

St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Community

Madison Heights, MI www.stvincentferrer.net

FEBRUARY 22, 2026 † FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

From The Pastor

Temptation is an essential part of what it means to be human. Temptation is too often seen only as sin and failure. Human temptation is an essential reality that leads towards human development, self-awareness, and personal growth. This kind of self-awareness leads to a mature relationship of faith.

In cycle A of the Lectionary, the first Sunday of Lent always tells the story of the Fall in the Garden of Eden. The story of Adam and Eve is the story and reality of all humanity falling into the pain of sin. This is a classic, undeniable description of human temptation and its consequences. Or should I say benefits? If we only frame the story as a tragedy of human failure that solicits God's rejection and expulsion from the garden, we are selling ourselves short on the greater lesson the story teaches.

There is no denying the reality of sin and its consequences in personal, relational, social, economic, and every other frame of human encounter. Human beings are prone to sin. As created beings, sin is part of what it means to be human. The challenge is to accept this reality and do all we can to mature beyond the realities of human selfishness and disordered behavior. This is the wisdom and the work of the Lenten season.

Notice the positioning of the first reading and the gospel. In the first reading, humanity through Adam and Eve are deceived by the serpent and are conflicted in the tension of this temptation. In the gospel, Jesus is subjected to temptation as he prepares for his public ministry. Jesus did not go to the desert for a rest or quiet retreat. Jesus was 'led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted.' Humans are tempted, Jesus is human, Jesus must face the reality of temptation. Strengthened in the reality and immediacy of the Father's love, Jesus sees temptation for what it is and chooses the union of Divine love against the comforts, ego, and power of the world. Jesus, like us, must face temptation to make a clear and personal choice for God.

The sequence continues. Temptation in the Garden of Eden anticipates Jesus in the 'garden' of the desert that would lead him to the Garden of Gethsemane. The agony of Jesus in the final garden reframes and restores the effects of the Garden of Eden. Disobedience in the first garden is reconciled by the obedience in the last garden of agony. The necessity of temptation is the freedom of choice toward God or away from God.

Why is temptation so critical in the human story? The fundamental action of the Garden of Eden was not only the act of disobedience, but also the awakening of human conscience. The development of human conscience confirms the gift of free will given by God. It establishes the necessity of moral integrity. Human beings are free to choose right from wrong, sin or grace, darkness or light. Each has its blessing or consequence. The Fall in the Garden establishes the dignity of human nature to choose and accept the gift of a mature relationship with God our Creator. Temptation creates the choice.

If this were not the case, how would human beings ever wake-up, mature beyond childhood selfishness, or learn to choose the good, the right, and the moral way of dignity and integrity that aligns us with God? Jesus himself had to encounter the challenges of temptation to secure his deepest identity in a full commitment to the will of the Father. The temptations Jesus endured confirm the reality of his humanity. Freely choosing the way of the Father's love defends him against sin, making him worthy to become the Redeemer of all sinners. Free choice is critical. To have free choice there must be an opposite force; good or evil, right or wrong, love or hate. Those with God choose love.

This does not in any way negate the reality of sin and its consequences. Sin is sin, and sin needs redemption for those who seek eternal life with God. Notice that God, in the person of Christ, takes into himself our sin that we may be reconciled by the surpassing love revealed and given on the Cross. The ancient hymn of the Exultant sung of Holy Saturday tells the story, 'O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!' In Christ, we are not saved from sin for the sake of God's gift of free will. We are redeemed through our sin, feeling its pain, the weight of its shame, and the perception of separation from God. Despite sin, God never leaves us, offering an endless invitation to return.

Lent is the season to reflect on our choices; those that lead us closer to God and those that do not. The challenge is self-honesty, blunt and vulnerable. Do you want your life your way, or to the best of your ability to be a part of God's way. The choice is yours. God has made his choice. It will always be for you. Let us pray for each other, our Church, and our world in this holy time.

Father John Esper

Liturgical Schedule

DAILY MASS

8:00am Monday thru Thursday

WEEKEND MASSES

Saturday - 4:00pm

Sunday - 9:00am

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturdays 3:00 - 3:45pm
in Chapel

Live Streaming of the Following:



Daily & Weekend Masses

Adoration on Tuesdays
8:45am to Noon

Rosary on Thursdays
following 8:00am Mass

Search for St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church (in Madison Heights) on youtube to find our channel or connect via our APP or website



MONDAY, February 23, 2026

8:00am Mass: Jason Bertolini† req. by Mary Jane Guc

TUESDAY, February 24, 2026

8:00am Mass: For families raising special needs children

WEDNESDAY, February 25, 2026

8:00am Mass: Stefanija & Pranas Juska (Memorial Anniversary) req. by Regina Juska-Svoba

THURSDAY, February 26, 2026

8:00am Mass: Anna Perry† req. by Corrine McCarthy

SATURDAY, February 28, 2026

4:00pm Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer

Mary Guaiana† req. by Family

Tony Seliga† req. by Jeanette & Family

Donna Dietrich† req. by Family

Edward Heffner† req. by Debbie Tourville

Michael Riley† (5th R.A.) req. by Terri Riley

Neil Repke† (1st R.A.) req by Barbara & Family

SUNDAY, March 1, 2026

9:00am Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer

Joseph Dong Kim Pham† req. by Family

Intentions of Corrine McCarthy (in gratitude) req. by

Helen Kapolka

Kitty Pauzzi† req. by Marie Sankuer

Contact Information

ST VINCENT FERRER PARISH OFFICE

28353 Herbert St., Madison Heights, MI 48071

248-542-8720 Fax 248-542-8721

Website: www.stvincentferrer.net

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday

9am to Noon - 1:00pm to 4:30pm,

Friday - 9:00am to Noon

Closed Saturday & Sunday

Parish Office Staff

Reverend John C. Esper, Priest in Solidum

Deborah Tourville, Bus. Mgr/Adult Faith Formation

Sheryl Brown, Parish Secretary/Bulletin

Jim Balistreri, Music Coordinator

Matthew Zinser, Evangelical Charity Coordinator/

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) Coordinator

Carl Copen, Facilities Supervisor

Alex Mototolea, Maintenance

FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

248-542-8720 – call for appointment

Matthew Zinser, Childhood Faith Formation Coordinator

For information on Baptisms, OCIA and Funerals contact the Parish Office 248-542-8720

Readings for the Week

February 22, 2026

Sunday: Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7/Ps 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17/

Rom 5:12-19 or 5:12, 17-19/Mt 4:1-11

Monday: Lv 19:1-2, 11-18/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15/Mt

25:31-46

Tuesday: Is 55:10-11/Ps 34:4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19/Mt

6:7-15

Wednesday: Jon 3:1-10/Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19/Lk

11:29-32

Thursday: Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25/Ps 138:1-2ab, 2cde-

3, 7c-8/Mt 7:7-12

Friday: Ez 18:21-28/Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8/Mt

5:20-26

Saturday: Dt 26:16-19/Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8/Mt 5:43-

48

Next Sunday: Gn 12:1-4a/Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22/2

Tm 1:8b-10/Mt 17:1-9

AOD RESTRUCTURING PLANS

For information or questions contact any person below or visit: restructuring.aod.org

Primary Person of Contact: Debbie Tourville

Key Parish Leaders:

Steve Orloski

Tom Karolski

Angie Maynard

Corrine McCarthy

Linda Collins

Judy McCown

Mike Kairis

Linda Yolkiewicz

Evangelical Service Corner

PRAYER BLANKET & CARDS FOR SHUT-INS MINISTRY MEETINGS

Thursday, February 26, 2026
6:00pm - Parish Hall

The Prayer Blanket Ministry and Decorating Cards for Shut-Ins Ministry will meet this Thursday, February 26, 2026 in the church social hall from 6-9 pm. All are welcome, children as well as adults. No artistic talent is required.

Lenten Evening Mass

This Wednesday at 7:00pm

Charitable Giving



Each Wednesday evening before the Mass, there will be a brief explanation of the work of the charity that we will be supporting that week. The information will also be on our website.

