

# SACRED HEART OF JESUS MUNISING

## FEBRUARY 2017 NEWSLETTER

Dear Parishioners, Friends and Guests:

<http://sacredheartmunising.org>

Welcome to Sacred Heart's new website. We hope you like it. Please feel free to navigate around so that you don't miss anything. The people who assisted us in building the site have built many Catholic sites so they knew what kind of information we wanted to include in the site. They did a great job in adding some great touches that we didn't think were even possible. For instance, take a look at the Sacrament of Reconciliation listed under the Sacraments tab. Page down and click on the white arrow inside the red box for a great explanation of this wonderful sacrament.

You will also see a lot of familiar pictures. Our many thanks go to Randy Johnson who took the photos. I didn't realize how difficult it was to take pictures of stained glass windows until I tried. Fortunately, Randy has some great insight in photography.

Please note that we now have a parish calendar. We will do our best to keep it current. Please feel free to contact the parish office if there is an event you would like us to schedule.

Please make sure you check out the **Links** tab. You will find many Catholic sites here that will be of interest to you. Families with young children will really enjoy Catholic Icing. I have used it frequently to come up with ideas for projects in our Faith Formation classes. Daily Mass readings – go to United States Conference of Bishops. There is a mountain of information under this tab – all you have to do is look for it.

Father Chris will be back for Ash Wednesday Mass. We have certainly missed him. Father Jose has done a wonderful job in Father's absence and we hope we will continue to see him often.

It is hard to believe that Lent will soon be upon us. Ash Wednesday is on March 1 this year. Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, the season of preparation for the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday.

**Question:** On Ash Wednesday, Catholics mark the beginning of the season of Lent by receiving ashes on their head, as a sign of their own mortality. Should

Catholics keep their ashes on all day, or can they take their ashes off after Mass?

**Answer:** The practice of receiving ashes on Ash Wednesday is a popular devotion for Roman Catholics. Even though Ash Wednesday is not a Holy Day of Obligation, many Catholics attend Mass on Ash Wednesday in order to receive the ashes, which are rubbed on their foreheads in the form of the Cross. As the priest distributes the ashes, he tells each Catholic, "Remember, man, you are dust, and to dust you shall return," or "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel"—a reminder of our mortality and of our need to repent before it is too late.

While very few (if any) Catholics who attend Mass on Ash Wednesday choose not to receive ashes, no one is required to receive ashes. Similarly, anyone who receives ashes can decide for himself how long he wishes to keep them on. While most Catholics keep them on at least throughout Mass (if they receive them before or during Mass), a person could choose to rub them off immediately. And while many Catholics keep their Ash Wednesday ashes on until bedtime, there's no requirement that they do so.

Wearing one's ashes throughout the day on Ash Wednesday helps us remember why we received them in the first place, and it can be a good way to humble ourselves at the very beginning of Lent, especially if we have to go out in public. Still, those who feel uncomfortable wearing their ashes outside of church, or those who, because of jobs or other duties, cannot keep them on all day should not worry about removing them. In the same way, if your ashes naturally fall off, or if you accidentally rub them off, there is no need to be concerned.

Can you eat meat on Ash Wednesday? Under the current rules for fasting and abstinence, Ash Wednesday is a day of strict fasting (only one full meal, and two small snacks that don't add up to a full meal) for all Catholics from 18 to 59, and abstinence from all meat and foods made with meat for all Catholics over the age of 14. This fasting and abstinence remind us that Lent is a penitential season.

### **The Rules for Fasting During Lent for Roman Catholics in the United States:**

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has declared that “the age of fasting is from the completion of the eighteenth year to the beginning of the sixtieth year.” The USCCB also allows the substitution of some other form of penance for abstinence on all of the Fridays of the year, except for those Fridays in Lent. Thus, the rules for fasting and abstinence in the United States are:

Every person 14 years or age or older must abstain from meat (and items made with meat) on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent.

Every person between the age of 18 and 59 (your 59<sup>th</sup> birthday begins your 60<sup>th</sup> year) must fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

### **Stations of the Cross:**

Father Chris and Deacon Tom lead us in the Stations of the Cross every Friday evening during Lent beginning at 6:00 PM. The Stations are followed by Benediction. This is a beautiful service. Please plan to attend. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring your children and grandchildren.

### **A Special Prayer for Lent and Easter from Pope Francis**

Dear Lord,

Help us to be your ears to listen to the cries of the poor.

Help us to be your voice speaking out love and acceptance.

Help us to be your feet walking beside those in need.

Help us to be your hands to clothe, feed and shelter them.

You came for the least, the lost and last of this world.

Lord, hear our prayer. Amen