

# St. Cletus Faith Formation Newsletter



Friday, February 17, 2023

Dear Parents,

This weekend we celebrate the Seventh Sunday in Ordinary time. Sunday's Gospel reading is a difficult one to follow. Christ's message to us is to resist retaliation of someone who has wronged us. We are to LOVE our enemies.

Because God's love is unconditional, we are asked to strive to love as God loves. Is that possible? How different our world would be if we could?

**[Reflection for the Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time.](#)**

## **Confirmation:**

Last Saturday, February 11, we had a perfect day for our Confirmation. The weather was perfect and Bishop Casey was truly amazing! Our Church looked beautiful and in all it was a truly wonderful and prayerful ceremony, one that I am sure was influenced by the Holy Spirit.

I would like to thank our Catechists for their work in preparing our Confirmandi and to their parents, who supported their children in this journey to bring them closer to Jesus. To their sponsors, your job is just beginning, you have the responsibility of walking with them as our young people continue to grow in their spiritual lives. I would also like to give a special thank you to our Gushers, who helped make everything flow on Saturday and to Kris and Clara Santin. for decorating the Church.

If anyone missed it, following is the link to download the pictures taken by Mrs. Hodak.

<https://www.sarahodakphotography.com/p9888382>.

## **Special Sacraments Group:**

Tomorrow, we will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation for our children in grades 3 – 7 who belong to our Special Sacrament Group and any of our second graders who were absent from the service in November.

Please keep them and their families in your prayers.

Should something happen where you are unable to attend, you will need make an appointment with Father Elmer or Father Michael to receive the Sacrament, most likely at one of the Saturday morning celebrations.

## **Lent**

Lent begins on Wednesday with Ash Wednesday. The season of Lent is a time in which we do penance and prepare ourselves for the wonder of Easter. We pray more. We make a greater effort to financially help those in need. (This is called *almsgiving*.)

We make special efforts to make amends for our sinfulness (penance), and we curb our physical desires by restricting our intake of food.

Fasting means that we eat only *one full meatless meal* and two smaller meals with no snacking between meals. This obligation is applied on Ash Wednesday (the beginning of Lent) and Good Friday. This applies to Catholics aged 18-59.

Abstinence means that we eat *no meat (including poultry) or meat by-products*. We observe abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays of Lent. This regulation applies to all Catholics over the age of 14.

People who are ill or have particular medical conditions, and women who are pregnant, are not obligated to observe these regulations. Of course, people in these circumstances are urged to pray, do penance, and help the less fortunate as a sign of their repentance and sorrow.

(Paraphrased from Knowing Our Catholic Faith).



### **Take Part in Our Parish Wide Survey**

St. Cletus parishioners, at the request of our Pastor and the Archdiocese of Chicago, are asked to participate in a 10-15 minute parish survey about discipleship conducted by the Catholic Leadership Institute. Please don't let the title deter your interest. This information will be invaluable to Fr. Elmer and our various ministries as we plan for the future and strive to be the best disciples we can be.

***The survey, which will go live on February 22nd, Ash Wednesday, will ask you to reflect on our parish's efforts to help you grow.*** All responses will be confidential and the parish will only receive information about the community as a whole. The on-line link to the survey, which is available in 17 languages, is being sent out via parish email this Wednesday.

**All family members, 8th grade and up, are asked to individually participate.** If you currently do not receive e-mails from the parish, please go to [stcletusparish.com/addme](http://stcletusparish.com/addme). Paper copies either in English or Spanish will be also be available beginning on Ash Wednesday. To make special arrangements for getting a paper copy, please contact Karen Ziemba, 708-215-5466 or by email: [DMIsurvey@stcletusparish.com](mailto:DMIsurvey@stcletusparish.com).

### **Calendar:**

Just a reminder, there are no Faith Formation Classes this week. Classes will be in session next Sunday-Monday, February 26-27.

Our March sessions will be: March 5-6; 12-13; and 19-20.

### **Lenten Outreach Volunteer Opportunity**

As we prepare for Lent, we partner with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to reach out and serve others through the Rice Bowl program. Please help distribute Rice Bowls after Masses **February 25-26**. All ages are welcome.

Visit: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e094cacac2ea2fc1-rice#/> to view slots and sign up.

Below you will find a second service opportunity for our Food Pantry.

Food Pantry: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e094cacac2ea2fc1-stcletus#/>

## **For Our Kids!**

### **Sunday Readings and Resources for our children and families.**

*Catholic Kid's Media –Love Your Enemies!* 7th week in Ordinary Time, cycle A

[Readings and Homily for Children.](#)

### **Fun Activities**

[Gospel Activity](#)

[Word Puzzle](#)

[Ash Wednesday Coloring Page](#)

### **You Tube Video**

[Ash Wednesday For Kids](#)

[What is Lent](#)

## **Finding God in Ash Wednesday** (by Julianne McCullagh).

The black ash is wet and cold. A practiced thumb stamps us with two intersecting lines of burnt palms from last year. Those gathered at Mass walk back up the aisle to their places as we await the dismissal.

Then we go out into the morning air to start our day, marked with the sign of Christ. School and work will begin now that this liturgy is over, and the black marks on our foreheads will be a cause for discussion, for double takes, and for witness.

### ***So Lent begins.***

Every year in the middle of a week in late winter we go to Church and have the ashes smudged upon our clean foreheads. Every year the churches are filled to overflowing with the regulars and the not-so-regulars. Why do we still undergo this ritual of ashes that is centuries old, as old as the prophets who pleaded with God's people to turn back from sin and toward God? We go because we need to go, because at least once a year we need to be reminded that our deepest hunger is the hunger for God.

Lent is a gift that the Church in her wisdom celebrates every year. It is a gift of time, a gift of contemplation, and a gift of quiet so that we may listen to the Word, who whispers to us to come back to the God who created us. It encourages us to turn away from the noise and over-indulged appetites so that we may understand the hunger that can be filled—with the grace of God—only by prayer, fasting, and giving to the poor.

So we go to our parish churches once a year to have crosses signed upon our faces. It is in this same manner that, when the Gospel is proclaimed, we take our right thumbs, trace three crosses, and pray: may the word of God be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart. The prayer of the whole Church, the Body of Christ, is that each year the sign of the cross penetrates a little deeper and moves us toward fuller conversion toward the light of Christ.

God Bless,

Lawrence Manetti  
Director of Faith Formation

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Associate Director of Faith Formation