



# Blessed Sacrament Parish & Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

PARISH NEWSLETTER

## READYING OUR HEARTS FOR THE TRIDUUM *How We Can Celebrate the Very Heart of Our Catholic Faith*

As Catholics, every time we gather for Mass, we celebrate the very heart of our faith — the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Eucharist, we are drawn into the one saving mystery of Christ, made present again and again. The Sacred Triduum — Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil — slows this mystery down, allowing us to walk step by step through those parts of Jesus’s life.

Msgr. Jim Buerster looks forward, as he does every year, to celebrating the Triduum Masses — the high point of the Catholic faith.

“The Triduum, it’s the high point of all our liturgies — of what we’re about as Catholics,” he says. “I always have the eighth-grade Confirmation kids take a very active role in the Triduum Masses.”

Holy Thursday is the celebration of the institution



of the priesthood, the Eucharist, and the washing of feet. Fr. Jim also incorporates a handwashing routine for the entire parish, led by the eighth-graders. He loves to find ways to integrate young people in the Triduum Masses —

including having children carry a life-size cross. They dress the cross after the veneration.

Two candidates will be welcomed into the Catholic Church at Queen of Peace during the Easter Vigil. Eighth-graders assist by lighting the candles as the fire from outside is brought into the church. Though the Easter Vigil is lengthy, it is a profoundly beautiful and unmatched celebration of the faith — truly a Mass unlike any other.

“We have one person entering the Church because her granddaughter wants her to be her Confirmation sponsor in the future,” Fr. Jim says. “It’s really a beautiful story.”

Although Holy Thursday and Good Friday aren’t Holy

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# *Palm Sunday:* *A Gateway to Holy Week and Stewardship*

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**P**alm Sunday, which marks the beginning of Holy Week in the Catholic Church, is a day of profound significance. It commemorates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, where crowds waved palm branches and shouted "Hosanna!" as a sign of honor and recognition. While Palm Sunday itself is not directly about stewardship, it holds deep connections to the concept of stewardship and its importance in the Church.

The waving of palm branches by the people of Jerusalem symbolizes the act of giving. The crowd willingly offered their palm branches as a sign of their reverence and respect for Jesus, acknowledging Him as the King who came in the name of the Lord. This act of giving is a reminder of the sacrificial nature of stewardship — the sharing of our time, talents, and treasure in a manner that reflects our commitment to Christ and the well-being of our faith community.

**STEWARDSHIP OF TIME:** Palm Sunday offers a unique opportunity to reflect on the stewardship of time. In the Catholic faith, time is considered a gift from God, and how it is spent is a reflection of one's stewardship. Just as the crowds in Jerusalem took time to greet Jesus and honor Him, Catholics are encouraged to dedicate their time to acts of worship, service, and reflection. The choice to participate in the liturgical events of Holy Week, including the Palm Sunday procession and Mass, demonstrates a commitment to stewarding time for spiritual growth and communal engagement.



**STEWARDSHIP OF TALENT:** The crowd's enthusiastic shout of "Hosanna!" on Palm Sunday represents the stewardship of talent. Talents and abilities are God-given gifts, and the crowd's proclamation can be seen as a public expression of their talents used to honor Jesus. Similarly, stewardship encourages individuals to use their unique talents and skills for the betterment of their faith community. Whether through musical talents, organizational skills, or other abilities, we are called to contribute our talents to the service of the Church and its mission.

**STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE:** Although the people of Jerusalem did not offer treasure in the form of money, the concept of giving one's possessions and financial resources is inherent in the act of hospitality and support shown to Jesus. This spirit of generosity and giving is deeply connected to the stewardship of treasure, which encourages Catholics to support the Church financially. The financial contributions made by parishioners enable the Church to carry out its mission, support those in need, and maintain the resources necessary for worship and community service.

Seen in this light, Palm Sunday serves as a meaningful gateway into Holy Week, and it holds significant connections to the concept of stewardship. The act of giving and sacrifice demonstrated by the crowds in Jerusalem reflects the principles of stewardship that are central to the Catholic faith. As Catholics wave their own symbolic "palm branches" through the stewardship of time, talent, and treasure, they acknowledge that Jesus is Lord in their lives and the importance of supporting the Church and their faith community. By connecting Palm Sunday to stewardship, we are reminded of the call to emulate Christ's sacrificial love and the willingness to give generously for the greater glory of God.



