

# Dear Padre,

*When I was young, my parish covered all the statues during part of Lent. What did it mean exactly? Do any churches still do this?*

In 2001, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the practice of veiling statues and crosses during the last two weeks of the season of Lent, beginning on the fifth Sunday of Lent. This practice is optional, at the discretion of the local pastor. According to the Roman Missal, “Crosses remain covered until the end of the celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday, but images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.”

Covering crosses and statues in violet cloth in the final weeks of Lent indicates a shift in the Church’s focus from Jesus in the desert (gospel for the first Sunday of Lent) to Christ during his Passion. Similar to other Lenten disciplines of penance and fasting that align us in solidarity with Christ, the veiling custom is meant to deepen our appreciation for Christ’s ultimate sacrifice. It represents our “fasting” from sacred depictions of the cross on which hung our salvation and from images of the saints, who glorify Christ and in whom he is glorified. This concealment creates an absence to make our hearts grow fonder for the Lord, who “bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24). ●



CATHOLIC

Fr. Byron J. Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>MARCH 9</b>	<b>MARCH 10</b>	<b>MARCH 11</b>	<b>MARCH 12</b>	<b>MARCH 13</b>	<b>MARCH 14</b>	<b>MARCH 15</b>
Lenten Weekday	Lenten Weekday	Lenten Weekday	Lenten Weekday	Lenten Weekday	Lenten Weekday	Fourth Sunday of Lent
2 Kgs 5:1–15ab Lk 4:24–30	Dn 3:25, 34–43 Mt 18:21–35	Dt 4:1, 5–9 Mt 5:17–19	Jer 7:23–28 Lk 11:14–23	Hos 14:2–10 Mk 12:28–34	Hos 6:1–6 Lk 18:9–14	1 Sm 16:1b, 6–7, 10–13a Eph 5:8–14 Jn 9:1–41 or 9:1, 6–9, 13–17, 34–38

### Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to [DearPadre.org](http://DearPadre.org) to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.



### A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

*We feel a deep and burning thirst that no drink in this world can satisfy. Knowing this, let us not deceive our hearts by trying to satisfy them with cheap imitations!... Let us turn this thirst into a step stool, like children who stand on tiptoe, in order to peer through the window of encounter with God.*

HOMILY, ROME, AUGUST 3, 2025



## Are You Listening?

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSSR

**I**f today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” (See Psalm 95.) Our psalm prayer invites us to respond to the Word of God. A positive response should be assumed as ordinary: very few among us would deliberately ignore God’s voice. The challenge is not in responding “yes” to the invitation of the Lord but rather in “hearing” his voice.

There are so many voices that daily compete for attention. We seem to be bombarded every waking moment with some kind of noise that demands attention and action. At one time, Neil Diamond might have been able to celebrate the “Beautiful Noise” of the city, but it is far more difficult for us today. Frankly, the noise around us is deafening, and most people long for true silence, a break in the pattern, a vacation from the frantic anxiety that seems to be present.

A wonderful Lenten practice—indeed, a spiritual practice that goes well beyond Lent—is to freely choose to disconnect from distraction. Resist the temptation to plug in the earbuds. Refrain from the distraction of social media content. Leave your cell phone in the living room, go sit in the backyard, and pay attention to nothing. “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:11), the psalmist reminds us. Listen for God’s voice, hear his call, and respond to the invitation. ●



LEARN ABOUT THE AUTHORS OF OUR PARISH COMMUNITY



The love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

ROMANS 5:5

### Reflect

*Do I need more silence?  
Do I find silence difficult?*



The  
**Catholic Church**  
in Pocahontas County  
West Virginia

**OUR MISSION**

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:19-20, NAB-RE)

ST. JOHN NEUMANN PARISH & CHURCH OFFICE, 714 Tenth Avenue, Marlinton WV 24954  
ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST MISSION, 92 Catholic Church Road, Rts 250 & 92, Bartow WV 24920  
ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX CHAPEL, 6332 Snowshoe Drive, Snowshoe WV 26209  
Telephone: St. John Neumann 304-799-6778, St. Bernard of Clairvaux 304-572-0847  
Website: PocahontasCatholic.org  
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Patty Bryant  
Margaret Bryant  
Ann Burke  
Danielle Cade  
Dick Connor  
Matt Madruga  
Cynthia Olson  
Quinn Riffle  
Tristan Sizemore

**EUCHARIST THIS WEEK**

Friday	8:00 a.m.	St. John
Saturday	5:30 p.m.	St. Bernard
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	St. John
	11:30 a.m.	St. Mark



St. John Neumann Church is open for private prayer every day during daylight.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered before each Eucharist or by appointment, and at St. Bernard on Saturdays 4:30-5:00 p.m.

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is available any time upon request.



