



# SAINT TIMOTHY

CATHOLIC CHURCH



## Parents of Addicted Children Ministry

*Providing Essential Resources, Comfort and Prayer*

It is no secret that our country has been facing a severe substance abuse crisis in recent years. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 19.7 million Americans were battling an addiction to drugs or alcohol in 2017. What many of us may not realize, however, is the tremendous impact this has on families in our community. For every individual included in these sobering statistics, countless others are struggling right alongside them — children, siblings, friends, and, of course, parents. With this in mind, Mark Rodriguez initiated St. Timothy's Parents of Addicted Children Ministry, or POAC, almost two years ago.

For Mark, the mission of this parish ministry is intensely personal.

"My wife and I have been dealing with a 35-year-old son who has had issues with substance abuse, drugs, and alcohol," he says. "We joined a parent support group at Idlewild Baptist Church after he had some really bad episodes over the last four years. We learned a lot, we got support, and we didn't feel alone. So



*Mark Rodriguez, coordinator of the St. Timothy Parents of Addicted Children (POAC) Ministry*

when Deacon Pete Burns told me he was aware of some of these situations in the parish, we started a group here."

The purpose of the POAC Ministry is to support parents dealing with addicted children in three ways — offering a place of comfort and understanding; providing information about addiction, rehabilitation, and legal resources; and

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February 2021

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## Parents of Addicted Children Ministry *continued from front cover*

praying together as a group. Attendance, as well as anything shared at the meetings, remains strictly confidential.

Mark understands how important it is to ensure that the meetings feel like a safe and judgment-free space for all who attend.

"People who know someone involved with substance abuse also know there is a stigma involved with it," he says. "So nobody talks about it, no one is going to advertise this at work or church, and most times, they will likely be embarrassed about it. This is a very powerful motivation for keeping it quiet and held inside. In these groups, people find solace and catharsis in sharing this information with people who understand it."

Whether someone comes to the POAC gatherings to share or simply to listen, the benefits of such a group are truly priceless. Just learning that they are not alone in their struggles can lift a heavy burden from these parents. Information on various rehabilitation options, both local and out-of-state, can be life-changing. And in conversation with others in a similar situation, these parents may also find answers to questions covering everything from "When our loved one appears on our doorstep and they are a mess, with no place to go and no money, what do we do?" to "What is the difference between a counselor, a licensed therapist, a psychologist and psychiatrist, and what will my insurance cover?"

By providing the parents of addicted children with comfort, resources, and prayer, the St. Timothy POAC Ministry is fulfilling Christ's call to serve others with great love and compassion. Mark hopes that any parent of a child struggling with substance abuse — whether that child is 15 or 57 — will consider attending a weekly meeting of this group.

"We have 2,600 families in our parish, and 10 percent of them likely have someone in their family that is dealing with substance abuse," Mark says. "A lot of people aren't aware of the help that is out there. With the anxiety and stress, frustration, and anger, sometimes parents lose sight of the light at the end of the tunnel. This group is an option that people who are experiencing this should explore. There is hope."

**"PEOPLE WHO KNOW SOMEONE INVOLVED WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE ALSO KNOW THERE IS A STIGMA INVOLVED WITH IT. SO NOBODY TALKS ABOUT IT, NO ONE IS GOING TO ADVERTISE THIS AT WORK OR CHURCH, AND MOST TIMES, THEY WILL LIKELY BE EMBARRASSED ABOUT IT. THIS IS A VERY POWERFUL MOTIVATION FOR KEEPING IT QUIET AND HELD INSIDE. IN THESE GROUPS, PEOPLE FIND SOLACE AND CATHARSIS IN SHARING THIS INFORMATION WITH PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND IT."**

**— MARK RODRIGUEZ**

*If you would like to learn more about the Parents of Addicted Children Ministry, please contact Mark Rodriguez at 813-240-0500 or [poacgroup@gmail.com](mailto:poacgroup@gmail.com).*

# SAINT TIMOTHY

## CATHOLIC CHURCH

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

## Let Us Seek the Ways of God This Lent

Dear Friends in Christ,

**T**he month of February ushers in a transition in our liturgical calendar as we leave the “green” of Ordinary Time to embrace the “violet” of the great season of Lent. February 17th is Ash Wednesday, and the day that we begin our solemn Lenten pilgrimage towards Easter. Longer than the Advent season and more penitential, the holy season of Lent is truly a time for us to seek conversion of heart and spiritual renewal. The ashes we receive on our foreheads at the beginning of our Lenten pilgrimage remind us that we are called to die to sin, and to all the unhealthy attachments to sin, as we strive to make progress in our spiritual life and experience the joy that comes from authentic repentance and sincere amendment of life. The pilgrimage of Lent is a journey that should lead us to grow in holiness and virtue, seeking the ways of God rather than the passing, fleeting pleasures of the world.