February 25 to March 3 we will be accepting donations for Deo Gratias Ministries Detroit. Deo Gratias Ministries Detroit works to honor the dignity of each person by offering Christ-like hospitality to people in need. Founded by the Felician Sisters, their services include a cafe, food pantry, tutoring, a community garden, an art program, faith and fellowship. For more information visit: <https://www.dgmdetroit.org/>

Donations can be put in envelopes, marked for the charity, and dropped in the collection baskets at any Mass. Donations can be made online thru our website or by using the QR code on page 7.



A covenant is a formal agreement between two parties. Assuming both parties enter into the covenant of their own free will, it is a bond that cannot be broken. As time goes on, that covenant will be tested and its validity questioned by skeptics, but it will remain if it is real.

God's covenant with his people is real. It began with a promise made to Noah and was renewed in the person of Jesus Christ. It has been tested by man through sin and by evil through Jesus' trials in the desert. But here in 2025, it still remains as strong as ever.

This Lent, take time to rediscover and reflect on this covenant God has with us. Reclaim your baptism and make it a motivating factor in how you live your life. Take the opportunity this Lenten season provides to increase your devotion and spirituality. You will be tested and you will suffer trials, for life is not always easy. But God has always upheld his part of the agreement. Now is the time to take our part in this covenant more seriously. ©LPI

AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE HEALING CHRIST

A Manresa Silent Healing Retreat
1390 Quarton Rd.
Bloomfield Hills, 48304

Friday to Sunday - March 6-8

There are quiet places in our hearts where we have placed doubts, memories, fears and hurts which need the loving hand of Jesus to heal. Receive His embrace during a precious few days of quiet and serenity. It is a place of peace where we can light a path which can lead to freedom, forgiveness, healing. God is waiting for you. Don't miss the invitation.

Directors:
Fr. John Esper
& Debbie Tourville



Weekend schedule:
Registration, Friday 5:00pm - Dinner 6:00pm
Closure of Retreat: Sunday at Noon
A nonrefundable deposit of \$50 is required
You may register on line at www.manresa-sj.org
For more information call 248.644.4933

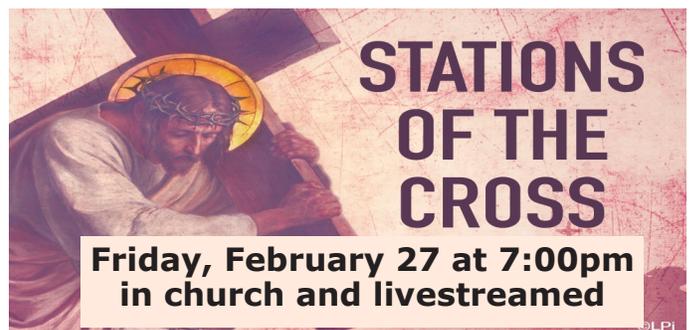
Can You Not Spend One Hour With Me?



This question was asked of the disciples by Our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night Jesus instituted the Eucharist—and is the same question He asks of us: Can we not spend an hour (or a few moments) of our time with Him who gives us all we have or ever will have?

On Tuesdays during Lent,
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will follow
the 8am morning Mass until noon.

Jesus is waiting for You.





1st Sunday of Lent

In my second-to-last year of seminary, I woke up one September morning to devastating news: two beloved classmates had died in a car crash. I was overwhelmed with grief and anger like I had never known. I entered therapy for the first time and had intense conversations with my spiritual director. For months I felt lost in a spiritual wilderness. But something unexpected happened: I encountered Christ there. The fear and sorrow didn't destroy me. In fact, that spiritual desert was a time of intense growth in faith.

Today's Gospel begins: **"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil" (Matthew 4:1).** The word "led" denotes a gentle, humble submission to the Spirit. Jesus does not send himself into this desolate place where wild beasts roam and Satan tempts. Who wants to be around roaming, wild beasts? The Church Fathers saw them as symbols of our inner chaos: fears, temptations, wounds. The Spirit leads us there, sometimes against our wishes. But those same Fathers also saw that this deserted place is also where angels ministered to Jesus, amidst his great trial and temptation.

