



The Lightpost

The Parish Newsletter of St. Joseph Catholic Church



A Letter from Our Pastor

Lenten Opportunities for Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving

Dear Parishioners,

Easter Sunday is on April 4 this year. And, so, the season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17. So, I thought I would offer some ideas for you to consider, hoping that this season of Lent will be a special time of grace for you and for all of our parish family.

In the Gospel for Ash Wednesday [Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18], Jesus recommends three ways to spend this holy season: in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. I would encourage you, in the penances that you commit yourself to perform, to choose something in each category.

In the realm of prayer, maybe you would like to take on some prayer in addition to your regular ones, or maybe you would like to concentrate a bit more on the prayers that you already offer each day. Participate in weekday Mass as often as you can, in addition to Sunday Mass. I also highly recommend spending time each week in prayer before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament either in church, or on Tuesdays in our Sacred Heart Chapel where the Eucharist is exposed for adoration from 8:00 in the morning until 8:00 in the evening, as well as on the First Fridays of each month following the 8:30 a.m. Mass until 9 a.m. the next day.



I recommend that everyone, from grade two on up, celebrate the Sacrament of Penance during Lent. It is a powerful means to personal conversion and, while always “in season,” is especially appropriate during Lent.

Confessions are heard here in our parish on Thursday evenings from 7:30-8:30 p.m., and on Saturday mornings from 11:00 to noon. There will be a Communal Penance Service with the parishes of our cluster [St. Raphael in Bay Village, Holy Spirit in Avon Lake, and St. Joseph in Avon Lake] on Sunday evening, March 21, at 7 p.m. here at Saint Joseph’s, with about ten priests present to hear confessions and offer individual

sacramental absolution.

In the area of fasting you might fast from sin, from food or drink or entertainment. Of course Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are both days of abstinence from meat and days of fast [that is, limited to a single full meal with two smaller meals, and without eating between meals except for liquids]. And all of the Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat. The law of abstinence from meat obliges Catholics who are age 14 and older. The law of fasting obliges Catholics from ages 18-59.

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Lenten Practices: *Penance and Abstinence*

To many Catholics, the practice of fasting and abstinence during Lent is as much a part of our Faith as is our sacred liturgy. Catholics know that when Lent arrives, it's time to say goodbye to meat on Fridays and hello to fish sticks and bean burritos. It's almost as if our Lenten obligations were hardwired into our biological clock at the moment we were baptized.

If there is one thing Catholics are good at, it's abiding to the laws of tradition, and the tradition of fasting and abstaining from meat during Lent draws its lineage from the early days of the Faith.

But why, exactly, do we fast and abstain from meat during Lent? And what are the Church's guidelines for this tradition?

In November 1966, the United States Council of Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral statement on penance and abstinence. The statement outlines the scriptural significance behind fasting and abstinence and directs the faithful on when it's encouraged and appropriate to do so.

According to the statement, there are four main points the Church wants to make about the tradition of penance and abstinence:

1. All humans are sinners
2. Penance and abstinence are ways to turn away from sin and back to God
3. The Church is constantly in a stage of ongoing renewal and penance
4. Advent, Lent and the vigils of certain feasts are the primary penitential seasons of the Church. The statement makes clear that the practices of penance and abstinence are tools created to help lead us to Christ, not stringent laws designed to cause discomfort and pain. Fasting, abstinence and penance help us to reflect on, and in some way understand, the suffering and selflessness our Lord's experienced during His passion and death.

Traditionally, Catholics must abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday (which falls on Feb. 17 this year) and Good Friday (April 2). And, because Christ died on a Friday,



the Church asks us to also abstain from meat on all Fridays during the season of Lent. Lent is also a time of penance. In preparation for Jesus' death and resurrection, the Church encourages all Catholics to seek forgiveness from sins and to renew their spirits in accordance with the Father's spirit. The overarching goal of all Christians is to become "one with the Father," and penance and abstinence help us attempt to do that.

But Lent isn't just about what we aren't "allowed" to do. The Church encourages us all to seek ways to alleviate the pain and suffering of others – just as Christ lifted the burden of sin from the spirit of humankind – "by special solicitude for the sick, the poor, the underprivileged, the imprisoned, the bedridden, the discouraged, the stranger, the lonely, and persons of other color, nationalities, or backgrounds than our own."

