



Lent – A Time of Renewal & Grace, 2019

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish – Palo Alto, California

*“For the creation waits with eager longing
for the revealing of the children of God (Romans 8:19).”*

Our forty-day Lenten journey toward Easter is fundamentally an imitation of Jesus’ time in the desert. It’s a time of simplicity, purification, and self-denial, of setting aside our distractions and diversion and getting back to basics: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Lent is also a season for confronting the desert of our own sin. Because God is the source of life, abandoning God forms a desert land around us. We tend to cover up our sins, make excuses for them, or dull our sensitivity to them. But during Lent, we intentionally venture into the desert, realizing the depths of our sin, and repenting, in order that we might find Christ’s path back to life. And so, with our eyes fixed on the coming glory of Easter, let us together enter into this desert time of self-denial, ready to break out of the cramped, barren space of self-absorption. (Bishop Robert Barron in his *Introduction to Lenten Gospel Reflections*).

Take some time to review the opportunities our parish offers to prepare us for Easter.

ASH WEDNESDAY, March 6 is the Church’s annual wake-up call. Our celebrations of the Eucharist on Ash Wednesday, which include the blessing and distribution of ashes, will be at **7:15AM, 6 PM & 8PM (Gregorian) at St. Thomas Aquinas Church** with a Communion Service with ashes at **12:15PM; 8:30AM & 7:30PM (Spanish) at Our Lady of the Rosary Church; 10AM (School) & 7PM at St. Albert the Great Church.**

THE LAWS OF FAST & ABSTINENCE - Ash Wednesday and all Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence from all meat (beast or fowl). Except for a serious reason, all persons fourteen years old and above are bound by this law. Ash Wednesday (March 6) & Good Friday (April 19) are also days of fast. All persons between the ages of eighteen, until the beginning of their sixtieth year are bound by this law. On these two days, one full meatless meal may be eaten. Two other meatless meals may also be taken sufficient to maintain strength; however, together they should not equal a full meal. Liquids, including milk and fruit juices may be taken between meals.

DAILY CELEBRATIONS OF THE HOLY MASS & ADORATION - Attendance at daily Mass and reception of Holy Communion is encouraged during the season of Lent. Mass is celebrated **Monday - Friday at 7:15AM & 12:15PM & Saturday at 12:15PM** at St. Thomas Aquinas Church; and **Monday through Friday at 8:30AM** at Our Lady of the Rosary Church. **The Stations of the Cross will be offered every Friday after the 8:30AM & 12:15PM Mass.** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is provided every Wednesday after the **12:15PM Mass** and on Wednesdays from **5PM – 7PM** at St. Thomas Aquinas Church.

THE LIGHT IS ON FOR YOU - SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION - Reconciliation (also known as Confession or Penance) is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ in His love and mercy to offer us forgiveness of any sins we have committed against God, our neighbor or ourselves. Sin prevents us from having a healthy, loving relationship with God, others and ourselves. This Lent, experience the healing and freedom of the Sacrament of Reconciliation at St. Thomas Aquinas Church from **5PM – 7PM: March 13, 20, 27, and April 3, 10 and 17.** Additional times for confessions are Saturday from **11:30AM – 12PM** at St. Thomas Aquinas Church & **4:15PM – 4:45PM** at St. Albert the Great Church. We will have two Lenten Penance Liturgies: **Monday, April 8 at 7PM at Our Lady of the Rosary, and on Monday, April 15 at 7PM at St. Albert the Great.**

S.O.U.P (SHARING OURSELVES WITH UNDERNOURISHED PEOPLE) - will be hosted at Our Lady of the Rosary Hall on the following **Wednesdays during Lent at 5:45PM: March 13, 20, 27, April 3, and 10.** The basic plan for SOUP is simple. Three families bring soup to the meeting and a few bring wine and juice. Each person brings a bowl and crackers or bread. We have about an hour of good conversation and a simple dinner. Donations will be accepted for Fr. Jack Donald's Central American Ministry, along with other worthy charitable causes.

PEACEFUL PRESENCE - **Monday, March 11, 7-7:30PM** at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 670 East Meadow Drive, Palo Alto and **Thursday, April 11, 7-7:30PM** at Unitarian Universalist Church, 505 E. Charleston, Palo Alto. In the midst of difficult times, ***Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice*** hosts "Peaceful Presence," a monthly prayer service on the evening of the 11th of each month, offering a time of quiet multi-faith prayers for peace and strength for the journey.

BIBLE STUDY - Each Thursday morning a Bible Study group meets in the Hospitality Center at St. Albert the Great site, from **10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.** Moderated by a volunteer, the group focuses on scripture, using various concordances, reflections, and study texts, as guides to understanding. All are welcome.

