

The Catholic Parish of St John XXIII

Perfection Ave cor Bentwood Tce, Stanhope Gardens www.john23rd.com

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

20 — 21 February 2016

Our Parish Mission

The parish of St John XXIII is a faith community with the Eucharist as its heart. Inspired by John XXIII's prophetic opening of the windows of the Church, we welcome the fresh air of the Holy Spirit, inviting every person to share in the responsibility of enriching the life and faith of our community by sharing their gifts and talents."



Parish Priest: Fr John McSweeney	✉ FrJohn@john23rd.org.au
Asst Priest: Fr Robert William	✉ FrRobert@john23rd.org.au
Deacon: Nicephorus Tan	✉

Mass Times

Monday to Friday 9:00am

Also Wednesday 9:00am Holy Cross
Primary during school term

Saturday 9:00am, 6:00pm (Vigil)

Sunday 7:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am
6:00pm (Youth)

Baptism 12:00pm *Sunday by appointment*

Reconciliation (First Rite)

Saturday 5:00 - 5:45pm

And after any weekday masses

Parish Office Hours

Tuesday to Friday 8.30 - 4.00pm

Parish Office Contacts

☎ (02)9852 0580 📞 0403 766468 AH

Secretary: Tanya Gatt

✉ secretary@john23rd.org.au

Finance: Mila Llamas (Fri)

✉ accounts@john23rd.org.au

Admin Asst: Jill Franco (Tues/Thurs)

✉ admin@john23rd.org.au

Business Manager: John McCartney (*pro bono*)

✉ businessmanager@john23rd.org.au

Devotions & Prayers

Novena Masses

Tuesday 7:30pm

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

First Friday 7:30pm

Sacred Heart of Jesus

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Tuesday 6:30 - 7:30pm

First Friday 6:30pm followed by
7:15pm Benediction

Saturday 8:00 - 9:00am (*Vocations*)

Sacrament of the Sick

First Saturday 9:00am Mass or upon request

Divine Office

Friday 12:00pm with Adoration

Sunday 8:15am

Praise & Worship

3rd Saturday 7:30pm

led by SJ23rd Prayer Group

2nd Saturday 7:30pm

led by CRL (*Community of the Risen Lord*)

Friday evenings 7:00pm church kitchen

(*Christ Catholic Community Prayer Group*)

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

As we move further into this Penitential Season of Lent, let us commit ourselves to be people of Mercy and Compassion to all whom we meet. In this Holy Year of Mercy we are all called to be 'missionaries of Mercy' in our own families, workplaces, schools and the general community (see Pope Francis' comments in *Evangelicum* for today and next week). What does this mean? Two things: that we seek the mercy of God ourselves, through our charitable actions to others and through our reception of the Sacrament of Mercy - the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation; and that we offer mercy and forgiveness (not without sometimes having to speak the Truth in Love) to those in need of this message in their lives. In this we will be 'transfigured' into the image of the One whom we follow, Jesus Christ; and we shall be 'Christian' not only in name but in fact!

* The Young Adults group called ***Ignite*** has its first meeting this weekend after the Sunday 6pm Mass in the St. Mark's Staffroom. Fr. Paul Roberts will address the topic of God's Spirit in non-believers. There will be time for discussion, reflection and prayer, and a supper to finish the evening. All who are 18-35 or so are most welcome to attend.

* Baptism Preparation for those having their children baptised in March is on in the Church this Wednesday from 7:30-8:30.

* On Thursday in the St. Mark's Staff Room there will be the next Parra Matters for Youth of the Diocese, which is organised by Catholic Youth Parramatta. Please see the Bulletin for more details.

* Please continue to pray for our 7 Catechumens and 1 Candidate who will be baptised and/or received into the Church this Easter Vigil. They will commence their final commitment (through three Sundays of 'scrutinies') during the 10:30am Mass over the next three Sundays. *Please be aware that this will necessitate the reading of Year A readings for the 10:30am Mass (only) on the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of Lent.*

Have a great week everyone; and let us continue to pray for one another.

