



# MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD of JESUS PARISH

*A Roman Catholic Personal Parish  
for the Extraordinary Form  
in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.*

## Quinquagesima Sunday

March 2, A.D. 2025

### **Mass Schedule**

Sundays: 8am, 11am  
Monday: 12 Noon  
Tuesday: 12 Noon & 7pm  
Wednesday through Friday: 12 Noon  
1st Friday of Month: 12 Noon & 7pm  
Saturday: 9am

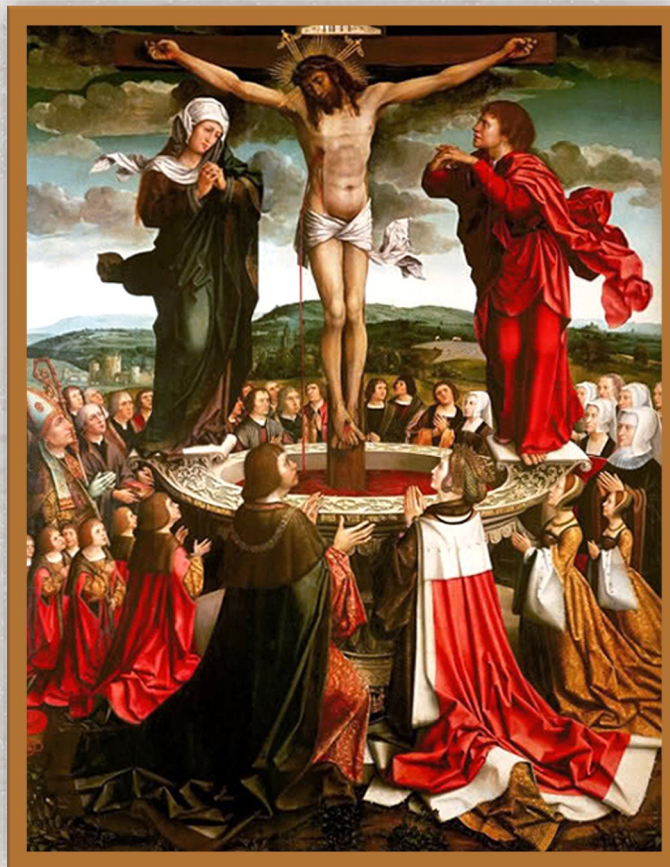
### **Confession Schedule**

Sundays: 7-8am; 10-11am  
Monday-Friday: 11:15-11:45am  
Tuesdays: also 6:15-6:45pm  
Saturday: 8-8:45am

*Please consult the Liturgical Schedule on page 2 for particular modifications to this standard schedule.*

### **Clergy & Staff**

Canon William Avis, *Pastor*  
[pastor@mpboj.com](mailto:pastor@mpboj.com)  
Canon Ross Bourgeois, *Parochial Vicar*  
[canon.bourgeois@institute-christ-king.org](mailto:canon.bourgeois@institute-christ-king.org)  
Geraldine Redic, *Business Manager/Safe Environment*  
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### **Contact Information**

Parish Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9am-2pm  
3250 California Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
Phone 412-761-1508  
Fax: 412-761-6454  
Email: [office@mpboj.com](mailto:office@mpboj.com)  
Website: [mostpreciousbloodparish.org](http://mostpreciousbloodparish.org) or  
[mpboj.com](http://mpboj.com)

*Pennsylvania Childline (report suspected child abuse)*  
1-800-932-0313  
*Protection of Children and Youth (diocesan office)*  
1-888-808-1235



***Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest***

***Veritatem Facientes In Caritate—Furthering the Truth in Charity***

## Liturgical Schedule

### Sunday, March 2, 2025

**Quinquagesima Sunday, 2nd Class —Violet**

8AM LMO + Michael & Doris Nardozzi  
(Judith Callaghan)

11AM HM *Pro populo*

Processional: *At the Name of Jesus* (pg. 54)

Recessional: *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* (pg. 78)

### Monday, March 3, 2025

**Votive Mass of the Holy Trinity, 4th Class—White**

12PM LM Nancy Saver (Saver Family)

### Tuesday, March 4, 2025

**St. Casimir, 3rd Class—White**

*Commemoration of St. Lucius*

12PM LM Ivana Warner (Marianne Warner)

7PM LM Living & Deceased Members of the  
Dindak Family (Brad & Jennifer Dindak)

### Wednesday, March 5, 2025 *Fast & Abstinence*

**Ash Wednesday, 1st Class—Violet**

12PM LM Spiritual & Temporal Welfare of Erin  
Shirkey (Family)

7PM HM Holy Face of Jesus (Anonymous)

Recessional: *The Glory of These Forty Days* (pg. 91)

### Thursday, March 6, 2025

**Votive Mass of Jesus Christ Eternal High Priest—White**

*Commemoration of the Lenten Feria, proper Last Gospel*

12PM LM Living & Deceased Members of the  
Merkosky Family (Claire Lucas)

8PM **Holy Hour of Adoration**

9PM **Compline**

### Friday, March 7, 2025 *First Friday*

**St. Thomas Aquinas, 1st Class—White *Plenary Indulgence***

*Commemoration of the Lenten Feria, proper Last Gospel*

12PM LMO + Lucas Traverse (Lynne Badstibner)

6:30 PM **Stations of the Cross**

7:15 PM LM + Deceased Members of the Camm &  
Stebleton Families  
(Matthew & Amanda Camm)

### Saturday, March 8, 2025

**Lenten Feria, 3rd Class—Violet**

*Commemoration of St. John of God*

9AM LM Baby Robbins (Robbins Family)