Lenten Challenge: This Lent and throughout life's struggles, the Spirit leads you and me into the wilderness. Name one "desert" into which the Spirit has led you: perhaps grief, fear, silence, change, disappointment. Ask for the grace to go there willingly. The beasts may be real, but they will not harm you. There, the angels are waiting to minister to the Christ living in you, who always goes where the Spirit leads.

— *Father John Muir*

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St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Community

extends its deepest sympathy and support to the family and friends of

Kathy Campbell

Please remember her and the souls of all the faithful departed in your prayers.

May all the deceased be welcomed into paradise!



Prayer REQUESTS

...all government leaders to seek wisdom in finding peaceful solutions to world wars and tensions.

...medical and

humanitarian aid for those suffering from hardship due to catastrophic weather, fires, wars, floods, earthquakes and disasters.

...respect for life from conception to natural death

...the safety of men and women dedicated to protecting lives and freedom.

...the homeless, the addicted and all who are suffering physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

...all who are sick, homebound, undergoing or recovering from surgery, medical procedures, treatments or testing, and those who have made specific prayer requests.

Lord Jesus,

You are the Divine Physician and Healer. To You, we lift up in prayer all who are lonely, homeless, sick or addicted; all who are unemployed or underemployed; all who are anxious or depressed and all who are suffering in any way spiritually, physically or emotionally. In their pain and brokenness, we ask that you bring them the comfort of your loving presence. In You, may they find strength for the day and hope for the journey. Amen

Observances of the Week

Sunday: 1st Sunday of Lent

Monday: St. Polycarp, Bishop and Martyr

Friday: St. Gregory of Narek, Abbot and Doctor of the Church

Next Sunday: 2nd Sunday of Lent

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52 SUNDAYS

A Family Resource from the AOD

Access is now available for three full years of inspiring content—readings, reflection questions, family activities, and more—all designed to help families make Sunday truly special.

Here's what's new:

- **Easy Navigation:** Select your year and use the spokes of the circle to find your date.
- **Quick Search:** Looking for a specific Saint or a delicious recipe? Our new search feature makes it simple to find exactly what you need—fast!
- **Still FREE:** Everything you love about 52 Sundays is still completely free to use.
- Visit **52Sundays.com** today to explore the fresh design and continue your journey to **Reclaim Sunday as the Lord's Day!**

CATHOLIC TRIVIA – JUST FOR FUN

Question: According to the Acts of the Apostles, who was selected to replace the Apostle Judas? ©LPi

Answer: St. Matthias.

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK FOR REFLECTION

1st Reading: Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7

Question: Genesis reveals that from the beginning the serpent (the devil) desires to lure and trap us into disobeying God. Can you think of some lies the serpent is telling people today?

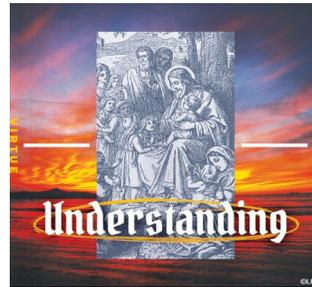
2nd Reading: Rom 5:12-19 or 5:12,17-19

Question: Paul argues that Jesus’ obedience to God brought us the gift of freedom and life. How do you see yourself obeying God?

Gospel: Mt 4:1-11

Question: The season of Lent begins each year with the story of the devil tempting Jesus in the desert. As we begin the 40 days of Lent, what temptations are you willing to confront?

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**VIRTUES,
EXPLAINED!
CONNECT WITH
TRADITION AND
GROW YOUR
FAITH**

UNDERSTANDING, *Explained!*

“I believe, in order to understand,” said St. Augustine. “And I understand, the better to believe.”

The virtue of understanding, which is a gift conferred by the Holy Spirit, shows us that there is no such thing as “blind faith.” Faith, by its very nature, seeks to better understand the object of that faith.

It is important to know that understanding is a process — the Holy Spirit is always willing to give a gift over and over again! “The same Holy Spirit constantly perfects faith by his gifts, so that Revelation may be more and more profoundly understood,” we read in *Dei verbum*, the dogmatic constitution on divine revelation.

