

**March 1, 2020  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent**

**St. Leo Catholic Church**  
330 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Palmyra, NE 68418  
(402) 780-5535  
Emergency Calls: (402) 202-7685

**St. Martin Catholic Church**  
125 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Douglas, NE  
(Please send mail to St. Leo Church)  
[www.stleoandstmartin.com](http://www.stleoandstmartin.com)

Pastor Email: [leomartinpastor@gmail.com](mailto:leomartinpastor@gmail.com)  
Megan Carman (Secretary) Email: [leomartinsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:leomartinsecretary@gmail.com)

**Fr. Adam Sparling, Pastor**

**Mass Intentions**

Mar	2	Mon	8:00am	St. Leo	+Steve Borin (O'Grady)
Mar	3	Tues	No	Mass	
Mar	4	Wed	8:00am	St. Leo	+Joe Smith (O'Grady)
Mar	5	Thur	8:00 am	St. Leo	Special Intention (Swanda)
Mar	6	Fri	8:00am	St. Leo	+Bill Walkup (Wittgren)
Mar	7	Sat	4:00 pm	St. Leo	Zach Crom (Ragon)
Mar	8	Sun	8:30 am	St. Martin	Liv & Dec. St. Martin Parishioners
Mar	8	Sun	11:00 am	St. Leo	The people of our parishes

**Your Response to the Lords Generosity:**

February 23, 2020

	Adult	Youth	Plate
St. Leo	\$580	\$ 0	\$38
St. Martin	\$285	\$ 0	\$9

*"God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8*

**Thank you to those who give!**

**Weekend Masses:**

**1st, 3rd & 5th** (Odd Sundays) **2nd & 4th** (Even Sundays)  
Saturday 4 PM at St. Martin Saturday 4 PM at St. Leo  
8:30 AM at St Leo Palmyra 8:30 AM St Martin Douglas  
11:00 AM at St Leo Palmyra 11:00AM St Leo Palmyra

**Confessions:**

Saturdays: 3:30 PM-3:45 PM  
Sundays: 8:00 AM-8:15 AM  
10:30 AM-10:45 AM

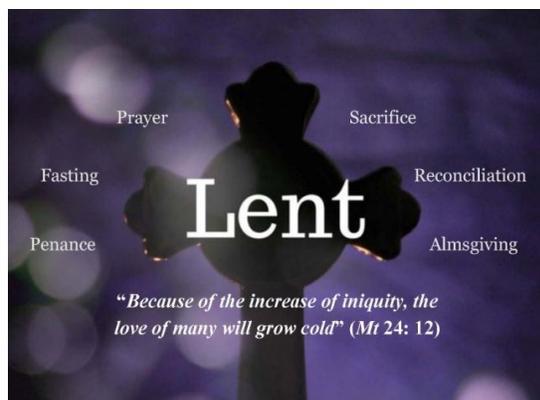
\*Any time by appointment

**Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:**

Sundays prior to 11:00 am Mass

**CALENDAR ITEMS**

- **Stations of the Cross:** Wednesday's following the morning Mass at St. Martin; Friday's at St. Leo beginning at 6pm.
  - Reminder that stations are a devotional that you do not need a priest to lead you in, a lay person can pray them by themselves or lay person may lead a group in the absence of a priest.
- **Knights of Columbus Fish Fry** – Please come enjoy at St. Paulinas in Syracuse from 5-8pm on March 13<sup>th</sup> and March 27<sup>th</sup>.
- **Adult Faith Formation** – **“Oremus: A Catholic Guide to prayer”** Wednesday evenings beginning at 7pm in Divine Mercy hall. If you have any questions please contact Chad Hartwick.
- **2020 Lenten Series** – **A Lenten Encounter with Christ-Forgiveness, Healing, Intimacy, Mission.** John XXIII Chapel, 3700 Sheridan Blvd., Lincoln from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm, Mondays of Lent, **March 2-March 30**. Matt Simmons will be giving the talks with Adoration to follow. Jonathan Little will be playing music during adoration while attendees can go to confession, receive prayer ministry, and have silence for prayer.
- **Day of advocacy at the Nebraska State Capitol** on March 4, 2020! We begin at St. Mary's in Lincoln with Mass at 8 a.m., and the program will be at 9 a.m. with speakers, lunch, and lobbying activities until 1:30 p.m. Hear from keynote speaker - former Nebraska Governor Kay Orr, State Senators, and the Nebraska Catholic Conference staff on important legislative issues of the 2020 Legislative session. For more information and to register at [necatholic.org](http://necatholic.org) or call [402.477.7517](tel:402.477.7517).
- **St. Martin's Altar Society Annual Soup Supper** on **Sunday, March 15th** from 10:30am-1:00pm. There will be a variety of soups, sandwiches, homemade pies and desserts available. FREE WILL OFFERING. Also, check out the bazaar items and buy raffle tickets for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00.
- **A Life in the Spirit Retreat at North American Martyrs Catholic Church** March 27- 29th, 2020. Mother Lucy and Sr. Marguerite Marie, DOLJ will present the retreat, which will begin on Friday, from 7-9 p.m. and resume with Mass Saturday at 9 a.m. and go till 3 p.m. including a breakfast and lunch. Sunday, we begin with 8 a.m. Mass and finish at 3 p.m., with breakfast and lunch. Registration is \$25. Please send your name, parish, check and any special needs to [julie-crawford@cdolinc.net](mailto:julie-crawford@cdolinc.net) or 1101 Isaac Drive, Lincoln, NE 68521.