### Sunday, March 9, 2025

**First Sunday of Lent, 1st Class —Violet**

8AM LM *Pro populo*

11AM HM José & Annabel Piñero (Family)

Processional: *Attende Domine* (pg. 99)

Recessional: *Forty Days and Forty Nights* (pg. 60)

LM = Low Mass; LMO = Low Mass with Organ; HM = High/Solemn Mass

## Our Weekly Offerings

*Sunday, February 23, 2025*

Offertory .....\$10,461.00

Parish Appeal 2025 .....\$240.00

Easter Offering .....\$20.00

Easter Flower Offering .....\$25.00

Ash Wednesday .....\$5.00

Palm Sunday .....\$20.00

Holy Thursday .....\$5.00

Holy Land Collection/Good Friday .....\$10.00

*Attendance: 8AM 532; 11AM 446; Total 978*

## Parish Group News

**RESPECT LIFE GROUP (RLG)** The Gospel of Life is at the heart of this group. RLG provides support to promote a culture of life through three working subcommittees: Legislation, Education,

& Advocacy. RLG's **March/April Newsletter** can be found at the entrances.

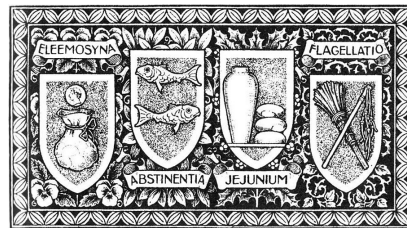
CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS will next meet on **Saturday, April 5th, beginning with the 9AM Mass. Next month's topic will be "On the Holy Mass".** Please contact [christianmothers@mpboj.com](mailto:christianmothers@mpboj.com) for more information. All adult women are welcome to attend.

SURSUM CORDA-YOUNG ADULTS GROUP is a nationwide initiative to foster the spiritual lives of Catholic adults, AGES 18–35, at Institute apostolates. To sign up for the mailing list and receive notice of future events, text **Corda** to 84576 and choose "SC Pittsburgh." For more information, contact José Piñero at 863.450.5143 or [sursumcorda@mpboj.com](mailto:sursumcorda@mpboj.com).

**Sursum Corda Luncheon – TODAY @ 1:30pm –** Ichiban Hibachi & Sushi Bar in Robinson Township.

## Collection of Palms Ends Today

The collecting of blessed palms for use on Ash Wednesday ends today. *Please do not leave more palms at the church after today.*



## LENTEN REGULATIONS

*Lent begins this Wednesday, March 5th.*

1. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence. The Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence in the United States.
2. The obligation of abstinence (refraining from eating meat) begins at the age of 14. The law of fasting (limiting oneself to one full meal and two lighter meals) obliges all between the ages of 18-59. No one should consider this obligation lightly.
3. Those individuals who have a medical condition in which fasting may be considered harmful are not obliged to fast, but should perform some other act of penance or charity.
4. Pastors and parents are to see to it that minors, though not bound by the law of fast and abstinence, are educated in the authentic sense of penance and encouraged to do acts of penance suitable to their age.
5. All members of the Christian Faithful are encouraged to do acts of penance and charity during the Lenten season beyond what is prescribed by the law.
6. As a general rule, a request for a dispensation from the obligation of abstinence on Fridays of Lent will not be considered unless some serious reason is present. (Attendance at social events, banquets, wedding rehearsals or receptions, or funeral wakes are not considered sufficient reason to request a dispensation.)

## Parish Appeal 2025

Today, the last Sunday before Lent marks the start of the Annual Parish Appeal. Each registered family or parishioner should receive a letter from Canon Avis, along with a pledge form/envelope. You may make a pledge using the envelopes/forms provided, or you can simply utilize the Parish Appeal monthly envelopes included in your envelope packets. Faith Direct also has a Parish Appeal category for earmarking donations, if you make use of our on-line contribution service. Your generosity to the parish appeal is greatly appreciated!

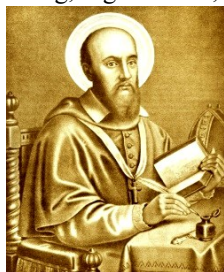
## Stations of the Cross During Lent

A venerable devotion during Lent is the *Via Crucis* or Way of the Cross. Stations are held at **6:30 p.m. on the Fridays of Lent**, followed by Holy Mass. On Good Friday, April 18th, Stations will be at 11 a.m. The faithful may gain a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions by praying the *Via Crucis*. This may be done privately or during public devotions.

**Introduction to the Devout Life**  
*By St. Francis de Sales*  
**Encouragement for the Tempted Soul**  
*(Book 4, Chapter 5)*

God never permits such grievous temptations and assaults to try any, save those souls whom He designs to lead on to His own living, highest love, but nevertheless it does not follow as a natural consequence that they are certain to attain thereto. Indeed, it has often happened that those who had been steadfast under violent assaults, failing to correspond faithfully to Divine Grace, have yielded under the pressure of very trifling temptations. I would warn you of this, my child, so that, should you ever be tried by great temptations, you may know that God is showing special favor to you, thereby proving that He means to exalt you in His Sight; but that at the same time you may ever be humble and full of holy fear, not overconfident in your power to resist lesser temptations because you have overcome those that were greater, unless by means of a most steadfast faithfulness to God.

