

# Saint Mary Magdalen Church

Building a family of faith in Jesus Christ through Catholic Worship, Formation & Charity.

9 MARCH 2025

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we begin the Season of Lent, I would like to meditate on what it means to give alms, one of the three principal spiritual acts of Lent, along with prayer and fasting. At the end, I want to invite you to consider a specific kind of almsgiving: to the *Catholic Charities Appeal* of the Archdiocese. But first, I want to give a broader context about money, donations, and how almsgiving relates to prayer and fasting.

Almsgiving is a very specific kind of act. We often think of it as "donating money," almost like writing a check to an *alma mater*. But they're not the same thing. Supporting the work of the Church by the means at our disposal is a serious duty and a spiritual act that transcends the kind of cost-benefit analysis often used in the language of nonprofits.

We can look at the *Book of Genesis*, where Abraham gives Melchizedek a tenth of what he had. Melchizedek is a mysterious figure who prefigures Christ and the Eucharist in offering bread and wine in sacrifice to the one true God. Abraham, our father in faith, responds to Melchizedek's act by giving him a tenth of his goods. Why does he do this?

Abraham recognizes that Melchizedek is acting as a mediator between God and humanity. By offering the bread and wine, he is carrying out a priestly act. For this reason, the gift of a tenth of what Abraham has is really a gift to God, one given freely out of love. This gift, then, is a recognition that everything we have belongs to God; it is a sacrifice of earthly goods in response to the spiritual sacrifice of the priest.

That said, this means that the priest has the grave responsibility of using these goods properly and responsibly to fulfill his own needs and the needs of the poor.

Even today, all gifts to the Church—i.e., those given at the local parish—have this dual purpose: providing for the legitimate needs of the clergy and caring for the poor and those in need. In many cases, this takes the form of providing salaries for parish staff and school teachers who assist the clergy in their work. But even in the contemporary form, it's the same basic act: the parish priest in offering the Eucharist serves as mediator between the Blessed Trinity and the adopted children of God (all Christians); in return, those who come face-to-face with the risen Christ through this

*continued on page 3*



## CLERGY

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Rev. Msgr. Ralph J. Chieffo  
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*Parochial Vicar*  
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*Sacramental assistance  
is provided by*

The Legionaries of Christ  
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Rev. Richard Maisano  
Rev. Philip Lowe

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Deacon Bob Szipszky, M.Th.  
*Permanent Deacon*  
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deaconbob@stmarymagdalen.net

Deacon E. Peter Zurbach, Ph.D.  
Permanent Deacon, Retired



## PARISH MASS & CONFESSION SCHEDULE

### Sunday

7:30 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM & 7 PM

### Weekday

Monday thru Friday  
6:30 AM & 8:30 AM

### Saturday

8:30 AM & 4:30 PM Vigil

**Confessions from 9 to 10 AM on Saturdays,  
and 6:15 to 6:45 PM on Sundays.**

For a private confession time, please call the parish office.

## PARISH DEVOTIONAL SCHEDULE

Adoration Chapel: Monday from 7 AM to Friday until 1 PM.

Morning Prayer: 7:15 AM from Monday to Friday in the Chapel.

First Friday Holy Hour: 5:30 PM Adoration & Confessions,  
followed by Mass at 6:30 PM.

Legion of Mary: 9:30 AM on Tuesdays in the Gathering Room.

Rosary: 7:15 PM on Tuesdays in the Chapel.

Flame of Love Devotions: Noon on Fridays in the Chapel.

See ministries and parish services on our website.



## ELECTRONIC PARISH GIVING

Visit our website's 'Giving' page to make a one time gift or sign up for recurring electronic donations using the 'Parish Giving' secure link or scan the QR code.

action respond in various ways, including by offering some of their earthly goods so that the work of the Church can continue, including its care for the poor. Of course, anyone can care for the poor and those in need at any time. But, from the time of the apostles, Christians saw something good about a corporate, organized kind of charity overseen by the apostles in addition to individual and private forms of charity.

In the Middle Ages, there was a clear expectation about this gift: in the tradition of Abraham, families were asked to give 10% of their goods to the Church each year. These goods were often physical items such as livestock, grain, and land. If they chose to give via currency, they were supposed to give 12.5%. The secular government could even compel those who chronically neglected tithing to do so.

