My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“Again we keep this solemn fast,” starts the familiar Lenten hymn. Prayer, fasting and abstinence along with generosity to the poor characterize how we traditionally keep this solemn time of the year. Lent developed backward from a celebration of Easter when those who had spent weeks in prayer and fasting were baptized. Somewhere around the fourth century with the rise of infant baptism, the Good Friday and Easter Vigil fast was gradually extended to 40 days becoming a season that encouraged ongoing conversion for the whole Church.

Lent begins with the annual recalling of Jesus’ own 40-day sojourn in the wilderness where he provides the living narrative reflected in the hymn found in Philippians 2:7-8: “He emptied himself, taking on the form of a slave, even to a slave’s death, but was exalted by God so that every tongue might confess him as Lord.” This was sung as a hymn at baptism very early in the Church. It offered not only a theology of what Christ did but also a pattern to be followed by disciples.

Commonly this trip to the wilderness by Jesus is titled “The Temptation in the desert.” This is misleading, since today we interpret the term “temptation” as an invitation to sin. The Greek is better translated as “testing” which reflects the Old Testament theme of the testing of the righteous people who, though tested by God, remain faithful. We see this in the Book of Job and in the Suffering Servant of the Prophet Isaiah in chapter 53. The one who remains faithful through this testing is called a child of God as we find in Wisdom 2:12-20; 5:1-23 and in Hebrews 2:18: “Because he himself (Jesus) was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.”

Continued on next page
In contrast is St. Mark’s simple statement that Jesus was tested forty days in the wilderness by Satan. Matthew and Luke have dramatic descriptions derived from earlier sources but reflecting their distinctive theologies, expressed primarily in the order of the tests by Satan. These tests evoke the original falling away of humanity in Adam. Satan introduces the first two tests with the phrase “If you are the Son of God…,” which evokes the image of Adam created as a child of God. What the devil proposes to Adam and Eve is that they will be immortal and will be “like gods.” Although human yet created in the image of God, they want to transcend humanity and usurp the power of the Creator. Jesus is then tested to show that he is Son by startling demonstrations of divine power: changing stones into bread and commanding the angels.

Jesus, who St. Paul calls the last Adam, reverses the sin of Adam. Even though he is called from birth “God with us,” as the Gospel unfolds Jesus will not demonstrate equality with God by demonstrations of self-serving power but will be called instead “a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners,” as the servant who will not break the bruised reed, and the one who draws to himself those who work hard and are over worked, not by displays of power, but by being meek and humble of heart. By accepting the fullness of his humanity, Jesus is truly Son of God.

Lent is a good time for us to think about the massive horrors we have lately seen that are nothing more than a quest for unlimited power. These originate from sin which drives control over nature and other people. We should cringe every time we hear the refrain that we are “the most powerful (or power-filled) nation on earth.” Throughout the world brutal dictators destroy the resources and spirits of their nations, and our ordinary lives often become miniature arenas of larger power struggles. Sadly the quest for justice can be corrupted simply into a struggle for control. Jesus resisted this primal temptation toward the misuse of power, while emptying himself so that we could experience true power: liberation for the fear of death through his passion and cross; confidence that even when we are of little faith, we can hear his words, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.”

Yours in Christ,

[F. Larry]

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**Ash Wednesday Mass Schedule**

**March 1st**

8 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 5:30 p.m., and 7:30 p.m.

The ashes, distributed at all masses, remind us to turn away from sin and return to the Lord during the Lenten season through prayer, fasting, and deeds of loving service. Lent continues until the Mass of the Lord’s Supper begins on Holy Thursday, April 13.
Lent...A Time of Renewal

Lent prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are the traditional disciplines that mark the observance of Lent. They lead us back to the intensity of faith that flows from the grace of our baptism. As the RCIA elect and candidates follow their path to the sacraments of initiation, we are also led to the study of our faith and scripture, the sacrament of penance and works of charity that form us into the image of God.

Prayer

On FRIDAY, March 3rd, we begin weekly Stations of the Cross and Benediction – Come to Stations of the Cross every Lenten Friday evening at 7 p.m. This devotional prayer service will be led by a different parish ministry each week. Come to the Parish Fish Fry which begins at 5:30 p.m. each Friday in the Family Center. Stations of the Cross: 7 p.m. in the church on March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, and April 7.

