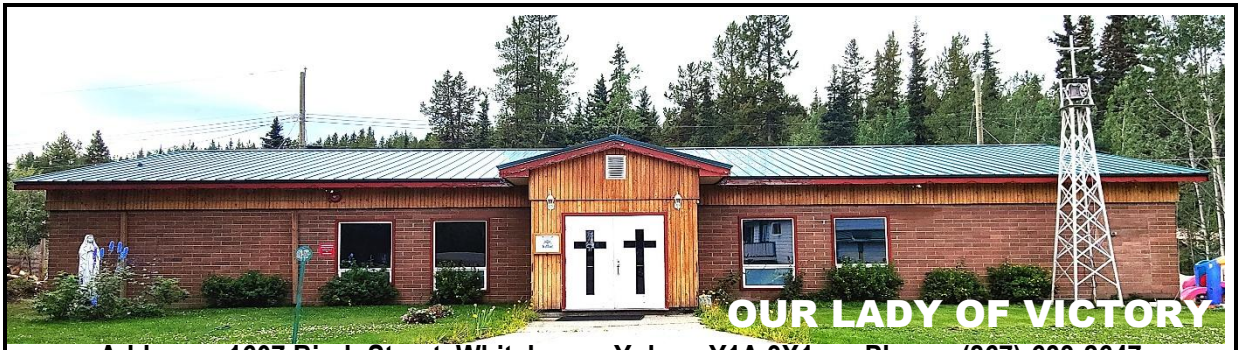



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# 3rd SUNDAY OF LENT

# PARISH UPDATES- 08 MARCH 2026

## PARISH MINISTRY

### Mass Intentions/Activities

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **07Mar** | | **6.30pm** | | **11Mar** | Wed | **6:00pm** | **No Holy Mass** |
| | | **7.30 pm** | **Syro-Malabr Holy Mass** | **12Mar** | Thu | **6.00pm** | **Holy Mass & Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament,** |
| **08Mar** | Sun | **10.00am** | All parishioners | **13Mar** | Fri | **6.00pm** | **Holy Mass & Stations of the Cross** |
| **09Mar** | Mon | **5.00pm** | First Holy Communion Class | **14Mar** | Sat | **6.30pm** | |
| | | **6:00pm** | Holy Mass | | | | |
| **10Mar** | Tue | **6.00pm** | | | | **7:30pm** | |

**Syro-Malabar Holy Mass on the 1st and 3rd Saturday at 7:30 PM. Adoration every Friday after Holy Mass.**

**SCHEDULE OF CONFESSIONS**

Confession will be available every day before Holy Mass. Confession times is Monday to Friday from 5:30 to 6:00 pm, Saturday from 6:00 to 6:30 pm, and Sunday from 9:15 to 10:00 am

**THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT**
**THEME: "PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD"**

**Mass Readings for Today**

First Reading: **Exodus 17: 3-7** "Give us water to drink".

Responsorial Psalm: **Psalm 95: 1-2, 6-7a, 7c-9 (R7c-8a)** "O that Today you would listen to the voice of the Lord. Do not harden your hearts!"

Second Reading**: Romans 5:1-2, 5-8** "God's love has been poured into your hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

Gospel: **John 4:5-42 "**The water that I will give will become a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

## A WORD OF THANKS AND APPRECIATION

We sincerely thank Bishop Hector Vila for his Pastoral visit to our parish and for his valuable guidance to the different departments of our parish, especially the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and Building Committee. Your presence, encouragement, and spiritual leadership have been a great blessing to our parish community. On behalf of the entire parish family, I extend heartfelt thanks to our shepherd, Bishop Hector Vila. I am also very thankful to all my parish family members for your active participation and support in all the activities of the Church. Your cooperation and commitment help strengthen our parish as a vibrant faith community. Thank you all for making this pastoral visit a meaningful and successful occasion.

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS – WALKING WITH CHRIST

The **Stations of the Cross invite us to journey with Jesus from His condemnation to His burial**. Each station is a moment to reflect on His love, sacrifice, and mercy, and to examine our own lives in light of His suffering. **We have the Stations of the Cross every Friday, immediately after the Holy Mass**. All parishioners are invited to join this devotion as we meditate on the Passion, suffering, and death of our Lord. Let us walk with Christ, renew our faith, and deepen our devotion together.