This Lent, as the world prepares for the anniversary of Christ's death and resurrection, take on a few Lenten practices of your own. In addition to abstaining from meat on Fridays and Ash Wednesday, find a way to share the love of Christ with others through gifts of time (prayer), talent (actions) and treasure (monetary offerings). The life of a disciple, as outlined in the Gospels, requires a renewed heart and a penitent soul. Seek to understand this Lent, in some small way, the magnitude of our Lord's suffering and love.



The Story Behind the New Mural

Larry Guthrie and his siblings had a vision. It was a vision they didn't just sit on it and let pass them by. It was a vision they made it come alive.

After their mother and father both passed away this past year, the Guthrie clan decided to donate a beautiful mural dedicated to their parents.

"Mom and Dad lived their lives by example," says Larry. "They were always there to lend a helping hand. They lived a very Catholic life. They were lifelong parishioners at St. Joseph's, so we wanted to donate a mural as a family, in their honor."

The idea to create the mural first came when Larry, a successful tile and flooring contractor, had been working to finish our new parish in the late 1990s. After some contemplation, as well as looking for a means to fund the project, Larry and his four brothers and sisters commissioned artist Angelica Pozo to do the job.

This past year, Angela began with a pastel and chalk drawing, which was then photographed for free by Tony Palmieri from Palmieri's Photography Studio.

Next, Angelica transferred the image to a ceramic tile field. Dal-Tile donated the setting and



The mural was created as a background to our statue of Christ the Fisherman to capture the essence of the message of the statue itself, the story of Christ's desire to seek and save all of humankind.

installation materials, as well as a metal frame, and the rest was history!

The mural was created as a background to our statue of Christ the Fisherman

to capture the essence of the message of the statue itself, the story of Christ's desire to seek and save all of humankind.

In the end, the mural's story tells a yet deeper tale – the story of love, of stewardship and of family.

Sing a Joyful Song to the Lord

The Junior Choir

According to parishioner Lorrie Coughlin, Director of Liturgical Music, anyone can sing.

"I always feel sorry for those who think they 'can't carry a tune in a bucket,' because I truly believe that, given the opportunity, everyone can sing," she says.

This is one reason why Lorrie enjoys directing our parish's Junior Choir. Unlike many adults, children believe that with a little determination anything is possible. Young people aren't afraid to sing out loud, even if it sounds horrendous at first.

"Children never tell me, 'That's too hard! We can't do that!'" says Lorrie. "They believe they can do anything, and they prove themselves correct in that notion time and time again!"

The Junior Choir is a longstanding component of our parish's music ministry, although its name has changed throughout its existence. Currently, about 20 children in grades three through eight contribute to the group.

The Junior Choir's repertoire includes music from Glory and Praise and other Christian hymnals, folk tunes, classical hymns, and other choral pieces. As director of the choir, Lorrie teaches the children how to sing in unison, how to sing in harmony, and how to sing canons or rounds. In addition, some of the children – particularly those who possess strong singing voices – sing solo parts from time to time.

The Junior Choir season runs from October to May each year. During a typical season, the choir sings two to three times per month at the 4:30 p.m. Saturday Mass. In addition, the group sings at the 6 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass and at one

of the Easter Masses. Lorrie also takes the children caroling during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Every year in March, the Junior Choir represents our parish community at the annual St. Patrick's Day Mass at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.

Because the Junior Choir is open to all children in our parish, grades three through eight, children from PSR and St. Joseph School can interact together. The group is able to experience Christ together, in new ways, through sacred music.

"We pray through our music and discuss what we are praying about," says Lorrie. "We talk about how, as St. Augustine taught us, 'Those who sing pray twice.' We also work very hard at understanding that, as a choir, we are not 'performing;' we are helping people to worship better."

Lorrie also uses the Junior Choir as training or preparation for the Senior Choir, should the children choose to join the Senior Choir upon graduating from the eighth grade.

