It’s Here! The Annual Lenten Fish Fry Guide

FEBRUARY 12, 2021

Categories: News
Tags: Diocesan News, Featured

Take-out only this Lent

The abundant meals featured in the 2021 Diocese of Pittsburgh’s annual Lenten Fish Fry Guide will be served with an abundance of caution due to COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

But despite restrictions related to the pandemic, volunteers at most of the diocese’s 57 parishes and groupings are saying, “Come and get it—and take it with you.”

Although the meals are take-out only this year, the menus offer a wide variety of delicious Friday foods. As well as the classic fried fish on a bun, there are baked fish choices for sandwiches.

Beyond that, parishes are preparing shrimp or fish tacos, pierogis, haluski, linguini, macaroni and cheese, coleslaw, clam chowder, tomato soup, tuna salad, pizza and
crab cakes, along with delicious desserts and other specials.

Besides food for the body this Lent, a number spiritual resources on the diocesan website offer food for the spirit. Lenten prayers, news, devotions, Confession opportunities, and more can be found here: https://diopitt.org/lent.

Click here for the **Lenten Fish Fry Guide**, and Happy Eating!
Four schools to merge

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Decision part of continuing plan for regional sustainability

In an ongoing effort to strengthen Catholic education in the south region of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, four elementary schools will merge into two schools for the 2021-2022 academic year. Bishop David Zubik made the decisions based on recommendations from the South Regional Catholic Elementary Schools (SRCES) board.

Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin School in Whitehall and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary School in Pleasant Hills will merge, with the Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin campus to be used as the main site of the new school.

Saint Margaret of Scotland School in Green Tree and Saint Philip School in Crafton will come together, with the new school to be located at the Saint Margaret of Scotland campus.
In his letter of acceptance, Bishop Zubik confirmed his understanding that the recommendations came after careful study of financial and demographic data and student enrollment trends, and consultation with parish and school communities. The SRCES board also gave consideration to other important and relevant information in determining the best possible way to continue to provide a Catholic education for children in the south region.

“Each day I thank God for all who faithfully support our Catholic schools. They serve our students, our diocese, and Jesus Himself,” Bishop Zubik said. “Catholic schools are vital to the future of both our Church and our world. They educate minds, hearts and spirits, teaching the value of service as they prepare young people to become productive citizens and future leaders.”

The mergers reflect the efforts of the new SRCES board to ensure that Catholic elementary schools are affordable and accessible. With regional governance, all parishes in a geographic area support Catholic education and all have a voice in advancing the mission of those schools.

In 2017, regional governance was launched in the North Hills, where it has stabilized enrollment and finances. SRCES began as an advisory board and last July became a governing board for the south region and is stabilizing enrollment and finances of Catholic elementary schools in the area.

“This decision comes after more than a year’s deliberation and many, many hours of study,” said Father David Poecking, board president of South Regional Catholic Elementary Schools. “While change can be difficult, we can bring together the best of the past to support a strong future for the newly merged schools.”

“Our goal remains to provide families with spiritually vibrant, academically excellent
and financially sustainable Catholic schools for generations to come,” said Michelle Peduto, diocesan director of Catholic Schools.
Parish Share to begin

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The 2021 Parish Share campaign kicks off February 21 with the theme, “Finding Joy in Giving.”

“Giving with gratitude in the example of Jesus Himself leads to a deep, authentic joy,” Bishop Zubik wrote in a letter to the faithful. “When we share our gifts, we become closer to Jesus and to His Body today, the Church.”

Parish Share supports the parishes, schools and ministries that serve the educational, physical and spiritual needs of neighbors across southwestern Pennsylvania. Gifts fund vital services that parishes cannot afford individually, such as payroll management for parish employees, assistance with communications, and social ministries.

Father John Rushofsky, pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in the North Hills, said he explains to parishioners how gifts help all parishes, as well as their own faith community.
“Parishes don’t exist on their own. The diocese provides many services,” he said. “It’s a necessary campaign and we need to willingly participate.”

Funds also make possible a seminary that provides education and formation for men who are discerning a call to the priesthood or permanent diaconate, as well as young people learning the faith and preparing for the sacraments.

“Parish Share is a fundraiser for your own parish,” Father Rushofsky said. “I try to explain to parishioners how it helps us, like repairing sidewalks, paving parking lots, cutting grass and removing snow. It all adds up.”

