

THE WAY

A NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION BY ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Volume 1 | Issue 1 | FEBRUARY 2021

From The PASTOR

My dear Parishioners,

I welcome all of you to the first edition of our Parish Newsletter, "THE WAY". This Newsletter is designed to,

- (a) keep us abreast with what is going on in the parish;
- (b) provide a forum for us to share faith with one another;
- (c) give us an opportunity to seek answers to and clarification about questions and doubts related to our faith, especially for our youth and young adults, and
- (d) provide us with a platform to learn more about the tenets and traditions of our Catholic faith. You will also find in this Newsletter, biblical and religious riddles, crosswords, and trivia; all designed to enhance the knowledge of our faith, as Catholics, while having fun doing so.

I am grateful to the Editorial Board members who have taken it upon themselves to solicit, collect, coalesce, edit, and publish materials for this Newsletter, not just for this edition, but for years and years to come.

On behalf of St. Michael's parishioners, I thank them, immensely.

This Newsletter is for all of us. So, please feel free to share any ideas that will help us improve its overall quality. We want this Newsletter to be of great interest and appeal to our parishioners and to all who may read it.

Msgr. Anselm

**We dedicate this Newsletter
in memory of our beloved
Youth Minister**

FOR YOUTH



BY YOUTH

THROUGH YOUTH

Phil Matrale

who was taken from us too soon on
November 21, 2020.

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CYO: ADIEU PHIL MATRALE



What is love? Anyone who has sat on the floors of the lower church of St. Michael's every Tuesday night during their high school years would know that the simple answer to that question is God. "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them." (John, 4:16). Not only did Phil answer and explain this to every member of CYO over the years, but he lived it every day he walked this Earth through his generosity, kindness, and passion.

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GRAPHIC DESIGN & PUBLISHING

Sefia Designs

<https://www.sefiadesigns.com/>

973-202 3770

GENERAL EDITOR

Msgr. Anselm Nwaorgu, Ph.D.

He was a man who lived in love, lived in God, and God in him. Phil was born on June 21, 1960 in Orange, NJ. He grew up in the Township of Union where he attended St. Michael's Grammar School and Union High School before graduating from Rutgers University. Continuing his education, he pursued and obtained a post baccalaureate certification in Adolescent Counseling from Seton Hall University. After graduating, he briefly worked for Xerox and Seton Hall before returning to St. Michael's to begin his true calling and God's work. In 1992, he married the love of his life, Dorothy Dittermer, at a beautiful mass at St. Michael's Church surrounded by their loved ones. Shortly after, the newlyweds moved to Old Bridge in 1993 and raised a family that consists of their three lovely daughters, Lauren (25), Julie Anne (22), and Carissa (17). The family became active parishioners of St. Ambrose Church, where Phil volunteered selflessly over the years for whatever was needed, whether it was a book fair, the carnival, or just paintings on the wall.

Phil felt his first true calling to help others in high school as a parishioner of St. Michael's. He became involved in Union County CYO and the Search and Crossroads programs. However, it was not until after completing his education that he found the job that God had called him to do at St. Michael's in 1986 as the Youth Ministry Director. It was then that he would begin his life's work of building a youth organization that would have such a long-lasting profound impact on the community for decades to come.



By *Cristina Manochio*

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<https://stmichaelunion.org/cyo/>

LITURGICAL SEASONS

LENT

WHY FAST?

About 3 years ago, Easter fell on April 16th. I was 13 years old about to turn 14. In school, I was taught that once a child turned 14, he/she could fast on Fridays during Lent until they turned 65. That year I calculated that I would only have to fast on April 7th and April 14th, since my birthday was on April 4th. I dreaded those two days as “Danger Days” because I thought of not eating till noon at school every Friday in Lent—7 painful hours between when I wake up and when I’m allowed to snack on Twinkies at noon. That year, I failed miserably, but a few Lents later, I realized that there’s more to Lent than just praying to be able to last hours without food.

