

## *Lent at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish*

During Lent we are called upon to change our way of life in the light of Christ's person and message. Lent is a time for examining our lives, looking at our shortcomings, and thinking about our family need for God. Lent is special time when we make a special effort to respond to Jesus and live in love according to his teaching.

The number 40 is special for many reasons. Back in the days when Moses led his people through the Reed Sea and into the desert, they wandered and survived with God's help for forty years. The forty days of Lent also remind us of the forty days which Jesus spent fasting (*eating very little*) and praying in the desert after his baptism.

Our word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "*lengthen*." They called the spring season "*lengthen*" because that is when the days started "*lengthening*" and getting warmer. Lent for the Anglo-Saxons was a time for eggs, rabbits, and flowers. These things reminded people of new life that comes in spring as the days lengthen. When the Anglo-Saxons put the Christian and nature practices together, they called the time of preparation "*Lent*" and the celebration of new life's arrival "*Easter*."

Ashes are sacramentals which remind us of creation, encourage prayer, and invite reverence. Our priests call us to receive the good news and to turn away from sin. We are reminded that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Ashes are made by burning blessed palm left over from last year's Palm Sunday. Black and gritty, they remind us that we are not permanent on this earth and that some things in our lives need to be confronted, repented, and changed. Worn publicly, they help to remind us that we call and support each other to live the gospel. Try to bring the children to the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday.

**Ash Wednesday**  
**Parish Distribution of Ashes**

**Wednesday, February 17 – Main Church**



6:30 AM Mass  
9:00 AM Mass  
12:00 Noon Prayer Service  
4:00 PM Prayer Service  
7:00 PM Mass

*Ashes for the Homebound are available in baskets in the back of the Main Church.*

**Family Lenten Reconciliation Liturgy**

**Tuesday, March 30**  
**7:00 P.M. - Main Church**



*Come and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation  
this Lent with Parish Families!*

## **Stations of the Cross**

**Presided by our Parish Deacons**



***Religious Education Students***  
March 1, 2, and 4: 4:15 PM - Main Church / Chapel

***Good Counsel Students***  
Fridays in Lent: During class hours - Main church

***Parish Families***  
Fridays in Lent : 7:00 PM - Main Church

## **Living Stations**

***Parish Families:***  
Friday, March 26 – 7:00 PM

***Good Counsel School Students  
and Families:***  
Thursday, April 1 – 10:00 AM



*Living Stations are portrayed by the  
Grade 8 students of  
Our Lady of Good Counsel School.*

*Presentations are in the Main Church*

## **Seven Last Words of Christ**

**Palm Sunday, March 28**  
**Good Friday, April 2**  
**7:00 PM in the Main Church**



*Seven Last Words of Christ are  
prayerfully presented by members  
of the Parish Youth Group.*

## Spring Family Mass and Breakfast

**Saturday, March 27**  
**9:00 A.M. - Main Church**  
**Breakfast follows in the Cafeteria**



*Families come together as a larger parish family to celebrate our faith.*

***Registration is required!***

[reprogram@olcgnj.org](mailto:reprogram@olcgnj.org) or 856-235-7136

## Chrism Mass

**Monday, March 29, 7:30 P.M.**  
**Cathedral of Saint Mary in Trenton**

**Open to all parishioners, and in particular, our eighth grade students  
and participants in the Initiation Process**



A school bus will depart the parish parking lot at **5:00 P.M.**

A brief social follows the Mass, with light refreshments and an opportunity to meet Bishop Smith.

We return to the parish parking lot approximately **10:30 P.M.**

The Diocesan Festival Choir, under the direction of Mr. Lucasi, will provide the music for this liturgy.

## ***Family Activities for Lent:***

1. Look for ways to share the love which God has so generously given us. Send a note of appreciation to someone with whom we interact. Send a cheery card to someone whose spirits need to be raised.
2. Children can meditate by completing incomplete sentences and then drawing pictures that illustrate the sentence they have written. Examples: *God is... Jesus is...Love is...Lent is... A Catholic is... Faith is... The Church is...*
3. Throughout Lent (*about 10 minutes a night?*) take turns reading to each other. One suggestion: *The Tale of the Three Trees*. When you have finished, discuss why this is a good Easter story.
4. Display Baptism pictures of the family. Discuss what they represent.
5. Write a family covenant. How will you as a family promise to spend your forty days?
6. Prepare a Lenten Christ Candle, symbol of Christ as the light of our world. Decorate it with family mementos. Add a touch of purple to signify forgiveness. Light the candle each evening as a conscious family symbol of Christ's presence in your life.
7. Choose one day each week on which you can have an inexpensive soup or cereal supper. Donate the money saved to the hungry.
8. For younger children, make a cloth or paper cross of purple for the refrigerator door as a reminder of penitence, humility, and suffering.
9. Make a belief poster on cardboard that children can decorate. Work on the poster throughout Lent. Some suggestions are:
  - Believe in yourself; you are God's creation.
  - Believe in your job; honest work is a form of worship.
  - Believe in your family; create harmony and togetherness by working together.
  - Believe in your neighbor; friends are an important ingredient of a happy life.
  - Believe in the present; yesterday is gone and tomorrow may never come.
  - Believe in God's promise; God meant it when God said, "*I am with you always.*"
  - Believe in God's mercy; since God forgives you, you can forgive yourself and try again tomorrow.
  - Believe in Christ's presence in your life; Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.
10. Give up things. Since Lent is a time of personal and communal conversion, it is an especially fitting time to cut back on life's extras. However, the purpose of Lent is not solely to give up things; it is to turn our lives from what does not really satisfy and to fill ourselves with God's life. Our culture promises fulfillment through material things. Finding something "to do without" can remind us that our hearts desire can be filled only by God.