In his letter, Bishop Zubik acknowledged that these are difficult times for many.

“It is not easy for your pastor to ask for donations when he knows so many family budgets have been affected over the past year,” he wrote. “Yet the ripple effect of the pandemic has made full participation in Parish Share critically important if ministry is to remain strong throughout our diocese, especially in all our parishes.

“I am so grateful for your support for our clergy, our parishes, and for our Church of Pittsburgh as we set about Finding Joy in Giving through Parish Share 2021,” Bishop Zubik said.
New Greensburg Bishop ‘humbled to serve’

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Diocese of Greensburg Bishop Larry Kulick (left) and Pittsburgh Bishop David Zubik.

The Catholic Diocese of Greensburg has its first homegrown bishop.

Bishop Larry Kulick was ordained as the sixth Bishop of Greensburg on February 11 in an Installation Mass celebrated at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral.

The new bishop’s predecessors, The Most Reverend Edward Malesic, Bishop of Cleveland, and The Most Reverend Lawrence Brandt, Bishop Emeritus of Greensburg, served as Co-consecrators. Bishop David Zubik, who was Bishop Kulick’s spiritual director when he was a young seminarian, also attended the ordination.

“He has all of the perfect qualifications to be a great bishop,” Bishop Zubik said.

“Bishop Kulick is devout with a strong prayer life, and is a proven administrator who channels the Church’s resources for the common good.”
Born and raised in the small town of Leechburg, Westmoreland County, Bishop Kulick is the first Bishop of Greensburg to come from that diocese, which was established in 1951.

He recalled that growing up with his younger sisters and brother, their parents offered “great examples of sacrifice. Their faith was so strong.”

After attending public elementary school, the future bishop graduated from Saint Joseph High School in Natrona Heights. He earned a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from Saint Vincent College, received a master’s in systematic theology and master of divinity from Saint Vincent Seminary before being ordained to the priesthood in 1992.

In 2012, Bishop Kulick earned a licentiate in canon law from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., when he was named vicar general of the Diocese of Greensburg. Last year he became administrator when Bishop Malesic was appointed Bishop of Cleveland.

“I am humbled and deeply honored to serve the diocese that’s been my home,” Bishop Kulick said when he learned that Pope Francis had named him Bishop of Greensburg. “Leechburg was a tight knit community where people modeled a life of service and unity.”
Fr. Hawkins: African American spirituality enriches Catholics

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Categories: Columns
Tags: Featured, Guest Contributors
By Father Matthew Hawkins

Parochial vicar, St. Mary Magdalene and St. Benedict the Moor parishes, Pittsburgh

African American History Month is an opportunity for all Catholics to experience a deeper encounter with Christ from a unique perspective. The spiritual journey of African Americans demonstrates that it is wrong to claim that religion is merely “the opiate of the masses,” a tool to teach oppressed people to accept dehumanizing conditions.

For African Americans, religion has never been a “happy pill” to escape pain. Those who dismiss the spirituality of African Americans as joyous escapism fail to understand its essence. African American spirituality has always entailed entering into the pain, embracing the cross, and allowing oneself to be transformed by it.
Even before the blues, which was a secular African American expression of entering into the pain, the spirituals emerged as a musical form that lifted the community into mystical transcendence. The spirituals communicated the dignity of the human person under dehumanizing conditions. As slavery destroyed the identity and culture of African Americans, and as family members were sold off, the spirituals spoke of steady perseverance in following the way of Christ.

The spiritual “Hold On” is one example. If taken literally, it appears to be a song about plowing a field. But its singers knew it to be a metaphor for liberation from enslavement that the authorities would not understand. On an even higher level, it was instruction in ascending the ladder of spiritual growth:

If you want to get to heaven, let me tell you how,
Just keep your hand on the Gospel plow
Keep your hand on that plow — hold on.
If that plow stays in your hand
It will land you straight in the promised land
Keep your hand on that plow — hold on.

Mary had a golden chain
Every link was Jesus’ name
Keep your hand on that plow — hold on.
Keep on climbing and don’t you tire
Every rung goes higher and higher
Keep your hand on that plow — hold on.

