



FOR MERCY'S SAKE

the quarterly newsletter of Our Lady of Mercy Church

February 2024

837 Bartlett Road Harborcreek, PA 16421
814-899-5342 • www.ourladyofmercychurch.org
www.facebook.com/ourladyofmercyharborcreek
www.youtube.com/ourladyofmercyharborcreek

THE SEASON OF LENT

ASH WEDNESDAY

Wednesday, February 14
8:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Mass with Distribution of Ashes

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Fridays of Lent
7:00 p.m.

Followed by Visio Divina

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Wednesday Evenings
February 21 & March 20
6:00 p.m.

LENTEN PASTUS

Wednesday Evenings
February 28 & March 6, 13
5:30 p.m. - Mass
6:10 p.m. - Simple Soup Supper
7:00 p.m. - Presentation

LENTEN PENANCE SERVICE

Wednesday, March 20
7:00 p.m.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

March 16 & 17
All Weekend Masses

PILGRIMAGE THROUGH THE SYMBOLS OF HOLY WEEK

Wednesday, March 27
7:00 p.m.

HOLY THURSDAY LITURGY

Thursday, March 28
7:00 p.m.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Friday, March 29
3:00 p.m.

Outdoor Stations
will be prayed at
1:00 p.m.

BLESSING OF FOOD

Saturday, March 30
11:00 a.m.

EASTER VIGIL

Saturday, March 30
8:30 p.m.

EASTER LITURGIES

Sunday, March 31
8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

THE SEASON OF EASTER



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LENTEN PRACTICES 2024



The season of Lent begins this year on Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024 and concludes when the Paschal Triduum of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord begins at the start of the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening, March 28, 2024.

The following practices and regulations are promulgated and binding for all Latin Rite Catholics in the Diocese of Erie for Lent and the Paschal Triduum, 2024.

1. Traditional Lenten practices of PRAYER, FASTING, and ALMSGIVING and other forms of self-denial are recommended most warmly by the Church. Daily Mass is particularly encouraged.
2. ASH WEDNESDAY, ALL FRIDAYS IN LENT, and GOOD FRIDAY are days of abstinence from meat for those 14 years of age and older.
3. ASH WEDNESDAY AND GOOD FRIDAY are also days of **fasting** for those ages 18 to 58 inclusive. *On these days, those bound by the law of fasting may take one full meal. Two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength according to one's needs, are also permitted. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids including milk and fruit juices are allowed. When health or work is seriously affected, the law does not oblige.*



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission
Our synodal journey: discerning the will of the
Holy Spirit as we listen to each other.



Let's Keep The Conversation Going!

Many parishioners from the Diocese of Erie participated in parish-level listening sessions during Phase I of the Synod on Synodality held in the winter of 2021-22. Following the international gathering in Rome last fall, synod organizers now are asking dioceses to cultivate additional dialogue before its planned October 2024 session. The Diocese of Erie is therefore facilitating additional opportunities, open to all, to deepen and broaden their prayerful reflection. Sessions will be held via Zoom in the diocese on **Wednesday, Feb. 28 at 8 pm, Thursday, Feb. 29 at 10 am, and Tuesday, March 5 at 12 pm.** Registration, open to all, is available at <https://forms.office.com/r/47PyuTyARs>. Please see the attached infographic for a quick overview of progress to date. More information about the synodal process and its history in the Diocese of Erie can be found at <https://www.eriercd.org/synod.html>.

OPERATION RICE BOWL



Once again, this Lent, parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy are invited to participate in Operation Rice Bowl.

Operation Rice Bowl is a project sponsored by Catholic Relief Services. CRS is a Catholic developmental organization assisting the poorest and most desperate of our brothers and sisters around the world. Through Operation Rice Bowl, we are given an opportunity to share our abundant blessings with those in need.

Rice Bowl cardboard banks and family calendars were distributed to all of the children enrolled in our Rel. Ed. Program. Additional Rice Bowls and calendars are available for families not connected with Rel. Ed.

The calendars offer excellent suggestions for keeping the needs of others before us during Lent. Information on the causes of hunger and poverty in various regions of the globe are given in a way that is easy for all to understand.

As we give up luxuries such as chocolate or eat a simple meal once a week, we are invited to place the money we save into the Rice Bowl Bank. In this way, our acts of self-sacrifice are not tests of our self-will, but opportunities to help others. The money in each bank is turned in to the Rel. Ed. Office during the Easter season. From there, it is mailed to Catholic Relief Services to help the hungry and homeless, those without access to education or medical care, around the world.



