



The Visionary

ST. MARY MAGDALEN

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2009

LENT A FORTY DAY RETREAT

Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel!

Believers begin this holy season speaking those words as their foreheads are marked with ashes in the form of a cross. This is a timely and critical reminder that we are only temporary citizens of this world, a people destined for eternity with God. So we begin the journey of Lent, forty days spent with the Lord who has destined us to share His resurrection.



The Feast of the Resurrection, which we call Easter and the ancients called the Great Sunday, was *the day* to celebrate our destiny. Just as the Lord Jesus spent forty days in the desert preparing for His new life, we spend forty days preparing for this great day of our destiny through fasting, prayer and works of charity. During Lent, we imitate Christ by entering a *spiritual desert* created by a conscious effort to simplify our lives. Fasting from unnecessary preoccupations and diversions, eating more simply, living more quietly, gives us the time and opportunity to realize our hunger for God. This hunger leads to prayer, the talking and listening to God which centers a Christian's life. Finally, what we have given up through our fasting should also be given away. Others, especially those less fortunate, are blessed by our "giving up and giving away". Our charity enables us to live as those who know that our lives are only *lent* to us.

The journey of Lent leads us through a spiritual desert of our own choosing so that we can grow toward the Great Passover of the Lord Jesus: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. It begins with a simple commitment: a cross of ashes - a reminder that life in this world is only temporary. We can be more, our lives can mean more, our temporary stay in this world can make a difference. So we turn away from sin through fasting, prayer and charity. We seek to grow in Christ and the promise of the Gospel. For More On Lent see page 7.

INFORMATION FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES

Given Michigan's current economic climate many are finding themselves un-insured or under-insured. Attempting to secure needed health care services under these circumstances can be frustrating and at times distressing. In an attempt to assist with health related-concerns, we have provided a list of resources for consideration.

Faith Medical Clinic This is a free medical clinic whose services are available to persons 18 to 64 years of age, without insurance. The clinic is located in Pinckney and operates on Saturdays from 9 am to 1 pm. Call 734-474-4627 for information and appointments, although walk-in cli-

ents can generally be accommodated. Livingston County residency is not required.

Livingston Health Plan B This is a county-funded health plan that assists with out-patient health care costs. Enrollment and physician participation is fairly limited and one must be a county resident. Eligibility is based on annual household income and limited assets. Call the Livingston County Department of Public Health (517-546-9850) for additional information.

Medicaid Medicaid is one Michigan health care program available to persons that are aged, blind or disabled, and families or eligible parents

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from the PASTORAL COUNCIL

Our Pastoral Council will soon be updating our Facility and Grounds Usage Policy as a part of our planning for how we will use our new facilities. Here is a summary of that policy:

Our parish facilities and grounds may be used for any activities, events, or meetings that are specifically related to St. Mary Magdalen Parish, its ministries or by groups that are sponsored by the parish (like Knights of Columbus, scouts, etc). None of our facilities or grounds will be rented out for private or public use.

We also would open our building and grounds to parishioner initiated activities that would be in keeping with our Vision Statement, activities and events sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Lansing and to non-profit organizations based in Livingston County . (In some cases, a fee may be assessed to cover maintenance and/or utility costs.)

Activities occurring Monday-Thursday need to end by 10 pm; and on Friday-Sunday by 11 pm. By state law, smoking is not permitted in the building and smoking outside is permitted at least 25 feet away from the building and entrances. Alcohol in moderate and discretionary amounts is only permitted at parish sponsored events or when special insurance is purchased for non-parish events. Furnishings are not to be taken off-site. Use by organized athletic groups is not permitted without Pastoral Council approval. Skateboard and rollerblade activities are not permitted at any time, at any location.

Any suggestions or concerns about changing this policy should be addressed to a Council member.