A LETTER FROM OUR PARISHES' ADMINISTRATOR

## APPROACHING LENT WITH THE HEART OF A STEWARD

Dear Parishioners,

**A**s we continue our journey through the season of Lent, a time of reflection, penance, and spiritual growth, I would like to remind you of the importance of examining our stewardship commitments of time, talent, and treasure. This period is not just about giving up certain luxuries, but also about deepening our faith, renewing our commitment to God, and serving others with a generous heart.

**TIME:** Time is a precious gift from God, and how we use it reflects our priorities and values. During Lent, it is essential to allocate more time to prayer, reflection, and service. Consider setting aside moments for daily prayer and Scripture reading. Attend Mass regularly and engage in devotional practices that help you draw closer to God. Additionally, volunteer your time to help those in need within our community. Acts of charity and service are a meaningful way to spend your time during this season.

**TALENT:** Each one of us possesses unique talents and abilities bestowed upon us by God. Lent is a perfect time to reflect on how we can use our talents to further God's kingdom. Consider sharing your talents with the parish and the broader community. Whether it's through participating in ministries, leading prayer groups, or offering your skills to those in need, your talents can be a source of blessing to others and an



expression of your commitment to God.

**TREASURE:** The stewardship of our material resources is a vital aspect of our faith. During Lent, take a closer look at your financial commitments and how you can align them with your faith. Consider increasing your financial support to the parish and charitable organizations that serve those in need. Sacrificing a portion of your financial resources during Lent can be an act of solidarity with the less fortunate and a way to live out the spirit of almsgiving.

Above all, I remind you to embrace a more profound connection with Christ during this holy season. Use this time to reflect on the significance of Lent

and how your stewardship can be a living expression of your faith and love for God.

May this Lenten season be a time of spiritual growth and transformation, as we examine and strengthen our stewardship commitments in the spirit of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. May we draw closer to God and one another, as we journey towards the joy of Easter.

Peace,

Fr. Jim Buerster  
Parish Administrator

## LENTEN FISH FRYS BRING COMMUNITY TO



*A dedicated team of fish fryers — dubbed the “Cod Fathers” — provides the delicious fried fish at our Queen of Peace fish fry. They have also developed original recipes for some of the menu items. Several are alumni of Queen of Peace School.*



*Nearly 20 parishioners volunteer to make a variety of desserts for the Queen of Peace fish fry.*



*Hungry diners line up at least an hour before the fish fry opens. Not only do our parishioners support the dinners, but members of our wider community do as well.*

The menu matters — from the fried cod to the homemade sides and desserts. The volunteers matter, too, from the cooks in the kitchen to the teens bussing tables.

But for Co-Chairs Eric Edgar and Jodi Edgar Reinhardt, the heart of the Queen of Peace Lenten Fish Frys is something deeper: bringing the parish and the wider community together around a shared table for good food, warm conversation, and genuine fellowship.

Eric and Jodi are longtime fish fry veterans. They grew up helping their mother, Jeanne, who ran the parish fish frys for 11 years beginning in the 1980s. Today, the siblings serve as equal partners. Eric oversees the food and kitchen volunteers, while Jodi manages event volunteers and handles marketing and public relations.

There are three fish frys scheduled during Lent this year. The first was held on Feb. 18, Ash Wednesday. Upcoming events will take place Friday, March 6, and Friday, March 27, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Queen of Peace Parish Center. Meals are available for both dine-in and carryout.

The menu offers something for everyone, including fried cod, peel-and-eat shrimp, fish tacos, and Raider Salad. Sides include hushpuppies, coleslaw, and macaroni and cheese — all homemade using recipes Eric and his team developed. Other sides include French fries and potato salad. A group of 30 volunteers provides homemade desserts.

Eric restarted the fish frys in 2022 after a hiatus, and Jodi soon joined him in the effort.

“When we started, I got three to four guys together,” Eric says. “We all worked in restaurants, and we wanted to do things differently. All the food would be homemade.”

Today, in addition to the 60 volunteers who help set up and run the events under Jodi’s leadership, Eric leads a team of 25 cooks known as the “Cod Fathers.”

“They are a special crew, and they’re all about the community,” he says.

“We want to serve a really good meal at an



## TOGETHER FOR GREAT MEALS AND FELLOWSHIP

affordable cost,” Jodi adds. “We serve between 800 and 900 people at each Lenten fish fry.”

Stewardship is the engine behind the fish fries, both during Lent and at two additional events held in the fall. Parishioners generously donate their time and talents, raising between \$22,000 and \$23,000 per year. Proceeds support needs throughout the parish and Queen of Peace School.

“I have kids in fourth and fifth grade coming up to ask, ‘Can I clean tables? Can I serve as a runner?’” Jodi says. “Volunteers range from older parishioners who donate desserts to people who come simply to support the fish fries by sharing a meal. It has given people of all ages a chance to give back in a meaningful way.”

