

ASCENSION CATHOLIC PARISH



FEBRUARY 2021



Sharing the Spirit Together in Christ

1100 Berkshire Blvd NW
Calgary, AB T3K 3M3
Phone 403.275.2240
Fax 403.274.3969
www.ascensionparish.ca

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday
9:30 am — 1:00 pm
By appointment only

PARISH STAFF

Pastor: **Fr. Avinash Colaco**
Associate: **Fr. Adrian Martens**
Deacon: **Patrick Woo**
Resource: **Sharron Robinson**
Sacraments: **Jenn Pashula**
Bookkeeper: **Nora Alzamora**

Check out inside ...

- ***Lenten Mission details***
- ***Sacrament Update***
- ***Building Fund Update***
- ***Finance Update***
- ***PPC Update***
- ***Letter for Lent from the Pastor***

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

As we approach the Season of Lent, our Parish continues to be very busy as we celebrate infant and school aged Baptisms, prepare our children for the Sacraments, prepare our adults for RCIA, continue with our daily live stream Masses, and prepare for Lent. We ask you to keep watch on our website and through FlockNote regarding our Ash Wednesday Services and other Lenten Liturgies and Masses. We invite all of you to take part in our Parish Lenten Mission. Details on the Mission are included in this newsletter and will be on our website. Also included in this newsletter is a special insert note on my thoughts on the Pandemic and the response of our Churches. I pray that you will take time to read and reflect on it as well.

Thank you so much for your continued support, prayers and donations and special thanks to all of our volunteers. Our Parish is truly blessed, and I pray that the Lord will continue to guide and protect you all.

Peace,
Fr. Avi



PARISH LENTEN MISSION
Date: March 11, 2021
Time: 7pm
Live stream: https://youtu.be/LuISYf7v_ZE
Topics: Replace fear with God's love;
My loyalty to God alone;
Turn to Heaven for healing

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We are in need of computer operators to run the projection screen during Mass. Training will be provided.

If you are interested, please contact the Volunteer Resource Coordinator at Resource@ascensionparish.ca.

Please include the Mass time you would be interested in helping at and your contact information – email & telephone number.



SACRAMENT UPDATE



Please pray for 165 students who received the Sacrament of Reconciliation this year. The students will continue to grow in their faith as they begin the at home learning for Holy Communion. Confirmation has also started for those students in grades 6 and above, this year we are excited to be using the “Chosen” program from Ascension Press..

We have been celebrating Baptisms all along in our Parish and we average 2-3 Baptisms per week at the moment. They are private and small celebrations with the child’s closest family members. If you are looking to have your child Baptized, please contact Jenn for the information and registration form.

We want to take a moment to thank all the volunteers who make these Sacraments possible. A special thanks to those who help with the Baptisms and those who helped with the Reconciliation services.

If you have any questions, please contact Jenn at sacraments@ascensionparish.ca or 403-275-2240.

BUILDING FUND UPDATE

A WORD ABOUT TAXES ... GOOD NEWS!!

Spring is coming! And while we all look forward to the longer days and warmer weather, springtime also brings with it tax time – something most of us don’t look forward to at all! However, there is a way to make tax time less taxing and help out Ascension Parish at the same time. Our Parish is a Canadian Registered Charity, which means that we will issue tax receipts to our parishioners who have made donations to help reduce the amount of tax paid.

How you can get a tax receipt...

Make sure the Parish has your full name and address on record for your donations. You can do that using our weekly envelopes or better yet, becoming a **Pre-Authorized Donor** to make your regular gift to the Parish – the form is on the Parish website.

Tax advantages to you...

In Alberta you get to deduct a portion of your donation directly against taxes owed:

25% for the first \$200 of charitable donations:

50% for amounts over \$200.

For that first \$200 gift to the Parish, you pay \$50 less tax. For every dollar more than that you save almost half of the donation in taxes.

You can donate up to 75% of your taxable income in any year and carry forward donations for up to 5 years to optimize your tax savings.

If you are in the top tax bracket of over \$215,000 per year taxable income you get a little additional bump in value of the donation.

If you have **publicly traded stocks** that you are interested in donating, the tax savings can grow even larger. There is a form on the Parish website with further details.

It is too late to have 2021 donations reduce your 2020 taxes but now is a good time to set up or increase your Pre-Authorized Donor monthly support. This time next year you could be feeling great about the positive impact you made to our Parish Building and Operating Funds – and enjoying all those tax savings!