Come what may in the shape of temptation, attended by whatsoever of delectation—so long as your will refuses consent, not merely to the temptation itself, but also to the delectation, you need have no fear—God is not offended. When any one has swooned away, and gives no sign of life, we put our hand to his heart, and if we find the slightest fluttering there, we conclude that he still lives, and that, with the help of stimulants and counter-irritants, we may restore consciousness and power. Even so, sometimes amid the violence of temptation the soul seems altogether to faint away, and to lose all spiritual life and action. But if you would be sure how it really is, put your hand on the heart. See whether heart and will yet have any spiritual motion; that is



to say, whether they fulfil their own special duty in refusing consent to and acceptance of temptation and its gratification; for so long as the power to refuse exists within the soul, we may be sure that Love, the life of the soul, is there, and that Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, is within, although, it may be, hidden; and that by means of steadfast perseverance in prayer, and the Sacraments, and confidence in God, strength will be restored, and the soul will live with a full and joyous life.

**“Many Apostolates, One Mission”**

Next Sunday, March 9, there will be a special second collection for the Institute of Christ the King’s U.S. Provincial Appeal, to help the Institute grow in the USA.

This Lent, you can make a difference in the Church today by donating to the people and the places that work to restore Catholic life and culture in America. Consider making a sacrifice of \$80—just two dollars a day during these 40 days—to help the Institute continue its work for the salvation of souls. Thank you for your generous support! May Christ our King reward you eternally. (You can also donate online with the QR code above.)



**Upcoming Events**

Friday, March 7—Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas\*: 12pm Low Mass with Organ; 6:30pm Stations of Cross followed by Low Mass  
 Wednesday, March 19—Feast of St. Joseph: 12pm Low Mass; 7pm High Mass  
 Friday, March 21—Feast of St. Benedict\*: 12pm Low Mass with Organ; 6:30pm Stations of Cross followed by Low Mass

*\*On feast days of the patron saints of the Institute, the faithful may gain a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions by assisting at Holy Mass at the parish.*

**40 DAYS FOR LIFE**  
 THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF ABORTION.



**From March 5<sup>th</sup> – April 13<sup>th</sup>**, you’re invited to join other Christians for **40 Days for Life** – 40 days of prayer and fasting for an end to abortion. You’re also invited to stand and peacefully pray during a 40-day vigil in the public right-of-way outside Planned Parenthood, 933 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh. Contact **Nikki Bruni**, [nbruni@40daysforlifepgh.com](mailto:nbruni@40daysforlifepgh.com), or **Jen at** [pghsaland365@gmail.com](mailto:pghsaland365@gmail.com)

**Most Precious Blood of Jesus parish has “adopted” Sunday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm to provide the prayer coverage at Planned Parenthood! Sign-up sheets in Narthex.**

**• 25,308 babies saved • 268 abortion workers converted • 150 abortion centers closed!**

**Kick-off Mass at Divine Mercy Parish, Epiphany Church on Tuesday, Mar. 4<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm, followed by a Eucharistic Procession to Planned Parenthood led by Fr. Christopher Donley.**

**[40daysforlife.com/Pittsburgh](http://40daysforlife.com/Pittsburgh) for more info, or check out our blog at [40daysforlifepittsburgh.com](http://40daysforlifepittsburgh.com)**

## **To All of Our Guests...**

The Canons and faithful of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish welcome you to our parish and to the Traditional Mass, celebrated in accordance with the classical Roman Liturgy. This personal parish was established by Bishop David Zubik on July 1, 2019, the feast of *The Most Precious Blood of Jesus*. Our parishioners come from all over the diocese for the prayerful tranquility of the Traditional Mass.

According to liturgical tradition, Holy Communion is received on the tongue, kneeling at the communion rail. Reception of Holy Communion is the sign of Divine and Ecclesial unity, so only practicing Catholics, free from mortal sin and who have observed the Eucharistic fast, may present themselves for Holy Communion. Visitors who are not of the Catholic Faith are welcome to join in prayer, but are requested not to receive Holy Communion. Those who need a low gluten Host should inform the usher as they approach the Communion rail, at the end of the distribution line for Holy Communion.

For more information about the parish, contact the Parish Office at 412-761-1508.

The pastoral care of Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish is provided by  
THE INSTITUTE OF CHRIST THE KING SOVEREIGN PRIEST.



MOST PRECIOUS  
BLOOD of JESUS PARISH

### **General Information**

**Bulletin Announcements:** Requests for proposed bulletin announcements must be submitted **ten days in advance** of the publication date. Submit to [bulletin@mpboj.com](mailto:bulletin@mpboj.com).

**Mass Intentions:** The Parish Mass Intention Registry is currently CLOSED. Mass intentions are accepted at specific periods in the year and announced in the bulletin. Instructions and forms are available during those periods.

**Parish News:** The parish uses **Flocknote** to circulate news and information. Please text MPBOJ to 84576 from your cell phone and follow the instructions, or check the parish website ([MPBOJ.com](http://MPBOJ.com)) for more information.

**Parish Materials/Events:** At both church entrances, there are racks containing church forms, reading materials and prayer cards. Please feel free to take what you need, but do not leave any materials without explicit permission from the Pastor. Parish events publicized on the bulletin boards at both entrances. If you are involved in an event that you would like to publicize or schedule, please provide a copy of the notice or request to [office@mpboj.com](mailto:office@mpboj.com) for approval.

**On Line Contributions:** Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish greatly appreciates all donations and contributions. If interested in making on-line contributions via Faith Direct, please visit: [membership.faithdirect.net/PA678](http://membership.faithdirect.net/PA678) or call 866-507-8757.

**Catholic Faith Formation and Spiritual needs:** For those seeking to join the Catholic faith, or who wish spiritual direction, please call the Parish Office for information.

**Rosary:** The Rosary is publicly recited one-half hour before most parish Masses.

### **Sacramental Information**

**Penance:** The parish offers the sacrament of penance forty-five minutes prior to each Mass. Confessionals are located on the Epistle (right-hand) side of the church, with a sign indicating where to stand for the line. There is an accessible confessional located on the right side of the double confessional, where the kneeler can be lifted for easy access. Both sides of the double confessional may be occupied at the same time. Start your confession when you hear the priest's blessing.