The great disciplines of the Lenten season aid us in our spiritual journey. They are prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Regarding prayer, the season of Lent is an opportune time to set aside time for a daily conversation with God. One of the great devotions of the Lenten season is praying the Stations of the Cross. What better way could we make use of our prayer time during Lent than by reflecting and meditating on the suffering Christ endured for you and me to save and redeem us. This meditative prayer gives us the privileged opportunity to walk with Christ and Mary on the road to Calvary. It can be prayed individually or communally, and can be a great Lenten family prayer prayed in the home. There are many great resources in print and digital form that can aid us in praying this important Lenten devotion.

Regarding fasting, the season of Lent also provides many opportunities for us to practice self-denial and mortification. This is an essential part of the spiritual life that helps to create a hunger in our hearts for the things of God. It's important that we adhere to the Church's fasting requirements for the



two great fast days, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. We are also to make Lenten Fridays days of penance and self-denial. Why Fridays? Because it was on a Friday that Jesus was nailed to the Cross, experiencing so much suffering out of love for you and me. Our acts of mortification are a small, but important way to thank Jesus for all that He suffered for us. Abstaining from meat and other types of food we enjoy, making acts of self-denial and mortification are ways we can enter into the true spirit of the Lenten season and hallow these days of Lent.

Finally, our Lenten pilgrimage affords us a wonderful opportunity to practice faithful stewardship as we generously give of our time, talents and treasure to serve the needs of others. Take some time to prayerfully consider what you can do this holy season to practice the discipline of almsgiving. Let us seek to spread the light and love of Christ to others by our acts of kindness, mercy and charity.

Also, don't forget to do your “Easter Duty” and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, making a good Lenten confession in preparation for Easter Sunday. There will be many opportunities in the days and weeks ahead to accomplish this essential Lenten task.

To aid us on our Lenten pilgrimage, we will have our Lenten Parish Mission March 6-10. Make sure to mark your calendars and plan to attend. Our mission preacher will be Fr. Basil Cole, O.P. who is a Dominican priest and a professor at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Fr. John Blum". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Fr. John Blum  
Pastor



# THE LENTEN PA

## An Opportunity to Grow in

For lifelong Catholics, there are probably many things that come to mind when thinking of the season of Lent — from ashes on your forehead, to fish on Fridays, to fasting and making other acts of penance. And while Lent this year will still be quite a bit different, it is still an opportunity to step outside of *our* “normal,” and take time to refocus on what really matters — our relationship with Christ and His Church.

This year, St. Timothy Catholic Church hopes to encourage this pursuit with our Lenten Mission, which will take place March 8-10. Our special guest, Fr. Basil B. Cole, O.P., will speak at Masses over the weekend of March 6-7, followed by giving both morning and evening presentations of the mission over the next three days. Fr. Cole is a Dominican friar who, over the past 55 years of his priesthood, has served as a parish priest, university professor in the United States and Rome, and as a traveling missionary preacher. He is a prolific writer who currently teaches moral, spiritual and dogmatic theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.

The theme of the mission will be penance, its role in the season of Lent, and the life of the Christian.

“What is Lent all about — why do we need Lent?” says Fr. Cole, explaining the heart of his message. “Why don’t we just have Easter all year round? Every Mass we offer is, in some way, an Easter celebration and every Mass is also a passion celebration, so how does Lent fit into all of this?”

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will also be an important highlight of the mission, with Fr. Cole offering an opportunity to receive the Sacrament after each presentation. Being available for the Sacrament of Confession is one of



*Fr. Basil B. Cole, O.P., is a Dominican friar who, over the past 55 years of his priesthood, has served as a parish priest, university professor in the United States and Rome, and as a traveling missionary preacher. He is a prolific writer who currently teaches moral, spiritual and dogmatic theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.*

Fr. Cole’s favorite parts of giving Lenten missions and he encourages parishioners to take advantage of the opportunity to receive the sacrament, whether it is part of their usual practice, or if they have not gone to Confession in a long time.

