

The celebration of the season of Lent is coming fast. This forty days of the Church recognizing Christ's journey into the desert to fast, pray and overcome the temptation of the evil one is preceded with Mardi Gras. Celebrations of eating and drinking, parades with floats, kings, queens and courts of people are part of our Gulf Coast tradition. I grew up in Biloxi in the sixties when the parades were small, the throws were few except for those white pencils with a Barq's root beer clip for your pocket, the marching bands were amazing and the military drill teams performed with precision. Most people were lower middle class and found the parade to be a family outing that was free. As years have passed, Mardi Gras on the coast has caught up with New Orleans and Mobile where grand celebrations have been presented each year. It is still a good time. It is part of our love for life in this world that leads us into the spiritual reality of this life being temporary. It reminds us that material objects fade away from importance when heaven offers a greater promise. Trinkets, throws, beads, parades and carnival balls are part of our remembering that the kings and queens of our history, pagan rites and pagan gods, have been replaced by the King of Peace, Jesus Christ. There are those who use it as an excuse for abusive and sinful behavior. That has been and still is a sad part of the fallen human condition, and unfortunately has stayed with so many people, whether it be at Mardi Gras, Hollywood, the Super Bowl or the movies. It does not necessarily make Mardi Gras bad. It does afford us an opportunity to celebrate with joy and prepare for Lent by feasting before the fast. I have heard that the New Orleans' Krewe's have a tradition of the King and Queen offering alms to the poor. We can enjoy with others, hopefully, with a responsible Mardi Gras. --God Bless, Fr. Mike.



The Parish Office will be closed on Tuesday, February 13th for Mardi Gras.



Lent begins Ash Wednesday (February 14th) with a day of Fast and Abstinence. Three masses will be available on that day beginning with the usual morning masses at 6:30 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. The children from our elementary school will attend the 8:15 a.m. Mass. There will also be an evening Mass at 6:00 p.m.



Stations of the Cross will be conducted each Monday morning immediately after the 8:15 a.m. Mass, each Friday afternoon by the schoolchildren at 2:30 p.m. (adults welcome), and Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. with the Way of the Cross followed by Mass.

Fasting: Catholics 18-59 years of age who are in good health are obliged to fast and abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On all the weekdays of Lent the U.S. Bishops strongly encourage the faithful to participate in Mass and to observe a self-imposed fast. The law of fasting allows only one full meal a day, but does not prohibit taking some food in the morning and evening. Customarily, the two smaller "collations," when considered together, should not equal the main meal – and ideally should be eaten only if needed to maintain one's strength.

Abstinence: All Catholics 14 years of age and older are obliged to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays of Lent. In their Penance and Abstinence pastoral, the U.S. Bishops declared: "the obligation both to fast and to abstain from meat, an obligation observed under a more strict formality by our fathers in the faith, still binds on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. No Catholic Christian will lightly excuse himself from so hallowed an obligation..." They also stated: "we preserve for our dioceses the tradition of abstinence from meat on each of the Fridays of Lent, confident that no Catholic Christian will lightly hold himself excused from this penitential practice."

The Knights of Columbus will be selling Shrimp Po-boys on Wednesday, February 14th (Ash Wednesday) in the KC Hall. Take-outs will be available beginning at 2:00 p.m. and dine-in starting at 5:00 p.m. The cost for a shrimp Po-boy with chips and tea (for dine-in) will be \$6.00. Cold drinks, bottle water and desserts sold separately.

**Altar Society Members for next week
Judy Anderson and Theresa Stuart**

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

MONDAY	FEBRUARY 12
James 1:1-11; Mark 8:11-13	
6:30 am	Mr. Joe Prejean
8:15 am	Int. Ms. Tiffany Wilson
TUESDAY	FEBRUARY 13
James 1:12-18; Mark 8:14-21	
6:30 am	Mr. Nolan Fremin
8:15 am	Ms. Linda Mayer
WEDNESDAY	FEBRUARY 14
Joel 2:12-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2; Matthew 6:1-6,16-18	
6:30 am	Ms. Connie Seymour
8:15 am	Mr. Donald Cole
6:00 pm	In Thanksgiving
THURSDAY	FEBRUARY 15
Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Luke 9:22-25	
6:30 am	Ms. Mary Skaar
8:15 am	Mr. Ricky Riviere
FRIDAY	FEBRUARY 16
Isaiah 58:1-9a; Matthew 9:14-15	
6:30 am	Mr. Edward G. Dietrick, Jr.
8:15 am	Carl and Betty Fountain
SATURDAY	FEBRUARY 17
Isaiah 58:9b-14; Luke 5:27-32	
8:15 am	Russ, Carley and Brittany Jordan
4:00 pm	Ms. Mary Anderson
SUNDAY	FEBRUARY 18
Genesis 9:8-15; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:12-15	
7:30 am	Congregation
9:00 am	Dr. & Mrs. Robert F. Carter
11:30 am	Ms. Peggy Dessommes
5:30 pm	Ms. Brandy Lesso Hebert

