

BULLETIN -- FEBRUARY 21

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.

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.

Our January CSA payback was a solid **\$733.00**, which is typical for the month following Christmas. Many people have major bills to pay, and have budgeted their CSA pledge to skip the Christmas season in anticipation of all those bills coming due. So thank you for your continuing faithfulness to the fulfillment of your pledges. We will be depositing this amount into our Improvement Fund due to the hefty number of unexpected emergency repairs that we have had come up in the last month or so.

An important development that you never heard about from the media took place in Marrakesh, Morocco, on January 25-27. Sponsored by Moroccan King Mohammed VI, this event brought together 300 prominent Muslim clerics and experts from Morocco to Indonesia. The goal of the conference was to prepare these clerics and judges to return home and spread the news of how the Islamic State (ISIS) and al-Qaeda have corrupted the message of the Quran to suit their own violent intentions. One after another, participants stood up to stress the importance of the rights of members of minority faiths (Christianity, Judaism, and so on) in countries where the majority follows Islam.

The big question is why this meeting was virtually ignored by the media, when so many people rightfully say that it is the duty of moderate and tolerant Muslims to stand up to the slaughter of "infidels" by the extremists. We hope and pray that the influence of these significant figures from throughout the world of Islam will encourage all their

co-religionists who wish to live in peace with their non-Muslim neighbors. We Christians must also take note that there *are* Muslims who are responding to the message of peace and tolerance which they find in the pages of their holy book. Any bullying or mistreatment of Muslims by Christians is not only contrary to the message of Jesus Christ, but also adds fuel to the sick thinking of the extremists. We must make sure that Muslims in our own country are not forced to lead lives of marginalization and persecution in retaliation for what ISIS and others are doing in the Middle East and elsewhere. If anyone has to live in our country in a state of fear, none of us is safe.

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.

Reading too much into it. One Sunday morning, the priest noticed little Jimmy standing in the vestibule of the church staring up at a large plaque. It had columns of names, with small American flags mounted on either side of it. The seven-year-old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the priest walked over, stood beside the little boy, and said quietly, “Good morning, Jimmy.”

“Good morning, Father,” the boy replied politely, still focused on the plaque. “Father, what is this?” he asked the priest.

The priest said, “Well, son, it’s a memorial to all the young men and women from the parish who died in the service.”

Soberly, they just stood together for a moment, staring at the columns of names. Finally, little Jimmy, with his voice barely audible and trembling with fear, asked, “Which service, Father, the 8:30 or the 10:30?”

I didn’t deserve a break today, but got one from **McDonald’s** of Outstate Michigan, when they sent a handful of coupon cards for a free Filet-O-Fish® Sandwich at any one of their local restaurants. It’s a Lenten practice they engage in, honoring the origins of the famous sandwich in Cincinnati, where it was developed in 1963 to support the Catholic community during the Lenten abstinence. The fast-food-fish sandwich was so popular in the Queen City of the West that it went national. The rest is fish-story. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: Lettuce represents a perfect balance between reason and emotion. The head and the heart blend into each other imperceptibly. (Put *that* in your sandwich and eat it! 😊)