Why am I saying this? First of all, the support of the work of the Church is a spiritual act. It isn't just about "giving back," as nice as that sentiment is. Rather, it is about trusting that God will take care of us and always give us whatever we need to carry out the mission he entrusts to us. It's about recognizing that the Church is the world's greatest force for good. In

addition to the infinite power of every Mass, the Catholic Church educates many children—including those in poverty, feeds the hungry, provides friendship for the homeless, and helps unwanted children to find loving homes. Has money given to the Church been used improperly at times? Absolutely. Do those of us in authority have a grave responsibility to be transparent about the use of these goods? You bet.

And yet, look at how our parish helps so many in need right now: with Christmas gifts, diapers for crisis pregnancy centers, and missionaries to proclaim the Gospel near and far. Yes, tithing has tremendous spiritual benefits for those who give and receive such a gift. That is what God can do with our generosity.

That brings me to the Catholic Charities Appeal.

Many of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy carried out in the name of the good people of the Archdiocese are funded through this annual appeal.

Let's face it: while it would be great if I could be at the soup kitchens and family service centers all day or work with refugees and college students as a full-time ministry, I simply cannot do that. While all of us can give of ourselves in a few ways, we simply cannot be everywhere. But in a mysterious way, we can be if we support this work in other ways. Through a financial gift to the Catholic Charities Appeal, you really can be in a certain way with the poor, the needy, and those who

need to hear the Gospel. You can be there because in all those places we are there: that is, the collective we of the Church, locally constituted in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. This is what giving alms means: supporting the poor who rely on the help of those who are able to assist them. It is, quite simply, one of the most important demands of the Christian life.

Our parish's goal for the appeal this year is \$126,000.

But I'm not worried about the actual number. We will surpass it. What is much more important is that in this season of Lent, each one of us takes a good, long look at our habits of spending, saving, and giving. What would our lives look like if we prioritized giving? If we really set 10% of our salary aside to support the work of the Church? Would our community be better or worse if our parish and the ministries of the Church had more opportunity to proclaim the Gospel and serve the least among us, the ones whom Jesus calls "my brothers" and says that whatsoever you do to them, you do to him?

## Disciple Maker Index SURVEY

**How well is our parish supporting you?  
Are you growing closer in your  
relationship with Jesus and His Church?**



We need your help  
to assess our progress!

The Disciple Maker Index (DMI)  
is an anonymous survey for the  
Archdiocese that provides  
insights into how well each parish  
is forming missionary disciples.

**The DMI is Open Now through April 10.**

Scan the QR Code  
or visit our website for  
the survey link. We are  
grateful for your input.





## PARISH

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## SCHOOL

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*Principal*  
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**Dcn. Joseph P. Boyle, Jr.**  
*President*  
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## NEW! VIRTUE=STRENGTH® THE VIRTUE OF FORTITUDE

As we enter Lent this month, students in our school and PREP are practicing the virtue of fortitude, or courage. This cardinal virtue enables one to remain steadfast in pursuing good, especially when facing challenges, temptations, and fears. Students should practice fortitude in small ways by speaking the truth even when it is uncomfortable, giving up small comforts to build resilience against difficulties, and accepting minor inconveniences with a peaceful spirit.

### ***How can we incorporate this virtue in our family and community daily?***

We must practice through opportunities to rise above fear and do the right thing. Always speak the truth and stand up for your peers. Walk or run together as a family for a specific challenge or intention. Courage enables us to achieve our goals when life gets tough. Pray and Reflect by reading stories about martyred or persecuted saints, or find a Bible verse about fortitude and memorize it. Making sacrifices to serve God and our community teaches us how to control our emotions and fears.

*'One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'*

—Psalm 91:4

**40 HOURS**

St. Mary Magdalen  
*with* Fr. Alex Gibbs  
*at* 6:30 PM

*on* March 11  
Searching Love

March 12  
Doubting Love

March 13  
Burning Love

Adoration  
All Day

Celebrate the glorious gift of Jesus in the Eucharist  
in adoration, liturgy, and discipleship.