**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Attention Amazon users!** If you do please consider using AmazonSmile for your purchases!  If you do and *select St. Leo Catholic Church of Palmyra* as your charitable organization a portion of your purchases will be given back to the parish Religious Education Program. Or go to: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-0537439>
- **E-Tithe!** Parishioners can now contribute to the Church via check, credit or debit card by going to our website and clicking the “Give Now” (or by going to <http://giving.parishsoft.com/stleo>). As always you can still give via cash or check in your envelope anytime.
- **Have you checked out the new FORMED.org?** — Programs, eBooks, movies, and talks that will entertain, engage, and inspire them with the beauty and wonder of their faith. FORMED is an on-line Catholic resource treasure trove. The parish pays for an annual subscription for you to use to grow in our beautiful faith. If you have not signed up for it yet, go to [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org) -- enter the parish code **KN4A9J** -- enter information required -- create a password -- search through and enjoy the material.
- **Mass Intentions** - The tradition of offering Masses for others originates in the early Church. A priest offers Mass with three intentions: 1) to offer the Mass reverently and validly in accord with norms of the Church, 2) to offer the Mass in union with the whole Church and for its good, and 3) to offer the Mass for a particular intention. The suggested donation is \$10 per Mass. Checks should be made payable to: St. Leo Stipend Account.

## **Note from Father:**

**Thank you to all those who donated to the Otoe County Food Pantry during the Month of February!!! We will finalize the CCD food count this week. I am so proud of our CCD students for their hard work to help those in need!**

*As we have entered the season of lent and we celebrate the first Sunday of lent I pray that each of you and your families will have a sacrificial lent. So many graces are available to us from our Lord. He desperately wants us to accept His invitation of love and mercy. That invitation is deeply rooted in humility and the recognition that we need His forgiveness. The Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) is essential to the life of every disciple. Unfortunately so many of us have fallen out of practice of regularly making a good confession each month. We have fallen victim to the worldly influence that we don't need it and that because we may not have stolen or murdered someone there is nothing we need to confess. We even fear going to confession.*

*Our need to go to confession doesn't make us bad or evil people. It is quite the opposite actually. Our going to confession is an act of love. Out of love we enter the confessional to tell the Lord we are sorry and out of love He freely forgives us.*

*Going to confession is an exercise of freedom – freeing ourselves from the slavery to sin. That oppression of sin sometimes even goes unnoticed because we have trained ourselves to rationalize it.*

*If you believe that you might not have anything to confess I urge you to look up an 'examination of conscience' and earnestly and humbly pray through it. Let the Holy Spirit guide your heart to break down the barriers of sin which distance us from accepting His grace. There is nothing to fear about visiting the sacrament. Below I have provided an article that was published recently in the Southern Nebraska Register. Read through it as it answers a lot of the commonly asked questions about Confession. More importantly, **MAKE A GOOD CONFESSION NOW**. Don't put it off any longer. Do it every month at the minimum.*

*I would love nothing more than to have to add more time to our confession schedule each week because I have so many coming to encounter the love and mercy of Jesus!!!*

**A blessed and sacrificial lent to you all!! God Love You!**

*~ Fr. Sparling*

## **Confession: why it's nothing to fear**

21 February 2020

(SNR) - To help people prepare for a holy season of Lent (Ash Wednesday is Feb. 26), Father Andrew Heaslip answered some commonly-asked questions about the sacrament of confession.

