

On Wednesday we began the season of Lent which is our preparation for the Easter celebration of Jesus' resurrection. It is a time in imitation of Jesus spending forty days in the desert. Jesus fasted in the desert, and overcame the devil's temptations. Jesus never sinned but in the desert he was tempted, and during these forty days of Lent we remember Jesus in

the desert as we try to overcome temptation in our lives and to overcome sinfulness.

LENT IS A TIME TO PUT OUR SOULS BEFORE A MIRROR AND SEE OURSELVES AS WE REALLY ARE. LENT IS AN INVITATION TO ALLOW OUR SIN AND DARKNESS AND WOUNDS COME TO THE SURFACE SO THAT WE CAN DEAL WITH THEM AND ALLOW THEM TO BE HEALED BY THE GRACE OF JESUS. During these forty days of Lent, we do not hide from our sinfulness or prevent God speaking to us or healing us during this Lent. It is only when we admit something that we can deal with it. The first stage in overcoming anything is to admit the problem. If we remain in denial we miss out on the grace of God to heal us and renew us and make us whole. **During Lent we say no to the devil's temptations to continue committing sin, and instead we trust in our heavenly Father like Jesus in the desert.**

Since the early centuries the Church has suggested three things that we undertake during Lent - **prayer, fasting and almsgiving.** It is for this reason that the Gospel text for Ash Wednesday every year is Jesus' advice on prayer, fasting and almsgiving. During Lent we want to pray more, fast and help the poor.

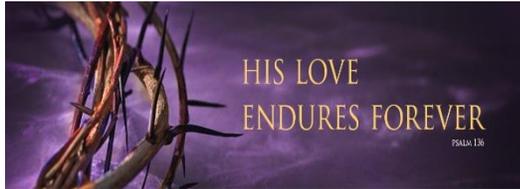
Lent is a time for more prayer. We live busy lives and there is much emphasis on enjoying life but a life without prayer is a life without the joy of the presence of God. God is our loving Father who greatly desires us to allow him close to us, so we pray more this Lent to experience more of the joy of know God our Father.

Fasting is a penance the Church encourages us to undertake during Lent. From the spiritual point of view, fasting symbolizes our dependence on God. It expresses the fact that we really are trying to put God first in our life. The Bible tells us that fasting from food must go together with fasting from violence and fasting from oppressing people. In other words, when we fast from food it is to be accompanied by a loving and forgiving attitude towards others. If we have a problem forgiving someone, we can share it with the Lord and ask his help and grace so that we may forgive.

For **almsgiving or helping the poor,** the Church makes it easy for us by giving us the opportunity to contribute to Catholic aid agencies, **(Rice Bowl operation is something that we all can do. \$1 a day for 40 days of lent helps provide: 1 month of food for a family, 2 years of seed for a farmer, 1 emergency kit for refugees – My Lenten gifts change lives. Fill your CRS Rice Bowl with dollars and coins, or give online at crsricebowl.org/give).** Helping the poor during Lent brings the words of Jesus to mind, "Whatever you did to one of the least of these you did to me."

The word "Lent" is an old English word which means "springtime." May this Lent really be a new springtime in the lives of each of us. Through prayer, through fasting from food accompanied by forgiving others and not bearing grudges, and through donating from our surplus to help the poor, may we like Jesus in the desert for forty days overcome temptation and thus be well prepared to celebrate Easter.

“LENT IS A NEW BEGINNING, THE FAVORABLE SEASON FOR RENEWING OUR ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST WHO LIVES IN HIS WORD, IN THE SACRAMENTS AND IN OUR NEIGHBOR.” – POPE FRANCIS



DURING LENT AT OLM CHURCH!!!

--- Join us for traditional Lenten Devotion every Friday morning at 10am (after 9:30 mass) and in the evening at 7:00pm – **STATIONS OF THE CROSS!!!** Try to come once at least, bring your family, children, and friends and walk with

Jesus his last journey.

--- Sacrament of Penance and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Monday night (7-8:30).



Lent is a 40 day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting. We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during

Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ.

Many know of the tradition of abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, but we are also called to practice self-discipline and fast in other ways throughout the season. Contemplate the meaning and origins of the Lenten fasting tradition in this reflection. In addition, the giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts—not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents. **As St. John Chrysostom reminds us: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2446).**

Lent reminds us that God is gracious and merciful to those who come to him with contrite hearts. God's divine mercy is a central theme of Lent. The priceless gift of God's mercy is highlighted and celebrated by the Church in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO GO TO CONFESSION THIS LENT!!! When I go to confession, it's for healing: healing the soul, healing the heart because of something that I did to make it unwell. The sacrament of reconciliation is a sacrament of healing, every time we go to confession, God embraces us. **EVERY MONDAY NIGHT 7:00PM-8:30PM (OLM CHURCH).**