## Casserole Collection

Next weekend before all masses

Place your frozen casserole in the cart. Tins and lids are available in the Narthex, or party size frozen meals may be purchased.

Donations of toiletries and socks are also appreciated.



## An Invitation from Archbishop Pérez

Your voice and presence are essential as we plan a new way forward

Archbishop Pérez published a Pastoral Letter that outlines his hopes for the Church of Philadelphia. He invites us to participate in a conversation about the trail we will blaze in building the best possible Church now and for years to come in our Archdiocese.

Please visit [trustandhope.org](http://trustandhope.org) or scan the QR code below to access his letter and video.

Then, he asks you to sign up for a session near you to share your thoughts.

The next session at SMM is on Thursday, April 3, at 6:30 PM in St. Francis Hall.

To register scan the QR or visit [stmarymagdalen.net](http://stmarymagdalen.net)



## The Drs. John J. and Margaret T. Clark Memorial Scholarship

The 2025 Scholarship Deadline is March 15, 2025.

Dr. John J. and Dr. Margaret T. Clark were devoted members of St. Mary Magdalen Parish. The Clarks directed that a gift be made through their estate to endow scholarships for students who are members of Saint Mary Magdalen parish toward their post-secondary education.

Annually, one eligible student will be selected by the St. Mary Magdalen Scholarship Committee to receive a scholarship toward the first two (2) years of undergraduate tuition for their chosen college, university, or trade school. The annual scholarship amount is \$5,000 for up to two years. Eligible students must be active St. Mary Magdalen parish members and current high school seniors graduating in May or June of 2025.

The 2025 Application and information are available on the parish website under 'Clark Scholarship' or scan the QR code. Send questions to the scholarship committee at [clarkscholarship@stmarymagdalen.net](mailto:clarkscholarship@stmarymagdalen.net).





# My Lent at SMM

## The Sacred Heart of Jesus

Wednesdays, March 12 to April 16

Join Fr. Bob for insights on Pope Francis' new encyclical *Dilexit Nos* on the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We will meet each Wednesday during Lent from 10 to 11 AM in the Gathering Room.

## Morning Prayer

Weekdays and Sundays

We gather in the Chapel at 7:15 AM. Praying with the psalms is a great way to begin the day. During Lent, we will also offer Morning Prayer on Sundays at 8:30 AM.

## Stations of the Cross

Fridays

Gather with our community at 2 PM and 7 PM on Fridays (First Fridays at 7:30) during Lent.

## Day of Mercy

Monday, April 7

Give yourself the gift of God's mercy and grace this Lent from 1:30 to 2:30 PM with the school, 5 to 6 PM with PREP, and 7 to 8 PM.

## Confessions

Saturdays from 9 to 10 AM

Sundays from 6:15 to 6:45 PM

First Fridays from 5:30 to 6:15 PM

Good Friday from 9 to 10 AM  
and 12:30 to 2 PM

## Forty Hours Eucharistic Devotions

Tuesday, March 11 to Thursday, March 13

Explore God's boundless love in the Eucharist with Fr. Alex from 6:30 to 7:30 PM.



## NEW! THE HONOR ROLLS

### VILLA MARIA ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL

The following students received honors for the first semester.

Distinguished Honors: **MaryGrace Coyne, Anna Vickers**; First Honors: **Caroline Naughton**  
Second Honors: **Reagan Martelli**

### BONNER & PRENDERGAST HIGH SCHOOL

The following student received honors for the second quarter in the first semester:

First Honors: **Gavin DiRita**, Class of 2027.

Congratulations to all these dedicated students.



## NEW! SENIORS' SOCIAL CLUB TRIP THURSDAY, APRIL 24

Our Seniors' Social Club invites you to join them for their trip to the Walnut Street Theatre to experience the unforgettable musical 'Dream Girls' on Thursday, April 24. The price is \$212 per person, including a deluxe motor coach transportation to and from SMM, 2 pm show admission, followed by dinner at the Positano Coast Restaurant in Philadelphia. For more information or to reserve your seat, please contact Bill Moore at patbillbr4@comcast.net or call 484-420-4575.

