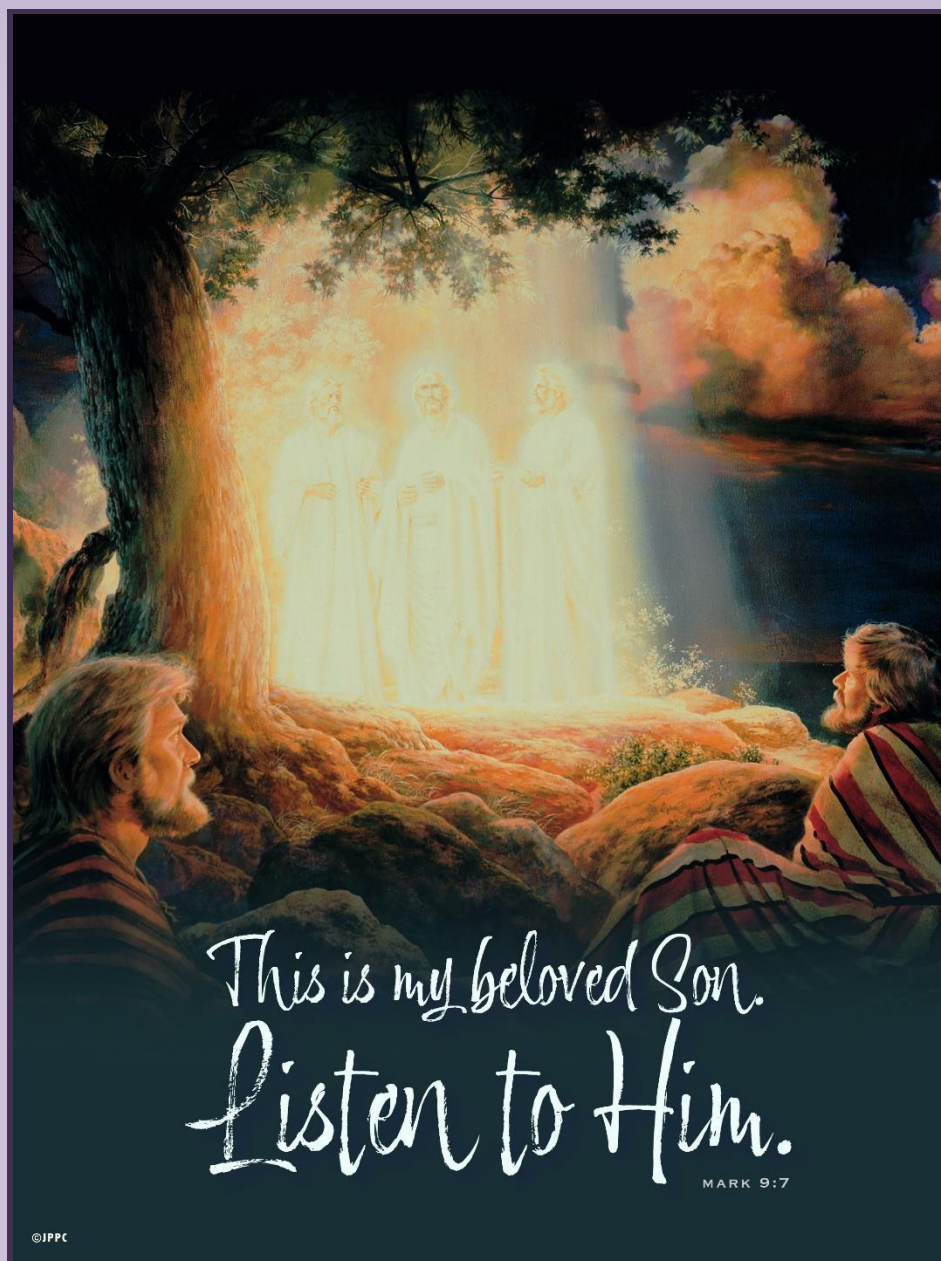


# The Second Sunday of Lent

## February 25, 2024



## Transfiguration of the Lord Parish

Saint Mary 14 Park Street + Sacred Heart 58 Church Street + Saint Mark 105 Stanley Street  
North Attleborough, Massachusetts