God bless. Fr. John

On the vigil of Ash Wednesday, Pope Francis received in audience priests who have been selected as Missionaries of Mercy for this jubilee. During the Mass of Ash Wednesday, they were given their mandate, including faculties to absolve certain sins reserved to the Holy See. .

Dear Brothers Priests, good evening!

It is a great pleasure to meet with you before giving you the mandate to be Missionaries of Mercy. It is a sign of special importance because it characterizes the Jubilee, and enables all the local Churches to live the unfathomable mystery of the Father's mercy. To be a Missionary of Mercy is a responsibility that is entrusted to you, because it requires that you be personally witnesses of God's closeness and of His way of loving. Not our way, always limited and at times contradictory, but His way of loving and His way of forgiving, which is in fact mercy. I would like to offer you some brief reflections, so that the mandate you will receive can be carried out in a coherent way and as a concrete help for the many persons who will approach you.

First of all I would like to remind you that in this ministry you are called to express the maternity of the Church. The Church is Mother because she always generates new children in the faith; the Church is Mother because she nourishes the faith; and the Church is also Mother because she offers God's forgiveness, regenerating to a new life, fruit of conversion. We cannot run the risk of a penitent not perceiving the maternal presence of the Church, which receives and loves him. If this perception failed, because of our rigidity, it would cause, in the first place, a great harm for faith itself, because it would impede the penitent to see himself inserted in the Body of Christ. Moreover, it would greatly limit his feeling that he is part of a community. Instead, we are called to be the living expression of the Church that, as Mother, receives any one who approaches her, knowing that through her he is inserted in Christ. As we enter the confessional, we should always remember that it is Christ who welcomes, it is Christ who listens, it is Christ who forgives, it is Christ who gives peace. We are His ministers and, for starters, we are always in need of being forgiven by Him. Therefore, whatever the sin that is confessed – or which the person does not dare spell out, but makes it understood, is sufficient. Every missionary is called to remember his existence as a sinner and to place himself humbly as a “channel” of God's mercy. And I confess to you fraternally that for me my confession of September 21 of '53 is a source of joy, which reoriented my life. What did the priest say to me? I don't remember. I remember that he smiled at me and then I don't know what happened. But it is to welcome as a father ... *(To be continued)*



Entrance Antiphon

Of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face. It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face from me.

First Reading

Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

God made a covenant with Abraham, his faithful servant.

Taking Abram outside the Lord said, 'Look up to heaven and count the stars if you can. Such will be your descendants' he told him. Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted this as making him justified.

'I am the Lord' he said to him 'who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to make you heir to this land.' 'My Lord, the Lord' Abram replied 'how am I to know that I shall inherit it?' He said to him, 'Get me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon.' He brought him all these, cut them in half and put half on one side and half facing it on the other; but the birds he did not cut in half. Birds of prey came down on the carcasses but Abram drove them off.

Now as the sun was setting Abram fell into a deep sleep, and terror seized him. When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, there appeared a smoking furnace and a firebrand that went between the halves. That day the Lord made a Covenant with Abram in these terms: 'To your descendants I give this land, from the wadi of Egypt to the Great River.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Communion Antiphon

This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 90:1-2, 10-15

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; before whom shall I shrink?

R.

O Lord, hear my voice when I call; have mercy and answer. Of you my heart has spoken: 'Seek his face.'

R.

It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face. Dismiss not your servant in anger; you have been my help.

R.

I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. Hope in him, hold firm and take heart. Hope in the Lord!

R.

THE WORD OF GOD

"Who can tell us how to get along with each other better than God? Where can we turn for wisdom better than God's Word, the Bible?"

Billy Graham, Billy Graham in Quotes

Second Reading

Philippians 3:17 - 4:1

Christ will transfigure these bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body.