## SIGN UP! LENTEN RETREAT TUESDAY, MARCH 25

All are welcome to join the Seniors' Social Club for their **Lenten Day of Reflection** on Tuesday, March 25 from 9:30 AM to 2 PM at the IHM Conference Center at 401 Bryn Mawr Avenue in Bryn Mawr, PA. The cost is \$45 per guest. If interested, email Bill and Pat Moore at patbillbr4@comcast.net.



## NEW! THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS DISTRICT FREE THROW FINALISTS

The Knights are pleased to announce the following children from our parish have won the Knights' District Free Throw Shooting Competition held at St. Kevin's and will advance to the Regionals at Gwynedd Mercy University. They winners from SMM are **Louie Mallon, Payton Grandieri, Chloe King, Luciano Votta, Colin Lake, and Joey Thompson.**

The Knights congratulate all the participants and wish luck to those as they advance to regionals and possibly state finals!

## WELCOME NEW FAMILIES

Are you interested in joining our parish? Visit our website or stop by our parish office to register. We welcome new members weekly.

Owen Dunfee & Marielle Montecillo, Christopher & Natalie Musumeci,  
Joseph & Lea Spitaleri, Anthony & Patricia Pustizzi

## CALLED HOME TO GOD

Our sympathy and prayers are extended to the families of **Joseph Paolino, James Murphy, Lien Nguyen, Thomas Logan, Kathleen Mullen**, those souls who have died due to wars or conflicts including the Holy Land, Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, those recently lost to natural disasters or acts of violence, those souls lost in the recent airline crashes, and the 4,000+ babies aborted daily.

## A TIME TO HEAL

Please pray for our sick. Call the Parish Office if you or a loved one is ill.

Carol Austin, Charles Bastian, Danielle Bastian, Kevin Boylan, Bill Boylan, Joe Cahill, Anthony Carbo, Tricia Carmen, Christine Cavaliere, Mary Cichanowsky, Jim Clark, Jean Cotter, Joseph DeFabio, Kieran Doran, Rosemary Dougherty, Theresa D'Orazio, Phil Franco, Kevin Gallagher, Katie Garwood, Jacquelyn Gibbons, Bob Gentile, Rodie Henson, Mary Ellen Hoffman, Francis Iacovone, Rita Klauder, Gregory Lewis, Leonard Lombardi, Shellz Mangan, Joe Malloy, Floyd Marvin, Robin Marvin, Marion McCarthy, Mary Jane & Pat McCloskey, Mary Theresa McDevitt, Michael McFadden, Dorothy Milliner, Dorothy Moerman, James Moerman, Joan Murphy, Mike Murphy, Carol Ortner, Bill Pace, John Pollera, Nicholas Quercetti, Sr., George Rodgers, Naomi Rouse, Daught Ryan, Peter Salemo, Angelina Scarpa, Brendan Shain, Lisa Innaurato Shaine, Bill Snyder, Susan Sowa, Amerigo Tomassi, Mark Torregosa, Roseann Yannacone, and Ernie Zappacosta.

## BAPTISMS

Congratulations to our newly baptized! For baptismal information, visit our website for an intake form, call, or email [baptisms@stmarymagdalen.net](mailto:baptisms@stmarymagdalen.net).

Michael Dominick Liciardello, Hazel Jane Carrigan



*Please pray for all those preparing to enter the Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation: catechumens, candidates, their families and sponsors.*

