism Mass, St Ambrose Cathedral Des Moines, 5:00 pm
- Mar 29 - Palm Sunday Mass Time Changes
- St Columbanus, 8:00 am & St Patrick, 10:00 am
- No Faith Formation Classes
- Mar 29-31 - Holy Week Bible Study with Deacon Scott, 6-7 pm

Offering Report

Last Weeks

Fiscal Year to Date

Sunday Envelopes	\$ 2,170.98	\$ 72,236.76
Open Offering	\$ 179.00	\$ 6,538.75
Children's Offering	\$ 37.00	\$ 578.11

Memorial Calendar

- Mar 8 - Catholic Sisters Week begins
- International Women's Day
- Mar 9 - Memorial of St. Frances of Rome
- Mar 12 - Girl Scouts' Birthday



ANNUAL DIOCESAN APPEAL: In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well in the middle of an ordinary day. A simple conversation becomes a life-changing encounter. Jesus offers her living water, restores her dignity, & sends her back to her village with a joyful invitation: "Come and see." That same mission continues in the Diocese of Des Moines. Each day, ordinary people like you reflect God's grace through welcome, encouragement, & care - creating places where others encounter Christ and discover they belong. Through the Annual Diocesan Appeal, your generosity strengthens ministries, forms future priests & deacons, cares for clergy, supports Catholic Charities, & brings hope to those in need. Please give prayerfully and generously, helping Christ's living water reach every corner of our Diocese. Donations can be dropped in the collection basket or mailed to the parish office.

ST. PATRICK SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION: St. Patrick Catholic Church of Neola, IA scholarship application is now available. Applicants will need to pick up and fill out two forms. Application and Sacrament information sheet must be obtained in person, by the applicant only, from only Father Julius. Forms are not available online and will not be mailed nor emailed out. Forms must be submitted in person, by the applicant only, to only Father Julius. Mailed, emailed, scanned or faxed forms will not be accepted. Forms must be submitted by the end of Mass on April 12, 2026. This scholarship is not associated with any other scholarships.

THANK YOU: A word of thanks for the beautiful celebration and gifts for my birthday at the Lent Retreat. -Fr. Emmanuel Offiong

PLEASE JOIN US.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY SOUP SUPPER

MARCH 17, 2026
AFTER 5:30 PM MASS

ST PATRICK NEOLA PARISH HALL

If you'd like to bring a food item or help at the event, please see the sign-up genius at <https://www.signupgenius.com/?go/10COA4BAAAD2AA1F4C25-62452538-stpatrick>

NEOLA FIREMAN'S ST. PATRICK'S DINNER

MARCH 14TH | 4:00PM - 7:00PM

AT THE NEOLA FIRE STATION

CORNER BEEF, ROAST BEEF, CABBAGE & ALL THE HELPINGS

50/50 RAFFLE TICKETS FOR SALE

FREE WILL DONATION

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Explore Religious Life!

March 27 - 28, 2026 in Kansas and Missouri

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN CURIOUS ABOUT RELIGIOUS LIFE ARE INVITED

This two-day trip is an opportunity to:

- Visit several religious communities
- Attend Mass and tour convents
- Meet the Sisters and ask questions
- Learn more about discerning a vocation

Fr. Max Carson and the chaperoned group will travel together to meet the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles, the Servant Sisters of Mary, and the Sisters Poor of Jesus in both Kansas and Missouri. A modest dress code is required.

For travel itinerary and more information, scan the QR code or visit stpatrikcb.org.

Come and see what the Lord may have in store for you.

Limited spots available. No cost to attend. Register by March 15

TO REGISTER, EMAIL:
Fr. Max Carson
Assistant Vocations Director
of the Diocese of Des Moines
carsonm@saintalbertschools.org

THE MAN OF THE SHROUD

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE TURIN SHROUD CENTER OF COLORADO

Presentation by Shroud expert, Jim Bertrand, M. Ed., includes a full-size replica of the Shroud of Turin.