The Members of the Pastoral Council

Jan Baldinger	Karen Luck	Gretchen Buslepp	Tom Callaghan	Kathy Carney	Sandy Oliver
Ken Kuna	Mike Lamberjack	Nancy Nychypor	Mary Beth Rupp	Mark Wright	Debbie Dehanke, Secretary
	Sr. Maryetta Churches, OP		Fr. David F. Howell		

from the FINANCE COUNCIL

July 2007 - June 2008

As of January 31, 2009

<u>REVENUE SOURCES</u>	<u>Jan 31</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>	<u>Projected Budget</u>
Sunday Stewardship	80,511	643,758	1,183,900
Religious Formation/Donations	4,953	54,035	89,600
TOTAL	85,464	697,792	1,273,500

→ **BUILDING FUND: \$46,329** ←

<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>Jan 31</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>	<u>Projected Budget</u>
Programs & Staffing	80,528	469,894	860,100
Building Operations	16,478	88,744	164,400
Building Pledge	20,834	145,838	250,000
TOTAL	117,840	704,476	1,274,500
BALANCE (plus/minus)	-32,376	-6,683	

BUILDING EXPENSE JAN 09: \$747,893

The Members of the Finance Council

Chris Cousins	Dick Demmings	Sandra Howe	Deb Guidos	Sharon Rossiter	Ken Kuna	Duke Davis
Bob Reske	Karen Carter	Ben Lindamood	Dan Grattan	Erin Wolfe	Chair, Bruce Heatley	
Bookkeeper, Dave Wisniewski		Fr. David Howell				

ON PREPARING THE BUDGET

Our Finance Council will soon be preparing a budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year which will begin on July 1. During these difficult economic times, we are trying to be as prudent as possible. After the first half of the fiscal year, our income has remained steady, but it has fallen about 3% short of our projections. Fortunately, our staff has been careful with expenses and our expenditures have also come in under projections.

In the new budget, there will be some increases. Salary costs will increase slightly as we welcome another deacon to our staff, Gary Prise. But salaries will be frozen or slightly decreased for the rest of the staff. Increases will result from the rising cost of health care and from the added utilities cost for the new additions. As we did last year, our goal is to create a realistic budget that will be less than the previous year. [07-08 \$1,297,700 ++ 08-09 \$1,274,500]

RELIGIOUS FORMATION *from Mary Mahar*

Our 4th grade Penance Candidates are in their final preparations for their solemn celebration of God's forgiveness. Thank you to Diane Neitzke and the 4th grade catechists for their hard work! At the retreat for the youth and their parents we provide activities, pray and we show the youth what actually happens as we celebrate a mock confession and talk about sin. All of these activities enhance the celebration of this important Sacrament as they come to Solemn Penance on March 12 and 14.

Our 6th grade youth will be visiting Temple Beth Emeth in Ann Arbor on **Sunday, March 15!** Parents are invited as well to see how much our youth have learned about our Jewish heritage this year. **Wednesday, March 18, at 6 pm** Fr. Dave will tie it all together with a comparison tour of our church and our traditions. **This church tour is for all 6th grade youth and their parents in lieu of formation classes on March 18/19.**

The Confirmation Candidates, along with their parents or sponsor, will join together on Sunday, March 8, at 5:30 pm for our Lenten Experience together in Church.

On Thursday, March 5, at 7 pm, Fr. Dave will lead a class on Penance for any adult wanting to learn more about the Sacrament. He will go into the history of the Sacrament and explain why penance is important to our Christian way of living. Materials will be available for any adult wishing to prepare to celebrate this Sacrament of forgiveness for the first time (or first time in a very long time!).

Our Religious Formation classes are starting to talk about the Lenten season and sacrifice. They have also been learning about Liturgy, being Catholic, the Church, collecting food and taking it to the food bank, making choices, Sacraments and much more. Classes have been very involved in community service projects to help them learn that service is our Christian way of life. Next month (during class) our 4th grade youth will learn about being altar servers so they can decide next year if they want to sign up!

If you have any more service suggestions, or are in need of service hours, (we have the Seder meal, Easter egg hunt, and more coming in April) please email mmahar@parishmail.com or call me in the office at 229-8624 ext. 15. See the dates below for some of what else is going on!