Fasting

“This is the Fast…

...that pleases me: to break unjust shackles.” (Isaiah 58)

On Ash Wednesday, March 1, Lent begins for adult Catholics (18 to 59 years) with a “fast” (very small meals with no food in between. Older children may want to join in the adult fast. Catholics 14 years and older also abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and every Friday of Lent until Easter.

Fasting is not only a discipline of self-control, but it also serves as an aid to prayer. When our bodies hunger for physical food it reminds us of our soul’s hunger for God. By fasting we signify our oneness with the Lord, acknowledge our need for conversion, and give witness to our solidarity with those less fortunate. The traditions of fasting and abstinence are an expression of our desire to be converted in our hearts, to be reconciled with each other, and to love our neighbor.

Almsgiving

Our call to almsgiving gives us an opportunity to share our blessings with various organizations and groups dedicated to alleviating need.

St. Louise House Project ~ (Parish outreach)

Saint Louise House empowers women with children to overcome homelessness in Central Texas by providing apartments and comprehensive support services with the goal of helping families stay together and develop self-sufficiency. You may make donations or pick up a donation card in the narthex after mass on March 4-5. If you would like more information, please see their website at www.stlouisehouse.org.

Ashes to Easter Project ~ (Diocesan outreach)

The diocesan Ashes to Easter Lenten Mission Campaign begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1st. We invite each family to take a mission box home in support of the missionary works of the Diocese of Austin. As the Catechism states, “The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and Each Friday in memory of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church’s penitential practice. Please support this long-standing campaign.
Lent Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available for you and your family during this Lent season on **Tuesday, March 21st at 7 p.m.**

Additional priests from neighboring parishes will assist our priests. The sacrament is also provided on Saturdays from 4 - 4:45 p.m. and by appointment.

Fish Fry Fridays

The Knights of Columbus will continue to provide the Friday evening dinners through the Lent season (March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; April 7). Tell your friends and neighbors to join you at St. Theresa Church for a fabulous meal of fish from Quality Seafood market, French fries, hush puppies, coleslaw, and drinks. The Knights are holding the dinner prices the same as last year at **$8.00** for Adult plates and **$5.00** for children under 13. Other ministries of the parish are providing deserts at a nominal cost. Serving in the Family Center begins at 5:30 p.m. All are welcome whether you dine in or take out. If your ministry is interested in holding a bake sale at one of the fish fry’s, please contact Mike McGiffin at mikemcgmail-knights@yahoo.com.

Soup and the Spirit ~ Thursdays in Lent

Beginning March 2\(^{nd}\), celebrate Mass on Thursdays at 11:30 a.m. and then join us in the Family Center for Soup and the Spirit. Each Thursday, in the monastic tradition, a delicious home-made soup will be accompanied by spiritual reflection. We will be hearing selections from “The Rules of St. Benedict.” The meal is free of charge, but donations are accepted and we encourage you to invite a friend.

Holy Week Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>Palm Sunday (Regular Mass Schedule)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>Holy Thursday (7 p.m. Mass of the Lord’s Supper)</td>
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<td>April 14</td>
<td>Good Friday (12 Noon Good Friday Service of the Passion and Veneration of the Cross)</td>
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<td>2:30 p.m. Outdoor Stations of the Cross</td>
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<td>3 p.m. Indoor Stations of the Cross</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Easter Vigil (8 p.m. (no 5 p.m. mass on this day))</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>Easter Sunday (7:30, 9 and 11 a.m. Masses (no 5 p.m. mass on this day))</td>
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Adult Bible Study During Lent

Join us for *Follow Me: Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John*, an Eight-Part Bible Study Featuring Dr. Edward Sri via DVD. Following Christ takes more than simply believing in him or doing what he asks of us. Jesus wants you to be more than just a believer — he wants you to be his disciple and friend. *Follow Me: Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John* is a guide to a personal encounter with Christ. *Follow Me* invites you to experience the joy of a renewed friendship with Christ.

Classes start on March 22\textsuperscript{nd}/23\textsuperscript{rd} and run through May 10\textsuperscript{th}/11\textsuperscript{th}.

Classes meet Wednesday evenings from 7 – 8:30 p.m. or Thursday mornings between 9:15 – 11 a.m. in Room 104, Bldg. E. Materials will cost $20. To join either class, email sttadults@gmail.com or attend the first class.