## MASS INTENTIONS

### SATURDAY, MARCH 8

8:30 AM – Francis X. “Frank” Eccles

4:30 PM – Judy Baker

### SUNDAY, MARCH 9

7:30 AM – Restituta Magnarelli

9:30 AM – Mary Z. Tinucci

11:30 AM – William Virbitsky

7 PM – The People of the Parish

### MONDAY, MARCH 10

6:30 AM – Rose Marino

8:30 AM – Ints. of James Watts

### TUESDAY, MARCH 11

6:30 AM – Dennis J. Colgan

8:30 AM – Michael Patrick Hurley

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12

6:30 AM – Catherine Guinan

8:30 AM – Francis James Johnson

### THURSDAY, MARCH 13

6:30 AM – Dr. Emilio Loy Valdes

8:30 AM – Ints. of Sylvia Sotelo

### FRIDAY, MARCH 14

6:30 AM – Silvia Salera

8:30 AM – Nancy Cicione

### SATURDAY, MARCH 15

8:30 AM – Ann & Peter Miniszak

4:30 PM – Martin Sarkees

### SUNDAY, MARCH 16

7:30 AM – William Virbitsky

9:30 AM – Patrick, Eleanor  
& Joyce Bizzari

11:30 AM – Ken Ryan

7 PM – The People of the Parish

## FLOWERS

In memory of Joseph Paolino

## BREAD & WINE

In memory of James Murphy

## CANDLE

In memory of Lien Nguyen



**THAT MAN IS YOU  
THURSDAYS AT 6:25 AM**

Join us in St. Francis Hall for *Apostles in Springtime*.  
Doors open at 6 AM. Learn more at TMIY.org.

**PRAY FOR PRIESTLY VOCATIONS**

Please encourage and pray for priest vocations.  
To aid us in our prayers, we have a blessed traveling Chalice from the Holy Land to enthrone in your home for a week. **To host our Blessed Chalice, please contact Deacon Joseph.**

**PARISH SCAM ALERT**

Recently, we have experienced an uptick in email and text scams trying to masquerade as parishes, priests, or other parish leaders throughout the Archdiocese. Do not respond to or click links from any suspicious emails or texts. When in doubt, contact our parish office or any staff member using the emails listed in our bulletin or on the website at [stmarymagdalen.net](http://stmarymagdalen.net).

**REGISTER! MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT DAY  
SATURDAY, MARCH 29**

*Marriages of Grace*, part of the Archdiocese, offers a day for engaged and married couples of all ages to renew, strengthen, and enhance their relationship and marital bond. Come with your spouse or fiancé and listen to nationally acclaimed Catholic speakers who will inspire you to live out your marriage with greater fervor, love, and joy.

The enrichment day runs from 9 AM to 4 PM. The event includes breakfast and lunch, followed by the Saturday Vigil Mass at St. Helena's Church, located at 1489 Dekalb Pike in Blue Bell.

**To register, visit [PhillyCatholicLife.org](http://PhillyCatholicLife.org) or pick up a flyer in our narthex.**

*'When he calls on me, I will answer him;  
I will deliver him and give him glory,  
I will grant him length of days.'*

—Psalm 91:15-16



Monica prayed for Augustine.  
Ambrose accompanied him.  
Who will you walk with?



**GO WALK WITH ONE**

Everyone is called to evangelize, and it's not as hard as you might think. *Walk With One* is your opportunity to be God's instrument in the life of another person—someone whom Jesus longs to bring into relationship with himself and his Church. Learn more about this initiative, access resources, and receive prayer support at [eucharisticrevival.org/walk-with-one](http://eucharisticrevival.org/walk-with-one).

**TODAY'S READINGS BEGIN ON  
PAGE 108 IN THE HERITAGE MISSAL**

**STEWARDSHIP & TITHING**

February 2025 \$94,315

Collection: \$27,229

Mail-in: \$19,962

EFT: \$47,124

February 2024 \$109,101

Collection: \$31,475

Mail-in: \$31,985

EFT: \$45,641

**We are grateful for your generous spirit!**



Scan our QR Code for a secure link to our 'Parish Giving' link for Weekly & Special Collections, Annual School Fund, In Memory, Single Gifts, Stewardship, School Fund, and more.





# *Giving Hope* TO ALL

Did you know 1 in 5 people in the Philadelphia area count on the Catholic Charities Appeal for help and hope throughout the New Year?

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**10%** SICK & RETIRED PRIESTS

This February, CCA kicked off its annual campaign. All around the archdiocese many benefit from its mission. CCA effects the lives of those in every county, town, parish, and neighborhood. Catholic Charities Appeal impacts nearly one million lives annually. However, they cannot do this vital work without you. Your gift, no matter the amount—matters more than you know.



We thank you for making a difference in the lives of so many, let's continue to bring hope throughout 2025!

To give, scan the QR Code, visit [catholiccharitiesappeal.org](https://catholiccharitiesappeal.org), or pick-up an envelope in the church narthex. CCA thanks you!

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