Every plowman understood the importance of holding onto the literal plow to avoid personal injury, but this plow was a response to Jesus’ invitation to ascend to spiritual perfection. It was about following Jesus without being distracted by transitory desires that would lead one to plow a crooked path toward participation one’s own dehumanization.
For African Americans to survive, the community needed to be steadfast in faith. Thirty-seven years after emancipation, in the midst of forced segregation and widespread lynching, James Weldon Johnson wrote a hymn of hope. It acknowledged the community’s history of suffering, but pointed to the steadfast faith under impossible circumstances that enabled the community to preserve its humanity.

The following verse describes a hope that was aborted before it could be born, only to be fulfilled through the strength of faith passed on from one generation to the next. The lyrics of “Lift Every Voice And Sing” read:

Stony the road we trod,
bitter the chastening rod
felt in the days when hope unborn had died,
yet with a steady beat,
have not our weary feet
come to the place for which our fathers sighed?

But even amid the hope of those partially fulfilled dreams, Johnson offered ominous words of caution for future generations:

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way.
Thou who has by thy might
Led us into the light
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God,
where we met Thee.
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world,
we forget Thee.

In these lines, Johnson echoed the message in the spiritual “Hold On.” The message was clear: persevere in the faith that had carried African Americans through centuries of dehumanization and abuse. Do not get distracted by the empty promises of a world that reduces human beings to mere objects.

This message has been the bedrock of African American spirituality for 400 years and it has meaning for all people of faith who are trying to find their way in the 21st century.
Totus Tuus draws people to Christ

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As a junior at Oakland Catholic High School, Megan Christ encountered God’s love through the ministry of Totus Tuus, a community of consecrated women called to radiate Jesus’s love to the secular world. Her life has never been the same.

“As before meeting these women, I didn’t know that faith could be alive and personal. I thought that God was just a big idea in the sky who didn’t know or see me,” Christ said.

She became active in mission work and campus ministry through Dorrie Donahue, a founding member of Totus Tuus who is director of Mission Integration at Oakland Catholic.

After college, Christ accompanied members who walked hundreds of miles on the Camino de Santiago, a pilgrimage in Spain. Not long afterwards, she felt God call her to join Totus Tuus. Now in her second year of formation, she has returned to Oakland Catholic as campus minister.
Looking to the motto of St. John Paul II, *Totus Tuus* or “all yours,” the members defined their mission as living a chaste, consecrated life in the secular world, bringing Christ to those who would not otherwise encounter Him. Members work in diverse professions, from Church ministry to the corporate world, drawing people to Christ through the joy they receive from giving themselves totally to Jesus through Mary.

*Totus Tuus* was founded in 2012 by consecrated women whose previous community was disintegrating. They had appealed to the Vatican for formal approval.

“We wanted the Church to give us space to discern our mission more fully,” Donahue said.

When Cardinal Francisco Javier Errazuriz presented their cause to Pope Benedict XVI, he advised the women to “see what God is calling you to do,” she recalled.

Donahue sees the community as a “little corner of the Church.”

They cultivate a deep devotion to the Blessed Mother. Members take regular pilgrimages to Marian apparition sites, such as Lourdes, France; Guadalupe, Mexico; and Fatima, Portugal.
Totus Tuus is small but growing, with 21 members worldwide, in Pittsburgh; Santiago, Chile; San Pablo, Brazil; Mexico City, Mexico; Dublin, Ireland; and Madrid, Spain. The three Pittsburgh community members live together, centering their lives on the Eucharist. They practice Ignatian discernment, a discipline that intertwines prayer and imagination to hear the message of Scripture.

Young women who desire to focus on the Eucharist and are willing to forego dating can live with them. Women interested in joining the community undergo a year of accompaniment, two years of commitment, and two to three years of temporary consecration before they take final vows.

Every day, the women fast, spend an hour in Eucharistic adoration, pray the Liturgy of the Hours and the rosary. They have monthly silent retreats and annual eight-day retreats.

Donahue and Christ teach the women they serve at Oakland Catholic about their identity in Jesus. They remind students that their value isn’t found in their number of Instagram followers but in their dignity as daughters of God.

Donahue said that her union with Jesus satisfies the deepest desires of her heart and gives her a foretaste of heaven.

Christ added, “Consecrated women lack nothing.”

To learn more about the community, visit: https://www.totustuuscommunity.org/.
From left: Father Tom Kunz, Dorrie Donahue, Megan Christ, Mimika Garesché, and Father Bob McCreary, OFM Cap at the Mass at the Oakland Catholic High School to begin Megan Christ’s Year of Accompaniment in 2019