

A Message from Father Vincent

February 21, 2021

Dear Friends:

Happy Lent!!! We have now begun our Lenten journey. Ash Wednesday here at OLM was absolutely wonderful. I had the opportunity to meet so many people that I have not yet had the opportunity to meet since I've arrived at OLM in September.

During these 40 days, it is a good time for us to think of how we want to transform our hearts into doing what Jesus is asking of each of us – renewing ourselves spiritually so that we are different people on Easter Sunday than we were on Ash Wednesday. We know that the most significant annual opportunities for spiritual attention and renewal for all of us are the faithful timeless practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Jesus said that God does not like it when people do righteous deeds just to look good in front of others. For example, when giving to the poor, “do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others.” Jesus also said, referring to the scribes and Pharisees, “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.”

Jesus said the same thing regarding prayer. “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,” he warned. “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.”

And he taught that those who are fasting shouldn't look as if they were. “When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting,” he said. “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.”

In order to defeat the fundamental human weakness known as self-centeredness and focus as Christ wants us to on God and others, we must turn our eyes away from ourselves and our passions, and direct them to God and to those around us. The most proven way to do this is through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Whether it's Lent or not, give them a try—you won't regret it!

Please visit our Parish website at www.urolm.org to view our Lenten schedule. We have many opportunities to help you deepen your faith and have a wonderful Lenten season.

Also, Cardinal Tobin wrote a beautiful Pastoral Letter titled “Returning to Grace: A Pastoral Letter on the Eucharist from Cardinal Tobin”. I have attached it to this message. As we begin our journey of Lent together, please read this incredibly beautiful and important message from the Cardinal.

Finally, as you know, Pope Francis has declared that this year is the **Year of Saint Joseph**. Each week, I will place a different prayer or reflection in my message for you to enjoy. I hope you enjoy it.

Memorare to Saint Joseph

Remember, O most chaste spouse of the Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who implored your help and sought your intercession was left unassisted.

Full of confidence in your power I fly unto you and beg your protection. Despise not O Guardian of the Redeemer my humble supplication, but in your bounty, hear and answer me. Amen.

Just a few reminders of what's happening here at the Parish:

- This Sunday, February 21st at the 9 a.m. Mass, we will begin our Class Masses. This week we will pray for our second graders in our school and in our religious education program. The students' names will be on the big screen in the Gathering Space so we can take a look and pray for our wonderful children, their teachers, and their catechists. They are such a blessing!
- On Saturday, March 6th at the 5:30 p.m. Mass, Bishop Michael Saporito, Auxiliary Bishop for Bergen County, will join us and celebrate Mass here at OLM. We are so happy to welcome the Bishop to our Parish that evening.
- The second part of my Lenten talk "God Is Love" will be on Sunday, March 7th at 7 p.m. in the Church. Please sign up on the Parish website. The event will also be live-streamed. The focus of this talk will be "Knowing God's Love for Us Through His Mercy". The talk will conclude with Eucharistic Adoration and praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet.
- With respect to the Annual Appeal from the Archdiocese, I thank each of you who has already given to or made a pledge toward the Appeal. The Appeal helps so many in need around the four counties of our Archdiocese and beyond through Catholic Charities, Hospital and Prison Ministry, Ministry to Persons with Disabilities, Respect Life Office (including Mercy House and Pro-Life Efforts) and Protecting God's Children. Funds raised also help in:

Proclaiming the Gospel – Ministry to Multi-Ethnic Communities; Office of Evangelization; Office of Family Life; International Missions; and Ministry to the Deaf.

Forming Future Priests and Supporting Retired Clergy – Continued Formation for Priests; Seminarian Education; and Priest Health Care.

Passing on the Faith – Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry; Catechetical Office; Campus Ministry and affiliated Colleges & Universities; Catholic Schools.

As you know from my past messages, the goal set for our Parish is \$109,317. Any amounts collected over this goal will be returned to the Parish to help us in our Parish mission. Any amount under this goal will still be the responsibility of each Parish to pay to the Archdiocese.

To date, we have collected approximately \$45,000 toward our \$109,317 goal. *Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!* If you have not already given or pledged, I humbly ask you to prayerfully consider doing so. All four of the Priests here at OLM are products of seminary education at Seton Hall. We know first-hand the benefit of this Appeal. Please visit www.rcan.org/sharing or visit our Parish website to donate.

- I will be on my annual retreat this coming week from Monday, February 22nd to Monday, March 1st. I will miss each of you. Please know that I will pray for you during my retreat. Please keep me in your prayers as well.

May God continue to bless each of you. You are a blessing to me.

With love and appreciation,

+ Father Vincent