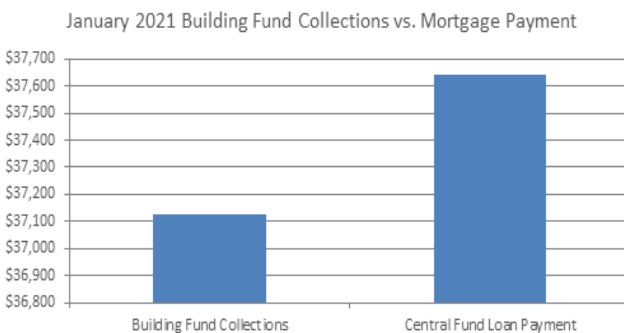
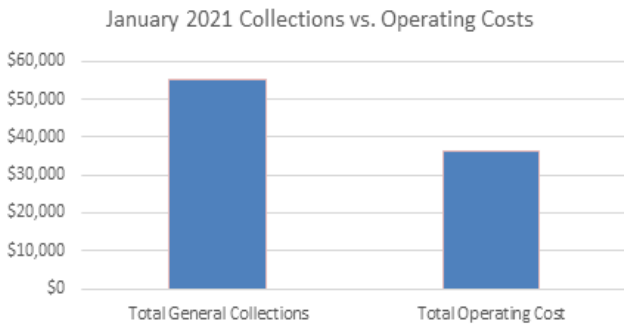
Plaque Size	Sold	Potential Sales
\$100,000	1 of 6	\$100,000
\$50,000	0 of 10	\$0
\$25,000	0 of 18	\$0
\$20,000	0 of 24	\$0
\$15,000	1 of 48	\$15,000
\$10,000	1 of 60	\$10,000
\$7,500	0 of 112	\$0
\$5,000	7 of 108	\$35,000
\$2,500	29 of 120	\$72,500
Total Sold: 39 of 506, \$232,500		\$5,030,000

FINANCE UPDATE

For January, the Finance Council would like to report that our collections exceeded our operational cost. The Parish anticipates that its operational needs will increase later in the year and this is a great start to our year.

Our renovation loan payments have commenced starting January 1. For 2021, our monthly payments will be \$37,642. In January, we collected \$37,214, which was slightly under the amount we are required to pay each month. This shortfall amount came out of our general operations.

Your Gifts to the Parish:



	Jan 2021
Collections - Operating	\$ 55,149
Government Grants	
Total General Collections	\$ 55,149
Operating Cost	\$ 30,804
Diocese Assessment/Other	\$ 5,494
Over/(Shortfall)YTD Op Cost	\$ 18,851
Building Fund/Donor Wall Collections	\$ 37,214
Interest Paid on Central Fund Loan	\$ 10,503
Principal Payment	\$ 27,139
Over/(Shortfall)YTD Building Fund	\$ - 428
Diocesan Annual Campaign	
Together in Action Collections	\$ 2,729
2021 Target	\$ 37,642
Remaining Towards Goal	\$ 34,913

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

February is a very busy month for us at the Parish as we begin the preparations for Lent and Easter. Before Parish Council members worked together with the Parish office to distribute the tax receipts to the parishioners. We were successful in delivering over 50% of them. On behalf of everyone at our Parish, we want to **thank you** for your continuous donations.

As we are on our way to Lent with Ash Wednesday beginning February 17, 2021, the Parish Council has a few events planned based on our theme of **Service** this year:

- Lenten Journey** - There will be different themes for each week in Lent. Each week we will upload a video related to the theme. We encourage you and your families to participate with us.
- The Way of the Cross** will be done every Friday of Lent after the 9am Mass. This will be live streamed and will be available on our website and on our YouTube channel.
- Lenten greetings and Easter cards** will be distributed to our Catholic seniors in long term care facilities.
- Stay tuned for our **Lenten Mission** by Fr. Avi and Fr. Adrian.

We want to wish you a blessed Lenten season. Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any questions. Thank you for your support.



MASS TIMES

Weekday Masses

Monday - Saturday: 9:00am

Weekend Masses

Saturday: 5:00pm & 7:00pm

Sunday: 8:00am; 10:00am; 12:00pm & 4:00pm

Please Note:

Registration is required to attend Mass in person. The link to register is on our Parish website. Dispensation from the Bishop to come to Holy Mass in person is still in place. Currently, our attendance is limited to 15% of our fire code capacity.

