



February 22, 2026 | First Sunday of Lent

Hearing God's Call

[On this First Sunday of Lent, our parish celebrates two Rites for 31 adults: the Rite of Sending for our catechumens (preparing for baptism) and the Call to Continuing Conversion (for our already baptized candidates). This afternoon at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Archbishop Ronald Hicks welcomes the catechumens, accepting their desire to be baptized into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil. This essay is written by Jennifer Gunsberger, who was baptized and received into the Church in 2025.]

Becoming Catholic was not a sudden decision but rather a fifty-year journey. God was always a presence in my life. My mother is Catholic, my father is Protestant. We all attended Catholic Church as I grew up. In our community, our friends were Catholic or Jewish, so these were the religions that most influenced me. I was born in California in the 1970s and my parents encouraged me to choose my own religious path if I felt drawn to one.

From a young age, I maintained a private relationship with God. After my mother put me to bed, I would kneel and pray, "Dear God, if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take, Amen." Then I would speak with God about my troubles. I continued to feel God's presence, though I knew little about Catholic faith. I remember feeling embarrassed attending church with my parents: I did not know the Our Father, though both my parents did. I longed to learn this prayer and be part of that experience.

As I matured, I explored other religions, including Buddhism and Judaism; none of these paths resonated deeply with me. Despite these explorations, I continued maintaining a quiet conversation with God.

It was not until after I married, and faced a challenging five-year fertility journey that my faith deepened. I entrusted God with my hope for a child, praying day and night. I chose Saint Elizabeth as my Baptismal Name because I identified with her story—struggling with infertility later in life. After suffering through seven miscarriages, our eighth pregnancy brought us our son Charlie. The pregnancy was difficult, and each day I prayed that God would safely bring our child into the world.

On December 31, 2018, our miracle baby was born. From the moment I met my son, I felt there was something special about him. Even as a young child, he showed deep empathy for others, comforting friends who were upset and bringing smiles to strangers. His kindness and warmth seemed to draw people in wherever we went.

My journey with faith continued; ultimately, it was our son who led me closer to God. My husband and I began exploring faith-based schools because we were concerned about the environment in public schools. Although my husband is Jewish and I did not identify with any particular faith, we looked into Catholic schools. In April 2024, our son was accepted into Saint Ignatius Loyola School for kindergarten. As we considered his acceptance and what would be best for our family, a Catholic friend pointed out that this was a clear sign of God calling me to the Catholic Church. I realized she was right—God had been calling me for a long time, but now, through my son, I was brought to His doorstep.

I joined the OCIA process, studied the Bible, attended church, and learned about Christ as my son began his own religious education. Since becoming Catholic, I've experienced many blessings. Now, as members of Saint Ignatius Loyola in NYC and St. Patrick's in Bedford, we attend church together, pray, and support each other. When my son faces challenges, I encourage him to consider Jesus's example. I trust God has an important plan for him, and I am grateful to raise him in the Catholic faith. After fifty years, I have finally made my choice.

— Jennifer Gunsberger
St. Ignatius Loyola Parishioner

Parish Mission Statement

*The love of Christ impels us to welcome all,
to worship joyfully and pray fervently,
to walk together with those in need, and
to reverence God in the wonder of Creation.*

This Week at a Glance

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24th

Lenten Book Discussion.

1 PM. Parish House. *Details at right.*

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25th

Lenten Bible Study | The Cross: Meaning and Misunderstanding.

7 PM. Parish House & Zoom.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28th

Stations of the Cross.

9 AM. Church. *Details on page 3.*

Lenten Fast and Abstinence

During the season of Lent, the Church urges the faithful to reflect a spirit of penance in their daily lives through performing acts of fast and abstinence.

- Lent began on Ash Wednesday, February 18 and ends on the evening of Holy Thursday, April 2.
- Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting and abstinence.
- Fasting means only one full meal a day may be taken. Two smaller meals may be eaten to maintain physical strength but together they should not equal another full meal in quantity. Snacking between meals is not permitted. Catholics ages 18-59 are obligated to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Those who are not specifically obliged to fast are encouraged to join in the discipline of fasting to the extent that they are able.
- Abstinence forbids the eating of meat or poultry. Those who have reached the age of 14 and older are obligated to abstain on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays of Lent.
 - Those who are not specifically obliged to abstain from eating meat are urged to join in the discipline of abstaining to the extent that they are able.
 - All Fridays of the year are designated as days of penance during which we are encouraged to practice self-denial out of gratitude for the suffering and death of Jesus accepted for us.

Low-Gluten Hosts

For parishioners wishing to receive a low-gluten host at the distribution of Holy Communion, please speak with a Hospitality Minister.