Pastoral Plan

The Pastoral Plan *Embracing the Great Commission* is being handed out at all Masses February 25\textsuperscript{th} and 26\textsuperscript{th} and will continue to be available in the Narthex and on our website. We encourage you to read it and reread it as it serves as a five-year guide for our parish as we pursue our mission of making disciples for Christ. The plan is our response to the pastoral plan of the diocese and calls for our parish to encounter Jesus Christ intentionally, to approach discipleship intentionally and, in so doing, transform the world in which we live.

*Our mission is to make disciples for the Lord Jesus Christ and, together in ministry for Him, advance the Kingdom of God.*

Pro-Life March and Rally

The weather was beautiful and the turnout was awesome for this year's Texas Alliance for Life March and Rally at the capitol. St. Theresa’s Pro-Life members were enthusiast participants at this event!
Some beautiful linens and vests have recently been added to the liturgy at St. Theresa. The fabrics, design and superb craftsmanship honor God in our worship. These are crafted in the very best tradition of the art of vestment making the likes of which are usually only available from the most sought after manufacturers. However, these were made right here in Austin by parishioner and sewing ministry co-leader Kris Murphy. Kris and Judy Russell lead the ministry of women who come together for a monthly sew-in to make prayer blankets, baptismal bibs, altar linens and other special projects as needed. “We are happy, busy, and sharing,” says Judy, who organizes the event. “It’s a really happy time.”

Many parishioners have items from the sewing ministry in their homes. If you or your child were baptized at St. Theresa during the past 30 years, you may still have the bib received that day. Judy thinks about this often while she sits at the machine sewing the bibs. “I think about the symbolic importance and how the child may have it as a reminder of their baptism for the rest of their lives,” she shared.

Others have been touched by the beautiful prayer blankets that are sewn in prayer and blessed before they are gifted to someone who is sick or homebound. One grateful recipient wrote, “It was exactly the healing needed. God is good and used you to send me the best blessing ever.” Another thank you note went to the late Clarice Yahn, longtime leader of the St. Theresa sewing ministry. “I will keep it near all my life and pass it on to a family member in need of healing. The blanket will be on my lap each morning for my scripture and prayer time,” she wrote.

Kris devoted many hours tracking down fabric, and designing and creating matching vestments for the deacons, priests and altar to enhance our liturgies. “It was extremely challenging creating something I had never made before and without a pattern. I spoke with vestment makers, fabric specialists, and I had problems to overcome,” she explained. “When I finally finished Father’s chasuble, I hung it up and it brought tears to my eyes. It was beautiful, like a miracle.”

The monthly sew-ins in Building E are attracting younger women, and Kris and Judy would like to see more young people carry on the ministry in the years ahead.

“We get great joy,” says Judy. “We know we are touching lives.”
I will never forget one of the words of wisdom my school teacher mother passed on to me when I was growing up. “Never criticize a person until you’ve walked a mile in his moccasins.” These words come from a poem entitled “Judge Softly” written by Mary T. Lathrop in 1895. Putting this advice into practice makes all the difference as we engage in the outreach ministry of our faith community.

About three years ago I served as chaplain for a nursing home and rehab center. One day in a staff meeting we were being told about a new man who had just entered the facility for a period of rehab. The nurses and just about everyone who had had direct contact with him complained about his anger and his refusal to cooperate. The administrator gave us some advice. “Make sure that when you go into see John you have another staff member with you.”

I decided to go in alone. John was a bright, intelligent man in his early fifties who had been active in his profession until the day when his car was hit by a drunken driver, leaving him a quadriplegic. He was single and his father was a widower who continued to work part time. His father faithfully came to visit John every day. But with the accident, John’s life faced a sudden and totally unexpected change. Whereas he had been an active member of his community, suddenly he was confined to the four walls of a nursing home room unable to use his hands or his legs. Totally dependent upon others to meet his most basic needs. And, most likely, for him this would be an ongoing situation.

John was a highly intelligent man and a person of deep faith. His goal was to become rehabilitated to the point where he could manipulate a wheelchair by blowing into a plastic straw. Then he planned to consider entering a profession that he could pursue from his wheelchair, preparing himself with whatever education was needed. He and his father and I developed an excellent rapport from the beginning. As his chaplain I saw myself as a listener, an affirmer, and most of all, a learner trying to grasp what life must be like from his perspective. The last time I had contact with John, it was indirectly through a chance meeting with his father in a store. After struggling for months with the staff of this facility, John had decided to enter another rehab facility, one in south Austin. Hopefully this new place worked well for him.

