



February 2024 part 2 >>>

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From Our Pastor >>>

Focus – Reflection for Father Peter Patrick

“Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.” Joel 2:13. This verse from prophet Joel, we are going to hear it on Ash Wednesday. This year Lent begin on Valentine’s Day, that’s on Ash Wednesday. Someone said, how can it happen? The name Valentine comes from a Latin word meaning “strength.” It’s so perfect Lent beginning on Valentine’s Day, because we need to be spiritually strengthen and also Jesus is sharing his love with us. Let us make Jesus our Valentine this Lenten season.

Some might think, Ash Wednesday has interrupted the Valentine’s Day. In fact, they are complimentary each other. Lent is a time of conversion. Henri Nouwen says: “That is the great conversion in our life: to recognize and believe that the many unexpected events are not just disturbing interruption of our projects, but the way in which God molds our hearts and prepares us for his return.

“What is your focus this Lenten season? I like sharing my practical experience, that has worked for me, and I know and believe it will also work for you. Picking one vice in your life that you want God to help you to overcome, and praying over it the whole Lenten season, and beyond until next lent, and praying for a virtue to replace it. By our own, we are not able to overcome our weakness or vices. We are called to be sincere with ourselves.

In his following of the Lord, St. Peter was as sincere as he was unpredictable. When he saw Jesus walking on the water, he did not think twice about calling out and asking: “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water” (Mt. 14:28) Jesus said to him “come” When Peter took his focus off the Lord and began to look at the waves and stirring of the wind, he began to sink and filled with fear.

The things around him and about him became more pressing than the Lord, so Peter sank. He lost a share of the glory that was offered in that encounter. In desperation, he cried out: “Lord, save me!” (Mt. 14:30). Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him. Lent is time to regain the encounter we had with Jesus on our baptism, when our sins were washed away. Let us during this Lenten season focus on our interior, that’s our spiritual brokenness, and ask Jesus without shame to heal, and save us as he did to Peter. Repent and believe in the Gospel. Have a blessed Lenten season. Encounter Jesus in his mercy through the sacrament of reconciliation. I invite you to ask yourself what matters. What are the essentials you need to focus on? What are things of value that you need to discern? These could be questions to take to daily prayers. “Seven days without prayer makes one weak.”

Message from the Archbishop >>>

January 23, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This week, champions of the pro-life movement offered Mass, personal prayers, and witness to the continuing battle for the soul of the United States. I offer my gratitude to all who have written letters, protested, voted for pro-life candidates, participated in prayer services, made trips to Washington, D.C., and gave voice to the silent unborn seeking to have the opportunity to live. They faced marginalization and alienation from members of the secular community and sometimes even among the ecclesial communities, in the post *Roe v. Wade* (1973) era.

It is amazing to me that a year and a half after the overturning of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, there are those in our society who are still upset that the killing of a human being has been denied. Many who claimed to be enlightened on the subject of the care of individuals in our society seem to conveniently forget the child in the womb. It is no wonder that as a society, we are confused as hospitals struggle to save the life of a newborn when, just across the street, a clinic can quickly extinguish a life.

I am confronted with many who claim a strict adherence to the social teachings of the Church. The Church has a proud tradition in the defense of “human dignity” in the rights of the worker, in the necessity for education, against the evils of poverty, and in the pursuit of peace. Yet there is at times a “blind eye” for many when it comes to the very first right that precedes all others: the right to life. If this right is not secured, then all other rights are in danger.

One of the major reasons why the Church is so vociferous in its defense of human life is that all human beings are created *imago Dei* — in the image of God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2258) teaches: “Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being.”

I have come to note that the attack on life is a direct attack on God Himself. In the ideologies of our modern world, it is important that individuals no longer see God as the ultimate authority in their lives. For the Nazis, Jews were less than human; for the communists, the state dictated how many children one could have and even forced abortions; now for the radical secularist, God is an obstacle which stands in the way of personal freedom and economic convenience. Pro-lifers are not only defending the child in the womb, but God Himself.

There are many issues still confronting proponents of life. The protection of life in every state, frozen embryos suspended in a scientific limbo, manipulation of DNA, euthanasia, and others. The ultimate weapon that pro-lifers have is an abiding trust in God and we will do so through prayer, knowing that God will use us as an instrument of His glory and presence.

The Father sent His Son into the world to sacrifice Himself out of love for us. We follow Jesus who is the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE. No one comes to the Father except through the Son.

We joyfully stand with our Lord, taking up His cross and standing up for life. As Christ loves us, so we also LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Sincerely,
Most Reverend Jerome E. ListECKi

Rosebud Blessing Bouquet>>>

St. Sebastian is introducing a new ministry that offers prayer and support during the joys, challenges, and sorrows of family life. This ministry helps the church identify, pray for, and support those who are pregnant, celebrating birth or adoption, grieving miscarriage, stillbirth, abortion, infant or child loss, the anticipation of becoming pregnant or adopting, as well as addressing grandparent or parents' concerns during troubled times.

A basket of silk roses and a vase will be placed on the table near Mary's side altar. All are invited to choose a rosebud from the basket that coordinates with your specific prayer request. Those requesting prayers are welcome to fill out an information tag, although this is not required, and affix it to the rosebud of your choosing. Say a silent prayer for your special intention and place the rosebud in the vase. Rest assured that the church is dedicated to praying for the intentions associated with each rosebud.

Roses will be available starting February 11. For any questions or if you wish to join the prayer team, please contact Judy Ballard or Tina Davis.



Community Activities >>>

February Fish Fry

The next fish fry at St. Sebs is Friday February 2nd- Groundhog Day. Dine in or carryout available.

If you would like to volunteer for Thursday prep or Friday set up, dinner service, or clean up, please reach out to Liz Martin or Katie Sanfelippo.

High school students who need service hours for school are welcome to volunteer as well.

Weekly fish fry during Lent will begin in the middle of this month.

- 2/16- Carryout only
- 2/23- Carryout only
- 3/1-Dine in and Carryout
- 3/8- Carryout only
- 3/15- Carryout only
- 3/22- Carryout only
- 3/29- Carryout only

Moms Group February Happenings

We are thrilled to thank our outgoing co-leader Chelsea Duffy and welcome our new co-leader Emily Briggs. Thank you, Chelsea for your service and Emily for taking the reins!

This month, moms of all ages and stages (including expecting and hoping to be expecting) are invited to a presentation led by the Friends of Life parish group introducing the new Rosebud Ministry. This ministry helps the parish pray for and support families at many different milestones. We'll meet on **Sunday, February 4 at 7pm** in the Multipurpose Room.

The Moms Group is also looking for two more volunteers to host a soup and bread delivery as part of our group's silent auction basket donation. For example, the March volunteer might make and deliver beef stew and Irish soda bread.

If you'd like to be added to the dedicated Moms Group email list or have questions about the above, please reach out to co-leaders Emily Briggs (ecbriggs712@gmail.com) and Maggie Shelledy McAsey (shelledym@gmail.com).

Please continue to read the bulletin; it's available online or if you would like to have it mailed to you, contact the parish office at 414-453-1061.