**Q. I'm scared of going to confession; isn't everyone? Do we really need to go?**

**A.** Confession is a sacrament of healing, and God's healing mercy is awesome and nothing to fear.

Because this sacrament gives us the mercy of Jesus Christ, it gives us something we need and should deeply desire. The more a person longs for the mercy of God and the more he or she experiences it in the sacrament of reconciliation, the less fear he or she will have in going to confession.

In regard to sin, confession is the ordinary way for mortal sins to be forgiven, and a particularly powerful way for overcoming venial sins. We certainly need to go to confession for the forgiveness of mortal sins; in fact, Catholics are required to make their "Easter Duty" which includes, as a minimum standard, that they confess their serious sins at least once a year. A far better practice recommended by saints, sinners, and confessors alike is going to confession at least once a month, or after committing a mortal sin.

**Q. Are you sure the priest won't think I'm awful?**

**A.** In Luke's Gospel Jesus says, "I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."

Priests who extend the mercy of God in confession realize this, and rejoice deeply when a child of God returns to his or her Heavenly Father. Regular confessors are also familiar with the extent of human sinfulness, and so should not be shocked or scornful because someone brings his or her sins forward.

### **Habits worth getting into to grow spiritually:**

- + Attend a weekday Mass
- + Pray the rosary as a family each week or day
- + Say the meal time prayers
- + Offer a Divine mercy chaplet for someone
- + Read Scripture or another Spiritual work
- + Choose and do a work of mercy each day
- + Make a Holy Hour before the tabernacle
- + Start a Bible study
- + Help sponsor and create opportunities for parish community building
- + Make use of our FORMED.org subscription
- + Let go and let God!!!!

**Q. But what if my sins are worse than everyone else's? And what if I haven't gone in a really long time?**

**A.** At times, a healthy conscience will experience the intensity of one's own sin. This can give the feeling that one's sins are worse than others', because we see our sins from the inside. Nevertheless, we are all sinners, and confession is meant for everybody's personal sins whether there is an intense feeling that accompanies them or a simple recognition that one needs forgiveness.

If someone hasn't gone to confession in a really long time, the season of Lent, which is a grace for the whole Church and all Christians, is an excellent time to return and begin anew with the practice of regular confession. If someone hasn't been in years, and has forgotten how, simply let the priest in the confessional know and he will guide you through the sacrament.

**Q. Exactly how much do I have to describe or spell out?**

**A.** To receive the sacrament of confession fruitfully, a person needs to confess all his or her mortal sins in kind and number, meaning: what the sin was and how often it happened—that's it. For example, "I omitted going to Mass on Sunday, twice." There are occasions where important circumstances need to be shared because they change the kind of sin it was, nevertheless, there is no need to give a detailed description of the experience.

**Q. But how do I know if a sin is a venial or mortal one?**

**A.** A mortal sin occurs if there is grave matter, full knowledge, and deliberate consent. A simple way to say this is that a mortal sin has to be serious, a person has to know it's serious, and he or she has to freely choose to do it anyway. If a sin is not grave matter, or is not fully known, or not deliberately chosen, it is a venial sin.

**Q. What if I forget to confess something and remember later?**

**A.** If someone forgets to confess a mortal sin, that is, really doesn't recall it during his or her confession, the sin is still forgiven; however, the person needs to mention it in his or her next confession. In this case, one would simply say, "I did not remember to confess in my last confession that I..."

On the other hand, if someone were to intentionally withhold a mortal sin in the sacrament of reconciliation and knew that he or she needed to confess it, it would be as though one were trying to hide from the mercy of God and thus his or her sins would not be forgiven. If a person finds himself in this situation, it is very important to realize that God desires to remove our shame and our guilt through his mercy, which is abundantly given in the sacrament of confession.

**Q. Once I went to confession and the priest told me to pray the Act of Contrition after I left – is that okay?**

**A.** In ordinary circumstances, the penitent would pray the Act of Contrition after receiving of the penance and before receiving absolution. However, there are a number of pastoral circumstances, for example a large number of people receiving confession, where the Act of Contrition could be moved before or after the confession.

Further, the Act of Contrition is a verbal expression of one's contrition of heart; the words of the prayer and when it is said can be modified but it is still essential for a good confession that one has contrition, that is, sorrow for his or her sins.

**Q. What if I don't know how to do the penance the priest gives me – if I don't know that prayer?**

**A.** Don't be afraid to say that to the priest when he gives the penance—he could give you a different penance or instruct you where to find the prayers he assigned.