Thursday, March 19 at 6:30pm at St. Patrick Catholic Church

You're invited to an up-close experience of the most studied artifact of all time - **The Shroud of Turin.**

Witness this powerful presentation of the history, science, and mystery behind what many believe to be the **authentic burial cloth of Jesus Christ.** Then, you can ask **YOURSELF** - who is this Man of the Shroud?

SHROUD OF TURIN EXHIBIT

WALK THROUGH THE TEMPORARY EXHIBIT AT ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH
The display is free to view as follows:

Monday, March 16 - 9 am to 4 pm
Tuesday, March 17 - 9 am to 8 pm
Wednesday, March 18 - 9 am to 8 pm
Thursday, March 19 - 9 am to 8 pm

4 Valley View Drive, Council Bluffs | stpatrikcb.org

March Birthdays		March Anniversaries	
Julie Klein	1	Trenton Huebner	7
Lisa Pape	1	Andrew Baxter	8
Anna Baragary	1	Kelly Alferts	9
Helen Lewis	2	Audrey Haverkamp	10
Nancy Ryan	2	Dani Baxter	10
Kelly Dollen	2	Chyane Sparks	10
Morgan Lausen	2	Vince Wilson	11
Adam Goeser	3	Ashley Lopez	11
Rob Larsen	4	Kurt Hulsing	12
Rachel Hundtofte	5	Sheila Heilman	12
Patrick Andersen	5	Vern Bertelsen	12
Mike Greiner	6	Tyler Weidner	12
Pat Ausdemore	6	Andrew Morse	13
Matt Fletcher	6	Chuck Waters	13
Nikki Scriven	6	Pat Fischer	14
Darrel Petersen	7	Tim Slobodnik	15
		Matt Ryba	15
		Sam Hulsing	16
		Kathleen Roane	16
		Eugene Johnson	16
		Lexi Powell	16
		Heath Rodenburg	17
		Walter Ausdemore	17
		Mary Beth Bladt	18
		Ellie Wollenhaupt	19
		Bill Busch	20
		Michael Ring	20
		Marilyn Alferts	21
		Jackie Bertelsen	21
		Jean Hofmaster	21
		Baylon Harman	21
		Nancy Rohatsch	22
		David Kramer	23
		Ben Fischer	24
		Kaylee Lopez	26
		Evan Reineke	27
		Chris Corrin	28
		Lori Eckrich	29
		Angie Rodenburg	29
		Jack Murphy	29
		Adam Ring	30
		Isabella Buckholdt	30
		Michael Denning	31

We welcome you into God's family! If you are interested in learning more about our church, or would like to join, please pick up a registration form at one of the entrances of the church, stop by the parish office, or call Father Julius for an appointment.

For information about Baptism, Sacrament of the Sick, Pastoral Visitations, Reconciliation, RCIA, Marriage, Adoration, or the Prayer Chain, please visit our website at <https://stpatriksneola.com/> or contact the Parish Office at 712.485.2750.

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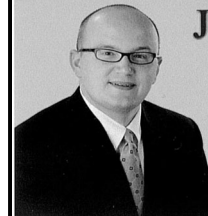
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Living LENT

MINISTERS & FEET WASHING NEEDED FOR HOLY WEEK: We are still in need of ministers & people to have their feet washed. If you are able to help, please sign-up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A4DAAAD2AA1F4C25-62346868-holy>

MEMORIALS: If you'd like to make a donation (perhaps in memory of a loved one) towards the cost of the Lilies that adorn our sanctuary during the Easter season, please put your donation and the name(s) of the person in an envelope and mark it "Lilies". Drop the envelope in the collection basket or deliver it to the parish office. Deadline is Sunday, March 29th.