February Dates to Remember:

- 25- NO WED FORMATION CLASSES - ASH WEDNESDAY Services at 5 & 7pm**
- 26- NO THURS FORMATION CLASSES**
- 28- Penance Retreat, 8:45am**
3rd grade classes to Gleaners Food Bank
Super Saturday at St Pat's for Catechists

- 5** Adult class on Penance led by Fr. Dave, 7:00
- 8** 9th grade Confirmation Candidates & Parents Lenten Experience 5:30
- 12/14** 4th grade Solemn Penance 7 pm & 10 am
5th grade hosts receptions
- 15** 6th grade trip to Temple Beth Emeth – leave parking lot at 2:15
- 18** 6th grade Church tour w/Fr. Dave – NO 6th grade class at 4:30/6:30
- 22/26 Break! Classes resume Sunday, March 29**

March Dates to Remember:

- 1** Family Program 10:30 and Home Study Meeting 10:15
- 4/5** Stations of the Cross for grades 5-8 at 4:30/6:30

MAGDALEN'S LITTLE PEOPLE *from Kathie Anderer*

Well, February is almost over and the weather sure keeps us guessing! One day it is winter, the next day it is spring. Our VIP Night was a huge success! What a fun night we had! Thanks to all that helped to make it a success. The children loved showing off their school and sharing their friends with their VIP.

We had a visit from St. George Church at chapel. It is such a pleasure to welcome all of these visitors to our chapel service each week. We also enjoyed our visit with Margaret Callaghan, Sister Joyce, and Mary Mahar over the past few weeks. We really missed not having Sister Maryetta join us because of her accident! We said lots of healing prayers for her and we hope to have her come visit again soon.

March is reading month. We have a trip to the Cromaine Library planned for March 12/13. The children really enjoy learning about the library and what it has to offer. We really enjoy our time there.

The end of the month the teachers and I will be attending the Teaching Conference in Grand Rapids. It is a great time to re-charge our batteries and learn some new ideas. It is a wonderful learning opportunity and we are thankful for the chance to attend.

Preschool sign up for the school year 2009/10 is in progress. If you or someone you know is looking for a pre-school for next year, please invite them in for a visit and to pick up an application. Our class lists will be compiled soon, so hurry and get your application turned in. We would love to have you join us! Have a wonderful Lent and God's blessings to you and your families.

TEEN NEWS

Nine years ago this month I was preparing for the birth of my first baby. I was excited, anxious and looking forward to the whole experience of having a baby. We bought new furniture, had baby showers; I bought all the right things including baby laundry soap to wash the new clothes. We rearranged the house and painted the nursery. We were excited and ready for what this new little person would bring to our lives. Nine years later and two more babies, life could not be more full of energy, excitement and fun. To think we wonder what we ever did before the kids came along! Now our lives are ruled by basketball games, afterschool activities, birthday parties and scheduled play dates. Whew.... when do I find time to be with God in prayer?

During February we begin the season of Lent, a forty day time-out from the stress of life to concentrate on our relationship with our Father in heaven. A time to reflect on the role God plays in our decisions, household management, and in our every day life. When I think about my anticipation nine years ago and all the preparation that goes into having a baby, I think I should plan like that for Easter. How am I rearranging my life to make room for God,

what am I buying differently to share my excitement with others, what is ruling, my time with God in prayer, or lack of time for prayer? These are all things to consider during this season. Let go of some of the things that rule your thoughts and let God in to help redirect your heart, your spending, and your thoughts. Ask for help where you need it. Share your desires for what you hope to gain during Lent with someone and share your experience together for greater growth and joy.

On Monday, March 2, I am having a meeting for those interested in the National Catholic Youth Conference. It will begin after 7 pm Evening Prayer. We will be talking about the details of our trip scheduled for November 19-22 to Kansas City, MO. At that meeting there will be a \$50 nonrefundable deposit required to reserve your spot. There are a limited number of spaces, so contact me at margaretcallaghan766@msn.com or via phone in the parish office to reserve your place. At the meeting we will be talking about fundraising opportunities as well.

