

The Roman Catholic Parishes of  
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher  
St. James the Apostle, Irwin  
Sacred Heart, Goodrich

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 29-30, 2025

BEHOLD  
new things have come.  
And all this is from  
GOD  
who has reconciled us  
to himself through  
JESUS CHRIST  
and given us the  
ministry of reconciliation,  
entrusting to us  
the message of  
reconciliation

So we are  
ambassadors for  
JESUS  
CHRIST



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Weekend Masses:

St. Margaret Mary Sat. 5:00 pm Sun. 10:30 am  
Sacred Heart Sun. 7:30 am  
St. James Sun 9:00 am

Confessions:

St. Margaret Mary Sat. 4:15 pm  
Sacred Heart Sun. 7:05-7:20 am  
St. James Sun 8:35-8:50 am

Church Mailing Address: 207 E. 5th Street Herscher, IL 60941 Phone: 815-426-2550

Quotable: "One of the qualities of a leader is mercy."

Fifth Sunday of Lent				April 5-6, 2025
Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, April 5 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, April 6 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, April 6 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, April 6 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron Neitzke Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron Neitzke Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron Neitzke Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron Neitzke Deacon Ron
Ushers	Dan Hoffman Dave Emling Roger Jensen Gery Wright	Dennis Pankey James Mallaney	Dallas Ferris Jerry Ogrentz Dave Ladehoff Cathy Jensen	Sean Riordan Brent Fulton Erik Wheeler Corinn Wheeler
Lector	Hillary Webb	Darlene Cipcich	Kelly Buente	Diane Long
Eucharistic Minister				
Servers				Caroline Fulton
Greeters			Greeter—Donna Bernicky R. Leader—Rita Thiesen	Julie Splear

### Mass Intentions for the Week

#### Monday, March 31 (SMM)

8:00 am +Donna Ruder (Kathy Jepsen)

#### Tuesday, April 1 (SH)

8:00 am +Leland Denault (Don St. Germaine)

#### Wednesday, April 2 (SJ)

8:00 am (SJ) Special intention of Rita Thiesen

#### Friday, April 4 First Friday (SJ)

8:00 am +Bill O'Connor (Craig/Pam Walker)

#### Saturday, April 5 (SMM)

5:00 pm +Tom Buckley (Jerome, Martha, Jason Schneider Families)

#### Sunday, April 6

7:30 am (SH) +Tom Buckley (Peaches Turner)

+Elsie Dumas (Gertrude Brigham)

9:00am (SJ) +Stephen Jensen (Bruce/Cathy Jensen)

+Carl Coy (Steve/Dena Coy)

10:30 am (SMM) All The Parish Family

### A Look Ahead

March 29/30—2nd Collection for Catholic Relief Services

Friday, April 4—First Friday at SJ

Thursday, April 10- Night in Italy—SMM

Thursday, April 24—SH Spring Luncheon

Saturday, April 26—First Communion at SMM

Saturday, May 3—First Communion at SJ

Pastor— Fr. Ron Neitzke- 815-426-2550

Deacon – Ron Gagnon— rjgckg@aol.com

Home—815-933-4077

Parish Email – smm\_sja\_sh@yahoo.com

TriParish web page – [www.triparishcatholics.org](http://www.triparishcatholics.org)

Like us on Facebook triparishcatholic communities

Tri Parish Church office –Barb Riker 426-2550

Julie Bisailon 426-2550

Bulletin – Debbie Jensen - 426-2550

debjen04@gmail.com

Religious Education –

St. MM – Jill Fulton [jfulton.stmm@gmail.com](mailto:jfulton.stmm@gmail.com)

Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015

St. James—Tanhya Osenga [tosenga81@gmail.com](mailto:tosenga81@gmail.com)

Parish Nurse – Jackie Eberle – 815-421-4048

Prayer Line—

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 [Jdstreefarms@aol.com](mailto:Jdstreefarms@aol.com)

St. James— Mary Offerman—602-670-8888 (call or text)

Sacred Heart-Marilyn Pfeiffer 815-955-8246 (call or text)

Terri Weakley— 815-514-8171

### Question of the Week

How can I be merciful like the father in this parable? What resentments do I need to overcome? Can I be truly forgiving to someone who has hurt me or those I love?

## Collections Weekend of March 15-16, 2025

St. Margaret Mary—\$1,701

St. James—\$1,676

Sacred Heart—\$1,454

Thank you for your generosity!