“Out of the 25 Cod Fathers, there are 10 alumni of our school,” Eric adds. “They are all giving back.”

That spirit of hospitality — one of the four pillars of parish stewardship — became especially visible when the fish fries resumed.

“One of the big things we said after the first year was that so much of the fish fries was about our parish and families coming together,” Eric says. “It was a great way to bring the community and the parish back together. It had been a while since we were able to do that. We became a community again.”

“We were coming off the pandemic,” Jodi adds. “People were eager to get back together. It is a lot of work, but there is a lot of love.”

*Anyone interested in volunteering on the food side may contact Eric Edgar at 618-691-9261. To volunteer for general duties, contact Jodi Edgar Reinhardt at 618-806-3384.*

## READYING OUR HEARTS FOR THE TRIDUUM

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Days of Obligation, Fr. Jim encourages us all to attend.

“We grow in our faith by participating, because these liturgies are the roots of who we are,” he says. “For 2,000 years, we’ve been celebrating them. We already come to church with faith — it’s not something we suddenly gain while we’re there. These liturgies renew, nourish, and reaffirm the faith we already have.”

As we continue through Lent, if you’ve fallen behind in meeting your Lenten commitment, it’s never too late to start over.

“That’s what our Christian faith is all about — God never gives up on us,” Fr. Jim says. “Lent is for those entering the Church and for those already in it. When we fall short, we begin again. Tomorrow is another day. Each day we say, ‘Lord, help me give it my best today.

Help me be faithful, as you are faithful to me.”

As we approach Easter, recommit to fasting and readying yourself for Easter. It’s not too late to deepen your faith. Each day offers us opportunities to learn more. Consider how you might be part of this year’s Triduum celebrations!

***“We already come to church with faith — it’s not something we suddenly gain while we’re there. These liturgies renew, nourish, and reaffirm the faith we already have.” — Msgr. Jim Buerster***

## A HISTORICAL LOOK AT OUR LENTEN PRACTICES AND TRADITIONS

When the Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, we enter into a time of preparation, sacrifice, and penance, culminating in Holy Week and the joyous celebrations of Easter. And while the liturgical season of Lent offers us a time for solemn reflection, it is also widely welcomed each year as an opportunity to be drawn ever closer to our faith.

But just how did this penitential season come to be? And how did the reverent hallmarks of Lent — such as fasting and prayer — become so deeply ingrained in our observance of this season?

To understand the Lenten season, it is important to understand the word “Lent” itself, which is derived from two Anglo-Saxon terms: *lencten*, meaning “spring,” and *lenctentid*, which is the term for both “springtide” and “March” — of course, Lent often falls throughout most of March, and during the transition into (and renewal of) the spring season. In Latin, the corresponding term for “Lent,” *quadragesima*, refers to its dating from the 40th day before Easter.

This brings us to another hallmark of the Lenten season — its length of 40 days. However, Lent was not originally observed for this length of time. During the first three centuries of the Christian era, Easter preparations consisted of three days of fasting and prayer. In some places, this preparation was extended into the entire week before Easter — which we now observe as Holy Week. There is also some evidence that, in Rome, Easter preparation was as long as three weeks.

In its early form, Lent was an intense period of spiritual and liturgical preparation for catechumens who were to be baptized at Easter. At the time, many members of the community observed this period of preparation alongside the catechumens. But, as time passed and more people were baptized as infants, the connection between catechumens and Lenten preparation gave way to a focus on the themes of repentance

and fasting during Lent for all Christians.

It was not until the fourth century — upon the legalization of Christianity — that Lent developed into its current length of 40 days, which mirrored the length of Jesus’ fast and temptation, as chronicled in Luke 4:1-13.

Yet, interestingly, the Lenten observations of fasting and prayer did not always take place for 40 consecutive days. For instance, in Jerusalem, fasting was observed for 40 days, Monday through Friday, but not on Saturday or Sunday — thus, Lent lasted for a total of eight weeks. In Rome and the West, fasting took place for six weeks, Monday through Saturday, with Lent being observed over six weeks. The practice of fasting for six days over six weeks eventually prevailed, with Ash Wednesday being instituted to account for 40 fasting days before Easter.

And as the length of Lenten observance developed over time, so did the observance of fasting itself. At first, some areas of the Church abstained from all meat and animal products, while others made exceptions for certain foods, like fish. And while a person was to only have one meal a day, a smaller repast would be allowed so that manual laborers could maintain their strength throughout the day. Eventually, eating meat was allowed throughout the week, save for Ash Wednesday and on Fridays.