COMMUNAL PENANCE NIGHTS:

- St. Columbanus - March 25 - 5:00 pm
- St. Patrick - March 31 - 7:00 pm - 2 priests will be available

STATIONS OF THE CROSS will be held every Wednesday evening at 5:30 at St Columbanus Weston and every Friday evening at 5:00 at St Patrick Neola. Here is the schedule of who will be leading the Stations at St Patrick:



- March 13 - Wollenhaupt family
- March 20 - Norm Baker & Grace Shively
- March 27 - Rogner & Jenny Hall

HOLY WEEK BIBLE STUDY: Deacon Scott will be having a 3-night Bible Study about Holy Week. This will be held in the Faith Formation Building on March 29th, 30th, & 31st from 6 to 7 pm. Everyone is invited. Free to attend.

CHRISM MASS: Bishop William Joensen will bless oils and Sacred Chrism at the Chrism Mass at 5:00 pm on Friday, March 27 at St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines. Everyone is invited to this special Mass. The oil and Chrism will be used for sacraments throughout the Diocese in the coming year.

PALM SUNDAY MASSES: All Palm Sunday Masses will begin in the Parish Hall. Please note the time change for the Sunday Masses:

- St. Columbanus Weston: 8:00 am
- St. Patrick Neola: 10:00 am

GOOD FRIDAY:

- Reminder that Good Friday is a fast day for all Catholics ages 18-59, which means 1 regular meal, 2 snacks not equal to a meal, and no meat.
- This year the Good Friday Service will be at St Columbanus Weston.
- Stations of the Cross will be at 2:30 pm, followed by Good Friday Service at 3:00 pm.

EASTER SUNDAY MASSES: Please note the time changes:

- St. Columbanus Weston: 8:00 am
- St. Patrick Neola: 10:00 am

St Patrick
Catholic
Church
Neola

Fish Fry FRIDAYS



St. Patrick Parish Hall, Neola IA

When:

February 20
March 6
March 20

February 27
March 13
March 27

5:00 PM to 7:00PM

Adults: \$15.00 - Children (5-10 Yrs.): \$5.00
- Children Under 5: Free

*Dinner includes: Fried & Baked Alaskan Pollock,
Baked Potato, Mac & Cheese, Orsi's Bread,
Cole Slaw, Relishes, & Dessert!
(May substitute grilled cheese for fish)*

For Questions, contact the Parish Office at 712.485.2750
For Carry Out's call 712.485.2433

Sign-Up Genius for help needed:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A4DAAAD2AA1F4C25-62160283-fish>

March 13 – Fish Fry

Hosted by circles:

- 1 – Terryll Greiner
- 2 – Carol Masker
- 3 – Jan Craft

- 4 – Rita Schnitker
- 5 – Julie McDonough
- 6 – Cecilia Powell

March 20 – Fish Fry

Hosted by circles:

- 7 – Teresa Hoffman
- 8 – Rhea Gross
- 9 – Diane Rodenburg

- 10 – Shannon Nye
- 11 – Sandi Pauley
- 12 – Roberta Morse

March 27 – Fish Fry

Hosted by circles:

- 13 – Kari Kunze
- 14 – Peggy Thielen
- 15 – Misty Weidner

- 16 – Rita Heinen
- 17 – Hannah Cook
- 18 – Liz Lyons

2026 Lent Project

The Parish Pastoral Council voted that for this year's Lenten Project, we assist both Legacy Grove Senior Veterans Apartments and the Fund-raising Benefit for Hazel and Brielle.

Monetary donations will be collected from Ash Wednesday (February 18) to Easter Sunday (April 5). Here are the ways to make a donation. Please clearly mark that the donation is for the "Lent Projects".

- Place in the box on the donation table at the front of church marked: "2026 Lent Project" or mail your donation directly to the parish office at P.O. Box 127, Neola IA 51559.
- Please make all checks payable to St. Patrick's Church.
- All monetary donations will be split evenly between the two unless otherwise noted.