CSA 2024 ONE FAITH ONE FAMILY

As Christ gives Himself to us in the Eucharist out of love, we are called to share His love with others. Each year, the Catholic Services Appeal allows us to join with Catholics from throughout the Diocese of Erie to evangelize, educate, serve, proclaim the Word, celebrate the sacraments, and give hope to people in need. This year, our parish goal is \$70,205.. Our gifts to the CSA are put to work immediately to carry out the work of the Gospel.

The Church serves each of us and our support is essential in continuing God's work in our area. Every CSA donation also brings us closer to being able to complete our own parish project replacing the carpet in the Gathering Space in preparation for celebrating the 25th anniversary of our church building. I ask for your support to share the love of Christ with a gift to the CSA.

Everyone is invited to participate in the appeal as a tangible sign of our unity as One Faith, One Family. No gift is too small, but please give as generously as you can.

Pledge forms can be found in church, on the bulletin tables and in the parish office. Registered parishioners received a pledge card at home as well.

Our gifts, combined with the gifts of all our brothers and sisters throughout our diocese, go a long way in supporting our Church.

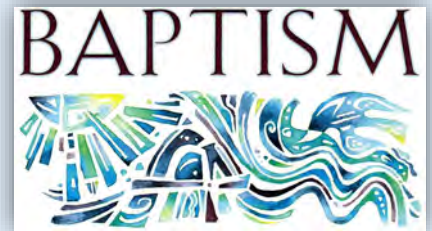
Thank you for your generosity

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION SESSION

Bringing a child to the Sacrament of Baptism is a beautiful privilege and awesome responsibility. In the waters of Baptism, we are welcomed to share in the death and Resurrection of Christ. We become members of the family of God and disciples of Jesus.

In order to prepare parents for their responsibility, the Diocese of Erie asks that they attend a preparation session prior to scheduling their child's baptism. The next session for parents at OLM will be held on **Sunday, March 3 from noon to 2:00.**

If you hoping to celebrate the baptism of a child in the coming months, plan to attend this session. Please register by Thursday, Feb. 29 by calling the parish office at **814-899-5342** or emailing secretary@ourladyofmercychurch.org. It is essential that parents register before attending.



JOINING THE CATHOLIC FAMILY

The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) is a journey of faith designed for those adults seeking baptism or full communion in the Catholic Community. This journey which takes 1 to 3 years, invites participants into a deep relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer, study, ritual, and community. Anyone who would like to learn more about this transforming journey of faith can call the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation **814-899-6132**, email ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org or speak with any member of the parish community.

Because this journey follows a road that is unique to each individual, all questions, doubts and detours are welcome as blessings. God's ways never fail to surprise.

Come and journey with us. Our destination is out of this world! Asking your questions, starting the conversation, stepping onto the path does not obligate you. So, come and learn more.





SATURDAY MARCH 2 12-4 P.M.

St. James Place - 2622 Buffalo Rd.

Tickets sold in the Parish Office

\$20 donation

● 15 Games ● Games of Chance ● Food & Drinks ●

If you would like to leave a donation without purchasing a ticket, please drop them off in the Parish office.

Thank you!

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION DURING LENT



Wednesday February 21 & Wednesday March 20

both beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Because Paschas falls on the same day as our usual Eucharistic Adoration during Lent, we will have adoration on the third Wednesday in February and March.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Our Parish Community will celebrate the **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick** at all **Masses on March 16 & 17**. Jesus spent the greatest amount of his time healing both spiritually and physically. It is said that we spend our time on those things which are most important to us. If this is true, then healing must have been a very important value to Jesus. Our Mission Statement reminds us that we are a community that lives the values of Jesus Christ. Our celebration is not just for the sick. The faith community gathers with them to show their concern for the sick of our community, and to pray with and for the sick of the community.

Who may celebrate this Sacrament?

Those who are suffering any serious physical or mental illness; those who are suffering any chronic illness; those who are about to undergo surgery; the elderly who cannot get around as well as before.



Another Lenten season is about to unfold with its many opportunities to grow as disciples. Wednesday evenings at OLM are a special time of being nourished, in spirit at the Eucharistic Table, in body by homemade soups, in mind through stimulating speakers. Each evening begins with Mass at 5:30. It is followed by a homemade soup supper at 6:10. The night concludes with a presentation at 7:00. The entire evening is free and all are welcome. If the schedule seems daunting, mark your calendar for the topic that interests you, the night that fits your schedule, the aspect of each Wednesday that will give you life. There is no need to attend every week or to be here for the entire 3 hours.

Feb. 14 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Mass

Let us begin this holy season of preparation and conversion joined together around the Eucharistic table and the Word of God.

