Vermont Catholic Charities Ash Wednesday Appeal

“Lent is a favourable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ.” — Pope Francis

On March 2, our Lenten journey begins with Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday marks the first day of the 40 days of Lent dedicated to reflection, fasting, alms giving and good works in preparation for Easter. One concrete way we can sacrifice and share our gifts with others is to participate in the Ash Wednesday collection which supports the outreach work of Vermont Catholic Charities Inc.

Since 1929, Vermont Catholic Charities has responded to the call to help our neighbors in need. Guided by our faith, we do what we do because we are Catholic, not because those we serve are Catholic. We help transform lives through the services we offer: residential care homes for seniors, counseling for individuals and families, a denture program, prison ministry and emergency aid. The clients that come to our “doors” are some of the most vulnerable in our communities. The continuing Covid-19 pandemic along with rising costs, isolation and other factors have heightened the needs for the population we serve and have brought new families to us for help. Due to budgetary constraints and increased needs, we are calling on you to help us continue to be able to serve fellow Vermonters.

Here are some of the “faces” you can help through a donation to the Ash Wednesday collection:

Residential Care Homes:
“My brother and I want to thank you for taking care of our dear sister. She moved successfully into your residential care home in December and loves it! The entire staff has been stellar. All of this is so much harder in a pandemic and we are grateful that she has found a new home in such a fine place. Thank you!”

Emergency Aid:
Sue called Vermont Catholic Charities with an emergency. She was running out of propane and was afraid that she and her two daughters could not stay in their apartment without heat due to the severity of the weather. We contacted the propane company and paid for a delivery of propane. Sue said, “Thank you for helping me in my time of need.”

Ron is a single father of two teenage children. He had fallen behind on rent. One of his children uses support services in the community. Therefore, George was committed to remaining in their home and community. We assisted with some back rent and helped him apply for additional assistance to ensure all his back rent was covered. George stated, “I am grateful for your support and relieved that my family can remain in our home.”

Ron and Deborah have three school-aged children. Due to Covid-19, Deborah had to take time off from work to care for her children at home. The loss in wages and the increase in food costs put the family in a temporary financial crisis. We assisted with a food card. Ron and Deborah commented, “This support was a godsend at a stressful time for our family. God bless you and thank you for all you do to help others.”

Counseling Services:
“Rachel” was referred to Vermont Catholic Charities because of some medical issues she was facing. All her life she has taken on responsibility for others including feeling responsible when things didn’t go well in their personal or work lives. By recognizing her limitations as a human being and learning to create boundaries with others as to not take on what others are capable of doing for themselves (sometimes called “enabling helplessness”), her health issues cleared up. She stated, “Through counseling I learned to not take on the burdens of others. I am grateful for this and a clean bill of health!”

As we begin this Lenten journey together, we ask you to prayerfully consider participating in the Ash Wednesday collection; any gift, no matter the size, makes a difference. Your gift will make a direct impact in helping Catholic Charities sustain and operate the essential and valuable programs that service individuals and families throughout the 14 counties of Vermont.

As a Catholic community, let us see the face of Christ in our neighbors in need and show Christ’s love through our actions. By sharing our gifts with others, we are preparing to celebrate the good news that Jesus Christ is risen.

Donations can be mailed to Vermont Catholic Charities, 55 Joy Drive, South Burlington, VT 05403 or made online at www.vermontcatholic.org/ministries-programs/catholic-charities/ash-wednesday-appeal/

— Mary Beth Pinard, Executive Director, Vermont Catholic Charities Inc.
**Upcoming Events**

**03|03, 04, 05 THURS – SAT**

**40 Hours Devotion**

St John Vianney, S. Burlington • 40 hours

Help us start Lent off with 40 continuous hours of Eucharistic Adoration and prayer. There will be Masses, a penance service, and other special devotions; please see schedule on our webpage: www.stjohnvianney.vermontcatholic.org/40hours. Adoration will begin after the 5:30 Mass on Thursday and continue until Benediction at 10 AM on Saturday. We are in need of two people for each shift, especially during the overnight hours which are traditionally difficult to cover. Sign up for a shift on our website. MORE INFO: Connie McDonald, SJVGoodNews@gmail.com

**03|09 WEDNESDAY**

**Dealing with Doubt — How will you Respond?**

Holy Family, Essex Jt. • 7 - 8:15 pm

Speaker Joe Blanchette’s lively presentation provides Catholic parents with well-researched, effectively presented talking points for defending the faith to counter the arguments presented by the secular world that young people are exposed to, especially when they first leave home for college. All are welcome. Sponsored by Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Court Fanny Allen #1060.

**03|10, 17, 24, 31, 04|07 THURS**

**Vermont Catholic Women’s Group Lent 2022**

via Zoom • 7:30 - 9 pm

Join the Vermont Catholic Women’s Group on Zoom as we go through Restore: A Guided Lenten Journal for Prayer and Meditation by Sr. Miriam James Heidland. We will have weekly edifying discussions. Join us for one or all meetings. Women of all ages are welcomed. Sign up for our mailing list at www.stlukevt.org and contact Carolina for more details.

**03|19 SATURDAY**

**Annual Men’s Conference**

Our Lady of the Angels, Randolph

8:30 am - 2 pm

Join with other Catholic Men for a day of fellowship. This year’s theme is ‘Band of Brothers’ and the keynote speaker will be Fr. Scott Gratton, serving as chaplain for the VT Air National Guard, recently deployed to Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Bishop Christopher Coyne will celebrate Mass. Please contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@vermontcatholic.org or call (802) 658-6110, ext. 1131 for the link to register. Registration deadline is March 4, 2022. Lunch is included in the $30 fee.

**03|25 FRIDAY**

**The Challenge Club for Catholic Girls**

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Williston • 6 - 8 pm

Challenge is a club for girls to grow in virtue, friendship and their Catholic faith. FOR MORE INFO: Mary Niekrewicz, mary.of.vt@gmail.com, (802) 878-5536 or Audrey Walko, audreycgsvt@gmail.com, (802) 373-9564.

**03|29 TUESDAY**

**Saints and Sinners**

Online • 7 pm

Join us in February when Fr. Tim Naples presents on Saint Anthony of Padua. There will be time for prayer, small group and large group discussion. For more info: vermontcatholic.org/saints-and-sinners.

**03|31 THURSDAY**

**Lenten Presentation**

Holy Family Parish Hall, Essex Jt.

7 - 8:30 pm