EDGE NEWS

[6 - 8 graders]

Calling all 6, 7 and 8th graders!!! Come on the following dates. Monday evenings are from 7-8:30. Check out EDGE!!

Saturday March 14th – Diocesan Middle School Rally. Contact margaretcallaghan766@msn.com for more information and paperwork.

Monday March 23 Come and reflect on the season of Lent and our actions EDGE style with our Step Forward activity.

Monday April 27th Our last EDGE for the year. We promise to end the year in our usually wild and crazy EDGE style!!

It is youth ministry planned with you in mind. There is food, fun, discussion, prayer and more fun!! It's a great way to meet cool people and get involved!! Don't miss out on the fun; bring a friend - check us out

NEW MEMBERS

JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2009



- Jeffery & Jennifer Burns, Riley, Addison
- John & Margaret Counihan
- Wayne & Maureen Fitzgerald
- William & Linda Lord, Courtney, Chelsea, Lindsay
- James & Kathleen Mitchell
- Lawrence & Donna Podpora
- Christopher & Jodi Rochowiak, Samuel, Maxwell
- Scott Ross, Adrianna, Sophia
- Larry & Rachelle Stawiarski, Ethan, Christian

THANKS AND PRAISE

We give thanks and praise to all the wonderful people who prepare our mailings every month. These devoted people collate, fold, tape and place mailing addresses on all our *Visionaries* and other special mailings. We could not do it without you! Thanks!

We would like to thank and praise our Knights of Columbus who cooked and served a tasty luncheon for our Confirmation candidates and their parents! We appreciate your generosity. You are #1 with all of us!

COUNCIL COMMENDATIONS

Our Pastoral Council would like to commend all those who assist with blood pressure screening. Thanks for making us a healthier community.

Our Blood Drives are very successful due to some wonderful people. Special thanks goes out to Bob and Claudia Sexton, Betty Prise and Dianne Sweeter.



SEDER MEAL

Our annual Seder celebrates our Christian heritage by observing the Jewish Seder, the Passover, the meal that served as Jesus' Last Supper and the origin of the Eucharist. Sharing this meal promises to lead us deeper into the holiest days of Holy Week, the Triduum. This year we offer a few authentic Jewish dishes, but most of the meal is pot luck. Everyone is welcome, and some folks make this an annual part of Holy Week. It will be celebrated April 8 at 6:30 pm in the social hall.

ADULT CONFIRMATION The Sacrament of Confirmation completes our initiation into the Catholic Church. Each year the eight parishes of the Livingston Vicariate combine efforts to offer 6 classes to prepare adults who have not yet been Confirmed in the faith. This year they will be held at St. John Parish in Hartland from 7- 8:30 pm on April 23, 30, May 7, 14, 21, 28. Anyone from our parish who participates will be Confirmed here on Pentecost Sunday.

HOUSE BLESSINGS The custom of asking for God's blessing on our homes is an old and venerable tradition. The Evangelization Team is planning to organize a series of House Blessings later this spring and summer. We are seeking Host families to provide a gathering of approximately 8 nearby families. Fr. Dave or one of the deacons will begin the blessing ceremony at the first house, then everyone will move from house to house and repeat the blessing prayers at each one until all the group assembles at the last house for a potluck dinner or dessert (depending on the time and day) and conclude this progressive blessing ceremony. Please contact Sr. Joyce if you are interested in Hosting or Coordinating the Home Blessings in your neighborhood.

FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES *continued from page 1*

caretaker relatives for a dependent child. All Michigan health care programs have income limits and possibly asset limits to qualify. Call the Livingston County Department of Human Services (517-548-0200) or visit www.Mich.gov/dhs to learn more about Medicaid, the Medicare Savings Program, MIChoice, etc.

