



HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH
National Catholic Church
15 THAYER STREET
SOUTH DEERFIELD, MA 01373

Rev. Fr. Robert M. Koerber, Pastor
Parish Phone: (413) 665-2129
Parish email: koerber702@comcast.net
Emergency Contact: (413) 530-8575
Website: holynamesouthdeerfield.org
FB: Holy Name of Jesus, South Deerfield



TODAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026
ASH WEDNESDAY

- 9:00 am** – Holy Mass of the Eucharist with the blessing and distribution of ashes to the faithful.
- 12:00 pm** – Eastern Diocese “call to prayer.”
- 7:00 pm** – Holy Mass of the Eucharist with the distribution of ashes to the faithful.

ENTRANCE HYMN
(Wisdom 11:23-24)

- V. You Lord, have mercy on all; because You can do all things; and You overlook the sins of men that they may repent.**
- R. For you love all things that are and loath nothing that you have made; for what You hated, You would not have fashioned.**
- V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,**
- R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

OPENING PRAYER

- V. The Lord be with you.**
- R. And also with you.**
- V. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, You created us; You love us, and You know our frailties. In this season of penance purify our motives for all that**

we do and deepen our reliance on You. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.



LITURGY OF THE WORD OF GOD

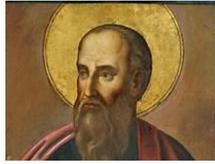
THE FIRST READING IS TAKEN FROM THE BOOK OF JOEL THE PROPHET (Joel 2:12-18)

Even now, says the LORD, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and with mourning: Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the LORD, your God. For gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment. Perhaps he will again relent and leave behind him a blessing, Offerings and libations for the LORD, your God. Blow the trumpet in Zion! proclaim a fast, call an assembly; Gather the people, notify the congregation; Assemble the elders, gather the children and the infants at the breast; Let the bridegroom quit his room and the bride her chamber. Between the porch and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep, And say, “Spare, O LORD, your people, and make not your heritage a reproach, with the nations ruling over them! Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’ Then the LORD was stirred to concern for his land and took pity on his people.

- V. This is the Word of the Lord.**
- R. Thanks be to God.**

GRADUAL
(Psalm 57:1-3)

- V. Have pity on me, O God; have pity on me, for in You I take refuge. In the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge, till harm pass by.**
- R. I call to God the most High, to God, my benefactor. May He send from heaven and save me.**



**THE SECOND READING IS TAKEN FROM THE
2nd LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS
(2 Corinthians 1:18-22)**

Brothers and sisters: We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Working together, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says: *In an acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.* Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

V. This is the Word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

**TRACT
(Psalm 79:8-9)**

V. Remember not against us the iniquities of the past; May Your compassion quickly come to us, for we are brought very low.
R. Help us, O God, our Savior, because of the glory of Your name; deliver us and pardon our sins for Your name sake.



**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST.
MATTHEW
(Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18)**

V. The Lord be with you.
R. And also with you.
V. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew
R. Glory be to You, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their

reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. "When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. "When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you."

V. This is the Gospel of the Lord.
R. Praise be to You, Lord Jesus Christ.



**OFFERTORY VERSE
(Psalm 32:5b)**

V. I said, "I confess my faults to the Lord," and You took away the guilt of my sin.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Most holy God, You are beyond our comprehension, Your justice condemns us before You; Your mercy seeks to reconcile us to You. Accept these gifts as a sign that we belong to You and return them to us as a sign of our pardon. We ask through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Let us Pray: Most loving Jesus, I adore You in the Most Blessed Sacrament, in which You are truly present. I love You above all things and I long for You in my soul. Since I cannot receive You sacramentally, I ask You to come spiritually into my heart and heal my soul. I embrace You and unite myself with You; may I never be separated from You. In flame my heart with the fire of Your love, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

COMMUNION VERSE

(Psalm 103:10)

V. Not according to our sins does He deal with us,
nor does He requite us according to our crimes.

CLOSING PRAYER

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

V. Let us pray. Almighty Father, as we begin this Great Lent, You have nourished us with the True Bread that comes down from heaven. May we realize the peace and freedom that Your salvation offers us. We ask this in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.



“For this reason, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of truth listens to Me.” - John 18:37

On this Ash Wednesday, we begin 40 days of Lent and are reminded of two very important things. The first message is found in the OT, in the words of the Prophet Joel: “Thus says the Lord: Turn unto Me with your heart and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning. And rend your heart and not your garments and turn unto the Lord your God”. The second important message is heard in the words spoken by the priest as we receive the blessed ashes on our foreheads: “Remember man that you are dust and unto dust you shall return, but your soul shall return unto God”.