Live Stream Mass

Monday - Saturday: 9:00am

Sunday: 10:00am

MINISTRY CONTACTS

Volunteer Resource: Sharron Robinson | resource@ascensionparish.ca

Safety Coordinator Lead: Christine Russell | apvolunteer@shaw.ca

SACRAMENTS

Sacramental Preparation: Jenn Pashula | sacraments@ascensionparish.ca

Baptism Preparation: Jenn Pashula | baptism@ascensionparish.ca

Marriage Prep: William Abenes | marriageprepatascension@gmail.com

RCIA: Rob Kehrig | robkehrig@gmail.com

MINISTRIES

Parish Council: Rodel Cenabre | rodelcenabre@gmail.com

Finance Council: Christina Dao | c_dc_d@hotmail.com

Building Fund: Mark Holland | markholland@shaw.ca

Special Events Fundraising: Holly Davidson | hollyd@telus.net

Art & Environment: Maria San Miguel | let@shaw.ca

Ex-ord. Min. of Holy Communion: Nadia Oliverio | nadia.oliverio@shaw.ca

Liturgical Ministries: Nadia Oliverio | nadia.oliverio@shaw.ca

Lectors: Andrew Harich | harich0307@gmail.com

Music Ministry (Interim): DeeDee Hedley | ddhedley@shaw.ca

Sacristy Care: James Chuah | jameschuah10248@gmail.com

Assist with Sacraments: DeeDee Hedley | ddhedley@shaw.ca

Ushers: Richard Svoboda | ricsvo@shaw.ca

Weekday Masses: Connie Raz | connieraz@gmail.com

Ascension Communication Team (ACT) | samandrafo@shaw.ca

LAY MINISTRIES

Catholic Women's League: Twila Tayfel | cwl.ascension@gmail.com

Knights of Columbus: Phil Fitzgerald | gk10065@kofc.ab.ca

St. Vincent de Paul Society: Davina Janssens | ssvp.ascension@gmail.com

St. Vincent de Paul Society: Hamper Request | 587.755.3855

CONFESSIONS

By appointment only

(please contact our Priests directly)

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Please call the office @ 403.275.2240.

When prompted, press 2 for

Fr. Avinash, press 3 for Fr. Adrian.

2021 MISSALS STILL AVAILABLE

If you have not yet purchased your 2021 Missal, they are available at the Parish office during office hours at a cost of \$5.00.

2021 DONATION ENVELOPES

If you have not yet received your 2021 envelopes, please arrange for a pickup during office hours.

FLOCKNOTE

Keep in touch with us via email and text message!

Text ACPYYC to 514.900.0130

or connect with us online at

ascensioncatholicparish.flocknote.com

Sign up and stay connected!

Stay up to date by visiting our Social Media

www.facebook.com/ascensionparishcalgary

<https://twitter.com/RCAscensionYYC>

<https://www.instagram.com/ascensioncatholic/>



ASCENSION CATHOLIC PARISH

"Sharing the Spirit Together in Christ"

LETTER for LENT

Dear Parishioners -

As a community of Christian believers, Lent is our annual reminder to reflect upon the transformational power of Jesus Christ and to remind ourselves to live every day by the power of His transforming love. My prayer for each of us is that we will embrace the transformation that is available to us during this unusual Lenten season in 2021, both, individually and corporately - and that the love of our Heavenly Father will transform us, so that we can transform the world around us.

This past year has brought many unwanted challenges to us, as we have needed to adjust ourselves to new ways of living, working and being. This pandemic has provided some areas of great significance to reflect upon during this Lenten season. I would like to share with you some of my thoughts regarding the pandemic and the role that we, as Christians, can play. There are 3 main areas of reflection for today:

- 1) Fear versus Love
- 2) Exposing our False gods
- 3) The Church as a transformational power in society

Fear versus Love

As Christians, our entire belief system is based upon one true and Holy God. Ours is a God of Love, who pursues each of us with a passion to be known by us, and a longing to be involved in day-to-day events of our lives.

Scripture tells us in 1 John 4:8 that perfect love casts out fear. This means that love and fear cannot both be in the same place at the same time. It is much the same as turning on a light in a dark room. When the light comes, the dark is just gone. Similarly, when love comes, fear has to leave. If we were able to distill out one primary emotion that has dominated our lives and our society during this past year, I think that fear is the emotional response that has gained the most prominence. Fear of death, fear of economic collapse, fear of loss. Fear has permeated and paralyzed us to a large degree. In any place where we have allowed fear to dominate us, the transformative love of our Heavenly Father has been pushed out because fear and love cannot co-exist. I wonder how different the past year would have been for all of us if we, as the Church, had refused to give any place to fear? It is my hope that this Lenten season, we can each reflect upon the areas of our lives in which we have allowed fear to dominate - and we can instead ask that our Heavenly Father to fill that place with His love. His love is the most powerful force in the Universe, and it's available to fill up every square inch of our lives. We are the ones who choose what we allow to fill us.