My brothers, be united in following my rule of life. Take as your models everybody who is already doing this and study them as you used to study us. I have told you often, and I repeat it today with tears, there are many who are behaving as the enemies of the cross of Christ. They are destined to be lost. They make foods into their god and they are proudest of something they ought to think shameful; the things they think important are earthly things. For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which he can subdue the whole universe.

So then, my brothers and dear friends, do not give way but remain faithful in the Lord. I miss you very much, dear friends; you are my joy and my crown.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 17:5

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

From the shining cloud the Father's voice is heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him.

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel

Luke 9:28-36

As Jesus prayed, the aspect of his face was changed, and his clothing became brilliant as lightning.

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake and saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As these were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' - He did not know what he was saying. As he spoke, a cloud came and covered them with shadow; and when they went into the cloud the disciples were afraid. And a voice came from the cloud saying, 'This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him!'. And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. The disciples kept silence and, at that time, told no one what they had seen.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reflection

Today, both the First Reading and the Gospel speak of mystical experiences with which God gifted both Abram and Jesus. They were religious experiences that impacted on their lives, and they showed forth the direction in life that would lead to fulfilment.

The experience of God consuming the birds and the beasts was a dramatic image for an ancient Semite. Their religious practice and worship revolved around sacrifices. Here, God ‘cuts’ a covenant with Abram (whom, we know, is later to be called Abraham).

Similarly, Jesus experiences something quite dramatic during a period of deep prayer. Unlike the sacrifice of animals, this “Transfiguration” of Jesus is a foretaste of the glory that will be his after the sacrifice of himself on the altar of the Cross.

We often dwell on the Glory that is contained in these episodes:

But the Glory is dependent on the suffering and death. This is often the case with God:

Abram must believe in order to remain in a right relationship with God, and thus receive the gifts of descendants and Land;

Jesus must suffer and die for the salvation of the world before he will receive the glory that is His destiny.

Another link between these two stories is the fact that the dramatic encounter with God occurs within the context of Prayer. And this is especially clearer in the Gospel text.

My brothers and sisters in the Lord, these Readings today encourage us in our self-denial for a greater good, and in our re-assessment of and recommitment to the practice of Prayer in our lives.

Let’s try to look at the message from God’s Word as the week unfolds.. and, among the many other aspects of our Lenten observance, let’s aim to realize our potential as faithful Christians.

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father
almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the
Only Begotten Son of God, born of
the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light, true
God from true God, begotten, not
made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation he
came down from heaven,

*At the words that follow, up to and including 'and
became man', all bow.*

**and by the Holy Spirit was
incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and
became man.**

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and
was buried, and rose again on the third
day in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven and is seated
at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge
the living and the dead and his
kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life, who proceeds from
the Father and the Son, who with the
Father and the Son is adored and
glorified, who has spoken through the
prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the
forgiveness of sins and I look forward
to the resurrection of the dead and the
life of the world to come.

Amen.

Readings for Next Week

22 Mon The Chair of Saint Peter

1st Reading 1 Peter 5:1-4
Psalm Ps 22
Gospel Matthew 16:13-19

23 Tues 2nd week of Lent

1st Reading Isaiah 1:10, 16-20
Psalm Ps 49:8-9, 16-17, 21, 23
Gospel Matthew 23:1-12

24 Wed 2nd week of Lent

1st Reading Jeremiah 18:18-20
Psalm Ps 30:5-6, 14-16
Gospel Matthew 20:17-28

25 Thurs 2nd week of Lent

1st Reading Jeremiah 17:5-10
Psalm Ps 1:1-4, 6
Gospel Luke 16:19-31

26 Fri 2nd week of Lent

1st Reading Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28
Psalm Ps 104:16-21
Gospel Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

27 Sat 2nd week of Lent

1st Reading Micah 7:14-15, 18-20
Psalm Ps 102:1-4, 9-12
Gospel Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Special intentions

Recently Deceased:

