

LENT: A TIME TO CLEANSE OUR HEARTS

In this time of Lent we are preparing for the celebration of Easter when we will renew the promises of our baptism. Let us walk in the world as Jesus did, and let us make our whole existence a sign of our love for others, especially the weakest and poorest. Let us build for God a temple of our lives and make it approachable for those we find along our journey. If we are witnesses of the living Christ, so many people will encounter Jesus in us, in our witness. But does the Lord feel at home in my life? Do we allow him to “cleanse” our hearts and to drive out the idols, those attitudes of cupidity, jealousy, worldliness, envy, hatred, those habits of gossiping and tearing down others? Do I allow him to cleanse all the behaviors that are against God, against our neighbor, and against ourselves? Jesus cleanses with tenderness, mercy, love. Mercy is the way of his cleansing. Let us, each of us, let us allow the Lord to enter with his mercy to cleanse our hearts.

(Excerpted from “Lent, A New Beginning”, Spiritual Reflections by Pope Francis, Steve Mueller, ed., All Saints Press, 2016.)

ASH WEDNESDAY

Today, ashes will be imposed on our foreheads with the words, “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.” Ash Wednesday reminds us of our vulnerability, the frailty and weakness of our human nature, and our sin. But we are also reminded that through the saving death and resurrection of Jesus we are given the strength to live a new life, life given to us in and through our baptisms. How will we die to ourselves so that we may live for Christ and for others? **ASHES will be blessed and distributed at the 9:00am and 7:00pm Masses on February 14th.**

LENTEN DISCIPLINE

ASH WEDNESDAY and GOOD FRIDAY are obligatory days of FAST and ABSTINENCE. ALL FRIDAYS OF LENT are also obligatory days of ABSTINENCE.

FAST: On a day of fasting, one full meal is allowed. Two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to each one’s needs, but together they should not equal the other full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted; but liquids, including milk and juices, are permitted. ***The law of fast binds all Catholics who are eighteen, but not yet fifty-nine years of age.*** We are also encouraged to keep the ancient paschal fast, from Good Friday to Holy Saturday, ending after the Easter Vigil.

ABSTINENCE: On days of abstinence no meat or meat products are allowed. ***All Catholics who are fourteen years of age and older are bound by the law of abstinence.*** If one’s health or ability to work would be seriously affected by this discipline, the law does not oblige.

YEARLY EASTER DUTY: ***Once they have received the Sacrament of the Eucharist, all Catholics are obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year.*** This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season unless it is fulfilled for a good reason at some other time during the year. The Easter season begins at the Vigil of Holy Saturday Eve, March 31st, and ends with the celebration of the feast of Pentecost on Sunday, May 20th.

RICE BOWL

We invite you and your family to participate in the annual, national Lenten program to help feed the hungry of the world by making a daily sacrificial monetary offering and setting aside the money saved for the poor. Let us stand in solidarity with those suffering from poverty and malnutrition. ***RICE BOWLS are available in the entryways. We invite you to please take one home.*** All filled rice bowls will be collected at the end of Lent and the monies sent to Catholic Relief Services.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is an important part of our Lenten observance. There is no better way to prepare for the celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord at Easter than by this Sacrament “which brings about a true spiritual resurrection, and restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God” (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1468).

Individual confessions will be heard, every Saturday, as usual, at 2:30pm. Our three parish communal Penance Services will be celebrated on Wednesday, March 14th and Wednesday, March 21st at 7:00pm, and Friday, March 23rd at 12:00pm.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Stations of the Cross recall for us the unconditional love of Christ for us in his journey through his passion, death and resurrection. In and through this devotion, we are asked to walk in his footsteps as we deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and walk daily in his footsteps. **Join us in praying the STATIONS OF THE CROSS all the Fridays of Lent at 3:00pm and at 6:00pm in the church. GOOD FRIDAY stations will be celebrated only at 3:00pm in the church.**

PETITIONER'S CROSSES

Once again we invite you to offer your special prayers on “Petitioner’s Crosses” in the season of Lent. **Please write your intentions on the paper crosses provided in the sanctuary** and pin them to the purple fabric on the wooden cross in the south sanctuary. We will remember your intentions weekly during the Prayer of the Faithful. At the Easter Vigil celebration, your crosses will be used to kindle the new Easter fire.

THE CRUCIFIX IN CHURCH HISTORY

Our Liturgy Commission invites all parishioners to a special presentation on the history and spirituality of the crucifix, the many kinds of crucifixes, and considerations for the selection of a new crucifix for our renovated church on **Wednesday evening, February 28th, at 6:00pm.** Watch the bulletin for more details.

PARISH SOUP AND BREAD SUPPERS AND MOVIE NIGHT

Please join us in our **SOUP AND BREAD SUPPERS**, a simple, sacrificial meal that we share with our Holy Trinity family, and in prayerful solidarity with the hungry of the world. **Soup will be served each MONDAY EVENING beginning on February 26th, from 5:30 to 6:15pm in the social hall through March 19th.** A free will offering will be taken up each week to support the Rice Bowl Program. **Immediately following there will be a showing of a contemporary, inspirational, and thought provoking movie to help us reflect on our lives of faith and discipleship.**

ADULT ENRICHMENT EVENINGS

All parishioners are invited to participate in the ongoing sessions offered by Deacon John Amlag from 6:00 to 7:00pm in the chapel. Tuesday evening sessions focus on “Living Life in the Holy Spirit.” Thursday evening sessions focus on **Jesuit Spirituality in everyday life.** Come and be blessed by these opportunities for learning and faith sharing with fellow parishioners.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Each year, our parish community is privileged to welcome those who will become the newest members of the Church and our parish family at the Easter Vigil. Lent is a time of final spiritual preparation for those who will celebrate the Easter sacraments of **Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.** We invite you to include in your daily prayers our Catechumens (the unbaptized), and Candidates (those baptized in other Christian denominations who will become Catholics) as they “Yes” to the Lord’s invitation to enter into deeper relationship with him as intentional disciples.

Special rites that mark their Lenten faith journey will be celebrated throughout Lent at the 9:45am Mass to include the **Rite of Sending for Election and the Penitential Rite for the Baptized.** As a family of faith, we pour out our most powerful prayers of intercession on behalf of our Elect that God will deliver them from the power of evil and sin as they turn their lives over to the Lord and walk in his ways.