**Infant Baptism:** Baptism should be administered within two weeks of birth. Please call the Parish Office prior to the baby's birth, to begin arrangements.

**Holy Matrimony:** Couples planning to marry at the parish must contact the Parish Office at least six months in advance, to schedule an appointment to begin marriage preparation instructions.

**First Holy Communion and Confirmation:** School age students receive First Holy Communion and the sacrament of Confirmation as part of our Catechism Program. Please see the parish website for registration instructions.

**Extreme Unction/Anointing of the Sick:** If you need the assistance of a priest for someone who is dying, please contact the Parish Office at 412-761-1508. If after hours, listen to the prompts and select option #1.

**Funerals:** The funeral home should directly contact the Parish Office to make Mass and burial arrangements.

**Sacramental Records/Letters of Good Standing:** To obtain sacramental records or a letter in good standing, please contact the Parish Office at 412-761-1508 for instructions.

### **Safety Awareness**

In an effort to make Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish a safe place for all parishioners and visitors alike, please be mindful of our urban neighborhood and the constant traffic. If visiting the parish for Mass or a social event, parents should ensure their children's safety by maintaining prudent watch and supervision of their children at all times. When children are registered and/or involved in a parish related activity overseen by a parish program manager (e.g., Children's Choir; Catechism; altar server practice), at least one parent/guardian must remain on site for the duration of the program.

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# Lent from The Liturgical Year by Dom Guéranger

## THE HISTORY OF LENT

*N.B. Dom Guéranger wrote this work in the mid-19th century. For what now is obligatory concerning fasting and abstinence, please see the bulletin announcement "Lenten Regulations".*

The Forty Days' Fast, which we call *Lent* [In most languages the name given to this Fast expresses the number of the day, *Forty*. But our word *Lent* signifies the *Spring-Fast*; for *Lenten-Tide*, in the ancient English-Saxon language, was the season of Spring. Translator.], is the Church's preparation for Easter, and was instituted at the very commencement of Christianity. Our Blessed Lord Himself sanctioned it by His fasting forty days and forty nights in the desert; and though He would not impose it on the world by an express commandment, (which, then, could not have been open to the power of dispensation,) yet He showed plainly enough by His own example, that *Fasting*, which God had so frequently ordered in the Old Law, was to be also practiced by the Children of the New.

The Disciples of St. John the Baptist came, one day, to Jesus, and said to Him: *Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Thy disciples do not fast? And Jesus said to them: Can the children of the bridegroom mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast.* [Mt. 9:14,15].

Hence, we find it mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, how the Disciples of our Lord, after the Foundation of the Church, applied themselves to Fasting. In their Epistles, also, they recommended it to the Faithful. Nor could it be otherwise. Though the divine mysteries, whereby our Savior wrought our redemption, have been consummated, - yet are we still Sinners: and where there is sin, there must be expiation.

The Apostles, therefore, legislated for our weakness, by instituting, at the very commencement of the Christian Church, that the Solemnity of Easter should be preceded by a universal Fast; and it was only natural, that they should have made this period of Penance to consist of Forty Days, seeing that our Divine Master had consecrated that number by His own Fast.

St. Jerome [*Epist. xxvii. ad Marcellam*], St. Leo the Great [*Serm. ii, v, ix. de Quadragesima*], St. Cyril of Alexandria [*Homil. Paschal.*], St. Isidore of Seville [*De Ecclesiast. Officiis, lib vi., cap. xix.*], and others of the holy Fathers, assure us that Lent was instituted by the Apostles, although, at the commencement, there was not any uniform way of observing it.

We have already seen, in our *Septuagesima*, that the Orientals begin their Lent much earlier than the Latins, owing to their custom of never fasting on Saturdays, (or, in some places, even on Thursdays). They are, consequently, obliged, in order to make up the forty days, to begin the Lenten Fast on the Monday preceding our Sexagesima Sunday. These are the kind of exceptions, which prove the rule. We have also shown, how the Latin Church, - which, even so late as the 6th Century, kept only thirty-six fasting days during the six weeks of Lent, (for the Church has never allowed *Sundays* to be kept as days of fast,) - thought proper to add, later on, the last four days of Quinquagesima, in order that her Lent might contain exactly Forty Days of Fast.

*Lent*, then, is a time consecrated, in an especial manner, to penance; and this penance is mainly practiced by Fasting. *Fasting* is an abstinence, which man voluntarily imposes upon himself, as an expiation for sin, and which, during Lent, is practiced in obedience to the general law of the Church. According to the actual discipline of the Western Church, the Fast of Lent is not more rigorous than that pre-

scribed for the Vigils of certain Feasts, and for the Ember Days; but it is kept up for Forty successive Days, with the single interruption of the intervening Sundays.

We deem it unnecessary to show the importance and advantages of Fasting. The Sacred Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, are filled with the praises of this holy practice. The traditions of every nation of the world testify the universal veneration, in which it has ever been held; for there is not a people, nor a religion, how much soever it may have lost the purity of primitive traditions, which is not impressed with this conviction, - that man may appease his God by subjecting his body to penance.

St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. Jerome, and St. Gregory the Great, make the remark, that the commandment put upon our First Parents, in the earthly paradise, was one of Abstinence; and that it was by their not exercising this virtue, that they brought every kind of evil upon themselves and us their children. The life of privation, which the king of creation had thenceforward to lead on the earth, - (for the earth was to yield him nothing of its own natural growth, save thorns and thistles,) - was the clearest possible exemplification of the law of penance, imposed by the anger of God on rebellious man.

