



In This Issue:

2

Prepare Your Heart for
Easter 2017 *Lenten Mission*
With Bishop Sam Jacobs

3

Lent Is More Than
Preparation for Easter

4

“Front-Row Joes”: *Meet the*
Hieger Family

6

Lent
A Season Of Preparation

7

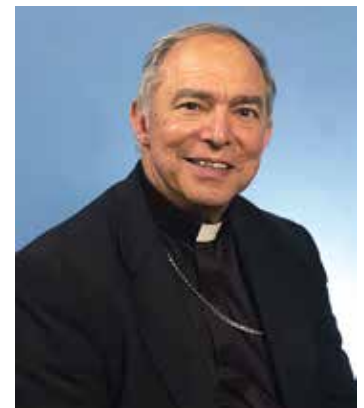
The Meal Train: *Feeding*
Parishioners Physically and
Emotionally

Prepare Your Heart for Easter 2017 Lenten Mission With Bishop Sam Jacobs

Lent is a time during which we prepare to celebrate the greatest day of the Church year – Easter. So, it is important that we enter in to the Lenten season with an open heart, eager to grow closer to Christ and renew our faith in the truths we profess.

In a very real way during Lent, we connect ourselves with Christ as He fasted and prayed in the desert those 40 days before He began His public ministry. He was aware of the enormity of the mission that laid before Him, and He knew how important it was that He prepare His heart and mind and connect Himself with His Father in a focused manner before He began to preach through the three years that lead to His passion, death and resurrection – the culmination of His public ministry.

For us as Catholics, the mission of our lives is to proclaim Jesus Christ and the life He offers through His passion, death and resurrection to the world. So, it is vital that we take opportunities to focus our hearts and minds on deepening our connection and our commitment to Him. Lent is one such opportunity. We are called to continual conversion during the season through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. And here at St. Anne, one way in which we can enter into the spirit of the Lenten season is by



Bishop Sam Jacobs, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux in Louisiana, will present this year's Lenten Mission

2017 Lenten Mission With Bishop Sam Jacobs

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participating in the parish Mission.

“The mission will help us to focus on the importance of Lent, and help us deepen our spiritual lives,” Fr. Kastl says.

Bishop Sam Jacobs, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux in Louisiana, will present this year’s Lenten Mission beginning with all Masses the weekend of March 4-5. The Parish Mission will then continue Monday through Wednesday evenings – Bishop Jacobs will celebrate Mass at 7 p.m. and present an extended homily focused on the importance of the Lenten season, and each evening’s festivities will conclude with a reception in the parish hall.

“This is a great way to experience Lent on a new level,” says Drew Fenton, our parish missionary. “It’s tempting to just do the same thing year after year during Lent. The Lenten Mission provides a simple, yet profound experience that helps each parishioner in their personal time of preparation for Easter.”

Bishop Jacobs brings with him a wealth of experience, having been pastor of numerous parishes throughout the

state of Louisiana, as well as serving as chairman of the National Service Committee for the Charismatic Renewal and as the Diocesan Director of Vocations. His homilies are sure to be inspirational and spiritually fulfilling.

We invite all parishioners, their families, and friends to join us. Childcare will be provided each night, and there is no need to register. Simply come as you can. We hope to see everyone there!

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– Drew Fenton, Parish Missionary

For more information on our upcoming Parish Mission, please contact the parish office at 918-251-4000.

Highlights of Our **2016** Stewardship Renewal

This past autumn, our parish leadership at St. Anne conducted the 2016 Stewardship Renewal. We are very happy to say that, per the results of our renewal, the Stewardship Way of Life is of utmost importance in our St. Anne parish family. We thank all who participated in the 2016 Stewardship Renewal!

We are happy to share with you some of the results of this past year’s renewal in this edition of our St. Anne newsletter:

❖ Commitment cards totaling 299 were returned during the renewal. This was a **50 percent** return rate from active households!

❖ There were 1,296 Prayer Commitments (Stewardship of Time) from 81 percent of participating households.

❖ There were 1,394 Ministry Commitments

(Stewardship of Talent) from 85 percent of participating households. Of these, 505 were new ministry commitments, and 889 were re-commitments to ministries.

