

St. Michael the Archangel Church

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Dear Parishioners and Friends of our Parish,

Next Wednesday begins a special time in the church year. Together with the whole Church, we enter the Time of Lent.

As we sprinkle our heads with ashes, we will hear the words of the priest: "Repent and believe in the Gospel". In these words the main purposes of Lent have been determined, because it is a time, when we are invited to renew our way of looking at the world, we ourselves and our lives be encouraged by Christ Himself, who said about Himself: "I am the truth" (J 14: 6).

We know, it is not easy at all! Maybe many times we have tried to deepen our relationship with God, maybe we have made many resolutions in our lives, maybe it is difficult for us to take the next step on the path of our faith. This year's Lent invites us, however, to this effort again. Do not worry, we are not alone on this journey. The entire parish of St. Michael, the whole Diocese of Bridgeport, and the whole Church is with us!

In the traditional teaching, the Church emphasizes the importance of Penance, Prayer and Alms:

Penance

Let us remember the value of penance, which is not to be simply "not eating" something, but giving up earthly goods for a purpose. We fast, we commit our mortification in a specific intention, and above all we care for peace and reconciliation with God and another human being. We will not bring much to our Lent if I am talking about someone wrong or I have been angry with someone for many years.

Prayer

Lent, which is just beginning, should be a time of even more fervent prayer, especially praying the Rosary. Mary, who teaches us in Fatima, invites us to pray: "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven and help especially those most need of Your Mercy." These words express goals of praying the Rosary, and begging for God's Mercy for us as well as for all poor, and spiritually lost people. We know that they are not lacking among us.

Alms

Because God continually shows us His mercy, we too are called to show mercy to one another (see Luke 6:36). The Church encourages each of us to support good works. Throughout Lent, before the Marian Altar, there will be a basket for St. Anthony to whom you will be able to give your free will offerings and voluntary sacrifices. It's the bread of St. Anthony, our help for the poor. From the free will offerings, we will buy food for the poor and the homeless, for whom our Parishioners regularly prepare meals.

At the beginning of Lent, I encourage you to participate in the well-known services of the Way of the Cross, Gorzkie Żale (Devotional Meditations of the Sufferings of Christ) and the Lenten Parish Retreat.

I wish you all the Blessed Time of Lent,

Pax et Bonum (Peace and Goodness)

Your Pastor, Father Norbert M. Siwinski