## Transfiguration of the Lord Parish

Rev. David A. Costa, Pastor  
Rev. Deacon Joseph E. Regali, Parish Deacon  
Sister Kathleen A. Corrigan, S.U.S.C., Pastoral Associate  
Rev. Kenneth R. Sicard, O.P. & Rev. R. Gabriel Pivarnik, O.P., Weekend Assistants  
Mrs. Martha O'Neill, Administrative Assistant  
Mrs. Jean Howard, Business Manager  
Mrs. Elaine Corvese, Director of Religious Education  
Mrs. Lisa Serak, Principal, Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School  
Mr. Adam Turcotte, Director of Music  
Mr. Miguel Peixoto, Buildings Supervisor  
Mr. James Kitsock, Building Maintenance

### Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School

Mrs. Lisa Serak, Principal  
57 Richards Avenue,  
North Attleborough, Massachusetts 02760  
(508) 695-3072 FAX (508) 695-9074  
[smsh@smsh.dfrcs.org](mailto:smsh@smsh.dfrcs.org) [www.smshschool.com](http://www.smshschool.com)

### Saint Mary Cemetery

Mr. Jarrod Ward, Superintendent  
Towne Street  
North Attleborough, Massachusetts 02760  
(508) 695-1173 or email [ripco@comcast.net](mailto:ripco@comcast.net)

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saint Mary Church • Saturday 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm

### Sacrament of Baptism

Baptisms are celebrated on designated Sunday afternoons at 12:30 pm, with a limit of four families at each baptism. Please contact the office at [stmaryna@noozi.com](mailto:stmaryna@noozi.com) for more information and available dates/locations.

### Sacrament of Marriage

Marriage is usually celebrated on Saturday morning and afternoon. Please contact the Parish Office at least nine months in advance to begin preparation.

### Sacrament of the Sick

Pastoral care to those in need of the sacrament of the sick is arranged through the parish office. Please call to arrange a visit.

### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is offered on the first Friday of each month in **Saint Mark Church** beginning at 9:00 am and ending at 6:00 pm with Benediction.

### Parish Offering

If you are attending in person, you may drop your contribution in the collection basket. You are welcome to mail your budget envelope to the parish office, at 14 Park Street, North Attleborough, MA 02760. You may also leave your envelope in the drop box located outside the parish office door, to the right on the landing. Or you can use this link for online giving:  
<https://chms.ecatholic.com/guest/mafrdiocese/31>  
Thank you for your ongoing support!

### Weekend Masses

Saturday 4:00 pm **Saint Mary Church**  
Sunday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**  
Sunday 9:30 am **Saint Mary Church**  
Sunday 11:00 am **Sacred Heart Church**

### Weekday Masses

Monday 8:00 am **Saint Mark Church**  
Tuesday 4:30 pm **Saint Mark Church**  
Wednesday 6:30 pm **Saint Mark Church (Lent)**  
Thursday 8:00 am Communion Service  
**Saint Mark Church**

**Links to:** Transfiguration of the Lord Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/Transfiguration-of-the-Lord-Parish-North-Attleborough-106529317647894/>

YouTube at <https://tinyurl.com/ysfaxaty>

### Parish Office

14 Park Street, North Attleborough,  
Massachusetts 02760  
Parish e-mail • [stmaryna@noozi.com](mailto:stmaryna@noozi.com)  
Parish website • [www.saintmaryna.com](http://www.saintmaryna.com)  
Phone 508-695-6161 Fax 508-695-5248  
Faith Formation • [TransfigurationRelEd@gmail.com](mailto:TransfigurationRelEd@gmail.com)  
Faith Formation • 508-695-3823  
Music Ministry • [transfiguration.na.music@gmail.com](mailto:transfiguration.na.music@gmail.com)





## February 24/25 – The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent

<b>Saturday</b> 4:00 pm	<b>February 24 – Vigil (St. Mary)</b> All Souls in Purgatory
<b>Sunday</b> 8:00 am	<b>February 25 (St. Mark)</b> People of the Parish
<b>Sunday</b> 9:30 am	<b>February 25 (St. Mary)</b> Gertrude & Raymond Vandette, Sr.
<b>Sunday</b> 11:00 am	<b>February 25 (Sacred Heart)</b> Thomas Sirois

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<b>Monday</b> 8:00 am	<b>February 26 (St. Mark)</b> Helen Poirier
<b>Tuesday</b> 4:30 pm	<b>February 27 (St. Mark)</b> Jeannette Raymond John Raymond ( <i>surgery</i> )
<b>Wednesday</b> 6:30 pm	<b>February 28 (St. Mark)</b> Connie Gonsalves
<b>Thursday</b> 8:00 am	<b>February 29 (St. Mark)</b> People of the Parish