❖ There were 239 Offertory Commitments (Stewardship of Treasure) from 80 percent of participating households. The average pledge was \$2,282.

If you didn’t get the chance to return a commitment card as part of the 2016 Stewardship Renewal, we invite you to consider how you can give of your gifts – your time, talent, and treasure – as an important part of our St. Anne parish community. There is something for everyone!

Thank you for making St. Anne such a vital parish community. God Bless, and have a wonderful 2017!

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Lent Is More Than Preparation for Easter

Dear Parishioners,

In 2013, Pope Francis issued his first significant work. It was what is called an “apostolic exhortation” titled *The Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium* in Latin). While Rome may use fancy words for some of these things, an “exhortation” of this sort does not change any official Church rules or traditions. However, it does offer advice and encouragement about how we should live our lives.

Pope Francis offers this kind of guidance on a regular basis, but this one in particular seems to present us with suggestions that are worthy of our consideration, especially during Lent. The pope called us to become missionary disciples: “The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 24).

Speaking about his exhortation, Pope Francis said, “One of the riches of the Second Vatican Council was to remind the Church of the two ‘lenses’ of the season of Lent: baptismal and penitential.” In fact, Vatican II noted specifically, “The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent – the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance – should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy

and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepared the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God’s word more frequently and devote more time to prayer” (*Companion to the Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1348).

It might be well for us to keep these in mind during Lent. There were vows made during our baptism, and this is the time of year to try to fulfill those vows, in addition to reaffirming them. We are given various opportunities to renew these vows, and we may tend to do it automatically without a thought. Now, however, is the time to think. Perhaps during Lent, we can renew these vows as families – and we must not necessarily do it in church or at a Mass. Then, we need to do something during Lent to help each of us understand what that renewal means.

The other important part of Lent pointed out by Pope Francis has to do with penance. Most of us have heard the traditional practices of Lent – fasting, prayer, reception of the

Sacraments, and almsgiving. These are things that may bring us closer to Christ. By fasting, we may gain a greater understanding of the hunger the Lord feels for our souls; by increased prayer, we join in union with God; through the Sacraments,

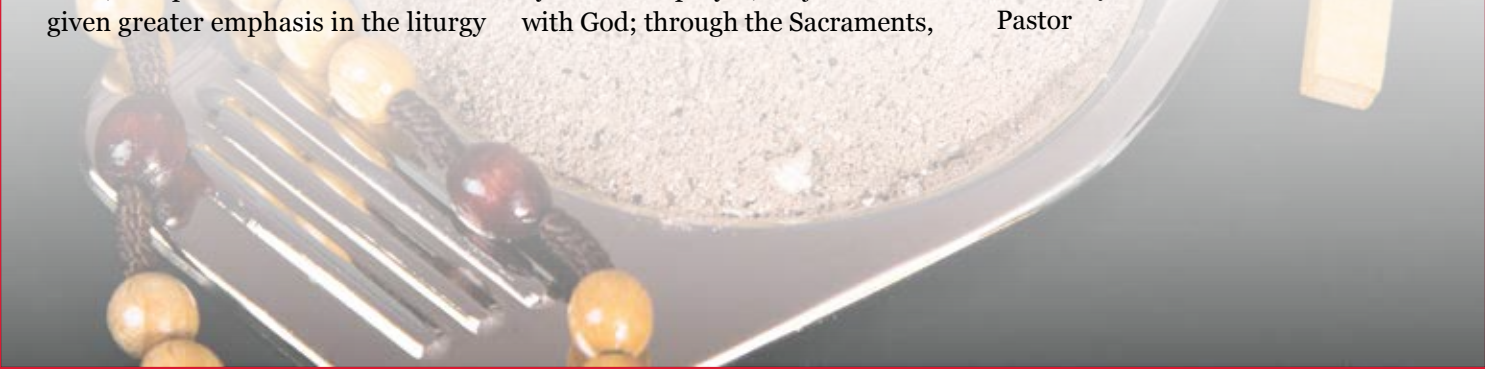


especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, we become a greater part of that union with God; through giving alms, we empty ourselves in part, just as Jesus emptied Himself for us on the cross.

This is a time to do more than prepare for Easter. This is a time to change how we may approach living and our faith. God bless you now and throughout this holiest of seasons.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Gary Kastl
Pastor



“Front-Row Joes”: M

Finding a parish community that you can truly call home makes all the difference – just like it did for the Hieger family.

