

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for March

Catholics in China

We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

PRAYER

FASTING

ALMSGIVING



THE ULTIMATE
GOAL
BECOMING MORE LIKE JESUS

Holy Trinity School is first and foremost a Catholic school with a commitment to help students grow in their faith. During this season of Lent, there are several initiatives that our school community will participate in to help us each on our way from being “good people” to being a little better – more like Christ Himself! Three areas of focus for Christians during Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Here’s how those are playing out at HTS this year, looking at each area for 2 weeks.

We started our Lenten journey with the Ash Wednesday Mass. Students will see short inspiring reflections throughout the season in their classrooms from The Miraculous Medal Shrine. Students are learning about Our Lady of Lourdes and taking turns bringing home a small statue of Our Lady to pray the rosary with their families. A basket is available at school to collect students’ written prayer intentions, which will be brought to the altar at the end of Lent. Students will be offered a time for confession one school day during Lent. Please especially remember our parish 2nd graders as they make their first penance one evening this month!

Our school community will focus on FASTING from March 11 – March 24 by considering all the things we could do without to help us grow more into our best selves that Christ would have us be – things like complaining, bad attitudes, gossiping, and selfishness! We will also discuss the sacrifices that our Pope, our new Archbishop, and our Monsignor Eckert have made to be who they are and the positions that they hold.

From March 25 – April 8 we will shift our thoughts to GIVING to others outside of our community. Students will learn about Our Lady of Confidence School, which is our archdiocesan school for kids with special needs. Collections will be taken for Our Lady of Confidence in addition to our ongoing rice bowl program for World Missions. Fundraisers will continue through Pentecost, as will the statues of Our Lady going home with students, to emphasize that the celebration of Easter extends that long to give the Church time to celebrate our Risen Lord!

Lastly, our students in grades 1 and 5-8 are busy working on the annual Passion Play to be performed on April 5, Passion Sunday. These students take their work very seriously and truly enter into the joys and sufferings of Our Lord as they reenact His story and experience His love for each one of them.

Stations of the Cross

The most popular devotion during the Lenten season is the Stations of the Cross. You may ask how this devotion began and why it became so popular. Hopefully, we can answer that question for you here with great assistance from an anonymous Franciscan Friar.

From the first centuries, Christians came to visit the sacred places of Jerusalem. When they returned home, they often brought back a bit of the Holy Land with them. In addition to tangible items such as relics, they brought back a desire to re-create scenes from the Holy Land in order to share their experiences with those unable to visit the holy places themselves. When access to the Holy Land was closed by the Turks, European replicas of the sacred sites became increasingly popular. Outside of Jerusalem, the tradition of walking the via sacra ("Sacred Way") in commemoration of Christ's passion, death, and burial with "stations" is mentioned as early as the twelfth century and these references point to an outdoor celebration. Depending on the location, there were as few as seven and as many as 42 stations. There was no standard celebration. In the beginning, the customary route was the reverse of what we now know starting with Calvary and ending at Pilate's house. Many other stops no longer considered part of the Via Dolorosa ("Sorrowful Way") were included.

Within the Franciscan tradition, Stations of the Cross were part of the Lenten devotion soon after St. Francis' return from the Holy Land in 1221. The Franciscans became active in the development of this devotion when they were granted custody of the sacred sites of Jerusalem in 1343, which is when they began to promote the devotion to Christ's passion. During the 15th and 16th centuries the Franciscans began to build a series of outdoor shrines in Europe to duplicate their counterparts in the Holy Land. The number of stations varied; seven was common. These were usually placed, often

in small buildings, along the approach to a church.

In 1686, in answer to their petition, Pope Innocent XI granted to the Franciscans the right to erect stations within their churches. In 1731, Pope Clement XII extended to all churches the right to have the stations, provided that a Franciscan father erected them, with the consent of the local bishop. One friar, St. Leonard of Port Maurice, expressed his zeal by erecting 571 sets of stations between 1731 and 1751, becoming known as the "preacher of the way of the cross." It is possible that he was responsible for reversing the order of the stations so that they ended at Calvary rather than at Pilate's house and for fixing the number of Stations to fourteen. In 1862 this right was extended to bishops throughout the church and the Stations of the Cross became a permanent and universal part of our Lenten prayers in commemoration of Christ's passion, death, and burial.

Whenever we actively pray the Stations of the Cross, either alone or with others, we extend a great legacy and tradition of the church, linking our prayers and footsteps with the very prayers and footsteps of Jesus, our Blessed Mother, the apostles and disciples, the saints and the martyrs, and countless generations of faith-filled men, women and children.

We adore you, O Lord Jesus Christ, in this church and in all the churches throughout the whole world, and we bless you, because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Submitted by Mattie Ward, member of HTS Advisory Council's Catholic Identity Committee

Holy Trinity parish offers Stations of the Cross every Friday of Lent at 7:30pm. Please join us!

Images of the Stations of the Cross for children to ponder, by **Happy Saints**

