

FROM THE DESK OF FR. D.



Quinquagesima Sunday is the last Sunday before Lent. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. It used to begin on the first Sunday of Lent but four days were added to Lent so that there would be exactly 40 days of fasting since one does not fast on Sunday. Sunday is the weekly reminder of the resurrection of the Lord and one cannot make penance when one commemorates the victory of life over death, of grace over sin. On the contrary, Friday is the weekly reminder of the passion and death of Our Lord on the cross and so it has always been a penitential day. The Catechism of the Council of Trent affirms that our sins have been the main cause of the torments and the death of Our Lord.

The number of 40 days of fasting is highly symbolic and refers to the fasting of Our Lord in the desert for 40 days after having been baptized by John the Baptist where he is tempted by the Devil. The church makes us relive the main events of the life of Christ throughout the liturgical year.

The preface for Lent sums up why we should fast: God, through our fasting, curb our vices, lift up our minds, and give us strength and rewards. Note that it is God who saves us and not directly our fasting. We do not fast for the sake of becoming a champion in fasting to our own eyes or other people's eyes. That was the fasting of the Pharisees that Jesus denounced in his time. Our fasting removes the obstacles to God's saving grace. By fasting we recognize that we are sinners and we need to atone for our sins. This disposes our soul to the grace of God which strengthens us so that we may conquer the incorruptible crown. Fasting helps our will to become stronger as it resists instant gratification. It helps us remove earthly concerns from our mind so it can focus on heavenly things.

Lent reminds us that, as the Hebrew people wandering in the desert for 40 years, our earthly journey has a goal, the Promised Land, the Heavenly Jerusalem. We are not home but travelers. We are here below only for a short time and preparing for eternal life.

One of the great modern illusions is that we think that we will find happiness in having. The more I have, the happier I will be. The more money I have, the more things I shall be able to buy. And people discover that when they have bought everything they wanted, they are still unsatisfied and unhappy. Pope John Paul II wrote many times on the primacy of being. Happiness is found in what we are, our qualities and our virtues, not in what we have, our possessions.

The greatest obstacle to priestly vocations or religious vocations is the materialism and consumerism in which we live. If children are not raised in a spirit of detachment and sacrifice, how could they one day respond to the call of God, to a life of dedication to God and their neighbor?

A French Catholic writer of the beginning of the 20th century wrote at the conclusion of one of his novels: "There is only one true sadness: not being a saint." Saints remain joyful in spite of trials and persecutions. They even seem to be happier in those times as they realize that it is then that they are able to resemble Christ to the fullest. "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." Mk 8, 34

On the first day of Lent, there is a meaningful ceremony: the blessing and distribution of ashes by which we are entering into a penitential time. Penitents used to wear sackcloth and ashes during the time of lent to expiate for their sins. The imposition of ashes is a transposition of the former public penance to all but with diminished severity. The priest says a few words taken out of the book of Genesis (3, 19) when imposing ashes: "Remember, man (human being), that thou art dust, and into dust thou shall return." This reminds us of our mortality and frailty.

Our Church News

- **Hymnals for High Mass** : Hymnals are available in the vestibule if you wish to sing along with the choir. Short of being tone-deaf, everyone should learn how to sing Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei of Mass 8 (De Angelis) as well as Credo 3. The credo is our profession of faith and we should all sing it with conviction. Look at the two panels on each side of the side chapels to know the page numbers of entrance and receding hymns. St. Augustine used to say: "To sing is to pray twice."
- **Today is the Chili Supper** you have all been waiting for! From 11am to 4pm in Parish Hall. Please come and enjoy the food and cheer. Proceeds from this event will help finance the work on our pipe organ.
- **Traditional St. Patrick's Day Dinner (Tuesday 17th of March)**: Corned beef from the Butcher Block, cabbage and mashed potatoes at the Church Hall from 11am to 7 pm with carry-outs available. Price includes the meal, dessert and drink (coffee or tea) at \$8 per person, \$5 for children under 12 and families for \$35. Come and enjoy the Irish traditions and be sure to wear your green. Make sure you mark your calendars! Proceeds will help us pay our debt on our marble altars.
- **Ash Wednesday**, the official beginning of Lent, is on the **25th of February** this year. It is a day of fast and abstinence. Although it is not a Holy Day of obligation, it is an important liturgical day (1st class) and so there will be two Masses at St. Rose's: 12:10 pm & 6 pm. The collection on Ash Wednesday is for the Church in Eastern Europe. If you have one, please use the TAN envelope.
- **40 Hours Devotion**: It is traditional before lent begins to have the devotion of 40 hours of silent adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament in reparation for the excesses of Carnival. We will begin modestly this year: we will have 6 hours of adoration on Monday 23rd of February. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after the 12:10 pm Mass until 6:10 pm (Benediction at 6 pm). We need at least two people signing their name for each hour of the adoration.
- **Stations of the Cross** will be celebrated every Friday of Lent at 5:30 pm (except on Good Friday at 12:10 pm). First Stations of the Cross will be on Friday 27 of February.
- **Adult Religion Class** : We had our first class for adults this past Wednesday. There will be no class this coming Wednesday (Ash Wednesday) but class will resume on Wednesday 4th of March in Church Hall. We will continue the explanation of the Mass according to the extraordinary form. Please bring your missal. Please let Father know any religious subject you would like to deal with.
- **Second Collection** : Starting with the first Sunday of Lent, March first, there will be a second collection on certain Sundays as required by the USCCB and the diocese for specific purpose. On March 1, the 2nd collection is for Black and Indian Missions (mandated by the 3rd council of Baltimore in 1884).
- If you are interested in learning to serve, please contact Vince Wernowsky 217-653-7554 or Chuck Zanger 217-653-3863. If you are interested in singing in the Choir please call Jason Stone 217-316-1401.

Other Church Community News

- **Trivia Night!** : Students attending Catholic HEART Work Camp are sponsoring a Trivia Night at St. Brigid's Parish (Liberty, IL) on Saturday, February 28th. Doors open at 5:30 pm with trivia starting at 6 pm. Come enjoy a night of games and fun! There will be group of questions in various categories. Come bring your trivia skills! Money raised will be for those attending CHWC from St. Brigid's, St. Joseph's, St. Thomas and Holy Family Parishes. Call Erin Hodgson at 217-242-4998 to reserve a table.