Tough Like BRIELLE & HAZEL

BENEFIT AUCTION

March 15, 2026

St. Patrick's Parish Center • Neola, Iowa
Free Will Offering Lunch | 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Live Auction | 1:00 PM



LENT

Faith Conversations

Week of March 8-14

SUNDAY READINGS: *Exodus 17: 3-7, Psalm 95, Romans 5: 1-2, 5-8; John 4: 5-42*

ADULT REFLECTION

In this week's First Reading we hear the story of God providing water for his thirsty people in the desert. Paul describes the Love of God himself— the Holy Spirit — as being "poured" into our hearts. And our Gospel, the Samaritan Woman at the Well, is jam-packed with food for thought and prayer.

We feel thirst because our bodies need water. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of a spiritual thirst. Our hearts, too, feel a need . . . though it can be harder to name or satisfy. Jesus helps the Samaritan woman get in touch with her own existential thirst, and then reveals himself as the living water that alone can quench it. Take some time to re-read this long and very rich Gospel. Pay attention to the give-and-take in the dialogue and the change gradually occurring within the woman because of her encounter with Jesus.

This was a woman who, culturally and religiously, was an unworthy outsider. And yet Jesus reveals himself to her personally with a clarity we don't often see in the Gospels. He seems to experience joy and satisfaction in refreshing her own deepest thirst.

Reflection Questions:

- *For what do you thirst? Jesus is available amidst our own daily tasks, at our own "well." Have you met him there? Ask him for a drink. He wants to be your "living water" too.*

FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS

Our Sunday readings focus on the theme of "thirst." Share a time that you were really thirsty. How did you feel when you finally got a drink? In our First Reading from the Old Testament, who was thirsty and why? What did God do about it?

In our Gospel, Jesus sits at a well during the hottest part of the day, and asks a woman with a bucket for a drink. He starts up a conversation with her that gets her realizing her heart is thirsty. How can our hearts "thirst" and for what?

What do you think Jesus means by, "whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." When we're Baptized we receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Is this related?



PRAYER

Jesus, encounter us in our daily routines this week. Give us the living water that is you. Pour your Spirit into our hearts to quench our deepest thirst. And inspire us to tell others about what you've done for us, that they, too, may come to believe in you. Amen.



FASTING

Consider trying to ration your family's water use (drinking, brushing teeth, washing) to one gallon jug per person for a day. Offer up your thirst as a prayer for those without access to clean water.



ALMSGIVING

In the story of the Woman at the Well, we hear that this woman went to fetch water alone in the afternoon because she wasn't accepted by the community - she was an outcast. Today there are still people living on the margins, is there a way you can help someone this week?



DIocese of Des Moines



With support from:
St. Joseph Evangelization
Center

Find this and other
resources to share at
dm-diocese.org/living-lent





March 3, 2026

For Immediate Release

Contact: [Anne Marie Cox](#)

515-237-5057

BISHOP WILLIAM JOENSEN STATEMENT ON IRAN

We are struck and sobered by the initiative and scale of United States military operations in recent days in Iran. As Catholics, we look to our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, for moral and spiritual guidance. At his public audience this past Sunday, one day after the initial U.S. attacks in Iran, Pope Leo XIV offered this exhortation:

Faced with the possibility of a tragedy of immense proportions, I make a heartfelt appeal to all the parties involved to assume the moral responsibility of halting the spiral of violence before it becomes an unbridgeable chasm. May diplomacy regain its proper role, and may the well-being of people, who yearn for peaceful existence founded on justice, be upheld. And let us continue to pray for peace.

Further, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, spoke on behalf of all our nation's bishops and echoed the Holy Father's remarks: "All nations, international bodies, and partners committed to peace must exert every effort to prevent further escalation." Archbishop Coakley continued:

At this critical moment, I invite Catholics and all people of goodwill to continue our ardent prayers for peace in the Middle East, for the safety of our troops and the innocent, that leaders may seek dialogue over destruction, and pursue the common good over the tragedy of war. We implore the intercession of our Blessed Mother, Mary, Queen of Peace, to pray for our troubled world and for a lasting peace.

Learn what the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) teaches about conditions necessary for legitimate defense using military force (CCC #2309 & 2310).