Please call the Church office (304-799-6778) if you know of a parishioner who is sick, in the hospital or nursing home, homebound, deployed, or in prison.

To report an incidence of suspected child sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency, or you may confidentially contact WV Child Protective Services at 800-352-6513.  
To report suspected cases of sexual abuse by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, please contact the Diocese at 888-434-6237 or 304-233-0880.  
To report suspected cases of sexual misconduct or sexual abuse by a bishop or eparch, please contact [ReportBishopAbuse.org](http://ReportBishopAbuse.org) or call 800-276-1562.

**TODAY'S SCRIPTURE PASSAGE**

*"I am he, the one who is speaking with you."*  
(John 4:26, NAB-RE)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & NOTES**

- **Daylight Saving Time** begins this Sunday (March 8) at 2 a.m. We all lose 1 hour of sleep, and children catch the school bus in the dark!
- **Senior lunch** is this Tuesday (March 10) beginning at 11:30 a.m. at Marlinton United Methodist Church. This week it's breakfast for lunch, and you *don't* have to consider yourself old to come!
- **Community Lenten Prayer Service** is every Wednesday at noon at Marlinton United Methodist Church. The topic this week is "Moral Example: Jesus Shows You How to Live" (1 John 3:11-24, Matthew 5-7) by Donnie Brown.
- **Community Dinner and Marlinton Care Team** planning meeting is this Thursday (March 12) at 6:00 p.m. at Marlinton Presbyterian Church. We welcome new volunteers and new ideas.
- **Stations of the Cross** is every Friday during Lent at 5 p.m. at St. John Neumann and St. Mark the Evangelist. Stations will include Exposition and Benediction at St. Mark the Evangelist this week.
- **Knights of Columbus Friday Fish Fry** in White Sulphur Springs is March 13, 20, 27.
- **Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA)** classes meet on Saturdays at 3:30 p.m. at St. Bernard Chapel, and on Sundays after Mass at St. Mark the Evangelist Church. Those wishing to join the Catholic Church, as well as parishioners and others wishing to know more about the Catholic faith, are welcome. Invite others to "come and see" (John 1:39, 46).

**LAST WEEKEND**

	<u>attendance</u>	<u>collection</u>
St. John Neumann	36	\$715.00
St. Mark the Evangelist	15	\$392.00
Priests' Retirement collection		\$10.00
Fund for the Poor		\$100.00
St. Bernard of Clairvaux	116	\$1,361.00
Fund for the Poor		\$952.00
<b>total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>\$3,530.00</b>

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THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT - YEAR A

First Reading (Exodus 17:3-7)

In those days, in their thirst for water,  
the people grumbled against Moses,  
saying, "Why did you ever make us leave Egypt?  
Was it just to have us die here of thirst  
with our children and our livestock?"  
So Moses cried out to the LORD,  
"What shall I do with this people?  
a little more and they will stone me!"  
The LORD answered Moses,  
"Go over there in front of the people,  
along with some of the elders of Israel,  
holding in your hand, as you go,  
the staff with which you struck the river.  
I will be standing there in front of you  
on the rock in Horeb.  
Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it  
for the people to drink."  
This Moses did, in the presence of the elders of Israel.  
The place was called Massah and Meribah,  
because the Israelites quarreled there  
and tested the LORD, saying,  
"Is the LORD in our midst or not?"

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9,  
*Grail translation, 1963*)

*Response:* If today you hear his voice,  
harden not your hearts.

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;  
hail the rock who saves us.  
Let us come before him, giving thanks,  
with songs let us hail the Lord.

Come in; let us bow and bend low;  
let us kneel before the God who made us  
for he is our God and we  
the people who belong to his pasture,  
the flock that is led by his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!  
"Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,  
as on that day at Massah in the desert  
when your fathers put me to the test;  
when they tried me, though they saw my work."

Second Reading (Romans 5:1-2, 5-8)

Brothers and sisters:  
Since we have been justified by faith,

we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
through whom we have gained access by faith  
to this grace in which we stand,  
and we boast in hope of the glory of God.

And hope does not disappoint,  
because the love of God has been poured out  
into our hearts  
through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.  
For Christ, while we were still helpless,  
died at the appointed time for the ungodly.  
Indeed, only with difficulty  
does one die for a just person,  
though perhaps for a good person  
one might even find courage to die.  
But God proves his love for us  
in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

Gospel Acclamation (*cf.* John 4:42, 15)

Lord, you are truly the Savior of the world;  
give me living water, that I may never thirst again.

Gospel (John 4:5-42,  
short form 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42)

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar,  
near the plot of land  
that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.  
Jacob's well was there.  
Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well.  
It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water.  
Jesus said to her,  
"Give me a drink."  
His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.  
The Samaritan woman said to him,  
"How can you, a Jew,  
ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?"  
— For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans. —  
Jesus answered and said to her,  
"If you knew the gift of God  
and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,'  
you would have asked him  
and he would have given you living water."  
The woman said to him,  
"Sir, you do not even have a bucket  
and the cistern is deep;  
where then can you get this living water?"