Marcelina Espinoza Bacani,
Leanne Bredin

Deceased:

Jeffrey Turner

Anniversary:

Herman De Silva, Gertrude Silva,
Vences Fernando, Britto D'Costa

For the sick:

Mark de Jesus, Laura Z Faelnar,
Elizabeth Newnes, Peter O'Leary,
Jackson Tate, Ernesto Coronel,
Mariano Antonio Jon Villaraza,
Helen Hill, Nigel Reynolds,
Maria Bellia, Edwin Rizon,
Guy Austria, Rosalia Clores

Paying our debt together

Weekly collections

2nd Collection: \$ 5,831.20

Loose \$ 2,338.70

PG Envelopes \$ 1,932.50

PG by EFT \$ 1,560.00

*Pays parish debt and on going running costs,
including wages of staff.*

***Please contribute more on the
Second Collection as this helps the
parish community***

If you would like to be a part of the church's plan giving program, an **SJ23rd form** (white) is available at the church foyer or contact the parish office.



Acknowledgments

So much work goes into the weekly bulletin - thank you to everyone who contributes material, looks after the layout of the bulletin and attends to the printing.

Novena Mass to Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Tuesday nights beginning with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at 6.30pm, Evening Prayer of the Church at 7.00pm, Rosary at 7.15pm, sung Benediction Mass 7.30pm and Novena prayers at 7:40pm.

If you want the opportunity of having the statue visit you in your home contact Bart Sarlabus - bart.sarlabus@gmail.com. Pick up the statue during the novena and return before the novena.

Rosary Statue Family Roster

February 23 Samonte Family

March 8 Agbulos Family

March 22 Houghton Family

April 5 *available onwards*

March 1 Gamboa Family

March 15 Sobrevinas Family

March 29 Torroba Family

Grace & Silence Retreat for Young Women: 27 February

Includes vocation discernment to marriage & family life, single life or consecrated life. Cost \$30 includes morning & afternoon tea, lunch and materials. Mt Schoenstatt, 230 Fairlight Rd, Mulgoa. Registrations: Sr M Julie Brcar ISSM, juliebrcar@gmail.com tel 0408 728334

St Paul's World Pilgrimage Information Afternoon: 28 February

You are invited to an information afternoon with Fr Wim Hoekstra, Parish Priest of St Michael's Parish at Baulkham Hills, who will be escorting this pilgrimage to Greece, Malta and Rome. Leaving 24 September and returning 14 October. The information session will be at 2pm for 2.30pm start in St Patrick's Cathedral Hall, 1 Marist Place, Parramatta.

For more information contact
Fr Wim wkh367@gmail.com

Calling for nominations for diocesan awards

Nominations are now open for three diocesan awards:

1. The Diocesan Medal of Honour

The Diocesan Medal of Honour seeks to encourage and recognise outstanding contribution and service by members of the Parramatta diocesan community in work on behalf of the Church and society. The Diocesan Medal of Honour is awarded for outstanding services to parish, Diocese and community.

2. The Diocesan Citation of Merit for Youth

The Diocesan Citation of Merit for Youth seeks to encourage and recognise youth between the ages of 18 and 25 who have shown outstanding contribution and service to the parish, Diocese and community.

3. The Diocesan Certificate of Recognition

The Diocesan Certificate of Recognition seeks to encourage and recognise outstanding contribution by non-Catholic members of the Diocese of Parramatta community, for work supporting the parish, Diocese and community.

The overview for how to make a nomination and notations are available from Rev Fr Arthur Bridge AM, Chairman of the Diocesan Honours Committee, tel (02) 9631 3316, arthurbridge@arasmusica.org.au

WALKING WITH LOVE

A seminar exploring alternatives and responses to abortion

Registration from 10am
10:30am to 2:30pm
Tuesday 8 March
Lunch provided
Cost: \$25

The Shrine of the Holy Innocents,
8 Greyfriar Place, Kellyville

Suitable for priests, pastoral associates, youth workers, counsellors, chaplains and outreach workers.