“I grew up Catholic, but I never thought parish life could be like this,” Nicole Hieger says. “It’s just awesome.”

Nicole, her husband, Mark, and their three children – Avery, 14; Austin, 11; and Ayden, 6 – have lived in the Tulsa area for a number of years, but it was only in the past two years that they started attending St. Anne’s.

“We bounced around with kids and whatever Masses would work for us – until we found our home at St. Anne’s,” Nicole says. “In the past, at other parishes, we’d go to church every weekend, but it was never a certain Mass and we would just go to church to fulfill our obligation.”

But for the Hiegers, everything changed when they started coming to Mass here. They began attending the Sunday 5 p.m. Mass because their children enjoyed the non-traditional music.

“We just fell in love with it, and my kids were asking, every Sunday, ‘Are we going to Sunday at 5?’” Nicole says, smiling. “They started getting excited about Mass, and then things kind of steamrolled.”

At the encouragement of Fr. Kastl and the many parishioners who welcomed them and helped them to find their place, it wasn’t long before the Hiegers had found all sorts of ways to become involved in parish life.

“We’ve been to several parishes, and they always list all these different activities, different ways to get involved,” Nicole says. “But not until we’ve got to St. Anne’s did people really reach out to us and say, ‘I think you would like this.’ Having that personal invitation is how we really started getting involved. [Events] weren’t just in the bulletin – people reached out.”

Now, Avery is one of the lead altar servers, involved in both the school and the parish. Austin recently began altar serving, as well, and Mark became a greeter and usher. Nicole and Ayden found a good fit for them, serving After-Mass Snacks.

The family members have also found ways to be involved that have strengthened their faith. Nicole attends the women’s book study, Mark goes to the men’s events at the rectory, and they both participate in Supper Club,



The Hieger family became involved at St. Anne and found their parish home.

regularly gathering with several other couples for a meal and fellowship.

“We jumped in with both feet, all hands on deck, and we love it,” Nicole says.

Since becoming involved at St. Anne’s, Nicole has found that the way they practice the faith has completely changed.

“I always thought, ‘I’m doing enough,’ because they go to Catholic school,” she says. “But the faith really needs to transcend your home life – I’ve really taken that to heart.”

Now, prayer has become a regular part of daily life, and Mass is no longer a battle.

“The kids don’t dread going to Mass anymore,” Nicole

Meet the Hieger Family

says. “They go to Catholic school and they get religion every day and go to Mass every week. Before, they would say, ‘I went on Friday, why do I have to go on Sunday?’ Now, they love it, they look forward to it. It’s just such a great feeling when your kids beg to go to Mass.”

And not only do they love going to Mass, but since coming to St. Anne’s, the Hieger children now insist on sitting in the front row.

“We’ve become ‘front-row Joes’ and we can’t say no,” says Nicole, laughing as she reflects on how involved her family has become and how much things have changed in the past couple of years.

Nicole encourage other parishioners – particularly those who may feel that they’re still on the fringes of the community – to find ways to get involved, and be

surprised at the difference it could make.

“Stay after Mass for five or 10 minutes, and you’d be amazed who would come up and talk to you and share their story,” she says. “I challenge people to not just ‘dine and dash.’ Stay around the parish and get to know the community.

“Just get involved, pick one thing where you can give an hour or two, and build new relationships,” she adds.

Sometimes, it’s easy to make assumptions of what “being Catholic” feels like – but who knows, maybe making a few connections in the community, and finding ways to give back could make all the difference in the world.

“We’re just at such a happy place,” Nicole says. “It’s really hard to put into words, but we really just feel at home. It’s awesome to be a part of this community.”

If you are looking for a way to get involved that will help you get to know more parishioners, consider serving with our new After-Mass Snacks Ministry, held in the gathering space after each Mass. For more information or to sign up, please contact Nicole Hieger at 918-636-9350 or hiegers@cox.net.