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## March 2/3 – The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent

<b>Saturday</b> 4:00 pm	<b>March 2 – Vigil (St. Mary)</b> Thomas Isherwood
<b>Sunday</b> 8:00 am	<b>March 3 (St. Mark)</b> People of the Parish
<b>Sunday</b> 9:30 am	<b>March 3 (St. Mary)</b> Louis & Rose Shepard
<b>Sunday</b> 11:00 am	<b>March 3 (Sacred Heart)</b> Erin (Carroll) Capotosto

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## Parish Contributions

Collection for February 17/18: \$11,666.70  
Ash Wednesday Collection: \$3,688.00

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## Lenten Reconciliation Opportunities



The Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) is celebrated every Saturday afternoon from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. at Saint Mary Church. We will be scheduling an evening later in Lent where a number of priests will be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As soon as this date is set we will post information in the parish bulletin and on our social media sites.

## Lent 2024

**Daily Mass:** Join us for daily Mass, Monday through Wednesday, and a Communion Service on Thursday morning. The Scripture readings and prayers of Lent offer much food for thought, prayer, and action. Our individual journeys are supported and strengthened by the prayer and presence of others in community. The daily Mass schedule is slightly adapted for Lent to afford the opportunity for those who work to participate at daily Mass at least once during the week. All Masses/Communion Service are celebrated at Saint Mark Church. The schedule is as follows:

**Monday – Mass at 8:00 a.m.**  
**Tuesday – Mass at 4:30 p.m.**  
**Wednesday – Mass at 6:30 p.m.**  
**Thursday – Communion Service at 8:00 a.m.**

**Stations of the Cross:** Join us this **Friday, March 1**, as we pray Stations of the Cross in Saint Mary Church beginning at 7:00 p.m. Sister Kathee will lead this week's prayer and reflections. All are invited.

**Lenten Bible Study:** Fr. Costa will present part one of a two-part study of the passion account as found in the Gospel of Saint Mark, next **Wednesday, March 6**, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in Saint Mark Church. The Passion of Saint Mark is the gospel in which we participate on Palm Sunday this year. A copy of the gospel account will be distributed at the class. All are invited! We will meet upstairs in the church.

**Our Lenten Charity: Holy Union Sisters in Tanzania, Africa:** The Holy Union Sisters, who have served in North Attleborough since 1923, first began ministering in Tanzania in 1973 when two Sisters from the Anglo-Hibernian Province, Sisters Aquinas and Adriana, arrived to teach at the Maua seminary. Eventually the number of Sister missionaries grew, including Sr. Eleanor McNally, from Fall River, MA. Their work focused mainly on education.

One of the fruits of this ministry was the attraction many young women had to join Holy Union. Beginning in 1993, the Sisters began welcoming native Tanzanians who were interested in joining the Holy Union Sisters. Over the past ten years the number of vocations has steadily grown. Today there are 16 women discerning their vocation or in formation for profession of vows. This past October 12th, three native Tanzanians professed perpetual vows.

In order to encourage vocations and provide for formation, the Sisters are planning to construct a pre-novitiate house in Tanzania. As Holy Union becomes better known through ministry and presence throughout Tanzania, as well as active vocation promotion, there is need for a place to welcome and train future members. The Sisters first seek our prayers for these enthusiastic and dedicated young women who are discerning God's call in their lives. Secondly, donations received from our Lenten collection will assist the Sisters in building this center and providing the formation that is needed for young religious.

## Irish Night: Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup>



Get ready to immerse yourself in the spirit of the Emerald Isle at our much-anticipated Irish Night Event! It's time to don your best green attire and embrace the warmth of Irish hospitality, complete with a scrumptious corned beef dinner, live music entertainment, and exciting raffles that could bring a touch of luck your way. The Irish Night event will be held on **Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup>** starting at **6:30 p.m.** in **St. Mary Church Hall**. Tickets cost **\$20.00** per person and will be sold at all weekend Masses on the weekends of **March 3<sup>rd</sup>** and **March 9<sup>th</sup>**, or by calling **Karen Smith** at **(508) 212-7377**. Those of you who have attended this wonderful event in the past can attest to how much was had by all. We hope you can join us!

### 2024 Mass Intention Book

The 2024 Mass Intention Book is open. The current Mass schedule provides for fewer opportunities for parishioners to remember their beloved dead at weekend Masses. For this reason, we will schedule, when necessary, multiple intentions for weekend Masses. There is no limit on the number of daily Mass intentions. Please contact the office via email, phone, or in writing with your requests.



## DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?

*In the words of Pope Francis*

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

pietrafitness.com



~~"GOD WON'T  
GIVE YOU MORE  
THAN YOU CAN  
HANDLE."~~

*will help you walk through the  
unthinkable. You were never  
meant to 'handle' it alone.*

@SUNLIGHTINDECEMBER

### Friends of SSMH Outing

As announced in our parish bulletin a few weeks back, the Friends of SSMH is offering various one day and multi-day outings. Join us on Wednesday, April 24 for **The Beach Boys Ultimate Tribute** show, at Lake Pearl in Wrentham, MA. Price per person is \$89.00 and includes luncheon, tax and gratuity, and show ticket. Information flyers are available at the doors of the church or you may contact Nancy Chapman or May Courbron at 508-243-2904 or by email: [friendsofssmh@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofssmh@gmail.com) for more information.

### Tuesday Communal Rosary Schedule



**Tuesday, February 27, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)**

Tuesday, March 5, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)

Tuesday, March 12, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)

Tuesday, March 19, 2024: Prayer & Pizza (5PM)

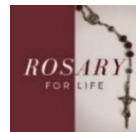
Tuesday, March 26, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)

Tuesday, April 2, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)

Tuesday, April 9, 2024: Rosary for Life (4PM)

### Rosary for Life

The Respect Life Committee of Transfiguration of the Lord Parish is pleased to announce that we will lead a Rosary for Life at 4:00 pm, prior to the 4:30 pm daily Mass in **Saint Mark Church** on the *first, second, fourth, and fifth Tuesday* of each month. The communal Rosary is also livestreamed for any participants who wish to join us remotely.



### Transfiguration of the Lord Respect Life Group

## RESPECT LIFE

### Monthly Meeting:

The next meeting of the Respect Life Group will take place on Thursday, **March 7, 2024 at 6:30 pm in Sacred Heart Church's Library**. We hope to see you there!



# SAINTS

## SAINT MARY-SACRED HEART

Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School:  
Your Story Starts Here!



Do you have a child who will be 4 years old by August 2024? Our **LITTLE SAINTS** program provides a faith-based environment where Catholic values are promoted and character development is reinforced every day. Our preschool program introduces Jesus' role by incorporating the love of God into every aspect of the day. Your child will learn from teachers and paraprofessionals who are faith-centered, loving, and nurturing. Call us at (508) 695-3072 to set up a time to tour our school and meet our amazing Pre-K4 staff! We invite you to learn more about our Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School students and programs by visiting our website [www.smshschool.com](http://www.smshschool.com).

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### SMSH Auction - Friday, March 8, 2024, Luciano's Lake Pearl in Wrentham, MA:

This year's auction is particularly special as we celebrate the centennial of our school. We are expecting 200 in-person guests and will reach even more through our online auction. We greatly appreciate any donations you can make to support our cause. Whether it's a family vacation getaway or gift baskets filled with items from local businesses, every contribution is valuable. We also offer advertising and sponsorship opportunities for those who prefer to contribute in that way. Please reach out to our Auction Co-Chairs, Lisa Augusto O'Neill or Jillian Figueiredo at the following email address: [SMSHauctioncommittee@gmail.com](mailto:SMSHauctioncommittee@gmail.com). Thank you for considering our request. We truly appreciate your support!

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### Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School Alumni:

Did you, your child, grandchild or other relative graduate from St. Mary's School, Sacred Heart School or Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School? If so, please go to the Saint Mary-Sacred Heart School website [www.smshschool.com](http://www.smshschool.com) and under the Alumni tab fill in the form on reconnect with SMSH. We appreciate your support in this important part of our school's history!

### Faith Formation Program 2023-2024

Director of Religious Education ~ Mrs. Elaine Corvese  
508-695-3823; [transfigurationreled@gmail.com](mailto:transfigurationreled@gmail.com)

#### Faith Formation Office hours:

**Monday – Thursday: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

#### Class Schedule:

February 25<sup>th</sup>: **Grades 1 & 2**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.  
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

February 25<sup>th</sup>: **Grade 9**, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

February 26<sup>th</sup>: **Grade 8**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

March 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Grades 3 & 4**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.  
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

March 4<sup>th</sup>: **Grade 5**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

March 10<sup>th</sup>: **Grades 1 & 2**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.  
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

March 10<sup>th</sup>: **Grade 9**, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

March 11<sup>th</sup>: **Grade 6**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

March 17<sup>th</sup>: **Grades 3 & 4**, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.  
(following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

March 18<sup>th</sup>: **Grade 7**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

March 25<sup>th</sup>: **Grade 8**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Please see website: [saintmaryna.com](http://saintmaryna.com) for the 2023-2024 calendar for all grades. Faith Formation classes are held at Saint Mark Church hall in Attleboro Falls.