Speakers include: Jeanette Reid, a highly experienced pregnancy and abortion grief counsellor for CatholicCare Parramatta, and Ben Smith, Director of the Diocesan Family & Life Office.

Role plays, group discussion, expert training and multimedia resources will also be part of the seminar.



Diocese of Parramatta



CATHOLIC CARE
Social Services

For more information or to RSVP
call 8838 3440 or email familylife@parra.catholic.org.au
www.parramafamilylife.org.au/walkingwithlove



DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA
FAMILY & LIFE OFFICE

For other events please go to

<http://catholicoutlook.org/event/>

Parish Pastoral Council Corner

Prayer and penance are the two wings which lift the soul up and allow it to rise towards God . - St. John XXIII, 23 Feb 1955

COUNCIL MATTERS

- † Next PPC Executive Team meeting will be held on Wednesday, 13 April 2016, from 7:30 pm at the Parish Office Conference Room.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

- † The next **Gardening Working Bee** will be held on Saturday morning, March 12. Volunteers needed.
- † The **Church Basement Cleanup** is being planned for Saturday morning, April 9. Volunteers needed.
- † The **Church Kitchen Cleanup** is also planned for Saturday morning, April 9. Volunteers needed.



LITURGY TEAM

- † Our parish will host the **Deanery's 2nd Rite of Reconciliation** on Tuesday, 22 March from 7:30 pm. There will be no Novena Mass on this night.
- † If you are interested in participating actively in the **Good Friday Stations of the Cross** to be held at Holy Cross School, Glenwood, please contact Bob or Grace Agbulos directly or through the Parish Office.
- † Rehearsals for the Holy Week liturgical celebrations for Acolytes, Altar Servers, Readers and EMCs are tentatively scheduled for Saturdays, 19 March, and 26 March, with Wednesday, 23 March as another possibility. Please check with Bob Agbulos for final schedules and times.
- † The **OFW Liturgical Ministry Formation Courses** for Readers, EMCs, Senior Servers and Acolytes commence on 22 February 2016.

Music Ministry

- † All Choir groups are invited to attend the Music & Liturgy workshop called "Celebrating the Easter Triduum" hosted by the Diocesan Office for Worship on Tuesday, 1 March, from 7–9 pm at Marion St., Blacktown. RSVP to Adelle before 24 Feb. to ofw@ifm.org.au or at 02 9831 4911.
- † Choir Rehearsals for the Holy Week liturgical celebrations are tentatively scheduled for Wednesdays, 16 March and 23 March, with Saturday, 26 March as a third possibility. Please check with Meg Lijauco and Ray Samonte for final schedules and times.

FAITH FORMATION TEAM

- † It is not too late to start or join our parish Lenten discussion groups, so please contact Rose Franco or the Parish Office to enroll yourself or your group. Talk to Rose as well about the limited copies available for the "Cleanse our Hearts with your Mercy" family programme.

Parish Council

- † Fr. Robert Melnick, Rector of the Shrine of the Holy Innocents at Kellyville will be preaching at all masses on the weekend of 20 - 21 Feb (Second Sunday of Lent) on both the Year of Mercy and the Shrine. He has offered to facilitate a reflection day for our parishioners sometime after that weekend and we will provide details on this accordingly.
- † The monthly **Praise & Worship Night** hosted by the SJ23 Prayer Group will resume this month on 20 February after the Vigil Mass. Guest speaker is the Very Rev. Christopher De Souza who will discuss the Formation and Vision of the Diocese of Parramatta.
- † On Friday 4th March to Saturday 5th March, our parish together with the Diocese of Parramatta, will respond to the Pope's call to have "**24 Hours with the Lord**" during the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Everyone is invited to participate in the series of prayers and liturgies that will be held in the Cathedral and at St John XXIII Church for those twenty-four hours. The official Prayer of the Church will be prayed at the appropriate hours, Masses will be celebrated, there will be Adoration and Benediction and, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available. Program to be finalized and announced accordingly.
- † Thanks to those who responded to our call for host families for the Rosary statue for February and March 2016. We are now looking for hosts for our Blessed Mother for April and May.

