

Pastor's Corner

Lent is just around the corner

Lent begins on February 26. There is so much excess in life that a season of penance is good for the soul. Lent of 1988 is when I experienced a major conversion in my life from more secular to more spiritual concerns. That's when I began praying daily, attending daily mass, participating in bible study, and serving in church ministries. As my relationship with the Lord grew, I began to experience the peace and joy I longed for which had eluded me. In accord with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6, the Church sets three disciplines during Lent to help us grow spiritually and experience conversion: prayer/study, penance/fasting, and almsgiving.

Prayer/Study: Prayer is the bedrock of a relationship with Jesus. The greatest prayer is the Mass, during which Jesus prays to the Father for us. Many have seen their faith life ignite by attending daily Mass during Lent. This Lent, our parish will have daily Mass Monday through Friday at 6:30 am and 8:00 am and on Saturday at 8:00 am. Our Adoration Chapel will be open for prayer 24/7, and the rosary will be recited after the 8:00 am Mass each weekday. We will have Stations of the Cross twice each Friday in Lent at 8:30 am and 6:00 pm; a six-week Lenten Bible Study on Matthew's Gospel; and a Parish Lenten Mission presented by three young priests, "Called, Forgiven and Sent by God." We will pass out complimentary Magnificat books for your Lenten spiritual enrichment this weekend. Pray about how best to engage prayer/study in Lent.

Fasting/Penance: On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the Church asks Catholics to fast (one regular meal; two smaller meals; no snacks) and abstain from meat. We abstain from meat on all Fridays in Lent. We also engage in a meaningful sacrifice that helps develop spiritual discipline, e.g., fasting from a specific food or from alcohol or from social media. We also receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which is offered in our parish daily Monday through Saturday and will be offered on several evenings in Lent. Pray about a meaningful Lenten penance.

Almsgiving: The Bible says love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8). Lent calls us to intentional charity. This Lent our Parish will participate in Operation Rice Bowl, a national program for the poor. We also can donate to our parish St. Vincent de Paul and Helping Hand Ministries. Indeed, there are many opportunities for charitable giving and charitable works in our midst. Reflect about a way to be charitable this Lent.

Lent is a sacred time to get our spiritual house in order. May we make the most of the transformative opportunities of this season of grace.

God bless,
Fr. Joe