“It’s always a great delight to be able to help somebody return to the sacraments, especially Confession,” Fr. Cole says. “When people have been away for 20 years, it’s a great delight to help someone on their journey, to pick up where they left off years ago.”

Lent is the perfect time to step out of our typical routine and go deeper in our faith, in preparation for the celebration of Easter. Although for many of us, life is still not “back to

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# PARISH MISSION:

## Our Experience of Christ

“AS OUR LORD SAID, ‘WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME, THERE I AM IN THEIR MIDST.’ COMING TOGETHER IS ANOTHER EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST. CHRIST EXISTS IN THE EUCHARIST, IN THE FAMILY, IN THE TABERNACLE, IN SCRIPTURE. HE ALSO EXISTS WHEN PARISHIONERS COME TOGETHER AND PRAY AND LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD. WE NEED EACH OTHER.”

—FR. BASIL B. COLE, O.P.—

normal,” it can still be challenging to prioritize our faith in the midst of our everyday lives, even if our “everyday” has slowed down. The Church gives us the season of Lent as an intentional opportunity to step back and make changes where necessary.

“One of the purposes of Lent is to help us become vigilant throughout the whole year,” Fr. Cole says. “We’re not always vigilant about the inspirations of the Holy Spirit when they come to us. It’s always good to grow in vigilance, and vigilance is hopefully one of the graces of a parish mission.”

Fr. Cole encourages parishioners to make a priority of attending the mission and growing alongside their fellow parishioners during this holy season of preparation for Easter.

“As our Lord said, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst,’” Fr. Cole says. “Coming together is another experience of Christ. Christ exists in the Eucharist, in the family, in the tabernacle, in Scripture. He also exists when parishioners come together and pray and listen to the Word of God. We need each other.”

As for having a good Lent, Fr. Cole reminds parishioners that we are dependent on God’s grace and help to fully enter into the season.

“We have to realize we don’t have the strength and the power to make a good Lent by ourselves,” Fr. Cole says. “We should ask the Lord Jesus for the grace to persevere in Lenten practices as we can’t do it on our own.

“That’s the purpose of Lent — to remind you, you’re frail!” he adds. “You need God’s help — and help is there waiting for us. ‘Ask and you shall receive, seek and you will find, knock and it shall be opened to you.’”

*If you would like more information on the Lenten Parish Mission, taking place March 8-10, please refer to the parish bulletin, or the parish website at [www.sainttims.org](http://www.sainttims.org).*



## Celebrating the Miracle of St. Blaise

### *FEAST DAY, FEB. 3*

**T**his month, we reflect on the life of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, who is one of the “Fourteen Holy Helpers” — a group of Catholic saints whose intercession is believed to be effective against diseases. Every year on Feb. 3, we celebrate the feast day of St. Blaise, during which parishes around the world bless the throats of the faithful. So, as we continue to navigate the ongoing challenges brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic, we may look toward St. Blaise’s example and pray for his intercession during these difficult times.

Though we do not know much about the life of St. Blaise, tradition tells us that he was born to wealthy, saintly Catholic parents. Born in Armenia, he devoted his life to medicine and helping the sick. He was a physician, until he was begged by the people to become their bishop. He was appointed by the Church as bishop of the Diocese of Sebaste.

Around the year 313, when the Roman Emperor Licinius was persecuting the Church, Blaise lived as a hermit in the woods among animals that he befriended. One day, a group of hunters found Blaise and seized him. Upon their trip to the governor, they encountered a woman whose pig was being attacked by a wolf. Blaise commanded the wolf to leave the pig alone and, upon his command, the pig was freed unharmed. Blaise was then taken to prison, where he miraculously healed a boy who was choking to death on a fishbone. While Blaise remained in prison, the woman whose pig he had freed brought him two candles to serve as his light so that he could read the Scripture.

It was from the miracle of saving the choking boy that the custom of praying to St. Blaise to cure all ailments of

the throat was born. And, so, after still refusing to recant his Christian beliefs, he was suspended from a tree and his flesh was torn with iron combs or rakes.