The question to ask is, “Why did Jesus Christ fast for 40 days and how does that relate to why I fast on Fridays during Lent?” Matthew 4:4 explains it all:



“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Remember why Jesus was in the wilderness in the first place; he

spent 40 days meditating and praying to his Father. Indulging in food would have distracted him from speaking with God, just like how eating Twinkies would distract me from praying during Fridays in Lent. Think about it, how many times have we been distracted by food and things as we tried to pray?

The point of fasting, as we learn from Christ, is to keep our focus on praying to God without temptations and distractions getting in the way. Let us see how fasting goes for me this year, and how long I will be able to hold off eating food in spite of my cravings.

By Paula Sefia

THE IMPORTANCE OF FASTING

I am not a Theologian by any means but one who has been raised in the Catholic tradition, attended parochial school, and is a practicing Catholic. During my days in parochial school, I was taught to view fasting as a spiritual discipline. Now as an adult, I have tried to understand more about fasting.

The Old Testament indicates that fasting was attributed to particular events such as The Day of Atonement or for particularly intense experiences during special seasons or feelings. The prophets say that fasting is more associated with grieving, repentance, or intense prayer for a specific cause. Theologian John Piper says fasting is a temporary renunciation of something that is in itself good, like food, to intensify our expression of a need for something greater – namely, God and his work in our lives.

I remember listening to Fr. Mike Schmitz's podcast where he describes four important reasons why we fast during Lent. The first is Self-Mastery, where we can control ourselves and gain the ability to say “No” whether it's to temptation or evil. The second is Obedience and Discernment—listening to the church's teaching and its application in our lives. The third is Worship and Sacrifice because fasting is a sacrifice and sacrifice is always about worship. The fourth is to become a Co-Redeemer of Christ, because since fasting is a sacrifice, we, by it, are uniting with Christ on the cross for the redemption of the world.

Thus, for me, fasting is not just about giving up certain foods, drinks, or activities; it is about giving more to others—others who are less fortunate; it is about fasting from sin; about praying more, and above all, it is about being kind to one another.

By Jim Ford

LIFE AFTER DEATH ... THAT'S THE GOOD NEWS

What Ash Wednesday Means to Me:

It has been more than two centuries since Gregory the Great began the practice of imposing a cross of ashes on the foreheads of the faithful. This year, this custom has come alive with new meaning for me. As we face our mortality, made glaringly apparent daily by the numerous Covid-19 deaths, I have come to realize that we share universal and often unspoken fears—the fear of death.

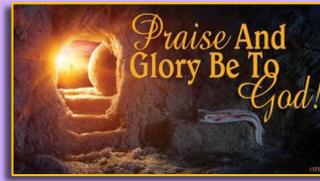
This very act of receiving ashes acknowledges this reality that we all have in common—that I am and always will be nothing more than dust, (a rather uncomfortable thought) ...until I think a bit more deeply about it. That black cross traced on my forehead, which often becomes more of a dirty smudge, reminds me that it is time for some changes in lots of areas; a time, so to say, to “clean up my act.” It invites me to step back, be still, and invite God in. Now it is my job to go out and find Him and to do His work while I am still among His people. So, I, and we, need to become more aware of the suffering and needs of others, not as a sympathetic bystander, but to carry out Christian action in whatever form that may take. It is hard sometimes to actually do the good things we think about, to say the kind encouraging words sorely needed by a friend or stranger. But that is the way the good news becomes something we all can share.

It is my hope that I will leave more than dust; that I will leave positive energy. So, although the blackness of ashes is present, I pray, let's let the light within each one of us spread that Good News, that Easter message, “Christ Has Died, Christ Has Risen, Christ Will Come Again.”

By Jean Perkins



EASTER SEASON



It is spring time; a season of hope; a time for everything to come alive again; flowers burst forth into life and the darkness of winter turns to light. Yes, resurrection is happening all around us. These are some of the thoughts I have had getting ready for the coming Easter season. By his resurrection, Jesus has shown us his power over death, and because of His great love for us, He wants to give this same power to each one of us. It is kind of hard to comprehend this. I look back on my life and I ask myself, “Why would Jesus want to give this gift of power to me?” “Why would He take on the suffering of the cross for my sake?” Can He really love me that much? For me, Easter season is a time for soul searching. I ask myself, “How can I partake and share this love that Jesus has for me?” My prayer is that, during this season, as God has resurrected Jesus to life again, may He resurrect me as well; may He show me the way to this great love.