WEEKLY OFFERING

Sunday Collection.....\$10,661.45
 Poor Collection.....\$ 4,330.46
 May God Bless You for your generous and faithful support.



Pray for Our Parishioners and Friends: Evelyn Bond, Glen Bosarge, Mercedes Bosarge, Quinn Boudreaux, Carole Bourgeois, Gregory Brou, Valerie Brou, Clarence Brown, Sybil Burchinal, Sally Fero Conklin, Pat Cronin, Breanne Dalton, Gina Dasher, Betty Dugan, Tyler Eldridge, Marthann Ello, Jackie Endt, Jeremy Forehand, Loretta Foster, Nora Foster, Joey Fountain, Carmen Gaethe, Doris Haynes, Mary Jo Hoogstra, Margaret Betty Horton, Lucia Hourihan, Most Reverend Joseph L. Howze, Earline Huster, Tommy Jones, Theresa Jones, Clarence Jordan, Anastasia Pitalo Jurich, Andre Kaufman, Audrey King, Ann Eleece Kouns, Jeff Kouns, Harby Kreeger, Daisie Laborde, John Langan, Nathaniel LaSalle, Catherine Lawrence, Bob Mayer, Bernie and Phyllis McGinley, Mary Mendenhall, Patricia Merlau, Edna Miguez, Eunice Misko, Margaret Murray, Leonard Necaize, Peggy and Edward Necaize, Chandra Nicholson, Travis Norman, Charley Nowel, Luke Nudson, Edwin O'Connor, III, Henry Parker, Judy Penton, Amy Petitjean, Anna Raley, Brenda Sargent, Karen Skrmetta Smith, Dick Smith, Joe Souza, Edna Spell, Dani Stafford, Rust Stallings, Stan Stanton, Gertie Templet, Sharon Tilmon, Dolores Trenouth, Ted and Clara Ursu, Ashley Vickers and Jane Walker.

Religious Education News

Pat Cronin – 872-2652; pcronin@cablone.net; www.stal.cc

Feb 12: New Wine, Parish Hall, 6:00 p.m.
Feb 15: No RCIA
 First Reconciliation Practice for Parents/Students in Church 5:30 pm
Feb 17: First Reconciliation in Church 10:00 a.m.
Feb 18: RCIA Rite of Election 7:30 a.m. Mass
 Religious Education 10:10 a.m.
 Adult Study Class 10:10 a.m.
 Children's Church, 11:30 a.m. Mass for 3-6 year olds
 Confirmation Class, Parish hall, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Family and Youth Calendar

Jane Sema 228-217-1392 jsema@osstalphonsus.org

This year will be the 41st annual **Youth Convention** held at the Gulf Coast Coliseum March 23rd – 25th. Youth groups from all the parishes within the Biloxi Diocese will come together to celebrate our faith through community, Mass, keynote speakers, and worship. The Diocesan Spirit Movers (10th – 12th grade peer ministry team) have planned the theme *ALIVE*, prepared activities, and will be the Masters of Ceremonies. Target age group for the youth Celebration is 9th – 12th grade. Our youth in 6th – 8th grades may also participate by attending the Junior High Rally from 2:00 -5:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 25th at the Coast Coliseum. Anyone interested in attending the convention or Youth Rally may text or contact Jane Sema at 228-217-1392 for more information.

As we build our youth programs we are looking for young adults and parents to help with activities for our youth. If you are interested in helping us build a **DYNAMIC YOUTH PROGRAM** contact Jane Sema at 228-217-1392.

Parent & Child Prayer and Fellowship

Come and join our group as we study The Saints. The group meets on the second and fourth Wednesday from September through May, in the Family and Youth office in back of the Parish Hall.