References of ashes are found in both the Old and New Testaments. In the OT, sitting upon ashes or heaping ashes upon oneself was a personal act of grieving and mourning, symbolizing one separated from God. In the Book of Ezekiel 27:30 we read of the distress and utter sadness of the people over the lost of their city Tyre: “And they will make their voices heard over you and will cry bitterly. They will cast dust on their heads, and they will wallow in ashes”. In the New Testament, we hear the words of Jesus in Matthew 12:21 over the unrepentant cities of

Chorazin and Bethsaida: “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you Bethsaida. For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes”.

In the second century, the great Church father, Tertullian, speaks of the use of “ashes” which became a regular ceremony of public confession and penance. We also read that those who were excommunicated from the Church would sprinkle ashes upon their heads outside the church asking that the prayers of those entering would be heard by God and that they might again be brought into the Church and be in Communion of God. Ashes were also used to represented things that were easily scattered, perishable and therefore considered worthless. “Remember man that you are dust and unto dust you shall return, but that your soul shall return unto God”. We read in Genesis 2:7: “Then the Lord God formed man out of the dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul”. We see in this scripture passage the two natures of man; the physical body and the spiritual soul. St Paul speaks in 1st Corinthians of the importance of these two natures: one which is perishable and the other which is imperishable. “Now I say this, brethren that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. The perishable must put on the imperishable and this mortal must put on immortality” The reality is that one day we will all die. We will then either be buried or cremated and if cremated our ashes will be placed in an urn, which is then placed to rest in a consecrated cemetery, or for some these ashes will return to what some have called “Mother earth.” The other reality is that of the imperishable, the soul of man, which was made in the image and likeness of the Creator? It is in our faith that the soul, which is imperishable, returns back unto Our Father who created us. Sadly, there is so many in our society who live only in the physical world without thought of the unseen spiritual world or even consider their own spiritual nature. Lent is a time to revisit our divinity.

My dear brothers and sisters: Let each of us consider the significance of the ashes placed on our foreheads and pause for a moment to reflect on what Lent means to you and what you would like to

accomplish in these next 40 days. Lent is a time in which we are called upon by the Church to become more somber in the thinking of our relationship with God as proclaimed by the Good News and the sacrifice of His Beloved Son, Jesus As Christians, we are called upon during this season of Lent, to consider and apply the three pillars of Lent – Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving into our daily living. To establish through prayer, a personal dialogue with God; to reflect in the study the Word of God. To fast from the excesses of our daily living and to become more generous through our almsgiving to help those who are less fortunate. The season of Lent is a time where we approach God as a penitent and as a sinner and recall the words of the Master: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and yet lose his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?” Amen.

PENITENTIAL SERVICES DURING LENT

Please Note: on **Fridays**, during the season of Lent, our Parish will hold Lenten Penitential services. “**Stations of the Cross,**” which will be celebrated at 12:00 Noon and again at 7:00 PM. All parishioners are called upon to attend if possible.



THE THREE GREAT PILLARS OF LENT

To truly benefit from this season of Lent, one must make a serious, personal, and humble commitment to walk these 40 days of Lent with their Lord, placing the emphasis on self-examination, seeking forgiveness as well as spiritual renewal.

The success of this Lenten period cannot take place without prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Just as a temple need supports to exist, so does every true follower of Jesus at Lent needs all three of these pillars to be a complete spiritual temple “unto the Lord,” for each pillar is dependent upon the other.

PRAYER

In the Catechism of the PNC Church, we teach that prayer is the “lifting up of our minds and hearts to God. It is our talking with God and listening to God..” Throughout Holy Scripture, we are reminded of the importance and the benefits of prayer.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God speaks to Solomon: “If my people who are called by My name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

In the Sermon of the Mount, as found in the Gospel of Matthew 6:5-8, Our blessed Lord sets a standard for prayer: “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room, and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

FASTING

The early Church Father Tertullian (c. 160 – c. 220 AD)) wrote concerning fasting: “Fasting possesses great power. If practiced with the right intention, it makes one a friend of God.”

In Matthew 6:16-18, Jesus gives insight into proper fasting: “And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

ALMSGIVING

Again, in Matthew 6:2-4, Jesus speaks on the importance of almsgiving:

Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Through the power of prayer, the practice of fasting and the outpouring of almsgiving, we truly set our minds and hearts in following our Lord during this season of Lent and will be rewarded by the grace of God.



RELECTIONS OF WALKING WITH GOD

“To walk out of His will is to walk into nowhere.”

- C.S. Lewis

“Only by walking with God can we hope to find a path that leads to life. This is what it means to be a disciple. After all, are we not called upon to follow Christ? Then by all means, let’s actually, follow Him. Not ideals about Him. Not just His principles but in Him.”