In this Lenten season of repentance and renewed humility of heart, and mindful of the scriptural admonition, "When they sow the wind, they will reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7), part of our prayer imitates Azariah's prayer in the Book of Daniel, Chapter 3: 37-45:

We are reduced, O Lord, beyond any other nation, brought low everywhere in the world this day because of our sins. We have in our day no prince, prophet, or leader, no burnt offering, sacrifice, oblation, or incense, no place to offer first fruits, to find favor with you. But with contrite heart and humble spirit let us be received. . . . So let our sacrifice be in your presence today and find favor before you; for those who



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trust in you cannot be put to shame. And now we follow you with our whole heart, we fear you and we seek your face. Do not put us to shame, but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy.

May the God who stands over all nations convict us, convert us, and draw us together as sisters and brothers united on the path leading to the peace only Jesus Christ can give. I commend you in this Lenten season of repentance to offer one additional day of fasting for peace.



St. Patrick's Church, Neola and St. Columbanus Church, Weston

Rev. Julius Itamid, Administrator

One Minute Meditations

St. Turibius of Mogrovejo

Born in Mayorga, Spain, in 1538, St. Turibius studied law at the University of Salamanca. Known for his prudence and integrity as a judge, St. Turibius was nominated by King Philip II to be archbishop of Peru. After witnessing the need of the faithful in Lima, St. Turibius agreed and was ordained. He spent his office reforming the Peruvian diocese of corruption, founded schools, seminaries, and hospitals, and worked to protect the rights of the natives.

Lent is about love

Lent can feel discouraging. After all, we give up things we like and focus on suffering. Yet, in Holy Week, for which Lent is the preparation, we see God's response to us in our sins. He meets us in our mess. He returns our rejection with freely offered love, our selfishness with radical self-gift, and our suffering with unfathomable mercy. We give up things for Lent because Love gave Himself up for us.

"[Our Lord] is thinking about you and not only about you but about every hair of your head: this is an article of faith and you must not have the slightest doubt about it... you have no cause to doubt that he is looking upon you with love..." — St. Francis de Sales, *Selected Letters*

Create space for grace

Lent is not just a season of temporary sacrifice, but a call to lasting conversion. Consider choosing disciplines that reshape daily habits and create space for grace. Here are five meaningful ways to begin redirecting your path:

Practice trust. "Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life?" (Matthew 6:27). Concern is human, but persistent worry bears little fruit. When anxiety rises, turn it into prayer, "Jesus, I trust You, I place this moment and its outcome in Your hands." Trust grows through repetition.

Refocus your heart. Lasting fulfillment does not come from appearance or possessions, but from knowing God and resting in His love. Keep a daily record of blessings received. Review it often.

Create quiet. St. Teresa of Calcutta said, "God is the friend of silence." Silence begins by turning off what

competes for attention. Place screens in another room. Silence notifications. Turn to God in the silence.

Give rather than acquire. Learn to distinguish between wants and needs. Limiting spending to what is truly necessary challenges the habit of

"Do you wish your prayer to fly toward God? Make for it two wings: fasting and almsgiving."
St. Augustine

seeking comfort or status in possessions. When we forgo nonessential purchases and redirect those resources to others, we cultivate detachment, strengthen generosity, and put our security in God.

Choose mercy. Resentment binds the heart; forgiveness frees it. On the Cross, Christ chose mercy. This Lent, choose the same path toward healing and peace.

Why Do Catholics Do That? Why do Catholics practice prayer, penance, and almsgiving during Lent?

Prayer, penance, and almsgiving are grounded in the prophets' call to genuine conversion. Joel urges the people to return to God with their whole hearts, not merely with outward gestures. Isaiah makes clear that the fast God desires feeds the hungry and shelters the poor, linking worship with justice. Jesus deepens this teaching in

Matthew 6. He assumes His followers will pray, fast, and give alms, but warns against practicing them for recognition.

When done in secret, these disciplines purify motives, reshape desire, and free us from attachment to possessions and approval. Properly embraced, they train the heart to seek lasting treasure in God rather than passing reward.