As I remember John and as I reach out to our parishioners who suffer from chronic or unexpected illness or loss of a loved one or any unexpected and unwanted change, I try to imagine being in a similar situation. What would it be like to be a vibrant, active member of the community and generous provider for one’s family and suddenly require assistance with the basic activities of living? What would it be like to be recently retired and looking forward to an active retirement, then be diagnosed or have your spouse diagnosed with terminal illness? What would it be like to be well established in your community and, for some unanticipated reason, have to relocate to a part of the country where you knew no one? When we are able to “walk a mile in the other person’s moccasins” we may not be able to solve their problems, but we can offer them a most priceless gift, the gift of presence. In so doing, we are saying, “I care, because you are important.”

God gives each one of us the opportunity to reach out to people in need, whether those needs be physical, material, spiritual, social, or emotional. While we may not be able to supply everything that person needs, we can walk the journey with them, letting them know they are not alone. Recall the friends who have done the same for us in the challenging times of our lives. These are priceless friends. Let them be our role models. And let us thank God for them.
Ladies’ Club

At a recent Ladies Club meeting, parishioner, Charles "Chuck" Dean gave a most informative talk on Forensics at the Austin Police Department. He has served as Assistant Manager of the Forensic Science Division for twenty-four years at APD. In December, the Ladies enjoyed a festive Christmas Lunch with Potluck goodies for the holidays. Tommy Griffin, pianist and spouse of President Nancy Griffin played the piano and provided music for a Sing-a-long of Carols.

Sacred Music Series

Thursday, March 9, 7:30 p.m.

St. Edward’s University Masterworks Chorale and Orchestra

A very special Lenten concert of Sacred Music will be offered by St. Edward's University this year at St. Theresa Church. Dr. Morris Stevens will direct over 100 singers, including St. Theresa Choir Members, and full orchestra from St. Ed’s and the Austin community. A free will offering will be collected at the concert. For more information please contact dgirardot@sttaustin.org.

St. Theresa Children and Youth Sacred Music and Art Camp

Save the Date!

St. Theresa Children and Youth Sacred Music and Arts Camp
June 5-9, 2017

Come join us June 5-9, 2017 for our annual camp where we will celebrate in song, drama, and dance! All 2nd-12th graders are invited! We meet from 1 - 5:30 p.m. M-F, and all will participate in singing, drama, instrument playing, arts and crafts, bread-making, snacks, stories, friendship, and faith filled fun!

Registration is posted on the website.

**College-age adults and parents are welcome as volunteer leaders. Contact the Liturgy Office at (512) 451-5132 or email dgirardot@sttaustin.org for information or adult volunteer opportunities.
Save the date: June 12-16 (9 a.m. – Noon)

Excitement is 'building' for VBS Maker Fun Factory at St. Theresa for kids going into Pre-K - 5th and for volunteers Grade 6 - Adult. Our new Children's ministry leader has a passion for VBS, having put on two dozens of them, attracting hundreds of children and volunteers year after year. Make St. Theresa your place for VBS this year! For registration information go to: https://sttaustin.org/news/vacation-bible-school-save-the-date

VBS Team

Visit our website to learn about volunteer opportunities for youth and adults and find out how you can become part of the team of Maker Fun Factory. Excitement is building!

Catholic Heart Work Camp

Attention all High School Youth: Be a part of a MISSION to serve Catholic HEART Workcamp style this summer July 9th-15th in St. Louis, Missouri! You will WORK, SERVE TIRELESSLY, THINK DEEPLY, CELEBRATE MASS and build relationships. You will dance, laugh ‘til your side hurts, pray, change on the inside and be a part of transforming lives and communities for Christ! Registration information and details soon to come.

ADULT CHAPERONES are needed and will attend for free! All adult volunteers must be in compliance with diocesan Ethics and Integrity in Ministry requirements. If interested, please contact Nina Koziuk at nina-koziuk@sttaustin.org.

Sunday Nursery Provides Break for Parents

The St. Theresa Sunday Nursery has a low adult to child ratio as it offers care to children ages 6-months – 3-years. It is open every Sunday, except Christmas and Easter, to care for children while their parents attend the 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. Masses. Parents appreciate the opportunity to better focus on the Liturgy and children appreciate the chance to play. The nursery is located in the far corner of the Family Center. No reservations are required.