#### Date of Confirmation:



CONFIRMATION

**April 7, 2024: 1:00 p.m. Saint Mary Church**

#### Dates of First Communion:



HOLY EUCHARIST

**May 4, 2024: 10:00 a.m. Saint Mary Church**

**May 4, 2024: 1:00 p.m. Saint Mary Church**

**May 11, 2024: 10:00 a.m. Saint Mary Church**

**Cancellation of classes:** In the event of cancellation of classes due to inclement weather, the Faith Formation Office will notify parents/guardians by email and the cancellation notice will also be on the answering machine of the Faith Formation office at 508-695-3823. Please note: if the North Attleboro School Department cancels school, Faith Formation classes are automatically canceled.

Preparation Lent Reflection  
Fasting Sacrifice  
Temptation

**Please Remember our Deceased Parishioners:**

*Eleanor S. (Grimaldi) Legere*

*David M. Schofield*

*Joseph F. Paulin, Jr.*

*Julia A. Homer*

*H. William "Bill" Donnelly*

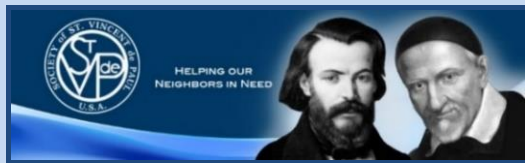
*Eternal rest grant unto our beloved dead, O Lord.*

*Let perpetual light shine upon them.*

**Baptismal Preparation Classes Have Resumed**

Parents requesting the baptism of their child should be registered members of the parish who attend weekend Mass here at Transfiguration of the Lord Parish on a weekly basis. Please pick up and complete one of the Parish Census forms if you have not already registered with the parish. If this is your first Baptism here at Transfiguration Parish, parents are asked to attend a brief baptismal preparation session. The next session will be held on Sunday, **March 10 at 12:30 pm** in the Sacred Heart Meeting Room. Advanced registration is required. Please call Martha at the parish office or email at [stmaryna@noozi.com](mailto:stmaryna@noozi.com) for more information.

**Transfiguration of the Lord Parish  
Saint Vincent de Paul Society**



Inspired by Gospel values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization, leads women and men to join to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are in need or are suffering, in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul. The Society meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month in the parish hall in Saint Mary Church. Please join us!

**Call for Assistance:**

If you need assistance, please call the help line for our parish Saint Vincent de Paul Society. They can offer information about the types of assistance available. Please call 508-212-4755 for help or more information.

**2023 Donation Statements Are Now Available**

The 2023 year-end tax reports will be available, **PER YOUR REQUEST, for those parishioners using the budget envelope system. Loose checks are not recorded by the budget company.** Please contact Martha in the office at [stmaryna@noozi.com](mailto:stmaryna@noozi.com) or call 508-695-6161 and leave a message with your name and address if you would like your statement. Contribution letters will be mailed. Thank you for your support of our parish community.



Saint Pope John Paul II once said:

*"In the Mass and in Eucharistic Adoration we meet the merciful love of God that passes through the heart of Jesus Christ."*

Please join us at **Saint Mark church** on Friday, **March 1<sup>st</sup>**, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. with Benediction. Remember, as we share in the work of Redemption, so will we be rewarded with our own redemption.

For more information call Joanne Regali (508-643-3821) or Arlene Hall (508-801-2243). Please leave a message if the call is not answered immediately.

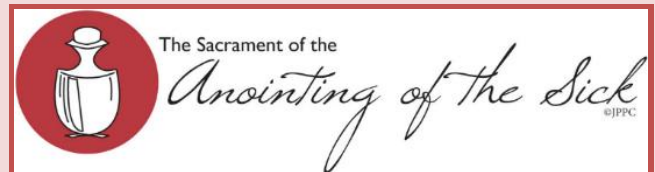
**Knights of Columbus Monthly Meeting**



**Knights of  
Columbus®**

Council #330 of the Knights of Columbus has been serving the Catholic Community of North Attleborough for 125 years. The Knights meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 7pm, in the St. Mary Church Hall. Please drop by on meeting nights if you'd like to learn more about the Knights. Council #330 is committed to assisting local charities that align with the values of our Faith such as the Parish, the Parish school, and Abundant Hope. Contact Jim Schromm with any questions: [jim.schromm@verizon.net](mailto:jim.schromm@verizon.net).