In fact, two of our most common and beloved Lenten and Easter traditions — the Shrove Tuesday meal and Easter eggs — developed from these early Lenten observations. Initially, abstinence from dairy products was observed during Lent, with dispensations given if pious works had taken place. Eventually, this particular rule of abstinence was relaxed entirely. Today, pre-Lenten pancake breakfasts, Easter egg decoration, and egg hunts remain as enjoyable seasonal opportunities for fellowship and fun within our parish families!



# THE PRAYER CHAIN MINISTRY

## *A Community of Stewards Engaged Fully in Prayer*

The power of a single prayer is an unseen force. A network of prayers is even more powerful — that's why we have a Prayer Chain Ministry in our parish. Marian Meyer currently coordinates the Prayer Chain Ministry, but her first encounter with the ministry was as a recipient.

"Ten years ago, I was sick," Marian says. "The prayers from the Prayer Chain helped me, and that's how I got involved. The person in charge had to quit because of health reasons about five years ago. She asked if I would take over."

Marian coordinated the ministry since. The process starts with a need.

"People call the parish office, and they contact me," Marian says. "Sometimes people call me directly or somebody else on the prayer chain, and they let me know, 'So-and-so needs prayers.' So, it's more or less word of mouth. I call about six people. Most of them have two to three people they call. It branches out. There are approximately 20 people total. Some people don't call anybody — they just pray. Some people text."

The word gets out across the Prayer Chain, and those prayer requests are met. Some are outside the parish as well.

"Sometimes people on the prayer chain move away and go to a senior center or another parish, and they still want to be involved," Marian says.

There are no requirements to be a part of the Prayer Chain Ministry — you must simply be willing to pray for others. The requests range from health concerns to job needs.

"The biggest request is for better health," Marian says. "At certain times, it's for jobs."

The ministry members pray in good faith, often not knowing of any results.

"People get healthier," Marian says. "I personally was on that list, and I was definitely ill, and I got better. Different ones, they found jobs. A lot of times, we don't hear anything about it. You just pray for them and hope for the best. People don't always contact you back and say, 'Hey, thank you for the prayers — my health is 100-percent better' or anything like that."

But for the group members, it's not about receiving



*Marian Meyer, coordinator of the Prayer Chain Ministry*

recognition or thanks. It's about stewardship with faith in prayer and caring for your community.

"It shows your community how we care for each other," Marian says. "It just makes me feel good to know I'm praying for people who need my prayers. I feel like I'm helping out in a small way. It's showing people that we care and how important prayer is."

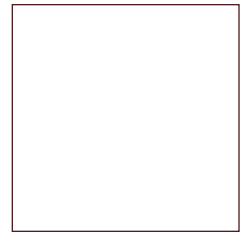
God hears the prayers of His people and answers in His wisdom.

"God answers our prayers — not always the way you want — but He's always answering our prayers one way or another," Marian says.

The members of the Prayer Chain will continue to pray in good faith, calling on the Lord hopefully.

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# Blessed Sacrament Parish & Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish



8707 West Main Street,  
Belleville, IL 62223  
(618) 397-2287  
bellevillecatholic.com



## MASS TIMES:

### Tuesday:

8:15 a.m. – Blessed Sacrament

### Wednesday:

8:15 a.m. – Our Lady Queen of Peace

### Thursday:

8:15 a.m. – Our Lady Queen of Peace

### Friday:

8:15 a.m. – Blessed Sacrament

### Saturday:

4:30 p.m. – Blessed Sacrament

### Sunday:

10:00 a.m. – Our Lady Queen of Peace

## THE PRAYER CHAIN MINISTRY

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“It’s just it makes me feel good to know that I’m praying for somebody else,” Marian says. “You’re not just thinking about yourself — you’re thinking of others. I use prayers for healing I found on the internet, from different prayer groups, or from the Laudate app. I found prayers specific to health that I have.”

All are welcome to join the Prayer Chain Ministry or to make prayer requests.

“The more prayers you get, the better,” Marian says. “So, if anybody would like to do the ministry, just let us know, and we’ll get you on the Prayer Chain. It makes me feel good to know that I’m helping in a small way, sending those prayers up to God, asking for help.

“Prayer is important,” she adds. “When I took a computer class, when I taught at St. Augustine’s, the computer teacher said, ‘Save and save often.’ My thing is to pray and pray often.”

*To get involved or to request prayers, contact Marian Meyer at 618-277-8155 or [mkm611@charter.net](mailto:mkm611@charter.net), or call the parish office at 618-397-2287.*