



St. Pius X Residence for
Retired Priests

Caring for those who cared for us



Embracing the Legacy of Service

Welcome to our Lenten Newsletter from the Staff and Residents of St. Pius X Residence for Retired Priests. We are delighted to share exciting updates and reflections from the staff and retired priests of our diocese. We thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter and to engage with us!



Dear Friends,

Thank you for the wonderful response on the part of so many of you in regard to our inaugural newsletter. We received many kind notes and emails! Most importantly, thank you for remembering us in your prayers. It seems we just put the Christmas Decorations away and now it's time for Mardi Gras and Lent – and what a wonderful and prayerful time it is!

Life here at St. Pius is filled with goodness. Our amazing staff keep us up and running, always with joy and a smile. We are truly blessed by their kindness and dedication to our Senior Priests.

Since my last letter to you we have had a few additions to our

house and we are now at capacity. Each priest who comes to reside with us brings with him his wealth of faith, experience, and the gift to his ministry. We are truly blessed!

As always, we thank you for your support and prayers for us. Please be assured of our continued prayers for you and your loved ones! Just because our priests are retired and no longer serving in the parishes, don't think that their work is finished. We continue to plead with the Lord on your behalf and on the behalf of all who live in our wonderful Diocese and all of Long Island!

May your Lent be filled with all the graces the Lord can grant and your celebration of the coming feasts of Holy Week and Easter be filled with wonder and joy!

God Bless you!
Fr. Steve



What a way to Start our Lenten Season!

Happy Lent! Happy St. Valentine's Day! This year we had the convergence of two feasts – one major – one minor, which I am sure left many very perplexed? How do I celebrate Valentine's

Day and Ash Wednesday together? In my mind – there is no question mark there – both of these wonderful celebrations have the same roots – LOVE!

While the Church Calendar no longer officially remembers the martyrdom St. Valentine on February 14th, (St Valentine was dropped from the calendar in the liturgical reform of 1969), we still celebrate his feast in a very popular way by remembering the love we have for those who are part of our lives.

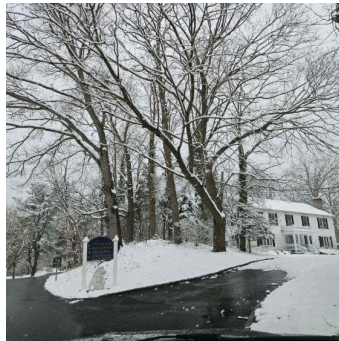
Unlike the original Church feast celebrating the martyr's life and example, today's celebration, like most holidays, has taken on a secular life of its own. Valentine, a priest who died in persecution of Christians during the first century, is said to have sent notes of encouragement, smuggled out of prison to his congregation hidden on the heart shaped leaves of ivy that grew through his prison window. It's his notes of love and encouragement commending his flock to remain firm in the faith despite the threat of death and the witness of his sacrifice, like Christ's that is the true hallmark of the Christian life. Unfortunately, today's commercial celebration is more about romance focusing on the sale of heart shaped boxes of candy, flowers (roses!), cards, and dinner reservations – oh, and jewelry! But is that all there is to this feast? Don't get me wrong. I want every husband and wife, boyfriend and girlfriend, sweetheart and sweetheart – to celebrate love, but just not the trappings of love...Rather Valentine would want us to remember and celebrate REAL LOVE! Love that doesn't come in candy form or needs to be watered. Love that isn't wrapped in light blue boxes and tied with white ribbon (you know what store I'm thinking of). Instead, he would want you to celebrate with love that is bigger and more profound than that! He would want you to celebrate a love that risks everything for another person! Love that has the courage to lay aside personal wants and desires for the greatest good for another. Love that is abiding and deep as the ocean and burns with an intensity that can never be quenched. Love that is all forgiving, all embracing, and endless.

