



MONTHLY BULLETIN

March 2025

At Home with the Lord

If you feel a bit gloomy at the sight of Ash Wednesday on the calendar (March 5 this year), behold the day of salvation! As Saint Paul advised first-century Corinthians, accept God's grace. Paul set forth "now" as the acceptable time.

Now that almost two millennia have passed, we know that Paul didn't somehow get the date of salvation wrong. Instead, we acknowledge that, no matter what may befall us, faith can save the day.

Preparing for Salvation

Back in 2019, cameras captured images of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris as firefighters focused on saving the church. People around the world watched on that Lenten day, hoping that more than ashes and heavy stone would remain.

Here's the thing: Parisian

Circle the Date

firefighters had trained in advance in case they got called to any of the city's historic churches filled with centuries-old wood and fragile



Fr. Mark Payne
Chaplain

stained-glass windows. For us, Lent provides a time to train our hearts on preparation for the day when Jesus comes again, desiring to find us ready.

Beyond the Ashes

In a full-page cover photo, the newspaper *La Croix* (*The Cross*) showed the spire of Notre-Dame falling, with billowing smoke

in its place. Part of the roof collapsed next.

Although the somber headline declared, "The Heart in Ashes," thoughts already turned to the hope-filled work ahead.

Grime to Glory

Before the cathedral blaze, everyday grime had accumulated from dust, burning candles, and human traffic. Fire restoration work gloriously brightened paintings, sculpture, and stained glass. During Lent, we contemplate the spiritual cleansing received at Baptism. Where we have since become lackluster, we do some repentant work.

Five-plus years after the fire, the Archbishop of Paris knocked on the cathedral door with a crozier (shepherd's staff) made from charred wood, and Notre-Dame's doors reopened! Now comes our time to enter into Lent with an open heart.

Daylight Saving Time Begins on March 9, 2025

To wake up on time for Sunday TV Mass on March 9, set your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed on Saturday night.



Lent: A Time of Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving



Can you make a special offering this month?

“I often send in prayer requests for my husband, and we just received notification that he is in remission. Thank God and all those who pray at Heart of the Nation.”

– Ann



“I really appreciate your having Mass online. I haven’t been able to donate to help you, but I will as soon as I can.”

– Carol

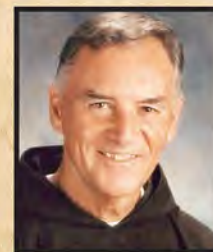


“Very beautiful Mass today. Father’s homily was thought-provoking.”

– Jim

Inspiring Blueprint

Home improvements range from repair to remodeling to adding a room. Back in 17th-century Amsterdam, adding onto one of the tall, narrow houses along crowded canal frontage required building at the back. So it happened with a dwelling known to this day as “Our Lord in the Attic.”



**Fr. Tony Scannell
Chaplain**

Challenges to beliefs and authority of the Catholic Church led to offshoot denominations. Although law in the Netherlands allowed freedom of conscience, only Protestants could worship openly.

In the canal home of a Catholic merchant named Jan Hartman, upper floors directly connected the front house and two annexes. He had plenty of room for family, the flow of goods in his business, and, above all, a hidden church.

In the Father’s House

At age 12, Jesus went with Mary and Joseph to the Passover festival in Jerusalem. Staying behind without telling His parents led to a frantic search. They finally found

Him conversing with teachers in the Temple, a building under reconstruction but still a house of His Father.

With faith, we look for the Lord. He backs us, behind us all the way! We come to church, ready to learn and build from there.

What to Bring

Newly chosen as an Apostle, Matthew hosted a great banquet at his house. Pharisees and scribes asked why Jesus ate with sinners.

Later, the Lord told His parable of a prodigal son who turned from his sinful ways. Returning to his father’s estate to seek help and forgiveness, he found love and celebration.

Jesus has invited us to envision a heavenly banquet. There, every

repentant sinner gets joyfully celebrated.

Places to Pray

In Amsterdam, the attic church has a ceiling lofty enough to accommodate its galleries and room for 150 people. Viewed from the waterfront, no one would guess at the place inside to give glory to God.

Like Holy Mass in a hidden church or prayer in a deserted place, good works without fanfare get noticed in heaven. In contrast to showy Pharisees, the Lord modeled humility.