During the two thousand and more years, which preceded the Deluge, men had no other food than the fruits of the earth, and these were only got by the toil of hard labor. But when God, as we have already observed, mercifully shortened man's life, (that so he might have less time and power for sin), - He permitted him to eat the flesh of animals, as an additional nourishment in that state of deteriorated strength. It was then, also, that Noah, guided by a divine inspiration, extracted the juice of the grape, which thus formed a second stay for human debility.

Fasting, then, is the abstaining from such nourishments as these, which were permitted for the support of bodily strength. And firstly, it consisted in abstinence from flesh-meat, because it is a food that was given to man by God, out of condescension to his weakness, and not as one absolutely essential for the maintenance of life. Its privation, greater or less according to the regula-

tions of the Church, is essential to the very notion of Fasting. Thus, whilst in many countries, the use of eggs, milk-meats, and even dripping and lard, is tolerated, - the abstaining from flesh-meat is everywhere maintained, as being essential to Fasting. For many centuries, eggs and milk-meats were not allowed, because they come under the class of animal food: even to this day, they are forbidden in the Eastern Churches, and are only allowed in the Latin Church by virtue of an annual dispensation. The precept of abstaining from flesh-meat is so essential to Lent, that even on Sundays, when the *Fasting* is interrupted, *Abstinence* is an obligation, binding even on those who are dispensed from the fasts of the week, unless there be a special dispensation granted for eating meat on the Sundays.

In the early ages of Christianity, Fasting included also the abstaining from wine, as we learn from St. Cyril of Jerusalem [*Catech. iv.*], St. Basil [*Homil. i. De Jejunio*], St. John Chrysostom [*Homil. iv. Ad populum Antioch.*], Theophilus of Alexandria [*Litt. Pasch. iii.*], and others. In the West, this custom soon fell into disuse. The Eastern Christians kept it up much longer, but even with them it has ceased to be considered as obligatory.

Lastly, fasting includes the depriving ourselves of some portion of our ordinary food, inasmuch as it only allows the taking of one meal during the day. Though the modifications introduced from age to age in the discipline of Lent, are very numerous, yet the points we have here mentioned belong to the very essence of fasting, as is evi-



Our Lord's 40 Day Fast

dent from the universal practice of the Church.

It was the custom with the Jews, in the Old Law, not to take the one meal, allowed on fasting days, till sun-set. The Christian Church adopted the same custom. It was scrupulously practiced, for many centuries, even in our Western countries. But, about the 9th century, some relaxation began to be introduced in the Latin Church. Thus, we have a *Capitularium* of Theodulph, Bishop of Orleans, (who lived at that period,) protesting against the practice, which some had, of taking their repast at the hour of *None*, that is to say, about three o'clock in the afternoon [Capitul. xxxix. Labb. Conc. tom. viii.]. The relaxation, however, gradually spread; for, in the 10th century, we find the celebrated Ratherius, Bishop of Verona, acknowledging, that the faithful had permission to break their fast at the hour of *None* [*Serm. 1, De Quadrages. D'Archery. Spicilegium*, tom. ii.]. We meet with a sort of reclamation made as late as the 11th century, by a Council held at Rouen, which forbids the faithful to take their repast before Vespers shall have begun to be sung in the Church, at the end of *None* [Orderic Vital. *Histor.*, lib. iv.]; but this shows us, that the custom had already begun of anticipating the hour of Vespers, in order that the faithful might take their meal earlier in the day.

Up to within a short period before this time, it had been the custom not to celebrate Mass, on days of Fasting, until the Office of *None* had been sung, (which was about three o'clock in the afternoon,) - and, also, not to sing Vespers till sun-set. When the discipline regarding Fasting began to relax, the Church still retained the order of her Offices, which had been handed down from the earliest times. The only change she made, was to anticipate the hour for Vespers; and this entailed the celebrating Mass and *None* much earlier in the day; - so early, indeed, that, when custom had so prevailed as to authorize the faithful taking their repast at mid-day, all the Offices, even the Vespers, were over before that hour.

In the 12th century, the custom of breaking one's fast at the hour of *None* everywhere prevailed, as we learn from Hugh of Saint-Victor [*In regul. S. Augustini*, cap.iii]; and in the 13th century, it was sanctioned by the teaching of the School-men. Alexander Hales declares most expressly, that such a custom was lawful [*Summa*, Part. iv. Quaest. 28, art. 2.]; and St. Thomas of Aquin, is equally decided in the same opinion [2a 2ae Q. 147, a. 7].

But even the fasting till *None*, (i.e. three o'clock,) was found too severe; and a still further relaxation was considered to be necessary. At the close of the 13th century, we have the celebrated Franciscan, Richard of Middleton, teaching, that they who break their fast at the Hour of *Sext*, (i.e. mid-day,) are not to be considered as transgressing the precept of the Church; and the reason he gives, is this: that the custom of doing so had already prevailed in many places, and that fasting does not consist so much in the lateness of the hour at which the faithful take their refreshment, as in their taking but one meal during the twenty-four hours [*In iv. Dist. xv., art. 3., quaest. 8*].

The 14th century gave weight, both by universal custom and theological authority, to the opinion held by Richard of Middleton. It will, perhaps, suffice if we quote the learned Dominican, Durandus, Bishop of Meaux, who says, that there can be no doubt as to the lawfulness of taking one's repast at mid-day; and he adds, that such was then the custom observed by the Pope, and Cardinals, and even the Religious Orders [*In iv. Dist. xv., Quaest. 9., art 7*]. We cannot, therefore, be surprised at finding this opinion maintained, in the 15th century, by such grave authors as St. Antoninus, Cardinal Cajetan, and others. Alexander Hales and St. Thomas sought to prevent the relaxation going beyond the Hour of *None*; but their zeal was disappointed, and the present discipline was established, we might

almost say, during their life-time.

