

Happy Laetare Sunday, otherwise known as "Rose Day"; referring to the Priest's vestments that are that color. Why? Because it marks the halfway point of Lent and it is considered a celebration. That is why it is "Rose" vestments, because we use flowers or roses in time of celebration. Take time today to celebrate your Lent thus far. More importantly, there is still plenty of time to enter in even if it has not gone as planned. All he wants from us is to come back to him.

God has been so good to us thus far and will continue to be. How do we know this? By this weekend's Gospel that reminds us that God always shows up at the time when we need him the most (and especially in those times when we may think we may not need him). We hear Jesus refer to himself as "Light" so that we can "See". The pharisees thought it was sin that caused physical blindness, but Jesus proved it was the blindness of *their* (the Pharisee's) hearts that is sinful as they are trying to be God and not follow him. The same is often true for all of us. We forget the mercy of God in our actions. However, he reminds us over and over that he is the one who saves from everything including sin and brings us that light through his mercy. A great way to encounter his mercy is through the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There are many opportunities available for this Sacrament throughout Lent. But remember the Sacrament is always offered every Saturday from 3p-340p. It doesn't matter how long it has been, or what you have done, the Lord wants to heal us with his mercy. Often, persons will ask why confession or how often. My answer that I offer is (*with a few tips in italics*):

1. It is an opportunity that only the Lord can give to make things new. Every sin we commit is a public act against another. The only way we may encounter forgiveness is through the power of that Sacrament because we may never see that person. This also reminds us that we too are human and sometimes may have a difficult time with this. Maybe we are scared to face this, but even more, this Sacrament is an opportunity to let him make us new so that we forget that sadness, fear, and anger.
2. It is an opportunity to be accountable to the Lord. Yes, it is true that we can ask for forgiveness from venial sins every day by the Act of Contrition, Mass, etc.; this Sacrament allows us to be accountable by remembering the times that we have forgotten his love in our lives totally by causing rupture in that relationship by our action. That is called Mortal Sin. A mortal sin is any action against the Ten Commandments. Never be afraid of this Sacrament, or what you need to say, and never hold back a sin that needs confessed in confession. It is never judgement by the priest as he can never break that seal; nor is it held against you by God when we acknowledge our sins. This is why we are asked to encounter the Lord at least once a year in this Sacrament. I often recommend putting this in our calendars and try to participate on a regular basis (monthly, bi-monthly, etc.; and/or any time we need to). However, to be in union with the Church one must go to Confession at least once a year. *Hardest Sin: With this you do not have to go into explicit detail but need to mention any offense that is considered mortal sin. After you do an examination of Conscience (remember the only sins that must be confessed are against the ten commandments as these are called mortal sins) and you cannot just choose if they apply to you; nor can you only just say the most important one. However, say the hardest sin for you first, and then the others that may not be as difficult to say. It is also okay to continue to go to confession if you struggle with the same sin over and over.*
3. It is an opportunity to grow in community. The basis of the Sacrament from Jesus is the call of Peter in Matthew 16:18-19 when he reminds him whose sin you forgive is forgiven, etc... Peter always stands for the leadership/shepherds of the Church. Further, it is never the Priest that forgives, but because of the unbroken Laying on of Hands, (through Apostolic Succession) from Jesus to the Apostles, then to the Bishops, then Bishops through their Ordination to the Priests. This gift through Ordination to Holy Orders keeps this line going from Jesus to the Priest that you are in front of for Confession. We have a duty to one another to build one another up in Community and to be accountable. Yes, it is true that Jesus alone forgives sin and that we too go directly to him because of his command in scripture through this sacrament. *Another Person: Perhaps challenge another person to attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you. You may be bringing them to the freedom of Jesus by your offer to go with them!*

4. There are other forms of Penance that we are called to unite our hearts in beyond the formal confession of sins such as abstinence from Meat on Fridays of Lent (and Fasting on Ash Wednesday/Good Friday). Why we fast is to take time to remove even the good things temporarily and offer them up for something/someone greater than ourselves. Fasting reminds us that God will give us what we need and trust that in our act of fasting, when we unite what we are lacking for a person/purpose, he will use that time to bring his glory to another. One of the greatest prayers we can offer for another is an act of fasting as the Catechism (paragraph 1434) reminds us of this form of penance can “express conversion in relation to oneself, to God, and to others.”

The source of much of this weekend’s columns come from the Scriptures as well as the Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 1422-1498, which can be found in the myparishapp and www.vatican.va, amongst other sources.

It was a blessing to have over 25 men from our parish attend the 2232 Men’s Conference via livestream on our campus this past Saturday. I hope and pray that this opportunity continues to fan the flame of the good that is yet to come in our parish. Ladies, your turn is coming up next month with more information available next week on how you can attend; but, please keep Saturday, April 18 on your calendar for this event!