Is your child in grades three through eight and interested in music? Consider introducing him or her to the Junior Choir. The commitment is fairly moderate; in addition to singing at Mass, the children also practice just twice a month.

And for those who are shy or don't think they have the ability to sing, heed the words of our pastor, Fr. O'Connor: "God gave you that voice; He deserves to hear it given back to Him!"

For more information, contact Lorrie at the rectory office at 440-933-3152.





SEM Weekend Coming in March

“Me? Volunteer? Why? How would I ever know what to sign-up for, and how would I ever find the time?”

If this sounds familiar, you are not alone. Many of us have a hard time imagining heaping yet another commitment onto our “busy life pile.” The good news is that giving your time, talent and treasure to God can be done in a way that fits you and your life – as well as that of your family’s – well. It doesn’t have to be a burden; it can actually be a source of great joy, and this is what the annual SEM Weekend is helping many of our parishioners discover.

“The SEM Weekend goes over very well with the parish,” says Ken Kodger, who coordinates the event with his wife Lois and Judy Kakas (who organizes the meals). “The reason for it is to give everyone the opportunity to see the variety of SEM groups, all presented in one setting.”

Last year, following our annual SEM Weekend (Social, Educational and Ministerial) and the generosity of our parishioners, St. Joseph’s saw a 12 to 15 percent increase in involvement in ministries. Several more ministry groups sprang out of the stewardship renewal as well. An estimated number of over 600 people came to the fair!

The next SEM Weekend will take place on March 13-14. Following the 4:30 p.m. Saturday Mass, there will be a chili dog dinner and after the Sunday 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and 12 p.m.

Masses, a pancake and sausage breakfast; all in the school’s gym and kitchen area. On the way to the meal, parishioners are invited to check out any of the over 50 parish ministry booths on display in the school hallway. Representatives will be available to present the ins-and-outs of each ministry, using a “story board,” or visual description of their group.

The SEM Weekend is an educational event only. This is the chance for ministry members to educate their fellow parishioners on how they serve the Lord and encourage them to jump on board! There are no sign-up sheets at the tables; only information about the joy of belonging to each particular group. The following week, parishioners will have the opportunity to respond to what they learn at the fair by filling out the mailed Commitment Cards, to be collected during Mass. The stewardship renewal weekend is also a good reminder of what the U.S. Bishops describe in their document, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, “Essentially, [stewardship] means helping the Church’s mission with money, time, and personal resources of all kinds. This sharing is not an option for Catholics who understand what membership in the Church involves. It is a serious duty. It is a consequence of the faith which Catholics profess and celebrate.”

All parishioners are warmly invited to come.

“It is an easy way to gain more knowledge, and we feed you afterwards,” says Ken. “What more could you ask for?”



Bingo for Benefit

Gambling doesn't necessarily have to be a sinful endeavor — just ask the members of the Knights of Columbus Father Ragan Council No. 3269.

Our local Knights have been holding a weekly Bingo game at their hall for over 25 years, and it continues to be one of their biggest and most popular fundraisers. The games are held on Fridays at 7 p.m. at the K of C hall in Avon Lake.

The fellowship, and socialization is one of the major drawing cards of the event. "Our doors open at 5:30, and people are already there at 5 o'clock," explains Knights of Columbus Bingo Chair Bob Schneider. "We don't start playing bingo until 7 o'clock. Why are they there? Because it's a social environment for them. They're friends, they're playing cards, they can have a meal, they even sit in the same seats every week."

The real joy of being a part of the event isn't even the game, it's the connections made with members of our community and other parishes. "As you're walking around talking to people, you get to know them," explains Bob. "They tell you things like 'I have grandkids,' or 'my husband is in the military.' You get to know something personal about them, which is part of the pleasure of running Bingo."

Proceeds from these contests go to the K of C foundation general fund. This fund helps pay for the K of C hall, and also supports various area charitable groups that the Knights assist and make donations to throughout the year. The Knights also offer several parochial high school and college scholarships throughout the year from their general fund.

Bingo events are carefully regulated in the State of Ohio, Bob explains. "Bingo is overseen by the Ohio Lottery Commission," Bob says. "They have specific rules and regulations about what you have to do with your money. We are told that a certain percentage of our money has to go to charity during the course of the year. We have to document to the Lottery Commission every year where our money went."