Prescription Medication Needs Many large stores with pharmacies, such as Target, Kroger, Meijer and Walmart now offer prescription medication assistance with \$4 generic prescription drug or free antibiotic programs. Visit these pharmacies to see which medications are included in the program and ask your physician if these medications would be appropriate to treat your condition.

If you have a condition that must be treated with non-generic medications or medications not on the various drug formularies of these stores, you may want to visit www.NeedyMeds.org to investigate whether a patient assistance program or other program may be used to obtain your medication.

St. Luke Hometown Healthcare- This Brighton clinic also offers basic health care and psychiatric services at reasonable prices for those without insurance. St. Luke operates from a "traditional Christian (Catholic) point of view" seeking to heal body, mind and spirit. Call 810-623-8182 for information and appointments, or visit www.stlukehome.com.

VINA (Vision, Integrity, Need and Action) Community Dental Center This dental clinic is staffed by volunteer professionals and provides services to Livingston County residents. To be eligible you must be an adult 19 years and older that are without dental insurance and have limited household incomes. Each visit costs \$15 regardless

which service is rendered. More difficult dental work is referred to other providers, University of Michigan or University of Detroit Dental Schools. Call 810-844-0240 to apply or visit www.vinadental.org for more information. Volunteers are needed to staff the office; if interested e-mail the office at vinadental@yahoo.com.

Whitmore Lake Health Clinic This medical clinic offers basic health care services to those with or without insurance, and participates with the Livingston and Washtenaw County Health Plans. A sliding-fee scale is available to those without insurance. Call 734-449-2033 for information and appointments.

Emotional Support Losing a job is one of the most stressful events that can happen to a person. It feels personal even when it is part of a mass corporate layoff or the closing of a business. Involuntary unemployment evokes a lot of emotions, from anger to sadness. It is easy to become depressed. Grief over the loss of part of one's identity or purpose is common. The difficulty of the experience can depend on the degree of emotional investment one had in the job. The aftermath of job loss also has a significant impact on family members, who are dealing with their own fears and other concerns.

If you (or a family member) has lost a job and are dealing with the transition it brings, you can request a BeFriender to be a companion on your journey.

BeFrienders provide a listening presence that is respectful and nonjudgmental. To request a BeFriender or to find out more about BeFriender Ministry, call Gary Prise (810-533-4850), Rene Tolen (810-227-6035), Judy Scharf (248-202-3199), or George Schultz (517-548-4856).

THE DEACONS BENCH

from Dave Scharf

Let me tell you a story, but there IS a test at the end.

A woman came out of her house and saw three old men with long white beards sitting in her front yard. She did not recognize them. She said "I don't think I know you, but you must be hungry. Please come in and have something to eat." "Is the man of the house home?" they asked.

"No," she said. "He's out." "Then we cannot come in," they replied.

In the evening when her husband came home, she told him what had happened. "Go tell them I am home and invite them in!" The woman went out and invited the men in. "We do not go into a house together," they replied. "Why is that?" she wanted to know. One of the old men explained: "His name is Wealth," he said pointing to one of his friends, and said pointing to another one, "He is Success, and I am Love." Then he added, "Now go in and discuss with your husband which one of us you want in your home."

The woman went in and told her husband what was said. Her husband was overjoyed. "How nice!" he said. "Since that is the case, let us invite Wealth. Let him come and fill our home with wealth!" His wife disagreed. "My dear, why don't we invite Success?" Their daughter-in-law was listening from the other corner of the house. She jumped in with her own suggestion: "Would it not be better to invite Love? Our home will then be filled with love!" "Let us heed our daughter-in-law's advice," said the husband to his wife. "Go out and invite Love to be our guest." The woman went out and asked the three old men, "Which one of you is Love? Please come in and be our guest."

Love got up and started walking toward the house. The other two also got up and followed him. Surprised, the lady asked Wealth and Success: "I only invited Love, why are you coming in?" The old men replied together: "If you had invited Wealth or Success, the other two of us would've stayed out, but since you invited Love, wherever He goes, we go with him. Wherever there is Love, there is also Wealth and Success." Whom did you choose? Why? (Food for Thought for Lent)

THE OTHER BENCH

from Jim Chevalier

A Prayer for our Country from Billy Graham: "Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self esteem. We have abused power and called it politics. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment. Search us, Oh God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Amen!" I would appreciate your feedback!