- John Eldredge

“If I walk with the world, I can’t walk with God.”

- Dwight L. Moody

“God’s mighty power comes when God’s people learn to walk with God.”

- Jack Hyles

“As you walk through the valley of the unknown, you will find the footsteps of Jesus in front of you and besides you.”

- Charles Stanley

“Most of all, God has blessed us the privilege of knowing Him and walking with Him every day. He did this by sending His Son into the world to die for our sins.”

- Billy Graham

What does the Bible say about

“Walking with the Lord?”

The idea of “walking with the Lord” is best described in the Old Testament, in the 23rd Psalm, The Shepherd Psalm.” A portion of it reads:

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters; He restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.”

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

Throughout the pages of the Old Testament, we read also the following:

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

- Psalm 119:105

“Observe the commands of the LORD your God by walking in His ways and by fearing Him.”

- Deuteronomy 8:6

“As for you, if you faithfully follow Me as David your father did, obeying all my commands, decrees, and regulations, then I will establish the throne of your dynasty. For I made this covenant with your father, David, when I said, ‘One of your descendants will always rule over Israel.’”

- 2 Chronicles 7:17-18

“So that you might walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and be fully pleasing to Him as you bear fruit while doing all kinds of good things and growing in the full knowledge of God. You are being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might, so that you might patiently endure everything with joy.”

- Colossians 1:10-11

“For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.”

- Ephesians 2:10

“The one who says he resides in God ought himself to walk just as Jesus walked.”

- 1 John 2:6

When we “walk with the Lord”, we draw closer to Him with our hearts. He becomes our focus and we seek and desire His presence. This is known as fellowship. When one “walks with God,” one desires to honor their Heavenly Father, and allows Him to work in our lives, and help to make us into the image of His Son.

“Because those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that His Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”

- Romans 8:29

“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” - Philippians 1:6

When we chose to “walk with the Lord”, we grow in humility through a clearer understanding of our own mortality and through this humility, we examine our consciences of where we have fallen short of loving God and our neighbor, as we are taught by Jesus.



THE LOTUS FLOWER

Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.” -Genesis 1:11-13

Flowers have always been associated with religious thought and carry spiritual significance.

For example, since the 17th century, Poinsettias have been associated with Christmas, and said to represent the “Star of Bethlehem,” and the beauty of Blessed Mother Mary.

Easter lilies are said first symbolize the purity and virtue of Jesus, and His Blessed Mother, Mary, who appears with lilies in various artworks and masterpieces of her “Annunciation.”

The most recognized lily is the “trumpator” which symbolizes the joy and celebration of the resurrection of Jesus at Easter.

During these upcoming 40 days of the season of Lent, I would like to speak of another flower which I believe has spiritual significance for all Christians, that being the lotus.

The Lotus is a delicate flower with many layered petals arrayed around the central core. Scholars believe the Egyptians viewed the Lotus, as a symbol of rebirth, because it appeared to sink at night and rise again in the morning.

In Buddhism, the lotus flower represents the “purity” of one’s soul and the desire of to spiritually development and advance, rising out of suffering well as direct spiritual contact with the physical world.

But, as many of us know, that whatever flower we may speak of, all plants and flowers rise from a seed to grow and then show their beauty as they unfold, as a gift of God.

Any gardener knows that without the key ingredients of light, water and nourishment, a plant cannot grow and survive.

Lent is a time for not only self-examination which leads to repentance, but by the grace of God, one is enlightened and unfolds like a lotus, as they come into a higher understanding of God through their prayers and devotion.

If we choose to walk with the Lord during this holy season of Lent, we realize that it is God who as a gardener, supplies our souls with the essential ingredients of spiritual light, water, and food to grow. In keeping with this theme, I share with you some thoughts of this transformation.

LIGHT

We read in Genesis 1:3-4, we read that the very first creation of God was Light.

“And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness.”

Our blessed Lord in John 8:12 taught: “I AM the Light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have light of life.”

WATER

We read in Genesis 1:1-2:

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.”

Jesus in the Gospel of John 4:14 taught: “Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

FOOD

Whether it be the manna that God provided to the children of Israel in their 40-year wandering, as found in Exodus 16 or the feedings of the multitudes, as found in the Gospels, people need nourishment, to survive.

Our blessed Lord taught in John 6:51. "I AM the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."



"KNOW THYSELF"

On the front entrance of the Delphi Temple, located on Mount Parnassos in Central Greece, there is an inscription, "Know thyself." It can be said that these two simple words form the basis of all philosophies and religions. Throughout the history of humankind, sages and devotees have sought wisdom, and all major religions have designated spiritual exercises and disciplines, seeking to "know oneself."

