



Dear friends of the Center,

My calendar shouts, “It’s Lent! Time for the annual self-improvement project.” Isn’t that what Lent is all about? Well, not exactly.

The three practices of fasting, almsgiving, and prayer are not about “lifting myself up by my own bootstraps” and improving myself. These practices are about improving relationships— with myself, others, and God. They involve openness and a dynamic of giving and receiving.

**Fasting** encourages me to say “no” to my appetites and desires. It helps me acknowledge that my own passions, drives, and wants are not at the center of the universe.

**Almsgiving** re-orientes me to make room in my heart for others. Using the Rice Bowl, giving to a charity of my choice, or helping someone in need, almsgiving provides me the opportunity to create right relationships of love and care for others.

**Prayer** allows me to humbly re-orient myself in right relationship to the Lord, the one who truly is the center of the universe. Like any relationship built on trust, I want to share honestly with God what is in my heart, not just what I think he wants to hear.

Prayer also means that I listen with my heart. If I want to hear God’s voice in my heart, I have to wait patiently upon the Holy Spirit’s voice, while quieting my own.

I find that praying the Psalms from the Bible is good training to share more honestly with God and to listen to God’s voice. Consider challenging yourself this Lent to memorize one of the psalms, like Psalm 23 (“The LORD is my shepherd...”) or Psalm 51 (“Have mercy on me, God...”). Ruminating on specific scriptural verses can feed our relationship with God, even when we do not have access to a Bible.

Praying with the Psalms of Holy Week is just one of the programs this month at the Center. Other programs to encourage you in strengthening your relationships with God, others, and yourself include nurturing inner peace and fostering unity among Christians. We look forward to seeing you this Lent, whether in-person or online.

Thank you for your prayerful support and financial partnership in the Center’s mission to proclaim the Good News of God’s Reign. As you deepen your various relationships with God, others, and yourself, may you experience the fullness of joy found only within God’s kingdom.

Christ’s Peace and Joy to your hearts always,

Sean Donovan  
Director of Religious Education

## Pray for :

**Jeaune Allard**  
**Mary Close**  
**Anna Dauksts**  
**Bernice Hallinan**  
**Harburg family**  
**Kapteyn Family**  
**+Fr. Charles Martin,**  
**CSP**  
**+Dr. Zumela Moret**  
**Mufide Family**  
**Mary Pannozo**  
**Geri Patis**  
**+Doug Skope**  
**Joyce Wright**

**March Mass for CIC**  
**Intentions:**  
**Sunday, March 12**  
**5:30 p.m. at the**  
**Cathedral**

*Please include your prayer intentions with your green envelope or email them to [cicoffice@catholicinformationcenter.org](mailto:cicoffice@catholicinformationcenter.org)*

# Upcoming Programs

**Nurturing Inner Peace**  
Thursday, March 9  
7-8:30 p.m. EST



For many, the slower pace and quieter existence during the pandemic was an unexpected gift. Explore ways to be intentional about nurturing our inner peace in this new season.

**Mary Wcisel** is a practicing spiritual director, currently working as a process graphic designer at CommunityWorks, Inc.

**Pondering as We Go**  
Tuesday, March 14  
10-11:30 a.m. EST



In the Gospel of Luke, we read that Mary pondered things in her heart (Luke 1:29, 2:19). Explore Scripture passages and prayer practices that can assist us in our life's continuing journey. This presentation is part of the 55 Plus Series, exploring spirituality and vitality in the second half of life.

**Father Joachim Lally, CSP**, author and spiritual mentor.

**Ecumenism Today**  
Wednesday, March 15  
7-8:30 p.m. EST



Fostering unity among Christians is a response to living the Gospel. What do we share and how do we journey together? How can we walk forward with each other?

**Rev. Karsten Voskuil**, pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran and **Deacon Dean Vernon**, deacon to St. Thomas parish.

**The Passion according to Matthew**  
Thursday, March 23  
7-8:30 p.m. EST



Each of the Gospels presents a different portrait and explanation for the death of Jesus. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is the righteous one - faithful to the Father's will that he drink the cup of suffering.

**Kathy McGovern**, author and Scripture teacher.

**Songs, Psalms, and Silence**  
Thursday, March 30  
7-8:30 p.m. EST



An evening of reflection on the music and sounds of Holy Week, inviting us to enter deeply into the "mystery of our faith."

**Michelle Ogren**, pastoral musician, and previous director of worship for the Diocese of Grand Rapids.



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## Friendship Corner

"My experiences with the Paulists in Grand Rapids have made me feel welcome and I enjoy the classes at the CIC. Getting involved in church matters such as counting collections and writing for our ecumenical meditation booklets has made a difference in my life. I was thoroughly impressed with the Paulist Fathers as they helped us through the pandemic. Shepherding us through that terrible time was a blessing and I cannot thank them enough."

- William Wildschut, longtime friend of the Center