By Joe Furnari

SAINTS & US TODAY

St. Joseph Cottolengo

Joseph Cottolengo, a priest in Turin, Italy, showed a special concern for the sick and poor. He founded The Little House of Divine Providence in 1832, where he welcomed in and cared for those who were sick and destitute. When a cholera pandemic broke out and swept through the city, he cared for those in his community who had been infected from the cholera disease.

Joseph recruited several religious Orders including the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul to help him serve the sick. Learning about the charitable works of Joseph Cottolengo has motivated me to help the less fortunate in my area of the world. For example, during this difficult time of the Covid-19 pandemic, I have volunteered my time at Elijah's Promise Community Soup Kitchen in New Brunswick to help serve “take-out” meals to individuals who would otherwise go hungry.

Cont'd on Page 5

SACRAMENTS

ADULT FAITH FORMATION & SPIRITUALITY

Praying Together as a Family During Lent:

One of the real challenges that we often find in our busy lives is finding time to be together as a family. It is especially difficult to find opportunities to pray together. And, if prayer, other than going to church on Sunday, hasn't been a family tradition, it can seem very "unnatural" to introduce it as something we might do together as a family. Lent is the perfect time to start praying together as a family. Here are a few ideas for ways we might be able to start praying as a family during the Lenten Season and throughout the year.

Saying Grace Together: If your family doesn't have a tradition of saying grace, now is a great time to start. Pick one meal a day and try to say grace at that meal for each day during Lent. Use your own words to thank God for your food, or go around the table and have each family member say one thing that they are grateful for that day. You can even sing a religious hymn or traditional prayer you are familiar with like the "Our Father".

Praying Together at a Planned Time: Find a time once a week that works for all your family members to pray together. Pray by expressing your joys and your concerns, and ask God for guidance and His blessings. If children in your family don't fully know The Lord's Prayer or the 23rd Psalm, the season of Lent would be a wonderful time to practice saying those beautiful prayers together. If you have young children, a great time to pray with them together as a family would be before the children go to bed.

Saying a Simple Prayer While Travelling in the Car Together: So many of us spend a fair amount of time in the car, often with other members of our family. These can be nice times to begin or end the trip, with a very brief and simple prayer.

For example: *Bless our shopping tonight. Help us be grateful for the gifts you give us. May this food/these clothes help us be mindful of those who have so much less than we do.*

Or, *bless our brother or sister at school today. Give them the gratitude and delight in what they are able to learn. Help them to do their best in their studies and to encourage others that they encounter today.*

My prayer for all of us is that our Lord Jesus Christ may bless our praying, in the community of our family, these upcoming days of Lent and throughout the entire year.

Deacon Michael Alfano

families that
PRAY TOGETHER
 stay together.

SAINTS & US TODAY

Cont'd from Page 4

Saint Joseph Cottolengo's example has taught me to trust totally in the infinite power and kindness of God and that through His grace, God will help me to serve those in need in my community.

Merciful Father, help me to follow the example of St. Joseph Cottolengo by caring and praying for those in need of my assistance.

By Deacon Alfano

MEET OUR MINISTERS & MINISTRIES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



The Religious Education Office welcomed potter Ray Boswell who facilitated a virtual Blessing Cup Retreat for the students preparing to celebrate the sacraments of 1st Eucharist and 1st Reconciliation this year.

Through song, prayer and watching pottery being made, the children and their parents learned about reconciliation in a full-bodied way. By listening to the potter's voice, we are reminded how we should all listen to the voice of the divine potter, God.

As a permanent reminder of the day of the retreat and the day to come of First Holy Communion, the children each decorate a chalice that becomes their blessing cup.