In Hinduism, these spiritual disciplines are known as "dharma," and centers around knowing the eternal and the inherent nature of reality and the cosmic law which underlies right moral behavior. It is believed that oneness can be achieved through the reading of scripture and the practice of meditation or reflection.

In Buddhism, "dharma" centers around knowing the nature of reality, regarded as a universal truth, which was taught by the Buddha; the "Enlightened One" circa 6-5 B.C.

But, in contrast, what draws me to the Lord Jesus is first my faith in Him. When John the Evangelist wrote that Jesus, became the "Word made flesh," he testified that Jesus is the eternal "dharma," by which we follow Him in discipleship.

We read in the Gospel of John 1:1-4:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the

beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people."

In my faith, through the teachings of Jesus, as found in the "Good News" of the Gospel accounts, He not only taught of eternal spiritual wisdom, but also a code of conduct by which we are enlightened ever higher to our true nature. Did not Jesus talk about the desire of all, becoming one with the Father? We read in John 18:21-24; words spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper:

"That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in Me and I am in You, may they also be in Us, so that the world may believe that you have sent Me. The glory that you have given Me I have given them, so that they may be one, as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that those also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory, which You have given Me because you loved Me before the foundation of the world."

But the final two factors that brings me to the Lord Jesus [Yeshua] in Aramaic, is first, His willingness to be sacrificed on the cross; a perfect sacrifice of "love," for me, which took and continues to take away all my sins and the sins of the world and supersedes through His death, in my path, all other spiritual disciplines. What greater sacrifice could be offered to God, our creator, for the sins of mankind, than by sending His only begotten, His Word, to offer Himself and die for each of us and for our sins.

In Hinduism and Buddhism, one chooses a personal spiritual teacher, known as a "guru." Now the term, "guru" is taken from two root words; "gu" and "ru" which loosely translates as "one who "takes away darkness." It is believed that when one finds their spiritual teacher, their "Guru" is that person which takes away the darkness and ignorance of their student.

In the New Testament, we read of the Apostle Paul who wrote of the most direct way to salvation in his Letter to the Romans 10:9 which reads:

“If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

The other factor that brings me to the Lord, is that eternal gift that He gave me, when He died for me, and something that I can share with Him, is His presence at Holy Mass found in the Holy Eucharist.

At the Last Supper, Jesus established a “new covenant” through His sacrifice, which He made on the Cross. When He spoke at His Last Supper, the words “This is My Body” as He broke the bread with His first chosen and when He lifted up the “cup of Elijah,” the “cup of salvation,” and said, “This is My Blood,”

He left me, a memorial of His “Eternal Love.”

In the PNCC, the Holy Eucharist is a “sacrament” of His real presence in the forms of the consecrated bread and wine.

Stop to think about the importance of the Holy Eucharist.

When we have a loved one pass, whether it be a grandparent, a parent, a brother or a sister, son, or daughter, so many times we retain a memento of their lives, whether it be a picture, or even a piece of jewelry. Whatever keepsake we possess, we hold their memories close to our hearts and remember the love we shared with them.

But what our Lord left to us was a lasting memorial, an eternal keepsake of the love He had and has for us.

In Luke 22:19. We read: “Then He [Jesus] took a loaf of bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.”

Following His death, resurrection, and ascension, we read that the early followers of Jesus remembered His directive of “doing this in remembrance of Me.”

In the Book of the Acts of the Apostles 2:42, we read: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. “

We also read in Acts 2:46: “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.

They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,”

In Yogic philosophy, it is believed that one reaches a “oneness” with the divine, through good works (Karma), knowledge (Gnani) or devotion (Bhakti). In Christianity, good works and knowledge comes through the love and devotion that we share in fellowship with the Lord, and it is through the Holy Spirit that one comes to a greater understanding of oneself.

Saint Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians 13:12 writes:

“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.”



ED MISSION & EVANGELISM COMMISSION

CALL TO PRAYER

In the month of February, our Eastern Diocese has called upon all its members and others to offer prayers for our parish families at 12:00 noon each Wednesday:

My Lord and my God, hear my prayers for the well-being of my parish family. Grant us Your grace and all that is necessary for the spiritual growth and welfare of our congregation. Enlighten and guide my pastor and all who minister to the needs of Your people. Strengthen and awaken in us a living faith; comfort and heal the sick, lonely, and brokenhearted; soften those who are contentious or stubborn; awaken the indifferent and rescue the fallen. Lord, help us to continue to proclaim Your truth. Unite us with Christ in like-mindedness of purpose. I ask this through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.