## LENTEN STATIONS OF THE CROSS SERVICES

Wed. April 2nd 7PM Scriptural Stations of the Cross SJ

Friday, April 4th Stations of the Cross 3:00 SJ

Wed. April 9th, 7PM Scriptural Stations of the Cross SMM

Friday, April 11th Stations of the Cross 3:00 SMM

\*Please note, when Stations are held at SMM plan on being here 10-15 minutes early to avoid school traffic.

## Holy Week Schedule

Sunday, Apr. 13—Palm Sunday— regular weekend masses

Mon., Apr. 14—Seven Last Words—7:00 PM (SMM)

Tues., Apr. 15—Confession—7:00 PM (SJ)

Wed., Apr. 16—Tenebrae—7:00 PM (SJ)

Thurs., Apr. 17—Mass of the Last Supper—7:00PM (SMM)

Fri., Apr. 18—Stations of the Cross—3:00 PM (SJ)

Fri., Apr. 18—Liturgy of the Passion—7:00 PM (SJ)

Sat., Apr. 19—Blessing of Easter Baskets—Noon (SH)

Sat., Apr. 19—Easter Vigil—7:00 PM (SH)

Sun., Apr. 20—Easter Sunday—Regular Sunday Mass schedule



## Gospel Shorts

### God Also Loves Older Brothers Questions for Heaven

What a contrast in attitudes between the father and the elder brother when the prodigal son returns home! Nobody likes the elder brother, but we all have a lot of him in us. He had forgotten how to believe in miracles, taken his father's love for granted, and become estranged from the one to whom he devoted his life.

How accepting are we of those who return to the Lord? Are our lives dependent on self-righteousness or God's righteousness? Every day we write our own ending to Jesus' most famous story.



Our Tri-Parish community is seeking individuals who would be interested in serving as eucharistic ministers for our homebound. This is a beautiful opportunity to share God's love and bring connection to those who cannot join us in person. We do have one minister who is serving those in Herscher. There is a need for rural ministers as well. We currently have several individuals who would be so grateful to be able to partake in Communion each week. Please call the church office at 815-426-2550 if interested or have questions. Thank you!

## Parish News:

### St. Margaret Mary-

- ⇒ We will be collecting non perishable food for Herscher Council of Churches spring food baskets (Easter Baskets). Please place in the bin at the back of the church.
- ⇒ Ladies, please join us in the kitchen after mass on Sunday, April 6 to make our delicious spaghetti sauce for our A Night in Italy event on April 10.
- ⇒ Congratulations to Jill Fulton, St Margaret Mary's CCW Woman of the Year!
- ⇒ Please watch for details on the Night In Italy 2025. It will be held on Thursday, April 10th. Sign up sheet for volunteers and food donations in back of the church.

### St. James

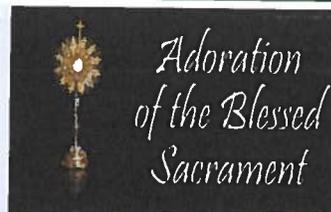
- ⇒ Our Lenten Project will be the Food Pantry of Kankakee. Items will be collected starting March 5.

### Sacred Heart-

- ⇒ The week of March 30th, the Blessed Virgin Mary candle burns for the special intentions of Jackie Cross as she celebrates her 90th birthday
- ⇒ Sacred Heart's CCW is preparing for their annual Spring Luncheon that will be at St. James Hall April 24th at 11am. We are now selling cash raffle tickets, accepting completed baskets for the basket raffle & door prizes. The poster is on the bulletin board at the entrance to the church to sign up for food donations. Your generosity is always appreciated.

### All Parishes—

- ⇒ Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.
- ⇒ Call the parish office to request your statement of donations to the parish for 2024.



## Adoration

First Friday adoration will be held on Friday, April 4 at St. James Church. Stations of the Cross at 3 pm

"Every consecrated host is made to burn itself up with love in a human heart."  
-St. John Vianney



**Obscure saint of the week: St. John Climacus (March 30)** was a well-educated youth who came to adulthood in an intellectual environment. Later he became a monk on Mount Sinai at age 16. From there he went on to become a hermit in various places in the Arabian Desert. John was selected to be the abbot at Mount Sinai at age 75. Just before his death he resigned his position to return to his solitary life. He was an ascetical writer whose works have for 15 centuries influenced those seeking the holy life.

