

LENT Begins This Week

ASH WEDNESDAY -- THE JOURNEY BEGINS

We can think of Lent as a journey with Jesus toward Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The journey consists in walking more closely with Jesus, following his way of life more eagerly. Lent is well defined by this prayer: Father, this great season of grace is your gift to your family to renew us in spirit. You give us strength to purify our heart, to control our desires, and so to serve you in freedom. You teach us how to live in this passing world with our heart set on the world that will never end.

The practices of Lent can be done in many different ways: **1)** Take up something that relates to *prayer, fasting, or alms giving* to be done every day during Lent, or **2)** do a different act of penance each week, or **3)** do a different thing each day of the week repeating the same each week.

HELP FOR THE JOURNEY:

PRAYER is listening to and speaking with God. To listen is to hear and to act upon what we hear. God speaks to us through the Scriptures, through the Church and through other people. We speak to God by using words of our own or of another in worship, song, praise, asking for things we and others need.

- 1) Go to Mass on weekdays during Lent - every day, or one day or more during the week.
- 2) Go to Stations of the Cross and Mass each Friday evening.
- 3) Spend an hour in the Adoration Chapel one or two days during the week.
- 4) Say the Rosary each day, or one or two days during the week.
- 5) Read some Scripture each day - If you would read 6 chapters of the New Testament each day during Lent, you would read the whole New Testament by Easter.
- 6) Make the Stations of the Cross on your own one or two days during the week.
- 7) Do some spiritual reading for 15 minutes a day, at least one day each week.
- 8) Go to Confession at the beginning of Lent and again for Easter.

FASTING means eating "very little". When people fast they are supposed to eat only one full meal, two half meals a day, and nothing between meals. The purpose of fasting is to practice self-control, mastery over our wants and cravings, and to become more aware of those who go hungry every day. Fasting can also mean giving something up.

- 1) Fast from food one or more days during the week.
- 2) Give up meat one or more days during the week.
- 3) Give up TV one or more days during the week.
- 4) Give up dessert one or more days during the week.
- 5) Give up the cell phone and iPod one or more days during the week.
- 6) Give up complaining, frowns, and negative thoughts.
- 7) Think of a bad habit you would like to change and work particularly hard at it.
- 8) Work at giving up gossip, bad language.

LENTEN TALKS

with Fr. Mark McGuckin

Directly following the Tuesday night Masses during Lent, Fr. Mark will be presenting Catholicism: The Pivotal Players (by Bishop Robert Barron). We will delve into the lives and teachings of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Catherine of Siena, Bl. John Henry Newman, and G. K. Chesterton. Each session will include a facilitated discussion and will last a little over an hour. All are welcome to attend these spiritually enriching nights. The first one will be on March 7th in the Parish Centre!

St. Paul Young Adults Community (SPYAC) invites young men and women ages 18 to 35 to our **14th Annual Good Friday Retreat** on Fri., April 14, at St. Paul Parish Centre, 7:00 - 10:30pm. Email spyacteam@gmail.com for more info.

ALMSGIVING Often with our fasting, abstinence and sacrifices, there is money that we would have otherwise spent. To give this to the poor is called **almsgiving**. It is a special work of Christian charity. Christ gave his **very self** for us. We are called to give **of ourselves**. Concern for the poor is a special sharing in the love of God. To make Lent complete, it is important to share it with those who are in need. Under almsgiving also come other charitable works, i.e. visiting the sick or shut-ins, making peace where discord exists; helping others, doing good deeds. The **Share Lent** collection (CCODP), a way to share our Lent with the poor of the world, is on **March 13th**.

Sample Week During Lent: While the practice may by negative the purpose is very positive. Many of these suggestions can be taken on for a week at a time with a different sacrifice each week. One can do a different sacrifice each day of the week. Every Monday during lent would be one practice, every Tuesday another. Below is just a sample. The order could be different but same each week is helpful in remembering.

SACRIFICE

PURPOSE

Mondays:	No Gossip (Tsismis). Say nothing bad about another. Repeat no rumors.	Talk kindly about others. Say those things which people need to hear: lots of praise and encouragement.
Tuesdays:	No Cell Phone. Turn it off when you go to bed on Monday and on again when you get up on Wednesday.	This helps us to discipline ourselves regarding those things we <i>really</i> do not need. The key is to develop a trust in God . If there is some message that is essential, trust that if it is so necessary, God will get it to you some other way.
Wednesdays:	Omit one meal, any one: breakfast, lunch or supper OR nothing between meals.	Disciplining self in this way provides funds to help the poor such as through the Share Lent collection - March 13 th .
Thursdays:	No TV, computer games or iPod.	Use the time for Scripture or spiritual reading. Have the family do some activity together like play games or go for a walk or visit the Adoration Chapel.
Fridays:	No meat today. More focus on prayer. A good day for Stations of the Cross and Mass - 7:30 pm.	Since Jesus died on a Friday, this day is great for penance and sacrifice. No meat is a traditional form of penance. Prayer is a traditional act of love. Make the Stations of the Cross today either at church or at home but as a family. Christ loved us through sacrifice. We can also love through the sacrifices or acts of penance that we do.
Saturdays:	Clean-up day. OR No clubbing or going out, spend the evening with your family. Do some family activity together.	Clean-up is good for body and soul. Don't wait until Holy Week to clean-up the soul; go to confession for a good Lent. Confession cleanses the soul and keeps our minds focused on doing good. Clean-up the house and particularly your room. A clean environment makes for a great Sunday.

Weekday Masses During Lent

Ash Wednesday: 8:00am, 11:00am (School Mass), 7:00pm (Parish Centre), 7:30pm (Church)
Monday-Friday: 8:15am & 7:30pm EXCEPT Mar. 13 - 24 (Spring Break): 8:00am & 7:30pm
All Fridays: Stations of the Cross & Mass at 7:30pm
All Saturdays: 9:00am