By Clare Andriola



MEET OUR CATECHISTS

Jovel Baring-Goligan



Jovel Baring-Goligan migrated from the Philippines in 1998. Jovel, together with her husband

Ludovico, and 2 daughters, Joy and Lauren, moved from New York to Union, NJ in 2005. Jovel and family have been parishioners of St. Michael's Church for the last 15 years.

In 2009, Jovel volunteered to be one of the catechists of the St. Michael's Religious Education Program. "I feel that I am called to serve," she says. Jovel is thankful for the opportunity to impart her Catholic beliefs and practices to the children, and at the same time, continue to deepen her own faith.

The class Jovel teaches is a special two-year sacrament preparation class for children whose ages vary from 9 to 14. These children have not had any religious teaching at all which makes teaching more of a challenge. Jovel introduces them to our faith as well as prepares them for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. Jovel Goligan was selected as St. Michael's Catechist of the Year in 2019.

Jovel is currently a member of St. Michael's Church Finance Council. She is also an active member of the Association of Filipino American Accountants (AFAA-NJ) and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA).

MEET OUR NEW LECTOR

Johnnuel Magno

How I Was Called



Being a lector was always something I'd thought of becoming, but I never expected it to happen so soon. There are several compelling reasons why I became a lector.

First, I've been an altar server since 3rd grade. However, the thought of my time as an altar server coming to an end was a motivation to become a lector. The second reason is that it runs in my family; my Mom and aunt are both lectors. Finally, we had the events following Covid-19 pandemic.

Life dramatically changed including the way we worship. Liturgical worship and devotional services were now being done virtually. It so happened that my Mom is part of the Media Ministry, so she pushed me to do one of the readings for one of the virtual masses, with special dispensation from the pastor, Monsignor Anselm. This made me realize that I could indeed be a lector. While my parents did "compellingly influence" me at first, this experience showed me how beautiful and powerful sharing the Word of God, as a lector, could be.

Cont'd on Page 8

WORD SEARCH

Lent & Easter

In this word search that covers the Lenten and Easter seasons, you may find some words that may or may not be familiar to us and our children. It is a great opportunity for family discussions, especially if your children come across terms that they are not familiar with.

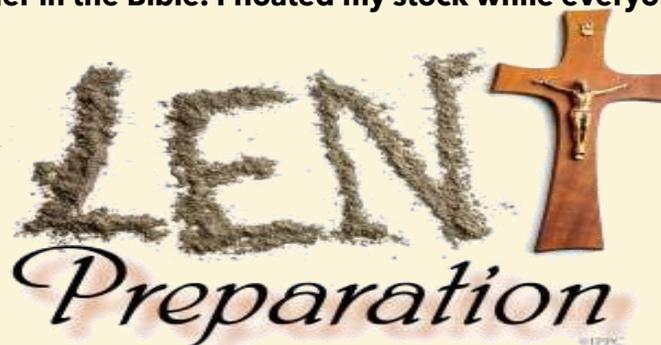
The twenty words in this puzzle can be found either running up and down, left to right, or diagonally. Phrases that are listed in the word-bank as one phrase will be found in the puzzle as one word, e.g. "Palm Sunday" will be found in the puzzle as "PALMSUNDAY". **Good luck!**

H	F	D	J	Z	A	S	H	W	E	D	N	E	S	D	A	Y	H	R	R	Ash Wednesday	Foot Washing
N	O	A	G	O	O	D	F	R	I	D	A	Y	J	E	S	B	O	E	E	Lent	Love
G	O	L	P	A	S	S	O	V	E	R	P	A	S	F	O	R	L	S	S	Forty Days	Good Friday
T	T	M	Y	B	M	F	J	E	S	U	A	J	A	C	K	A	Y	U	U	Purple	Fasting
N	W	S	P	S	G	O	L	O	V	E	L	E	C	E	D	N	T	R	R	Almsgiving	Sacrifice
N	A	G	R	F	A	R	L	P	A	L	M	B	R	A	N	C	H	E	R	Prayer	Holy Saturday
J	S	I	A	A	F	T	P	L	Y	E	S	E	I	S	P	J	U	S	E	Palm Sunday	Passover
C	H	V	Y	S	O	Y	U	J	T	N	U	A	F	T	A	E	R	U	C	Holy Week	Jesus
J	I	I	E	T	R	D	R	R	M	T	N	S	I	E	H	S	S	S	T	Palm Branch	Easter
A	N	N	R	I	H	A	P	W	D	J	D	T	C	R	X	U	D	W	I	Holy Thursday	Resurrection
N	G	G	C	N	O	Y	L	W	E	A	A	E	E	Y	G	S	A	Z	O		
W	E	D	N	G	L	S	E	H	O	L	Y	W	E	E	K	H	Y	C	N		