Exposing our False gods

One of the benefits the pandemic has brought to the Church has been to expose our idols - which have fallen one by one in the past few months. Scripture is clear that we are to have no other gods before the one true God. Perhaps we never intended to worship other gods, but during the COVID crisis, it has become abundantly clear that in many situations, we automatically look to other gods to take care of us before we look to our Loving Father. As I list some examples of our false gods that have been exposed, notice how fear is also woven into the equation. When fear dominates, the love of our Heavenly Father is pushed out, and false gods take His place instead.

- We have been fearful of financial loss, even though our God promises to provide for all our needs – *we worship money.*
- We have been dismayed with the lack of ability the government has shown in sorting out this crisis - *we worship man-made institutions.*
- We have been terrified of losing our jobs and the resulting impact on our family - *we worship the work of our hands.*
- And now we are putting all of our hope in Big Pharma to produce a vaccine that will return life to normal - *we worship science and technology.*

Now, I want to be clear - none of these things are wrong in and of themselves. What is wrong is that we look only to them to take care of us and become paralyzed with fear when they either don't or can't. As Christians, we are privileged to access all of the resources of Heaven at any time. Instead of fearing that lack, we are invited to focus on our Heavenly Father who has unlimited resources, healing & restorative powers, and wisdom beyond anything we can imagine. God is real and He is ready to come to our rescue. Have we asked Him to rescue us from our distress? Are we ready to



repent for our reliance on lesser gods and ask Him to show Himself great on our behalf? COVID was not a surprise to Heaven, and only Heaven knows what we need to do about it. So, it is better to ask Heaven directly.

The Church as a transformational power in society

Many Churches and religious leaders have been openly defiant towards governmental restrictions during the COVID pandemic. The justification provided is that we are losing our freedoms. That may be true, but I don't believe the first response of the Church in any situation should be defiance. Scripture tells us that we have in authority over us, the "King" that we deserve. It's sobering to reflect upon that truth and ask our Father to show us our own deficiencies that have enabled our government to flounder in the current situation.

I would like to propose that the Church has failed society during this pandemic more seriously than our governments have failed the people. The Body of Christ is clearly called to operate in the gift of healing - yet few of us have invested the effort needed to unpack this gift. How different would the past year have been if even one Church in every major city was able to heal those infected with COVID? There would be no lockdowns, no restrictions on personal liberties, no economic collapse, no death rates, no reason for Christians to be defiant towards the government. Essentially, life would have been able to carry on as normal. Life should have been able to carry on as normal except we, as the Church, have failed. We have been calling out to remove the "speck" in our brother's eye which is the ineffectiveness of government, while completely ignoring the log in our own eye which is our inability or unwillingness to walk out our calling to bring healing.

How do we rectify this situation? I am the first to admit that I don't have all of the answers in this department. Sometimes I pray for healing and people are healed, and sometimes they aren't. I don't understand what the difference is, but I clearly understand that I am the one who is missing the boat on this. The power to heal consistently and predictably is available to each of us. Jesus healed all who came to Him and He gave us the power to do all that as He had done.

As the Church, we have the opportunity to press into Heaven and ask for a release of His power to bring healing. We can ask our Father to deal with anything inside of us that is hindering His ability to heal through us. It starts with asking - for wisdom, for understanding, for faith to believe it is possible. Let's start asking and see where He takes us. It's time for the Church to be the difference that the rest of our world desperately needs especially during the season of Lent.

In conclusion, I have 3 areas of focus for my Lenten reflections this year:

- 1. I want to root out fear in my life and replace it with the Love of God.***
- 2. I want to identify where I have placed my faith in anyone or anything except God and return my allegiance to Him alone.***
- 3. I want to press into Heaven for greater understanding regarding healing and how I can operate in the same healing power that Jesus did.***

We have nearly 7600 registered families in our Parish. Can you imagine the difference that we could make in this city if we all embraced the transformational power that is available to us as Christians? I hope each of you will join me in these reflections during Lent, and that together we will be transformed into a people who face adversity without fear, and who walk in the ability to transform the world around us. May we understand and embrace our Father's love this season. Please pray for me as I assure you my prayers as well.

Peace,

Fr. Avinash Colaco



God is Love