Feb. 28 5:30 Mass

6:10 Soup Supper

7:00 **American Revelations: Joseph Smith, the Restored Gospel, and the Emergence of Latter-day Religion**

In 1820 a 14-year-old boy, concerned for the welfare of his soul, took James 1:5 to heart and called upon God to ask which, of the bevy of (Protestant) options available to him, was the true church. In response to his fervent prayer, the Father and Son appeared to him and revealed that, while the true church did not currently exist, they had a special plan for him. This plan unfolds when the angel Moroni reveals to Joseph Smith, Jr. the existence of ancient scriptures that Smith would retrieve, translate (over several years via divine revelation), and publish as the Book of Mormon in 1830. By the time of Smith's martyrdom in 1844, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was well established, if consistently harassed by Protestant citizens and the government of the United States. In our time together we'll briefly explore this Christ centered religion and its lived realities made possible by the Restoration of the Gospel. *Dr. Robert von Thaden, Jr. is Professor of Religious Studies at Mercyhurst University who specializes in biblical and other sacred texts.*

March 6 5:30 Mass

6:10 Soup Supper

7:00 **Air, Earth, Water and our Common Home: Pope Francis' vision for a Humane future**

From climatic changes to dying coral reefs, from debates over energy sources to conversations about natural resources, issues connected with the environment are a prominent part of our news cycle. What can our faith add to the dialogue, in particular the most recent Apostolic Exhortation "Laudate Deum"? And what do these global topics mean for a small community on the shores of Lake Erie? *Aaron K. Kerr is executive director of Groundwork Erie, an environmental justice non-profit which employs youth to do conservation work in Erie's urban core. He is the author of two books in the philosophy of education and environmental awareness, Encounters in Thought and Mediations Between Nature and Culture. He and his wife attend Sacred Heart Parish in Erie.*

March 13 5:30 Mass
 6:10 Soup Supper
 7:00

Buddhism Might Be More Familiar Than We Think

This talk addresses the key principles in Buddhist thought, which on one level are profoundly different from Christianity. Upon closer inspection, however, we see points of convergence, above all in the realization selfless and unconditional love. The two traditions arrive at these virtues in very different ways, but they nonetheless share a vision of deep, abiding love for all. *Thomas Forsthoefel is Professor of Religious Studies at Mercyhurst University, specializing in religions of India. Among his publications are a cross-cultural exploration of holiness, Soulsong: Seeking Holiness, Coming Home, and a collection of the writings of the Dalai Lama, of which he served as editor.*

March 20 7:00 PM Parish Penance Service

Lent is a beautiful season to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The prayers and practices of this season help us call to mind our sins and God's forgiveness. As we grow in awareness of our faults, we can bring them to God in a spirit of repentance, open to growth in grace, awaiting the full expression of mercy and love. Communal celebrations of the sacrament of reconciliation remind us that continued conversion is a journey we make together as the Body of Christ.

March 27 7:00 A Holy Pilgrimage Through Holy Week

Pack your bag. Leave your cell phone and day planner behind. Come and join us for a pilgrimage through Holy Week.

SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Lent is a season of renewal, of making new what we hold closest to our hearts. Small faith sharing groups are the perfect way to renew our spiritual lives, to challenge ourselves to live a new our walk with Christ each day.

All are invited to try a Small Christian Community during the season of Lent. There are groups for every schedule: daytime and evening, all female and mixed groups, those that meet weekly and those that meet less frequently.

What is a Small Christian Community? A Small Christian Community is a group of parishioners who meet consistently to reflect together on the Sunday readings. Each gathering begins and ends with prayer. Believing that God's Word is alive and deeply personal, participants allow the Scripture to speak to their hearts. The shared insights of each member helps the others to grow in their understanding of what God is saying. As the members share their

reflections on the biblical passage, they also share their lives, their hopes and dreams, their joys and sorrows and become the hands and voice of Christ to each other.

Anyone interested in trying a small faith sharing group during the Lenten season can contact Irene in the Faith Formation Office at 814-899-6132 or ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org. Trying a small faith group during Lent does not obligate you to continue beyond those 6 weeks if the experience does not speak to you or time to does not allow.

Are you reluctant to join a group that has been together for years? Consider forming a group with your own friends or parishioners you know. We will be training new leaders of Small Christian Communities this month and would love to have you join us. For more information, contact Irene at ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org or 814-899-6132



Save the Date Discover the Woman April 25th

Women In Leadership

All women are invited to be a part of a new movement to help women discover how they can make a difference in the world and grow spirituality and in leadership skills. Outstanding women leaders will present their vision and journey in the upcoming programs.

Reserve the following dates on your calendar:

May 6, May 22, June 3, September 9, and October 22.