**Other obscure saint of the week: Julio Alvarez Mendoza (March 30)** was ordained in 1894. Father Julio worked his entire ministry at Mechoacanejo, Jalisco, Mexico. He visited the area ranches, going to people who would not come to the church. He had a great devotion to the Eucharist. When the Church was suppressed by the state, he conducted Mass on farms and baptized in mountain streams. Julio was arrested on March 26, 1927, for the crime of priesthood. He was tied to a saddle and dragged several days to Leon where General Amaro sentenced him to death. He was a martyr.



### The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

By this time a lot of men and women of doubtful reputation were hanging around Jesus, listening intently. The Pharisees and religion scholars were not pleased, not at all pleased. They growled, "He takes in sinners and eats meals with them, treating them like old friends." Their grumbling triggered this story.

"There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me.'

"So the father divided the property between them. It wasn't long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any.

"That brought him to his senses. He said, 'All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I'm going back to my father. I'll say to him, Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.' He got right up and went home to his father.

"When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: 'Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son ever again.'

"But the father wasn't listening. He was calling to the servants, 'Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We're going to feast! We're going to have a wonderful time! My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!' And they began to have a wonderful time.

"All this time his older son was out in the field. When the day's work was done he came in. As he approached the house, he heard the music and dancing. Calling over one of the houseboys, he asked what was going on. He told him, 'Your brother came home. Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef! —because he has him home safe and sound.'

"The older brother stalked off in an angry sulk and refused to join in. His father came out and tried to talk to him, but he wouldn't listen. The son said, 'Look how many years I've stayed here serving you, never giving you one moment of grief, but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money on whores shows up and you go all out with a feast!'

"His father said, 'Son, you don't understand. You're with me all the time, and everything that is mine is yours—but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. This brother of yours was dead, and he's alive! He was lost, and he's found!' " (from Luke 15).

**SPIRITUALITY**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Luke 15:18

I will get up and go to my Father and shall say to him:  
 Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

**Gospel** Luke 15:1-3, 11-32; L33C

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So to them Jesus addressed this parable:

"A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.'

So the father divided the property between them.

After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.

When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need.

So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine.

And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any.

Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger.

I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him,  
 "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

*Continued in Appendix A, p. 275.*

*Year A readings may be used, see Appendix A, pp. 276-277.*

**Reflecting on the Gospel**

One often hears of bitter disputes among siblings when it comes time to divide up the inheritance left by their parents. The parable Jesus tells begins on a shocking note—the younger brother demands his share before the father is even dead! The older brother stands there mute as the father, without a word of protest, gives each son his share. The elder brother's objections come later,



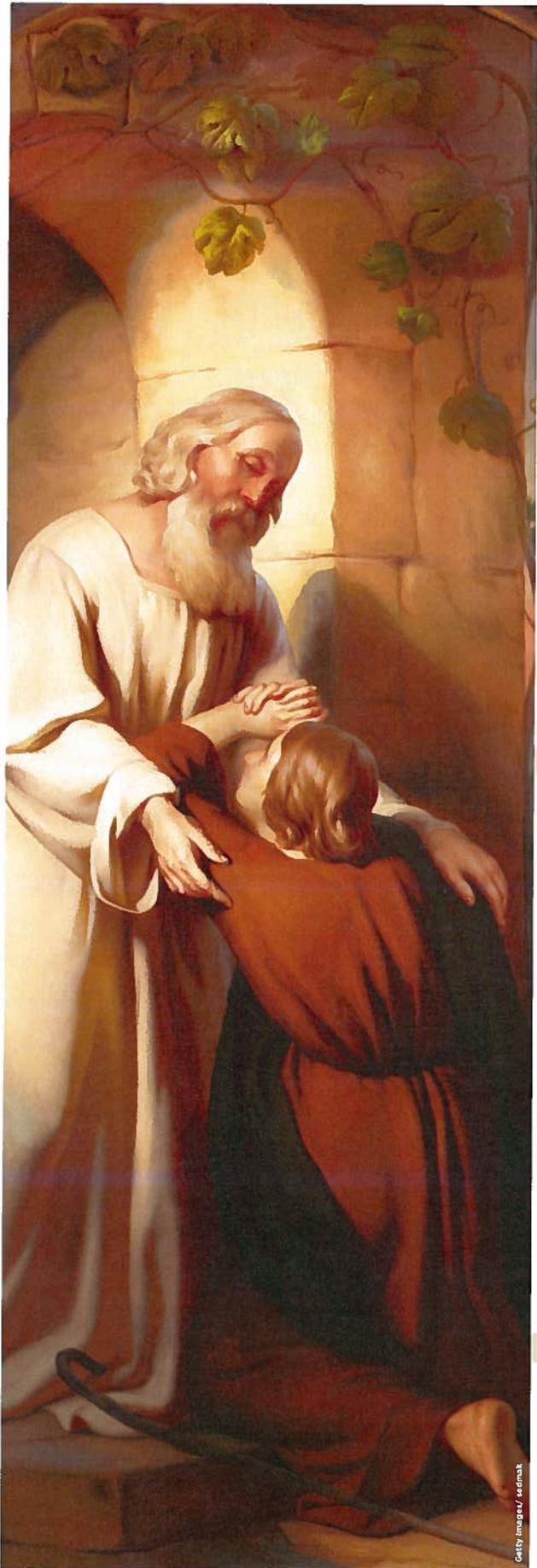
when his brother returns home and the former fears his own portion will be jeopardized. Both sons display a sense of entitlement. They've calculated what they have coming to them, and they are making sure they collect all of it. There is a considerable amount of inheritance involved. This is not a poor family. They have cattle and means to put on a feast. The father has a fine robe, sandals, and a ring to put on his son.