## LENTEN SCHEDULE UPDATE

The holy season of **Lent**, the following changes will be observed in our parish schedule: **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** is shifted to **every Thursday immediately after the Holy Mass** and **Stations of the Cross** will take place **every Friday immediately after the Holy Mass**.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR CHILDREN

Parents who are interested in preparing their children for the Sacraments of **First Holy Communion and Confirmation** for the coming year are requested to register their names with the parish. This will help us to plan the program and arrange the necessary materials and books.

## HOLY THURSDAY – WASHING OF THE FEET

On **Holy Thursday**, during the celebration of the Lord's Supper, we will have the **Washing of the Feet**, remembering how Jesus humbly washed the feet of His twelve disciples as a sign of love and service. We are looking for **12 parishioners** who are willing to participate in this meaningful and beautiful ritual. If you are interested, please kindly write your name on the sign-up form placed at the entrance of the church.

## 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF BISHOP HÉCTOR VILA'S EPISCOPAL ORDINATION

You are warmly invited to join the celebration of the **10th anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Héctor Vila**. The celebration will take place on **Wednesday, March 25, 2026**, on the **Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord**, at **Sacred Heart Cathedral, Whitehorse**. The **Holy Mass will be celebrated at 5:30 PM**, followed by **dinner and a reception in the CYO Hall**. All parishioners are warmly invited to participate in this joyful celebration and to pray for our Bishop.

## DIOCESAN STAFF LENTEN RETREAT

The Lenten Retreat for the Diocesan Office Staff and Priests will take place from **March 10th to 13th** during this Lenten season. This retreat will be a special time of **prayer, reflection, and spiritual renewal**. We kindly ask all parishioners to keep **our Bishop, priests, and diocesan staff** in your prayers during these days, that this time of reflection may strengthen them in their **ministry and service to the Church**.

## SAINTS OF THE WEEK

09Mar. **Ferial: St. Frances of Rome** – (1384–1440) was born in Romeman, and at 15, she married Lorenzo Ponziani, later founded a community of Benedictine oblates canonized by Pope Paul V patron saint of Rome. She became a saint because of her life exemplified extraordinary holiness through **charity, prayer, and devotion to God**, even while living as a laywoman and fulfilling her family duties. The Catholic Church recognized her sanctity based on several key factors: heroic virtue, mystical and spiritual life, miracles and intercessions.

# HOLY MASS, BLESSING AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES

# Homily OF LEO XIV

**Basilica of Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill**
**Ash Wednesday, 18 February 2026**

**Dear brothers and sisters,**

At the beginning of each liturgical season, we joyfully rediscover the grace of being Church, namely a community gathered to listen to the word of God. The voice of the Prophet Joel speaks to us, bringing each of us out of our isolation and showing us the urgent need for conversion, which is always both personal and public: "Gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast" (2:16). He mentions the most fragile and least suited to large gatherings, those whose absence would be easy to justify. The prophet goes on to refer to husband and wife: he seems to call them from the privacy of their marital life, so that they will feel part of a larger community. Then he turns to priests, who already find themselves — almost by duty — "between the vestibule and the altar" (v. 17). They are invited to weep and to express these fitting words on behalf of all: "Spare your people, O Lord!" (ibid).

Even today, Lent remains a powerful time for community: "Gather the people. Sanctify the congregation" (*Joel* 2:16). We know that it has become increasingly difficult to gather people together and make them feel like a community — not in a nationalistic and aggressive way, but in a communion where each of us finds our place. Indeed, during Lent, a people is formed that recognizes its sins. These sins are evils that have not come from supposed enemies, but afflicts our hearts, and exist within us. We need to respond by courageously accepting responsibility for them. Moreover, we must accept that while this attitude is countercultural, it constitutes an authentic, honest and attractive option, especially in our times, when it is so easy to feel powerless in the face of a world that is in flames. Truly, the Church exists as a community of witnesses that recognize their sins.

