

Dear Parishioners:

At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their kindness toward me and my family concerning the recent death of my mother. The loss of my mother was very difficult for me but I, and my entire family, was certainly comforted by your support and Mass cards. Thank you again for your prayerful consolation.

Well, believe it or not, Lent is upon us! Easter is very early this year – March 27 – so that means that Lent is very early as well. It seems like we were just singing Christmas carols. **Ash Wednesday** is this Wednesday and thus begins the season of Lent. The schedule for the distribution of ashes is listed in the bulletin. Basically, we will offer Prayer Services or Masses during a variety of times, especially in the afternoon. We have to block off some time in the morning in case there is a funeral.

During the Lenten season, there will be a variety of Spiritual Opportunities that will take place. I urge you to take advantage of these Lenten Spiritual Opportunities. Allow the Lord to touch your heart by taking advantage of these spiritual opportunities. But, as with all opportunities, you have to choose to participate or not. Make the choice for God!

I especially want to point out that during Lent, we will have an **additional daily Mass** during the week. From Monday to Friday, in addition to the normal 8:30am Mass, we will also have a **12:10pm Mass**. We will pray the Stations of the Cross every Friday at 1:00pm (with the school) and at 7:00pm. Every Tuesday evening, there will be other spiritual and educational activities.

I particularly want everyone to set aside **March 7 - March 10 for our PARISH MISSION** which will be led by **Deacon Kevin McCormack**. Many of you may know Deacon Kevin from the radio; he is the co-host of Religion on the Line on WABC (770AM) every Sunday morning. Carve out time for the Parish Mission now. I am confident that you will be glad that you did. Bring a friend, especially if he or she has been away from the church for a period of time. Be a good evangelizer!

Pope Francis has asked that this year be a special Holy Year dedicated to **MERCY**. Here at Our Lady of Lourdes, we will focus on the **Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy**. Each month, we will concentrate on one or two works of mercy. We will sing special “psalms of mercy” at Sunday Mass and ask everyone to live out that particular work of mercy (ex.: bring in food for the month dedicated to the corporal works of mercy: feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty). I challenge everyone to **PRAY** the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and to concretely **LIVE OUT** that work of mercy. Please see the bulletin each week for more information and ideas.

Remember: Together, we can do something beautiful for God.

In Christ,

Fr. Brian