When the father hands over his considerable wealth to his sons, one would think they would be happy. But both end up miserable. The younger one squanders everything, while the older one hoards it all, not spending even a little bit to entertain his friends. Both complain about what they have not been given. The younger son, after using up

all he had inherited, lowers his sights and would be satisfied with the slop fed to the swine, "but nobody gave him any." The elder son complains bitterly to his father. "You never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends." This accusation is puzzling, when the son has already been given his share of everything the father has. It is equally surprising that the father, instead of angrily dismissing his son's baseless accusations, responds with a renewed invitation to joy, and a reminder: "everything I have is yours"—already! But something has died in both sons. Their greed and jealousy have blinded them to the overflowing abundance that is theirs.

The younger son has come back to life. He has hit rock bottom, believes he no longer deserves to be called "son," and acknowledges the wrong he has done his father and the whole community. What has brought him back to life is not his own coming to his senses and his own efforts to return to the source of his heritage. Rather, it is the father's unflinching love, as he seeks him out and flings open his arms, wrapping him in a mantle of forgiveness, that resurrects in him the response of love and joy and gratitude, along with the sure knowledge that all is given freely and totally. This heritage cannot be earned, and it is never depleted, even by our most egregious misuses.

As a figure of the divine, the father offers a gift of reconciliation that shatters the too-narrow vision of children vying for a bigger piece of the pie, when all along the whole of the inheritance is offered to each and all, with no bounds. This gift begins a process of healing that expands our puny estimation of our inheritance and opens our capacity to be transformed by the Giver, enlarging our capacity to pass on that heritage to others.



March 30, 2025

## Fourth Sunday of Lent

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

Jos 5:9a, 10-12 | 2 Cor 5:17-21 | Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

### **GROW AS A DISCIPLE** | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

We await with anticipation holidays and holiday parties – but do we look forward to the day after? To the cleanup, the back-to-the-grind, the business-as-usual? Jesus' parable in today's Gospel recounts the lavish celebration of the father who rejoices at the homecoming of his wayward son. We rightly recognize in the father's mercy the abundant forgiveness of our heavenly Father. But have we ever considered what happened the next day? The son, accustomed to his independence and dissolute life, is once again in his father's house. He must live according to his father's rules and demonstrate the sincerity of his repentance by faithfully carrying out his duties. There is work to be done – crops to be harvested, perhaps. As the weeks and months pass without another fatted calf for feasting, the son might ask if his father's love has waned. And although we may sympathize with his unease, the certainty of his father's goodness must be, for the prodigal son and for us, the guarantee of his steadfast love.