Naturally, sin is personal, but it takes shape in the real and virtual contexts of life, in the attitudes we adopt towards each other that mutually impact us, and often within real economic, cultural, political and even religious "structures of sin." Scripture teaches us that opposing idolatry with worship of the living God means daring to be free, and rediscovering freedom through an exodus, a journey, where we are no longer paralyzed, rigid or complacent in our positions, but gathered together to move and change. How rare it is to find adults who repent — individuals, businesses and institutions that admit they have done wrong!

Today, we are reflecting precisely on this possibility of repentance. Indeed, it is no coincidence that, even in secularized contexts, many young people, more than in the past, are open to the invitation of Ash Wednesday. Young people especially understand clearly that it is possible to live a just lifestyle, and that there should be accountability for wrongdoings in the Church and in the world. We must therefore start where we can, with those who are around us. "Now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!" (*2 Cor* 6:2). Let us therefore embrace the missionary significance of Lent, not in a way that distracts us from our individual efforts, but in a way that introduces this season to the many restless people of good will who are seeking authentic ways to renew their lives, within the context of the Kingdom of God and his justice.

"Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" (*Joel* 2:17). The prophet's question is a warning. It also reminds us of what others think about us, especially those who observe the people of God from the outside. Lent urges us towards a change of direction — conversion — that makes our proclamation more credible.

Sixty years ago, a few weeks after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, Saint Paul VI decided to celebrate the Rite of Ashes publicly during a General Audience in Saint Peter's Basilica, so that the gesture tha

we are about to perform today would be visible to all. He spoke of it as a "severe and striking penitential ceremony (Paul VI, *General Audience,* 23 February 1966) that defies common sense and at the same time responds to the demands of our culture. He said: "In our own day we may ask ourselves whether this pedagogy is still understandable. We answer in the affirmative, because it is a realistic pedagogy. It is a severe reminder of the truth. It brings us to an accurate perception of our existence and our destiny."

Paul VI said that this "penitential pedagogy surprises modern man in two ways": the first is in "his tremendous capacity for delusion, self-suggestion and systematic self-deception about the reality of life and its values." The second aspect is "the fundamental pessimism" that Paul VI discovered everywhere: "Most of the material offered to us today by philosophy, literature and entertainment," he said, "concludes by proclaiming the inevitable vanity of everything, the immense sadness of life, the metaphysics of the absurd and of nothingness. This material is a vindication of the use of ashes."

Today, we can recognize that his words were prophetic as we perceive in the ashes imposed on us the weight of a world that is ablaze, of entire cities destroyed by war. This is also reflected in the ashes of international law and justice among peoples, the ashes of entire ecosystems and harmony among peoples, the ashes of critical thinking and ancient local wisdom, the ashes of that sense of the sacred that dwells in every creature.

"Where is their God?" the peoples ask themselves. Yes, dear friends, history, and even more, our own conscience, asks us to call death for what it is, and to carry its marks within us while also bearing witness to the resurrection. We recognize our sins so that we can be converted; this is itself a sign and testimony of Resurrection. Indeed, it means that we will not remain among the ashes, but will rise up and rebuild. Then the Easter Triduum, which we will celebrate as the summit of the Lenten journey, will unleash all its beauty and meaning. This will take place if we participate, through penance, in the passage from death to life, from powerlessness to the possibilities of God.

The ancient and contemporary martyrs shine as pioneers on our journey towards Easter. The ancient Roman tradition of the Lenten *stationes* — which begins today with the first station — is instructive: it refers both to moving, as pilgrims, and to stopping, *statio*, at the "memories" of the Martyrs, on which stand the basilicas of Rome. Is this not perhaps an invitation to follow in the footsteps of the admirable witnesses to the faith, who can now be found throughout the world? Let us remember the places, stories and names of those who have chosen the way of the Beatitudes and lived them out to the end. Their lives are countless seeds that, even when they seemed to be scattered, were buried in the earth and prepared the abundant harvest that we are called to gather. Lent, as we have seen in the Gospel reading, frees us from wanting to be seen at all costs (cf. *Mt* 6:2, 5, 16), and teaches us instead to see what is being born, what is growing, and urges us to serve it. It is the profound harmony that is established with the God of life, our Father and the Father of all, in the secret of those who fast, pray and love. Let us redirect, with sobriety and joy, our entire lives and hearts towards God

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