Ignatian Interfaith Ministry

Pilgrimages: Sharing Journeys of Faith

Friday, March 6th

Doors open 5:20 PM | Program starts 5:45 PM

Call to prayer: 5:55 PM

Join the Ignatian Interfaith Ministry as we welcome our Muslim brothers & sisters from Peace Islands Institute, NY, for our 7th annual Iftar celebration. Iftar is the breaking of the daily fast during Ramadan. Dinner and fellowship will follow the opening prayer.

Our panel will be discussing the history and importance of pilgrimages in the Muslim, Jewish and Christian faith traditions and how we can learn from each other's journeys. Families are encouraged to attend. If you have been on a pilgrimage (or want to go), come and share your story!

Space limited. Registration is required by March 2nd at ignatianinterfaithministry@gmail.com. Please include all first and last names of your party.

Lenten Book Discussion

Starting Tuesday, February 24th

1 PM

Parish House

Join the St. Ignatius Loyola Laudato Si'/Care of Creation Ministry for our Lenten Book reading. Tuesday meetings 1-2 PM in the Parish House will be on February 24th, March 3rd, 17th, 24th, and 31st.

We will read the acclaimed *Healing Wounds*, by Bishop Erik Varden, OCSO, who, through his journey, examines why Christ's wounds were efficacious for the healing of humankind. Varden's book is structured to guide readers through a journey of reflection, beginning with the raw reality of suffering and moving toward the possibility of redemption and renewal.

To register, email Jean Santopatre at santopatrej@nycignatius.org.

For Families with Young Children

For the safety of your child, please accompany them to the bathroom if there is a need during the course of the Mass.

They must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Lady Chapel Open for Private Prayer

The Lady Chapel is open daily for private prayer from 1 PM to 4 PM. During those hours, the Church will be closed.

Circle of Friends

Irish American Stories to Celebrate America 250th

Tuesday, March 10th at 1 PM
Wallace Hall

Dr. Elizabeth Stack returns to Circle of Friends this March to discuss some famous—and not so famous—Irish Americans to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of American Independence.

Dr. Stack will discuss some of the people involved in the American Revolution who had an impact on this country over the ensuing 250 years. In politics, religion, education, labor and culture, the Irish made incredible contributions to growing America, and yet some of these Irish Americans have been forgotten. To celebrate Irish American Heritage and Women's History Month, Dr. Stack will shine a light on some of these unsung heroes of Irish American history. Come join Circle of Friends and learn about the histories of these unsung Irish Americans.

There is no charge for this program.
A free will offering is appreciated.

RSVP at silcircleoffriends@gmail.com.

Laetare Lecture

Joy in a Time of Turbulence: The True Legacy of Pope Francis

Monday, March 16th at 7 PM
Wallace Hall

PRESENTER

Dr. Austen Ivereigh

Fellow in Contemporary Church History,
Campion Hall, Oxford, England

Visionary, reformer ... Pope Francis leaves a vast legacy. But most of all he showed us how to open to God's grace in our troubled "change of era".

Stations of the Cross: Saturdays in Lent Through March 28th at 9 AM Church

Led by Fr. Mark Hallinan, S.J.

Join us for this traditional devotion as we draw closer to Jesus through a prayerful reflection on his passion and death.

Note: There will be Stations of the Cross on Wednesday, April 1st at 7:30 PM in the Church.

Young Adult Lenten Morning of Reflection

Saturday, March 7th
9 AM to 1 PM
Wallace Hall

If you are a Young Adult in your 20s & 30s, we invite you to join us for a Lenten Morning of Reflection.

Take a few hours this Lent to slow down with us, bask in a few hours of silence and reflection, and grow in fellowship with one another. Meals will be provided.

To register for the March 7th session, visit
tinyurl.com/March7session

For more information, please contact Roxanne De La Torre, Pastoral Associate, at delatorreR@nycignatius.org.

Sponsored by the Father William J. Bergen SJ Office of Ignatian Spirituality & Faith Formation

A Family Celtic Night Celebration

Friday, March 13th, from 7 PM to 10 PM
Wallace Hall

Featuring music by Murphy's Lawyer, as well as Shepherd's Pie and Scones by Mary O's

With an open bar (Beer and Wine and Soda), face painting and dancing

All included with ticket price.

Price: Adults \$50 and Children \$25

Bring your small bills to shop the SIL SIOPA and bid on Celtic-themed auctioned baskets.



To purchase tickets,
scan the QR code at left.

Guided Church Tour

Sunday, March 22nd at 12:30 PM
Church (Meeting Point: Narthex)

The Church of St. Ignatius Loyola is a vibrant parish community whose foundation rests on the faith life and commitment of all who worship here.

We invite you to explore and learn more about our beautiful church through our monthly tours.

To register, visit ignatius.nyc/guidedtour/.

Join Our Email Mailing List!

We invite you to sign-up for our e-newsletter to receive updates on parish news and events.

To sign-up, scan the QR code at right
or visit ignatius.nyc.



