

Lent

Journey of
the Heart



2017 Kalamazoo Area Lenten Penance Services

Priests in the Kalamazoo area parishes are working together during the Lenten season to offer a schedule that meets the needs and convenience of many people. Rather than every parish having its own service and trying to find priests to assist at each one, we are going to offer nine services throughout the area, and priests will be available at the end of each service for individual confessions. You are invited to come to whatever location best suits your needs.

St. Ambrose — Tuesday, March 21, 7:00 p.m.
1628 East G Avenue, Parchment

St. Monica — Wednesday, March 22, 7:00 p.m.
434 W. Kilgore Road, Kalamazoo

St. Martin of Tours — Sunday, March 26, 5:00 p.m.
5855 East W Avenue, Vicksburg

St. Ann Gull Lake — Wednesday, March 29, 6:30 p.m.
12648 East D Avenue, Augusta

St. Mary — Sunday, April 2, 7:00 p.m.
939 Charlotte St., Kalamazoo

St. Catherine of Siena — Tuesday, April 4, 6:30 p.m.
1150 W. Centre Street, Portage

Ashes will be available at St. Tom's
9:00 a.m. — 9:00 p.m.
You are welcome
to come in during the day,
pray with the readings,
and mark yourself with the ashes.



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

MARCH 1, 2017

12:10 p.m. — Mass at Kanley Chapel (WMU)

5:30 p.m. — Mass at St. Tom's

7:30 p.m. — Mass at St. Tom's



RICE BOWLS

You are invited to participate in Catholic Relief Services' Operation Rice Bowl. Throughout Lent we will pray, fast, learn and give as a way to reach out in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world. Please be sure to take home a Rice Bowl packet and follow this simple yet powerful Lenten practice. They are available in the narthex.

Visit orb.crs.org for additional resources to use at home.

THE LITTLE BLACK BOOKS

with Lenten reflections are available in the narthex.
One copy available for each family and college student.

PRIVATE RECONCILIATION

Here at St. Tom's

Wednesday, March 8 — 6:30-7:30 p.m.

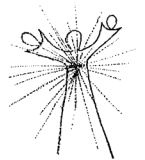
Wednesday, March 22 — 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 29 — 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 5 — 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 8 — 11:00 a.m.—12:00 noon

Wednesday, April 12 — 6:30-7:30 p.m.



Lent begins this week with its annual challenge to change our lives to make them more attuned to the vision and values of Jesus. Lent is the time for renewing our discipleship by adopting some more rigorous discipline to heighten our spiritual awareness. The idea of discipline relates to the experience of being a disciple, a learner, and discipline, a way of learning. It includes instruction for the mind and exercises for the body. Just as our body sometimes needs an extra boost to get into shape, so our spiritual life needs some special spiritual exercise in order to improve.

Instead of imposing the same spiritual exercises on everyone as in the past, the Church now recognizes that our spiritual life must be our own responsibility. The Church encourages us to decide which disciplines to use; fasting – if our age and health permit, abstaining from meat; increasing our attention to prayer, to the sacraments, to the study of our faith, and to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy – visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, helping the homeless. We are responsible for tailoring our Lenten practices to the needs of our spiritual life. For some this will demand “giving up” and for others “taking on” attitudes and behaviors in order to be more like Jesus.

The most important thing anyone can do for Lent is to “return to the Lord with your whole heart.” (Joel 2:12) Repent means to turn around. Catholics are challenged to turn our lives around to the Lord through the Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

REMEMBER, LENT IS AN INVITATION TO NEW LIFE.
NOW IS THE TIME. WHAT NEW LIFE DO YOU DESIRE?
WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO SACRIFICE
TO MAKE IT HAPPEN?



PRAYER

is a recognition that we need help to turn back to God. Perhaps during Lent, you may want to attend the 5:15 p.m. daily Mass once in a while or pray with the Scripture readings before you come to Sunday Mass. Use the little black book for private prayer – just six minutes a day – spent with the Lord. Pray while you’re waiting at a stop light, or in the check out line. It doesn’t have to be formal or fancy. As Lent begins, we invite you to form a small faith-sharing group. Gather 4 or 5 friends or family members together weekly to read the Sunday Scriptures and talk about their impact on your lives. This “breaking open the Word” is what the RCIA candidates and catechumens do each week when they are dismissed from Mass. Talking about our faith and how we live as Christians in our world is not something we do very often. It may not be easy at first. Maybe that’s the challenge of Lent this year.

**prayer
for the good
of your soul**



FASTING and ABSTINENCE

is a way to remind ourselves that we need God above all things. Fasting is a sacrifice, a gift back to God of our heart’s intent to depend more completely on God. The interior free desire to deepen our relationship to God is the essence of a Lenten fast.

The Church’s Lenten Regulations are:

FASTING: Ages 18 – 59 fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, limiting themselves to one full meal and two smaller meals each day, with no snacking between meals.

ABSTINENCE: Catholics age 14 and older abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays of Lent.

**fasting
for the
good
of your
body**

ALMSGIVING

readjusts our priorities while it expresses both our love of neighbor and our trust in God. A free gift to those in need confirms our basic trust in Providence while concretely helping those in need. Just as we fast without starving ourselves, so we give alms without jeopardizing our security or that of our family. The point is to give from the heart.

Perhaps you would like to sponsor a student from our sister parish in El Salvador – those forms are at the church doorways. And we continue to accept contributions to Catholic Relief Services for the victims of the hurricanes or



other natural disasters. Numerous local volunteer agencies are looking for help. Our music ministry could use more people. Habitat for Humanity needs workers. Almsgiving isn’t just about giving money. It can be giving of your time, sharing your talents, supporting a cause.

almsgiving for the good of your neighbor

*May God bless our parish family as we accept the disciplines of Lent,
with open hearts and willing spirits.
May we all grow spiritually during this holy season.*