Are you greater than our father Jacob,  
who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself  
with his children and his flocks?"

Jesus answered and said to her,  
"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again;  
but whoever drinks the water I shall give  
will never thirst;  
the water I shall give will become in him  
a spring of water welling up to eternal life."  
The woman said to him,  
"Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty  
or have to keep coming here to draw water.

"I can see that you are a prophet.  
Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain;  
but you people say that the place to worship  
is in Jerusalem."  
Jesus said to her,  
"Believe me, woman, the hour is coming  
when you will worship the Father  
neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.  
You people worship what you do not understand;  
we worship what we understand,  
because salvation is from the Jews.  
But the hour is coming, and is now here,  
when true worshipers will worship the Father  
in Spirit and truth;  
and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him.  
God is Spirit, and those who worship him  
must worship in Spirit and truth."  
The woman said to him,  
"I know that the Messiah is coming,  
the one called the Christ;  
when he comes, he will tell us everything."  
Jesus said to her,  
"I am he, the one who is speaking with you."

Many of the Samaritans of that town  
began to believe in him.  
When the Samaritans came to him,  
they invited him to stay with them;  
and he stayed there two days.  
Many more began to believe in him because of his word,  
and they said to the woman,  
"We no longer believe because of your word;  
for we have heard for ourselves,  
and we know that this is truly the savior of the world."

### Reflection (2023)

Do we listen to the voice of the Lord, or do we  
grumble at what he tells us? The Israelites complained  
because they had no water while they wandered in  
Egypt, so God had Moses strike the rock, and produced

water for them to drink. They drank that day.

The Samaritan woman came to the well to draw  
water, and Jesus asked her for a drink of water. She  
gave him a drink, and he gave her water that never  
ends, "living water," "water welling up to eternal life."

It is interesting that Jesus spoke to the Samaritan  
woman. First, a Jewish man would never speak to a  
woman alone. Second, the Samaritans were despised  
by the Jews because they mixed Jewish practice with  
pagan customs. But Jesus offers her "living water."

"Living water" is water that quenches thirst,  
certainly, but it is also the power of the Holy Spirit that  
leads us in this life, and it is the message of Jesus that  
leads us to eternal life. That message can be spread  
throughout the world to all people: to women and to  
men, to outsiders and to foreigners, to the oppressed  
and to the marginalized, to all the people that we who  
are comfortable in our faith might want to leave out,  
but a message meant for all people, just as that  
message spread to the Samaritans.

### Reflection (2026)

Who is the Messiah? That is the question that was  
asked at the time of Jesus. There had been many  
people who had come and claimed that title, claiming  
they were the "anointed" one, in Hebrew, the Messiah,  
or in Greek, the Christ. So that created a lot of  
confusion among people who truly were waiting for the  
Messiah.

Jews were waiting for the Messiah, but Samaritans  
were also waiting for the Messiah, although Jews  
despised Samaritans, because the Samaritans had  
mixed Jewish practice with pagan customs.

The woman at the well, a Samaritan – that is, a  
despised person and a foreigner – is the one who  
recognized that Jesus is the Messiah. First she says "I  
know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the  
Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything."  
She tells us how she will know. Then Jesus says "I am  
he, the one who is speaking with you." Then because  
of her witness, other Samaritans began to believe in  
him, saying "We no longer believe because of your  
word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know  
that this is truly the savior of the world."

Some lessons for us:

- if someone asks for water, or anything needed, give it to them, it just might be Jesus we are serving
- if we give something to someone else, who knows, we might receive so much more in return
- Jesus will tell us everything, so listen to him
- and then, tell everyone, become an evangelist and evangelize

**8 March 2026**  
**Third Sunday of Lent - Year A**

*Penitential Rite*

I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do,  
through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;  
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.  
May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,  
and bring us to everlasting life.  
Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

*Prayer of the Faithful*

Merciful Father, you are generous with your love and abundant with your grace, and so we can lift up our needs to you in prayer:

- for Christians everywhere, that we will spread the good news of the Gospel, we pray
- for local, national, and world leaders, that they will make wise and compassionate decisions for the good of the community, we pray
- for peace in the Middle East, we pray
- for the hungry and thirsty, and all those in need, we pray
- for all of us gathered for Eucharist, that our hearts will be open to the voice of God, we pray
- for all those who have died, that they will be saved, we pray
- and for your other intentions  
*(pause)*  
for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, we pray

Almighty Father, draw us ever closer to you, and hear our prayers and answer them in your mercy. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.