But, whilst this relaxation of taking the repast so early in the day as twelve o'clock rendered fasting less difficult in one way, it made it more severe in another. The body grew exhausted by the labors of the long second half of the twenty-four hours; and the meal, that formerly closed the day, and satisfied the cravings of fatigue, had been already taken. It was found necessary to grant some refreshment for the evening, and it was called a *Collation*. The word was taken from the Benedictine Rule, which, for long centuries before this change in the Lenten observance, had allowed a Monastic Collation. St. Benedict's Rule prescribed a great many Fasts, over and above the ecclesiastical Fast of Lent; but it made this great distinction between the two: - that whilst Lent obliged the monks, as well as the rest of the faithful, to abstain from food till sunset, these *monastic* fasts allowed the repast to be taken at the hour of *None*. But, as the monks had heavy manual labor during the summer and autumn months, (which was the very time when these Fasts "*till None*" occurred several days of each week, and, indeed, every day from the 14th of September;) the abbot was allowed by the Rule to grant his religious permission to take a small measure of wine before Compline, as a refreshment after the fatigues of the afternoon. It was taken by all at one and the same time, during the evening reading, which was called *Conference*, (in Latin, *Collatio*;) because it was mostly taken from the celebrated *Conferences* (*Collationes*) of Cassian. Hence, this evening monastic refreshment got the name of *Collation*.

We find the Assembly, or Chapter of Aix-la-Chapelle, held in 817, extending this indulgence even to the Lenten fast, on account of the great fatigue entailed by the Offices, which the monks had to celebrate during this holy season. But experience showed, that unless something solid were allowed to be taken together with the wine, the evening Collation would be an injury to the health of many of the religious; accordingly, towards the close of the 14th, or the beginning of the 15th century, the usage was introduced of taking a morsel of bread with the Collation-beverage.

As a matter of course, these mitigations of the ancient severity of fasting soon found their way from the cloister into the world. The custom of taking something to drink, on fasting days, out of the time of the repast, was gradually established; and even so early as the 13th century, we have St. Thomas of Aquin discussing the question, whether or not drink is to be considered as a breaking of the precept of fasting [*In iv. Quaest. cxlvii. art. 6*]. He answers in the negative; and yet he does not allow that anything solid may be taken with the drink. But when it had become the universal practice, (as it did in the latter part of the 13th century, and still more fixedly during the whole of the 14th,) that the one meal on fasting days was taken at mid-day, a mere beverage was found in sufficient to give support, and there was added to it bread, herbs, fruits, &c. Such was the practice, both in the world and the cloister. It was, however, clearly understood by all, that these eatables were not to be taken in such quantity as to turn the *Collation* into a second meal.

Thus did the decay of piety, and the general deterioration of bodily strength among the people of the Western nations, infringe on the primitive observance of fasting. To make our history of these humiliating changes anything like complete, we must mention one more relaxation. For several centuries, abstinence from flesh-meat included likewise the prohibition of every article of food that belonged to what is called the animal kingdom, with the single exception of Fish, which, on account of its cold nature, as also for several mystical reasons, founded on the Sacred Scriptures, was always permitted to be taken by those who fasted. Every sort of milk-meat was forbidden; and in Rome, even to this day, butter and cheese are not permitted

during Lent, except on those days whereon permission to eat meat is granted.

Dating from the 9th century, the custom of eating milk-meats during Lent began to be prevalent in Western Europe, more especially in Germany and the northern countries. The Council of Kedlimburg, held in the 11th century, made an effort to put a stop to the practice as an abuse; but without effect [Labbe, *Council.*, tom. x.]. These Churches maintained that they were in the right, and defended their custom by the dispensations, (though, in reality, only temporary ones,) granted them by several Sovereign Pontiffs: the dispute ended by their being left peaceably to enjoy what they claimed. The Churches of France resisted this innovation up to the 16th century; but in the 17th, they too yielded, and milk-meats were taken during Lent, throughout the whole Kingdom. As some reparation for this breach of ancient discipline, the City of Paris instituted a solemn rite, whereby she wished to signify her regret at being obliged to such a relaxation. On Quinquagesima Sunday, all the different parishes went in procession to the Church of Notre Dame. The Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Augustinians, took part in the procession. The Metropolitan Chapter, and the four parishes that were subject to it, held, on the same day, a Station in the court-yard of the Palace, and sang an Anthem before the Relic of the True Cross, which was exposed in the Sainte Chapelle. These pious usages, which were intended to remind the people of the difference between the past and the present observance of Lent, continued to be practiced till the Revolution.

But this grant for the eating milk-meats during Lent, did not include eggs. Here, the ancient discipline was maintained, at least this far, - that eggs were not allowed, save by a dispensation, which had to be renewed each year. In Rome they are only allowed on days when Flesh-meat may be taken. In other places, they are allowed on some days, and on others, especially during Holy Week, are forbidden. Invariably do we find the Church, seeking, out of anxiety for the spiritual advantage of her children, to maintain all she can of those penitential observances, whereby they may satisfy Divine Justice. It was with this intention, that Pope Benedict XIV, alarmed at the excessive facility wherewith dispensation were then obtained, renewed, by a solemn *Constitution*, (dated June 10, 1745,) the prohibition of eating fish and meat, at the same meal, on fasting days.