**Q. What if I did my penance but I still feel bad about what I did? Should I go to confession again or do my penance again?**

**A.** To answer this question it is important to make the distinction between forgiveness and purification.

First, when a person confesses his or her sins with contrition (motivated by the love of God) or even attrition (motivated by the fear of hell or the ugliness of sin), both of which include the firm resolve not to commit them again, and receives absolution from a priest, that person is forgiven—period.

Second, purification and healing from one's past sins or one's specific tendencies to sin is more complicated. After a person's good confession which ordinarily brings peace, it can happen that one feels a certain unease or anxiety because he or she realizes that purification is still needed or that temptation will come in the future both of which will be difficult.

If one begins to rely on himself to be purified and healed, or on his own strength to avoid sin, the fear and anxiety typically will increase and the person will feel even worse. In this case, what is needed is not a repetition of confessing the same sin or repeating again the same penance, but rather greater faith and trust in the mercy and redeeming power of Jesus. Faith and trust grow over time, and as they grow, so does our peace.

On the other hand, there can be a number of moral and spiritual struggles surrounding this point, such as scruples, psychological wounds, addictions, believing lies about oneself or God, spiritual strongholds from the enemy, etc. In these cases, it may be fitting to seek additional help from a priest, a spiritual director, a counselor, a support group such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, or Sexaholics Anonymous, a deliverance ministry such as Unbound, or a healing ministry such as the Lincoln Equipping Team.

**Q. Do I have to confess to a priest, and not just alone in prayer to God?**

**A.** A priest is a minister of God who stands in the person of Christ. Part of the reason Jesus instituted the priesthood was to concretely extend his mercy to his flock.

Jesus said to his Apostles, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven...” Hence, every time a person goes to a priest in the sacrament of confession, he or she is fundamentally also approaching Jesus, who is present in his body, the Church and in the Church’s minister, the priest.

Moreover, reconciliation is always, simultaneously with Christ and with his Church, and priests are ordained ministers of this reconciliation. In practice this means that all mortal sins need to be confessed to a priest in the context of confession; it is also very helpful though for a person to confess his or her venial sins since there is a particular grace given for overcoming them in the sacrament of confession.

Nevertheless, there are numerous ways that we can receive God’s forgiveness for our venial sins. For example, St. Augustine highlights that devoutly saying an “Our Father” forgives smaller faults. Likewise, at the beginning of Mass during the Penitential Rite, the faithful recall their venial sins with sorrow, and they are forgiven. When one prays an Act of Contrition with repentance, say, at the end of the day, his or her venial sins are taken away.

**Q. Has confession always been done like this where you have to tell a priest?**

**A.** Simply put, yes. Yet to better answer this question it is important to have an historical sketch of the practice of confession in the early centuries of the Church.

In the Gospel of John when Jesus institutes the sacrament of reconciliation he says to his apostles, “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” Implicit in this statement is that the apostles would have to know what the sins are and whether one is repentant in order to make the decision to forgive the sin or retain it. Hence, even in the first century, at the Church’s very beginning there was the provision of confessing one’s sins to those appointed by Christ.

Likewise, there are references in a work called *The Shepherd of Hermas* (ca. second century), in Tertullian (d. 220 AD), and in Origen of Alexandria (d. 253 AD) that shed further light on the sacrament of confession in the early Church. While the specific practices in these sources vary, (e.g., regarding the frequency of reconciliation, its public or private character, and the order of what a penitent did to be reconciled), they are unanimous in witnessing to the practice of a post-baptismal penance for the forgiveness of serious sins. Hermas, for example, indicates that forgiveness for grave sins after baptism can occur only once in a Christian’s life. Tertullian witnesses to the practice of carrying out penance publically as well as to a different order of reconciliation, namely, (1) a confession of serious sin (typically in private to the bishop or priest), (2) a public period of penance, and (3) official reconciliation.

Origen, however, shows that there was another form of reconciliation that was private and more frequent; it involved (1) a private confession, (2) personal penance that was not public, and (3) a priestly prayer. It was not until around the seventh century, especially with the influence of the Celtic missionaries, that the public dimension of penance began to fade in favor of the private practice similar to what Origen described. Hence, the practice “where you have to tell a priest” was definitely present in the early church.

**Q. What is a good way to pray so I’m better prepared for confession next time?**

**A.** A good way to pray in preparation for confession is through an examination of conscience. During this time one can consider their thoughts, words, and deeds in view of the Ten Commandments, or the Beatitudes, or the theological and moral virtues, or one’s vocation and station in life, etc.

Through this practice one can see where they have sinned and missed the mark of God’s call to holiness and so make an honest confession.