CHARITY & JUSTICE from Lisa Klein

OUR EASTER TREE OF LIFE will be in the Gathering Area from March 1st through March 29th. The tags on the tree represent the needs of senior citizens from Brighton, Howell, and Hartland Senior Centers, Catholic Social Services, Medilodge and Howell Care Center. You are invited to take a tag from the tree and return the unwrapped item or gift card by **March 29th**.

St. Mary Magdalen has a **RELAY FOR LIFE TEAM!**

This is a fun-filled overnight event sponsored by the American Cancer Society where our community gathers at the Brighton High School track with the goal of keeping people walking on the track for 24 hours. The event will take place on May 15 and 16, 2009. There will be sign-ups to participate as a walker, sponsor our team, or purchase a luminaria bag which honors cancer survivors and remembers loved ones lost to cancer. The luminaria candles line the track and are left burning throughout the night to remind participants of the incredible importance of their contributions. As volunteers and donors, our efforts support research, education, advocacy and services that allow the ACS to offer help and hope to people across the country when they need it most. Watch the bulletin and gathering area for more information as Relay for Life approaches. To learn more, go to www.relayforlife.com.



Questions on these or any other Charity and Justice Projects can be directed to Deacon Dave at the Parish Office or Lisa Klein at 810-844-0074 or lmispitzley@aol.com. C&J meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. All are welcome to join us!

LENT: A JOURNEY OF FAITH

During Noah's time, God flooded the world by sending the rain for forty days and nights. The great flood made an end to sin and offered a new beginning. During the days of Moses, God led the Israelites through the desert for forty years. This journey from slavery helped to prepare them to enter the promised land, the land of the covenant. Jesus, too, spent forty days of fasting and prayer in the wilderness to prepare for his ministry which would lead Him through suffering and death into the resurrection. For Christians, Lent is a similar journey. The prayer, fasting, penance and reflection of these forty days is meant to prepare us to live the life of Christ more fully. Catechumen, candidates and the whole Church seek the fullness of Christ's life. Beyond our personal lenten practices and the small faith sharing groups, our parish community offers the following ways for our members to be nourished and grow through these days of Lent:



MORNING LITURGY: Daily Eucharist, being fed on the Word of God and the Bread of Life, has been a part of our lenten observance since the early Middle Ages. Weekday morning Liturgies are celebrated in **Holy Cross Chapel at 9 am** on Monday & Tuesday, Thursday & Friday.

MONDAY EVENING PRAYER: Since the days when we were still a part of the synagogue, the community of believers joined together to pray in the evening. Using the Scriptures, we gather to raise our voices in prayer. This short service (approximately 30 minutes) will include a reflection on the themes of Lent. Evening Prayer will be celebrated **at 7 pm on Mondays** in the church.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LITURGY: Many cannot participate in the morning Liturgy during the week. This evening Liturgy offers these folks the opportunity to feed on the Word and the Bread of Life. The Evening Liturgy will be celebrated **on Wednesdays at 7 pm** in the church.

FRIDAY: THE WAY OF THE CROSS: St. Francis of Assisi set up the first Stations of the Cross in Jerusalem and created the prayer service that would help pilgrims commemorate that last journey of the Lord. He re-created these stations in parish churches so that all the faithful might also walk those last miles with Christ. Our celebration of the Way of the Cross will include a reflection on the meaning of one of the stations. The Way of the Cross will be prayed **on Fridays at 7 pm**.



ON FAST & ABSTINENCE DURING LENT

No one is obligated to fast or abstain during Lent as a matter of Church law **except on Ash Wednesday & Good Friday**. Abstaining from meat on the Fridays of Lent is strongly recommended for all those who have made their First Communion. Fasting during all of Lent (except on Sundays - when we always celebrate the resurrection) is also recommended for all those who are Confirmed. Anyone whose health would be adversely affected by the traditional fast or abstinence should, of course, choose another form of penance during Lent.