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LENT

A Season of Preparation

EAST

PRAY

GIVE

THANK

SERVE

REFLECT

March 1st | Ash Wednesday

Mass at 6:30 am | 8 am | 7 pm

March 6th, 7th & 8th | Lenten Mission

Bishop Sam Jacobs
Mass and Reception | 7 pm

Every FRIDAY During Lent:

Adoration | 11 am to 6 pm
Stations of the Cross | 6 pm
Lenten Meal in Parish Hall | 6:30 pm
Lenten Movie in St. Francis Hall | 7:30 pm

Every SUNDAY During Lent:

Missionary Disciples/Adoration | 10:15 am

Adult Faith Formation | On MONDAYS

The Gospel of Mark | 7 pm | Starts Feb. 27th
Presented by John Mahon | St. Anne Hall

Adult Faith Formation | On TUESDAYS

What Catholics Really Believe | 7 pm | Starts Feb. 28th
Presented by Steve Creedv | St. Anne Hall

March 28th | Lenten Penance Rite | 5 to 7 pm

Other Confession Time During Lent Include:
Wednesdays | 12 to 1 pm & 6 to 7 pm
Saturdays | 3:30 to 5 pm
Sundays | 8:30 to 9 am

April 13th | Holy Thursday

Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7 pm

April 14th | Good Friday

Stations of the Cross at the Via Dolorosa | 3 pm
Confession | 4 to 6 pm
Good Friday Service | 7 pm

April 15th | Holy Saturday

Polish Easter Basket Blessing | 1 pm
Easter Vigil | 8 pm

April 16th | Easter Sunday

Mass at 9 am | 11:30 am | 5 pm

The Meal Train: *Feeding Parishioners Physically and Emotionally*

No matter how busy life gets, or the amount of joys and trials that face us, food remains a constant in each of our lives. A basic human need, meals can also serve as an avenue for spiritual enrichment and emotional support. It's where family bonds are strengthened, busy friends catch up, and how people show support during times of grief or suffering. That, explains parishioner Stephanie Miller, is the beauty of St. Anne's new Meal Train Ministry.

"The Meal Train Ministry provides cooked meals for a period of time – either short or extended – to parishioners experiencing life transition," Stephanie says. "Let's say someone in your family is having a baby. One of the easiest ways for you to show them love and support is by bringing them a hot cooked meal. The Meal Train takes that idea and extends it further, including those who are also sick, have experienced a loss, or have recently undergone surgery. Then, we open it up to the entire parish, allowing anyone to sign up and support those parishioners in need."

As the mother of a young child, Stephanie has been grateful for this opportunity to serve within the parish amidst her responsibilities as wife and mother. After all, says Stephanie, "you are already cooking for your own family each day," making it easy to fit this ministry into daily living by simply doubling proportions or buying extra at the store. In the process, volunteers are able to provide for those in need within our community both physically and spiritually, becoming the hands and feet of Christ in a concrete way.

"Anyone who signs up to participate in the Meal Train brings the meal in person to the individual suffering or in transition," Stephanie says. "I think the fact that they are able to make that personal impact, showing that they care, is the biggest way they are able to become Christ. It helps another person experience Christ's love because parishioners, even though they



For parishioner Stephanie Miller, pictured with her family, the new Meal Train Ministry has been a unique way for her to live out stewardship amidst her responsibilities as wife and mother.

might not personally know them, were willing to come and offer a willing hand."

Another blessing is the low-commitment nature of this ministry, with parishioners volunteering on a case-

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New members are always welcome to the Meal Train Ministry, helping to ensure that we as a faith community can meet the needs of those in transition for however long is needed. To join, simply contact Stephanie Miller at stephanie571@gmail.com. If you know of a parishioner or family who would benefit from receiving from the Meal Train Ministry, please contact the parish office directly at 918-251-4000 detailing the situation.

The Meal Train: Feeding Parishioners Physically and Emotionally *continued from page 7*

by-case level. This allows individuals or families to cook or buy food when they are able, without the commitment becoming burdensome. At the same time, says Stephanie, parishioners are able to grow in gratitude for their own blessings and more compassionate toward those going through difficult times.

“It’s a very low-key ministry, but it is also a very concrete way to help those in need,” Stephanie says. “I think it’s easy for us to forget the suffering that others go through. Oftentimes, things like giving birth or the loss of a loved one are viewed as simply part of life. But even though everyone goes through these experiences, the gift of a meal can make all the difference during those phases of adjustment and struggle.”

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