

The holy season of Lent begins in just a few short days! Are you ready?

How does your family prepare to commemorate these 40 days that help us to remember the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert, preparing himself before his passion, death, and resurrection? The Church tells us that it is important that we use 3 easy to remember ways to mark this holy season:

Fast – not only by denying ourselves food on days of fast and abstinence, but also by fasting from unkind behaviors and actions, from all of the things in our daily lives that draws us further away from Jesus, not to him.

Pray – not only for our wants and needs, but to remember those most in need of our prayers: the poor, the sick, those who have no one to pray for them. If we've fallen out of the habit of daily prayer, pick up that practice again. Pray on the way to work or school, as a family when gathered for a meal. If you've fallen away from weekly Mass attendance, start to make the effort to follow the Third Commandment – Keep Sunday Holy. We start our day and our week with the Eucharistic Liturgy – both the source of our strength and the summit of our life in faith.

Give – not only our financial offering to the poor, but give of our time and talents in order to serve others and make their lives easier, more bearable. Do one good deed a day – every day – for someone who needs it; it's that simple!

Need some help getting started? Here are some suggestions that will all be listed in the bulletin:

Ash Wednesday Services – 8:30am Mass/Ashes; 12:15 Prayer Svc/Ashes; 7:00pm Mass/Ashes. Ash Wednesday is Feb. 14

Attend Mass whenever possible: weekends or Monday, Wednesday, Friday mornings at 8:30 am.

Pray the Stations of the Cross: Friday evenings during Lent in church at 7 pm. Watch for special times when we offer family versions.

Attend Adult Ed on Monday mornings after Mass or evenings at 6:30. (contact Mrs. Romano)

Lectio Divina will be offered on Wednesday mornings after Mass. (contact Sr. Catherine)

Want to keep Lent on the Go? Visit these websites for daily Lenten reflections: wordonfire.org; bestlentever.com; bustedhalo.com; sacredspace.ie. Have a good reflection website to share? Please let me know and I'll post!

RE Lenten Service Project - SOCIAL JUSTICE

St. Margaret of Scotland Roman Catholic Church

Our RE classes will be helping our parish Social Justice committee this year by collecting medical and hygiene supplies for Guatemala. Each grade is assigned a specific product. Please bring to RE class before March 11:

Kindergarten & Grade 1: Gauze bandages – all sizes

Grade 2: Gauze tape – paper or micropore

Grade 3 & 4: Children's chewable vitamins

Grade 5: Children's Tylenol tablets (generic is okay)

Grade 6: Adult Tylenol, Extra Strength (generic is okay)

Grade 7: Toothbrushes

Grade 8: Toothpaste

Expiration dates on all products should be at least one year in the future

PLEASE CHECK THE REVERSE OF THIS NEWSLETTER FOR IMPORTANT RE NEWS!

What we learn at class: Accountability and Understanding

Parents, I spoke with our students about this last week. As we enter the season of Lent, I've asked that the students begin to prepare for a very basic, easy quiz that will be given at the end of the month. I'm trying to garner how well things are going, what is retained from year to year, what we live and learn once we leave class. Here is what you can review at home to help your student at each grade level to be ready.:

ALL GRADES: Name of our Parish; our Pastor, our Deacons (Msgr. Hopkins, Deacon Tommy Watts, Deacon Austin Lobo) The Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be – all common prayers of our faith, and prayers of the Rosary. Grade 2 & up should know Act of Contrition, as well.

GRADES 3 & UP: name the 7 sacraments. How many of the 10 commandments can you name? (Catholic version, please). Which pertain to our relationship with God? (1 to 3) Relationship with others? (4 through 10). What is the Great Command? What is the name of our diocese? Our Bishop?

Grade 4 & UP should know the Apostles Creed (NOT the one we say at Mass) and all 10 Commandments in order (Catholic version).

Grades 5 & UP: 7 sacraments grouped: 3 of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist; 2 of Service: Marriage, Holy Orders; 2 of Healing: Penance, Anointing of the Sick. How many of the Beatitudes can you name? Can you name the Corporal & Spiritual Works of Mercy? Should know the Nicene Creed (the one we DO say at Mass)

As I told all students – they do know all of this; they've been taught it. These are the basics that we live each day. I'm just looking for them to be able to share it back with us.

For the Parents

In August, I found an article to share. I hung onto it until now because I wanted to send it during a liturgical time when we are preparing, working on our relationships with God. It isn't meant to chide or to judge. It's meant to reflect and act on during Lent. Lent is 6 weeks long – not a horribly long time, but time enough to change habits, change hearts. Please read this article in the light it is meant. I am then asking that you answer the questions attached and return them over the course of February. These questions will help me to begin a conversation here at the parish, a conversation that will perhaps help us to look at what we do and how we do it, who we serve and how we serve them. Please take the time to read with an open mind and share. No names necessary. Anything that you might want to say can be said as long as it's said with respect. Thank you in advance for your time, attention, and participation in this exercise.

IMPORTANT DATES & ACTIVITIES – Please Read Carefully!

If you will note on your RE calendars, February 20 & March 20 are dates where first lower, then upper grades will report to class, but then go over to church to pray the Stations of the Cross with Msgr. John. Even though these are Tuesday RE dates, ALL parish families with children in these grades are invited to join us. Parents, please bring your children, walk over to church with them after attendance and the week's work is distributed, and help us to pray this important Lenten devotional that walks us through the 14 steps of Jesus' journey from his trial to his crucifixion. Yes, this is a very traditional practice of Catholics, but it is also a most important one. Please mark your calendars and join us, and feel free to bring other family members with you. RE families who are with their K – grade 4 students on February 20: Report to the cafeteria and go to church with your students for a 5:30 start in church. Those families of Grade 5 – 8 students on March 20, you will do the same that evening. Students whose families are with them will be dismissed directly from church and do not have to return to class on those evenings, but attendance will be taken. *This is considered a class day.*