Instructing the disciples about prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in secret, Jesus gave us a blueprint. Lent gives us time to do some spiritual remodeling before Easter.

Give and Receive

Jesus encouraged His disciples to quietly give alms, fast, and pray, knowing that the heavenly Father sees and rewards every offering. When you give to Heart of the Nation this Lent, your generosity will help to provide TV Mass, free publications, and prayer cards that enable homebound Catholics to experience the spiritual comfort of belonging to a community of faith. Please take a moment to donate or pledge any amount that you can.



Prayer for a Meaningful Lent

Lord Jesus, I believe that You do not abandon me, even when, through sin, I turn away. For the many times I've failed to go and sin no more, in sorrow and yet in hope, I pray. Please help me sort out what hinders blessings and grace given, for You know my faults and fears and needs. May struggles that I bear and Lenten sacrifices made set me straight on the way Your love leads. Amen.



Quiz Time: Lent Q & A

1. What rules apply on days of fasting and abstinence, health permitting?

Fasting: From midnight at the end of a person's 18th birthday, through midnight at the end of the 59th birthday, fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Fasting allows three meals, but two small meals together should amount to less than the full one. Liquids are allowed anytime.

Abstinence: Starting at midnight at the end of the 14th birthday, Catholics do not eat meat or poultry on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays of Lent. (On other Fridays of the year, you may choose a penance more meaningful for you.)

2. When does Lent begin and end this year?

Liturgically, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, **March 5**, and ends right before the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, **April 17, 2025**. Whatever you give up or do as a personal Lenten observance traditionally ends right before the Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday, **April 19, 2025**.

3. Does the Catholic Church require personal Lenten observances?

Canon (Church) law requires Catholics to do penance in their own ways and to abide by the rules for Ash Wednesday and Fridays. In keeping with Lent as a penitential **time of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving**, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has explained that Catholics are called to practice self-discipline throughout the Lenten season.

4. Do Catholics skip their individually chosen penitential practices on Sundays?

Canonically, Lent and all Fridays of the year are penitential times. Nevertheless, Catholics may skip individually chosen observances on Sundays in recognition of joy in the Resurrection celebrated every Sunday year-round.

Jubilee Year: March Focus

Every 25 years, the Catholic Church worldwide celebrates an Ordinary Jubilee—a Holy Year of forgiveness, indulgences, reconciliation, pilgrimage, conversion, and commitment to serving God. “Pilgrims of Hope,” the theme for this year’s Jubilee, evokes a faith journey. Like a road with many signs along the way, the 2025 Jubilee has days of focus each month.



March 8-9: Volunteers

March 28-29: “24 Hours for the Lord”

March 28-30: Missionaries of Mercy



Volunteerism follows the Lord’s way of freely giving of Himself. Consider making March 8-9 days when you might offer a hand, a listening ear, or prayer for volunteers. On March 28-29, please pray for participants in “24 Hours for the Lord” events at churches open for prayer, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Eucharistic Adoration, day and night, for 24 hours.

Did You Know?

During the 2015 Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, Pope Francis commissioned more than 1,000 priests to serve as Missionaries of Mercy, giving them authority to hear Sacramental Confessions worldwide and lift excommunications. The ministry continues, as does a wider missionary call among the Baptized to pray, engage in good works, and witness to our loving and merciful God.



MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday, March 2, 2025
Eighth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Wednesday, March 5, 2025
Ash Wednesday
(no Mass obligation)


Sunday, March 9, 2025
First Sunday of Lent
(Daylight Saving Time begins)

Sunday, March 16, 2025
Second Sunday of Lent

Sunday, March 23, 2025
Third Sunday of Lent


Sunday, March 30, 2025
Fourth Sunday of Lent

Online Mass available all day
at www.HeartoftheNation.org
every Sunday and Holy Day



Prayer & Worship Guide

Seven issues yearly provide readings and prayers for Sunday TV Mass, plus reflections, where to find daily readings in the Bible, and seasonal prayers. **For a free subscription**, please send the recipient’s name and address to Heart of the Nation.



Thank You!

Through monthly donations, Circle of the Heart members steadfastly share spiritual comfort and hope. Heart of the Nation gratefully includes Circle of the Heart donors in perpetual prayers placed before the altar for every Sunday TV Mass. To join, please mark the box on your donation reply card, and indicate the amount of your pledge.



Heart of the Nation.
CATHOLIC MASS

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