LENTEN SATURDAY MORNINGS OF CENTERING PRAYER on Saturday - **March 16, 23, 30, April 6, & 13, 2019, 9 am – 10 am** in the Thomas House Library, 745 Waverley St. (next to St. Thomas Aquinas Church.) Give yourself the gift of sacred time and space this Lenten season. Please consider attending this weekly one-hour prayer session on Saturday mornings during Lent. All are welcome.

LENTEN MORNING OF REFLECTION – **April 6:** Sr. Marilyn Wilson, BVM, will lead a Lenten Morning of Reflection on **Saturday, April 6, 9 am - 12 noon**, at St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center, 1095 Channing Ave., Palo Alto. In an informal but structured session, she will guide us through meditation, prayer, and dialogue into the possibilities of Lenten observance and service. All are welcome, there is no fee to attend.

TAIZÉ PRAYER - is a time for connecting with the Spirit in joy and gratitude and nurturing the presence of God within. Candles, melodic chants and inspirational readings will call you to a deeper awareness and appreciation of the beauty of God's presence. Join us on **Tuesday evenings during Lent: March 26, April 2, and 9 at 7PM at Our Lady of the Rosary Church.**

ALMSGIVING (*Works of Mercy on behalf of the Poor*). **Operation Rice Bowl** is a way to experience Lent through prayer, fasting and almsgiving, while aiding people in need through the work of **Catholic Relief Services.** Pick up your rice bowl at church this Sunday and bring it with you to Mass on Palm Sunday, **April 14.** On **Holy Thursday, April 18** at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, a collection will be taken up for the work of our local **St. Vincent de Paul Conference.**

BestLentEver.com – Don't just give up chocolate for Lent. Join *Dynamic Catholic* for the Best Lent Ever, a FREE email program designed to help you have a life changing Lent. Based on Matthew Kelly's latest book, *Resisting Happiness*, this year's program will help you identify what stands between you and happiness, and what you can do about it. When you sign up, you'll get short inspirational videos, practical tips, and a study guide (groups or individuals.) Visit: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/best-lent-ever>.

40 DAYS FOR LIFE - A Lenten Campaign runs from Ash Wednesday, March 6, through Palm Sunday, April 14. 40 Days for Life is a peaceful pro-life effort of volunteer Prayer Warriors and Sidewalk Counselors, committed to protecting women and their unborn children. The campaign consists of Prayer and Fasting, Community Outreach and Peaceful Vigils outside of the abortion mills at local Planned Parenthood clinics. Come pray with us—every innocent life saved is another blessing from God! For more information, visit, <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/san-jose/>

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION - On the 1st Sunday of Lent, **March 10**, during the **10:30AM** Mass at Our Lady of the Rosary our catechumens will be sent forth to the Bishop for their Rite of Election at St. Joseph Cathedral Basilica. On the 4th Sunday of Lent, the Rite of Continuing Conversion will be celebrated with our youth preparing for Confirmation at the **5PM** Mass at St. Albert the Great on **March 31**. On the **Third, Fourth, and Fifth** Sundays of Lent, the Scrutinies for the Elect will be celebrated with the elect during the **10:30AM Mass** at Our Lady of the Rosary.

SPIRITUALITY TUESDAY ASSEMBLIES - Deepen your faith by attending our Tuesday adult faith formation sessions this Lent. We begin at **7PM** at St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center. **March 12**: The Mystery of God: Exploring the Trinity (video). **March 19**: The Green Committee gives us an update on Climate Change. **March 26, April 2, April 9**: Taizé Prayer at Our Lady of the Rosary Church. **April 16**: Seder Dinner at Our Lady of the Rosary Hall at **6:30PM** (see below).

PARISH SEDER MEAL - Enjoy a traditional Seder lamb dinner, Scripture readings and an explanation of the Passover Feast, on **Tuesday, April 16 at 6:30PM, in Our Lady of the Rosary Hall**. The requested dinner donation is \$10. All proceeds will be sent to Father Jack Donald. He grew up in our parish and is a missionary in Honduras. Reserve your place by contacting Anne Morrison: ahbert55aol.com or 650-493-2998.

HOLY WEEK - Plan ahead to join us in the celebration of Holy Week, beginning with the traditional **Solemn Procession of Palms on Passion Sunday, April 14**, continuing into the Easter Triduum: **Holy Thursday's Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, April 18** at 7:30PM at Our Lady of the Rosary Church and 8PM at St. Thomas Aquinas Church (Gregorian); **Good Friday's Celebration of the Lord's Passion** at 12PM at St. Thomas Aquinas Church and 7:30PM at Our Lady of the Rosary Church (Spanish); Jesus' 7 Last Words & Stations of the Cross from 2PM – 4PM at Our Lady of the Rosary. **The "Night of all Nights," the Easter Vigil is on April 20 at 8:30PM at St. Albert the Great Church**. Having entered into the Lord's Passion and Death, we will celebrate the new life of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. We invite every parishioner to celebrate with us this *holiest* of weeks at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish.