



**ST. MARY'S PARISH
8 CHURCH ST.
HOLLISTON, MA 01746**

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PALM SUNDAY MARCH 29

**Full Holy Week
& Easter Schedule
Enclosed.**

**Photos Below: This Lent
our Middle School Youth
Group made lunches for
the homeless.**



The Lenten Spirit was shining bright at our Middle School Youth Group's March 1 Meeting. After reflecting on Matthew chapter 25 where Jesus says, *"Whatsoever you do for the least of mine so you do unto me,"* our amazing teenagers made 125 delicious lunches for the homeless. Each contained a ham and cheese or turkey and cheese sandwich as well as chips and cookies. All were placed in beautifully decorated bags that the kids inscribed with art and scripture messages. There is a traditional link between Lenten fasting and Lenten almsgiving. During Lent we use less food and other things for ourselves so that we have more to give to the poor. This night was a great example, as our kids voted at their February meeting to skip their usual refreshments and snacks at the March Youth Group Meeting and use the money instead towards the sandwich

St. Mary's Parish Newsletter

April, 2026 ~ Volume 52, Number 3



St. Mary's Parish
8 Church Street
Holliston, MA 01746

Rectory: 429-4427

Religious Education Center: 429-6076

Music Program: 429-6076

Religious Education Email: st.marysre1870@gmail.com

Parish Email Address: st.marys1870@gmail.com

Website: www.stmarysholliston.com

Mission: "To Know Christ and to Make Him Known!"

What: Photos with the Easter Bunny in front of a professional backdrop; Children's Easter Craft Activities; and a **Golden Easter Egg** Grab! Each child gets to grab eggs full of candy and prizes. If they grab a "**Golden Egg**," they win a fabulous prize for the whole family!

Where: Fr. Haley Hall.

Suggested Donation: \$25 per family. To support the 2026 High School Mississippi Mission Trip.



EASTER BUNNY EGGSTRAVAGANZA!

THIS SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 10 AM to 1 PM,

St. Mary's Parish Hall, Holliston. All Are Welcome!



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Members of the St. Mary's Parish Family,

This coming Sunday we will receive the blessed Palms at Mass. When we first take them home, they are lush and green, full of life and freshness. Many of us place them behind a crucifix, tuck them into a frame, or keep them in a place of prayer. Yet as the weeks and months pass, those same palms slowly dry out. They become brittle and fragile, easily broken.

In a way, those palms can mirror our spiritual lives. When we receive them on Palm Sunday, we join the joyful crowd that welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem. We wave our palms and proclaim Him as King. In that moment, our faith feels vibrant and alive - like the green branches in our hands.

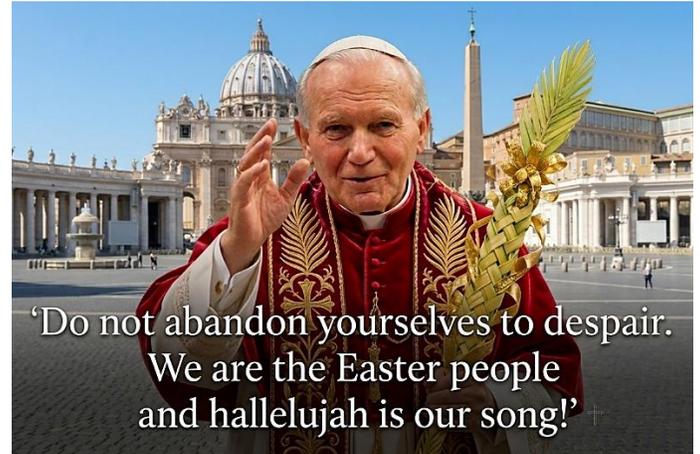
But the Gospel reminds us of a difficult truth. That many of the same people who celebrated Jesus's arrival on that first Palm Sunday either disappeared when things became difficult or stood among those who cried out for His crucifixion only days later.

Like palms, faith too can grow dry. The pressures of daily life, disappointments, distractions, worries, and routine can slowly harden the heart. Prayer can become rushed or forgotten. Mass can become something we attend out of habit rather than something we embrace in an open and heartfelt way. Like the palm branches we keep in our homes, our faith can become brittle if it is not renewed.

In mid-February we all brought our old, dry Palms to Mass, where they were collected and burned to make the ashes for Ash Wednesday. This Sunday, we will receive new, fresh, green ones. But how do we accomplish a similar renewal for our souls?

Holy Week is the Church's great invitation to let God bring our faith back to life. Through the sacred days of the Triduum - Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil - we do not simply remember events from long ago. We step into the mystery of Christ's love here and now. We watch Him wash the feet of His disciples. We stand at the foot of the Cross. We wait in the silence of the tomb. And

then, in the darkness of the Easter Vigil, we see the light of the Resurrection break forth again. These days have the power to soften hardened hearts, renew weary spirits, and restore faith that may feel dry or fragile.



St. John Paul II once said, *"Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song!"* Holy Week reminds us that Christ entered fully into human suffering, betrayal, fear, and death so that none of those experiences would have the final word in our lives. The Resurrection tells us that God is always able to bring life out of what seems lost.

This year, allow Holy Week to shape your life not just as a memory, but as an experience. Make time for prayer. Come to the liturgies of the Triduum. Bring your family. Sit with the Scriptures. Allow the story of Christ's Passion to touch the places in your life where faith has grown weary.

The palms we receive this year will once again dry out with time. But the faith they symbolize does not have to. If we walk with Christ through these sacred days, the Lord can make our hearts green again - alive with hope, strengthened by grace, and ready to proclaim with joy on Easter morning, *"Christ is risen!"*

In His Service and Yours,

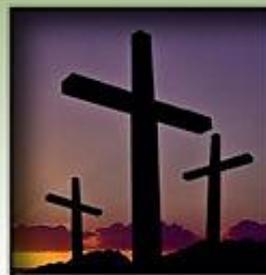
Rev. Mark J. Coiro



"So let us spread before his feet, not garments or soulless olive branches, which delight the eye for a few hours and then wither, but ourselves, clothed in his grace, or rather, clothed completely in him."

- St. Andrew of Crete

Holy Week Schedule



PALM SUNDAY

Saturday, March 28:

5 & 7:30 PM Masses

Palms will be blessed and

Sunday, March 29:

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

the Passion read at all Masses.

HOLY THURSDAY

Thursday, April 2:

9 AM

Morning Prayer

7 PM

Mass of the Lord's Supper

The Mass of the Lord's Supper recalls the events the night before Jesus died, especially the institution of the Holy Eucharist. The ceremony of the washing of the feet reminds us of Jesus' call to serve one another. The Mass concludes with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the altar of repose in Father Haley Hall, where Adoration will continue until 10 PM - closing with Night Prayer at that time. At Mass a collection is taken up for the Holliston Food Pantry.

GOOD FRIDAY

Day of Fasting and Abstinence

Friday, April 3:

9 AM

Morning Prayer

12 PM

(Kindergarten - Grade 5) Younger Children's Stations of the Cross

7 PM

Celebration of the Lord's Passion

The 7 PM Lord's Passion Celebration is the official Good Friday Liturgy that continues the three day Triduum Celebration begun on Holy Thursday and concluding at Easter. It consists of the Liturgy of the Passion, Veneration of the Cross, and Holy Communion. The Noon Stations are designed for younger children K - Grade 5, (accompanied by parents), and utilize a living tableau and special station prayers to help young children discover Jesus' love for them in the here and now.

Good Friday is a day of fasting and abstinence from meat. In every single Catholic parish around the world this day, a collection is taken up to maintain the Shrines and struggling Christian communities in the Holy Land. This collection is taken up at both the Stations and Passion Services.

HOLY SATURDAY

Please Note: No Confessions on Holy Saturday

Saturday, April 4:

9 AM

Morning Prayer

8 PM

The Great Easter Vigil (brass, adult choir)

The Great Easter Vigil is rightly called the "Mother" of all liturgies. It includes the blessing of the new Easter Candle, the sung Exultet Prayer, and readings that capture the fullness of God's saving work for humanity. The Church rejoices in a special way to receive new members this night through the Sacraments of Initiation. All Easter collections go to support the retired priests of our Archdiocese. Please generously support these men who have given their whole lives in your service.

EASTER SUNDAY

Sunday, April 5:

7:30 AM

Church Mass

9:30 AM

Fr. Haley Hall Mass

9:30 AM

Church Mass

11:30 AM

Church Mass



DO YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR CHURCH ...

- ... train holy priests for ministry?
- ... feed the hungry?
- ... shelter the homeless?
- ... support women in crisis pregnancies?
- ... clothe the naked?
- ... minister to the sick?
- ... educate the young?
- ... console the bereaved?

IF YES, THEN HAVE YOU GIVEN YET TO THE 2026 CATHOLIC APPEAL?

The Catholic Appeal supports all of the good works listed above and many, many more. The Appeal is to your Archdiocese what the weekly collection is to your parish - the critical support that makes its ministries possible. This includes essential services to the poor and needy, whose situation is more serious than ever due to government program cutbacks.

It is the duty of every Catholic to support the good works of the Church. Please do your part and give to the Catholic Appeal by mailing in a Catholic Appeal Envelope, or by donating online at <https://bostoncatholicappeal.org/>. Please be sure to identify your parish as St. Mary's, so that your gift will count toward your parish's 2026 Appeal Contribution.



Gifts of every size - even modest ones - all matter. The important thing is to participate. Remember what Jesus said when He saw the widow put her one tiny coin into the temple treasury: *"Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."* (Mark 12:44)

Easter Collection for Retired Priests



As at Christmas, the entire Easter Collection in each parish goes to support the healthcare and other needs of our retired priests.

These good and holy men gave their whole lives in dedicated service to us. Now let us be there for them in their need.

Please mail in or bring to Easter Mass your offering for our priests.

Or you may contribute online at <https://clergytrust.org/>. This site also provides detailed information about the uses of this collection.

WeShare and Automatic Giving gifts may also be designated for the Easter Collection.

Thank you!



CHILDREN'S GOOD FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS, APRIL 3 AT NOON.

Letters were mailed March 9 to families with children in **grades K - 5** for children to take a role in the Stations of the Cross Tableau. Please complete the enclosed form in the letter and return it to the Religious Education Office ASAP. Children who accept a role **attend** two

rehearsals during Holy week: Tuesday, March 31 and Wednesday, April 1 from 4:30 to 5:30 PM in the church. On Good Friday there will be a dress rehearsal at 11:15 AM before the Stations of the Cross begins.

GRADE 2 FIRST COMMUNION FAMILY RETREAT.

The retreat for children preparing for First Communion and their families is scheduled for Saturday, April 11 from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. Families, please mark your calendars for this special day and come together with joy to support your children as they prepare to receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. The retreat begins with an intimate time with Jesus in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with Fr. Mark. Following Adoration, the children engage in many activities with crafts as well as a special play guided by Najat Whalen, where the children interact with "Let My People Go". A short film on the Life of Jesus is shown followed by a small reception for the families to gather and enjoy with beverages and food.



ST. MARY'S FAITH ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FOR MEN.

APRIL: We are looking forward to our next Cor meeting on **Thursday, April 9**, (a discussion on the Acts of the Apostles); and our **Thursday, April 23** Meeting (a discussion on the Eucharist. For more information, contact: StMarysCor@gmail.com).

Cor kicked off its Spring 2026 Season on February 26 by exploring the topic of Reconciliation. More than a dozen men of the Parish joined together to learn about the origins of the Sacrament, and how it re-connects us with God so that we can fulfill the missions that God has for each of us. Deacon Ron began the meeting with a presentation on the topic of Reconciliation which was followed by small discussion groups where participants had the opportunity to open up about their own experiences with Reconciliation. After the break-out groups, Deacon Ron discussed the differences between mortal sins, venial sins and imperfections. A lively discussion followed and Deacon Ron fielded numerous questions. The meeting concluded with the recitation of Psalm 51, the Miserere.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS 18th ANNUAL CHARITY RAFFLE: One ticket is \$5 and a book of five for \$20. First prize is \$1,000. The raffle drawing will take place at the K of C Golf tournament on June 26. Knights will be selling tickets after all Masses on April 11 and 12 and at local grocery markets in

May and June. The contact to purchase tickets is stmaryshollistonkofc@gmail.com.

SPRING MULCH/PARISH CLEANUP FOR EASTER: The Council annually donates mulch to spruce up the church grounds for Easter. This will take place at 8:00 AM on April 4. All parishioners are welcome to help our Council spread mulch and remove winter debris around the parish grounds.

KNIGHT MICHAEL KERRIGAN SEEKS STATE WARDEN OFFICE: To aid his campaign, a Friendship Dinner will be held in Father Haley Hall on April 19 at 1:00 PM. The cost to attend is \$25. Mail checks payable to 'Michael Kerrigan' to 190 Prospect Street, Holliston, MA, 01746. Please remit by April 3. The dinner is open to all parishioners.



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE FOR 2026: For membership information contact Grand Knight Tom Brodo at StMarysHollistonKofC@gmail.com OR you can now join ON-LINE by going to the Supreme K of C website kofc.org/joinus. Our Council respects members limited time but desires new members to share our faith, present innovative ideas, and be part of our journey as Roman Catholic men.

MONTHLY ROSARY: The next Rosary will be Wednesday, April 15, in the church at 7:00 PM. The Rosary serves as a spiritual shield for a Knight of Columbus, grounding him in the virtues of charity, unity, and fraternity while he navigates the challenges of modern life. As a "Knight of Mary," each member is entrusted with the Rosary at his initiation, symbolizing his commitment to defending the faith and honoring the Blessed Mother.



WINGS Spring Season begins this April 8 / 15 in person and on Zoom! Our theme will be:

"One Body: Living Faith in a Fragmented World."

In a world that often feels like a collection of shattered mirrors - divided by digital noise, differing opinions, and the isolation of modern life - we are called to remember a profound, ancient truth: we are not meant to walk alone. As Catholic women, our identity is rooted in the Mystical Body of Christ.

... we are called to remember a profound, ancient truth: we are not meant to walk alone. As Catholic women, our identity is rooted in the Mystical Body of Christ.

This isn't just a poetic metaphor; it is a spiritual reality. When we feel fragmented within ourselves or distanced from our neighbors, we find our wholeness again at the Altar. In the Eucharist, the many grains of wheat become one bread, reminding us that our personal "living faith" is the heartbeat that connects us to a much larger, divine organism.

Living this faith in a fragmented world requires a "theology of the hinge," being the point where reconciliation happens. While the world may encourage us to retreat into bunkers of comfort, our faith compels us to reach out. We are the hands that soothe, the voices that speak peace, and the hearts that hold space for the broken.

By seeking the face of Christ in the "other," we begin to knit the fabric of community back together. Our daily acts of charity and steadfast prayers serve as the "spiritual glue" that counters the forces of division, proving that the unity of the Spirit is far more powerful than the discord of the age.

The WINGS Spring Season enables women to discern how they are called to live out their faith in the world today through powerful witness speaker presentations. Watch the Bulletin for our start date and speaker details. Contact stmaryswingssecretary@gmail.com to register or for more information.

FROM SHADOW TO SPLENDOR: FINDING HOPE AND HEALING IN A DIGITAL AGE

In our modern world, the digital frontier has brought many blessings, yet it has also facilitated a “growing problem” that the U.S. Bishops have called a “plague”: the proliferation of pornography. What was once hidden in the shadows of back alleys is now a constant, silent guest in our pockets, homes, and schools. For Catholics, addressing this is not about shame, but about reclaiming the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of love.

The Toll on the Mind and Heart

Research increasingly confirms that pornography is not a “victimless” habit. It fundamentally reshapes the human person at three critical levels:

The Developing Male Brain: The prefrontal cortex, the area responsible for impulse control and decision-making, does not fully mature until age 25.

Neuroscientists have observed that heavy pornography consumption can lead to a 10 - 12% reduction in gray matter and a “blunting” of the brain's reward system (Meng, 2016; Kuhn, 2014). This creates a cycle of desensitization where the user requires increasingly extreme content to achieve the same dopamine high.



Social Connection: Pornography creates a “time displacement effect,” replacing real-world social interactions with a digital fantasy.

Studies show it is associated with lower levels of empathy, increased social anxiety, and a “flattening” of emotional affect, making it difficult to connect with real people in meaningful, vulnerable ways (PMC12515835, 2025).

The Marital Bond: In the context of marriage, pornography acts as “spiritual adultery.” Statistics indicate that the probability of divorce nearly doubles when one spouse begins consuming pornography (Webster, 2022). It creates a “predatory” gaze, where the spouse is no longer a partner to be loved, but an object to be compared to an impossible, airbrushed standard.

The Spiritual Impact

Spiritually, pornography is a direct offense against the virtue of chastity. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that it “perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other” (CCC 2354).

By removing sexual acts from the context of real, self-giving love, it turns the user inward toward a selfish “illusion of a fantasy world.” St. John Paul II often spoke of the “nuptial meaning of the body” - the truth that we are made to be a gift to others. Pornography reverses this, training us to *use* rather than to love.

A Path to Victory ~ Spiritual and Practical Best Practices

If you or a loved one are struggling, there is profound hope. Recovery is possible through a “holistic” approach that combines the wisdom of science with the power of grace.

The Sacramental Life: Frequent Confession is the primary source of healing. It is not a place of judgment, but a “clinic of the soul.” Coupled with the Eucharist, the sacraments provide the supernatural grace necessary to rewire the heart.

Marian Intercession & Prayer: The Catholic tradition has long held the Rosary as a powerful weapon against temptation. Many find success in the “Three Hail Mary’s” devotion - praying three Hail Mary’s every morning and evening for the virtue of purity.

Practical Safeguards

Guard the Senses: Identify triggers (fatigue, loneliness, stress) and use digital filters.

Accountability: Sin thrives in the dark. Bringing the struggle into the light with a priest or a trusted mentor is the first step toward freedom.

Resources for the Journey

You do not have to walk this path alone. The following organizations provide compassionate, expert help:

- **Strive 21:** A free, 21- day detox program for men led by Matt Fradd. strive21.com
- **Integrity Restored:** Provides resources for men, women, and couples, including a directory of Catholic therapists. integrityrestored.com
- **RECLAIM Sexual Health:** A science-based Catholic recovery program focusing on brain health and spiritual renewal. reclaimsexualhealth.com
- **Catholic in Recovery:** 12-step support groups that integrate the Catholic faith. catholicinrecovery.com
- **Covenant Eyes:** Leading software for screen accountability and filtering. covenanteyes.com

Article Footnotes & References, See Page 3 at:

https://stmarysholliston.com/wp-content/uploads/Bulletin_2026.03.08.pdf

VIRTUE'S VOICE

Reflections on Faith and Freedom

ST. MARY'S IN HOLLISTON

FREE AND OPEN TO ALL



FRIDAY, MAY 29 | 7:00 PM

Join us for the return of our annual Spring Choir Concert, celebrating our country's 250th Anniversary in recommitment to upholding holy virtues and the dignity of all God's peoples.

ST. MARY'S MUSIC MINISTRY

ABIGAIL KELLEY-LANSER, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

THIS PROGRAM IS FUNDED IN PART BY A GRANT FROM THE HOLLISTON CULTURAL COUNCIL, A LOCAL AGENCY WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL, A STATE AGENCY.