**The Sacrament of the Sick**



If an ill family member is desirous of or in need of the comfort and grace of the Sacrament of the Sick, please call the parish office to make an appointment for Fr. Costa to visit. With the present vocation crisis in our Diocese, priest chaplains are not available at Sturdy Hospital. Pastoral Care of the Sick is provided ably and graciously by Deacon Del Malloy. If a family member is at Sturdy and would like to celebrate the Sacrament of the Sick, please call the parish office in order for Fr. Costa to visit as soon as he is able. The hospital does not send out notifications to the parishes when parishioners are admitted.



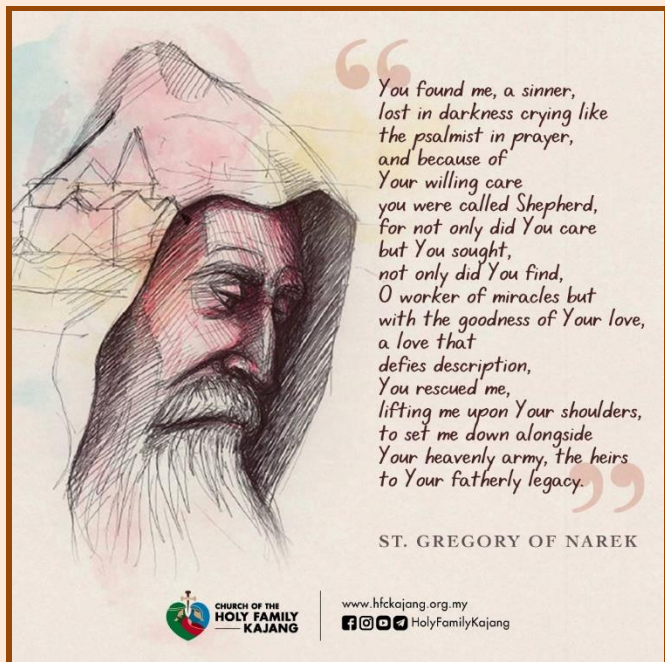
## Saint of the Week: Saint Gregory of Narek Feast Day: February 27<sup>th</sup>

Gregory was born in a village on the shores of Lake Van between 945 and 950. When his parents died, Gregory and his older brother were raised by a scholarly uncle who had them educated at the Narek monastery where he was a monk. The monastery was a prominent center of learning located in what is now Turkey. Gregory too entered the monastery and was ordained in 977.

A professor of theology, Gregory wrote a mystical interpretation of the Song of Songs, and a long mystical poem called the Book of Prayer or the Book of Lamentations. He described his poem as “an encyclopedia of prayer for all nations.” This classic of Armenian literature has been translated into 30 languages. The Russian text of the Book of Lamentations was set to music in 1985. Little else is known about Gregory, other than he died in the early 11th century and was buried within the walls of the Narek monastery where he had spent his life.

As opposed to the Armenian Catholic Church that began in the 17th century, the earlier Armenian Apostolic Church did not accept the Council of Chalcedon’s (convened in the year 451) teaching that Christ was fully divine and fully human. In 1996, St. John Paul II and Apostolic Catholicos Karekin I signed a declaration confirming the common faith of their two Churches. Prayer often unites groups of people who have seen themselves as very distinct—even enemies.

In 2015 as the world observed the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire, Pope Francis concelebrated a Mass at the Vatican with Patriarch Nerses Bedros XIX Tarmouni and declared the monk, poet, and saint of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Gregory of Narek, a Doctor of the Church. His liturgical feast is celebrated on February 27.



## The Season of Lent is Upon Us



### Catholic Men’s Conference: March 16, 2024

The Catholic Men’s Conference returns to Worcester’s DCU Center in 2024 with a program entitled: **‘You Shall Know the Lord.’** Men (*of all ages, including teens and college students*) are invited to this important conference, scheduled to take place at Worcester’s DCU Center on **Saturday, March 16, 2024**. Adult tickets are \$50 until March 4, 2024; afterwards \$60. Student tickets are always \$30. Tickets will not be available at the door this year because of advance planning for the luncheon. Visit the conference website at <http://www.catholicmenworc.org> for information and to purchase tickets online. Come and hear dynamic talks from Catholic leaders: Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers, James Wahlberg, Michael Nicholson, Bishop Robert McManus and Msgr. Thomas Sullivan. Adoration available all day. Closing Mass at 4:00 pm. For further information you can email [cathmenworc@gmail.com](mailto:cathmenworc@gmail.com).