Questions may be directed towards. Peggy Williams, Jan Brown, Sharon Kessler, Sue McCreary, Sandi Matts, Teresa Shamburg,

*kind heart
wise mind
brave spirit
bold faith*

OUR LADY OF MERCY WELCOMES SUE BERDIS

Change is known to be hard. Change can be especially hard when it occurs after 20 years. In December of 2023, we experienced that kind of change when our Pastoral Minister of 20 years, Donna Clark, moved on from her time at Our Lady of Mercy. She will be greatly missed by the staff, parishioners and community members; and we are grateful for her ministry to the parish.

We knew we had a big gap to fill in the office. We needed someone who is energetic, pays attention to details, can see the “big picture” when it comes to parish life and has a way with connecting with people.

Our Lady of Mercy is excited to announce that we have found our missing puzzle piece. Her name is Sue Berdis and she is our new Business Administrator. Sue comes to Our Lady of Mercy with 15 years experience in parish work. And her first day in office will be February 12th.

Sue is married to Kevin Berdis for 37 years. Kevin grew up down the road from Our Lady of Mercy and use to come to the church to play basketball with Fr. Sperry (he even celebrated all of his sacraments at Our Lady of Mercy). Sue and Kevin are parents to 5 children. In their spare time they enjoy spending time with their 2 grandsons and are looking forward to welcoming 2 more grandchildren this year (one is due in March and the other in July).

Outside of family time, Sue finds joy in taking walks and spending time in nature.

Sue is especially looking forward to being in such a vibrant parish and getting to know the parishioners.

You can reach Sue by calling the parish office at 814-899-5342 and using extension 213.

Welcome to Our Lady of Mercy, Sue! We are so glad to have you here!

TO SERVE AND TO BE SERVED



The final lesson Jesus gave his disciples prior to his crucifixion was to wash their feet. There is something profoundly powerful in the final thoughts of one facing death. For Jesus, those thoughts were to remind his followers of the centrality of serving others and of allowing others to serve them. It is in these mutual acts of love that the world will know that we belong to Christ. It is in our witness of selfless service and humble acceptance of care that the Gospel is credibly proclaimed.

Lent reminds us of the call to be servant and served. Ministries at Our Lady of Mercy give us opportunities to fulfill Christ's mandate to do as he has done.

In August, we revived our ministry of bringing the Eucharist to the homebound in our parish. Covid had forced us to put a pause on this essential way of caring for one another. The generous gift of time and love over the past few months has allowed Christ to come physically to many who are no longer able to come to Mass on Sunday morning.

Anyone who is willing to serve in this ministry should contact the Faith Formation Office. Ministers can elect to serve a single person or several at the day and time that works best for them. It is a gift and a privilege to be allowed to bring the Body of Christ to those carrying the cross of frail health.

If you or someone you know is unable to attend Mass due to age or illness, please allow your parish family to bring Christ to you. It does not matter if you are homebound due to a short illness or surgery or if age or a chronic condition makes it impossible for you to get to Mass. You need to be nourished by the Eucharist during your time of pain or loss. If you are willing to let us, bring the Eucharist to your home, for a month or for years, please contact the parish. To give someone the chance to be the hands of Christ is the greatest gift you can give.

We need to be nourished in body as well as in spirit. Our Lady of Mercy has always been a parish that spontaneously brought hot meals to neighbors facing illness or grief. Now we are formalizing that care into a ministry of bringing home cooked meals to families during times of need. Anyone willing to be called on when a hot meal is needed should contact the Faith Formation Office to have your name added to the list.

In order to succeed, this new ministry needs two things. It needs volunteers who will cook. And it needs parishioners willing to receive. If you know of a family who needs a hot meal, if your family is facing a time of strain, please contact the parish so that we may feed in Christ's name with Christ's love.

We all know the power of prayer. The Prayer Line is eager to lift up all who need God's caring presence. Sometimes, we need to feel that prayer surrounding us. Prayer shawls are a tangible sign of the comfort that comes from being wrapped in the embrace of a praying community and the arms of a loving God. If you know of anyone who would like a prayer shawl, please contact the Faith Formation Office. There is never any charge.

To wash each other's feet is our calling and our joy. And unless we allow our feet to be washed, we will have no part with Christ. In our time of need, let us serve and be served. And, in our mutual humility, may we proclaim the love of Christ to all. Lent is the perfect season to step into a new ministry. It is also the perfect season to admit our need and open our arms to Christ coming through the hands of another.



Looking for Easter Basket Fillers or like to shop from home?

Gift Cards could be the answer!

One stop shopping AND the Church earns money.

