

BULLETIN -- FEBRUARY 14

Lenten penance services. We are happy to provide, for your convenience, the schedule for Lenten confession opportunities in the area. We shall keep you updated with any additional choices as we learn of them.

Sun., Feb. 14	3 p.m.	St. Dominic's
Thurs., Feb. 25	5-8 p.m.	SS. Peter & Paul and every church throughout the Diocese
Fri.-Sat., March 4-5	TBA	St. Andrew's 24 hrs. of confessions
Sun., March 6	11 a.m.	SS. Peter & Paul
Thurs., March 10	6-8 p.m.	St. Robert's, Ada
Sat., March 12	9:25-10:40 a.m.	
	1-3 p.m.	West Catholic H.S. at Kepha Retreat
Sun., March 13	3 p.m.	Our Lady of Consolation, Rockford
Wed., March 16	2-3 p.m.	West Catholic H.S. cafeteria
Thurs., March 17	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	St. Andrew's (for CCHS and others)

In addition, we have our regular confession schedule of Tuesday evenings at 6:30, Saturday afternoons from 3-4 p.m., and 2 hours each day during the MTW of Holy Week. There is no excuse (other than our own stubbornness) why anyone would not be able to come to confession during Lent. If it's been a long time, use THIS Lent to get back in the habit. Christ wouldn't have given us this great sacrament if he didn't intend for us to use it. Swallow your pride and follow the promptings of the Church on this. Not one saint has been formed in modern times without frequent resort to the sacrament of penance. It is an eminently available channel of God's grace and mercy.

Mercy, mercy! It's instructive to notice, as I myself have begun to notice in this Jubilee Year, how often the word "mercy" occurs in the prayers of the Liturgy. During the Mass, we ask God's mercy in various ways from beginning to end. Asking for mercy is not an empty plea. It is at one and the same time an acknowledgment of guilt, to some degree or another. We are all sinners, and we all stand in need of God's mercy. When we understand Romans 5:8, "It is precisely in this that God shows his love for us, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us," we begin to realize that mercy is something that God shows even to those who are not contrite. Mercy is a medicine. Its application is an act of God's grace. It will benefit us only if we allow it, but we cannot be saved without it. No wonder the prayers of the Mass have us repeating our petitions for God's mercy so frequently! We have no difficulty repeating our sins, so we should have no difficulty repeating our pleas for God's mercy. Are we worthy? Never. It's always undeserved.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion training is being held at the Catholic Information Center at Cathedral Square on **Saturday, February 27, 2016, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Fr. John Geaney, C.S.P. ("Father G") will be the presenter. Topics include assisting with Communion at Sunday Mass, bringing Communion to the ill and homebound, prayer and ritual resources, terminology, the use and care of sacred vessels

(ciborium, pyx, tabernacle, etc.). The training is offered for all preparing to become Extraordinary Ministers as well as for those already serving in this capacity. The purpose is to deepen participants' understanding and experience of the Eucharist as well as enhancing their special role in this ministry. **Participants must be recommended by their pastors**, so please let Father Den know if you are interested. Our parish will provide the \$15.00 fee per person for those we send, and that includes lunch.

West Catholic High School advises us that the following parish scholars (with grade level in parentheses) have made the Second Quarter Honor Roll: Joshua Augdahl (10), Michael Edozie (10), Holly Holtzclaw (10), Samantha Knight (11), Bridget Kohane (9), Maria Kohane (12), Olivia Marzolf (9), Ciera Rodney (9), John Worm (12), and Joseph Worm (9). Congratulations to these parishioners. And to all our other scholars, continue to do your very best. If you know you're working as hard as you can, your efforts are not in vain. Virtue is its own reward.

Confirmation news! Our students who are planning to be confirmed will celebrate the sacrament on **Tuesday, March 8, 2016**, at 7 p.m. at the Cathedral with Bishop Walkowiak. Sincere thanks to our catechist, Mrs. Cathy Lindgren, for her fine and conscientious work in preparing our young people. **If you are older than 8th grade**, have not been confirmed, and are not in RCIA, we'll be having classes on the Friday evenings of February 19, March 4, and March 18 to prepare you for confirmation at the Cathedral with Bishop Walkowiak on **Pentecost Sunday, May 15, 2016, at 3 p.m.** Attendance at all three sessions with your confirmation sponsor is a requirement. If those dates don't work for you, we suggest you try the preparation at another parish or wait until fall. Remember, your sponsor must be an active, practicing Catholic. A godparent is preferred, but any confirmed Catholic other than a parent is also eligible. Start thinking now about a confirmation name, the name of a saint whom you wish to honor or emulate in your own life. Remember that the Church is most eager that any Catholic being married should be confirmed before marriage, if at all possible. So, if you have a wedding coming up and either you or your Catholic fiancé is not yet confirmed, this is tailor-made for you. Please plan ahead. Call the parish office at 454-6000 to register, so we have a sufficient amount of materials available. God bless you!

Anyone in your family with a disability? Mark your calendars now! On Saturday, June 11, 2016, the Diocese is co-sponsoring a conference for all of our parents and families who have children with disabilities. The conference will take place at St. Robert's in Ada. It will begin at 1 p.m., and includes Mass with Bishop Walkowiak at 4:30 p.m. More details to come, but please plan ahead. This could be the first recognition our Diocese has given to those with disabilities in many years, going way back to the wonderful work of Sister Rose Callahan, O.P. St. Robert's has been a leader in offering religious instruction and events, but we are excited to see this diocesan involvement. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: Afraid of the sacrament of penance? Afraid to go to confession? Something you did, long ago or recently, eating away at you and you don't know how to say it? On the unfathomable mercy of God, ponder these lines as if Christ himself were saying them to you:

Nothing you confess
Could make me love you less.