The same pope, whose spirit of moderation has never been called in question, had no sooner ascended the papal throne, than he addressed an encyclical letter to the bishops of the Catholic world, expressing his heartfelt grief at seeing the great relaxation that was introduced among the faithful by indiscreet and unnecessary dispensations. The letter is dated May 30, 1741. We extract from it the following passage: "The observance of Lent is the very badge of the Christian warfare. By it, we prove ourselves not to be enemies of the Cross of Christ. By it, we avert the scourges of divine justice. By it, we gain strength against the princes of darkness, for it shields us with heavenly help. Should mankind grow remiss in their observance of Lent, it would be a detriment to God's glory, a disgrace to the Catholic religion, and a danger to Christian souls. Neither can it be doubted, but that such negligence would become the source of misery to the world, of public calamity, and of private woe." [Constitution: *Non ambigimus*.]

More than a hundred years have elapsed since this solemn warning of the Vicar of Christ was given to the world; and during that time, the relaxation, he inveighed against, has gone on gradually increasing. How few Christians do we meet, who are strict observers of Lent, even in its present mild form! The long list of general dispensations granted, each year, by the bishops to their flocks, would lead us to suppose that the immense majority of the faithful would be scrupulously exact in the fulfilment of the fasting and abstinence still remaining; but is such

the case? And must there not result from this ever-growing spirit of immortification, a general effeminacy of character, which will lead, at last, to frightful social disorders? The sad predictions of Pope Benedict XIV are but too truly verified. Those nations, among whose people the spirit and practice of penance are extinct, are heaping against themselves the wrath of God, and provoking His justice to destroy them by one or other of these scourges, - civil discord, or conquest. In our own country, there is an inconsistency, which must strike every thinking mind:- the observance of the Lord's Day, on the one side; the national inobservance of days of penance and fasting, on the other. - The first is admirable, and, (if we except puritanical extravagances,) be speaks a deep-rooted sense of religion: but the second is one of the worst presages for the future. No:- the word of God is too plain: unless we do penance, we shall perish [Lk. 13:3]. But, if our ease-loving and sensual generation were to return, like the Ninevites, to the long-neglected way of penance and expiation, - who knows, but that the arm of God which is already raised to strike us, may give us blessing, and not chastisement?

Let us resume our History, and seek our edification in studying the fervor wherewith the Christians of former times used to observe Lent. We will first offer to our readers a few instances of the manner in which dispensations were given.

In the 13th century, the Archbishop of Braga applied to the reigning Pontiff, Innocent III, asking him, what compensation he ought to require of his people, who, in consequence of a dearth of the ordinary articles of food, had been necessitated to eat meat during the Lent? He at the same time, consulted the pontiff as to how he was to act in the case of the sick, who asked for a dispensation from abstinence. The answer given by Innocent, which is inserted in the Canon Law [Decretal., lib. iii. cap. *Concilium*; de Jejunio. Tit. xlvi.], is, as we might expect, full of considerateness and charity; but we learn from this fact, that such was then the respect for the law of Lent, that it was considered necessary to apply to the sovereign pontiff, when dispensations were sought for. We find many such instances in the history of the Church.

Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia, being seized with a malady, which rendered it dangerous to his health to take Lenten diet, - he applied, in the year 1297, to Pope Boniface VIII, for leave to eat meat. The pontiff commissioned two Cistercian abbots to enquire into the real state of the prince's health: they were to grant the dispensation sought for, if they found it necessary; but on the following conditions: that the king had not bound himself by a vow, for life, to fast during Lent; that the Fridays, Saturdays, and the Vigil of St. Matthias, were to be excluded from the dispensation; and, lastly, that the king was not to take his meal in the presence of others, and was to observe moderation in what he took [Raynaldi, Ad ann. 1297].

In the 14th century, we meet with two briefs of dispensation, granted by Clement VI, in 1351, to John, King of France, and to his queen consort. In the first, the pope, - taking into consideration, that during the wars in which the king is engaged he frequently finds himself in places where fish can with difficulty be procured, - grants to the king's confessor the power of allowing, both to his majesty and his suite, the use of meat on days of abstinence, excepting, however, the whole of Lent, all Fridays of the year, and certain vigils; provided, moreover, that neither he, nor those who accompany him, are under a vow of perpetual abstinence [D'Archery. *Spicilegium*. tom. iv.]. In the second brief the same pope, replying to the petition made him by the king for a dispensation from fasting, again commissions his Majesty's present and future confessors, to dispense both the king and his queen, after having consulted with their physicians [D'Archery. *Spicilegium*. tom. iv.].

A few years later, that is, in 1376, Pope Gregory XI sent a brief in favor of Charles V, King of France, and of Jane, his queen. In this brief, he delegates to their confessor the power of allowing them the use of eggs and milk-meats, during Lent, should their physician think they stand in need of such dispensation; but he tells both physicians and confessor, that he puts it upon their consciences, and that they will have to answer before God for their decision. The same permission is granted also to their servants and cooks, but only as far as it is needed for their tasting the food to be served to their Majesties.

The 15th century, also, furnishes us with instances of this applying to the Holy See for Lenten dispensations. We will cite the brief addressed by Xystus IV, in 1483, to James III, King of Scotland; in which he grants him permission to eat meat on days of abstinence, provided his confessor consider the dispensation needed [Raynald, *Ad ann.* 1484]. In the following century, we have Julius II granting a like dispensation to John, King of Denmark, and to his Queen Christina [*Ibid.* *Ad ann.* 1505]; and, a few years later, Clement VII giving one to the Emperor Charles V, [*Ibid.* *Ad ann.* 1524], and, again, to Henry II of Navarre, and to his Queen Margaret [*Ibid.* *Ad ann.* 1533].