### **GO** EVANGELIZE

#### **PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT**

In our relationship with God, we will likely experience moments when our Father's love is keenly felt. Perhaps we will be overwhelmed with peace when we return to him in the sacrament of confession. Perhaps we will be struck by a verse of Scripture during a moment of prayer. But most of our days will look more like the prodigal son's "day after" than the festivities which marked his return. We know, however, that if the weeks that followed were comparatively boring, his father's love had lost none of its warmth or vitality. Similarly, in the days when God seems quiet, when our prayers seem to drift into space or our hearts are distracted with the concerns of everyday life, we must not despair of the Father's love. Nor can we suppose that our happiness can be found outside of his fold. We abide under the care of our Father who lovingly calls us to himself with every circumstance he places before us. To believe this, even when the festivities are over, is to live by faith.

### **PRAY**

With so many opportunities for gratification at our fingertips, it is easy to become restless and to seek happiness in distractions. This week, find an image of Jesus or a Scripture verse about God's love and keep it with you as you work, study, or carry out monotonous tasks. When you're tempted to leave your duties aside out of boredom, take a moment instead to praise and thank God for his love.



You are cordially invited

Están cordialmente invitado

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

Click button below or scan QR code to register



**TRADE OUR SUBSCRIPTION**

Haga clic en el botón de abajo o escanee el código QR para registrarse



You are cordially invited to the Diocese of Joliet

**Jubilee Mass for Persons with disabilities**  
**June 1, 2025**  
**12:30 p.m.**

**Cathedral of St. Raymond**  
**604 N. Raynor Ave.**  
**Joliet, Illinois**

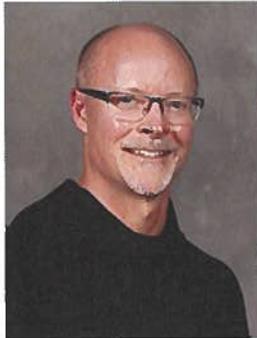
The Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Ronald Hicks, refreshments and fellowship to follow. Those with disabilities, and their caregivers, will receive a special blessing.

**Plan Today for Peace of Mind Tomorrow**

It's difficult to think about, but pre-planning your Catholic cemetery arrangements today protects your family from the heartbreak and financial worry of having to make these decisions tomorrow. Look for special savings in your mailbox soon and visit [diojoliet.org/cemeteries](http://diojoliet.org/cemeteries) for more details. *We're here to help!*

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**MONDAY, MARCH 31 THRU WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup> SAINT JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH BRADLEY, IL.**



Our mission at our Parish Church (designated as a Pilgrimage Church for the Diocese by Bishop Hicks) is available to anyone interested with an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation available each evening (of the Mission) beginning at 6pm until just prior to our 7pm mission presentation which is being given by Father Adrian Burke OSB. His parish mission topic will be **We (the church) as: "Pilgrims of Hope"**.

**Reflections**

Most people know that Lent is 40 days long, but they think that the 40 days are the six weeks plus the four days of the week of Ash Wednesday (which totals 46 days) minus six Sundays, which equals 40 days.

But Lent does not end on Holy Saturday; it ends on Holy Thursday evening. Lent brings us to the Triduum, not to Easter Sunday. (The whole of the Triduum is celebrated as a three-day season unto itself and not as the final three days of Lent.) The span from Ash Wednesday until Holy Thursday is 44 days. The "forty" now are calculated thus:

From the time of the Fathers, the 40 days of Lent were counted from the First Sunday of Lent until Holy Thursday. We have kept this practice to the present time.

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**Note: change of location to St. James Parish Hall.**

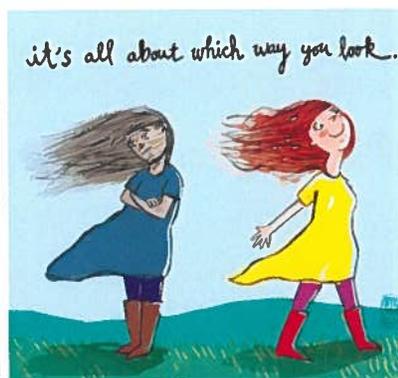
**Lenten Fish Frys in Dwight**

St. Patrick's and the Knights of Columbus will again be having their Annual Lenten Fish Frys at St. Patrick's Hall in Dwight. April 4, and April 11 5pm-7pm

The price includes your choice of baked cod, fried pollock and breaded shrimp. Also available—grilled cheese sandwich and mac & cheese (new). Your choice of sides is baked potato, French fries, Cole slaw, apple sauce and rolls, beverage and a dessert, while they last.