The Prayer Shawl Ministry is looking for knitters/crocheters to help with making small Baptismal blankets to be given to the children being baptized in our parish.

We have been doing this for quite a few years now and some members of our group can no longer participate. Any help would be much appreciated.

Patterns are available for both knit and crochet if needed. For more information, please contact Nancy Chapman at [nchapman88@comcast.net](mailto:nchapman88@comcast.net).

# *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent - February 25, 2024*



Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

## *First Reading*

### **A reading from the Book of Genesis**

God put Abraham to the test. He called to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am!" he replied. Then God said: "Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you."

When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the LORD's messenger called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Here I am!" he answered. "Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger. "Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son." As Abraham looked about, he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So he went and took the ram and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son.

Again the LORD's messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said: "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing— all this because you obeyed my command."

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

## *Responsorial Psalm*

**R. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.**

I believed, even when I said,  
"I am greatly afflicted."  
Precious in the eyes of the LORD  
is the death of his faithful ones.

**R. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.**

O LORD, I am your servant;  
I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;  
you have loosed my bonds.  
To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,  
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

**R. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.**

My vows to the LORD I will pay  
in the presence of all his people,  
In the courts of the house of the LORD,  
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

**R. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.**



## *Second Reading*

### **A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans**

Brothers and sisters:

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him?

Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us, who will condemn? Christ Jesus it is who died—or, rather, was raised—who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*



# Gospel Acclamation

**R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!**

*From the shining cloud the Father's voice is heard:  
This is my beloved Son, listen to him.*

**R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!**

## Gospel

The Lord be with you.  
**And with your spirit.**

† A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them.

As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*



## SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

### Comment:

Today we hear of powerful, energizing promises fulfilled. We read of life drawn from a situation that portends cruel death. These stories take us to two summits—Mount Moriah of Abraham's nightmare, and Mount Tabor of Jesus' transfiguration. First, Abraham, our father in faith. We recall that he uprooted his family and journeyed from present-day Iraq across the Fertile Crescent to an unknown land. Abraham, who faltered and grew weary, moved steadily forward on the singular promise that his and Sarah's children would be as numerous as the stars on clear, cool nights and as many as the sands they could see in the burning and shadowless desert. Abraham and Sarah finally and at long last have the child of God's promise, a son named Isaac. And now, Abraham understands that this son is to be offered up—by Abraham himself. Mercifully, we are given a happy ending here. The mysterious God whom Abraham apprehends is not like the neighboring Canaanite gods, who demand human sacrifice. In the end, Abraham understands that God asks obedience and even sacrifice, but not this kind of sacrifice. Abraham's trust in God is absolute. God asks for and receives Abraham's fidelity, which is richly rewarded in his posterity—the twelve tribes of Israel. This first reading is set before us to heighten and enhance the layered meanings of the Gospel itself. For the Gospel also brings us to a mountaintop, this time Mount Tabor. Here three of Jesus' closest apostles—Peter, James, and John—are privileged to witness the vision of Jesus with Elijah and Moses. These two represent the whole of the Hebrew prophetic and patriarchal tradition. On this apex, heaven and earth meet, and the former and new dispensation meet also. Again, God's voice is heard, and it speaks again of sonship. On Mount Moriah, God's words rang in Abraham's ears, reminding him that Isaac is his son, his only son. Here the voice of God introduces Jesus as "my beloved Son." This ecstatic experience is so stunning and attractive that Peter would like it to go on forever. This is a deeply human response. As yet, the apostles do not know they will need all the inner strength they can summon as this Son, this beloved Son, enters into his passion and death.