CHURCH OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA

980 Park Avenue at 84th Street • New York, New York 10028

(212) 288-3588 • Fax: (212) 734-3671 • ignatius.nyc

PARISH STAFF

Pastor

Rev. Dennis J. Yesalonia, S.J.

Associate Pastors

Rev. Mark C. Hallinan, S.J.

Rev. Michael P. Hilbert, S.J.

Assisting Priest

Rev. James Martin, S.J.

Pastoral Year Priest

Rev. Jonathan P. Pennacchia, S.J.

In Residence

Rev. James A. Casciotti, S.J.

Pastoral Associates

Roxanne De La Torre

Kate Noonan

Brian Pinter

Jean Santopatre

Pastoral Assistant

Maureen Haley

Music Ministries

Jen Arvay Kefalas

Robert Reuter

Daniel Beckwith

Michael Sheetz

Christina Kay

Elizabeth Van Os

Douglas Purcell

Scott Warren, *Director*

Assistant to the Pastor

Rebecca Brucas

Director of Communications

Elizabeth O'Sullivan

Director of Facilities

Robert Cisternino

Facilities Coordinator

Pattie Hughes

Parish Administrative Assistant

Caitlin Caruso

Treasurer

Fernando Castro

Weekday Masses (Monday – Friday)

8:30 AM, 12:10 PM, and 5:30 PM

Saturday: 8:30 AM

Masses for Next Weekend

Saturday Vigil 5:30 PM Fr. Yesalonia

Sunday: 8:00 AM Fr. Yesalonia

9:30 AM Fr. Casciotti

Wallace Hall Mass 11:00 AM Fr. Pennacchia

Solemn Mass 11:00 AM Fr. Hilbert

7:30 PM Fr. Hilbert

Religious Education for Children

Ms. Kate Noonan, Director

(212) 288-3588 x609

noonank@nycignatius.org

Saint Ignatius Loyola School

Upper Campus

(First Grade through Eighth Grade)

Ms. Mary Larkin, Head of School

M.S. Ed. (Admin.), M.S. Ed. (Literacy)

48 East 84th Street

(212) 861-3820 | Fax: (212) 879-8248

Lower Campus

(PreK-3 through Kindergarten)

Ms. Mary Larkin, Head of School

240 East 84th Street

(212) 734-6427 | Fax: (212) 734-6972

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Sundays at the 9:30 AM Mass.

Confessions

4:30 PM Saturday, 6:30 PM Sunday,
or by appointment.

Baptisms

Please contact Maureen Haley at
baptisms@nycignatius.org
to arrange for a Baptism and
the preparation given prior to Baptism.

Order of Christian Initiation for Adults

Contact Maureen Fullam, M.A.,
Director, at the Parish House.

Marriages

The Bride or Groom should contact
Maureen Haley at
weddings@nycignatius.org
to begin preparation for Marriage,
normally one year in advance.

Visits to the Sick

Please contact the Parish House
between the hours of
9:00 AM and 9:00 PM.

Ignatian Young Adults (IYA)

For more information about our IYA
ministry, email Jean Santopatre at
santopatrej@nycignatius.org.

Announced Masses and Readings for the Week

Monday, February 23rd

(First Monday of Lent)

Leviticus 19:1–2, 11–18 Psalm 19

Matthew 25:31–46

8:30 MEM Charles Regan

12:10 MEM Emile R. Fadel

5:30 MEM Mary M. McHale

Tuesday, February 24th

(First Tuesday of Lent)

Isaiah 55:10–11 Psalm 34

Matthew 6:7–15

8:30 ANN Marian Vinocour

12:10 MEM Cecil C. Spadafora

5:30 MEM Ellen Gavin Broderick

Wednesday, February 25th

(First Wednesday of Lent)

Jonah 3:1–10 Psalm 51

Luke 11:29–32

8:30 MEM Philip Nix

12:10 MEM Lauren M. Baker

5:30 MEM Eveillard Cyrill

Thursday, February 26th

(First Thursday of Lent)

Esther 12, 14–16, 23–25

Psalm 138 Matthew 7:7–12

8:30 MEM Donald Gordon

12:10 MEM Mary Scanlon

5:30 MEM Ann E. Lafranchi

Friday, February 27th

(First Friday of Lent)

Ezekiel 18:21–28 Psalm 130

Matthew 5:20–26

8:30 MEM Willie Burke

12:10 MEM Allan Q. Lee

5:30 MEM William Powers

Saturday, February 28th

(First Saturday of Lent)

Deuteronomy 26:16–19 Psalm 119

Matthew 5:43–48

8:30 MEM Henry Varienne

Sunday, March 1st

(Second Sunday of Lent)

Genesis 22:1–2, 9a, 10–13, 15–18

Psalm 116

Romans 8:31b–34 Mark 9:2–10