PASTORAL & SACRAMENTAL TEAM

First Holy Communion

- † Registration for enrolment commenced Monday, 1 February 2016 and will conclude on Friday, 4 March 2016. Enrolment forms are available at the Parish Office, Church foyer and from the parish website.
- † Formal enrolment will be held during the Weekend Masses on Saturday, the 12th of March and Sunday, the 13th of March 2016.
- † The Parents' Meeting will be held at the Church on Wednesday, 16 March 2016 from 7:30 pm.

FUNDRAISING PROGRAMS

- † We officially launch this year's **Parish Annual Fundraising Raffle Draw** this 2nd Sunday of Lent, 21 February. The first prize will be a brand new car and this will be drawn on Sunday, 5 June 2016 coinciding with our Church Dedication 9th Anniversary. Please extend your usual support to this major fundraising effort for our parish.
- † Please continue to support our 2016 World Youth Day pilgrims by buying \$2 tickets to the Diocesan WYD fundraising raffle!

Parish News

ST JOHN 23rd PRESENTS

2016

IGNITE
Enkindling the fire of faith

FEATURING

FR PAUL ROBERTS

ON

GOD'S SPIRIT IN A NON-BELIEVER

SUN
21st
Feb
7:15-9pm

ST MARK'S STAFF ROOM

Ignite is a contemporary young adult's group which meets once a month to explore our spirituality in these modern times. We will be having monthly guest speakers sharing the Catholic teachings on topics relevant to our society.

www.facebook.com/sj23ignite



President

Bart Sarlabus

✉ bart.sarlabus@gmail.com

Council Team Leaders

Community Bldg

Techie Sarlabus

Comms & Media

John McCartney

Faith Formation

Rose Franco

Fundraising

Rodi Orantia

Liturgy

Bob Agbulos

Music

Ray Samonte

Pastoral Care

Jill Franco

Social Justice

Qwayne Guevarra

"24 Hours with the Lord"

When: 4th—5th of March 2016

Starts with the Stations of the Cross

7:30pm - Mass of the Sacred Heart

The official Prayer of the Church will be prayed at the appropriate hours, there will be Adoration and Benediction and, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available. Program to be finalized and announced accordingly.

Where: St John 23rd Parish Church

If you or a family member is homebound and would want to receive communion in your home please contact the parish office.

Our School Communities

Holy Cross Primary

49 Meurants Lane, Glenwood

Principal: Marina Hardy

☎ (02) 9629 8742

✉ olycross@parra.catholic.edu.au

John XXIII and St Mark's College

160 Perfection Ave,

Stanhope Gardens

Principal: Dr Peter Webster

☎ (02) 9852 0500

✉ stmarks@parra.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Learning Centre

160 Perfection Ave,

Stanhope Gardens

☎ (02) 9852 0585

✉ lcstanhope@parra.catholic.edu.au

www.celcstanhope.catholic.edu.au

Why we do what we do.....

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving

The three traditional pillars of Lenten observance are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The key to renewed appropriation of these practices is to see their link to baptismal renewal.

Prayer: More time given to prayer during Lent should draw us closer to the Lord. We might pray especially for the grace to live out our baptismal promises more fully. We might pray for the elect who will be baptized at Easter and support their conversion journey by our prayer. We might pray for all those who will celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation with us during Lent that they will be truly renewed in their baptismal commitment.

Fasting: Fasting is one of the most ancient practices linked to Lent. In fact, the paschal fast predates Lent as we know it. The early Church fasted intensely for two days before the celebration of the Easter Vigil. This fast was later extended and became a 40-day period of fasting leading up to Easter. Vatican II called us to renew the observance of the ancient paschal fast: "...let the paschal fast be kept sacred. Let it be celebrated everywhere on Good Friday and, where possible, prolonged throughout Holy Saturday, so that the joys of the Sunday of the Resurrection may be attained with uplifted and clear mind" (Liturgy, # 110).

