

# Sacred Heart Parish

1040-39th Street  
Sacramento, CA 95816

February 12, 2021

Dear Parishioners,

Let me begin by saying how grateful I am to the parishioners of Sacred Heart. Throughout these past 11 months I have been blessed to receive your prayers and solicitude for my health. It is heartening to see your presence at church, to witness the work of the many volunteers who step forward to help with all the safety protocols required for the celebration of Mass. Thank you to the many volunteers who help me to safely “open our doors.” The members of the Pastoral Council, Finance Council and all of our parish ministries have been faithful and a great help to our parish community. Our school community, administration, staff, teachers, students, parents, and all the families have been outstanding in their commitment and flexibility. When put to the test, we have met the challenges of our Covid constricted world. I am so very grateful to all of you.

We begin Lent on Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021. As we are all keenly aware, this Lenten season marks our second Lent where we labor under the threat, constraints, and uncertainties of the Covid pandemic. We continue to pray for all those affected by the coronavirus and for an end to the pandemic.

We are thankful that on February 7th we were able to resume gathering for Mass for those who are able to do so. We have all felt the sadness of Covid restrictions. It has been difficult to support friends and family at funerals, weddings, baptisms, and other sacramental moments. We have missed our choir, Schola Cantorum and their sublime concerts at Christmas, Easter and Lent. And yet, despite the catastrophic events since March of 2020 there is so much for which we need to be grateful. After the events of 9-11 the U.S. Catholic Bishops wrote: *“Above all, we need to turn to God and to one another in hope. Hope assures us that, with God’s grace, we will see our way through what now seems such a daunting challenge. For believers, hope is not a matter of optimism, but a source for strength and action in demanding times.”*

Let us take the words of the bishops to heart: Hope!

**LENT.** Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving are the touchstones of Lent. How can we engage in this penitential season with our whole heart? I would like to share with you some helpful resources. Consider adopting some of these practices during the 40 days of Lent:

## **PRAYER**

- Read or listen to Pope Francis’ short book entitled *The Church of Mercy, A Vision for the Church*. Available on Amazon. Click [here](#).
- “Year of St. Joseph.” There are numerous prayers and devotions for you at the Vatican website to honor St. Joseph. For more detail click [here](#). Watch the Bulletin for Parish activities surrounding this Year of St. Joseph.
- Unpack the Sunday Mass Readings. Visit the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website for 3-minute daily video reflections on the Mass readings of each day. Click [here](#).

- Another website to better understand Sunday Mass Readings is recommended by Fr. Robin Ryan, CP. Visit Catholic Theological Union website. Click [here](#).
- Attend in person daily Mass at Sacred Heart (8:00 am) or online at Catholic TV. Click [here](#).
- Pray [Morning](#) and [Evening](#) Prayer. Find Morning Prayer at [universalis.com](#).

### **ABSTINENCE AND FASTING**

- Visit the Diocesan website for details about abstinence and fasting. Click [here](#).
- Abstinence means to refrain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays for all individuals 14 years and older. Other forms of abstinence, for example, are abstinence from alcoholic beverages, television, video games, the internet, and social media.
- Fasting means individuals from ages 18 to 59 may only eat only one full, meatless meal and 2 smaller meals on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Voluntary fasting on other weekdays of Lent, especially on Wednesdays and Fridays, is highly recommended.
- When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, neither the law of fasting nor the law of abstinence obliges.

### **ALMSGIVING**

- 2021 Diocesan Annual Appeal has begun. Our Diocese helped over 362,000 people last year through the financial support of all of our parishes. Please consider helping those who are:
  - o recovering from natural disasters,
  - o experiencing homelessness,
  - o returning to society from jails and prisons,
  - o protecting the unborn, and
  - o living in poverty.

Your contribution sustains these vital Diocesan programs. ACA envelopes are available in the church vestibule or you may call the Parish Office and an envelope will be sent to you. For more information on how you can help, click [here](#).

- Catholic Relief Services collects money to relieve hunger and poverty throughout the world. Their website has wonderful examples of Lenten practices, inspiring videos about the good work of CRS, recipes for meatless meals, a booklet for praying the Stations of the Cross, and stories of hope. To see these resources click [here](#).

I look forward to joining with you on the Lenten journey to Easter. During this Lenten season we all share a common goal: to be renewed by prayer, fasting, self-denial, and almsgiving. May this season of repentance bring us the blessing of God's forgiveness and the gift of His light.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Robert P. Walton*

Rev. Msgr. Robert P. Walton  
Pastor