Take out orders are available for the same price. You can call ahead at 815-584-3110

No price increase from last year!  
 Adults / High School - \$13.00



## Questions Catholics Ask

### Do we have to abstain from eating meat on Fridays during Lent?

As early as the 2nd century, the Didache notes the practice of abstaining from meat on *all Fridays of the year* as a penitential observance recalling the crucifixion. There is no corresponding insistence on eating fish. It was Pope Nicholas I (9th c.) who made this practice binding under pain of mortal sin—and not because his family owned a fish market, as is sometimes suggested. Pope Innocent III (12th c.) made an exception for when Christmas falls on a Friday. Thomas Aquinas considered meat, milk, and eggs all foods that incite desire. Fasting and abstinence were meant to bridle "the concupiscences of the flesh, which regard pleasures of touch in connection with food and sex." Vegans might find incidental common cause with this doctor of the church.



The practice of abstinence from meat is intended as a penitential practice.

It wasn't until 1966 that Pope Paul VI advised local church officials to modify the abstinence rule as they saw fit. That same year, U.S. Bishops issued the *Pastoral Statement On Penance And Abstinence* allowing a substitution of some other form of penance in place of abstinence on all Fridays except for those that occur in Lent. However, persons in good health between the ages of 14 and 59 must abstain from meat (and items made with meat) on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and lenten Fridays.

Some bishops or pastors make exceptions for St. Patrick's and/or St. Joseph's Day when they fall on lenten Fridays. In 2012, the U.S. bishops reconsidered reinstating abstinence for all Fridays of the year, but preferred to make it optional to abstain on Friday for the intentions of life, marriage, and religious liberty. In 2010 the bishop of New Orleans reclassified alligator as a non-meat item on the menu.

The practice of abstinence from meat is intended as a penitential practice. Obviously, if you're wild about fish, that may not be the best substitution with which to observe the sacrifice. While fish, lobster and other shellfish are not categorized as meat and can be consumed without violating abstinence, indulging in a seafood buffet isn't in the spirit of a penitential act.

—Alice Camille

Scripture: Pss. 69:11; 109:24; Isa 58:3-12; Dan 9:3; Joel 2:12-17; Neh 1:4; 9:1; Tobit 12:8; Judith 4:13; Esther 4:3; 9:31; Matt 6:16-18; 9:14-15; Lk 2:37;

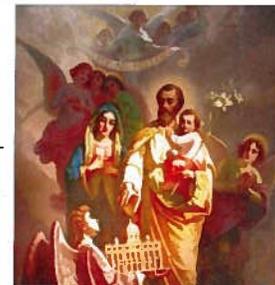
### Catholic Snacks, Get Fed

What is the chaplet of St. Joseph

Draw closer to St. Joseph through this powerful devotion

"What could Jesus Christ refuse St. Joseph, who never refused him anything during His mortal life on earth?" — St. Augustine

Although Scripture records none of St. Joseph's words, the stories it relates of his life actually reveal a great deal. From Scripture, we know that he was a carpenter of the line of King David. We also know that he was the foster father of Jesus and the earthly spouse of Mary, the Mother of God.



We can see that St. Joseph was a righteous man who demonstrated the virtues of compassion, courage, faith, and love of Jesus and Mary, to name a few.

St. Joseph said "yes" to God by adopting Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, as his own Child. Joseph's "yes" is very similar to the "yes" of Mary: just as it demonstrated her humility and obedience, so it also demonstrates his.

In our own lives, we are also called to give Our Lord our own "yes." However, this act of obedience can prove difficult. When we find ourselves struggling to give Jesus our "yes," we can turn to St. Joseph in prayer. He will help us grow in obedience, even when it's hard!

The Chaplet of St. Joseph is one of the most powerful ways to pray to St. Joseph. Here is how to pray it:

**The chaplet contains 15 groups of four beads** consisting of one white and three colored beads. The white bead represents St. Joseph's purity, and the colored bead (normally blue or purple) symbolizes his piety.

For each of the 15 white beads, we meditate on a Mystery of the Holy Rosary, while a special prayer is recited on each colored bead:

**"Praise and blessed be Jesus, Mary, and Joseph."**

**The chaplet concludes with an invocation to St. Joseph and a closing prayer.**

Throughout March, the Church honors St. Joseph. This month, renew your devotion to him by praying the Chaplet of St. Joseph. -reprinted with permission The Catholic Company [www.thecatholiccompany.com](http://www.thecatholiccompany.com)