

First Sunday of Lent



News You Can Use...from Fr. Steve Signs and Readiness for Lent

When you enter the Church's worship space today, on this First Sunday of Lent, you should know just by looking around, that the Church is ready to begin the holy season of Lent. One of the important features of the Lenten environment is "sparseness." The environment is "lean" and devoid of some of its ordinary celebratory quality. The lack of floral arrangements in the sanctuary offers a trimmed down appearance. The whole sanctuary displays a "bare" character and, if you had a poetic imagination, you could sense that the physical environment itself was fasting and abstaining - preparing itself along with the faithful to **"...come to the joys of the resurrection with an uplifted and welcoming heart"** [from the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" #110, Vatican II documents].

Purple, which is the penitential color of the Liturgy, is very visible in the worship environment. It is a reminder that Lent is a penitential time in the Church, and throughout these forty days of Lent, we continue to embrace the admonition we heard on Ash Wednesday: **"Turn away from sin and believe in the Gospel."**

We understand Lent as a penitential season because the Church emphasizes in Word and Liturgical celebration the unworthiness and the sinfulness of the baptized rather than their blessedness and giftedness. It is through a proper, prayerful understanding of our unworthiness and sinfulness that we are able to enter into the meaning and power of Christ's redemptive act of Love on the Cross.

The Shadow of the Cross falls across the entire Lenten season so the principle instrument that brought forth our salvation is given more prominence in the worship environment. The Cross stands in the body of the Church inviting worshipers to meditate on it, honor it, and embrace it for by this holy Cross, Christ has redeemed the world.

Yes, our sanctuary, Church environment, the liturgy, and the readings are ready – but is your heart prepared and ready as well? For Lent to be personally fruitful, it must be an internal reality in the heart of the believer, a conscious and willful participation in the Church's desire for purification and enlightenment. The spiritual attitudes and exercises of the Lenten season, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, need to be joyfully embraced, as a sign of our union with Christ crucified and our union with His work of our redemption.

Ongoing Faith Formation Opportunities at St. AJ

Want to learn more about your Catholic faith? Want to join with others seeking to face the challenges of living out our faith in the modern world? Our Parish is committed to providing you with ongoing faith formation opportunities. All are welcome to join our Catholic Forum discussion group each Sunday downstairs in the Parish Hall after the 10 AM Mass. In addition, anyone interested in joining the Catholic Church should check the RCIA page on the parish web site, www.saintsaj.org, or contact saintsajrcia@hotmail.com.

Visit the Jacobium Gathering Space...

On the right-hand side as you exit. Read and stay informed about the latest happenings at St. AJ.

Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble. Psalm 91

This Week at St. AJ

Saturday, February 20

4:00PM Confessions

5:30PM Vigil Mass *Intentions of Parishioners and Benefactors*

Sunday, February 21

First Sunday of Lent

10:00AM Mass

Catholic Forum Today February 21 - after 10:00AM Mass

11:30AM Mass *Anton Jung*

5:00PM Mass

10:00PM Mass *Intentions of Students at our Area Universities*

Monday, February 22

7:30AM Mass *Marie Claire Estime Colimon, Her mother and Aunts*

12:05PM Mass *Joseph Puthenkandathil*

Tuesday, February 23

7:30AM Mass *Gina Fils Aime*

Wednesday, February 24

12:30PM to 2:00PM Church open today. Ring Rectory bell.

Thursday, February 25

12:05PM Mass *Dolph J. Tokarczyk*

Friday, February 26

No 7:30AM Mass

5:15PM (Church) Stations of the Cross

Saturday, February 27

4:00PM Confessions

5:30PM Vigil Mass *Intentions of St. AJ Parishioners & Benefactors*



Men's Spirituality Conference

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Men's Spirituality Conference will be held March 13, 2010 at Archbishop Ryan High School. Philadelphia area native Mike Piazza, the 12-time All-Star catcher; Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey; Catholic lay evangelist Jesse Romero; and Mark Houck of the King's Men headline an impressive lineup of speakers and topics for a day of faith-sharing, reflection and fellowship. Cardinal Justin Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia, will celebrate the Conference's closing Mass at 4 PM. To register go to www.archphila.org and click on the Men's Spirituality Conference 2010 Logo. For additional information contact the Family Life Office at 215-587-5639, or email: mscquestions@adphila.org.

Registration for Marriage Preparation Available Online

Engaged couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage can now register for programs offered by the Family Life Office online. Couples interested in this opportunity can visit our website at: http://archphila.org/evangelization/famlife/marriage_prep/marriage_e.htm, choose a date and location for marriage preparation (either a four session program or weekend retreat), and register online using a credit card. Registrations will still be accepted by mail, but the new online system provides a convenient way for couples to begin the important process of preparing to enter into the Sacrament of Marriage. If you have questions about marriage preparation, call 215-587-5639 or e-mail: famlife@adphila.org.

Upcoming Natural Family Planning Classes – March 2010

The Family Life Office offers regular NFP classes throughout the Archdiocese. This is a great opportunity for engaged or married couples to learn about the Church's teaching on the gift of human sexuality, the meaning of responsible parenthood, and a safe, effective, and morally acceptable method for spacing children. Upcoming Archdiocesan-sponsored sympto-thermal NFP classes are on and March 8 and 15, 2010 (2-part class), from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at St. Margaret Church in Narberth, PA. For more info and to register for class, call 215-587-3516 or email tseyfer@adphila.org