What? You think that it does not exist? But I know it does. I have caught glimpses of it, though I have never seen it face to face. I know what it looks like and have heard it whisper. Simply put, it is God. What would make Valentine and myriads of other martyrs, saint and holy women and men lay down their lives out of love? What would make Jesus embrace the cross? What could be the driving force that has driven the Church for centuries? It's simply God's love. God's love makes us strong, fearless, and brave. And with it we can do anything, be anyone, conquer anything, and accomplish everything, because its source is

endless and all encompassing. It's a perfect love. I think St. Valentinus would want you to have even the smallest portion of that love for one another. And if you do, then you don't need candy or flowers or cards. You have all you need already!

That brings me to the start of our Lenten Season and Ash Wednesday. Did you get your Ashes? If you did, then, now what? The ashes were a symbol of your willingness to sacrifice – but what is sacrifice without love? It's empty. However, if I sacrifice because I love, - I will the best for the other - then I am willing to risk and do everything for their sake...Just as Jesus was willing to do for me – out of love beyond all telling.

My friends, my hope filled prayer for each of you this Lent is that the love with which St. Valentinus and myriads of others who were and are dedicated to the Lord Jesus live(d) will fill your heart and overflow. That you know how much you are loved – beyond all measure and that you share that love with others! Happy Lent!



The beauty of a snowstorm and the powerful time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving!

Dear Friends

The recent February snowstorms made the St. Pius X Residence environment more beautiful than it usually is! Watching the snow settle, I saw a familiar landscape become transformed. What was a lawn of dull green and brown became a field of white. Snow drifts added to the magic. Benches and fences were covered with delicate and various traces of snow created by the gusts. Nature's work of art.

Since one storm came before Ash Wednesday and the other a short time after, I started thinking about the snow and Lent. Here are some thoughts.

1. Snowstorms and Lent throw off our routines. Whether there's a lot of snow or a small amount, we must adjust. In a similar way, Lent calls us to adjust our regular routine and to take on personal penances (fasting, abstaining from meat on Fridays, extra prayer time and/or reading the Bible). It is not a matter of willpower, but an expression of faith in God's plan.

2. A snowstorm fascinates us with its beauty and power. But it also covers what is more important – the land underneath. Snow comes and goes, the land remains. Similarly, the attractive activities or demanding responsibilities of our day-to-day lives that come and go can easily cover over the more important challenges of life: our relations with the Lord Jesus and those we love. Lent is a time to take a step back and look at our priorities from a different perspective. Is there an area of my life that I need God's help with? Are there some opportunities that I've been neglecting to help others?

3. Beyond snow's initial attractiveness, there are long-term benefits. By melting, snow provides moisture in preparation for the needs of Spring (and here on Long Island, helps the aquifers). Our choices in Lent do not give immediate results, but this holy season offers long-term benefits. Being open to the Lord's grace, we can acknowledge our sinfulness and limitations as well as live more fully on the way that Jesus calls us – not only in Lent, but in an ongoing way.

We usually think of Lent as starting on Ash Wednesday and ending in Holy Week, and that is true. BUT, Lent is not an "all or nothing." There are times in past Lents that I got distracted or failed in my promises. Instead of giving up, I picked myself up and started again. Each of us can enter the Lenten journey at any time. If you want to make Lent special, it's never too late.

Thank you for your support of our Residence. After 51+ years of priesthood, including 33 years as pastor in different parishes, I deeply appreciate its wonderful spirit!

Peace,

Father Jim Wood

**Registration is open to our
Celebration of our Retired Priests of the
Diocese of Rockville Centre**

Please join us for a Mass and Brunch Fundraiser in support of our Senior Priests living at St. Pius X Residence. The Celebrant for the Mass will be the Most Reverend John O. Barres, Bishop of Rockville Centre.

Saturday, April 27, 2024
11 am Mass followed by Brunch
St. Agnes Cathedral

Click here to Register for Celebration of our Retired Priests

Our Blessings and Good Wishes for a Happy Lenten and Easter Season!

Learn more about St. Pius X Residence

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