Gift Card Order Form

Our Lady of Mercy earns cash with every gift card purchased.

(2.5% - 14% depending on the gift card)

The cards listed below are those available in the Parish Office or visit the RaiseRight mobile app or RaiseRight.com to see all 750+ brands and available denominations.

3 ways to order:

Stop by the parish office after the weekend Masses or during the week between 9 and 2.

Fill out the form below and drop it off or mail it to OLM 837 Bartlett Rd Harborcreek PA 16421

Contact Pat Marshall: Text (814)440-4890 or email pmm1955.erie@gmail.com

Please make checks payable to: Our Lady of Mercy Church

For questions or more information please call Pat Marshall at 814-440-4890

Denomination Quantity Total Cost

Denomination	Quantity	Total Cost
Amazon	\$25	
Amazon	\$100	
Apple/Itunes	\$25	
Applebees	\$25	
Arby's	\$10	
Barnes & Noble	\$10	
Bath & Body Works	\$10	
Bath & Body Works	\$25	
Bob Evans	\$10	
Bob Evans	\$25	
Buffalo Wild Wings	\$10	
Buffalo Wild Wings	\$25	
Burger King	\$10	
Chipotle	\$10	
Cinnabon-Moes etc	\$25	
Country Fair	\$25	
Country Fair	\$50	
Country Fair	\$100	
Dairy Queen	\$10	
Darden Restaurants	\$25	
Domino's	\$10	
Dunkin'	\$10	
Dunkin'	\$25	
Giant Eagle	\$25	
Giant Eagle	\$50	
Giant Eagle	\$100	

Denomination Quantity Total Cost

Denomination	Quantity	Total Cost
Home Depot	\$25	
Kohl's	\$25	
Michaels	\$25	
Old Navy	\$25	
Outback Steakhouse	\$25	
Outback Steakhouse	\$50	
Panera	\$10	
Panera	\$25	
Pizza Hut	\$10	
Stan's Garden Center	\$25	
Starbucks	\$10	
Starbucks	\$25	
Subway	\$10	
Target	\$10	
Target	\$25	
Target	\$50	
Tim Hortons	\$10	
Total Wine	\$25	
Ulta	\$25	
Walmart	\$25	
Walmart	\$50	
Walmart	\$100	
Wendy's	\$10	

Others found at RaiseRight.com

Denomination	Quantity	Total Cost

Customer Info:

Name: _____
 Phone # _____
 Email: _____

In stock: Total \$ _____ # Cards _____
 Ordered: Total \$ _____ # Cards _____
 Total: \$ _____ Total Cards _____
 Check # _____ Or Cash

Visio Divina

Join together in an
Experience of
Prayer



This Lent, every Friday, after Stations of the Cross
at 7 p.m.

Lunch WITH THE LORD

MENU February 27th
11:30 a.m.

All are invited to come together for a Lunch With the Lord. At table, we will share with each other our journey in faith, our joys and our challenges. A speaker will give witness to her or his experience as a Christian at each lunch, sharing how the Spirit has guided them and how the gift of salvation has influenced them. The gatherings will be ecumenical and open to all.

Harborcreek First Presbyterian
6724 Buffalo Rd.
Harborcreek, PA 16421

Bring your own lunch.
Drinks will be provided.

Presenter will be:
Mary Louise McCullough



Pastoral Planning Prayer

Loving God, author of creation,
your spirit pervades and enriches our world.
Through your Son, who shares our humanity,
you have called us to participate in your divine creativity
and to build the kingdom of God here on earth.
Form us, we pray, as one community
under the leadership of our bishop
to serve all the people of this region in your name.

Inspire us to discover new ways
and structures to spread your Gospel.
Open our eyes to see Christ in others,
especially the poor, the sick and the marginalized.
Empower us to be the hands and feet of Christ
in our parishes and communities.
Help us to welcome all into His embrace.

Guide us in our discernment,
as we pray with Pope Francis
for the vision to see new paths of possibility;
for a spirit of mission that invigorates our every effort;
and for the strength to be unafraid of what is new.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Imprimatur, July 25, 2014
The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico JCL
Bishop of Erie

From



and



Your generous donations of OTC products
were greatly appreciated!

Pilgrimage to the National Eucharistic Congress

**INDIANAPOLIS
JULY 17 - 21, 2024**

with the Diocese of Erie



Participate in this pivotal moment in the Church and draw into a deeper intimacy with our Lord. Join our Diocese by registering today! Scan the QR code or click the Book Now button to attend this historic event.



[BOOK NOW!](#)

**Coordinated by the Erie Diocesan Eucharistic Adoration Committee
(eriedeac@gmail.com)**

