

LENT

37 200 000 000 000(37.2 trillion)

The Lenten call to repentance is as relevant today as it was to those who first heard Jesus preach some two thousand years ago. We may enjoy more prosperity than any previous generation, yet our sense of emptiness increases as our reliance on material possessions blocks out spiritual values. It can be so easy to stray off course and lose our moral direction. Repentance enables us to become more dependent on Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life. This Lenten period is a time to turn to God with our whole heart and focus on the values and attitudes of mind that help us live as Jesus would have us live. It is a season of grace when the church invites us to leave ourselves free to be loved once more by God who cares for us totally.

A few years ago as I helped to prepare a class for confirmation one of the students asked me an interesting question. He asked me if I believed that God is able to hear and respond to all our prayers when there are over 8 billion people on the planet. I assured him that God was able but I wasn't really sure myself either. Eight billion is a lot of people so how can God make time for them all.

Over the years as I continued to reflect on this question I became increasingly convinced that God has the capacity to hear all our prayers especially when I marveled at the beauty of creation, the magnitude of the universe and the goodness of people but I wasn't 100%.

That was until last week when I was pondering just how many cells make up the human body. Cells as I foggily recall from my high school science classes are the basic structural, functional and biological unit of all known living organisms. A cell is the smallest unit of life and can replicate independently. Cells are often called the "building blocks of life" and the word itself is from the Latin word *cella* which means small room. According to Wikipedia cells consist of a cytoplasm enclosed within a membrane which contains many biomolecules such as proteins and nucleic acids.

The total number of cells in the average adult body is approximately 37.2 trillion. It is when I read this number that I became absolutely convinced that nothing is impossible for God and yes God is easily attentive to all our prayers, words, actions and experiences. It is completely unfathomable to me or the greatest human mind just how God could coordinate the behaviour of 37.2 trillion cells in a single person and yet God does this for the 8 billion people on the planet, the animals and plants and all life throughout the universe and yet I struggle to manage the comings and goings of my three boys. I always appreciated that God was smarter than me and the Church teaches that God is 'all knowing' but I never appreciated before just how much smarter God is.

God is trillions of times smarter than the combined intellect of all humanity and therefore I need not worry about the planet or the people on it as God most definitely has it all figured out. This truth doesn't mean I don't have a special part to play in the world as I live out my Christian vocation but it does mean that I can be at peace that God has everything under control and hears all my prayers. This is something helpful to ponder as we journey with Jesus through Lent towards Easter, that our loving God truly has the whole world and us in his hand.

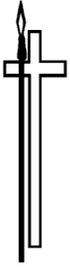
John Humphries



Mass Intentions

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|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday | Soul of Joan Lookhong |
| Tuesday | Souls of Ray Bursey, Julian Penoso, Amar Hadad and Nora Garvin |
| Wednesday | Intention of Richard Farrell |
| Thursday | Soul of Mindanita Agoncillo |
| Friday | Soul of Frederick Jack Wilson |

PRAYER REQUEST LINE
905 881-2786 ext. 250



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

You are invited to join in praying the Stations of the Cross each Friday during Lent at **7:30 p.m.** in the church. All are invited to come and spend one hour in prayer.



THORNHILL MINISTERIAL LENTEN SERIES 2018

The Thornhill Ministerial is marking **50 years** of Ecumenical Lenten Services. This year the theme is **Celebrating our Common Faith:**

A Fresh Look at the Apostles' Creed

Guest Speakers have been invited to preach

Sunday February 18 at 4:00 p.m.

I Believe in God the Father Almighty,

Creator of Heaven and Earth

Thornhill Baptist Church; 8018 Yonge St.

Speaker: Bishop Peter Fenty
(Offering to Out of the Cold)

The 26th Annual

LIFT JESUS HIGHER RALLY

Saturday, March 3rd 9:00 am – 5:30 pm

Metro Convention Centre, North Bldg.

255 Front Street W

Adults \$20.00; Youth \$10.00

Come and be inspired, encouraged, & healed. For tickets or more information please call 416 251-4255 or 905 270-2510 or email: info@lift-jesus-higher-rally.ca Visit www.lift-jesus-higher-rally.org for more information

TUNA CASSEROLES

The Tuna Casseroles for the Good Shepherd Ministries are due this month on February 25th (last Sunday of the month). Thanks for your continued support.

CALL FOR CONSCIENCE CAMPAIGN

The Call for Conscience 2018 Campaign is underway. Cardinal Collins and bishops across Ontario are asking for an email address from every Catholic family in their community, with a goal of 100,000 email addresses collected by the end of February 2018. This information will be used locally by Cardinal Collins and trusted faith partners to communicate periodically (approximately 6-8 times each year) on issues of particular importance for the Catholic community.

The first campaign of 2018 is the Call for Conscience, inviting our elected Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP's) and those seeking office this June to increase funding/access to palliative care, to protect health care workers wishing to abstain from any involvement in euthanasia/assisted suicide and to protect faith based facilities from participation in euthanasia/assisted suicide. The work builds on a similar campaign in 2017.

Please take a moment to provide your contact information at the back of the church on the weekends of February 24/25 and March 3/4. Thank you for living a faith that acts!

St. Augustine's Seminary of Toronto presents
the following upcoming retreat

VICE AND VIRTUE

By Dr. Josephine Lombardi

March 10 – 9:30-3:00 pm

**2661 Kingston Road, in the seminary chapel
Scarborough, ON**

New Beginnings presents

BEATING THE WINTER BLUES!

St. Mary Immaculate, 10295 Yonge St., Richmond Hill

March 5, 2018 Time: 7:00 pm-9:00 pm

Learn how Grief and Gratitude prepare us for renewal and rebirth.

Guest Speakers: Alex Lopechuk, MSW and Arcangelo Limanni, MRE

Following seminar light refreshments will be served.

For registration: Please call (416) 921-1163 or Email: alimanni@cfstoronto.com New Beginnings is a ministry dedicated to helping people who have suffered loss through separation, divorce or the death of a loved one.