Understanding is the “food” of faith. We must constantly ask the Holy Spirit for greater and more profound understanding, for though understanding proceeds from faith, it in turn nourishes that faith. “A more penetrating knowledge will in turn call forth a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love,” says the Catechism (CCC 158).

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**MEN’S FELLOWSHIP &
SCRIPTURE REFLECTION**

**Saturday, February 28 at 9:00am
Faith Formation Office in School**



The men’s fellowship group gathers for a scripture reflection/sharing every other Saturday. All men are welcome. No fees or registration are required.

**WHY DO WE DO THAT?
CATHOLIC LIFE EXPLAINED**

TAKE UP OUR CROSS

Question: What does Jesus mean when he talks about taking up our cross?

Answer: Our journey of faith begins in baptism. When we are faithful to it, we find God’s plan for us, his way of allowing us to participate in his saving work, which in turn becomes for us our own salvation. Stated simply, we share in the mission of Jesus each day. We live our life with all of its ups, downs, joys, and sorrows in union with the mission of Jesus. Our work then is holy. It is joined to the cross, God’s will for Jesus — the way in which he destroys sin and death and makes eternal life possible. His sacrifice accomplishes what we ourselves cannot do.

To take up the cross, then, means that we share in the mission of Jesus and so embrace the sufferings of the cross. It is our daily life made holy, given a redemptive mission. It is our purpose and goal to unite our life to that of Christ. St. Paul says it best, “If we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection” (Rom 6:5).

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Ministry Schedule

February 28/March 1, 2026

Mass	4:00pm	9:00am
Sacristan	T Riley	C McCarthy
Reader #1	M Simmons	R Grant
Reader #2	T Riley	C McCarthy
EME	M Simmons	A Goll
	L Collins	R Grant
	R Pasiak	M Waskowski
Greeters	J Ballantine	T Lane
	T Oparka	P Rarus
	N Oparka	B Gutowski
	M Smith	D Vu

**Traveling Chalice Host beginning week of Feb. 28/March 1
Gary & Darlene Lentini**

INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

Our Lord is so humble that he allows us to see him experience temptation. The vulnerability of this moment is awesome to behold. Let us learn from Jesus' interaction with the devil, and be transformed by it. Let us say, with him: "Get away, Satan." ©LPi

Into the Desert

by Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

When we first got married, I wanted to know everything my husband was thinking, exactly when he was thinking it.

Thirteen years later, I still want to know it all. But I want to know it after he's had a snack.

I think he still wants to know what I'm thinking, too. But he wants to know it after I've had 10 minutes without hearing the word, "Mommy!"

Life has taught us, you see, that it's hard to be a good person, a nice person, a gentle person, when your body doesn't feel good or nice or gentle. When you're hungry. When you're exhausted. When you're anxious. It's not impossible, of course. It's just ... *hard*.

We're entering a penitential season, a time in which we purposefully deprive ourselves in certain ways. During Lent, we intentionally enter into the desert of physical hunger and weakness. Why, in preparation for Easter and in an effort to spiritually purify ourselves, do we go to this place where it's *so hard to be good*? Why do we go to the desert?

Because Christ has shown us that the desert is where decisions are made.

There are many reasons why the Word became flesh to accomplish God's plan for our salvation. But I think one of the most important reasons must have been that God wanted to show us that He knows, intimately, how easily the devil exploits our physical experience of this world. We see it in today's Gospel: Jesus, hungry and weary. Jesus, taunted and tempted.

We see him. We recognize him. We are him.

And we hear his voice, even though it trembles with fatigue: "Get away, Satan!"

Today, we enter the desert. Because the desert is where decisions are made. ©LPi

JUBILEE YEAR OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

January 10, 2026 to January 10, 2027

Pope Leo proclaimed a Jubilee year of St. Francis of Assisi on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the death of this beloved saint. In a letter to the Ministers General of the Conference of the Franciscan Family, Pope Leo offers the prayer below.

St. Francis, our brother

You who eight hundred years ago

Went to meet Sister Death as a man at peace,

Intercede for us before the Lord.

You recognized true peace in the Crucifix of San Damiano;

Teach us to seek in Him the source of all reconciliation that breaks down every wall.