Fasting is more than a means of developing self-control. It is often an aid to prayer, as the pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God. The first reading on the Friday after Ash Wednesday points out another important dimension of fasting. The prophet Isaiah insists that fasting without changing our behavior is not pleasing to God. "This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke;

setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own" (Is 58:6-7).

Fasting should be linked to our concern for those who are forced to fast by their poverty, those who suffer from the injustices of our economic and political structures, those who are in need for any reason. Thus fasting, too, is linked to living out our baptismal promises. By our Baptism, we are charged with the responsibility of showing Christ's love to the world, especially to those in need. Fasting can help us realize the suffering that so many people in our world experience every day, and it should lead us to greater efforts to alleviate that suffering. Abstaining from meat traditionally also linked us to the poor, who could seldom afford meat for their meals. It can do the same today if we remember the purpose of abstinence and embrace it as a spiritual link to those whose diets are sparse and simple. That should be the goal we set for ourselves—a sparse and simple meal. Avoiding meat while eating lobster misses the whole point!

Almsgiving: It should be obvious at this point that almsgiving, the third traditional pillar, is linked to our baptismal commitment in the same way. It is a sign of our care for those in need and an expression of our gratitude for all that God has given to us. Works of charity and the promotion of justice are integral elements of the Christian way of life we began when we were baptized.

<http://www.catholic.org/clife/lent/faq.php#n1>

Youth Corner

GTK Youth Group

(Getting to Know)

St John XXIII Parish youth group where our young people get to know God, the Catholic faith and each other through Gospel reflection, music, active participation at mass, games and food!

So, if you are in years 4 - 9, come along to one of our sessions and let us grow together in our faith.

When: 2nd (choir) and 4th Sunday

Where: St Mark's Staff Room

Time: 4:30 - 7:30 pm

Contact: gkyouth@gmail.com

Info: <http://www.gkyouth.com/>

GTK will resume on the 14th Feb 2016

IGNITE

Enkindling the fire of faith

Young adults from 18 - 35 years of age meets every 3rd Sunday of the month after the 6:00pm mass. Monthly guest speaker, discussions & shared supper

CRL

(Community of the Risen Lord)

Praise & worship

When: 2nd & 4th Saturdays

Where: Church

Time: after 6:00pm vigil mass

YFC

(Youth for Christ)

When: Meets every 3rd Sunday

Where: St Mark's Staff Room

Time: 1:00pm for Break open the word

6.00pm Youth Mass

How many words can you form



TRANSFIGURATION

Word Find

This is my chosen Son. Listen to what he says!

Q H M W B L M S D F A S D A Y K A
 R T J J F S L X Q L Y N Q A S V Y
 L D E D S I S U S K L F E U S W U
 H H Q I E E A A K R N W B S D A U
 B Z E Z V N S S O S E V Z R O R D
 H B G O T V E O K K V T Y K B H D
 D X R O N B R T M F A P L Y K Z C
 H K O G N I N I H S E A M E S O N
 R R M M M W J H F G H X H N H N G
 L R S Z B A I Q A F I F R I T S K
 B C X T A U H L N C S R H A H J I
 Z J T G R W X D U O L C F T R V M
 L H Q P T D M A E S K B G N E T M
 U J C L O T H E S R B W T U E E R
 A S V B R E T E P S F Y B O Q S W
 S S X P B L X U H J N C Q M T D A

Find these words

Chosen clothes cloud frightened heavenly Moses mountain
 Peter shelters shining Son three

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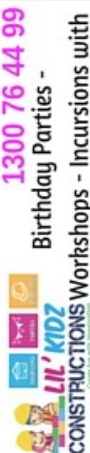


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