Thus were princes themselves treated, three centuries ago, when they sought for a dispensation from the sacred law of Lent. What are we to think of the present indifference where-with it is kept? What comparison can be made between the Christians of former times, who, deeply impressed with the fear of God's judgments and with the spirit of penance, cheerfully went through these forty days of mortification, - and those of our own days, when love of pleasure and self-indulgence is forever lessening man's horror for sin? Where there is little or no fear of having to penance ourselves for sin, there is so much the less restraint to keep us from committing it.

Where now that simple and innocent joy at Easter, which our forefathers used to show, when, after their severe fast of Lent, they partook of substantial and savory food? The peace, which long and sharp mortification ever brings to the conscience, gave them the capability, not to say the right, of being light-hearted as they returned to the comforts of life, which they had denied themselves, in order to spend forty days in penance, recollection, and retirement from the world. This leads us to mention some further details, which will assist the Catholic reader to understand what Lent was in the Ages of Faith.

It was a season, during which, not only all amusements and theatrical entertainments were forbidden by the civil authority [It was the Emperor Justinian who passed this law, as we learn from Photius; *Nomocanon.* tit. vii., cap. i. It is still in force in Rome.], but when even the law courts were closed; and this, in order to secure that peace and calm of heart, which is so indispensable for the soul's self-examination, and reconciliation with her offended Maker. As early as the year 380, Gratian and Theodosius enacted, that Judges should suspend all lawsuits and proceedings, during the forty days preceding Easter (*Cod. Theodos.*, lib. ix., tit. xxxv., leg. 4.). The Theodosian Code contains several regulations of this nature; and we find councils, held in the 9th century, urging the kings of that period to enforce the one we have mentioned, seeing that it had been sanctioned by the Canons, and approved of by the Fathers of the Church [Labbe, *Concil.*, tom. vii. and ix.]. These admirable Christian traditions have long since fallen into disuse in the countries of Europe; but they are still kept up among the Turks, who, during the forty days of their *Ramadan*, forbid all law proceedings. What a humiliation for us Christians!

Hunting, too, was for many ages considered as forbidden during Lent; - the spirit of the holy season was too sacred to admit such exciting and noisy sport. The Pope, St. Nicholas I, in the 9th century, forbade it the Bulgarians [*Ad Consultat. Bulgarorum.* Labbe, *Concil.*, tom. viii.], who had been recently convert-

ed to the Christian Faith. Even so late as the 13th Century, we find St. Raymund of Peñafort teaching, that they who, during Lent, take part in the chase, if it be accompanied by certain circumstances, which he specifies, cannot be excused from sin [*Summ. cas. Poenit.*, lib. iii, tit. xxix. De laps. et disp., §1]. This prohibition has long since been a dead letter; but St. Charles Borromeo, in one of his Synods, re-established it in his province of Milan.

But we cannot be surprised that hunting should be forbidden during Lent, when we remember, that, in those Christian times, war itself, which is sometimes so necessary for the welfare of a nation, was suspended during this holy season. In the 4th century, we have the Emperor Constantine the Great enacting, that no military exercises should be allowed on Sundays and Fridays, out of respect to our Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered and rose again on these two days, as also in order not to disturb the peace and repose needed for the due celebration of such sublime mysteries [Euseb. *Constant. vita.* lib. iv., cap. xviii. et xix.]. The discipline of the Latin Church, in the 9th century, enforced everywhere the suspension of war, during the whole of Lent, except in cases of necessity [Labbe, *Concil.* tom. vii]. The instructions of Pope St. Nicholas I to the Bulgarians recommend the same observance [*Ibid.* tom. x]; and we learn, from a letter of St. Gregory VII to Desiderius, Abbot of Monte Cassino, that it was kept up in the 11th century [*Ibid.* tom. x]. We have an instance of its being practiced in our own country, in the 12th century, when, as William of Malmesbury relates, the Empress Matilda, Countess of Anjou, and daughter of King Henry, was contesting the right of succession to the throne against Stephen, Count of Boulogne. The two armies were in sight of each other; - but an armistice was demanded and observed, for it was the Lent of 1143 [Willhelm. Malmesbur. *Hist. nov.* no. 30].

Our readers have heard, no doubt, of the admirable institution called *God's Truce*, whereby the Church, in the 11th century, succeeded in preventing much bloodshed. It was a law that forbade the carrying arms from Wednesday evening till Monday morning, throughout the year. It was sanctioned by the authority of popes and councils, and enforced by all Christian princes. It was a continuing, during four days of each week of the year, the Lenten discipline of the suspension of war. Our saintly King, Edward the Confessor, gave a still greater extension to it, by passing a law, (which was confirmed by his successor, William the Conqueror,) that *God's Truce* should be observed, without cessation, from the beginning of Advent to the Octave of Easter, from the Ascension to the Whitsuntide Octave; on all the Ember Days; on the vigils of all feasts; and, lastly, every week, from None on Wednesday till Monday morning, which had been already prescribed [Labbe, *Concil.* tom. ix.].

In the Council of Clermont, held in 1095, Pope Urban II, after drawing up the regulations for the Crusades, used his authority in extending the *God's Truce*, as it was then observed during Lent. His decree, which was renewed in the council held the following year at Rouen, was to this effect: that all war proceedings should be suspended from Ash Wednesday to the Monday after the Octave of Pentecost, and on all Vigils and Feasts of the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles, over and above what was already regulated for each week, that is, from Wednesday evening to Monday morning [Orderic Vital. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. ix.].

Thus did the world testify its respect for the holy observances of Lent, and borrow some of its wisest institutions from the seasons and feasts of the liturgical year. The influence of this Forty-Days' penance was great, too, on each individual. It renewed man's energies, gave him fresh vigor in battling with his animal instincts, and, by the restraint it put upon sensuality, ennobled the soul.