You who, unarmed, crossed the lines of war and misunderstanding,

Give us the courage to build bridges where the world raises up boundaries.

In this time afflicted by conflict and division,

Intercede for us so that we may become

peacemakers:

Unarmed and disarming witnesses of the peace that comes from Christ. Amen

Wisdom from the Saints on Prayer, Fasting & Almsgiving

"Prayer offered in holiness from a faithful heart rises like incense from a holy altar."

"Do you wish your prayer to fly toward God? Make for it two wings: fasting and almsgiving."

St. Augustine

"Fasting is directed to two things, the deletion of sin, and the raising of the mind to heavenly things."

St. Thomas Aquinas

"Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism for what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes but bite and devour our brothers."

St. John Chrysostom

"Prayer begins by talking to God, but it ends by listening to Him. In the face of Absolute Truth, silence is the soul's language."

Venerable Servant of God Bishop Fulton Sheen

"Be earnest in righteous works, by which sins may be purged. Frequently apply yourself to almsgiving by which souls are freed from death."

St. Cyprian





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Stay informed, stay inspired.

Entering Canaan: A Day of Prayer & Healing for Women after Abortion
Saturday, March 14, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

*This Lent, make peace with your past:
Come back to God, who is Love and Mercy*

Completely confidential, the day includes a testimony, video, lunch, Adoration, Confession, and Mass. The confidential location, details for the retreat, and options for the \$25 fee will be provided after registration:

- > Project Rachel email: projectrachel@aod.org – Call/Text: 313-237-5929
- > Mary Lockwood mail: ecbrightonmi@gmail.com – Call/Text: 734-395-0677



MASS SCHEDULES

National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica

2100 W. 12 Mile, Royal Oak, 48073

SATURDAY- 8:30am and 4:30pm (livestreamed)

SUNDAY-7:30am, 9:30am, 11:30am 3:30pm (Spanish), and 6:00pm

WEEKDAYS (*Monday thru Friday*) 6:30am (livestreamed), 8:30am

St. Mary Magdalen

50 E Annabelle Ave. Hazel Park, 48030

WEDNESDAY - Noon

SATURDAY - 4:00pm

SUNDAY - 10:00am -

St. Mary

730 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak, 48067

SATURDAY - 4:30pm

SUNDAY - 9:00am, 11 am

MON, TUES, THURS, FRI - 7:30am

To support St. Vincent Ferrer with a financial contribution scan the code below to connect to our tithe.ly giving site.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP GIVING - WEEK ENDING FEB. 14/15, 2026

<i>Fiscal Year 7-1-25 to 6-30-26</i>	Budgeted	Actual	Over/Under	YTD
Offertory Env. Used & e-fund participants	240	120		
Offertory	\$ 5,185.00	\$ 8,665.92	3,480.92	11,368.96
Energy, Coffee/Donuts, Flowers/Trees, Candles, Mass Intentions	472.00	573.00	101.00	738.00
Fundraising: includes Budget Deficit envelope, CSA returned	1,673.00	285.00	(1,388.00)	(17,333.25)
Bequests		108.00		2,618.00
AOD Collections: Church in Central & Eastern Europe		40.00		40.00
AOD Collections: Priest Retirement Fund		2.00		2,382.00
Holy Days: Mary Mother of God		40.00		5,248.00
CSA 2025 Pledged 69,278.50				Paid 68,646.84

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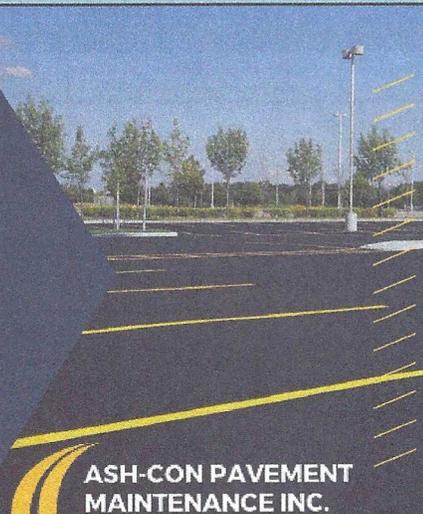


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