Margaux Brown is one of several caregivers in the nursery with children each Sunday. The Sunday Nursery cares for children ages 6 months – 3 years during the Sunday 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses.
First Communion students and their parents came to church Saturday, February 11, for a retreat where they heard about the sacrament from Fr. Larry and visited different learning stations that included touring the church, including the vestry and sacristy, to learn about the different items used in the Mass. The retreat will be repeated Sunday afternoon, February 26, with First Communion Masses scheduled for the first two Saturdays in May.
St. Theresa’s Catholic School continued our tradition of honoring “The Greatest Generation” of special loved ones during the annual Grandparents’ Day celebration.

Our service of Mass, led by Father Larry Covington, ended with choral performances from PK thru 5th grade. Guests were then treated to a welcome reception and invited to tour the beautiful campus. Among the highlights of the day’s festivities were science demonstrations, 1st grade Patriotic Play, students’ guitar concerts, Middle School recitations of “What Catholic Education Means To Me” in the school library, and performances from the St. Theresa’s award-winning Robotics team.

Jordan Hall was a pinnacle of activity with displays from the annual Science Fair as well as Social Studies projects associated with students’ fall field trip to Port Aransas.

A new highlight of the day was the inaugural performance of our school’s new Drum Line, led by music teacher Arnold Castillo. The talent of these young performers reverberated throughout the campus!

If you would like more information about your parish school or to set an appointment for a campus tour, please call Admissions and Development Director Suzanne Leggett at (512) 451-7105 or e-mail her at sleggett@st-theresa.org.

St. Theresa’s School is an award-winning Catholic school in northwest Austin serving over 410 pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students. Established in 1986 and accredited through the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department, it is dedicated to educating its students in a Catholic, community-oriented, and academically excellent environment.
Diocesan Leadership Award Honors Top St. Theresa Students

Five current St. Theresa’s Catholic School 8th graders were chosen to receive the Diocesan Leadership Award. The Most Rev. Daniel Garcia, Auxiliary Bishop of Austin, personally recognized these outstanding teenagers in a ceremony at the school’s Jordan Hall.

The following St. Theresa students were selected based on their achievements in making a meaningful difference in their school and community: Tori Garcia, daughter of Cristina and Raymond Garcia; Ellen Hoffman, daughter of Christina and John Hoffman; Peter Holub, son of Shannon and Christopher Holub; Sophia Linn, daughter of Amanda and Ralph Linn; and Sam Queralt, son of Alison and Dr. Mark Queralt. Students from each of the seven Catholic elementary/middle schools in Austin were nominated for the award and each was presented a certificate from the Diocese of Austin.

St. Theresa’s students share a dedication to community service – whether volunteering for Mainspring School, Capital Area Food Bank, raising money for breast cancer research or delivering food and clothing to the homeless and working poor through Mobile Loaves and Fishes. These students well represent the St. Theresa’s School motto to Learn*Serve*Believe.

Quiz Bowl ~ Cougar Clash Tournament

The St. Theresa’s Quiz Bowl teams participated in the Cougar Clash Middle School Quiz Bowl Tournament in San Antonio on January 28. There were 15 teams from schools in the San Antonio and Austin areas. The St. Theresa teams were: Red Team – Evan Fletcher, Ellen Hoffman, Peter Holub, and Thomas Mazzurana; White team – William Meskill, Lincoln Obermeyer, Drew Tufto, and Luke Zimmermann; Gold Team – Cole Christie, Sam Queralt, and Micah Santos; Navy Team – Keegan Klein, Chance Stevens, and Anna Usleman; Green Team – Niko Jedrzejewski, Liam McDonald, Timothy O’Beirne, and Anne Zimmermann; Orange Team – Bridget Baile, Ashley Farrens, Emily Fletcher, and Thomas Hoffman; Yellow Team – Paul Earthman, Thomas Edmonds, Isaac Swoyer, and Stephen Szygenda. Congratulations to the Red and White teams – they both tied for third place in the tournament! Also, big congratulations to the White team for qualifying for the NAQT National Quiz Bowl Tournament based on their performance in this tournament! We now have both the Red and White teams qualified for Quiz Bowl Nationals! And congratulations to all the teams for their performances in the tournament. All the players had a blast competing!