We have another exciting event coming up in two weeks: Bible in a Day on Saturday, March 28. The insert will offer more information about the day, but why we are bringing this to our parish is another way to grow in knowledge and community! If you have participated in the “Bible in a Year” Podcast; Ascension Press is the one who does this and this day will be a similar format to help us grow in our love of and pray with Scripture! JOIN US!

Another reminder to continue to submit names for the “Called by Name” program that we (and a few other parishes) are piloting. You can pick up a form in the Gathering Space Lobby, scan the QR code in the bulletin/our website to offer a submission, please keep praying for and submitting names! It may be your encouragement that will help him to be open to this possibility! Never underestimate your encouragement.

A note regarding last weekend: As I said, the intention of the *Explanatory Masses* is not just to “know” via intellect why we do what we do, but “who” we worship. I hope you have a chance to go back on our livestream and re-watch this Mass to help you reflect on the gift we truly have!

All Jesus asks of us is faith like the blind man, to come to him and trust in his goodness that was proven for us on the Cross. The Sacrament of Reconciliation, along with Holy Communion are the guiderails on our road to life and God willing one day to heaven. This, my friends, is the reason why we “laetare” (rejoice). There is plenty of Lent left to enter in so please join us in the Sacraments and the many other offerings of the Season to slow down and be more intentional! Also, enjoy our Diocesan Feast Day as “break” from our Lenten Fast and take a moment to pray in thanksgiving for all our Diocese does for us and we as part of it. Know of my prayers for you and ask the same from you as well for me!

Our Lenten Offerings this week:

Sunday, March 15: Extra Confession Opportunity: 7:45am-8:15am

Monday, March 16: Stations of the Cross for St. Eusebius Parish (at St. Eusebius) at 6pm

Tuesday, March 17: *St. Patrick Day (Feast Day of the Diocese):*

+Extra Weekday Mass at IC at 12:10pm Mass

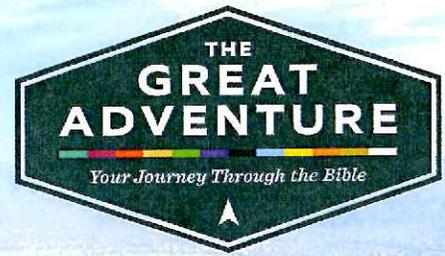
+Stations of the Cross for St. Charles Parish with Exposition/Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament (at St. Charles) at 6pm

Wednesday, March 18: Stations of the Cross with Exposition/Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament AND the Opportunity of the Sacrament of Reconciliation after Benediction until all are heard beginning at 6pm

Thursday, March 19: St. Joseph Day Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at IC from 5:30pm-6:30pm
(Also, please see your email with the complete Holy Week Schedule that was sent to you via email!)

Bible in a Day

SEE THE STORY OF SCRIPTURE COME ALIVE



Have you ever opened the Bible and wondered how all the pieces fit together? You're not alone. The Bible isn't meant to be overwhelming—it's meant to be understood, shared, and lived. That's why our parish is excited to host *Bible in a Day*, a one-day seminar hosted by Ascension Press and featuring Catholic author and speaker Colin MacIver.

In just six hours, you'll discover how the Bible tells one unified story of God's love for his people. Guided by the *Bible Timeline*® Learning System—the same approach behind *The Bible in a Year* (with Fr. Mike Schmitz)® featuring Jeff Cavins—Colin will reveal how the key people, places, and events of Scripture connect from Genesis all the way to the Church today.

Why the *Bible Timeline* Works

The Bible isn't simply a library of books—it's one continuous story of salvation. The *Bible Timeline* organizes Scripture into color-coded time periods, making it easy to follow the "big picture." This method has helped millions of Catholics read and understand the Bible without confusion or frustration.

Whether you're new to Scripture or have studied it for years, you'll leave with a clearer sense of God's plan and a deeper understanding of how your own life fits into his story.

More Than a Seminar

Bible in a Day is not just about learning scripture. It's about coming together as a community of faith. The day will include the following:

- Engaging presentations that bring the story of salvation to life
- Small-group discussions to reflect and share insights
- Lunch and fellowship with parishioners
- Practical tools to help you continue praying with Scripture long after the event
- Premium Access to the Ascension App for 30 days

Date:

Saturday, March 28

Location:

Immaculate Conception Parish
715 Main Street
Clarion, Pa 16214

Time:

9am-3pm

Reserve your spot now:

The event is FREE (donations are accepted). However if you would like lunch there is a \$15.00 fee.

Contact: Linda Summerville at:
1-814-226-8433x203

or

lsummerville@icclarion.org
for more information!

The day is FREE (but please RSVP if you would like lunch option)

Come and see the big picture of salvation history and your place in God's plan.


ASCENSION