The Lord Is My Help needs volunteers to pack take-out lunches from 9:15 - 10:30 a.m. and/or to serve lunch from 11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (no cooking involved) during the coming week (February 12 – 16 -- closed February 13). If you are able to volunteer your time on any of these days at either/both of the times, please call Norma Williams at 875-2636. Any help would be greatly appreciated.



The St. Alphonsus Knights of Columbus are now selling tickets for a "10 week" drawing for \$10.00 each. Each week, for nine weeks, a ticket will be drawn for \$50.00. The "winning" ticket then goes back into the "barrel" until the last week when a \$500.00, \$200.00, and \$100.00 winner will be pulled. First drawing will be February 18, 2018. For tickets contact Carl Brochard, 228-327-0066 or Chuck Nannery, 228-875-0267. All proceeds will benefit the Seminarian Education Fund.



A new Bible Study will begin on Wednesday, February 21st at 9:00 a.m. on the Book of Revelation. It is presented by Jeff Cavins and called Adventures in Revelation. This study will take place in the home of Sue Mihal, 13605 Paso Road (Gulf Hills). For more information or to register, please call Mrs. Mihal at 601-573-0020.



A Women's Cursillo weekend will take place February 22nd-25th. Fr. Greg Barras will be the spiritual advisor. For more information, contact Melanie Moe 228-229-2956, mmeaux@thecolumbiagroup.com or Wanda Cole 228-669-5901, rwmax@cablone.net.

School Subsidy Policy

For the 2018/2019 School Year

St. Alphonsus Finance Committee, in conjunction with the Parish Staff, wishes to reiterate the established policy concerning subsidy of our young people at St. Alphonsus Elementary School or St. Patrick High School. In order for students to receive subsidized tuition at St. Alphonsus Elementary School or St. Patrick High School, the following must be followed:

1. The Family must be registered in St. Alphonsus Parish
2. Contribute to the support of the parish through the regular use of the envelope system or some other agreed upon service.
3. The family **MUST** attend weekend Mass with the Parish Family at St. Alphonsus.

ST. ALPHONSUS SCHOOL

Feb 12-13: No School – Mardi Gras Holidays
Feb 14: Children's Mass 8:15 a.m. / Early Dismissal 2:00 p.m.
Feb 15: First Reconciliation Practice in Church 5:30 p.m.
Feb 16: Stations of the Cross 2:30 p.m.
Feb 17: First Reconciliation in Church 10:00 a.m.



St. Alphonsus School would like to thank parents and parishioners for supporting Catholic education during Catholic Schools Week.

The children raised \$308.00 for our St. Vincent de Paul Society

ST. PATRICK HIGH SCHOOL

Feb 12-13: No School Mardi Gras Holidays
Feb 14: Ash Wednesday Service 2:20 p.m.
Feb 16: 8th Grade Retreat / JH Girls Soccer Banquet 6:00 p.m.



A Lenten Painting Group "Into the Desert" will begin on Sunday, February 18th and continue through Palm Sunday (March 25th) from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall Meeting Room. Participants will create an image inspired by the weekly Gospel reading and have an opportunity to share with other participants. Participants will need to bring their own paints, canvases and brushes as only a small supply of material will be available for group use. For more information contact Teresa Ballinger at 228-806-1909. All are invited.



You are invited to come to a Marian Movement of Priest Cenacle Mass on Tuesday, February 20th, at 7:00 p.m. in the Church. Rosary, Message reading, Consecration, Mass



An Altar Server Training is scheduled for Saturday, February 24th from 9:00 11:00 a.m. with lunch being served afterwards in the KC Hall. All altar servers, and anyone wishing to become an altar server (must have already made First Holy Communion), are asked to please attend this training. Hamburgers and hotdogs will be served for lunch - we ask that you call or email the Rectory Office (875-5419 or stals@cablone.net) if your child plans on staying for lunch.



Soon a **"Button for Lent Reflections"** will be added to the St. Alphonsus Church app and **"Daily Lenten Reflections"** will be available through FORMED.



Your prayers are requested for the repose of the soul of Marilyn LeBlanc, sister of Sharon (Mick) Barthes of this parish, who passed away February 3rd in Tampa, Florida.

We extend our sympathy to the family and promise them a remembrance in our prayers. May God grant her eternal peace.



The Flowers in front of the Altar are in Memory of Glen Skelton On his Birthday