BIBLICAL RIDDLES

Our biblical riddles are based on scriptural information or its moral conundrums that challenge a person's understanding of the Bible and God, and also some other common knowledge. While some of these riddles are designed for learning because the question and answer is based on biblical content, others are more designed for humor, for example: What kind of lights did Noah use on the ark? Answer: Flood lights. It is our hope that you will have fun with these. Good luck.

- 1. Why did Eve want to leave the Garden of Eden and move to New York?**
- 2. How many times did Moses lead God's people around the walls of Jericho?**
- 3. Who was the smartest man in the Bible?**
- 4. I am the greatest financier in the Bible. I floated my stock while everyone was in liquidation. Who am I?**



Ask MONSIGNOR

As a generation born within/post 9/11 and coming of age during a pandemic, Generation Z (about 1995–about 2010), how do you suggest we see the positive aspects of life in a world that thrives on spreading negativity?

Leticia Sefia

Hi Leticia, the question you asked is a very important one because negativity, truly, seems to have overtaken our world, so much so that, for some, a negative world is the “new normal”. So knowing how to stay positive in a world like this is a powerful way to take back control from the darkness it creates.

The place to start, in my opinion, is a change in mindset. Instead of looking for or expecting the negative, (which is not hard to find at all), seek out the positive which still exists within the imperfection of our world. As you seek out the good in life, and in the world, you will begin to find it more and more, and before you know it, the darkness of negativity will begin to disappear from the world of your heart.

A change in mindset can begin from the choices we make. We can chose to be optimistic about people and circumstances, to be grateful in all things, to have a willingness to sacrifice for others, to be humble and content in our circumstances, to participate instead of just belonging, to care and to give a helping hand, to be generous not just fair, to forgive, to love and cherish others, to stand up for what is right and just, to keep your dreams alive by holding on to hard work and hope, to be a hand of healing and comfort to others, to keep moving and striving forward instead of sitting in regrets and dwelling on past things and mistakes.

The fact is that so much good is being done in the midst of the darkness in our world. So, let us seek the good out; let us be part of it—part of the light that dispels darkness.

Another thing is to make sure that you choose the company that you keep, wisely. Scripture says, “Do not be led astray, [for] ‘bad company corrupts good morals’”. The attitudes and ways of those with whom you hang out can derail your purpose and draw you into deeper darkness or keep the light of your grace glowing. In all things, keep the faith as you run the race.

Msgsr. Anselm

MEET OUR NEW LECTOR

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I was officially commissioned as a lector on January 16, 2021, only a few months after my Confirmation.

The first time I became a lector in front of my St. Michael parish family, I felt a great surge of power coming from the Holy Spirit. It was exhilarating and frightening at the same time!

FROM THE LECTOR MINISTRY HEAD

Congratulations to our newly commissioned lector, Johnnuel Magno. He is the son of Shella Magno, a long-time lector. Johnnuel has been active at St. Michael's for many years as an altar server. Recently, he has been helping as one of the readers in the nightly recitation of the rosary. We welcome Johnnuel to our Lector family!

If you are interested in becoming a lector, please call the parish center or email Albertaavp@verizon.net. Training is provided.

By Alberta Phillips

BIBLICAL RIDDLES (Answers)

1. She fell in love with the Big Apple.
2. None—Moses died before the Israelites entered the Promised Land. It was Joshua who took them for 13 laps around the city in one week.
3. Abraham—because He knew a Lot (Play on words. Lot was his uncle).
4. Noah—His boat was afloat while everyone's house was under water.