There has been quite a popularity growth for Bingo in recent months, with average turnout jumping from 80 to 125 players per game. Players come from all over the area, and many are not even parishioners of the four parishes that make up the K of C Council.

"I can walk into the Bingo hall, and half of the people know my name," says Bob. "They're from all over the area, we're bringing people in from the far east side of Cleveland out past Vermillion, down into Strongsville. There's a reason for that, and it's because people enjoy coming so much."

Food goes hand-in-hand with the Bingo fun, and players can get a variety of delicious meals from the excellent K of C kitchen. Everything from hot dogs, to Cabbage and Noodles, to Chicken Dinners, to Spaghetti dinners are served.

"It's a nice place to play," explains Bob. "We have good callers, we have good instant sellers. We have a good kitchen, clean bathrooms and secure parking."





Lenten Opportunities for Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving Continued from front cover

And in terms of almsgiving I encourage you to remember the poor with your generosity, prayers and good works. Donations to our parish Saint Vincent de Paul Society – by use of the monthly envelope in your Sunday Offertory packet – are a great way to assist people in need. Helping the poor helps them, and helps us to appreciate just how blessed we are and how many blessings we have to share.

Let us keep our RCIA candidates in our prayers as they use these days of Lent as an extended retreat opportunity in preparation for their baptisms or professions of faith on Holy Saturday night. Let us also keep one another in our prayers as we prepare to renew our own baptismal promises during the Easter liturgies. And let us also be grateful for our church which we began using for the first time at the Easter Vigil 2000, 10 years ago, and which is a place of holiness and blessing today – and will be in the many years to come.

Thank you so very much for all that you do to make Jesus Christ known and loved here at Saint Joseph Parish and in our community. I am truly grateful. We all are.

With my prayers for you and for your special intentions, I am, as always,

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor

Our Family in the Armed Forces

When you gather your family for prayer, please remember these members of our parish family who are placing their lives on the line to protect and serve us!

Michael Baker

Patrick Curry

Timothy Gaydosh

Scott Hardman

Patrick Harris

Brendan Mackin

Charlie Meyer

Matt Monschein

Brian Nealon

Robert Pate

Ryan Petrella

Michael Schumacher

Larry van der Oord

Dr. Roy Seitz

Jessica Moran

Brian M. Novotny

Brian Hertvik

Scott Vorisek

Tony Zelasko

James Goodwin

Scott Hutcherson

John Stanley

Daniel Urbin

If you have any loved ones in the service, please let us know so we can add them to our honored list and keep them in our prayers.

Saint Joseph

Catholic Church

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Save the Date!

Important Dates for February 2010

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| 5 | 24-Hour Adoration 9 a.m.- 9 a.m. Saturday | 18 | First Communion Parent Meeting 7 p.m. |
| | Night Under the Stars -SJS Auction | | Adult Confirmation Class 7:30 p.m. |
| | St. Vincent de Paul Food Drive | 19 | Stations of the Cross 7 p.m. |
| | (until 9 a.m. Monday) | | Roesky Tournament |
| 7 | Bake Sale after Sunday Masses | 20 | Pre-Cana Day |
| 8 | Mass at Main Street 10:30 | | Roesky Tournament |
| | Food Drive ends at 9 a.m. | 21 | RCIA Rite of Election |
| 9 | Eucharistic Adoration 8 a.m.- 8 p.m. | | Roesky Tournament |
| 11 | Adult Confirmation Class 7:30 p.m. | 23 | Eucharistic Adoration 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. |
| 13 | Roesky Tournament Begins | 26 | Stations of the Cross 7 p.m. |
| 14 | Valentine's Day event with Fr. Becherer | | Roesky Tournament |
| | Roesky Tournament | 27 | Roesky Tournament |
| | Hospitality Sunday | 28 | Roesky Concludes |
| 15 | Eucharistic Adoration 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. | | Fr. O'Connor and Senior Choir |
| 17 | Ash Wednesday Masses 8:30 a.m., 7 p.m. | | 5:30 p.m. Mass at St. John's Cathedral |