Blaise was then thrown into a lake to drown. To the surprise of his persecutors, he surfaced and walked upon the water, and he invited his persecutors to join him. They should do this, he said, to show the power of their gods. The pagans took him up on his invitation, and ultimately they drowned. Blaise was then told by an angel to return to dry land to receive martyrdom. He was beheaded on the shore and immediately went to heaven.

Because of his prison experience and his great reputation as a healer, St. Blaise’s intercession is invoked for the healing of diseases affecting the throat. The candles that the clergy place upon our throats while blessing them symbolize the candles that enlightened St. Blaise’s cell as he studied Sacred Scripture — connecting his spiritual life to the physical healing. Let us remember to invoke the intercession of this great healer upon any ailments that might be affecting us, either physical or spiritual — especially those pertaining to the throat.

The blessing of the throats is done by the priest holding two blessed candles near the throat in the form of a cross. The priest says, “Through the merits and intercession of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver thee from all diseases of the throat, and preserve thee from every other evil. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

## Our Lenten Marriage Series: Strengthening the Matrimonial Covenant

For Lent, many of us choose to give up things like chocolate, coffee, or ice cream. But Deacon Peter Burns asks married couples to consider using this Lent to do something extra, rather than simply giving something up.

"Life gets busy, so let's carve out one hour a week in Lent," he says. "Let's do something for our marriages this Lent."

The Lenten Marriage Series takes place on the six Fridays of Lent, excluding Good Friday, in the Day Chapel. Following Stations of the Cross, all married couples are welcome to the Lenten Marriage Series, which begins at about 7:45 p.m. Deacon Peter has been hosting this series for more than 10 years.

"We've had engaged couples and newlyweds, all the way to couples married more than 50 years," Deacon Peter says. "So, this really is for any couple."

Since many couples already have a busy schedule, the sessions are arranged to be short. The time includes an ice breaker, a short presentation and about 20 minutes to discuss the topic privately as a couple.



*Deacon Peter Burns and his wife, Charlotte, have enjoyed leading and participating in our Lenten Marriage Series.*

The one-hour sessions end with some group sharing, which is not required, and a closing prayer.

"The one-on-one time with the spouses is always the favorite part," Deacon Peter says. "This gives the couples time that they don't usually have."

This year, sessions will focus on the book *Praying for (and with) Your Spouse: The Way to Deeper Love*, by Dr. Greg and Lisa Popcak.

"The idea is to invite couples to learn about prayer, and about praying for and with each other," Deacon

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**"PRAYER HELPS US TAP INTO THE GRACE THAT GOD HAS PROVIDED TO HELP US LOVE IN WAYS WE NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE. PRAYER HELPS US, ALSO, FORGIVE IN WAYS THAT HAVE BEEN CHALLENGING IN THE PAST."**

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*DEACON PETER BURNS*

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## CATHOLIC CHURCH

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## Our Lenten Marriage Series *continued from page 7*

Peter says. "We share so much with our spouses, but praying together can be hard."

As Deacon Peter points out, this will be like an introduction to prayer class for couples and that, with prayer, we can help to get a taste of God's love for us through our spouse.

"Prayer helps us tap into the grace that God has provided to help us love in ways we never thought possible," he says. "Prayer helps us, also, forgive in ways that have been challenging in the past."

The beginning of the sessions allow time to meet other people. Fellowship is also an important component of the

sessions. Each session covers something different, so it's fine if a couple can't attend all six.

Deacon Peter looks forward to another year of leading the Lenten Marriage Series. He notes that it has truly been a blessing for him and his wife, Charlotte.

"Over the course of the years, I have had couples who keep coming back," he says. "They like the time alone and tapping into aspects of life. Sometimes, the right question at the right time can make a world of difference."

"Let us do what God is calling and open our hearts for His grace to work on us in ways we can't imagine," he adds. "All marriages need that."

*The Lenten Marriage Series begins on Feb. 19. Please join us at 7:45 p.m. in the Day Chapel to "take something up" this Lent.*

### *Mass Schedule*

Saturday Vigil: 5:30 p.m. • Sunday: 7:30, 9, 11 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. • Daily: Mon-Sat 9 a.m. • Holy Days: 9 a.m. & 7 p.m. Vigil: 7 p.m.