### Reflection:

In the second reading, Paul asks the rhetorical question, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" We are tempted to say that plenty can be against us! Perhaps on our better or easier days we can see that God is on our side. But not always. Like the three who were with Jesus on the top of Mount Tabor, we see and we do not see—or we forget. After Jesus' death and resurrection, the apostles will remember and grow to understand this mix of death and life that transpired from that first Good Friday to that first Easter Sunday. On Friday, the apostles surely recalled who was against them. They succumbed to those forces, in fact. They subsequently recovered their balance, however, because God was for them and with them. They were forgiven, granted peace, and commissioned to preach the gospel. The resurrection of Jesus provided the light and the life that the apostles could live by. The vision on Mount Tabor offered a glimpse of the full life of God attained in the death and resurrection to come. The image on Mount Tabor hinted at the life of the risen Lord, who broke all boundaries and exceeded all dreams. Though God spared Abraham's only son, the Son of God was not spared. The zenith on Mount Tabor eventually is balanced by the nadir of the Garden of Olives, where Jesus prayed for deliverance. But ultimately, the glory prefigured in the Transfiguration will be the fate of all believers, just as it was for Jesus Christ. Jesus loved his life as dearly as we love ours. Yet he also recognized God's will and what was worth dying for. His embrace of his own death was equal to his embrace of God's words, "This is my beloved Son." For us, it is difficult to keep the seeming extremes of life and death in balance. Though our faith teaches us that life can come through death, we resist mightily. We need the vision of the Transfiguration to sustain us; we need the power of the Resurrection to strengthen us. We can find no better inspiration than our Lord Jesus Christ, the beloved Son, who has shown us the way through death to life.

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# Reflections for the Week beginning Sunday, February 25, 2024



Invest time each week to  
expand your vocabulary and  
deepen your faith.

25 February 2024

## WORD OF THE WEEK

### Agnus Dei ˈäg-nūs-ˈdā

Latin term for "Lamb of God." A title given to Jesus by John the Baptist (John 1:29); the litany sung or said by the assembly at Mass before Communion ("Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world . . .") introduced into the Roman Rite in the seventh century by Pope Sixtus; an image of a lamb often with a halo and a banner and cross used as a symbol of Christ; a wax disc sacramental.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-agnus-dei>

## CONTEXT

Either sin is with you, lying on your shoulders, or it is lying on Christ, the **Lamb of God** [Agnus Dei]. Now if it is lying on your back, you are lost; but if it is resting on Christ, you are free, and you will be saved. Choose what you want.

—Martin Luther

The address to the **Lamb of God** does not refer to Christ simply, but rather to Christ present in the Eucharist as a sacrificial offering.

—Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite*

## WHY IT MATTERS

The Passover lamb is the symbol of God's people passing over from slavery and death to freedom and life (Exodus 12). A "lamb led to slaughter" is Isaiah's prophesy of God's faithful servant (Isaiah 53:7). The victorious Lamb in Revelation is the light of God's holy city (Revelation 21:9-22:5). With all of salvation history as its backdrop, the **Agnus Dei** epitomizes the sacrifice of Jesus who achieves our freedom from sin and death. "It is love to the end," says the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "that confers on Christ's sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction (616).

## RELATED WORDS

Sacrifice | Paschal Lamb | Expiation | Fraction

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### What is the meaning of the Transfiguration?

Gospel Greek deliberately avoids the term *metamorphosis* in this account, an attempt to sever any "pagan" comparison. The brilliance of Jesus' face; the enveloping cloud, and Peter's suggestion of pitching tents evokes significant encounters Moses had with the Holy Presence. The simultaneous appearance of Moses and Elijah, representatives of Law and Prophecy, reinforce these anchors to the Hebrew story.

So what's it doing in the New Testament? Scholars offer three possibilities. One is that this event is the Gospel of Mark's misplaced Resurrection story. The second idea is that this story is a theological reflection of the first-generation church: a symbolic way of reconstructing what Jesus means to them. The third theory is that the Transfiguration is a private vision of Peter in which the truth about Jesus "came together" for him and shaped his understanding of the Second Coming before or even well after Easter. What's our final takeaway? Saint Paul declares that we will all be transfigured if we keep our sights trained on Christ.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-transfiguration>

## REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT (FEBRUARY 25)

### For the love of God

One of the deepest spiritual longings is to know ourselves as the beloved of God. Maya Angelou, in her memoir *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now*, recalls being asked by her teacher to read a section from a book that ended with the words, "God loves me." He instructed her to say the passage again and again. Eventually it dawned on her there might be truth in those words. "I suddenly began to cry at the grandness of it all," she writes. "I knew that if God loved me, then I could do wonderful things."

READINGS: Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Romans 8:31b-34; Mark 9:2-10 (26 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/0225.24.cfm>). "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."

## FAITH IN ACTION

Make a Lenten practice of repeating "God loves me," and share the Good News of God's love with others.