The right time is now

When is the right time to proclaim the Gospel, live the faith with greater intention, and renew our commitment to God's plan? During a January Angelus address, Pope Leo said, "God is at work at all times; every moment is 'God's time'." The call to discipleship is not reserved for a future time when life feels more settled. It is meant for us today.

God works in uncertain moments. The Gospels show that Jesus did not wait for favorable conditions. Matthew records that His public ministry began after John the Baptist's arrest, a moment marked by instability and threat. Rather than withdraw, Jesus proclaimed, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matthew 4:17). What seemed like a setback became the starting point of His mission. If we postpone

necessary change until circumstances improve, we may never act. Every moment, even a difficult one, can become the moment of conversion because God is always at work.

God draws close. Jesus also chose an unexpected location. He began not in Jerusalem, the religious center, but in Galilee, a region known for cultural and religious diversity. His mission made clear that God's grace is not confined to a single place or people. As Pope Leo explained, the Gospel reveals a God who draws near to all. No environment is beyond His presence. In our own lives, this means that God's invitation unfolds in ordinary settings. He calls us to deeper friendship, lasting conversion, and faithful witness wherever we are.

from **S**cripture

Matthew 26:14-27:66, God turns suffering into glory

In this passage, we read Matthew's account of the Passion, which begins with Judas agreeing to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and continues through the preparations for the Last Supper. At that meal, Jesus institutes the Eucharist, giving His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity to His disciples. The contrast is striking. While Judas pursues his own self-interest, Jesus gives Himself in total self-offering.

In Gethsemane, the contrast deepens. As Jesus endures profound anguish, He asks His closest companions to remain with Him in prayer. They fall asleep. Soon after, Judas arrives with an armed

crowd and identifies Jesus with a kiss. Jesus is then bound, falsely accused, mocked, and beaten. By the next day, He is scourged, condemned, crucified, and laid in the tomb.

Through these events, Matthew highlights Jesus' trust in the Father and His commitment to the Father's will. The Passion is not a sign of divine abandonment. It reveals the depth of God's mercy. In Christ's willing sacrifice, suffering becomes the means of redemption, grace is poured out, and death itself is conquered. Holy Week shows that God can transform even the darkest hour into the path to glory.

Feasts & Celebrations

March 1 – St. David of Wales (c. 601). St. David is the patron saint of Wales. He was born into Welsh nobility, but instead chose to become a priest. He was later consecrated a bishop. He is best known for founding an ascetic monastery, and ridding the area of the Pelagian heresy, which states that we must earn our salvation. He was known for his inspiring preaching, penitential life, and kindness to the poor.

March 4 – St. Casimir of Poland (1483). Born to King Casimir IV of Poland, St. Casimir became known for his piety and integrity at a young age. When

the prince was older and his father sent him to conquer Hungary, Casimir assessed the odds against winning the war and turned back out of concern for his troops. He resolved never to be involved in war again. He died of illness when he was twenty-five.

March 19 – St. Joseph, Husband of Mary (1st Century). Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.

March 29 – Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion (1st Century). On Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, when He was greeted by crowds waving palms and cheering. This Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week.

Q & A Does repeated failure & change how God loves me?

It can be discouraging to struggle with the same sins repeatedly. The pattern may feel discouraging. Yet discouragement should never become despair. The central truth of the Christian life is that when repentance is sincere and there is a real desire to improve, God always receives us. As Pope Francis said, "He does not tire in forgiving. We are the ones who tire in asking for forgiveness." His mercy does not diminish with repetition.

At times, God may permit ongoing struggles to deepen our humility. Repeated weakness can protect us from spiritual pride, which blinds us to our faults and keeps us from seeking grace. Humility, however, recognizes imperfection without losing trust. A humble person is not shocked by failure but returns to God with greater dependence.

If you feel anxious about Confession, whether for a new sin or a familiar one, remember the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son. He waits, watches, and runs to meet his child. This is how God receives us. In every sincere confession, we encounter not frustration, but mercy renewed.

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(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible - Revised)