St. Mary's Spring Choir Concert! Mark your calendars for Friday, May 29 at 7:00 PM in the Church for a musical celebration of our country's 250th Anniversary! St. Mary's Adult and Children's Choirs, along with guest professional musicians, will perform a collection of inspiring anthems that acknowledge our nation's history and recommit us to upholding holy virtues and the rights of all God's peoples. This event is free and open to the public!



St. Mary's Parish Middle School Youth Group

Our Next Meeting is Sunday, April 12, from 6:30 - 8:00 PM, Welcome!

BODA BORG: On Friday, February 20, Middle School Youth Group teens enjoyed a day at BODA BORG in Malden. Teams of four to six teens raced to solve escape room quests - some physically demanding, others requiring knowledge and mental skill. Teamwork and a good memory were required to keep the lights on in a town during a huge storm, while teens raced and climbed to reach safety during a battle in Platoon. Everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Quincy Market Food Court, with the winning Boda Borg Team eating for free. They solved an impressive eight quests!



MUSIC FROM HEAVEN! The beauty of sacred song filled Saint Mary's Church on Friday, February 27. We were delighted to welcome the Archdiocesan Boys Choir from Saint Paul's in Cambridge. Following a tradition of many years, the Middle School Youth Group hosted the boys - greeting them, serving them their dinner in Father Haley Hall, and in all ways making them feel welcome. Our MSYG teens then attended the concert, basking in the bright and beautiful music. A very special night in our Lenten Journey!





St. Mary's Parish High School Youth Group

Contact Lisa Dufault, st.marystgif1870@gmail.com, 508-429-6076 ext. 3

TGIF is hosting this week's Lenten Supper on Friday, March 27. The Lenten Supper runs from 6 - 8 PM. All Parishioners are invited for good (meatless) food, faith, and sharing friendship.



Friday, March 27 - TGIF SPONSORED LENTEN SUPPER.

Sunday, March 29 - TGIF MISSION TRIP FUNDRAISER - **EGGSTRAVAGANZA!**

Saturday, April 11 - BAGGED LUNCH MAKING/FR. BILL'S SHELTER TOUR/SCAVENGER HUNT SOUTH SHORE PLAZA.

SUNDAY, APRIL 26 - TGIF MONTHLY MEETING.

On February 8, the teens of TGIF went to Mission Springs to host a St. Valentine's themed BINGO with the residents. Everyone had a great time! There were wonderful prizes awarded.





Meetings: Monday Nights 7 - 8:30 PM

Contact: Mike Hebert, Scoutmaster
603 - 520 - 9045

Email: Troop14Holliston@yahoo.com

If interested in joining Troop 14, contact the Scoutmaster. It is an ideal organization for boys in sixth grade or above. The Troop meets weekly during the school year, Mondays from 7 - 8:30 PM in the Lower Church.

KLONDIKE DERBY: Troop 14 attended the Klondike Derby at Camp Squanto in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on Saturday, February 7. The Klondike Derby is a winter-themed adventure where Scouts travel between themed villages to test their Scouting skills, teamwork, and Scout spirit. Scouts rotated through hands-on challenges such as fire building, orienteering, marksmanship, and rescue skills designed to showcase their proficiency in these essential outdoor Scouting skills. Troop 14 also constructed a homemade sled used to compete against other Troops during the day. The day-long event concluded with the Troop cooking and eating dinner while enjoying a campfire.



SCOUT SUNDAY - PANCAKE BREAKFAST FUNDRAISER: On February 8, also recognized as Scout Sunday to celebrate the anniversary of Scouting (February 8, 1910) and to recognize the duty to God and community, Troop 14 held the annual pancake breakfast fundraiser in Father Haley Hall. Attendees were treated to plain or chocolate chip pancakes and sausages. Scouts also attended the 9:30 AM Mass and received a special blessing from Father Mark. Troop 14 wishes to thank the event sponsors, attendees, and volunteers who helped to make this annual fundraiser a success!