LENT: A TIME OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION *from Diane Kubus*

During Lent we are called to take a deeper look into ourselves and our lives, focusing especially on the areas where we need to change and grow. The Liturgies of Lent and the many opportunities for prayer and reflection in our parish help us to do that. The Sacrament of Penance especially helps us to heal, to change, and to grow. Many take advantage of what this Sacrament offers, but many do not. I would like to share a part of a reflection we have done with those who are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Penance.

When we prepare to celebrate Penance, it is not just thinking of what our sins are. We need to take that deeper look at ourselves and our lives; at who we are and who we *can* be. As a part of this reflection we need to ask ourselves some important questions: What has caused me to sin? Is it an attitude I have that I need to change? How can I become better? Does my perception of others need to change? When we see the truth about ourselves we are able to change and become better. We feel better about ourselves and others and the burden of sin is lifted.

Lent is also a time to reflect on God's great love for us. That is ultimately what the Sacrament of Penance is all about. God loves us much more than we can ever imagine, and no matter what we have done, God is continuously blessing us with His gifts of mercy and forgiveness.

I love Lent! Every year during this season I learn something new about myself and others and the world around us. I experience a change and growth that I never thought would ever happen. God always amazes me in this way and very often surprises me, and I always feel and come to know God's love more in my life during Lent.

You will find the different opportunities for prayer and reflection in our parish during Lent in this newsletter. I especially encourage you to come the **First Sunday of Lent, March 1**, to our Day Chapel to spend some quiet time in prayer – with the Lord. Stay as long as you like. "It's in the quiet that we hear God's voice." Sometimes I think God constantly and patiently waits for us to quiet ourselves and stop what we're doing to listen - so that He can speak to us! I hope you will find that spending some time alone with the Lord is the best way to prepare for Lent and to make the most of Lent. Blessings on the journey!

SAINT MARY MAGDALEN PARISH

2201 South Old US 23 Highway
Brighton, Michigan 48114-7609
(810) 229 - 8624
www.saintmarymagdalen.org

MARKING THE CALENDAR

February 21 (Saturday) **MARDI GRAS!**

Costumes, food, fun and dancing are all a part of this celebration in preparation for the fasting and penance of Lent. It will begin at 7 pm and end at 10 pm.

February 25 **ASH WEDNESDAY - A day of fast & abstinence**

+ Morning Prayer with Ashes at 7 am Liturgy and Ashes at 9 am
Evening Prayer with Ashes at 5 pm Liturgy and Ashes at 7 pm

February 26 \ March 5 **UNDERSTANDING the SACRAMENT of PENANCE**

Most people learned about this Sacrament as a child, and as a result, they have never been able to appreciate the spiritual growth and grace it can bring. Fr. Dave will be teaching two sessions to provide an adult understanding for those who would like to better use this Sacrament of peace. Both sessions will be on Thursday evenings from 7-8:30. Session I: Background of the Sacrament -- Session II: Sin & Forgiveness.

March 1 (Sunday) **A SPECIAL DAY OF PRAYER**

The Holy Eucharist is clear and convincing witness to Jesus' promise: "I am with you always until the end of time!" After the 11 am Liturgy, the Eucharist will be brought to Holy Cross Chapel and remain there until 4 pm, when we will return the Eucharist to the church for Evening Prayer. Throughout the afternoon, everyone, especially our Ministers of Prayer and our Eucharistic Ministers, are encouraged to come and spend some time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

March 15 (Sunday) **EUCCHARISTIC MINISTER FORMATION**

This is a special gathering for all Eucharistic Ministers to reflect on their special Liturgical ministry of distributing the Body & Blood of Christ. It will begin with prayer at 1:30 and continue with reflections and faith sharing until we conclude with Evening Prayer (ending at 4:30 pm).

