



Dear Parishioners,

February 18 & 19, 2012

I like to introduce a common theme for this lent that starts this week with Ash Wednesday. I reflected and prayed over what is the best thing we can do during lent. As a parish family, I like you to think about *"giving up complaining"*. It is one of the root causes of day today failures. The first thing we like to do is to complain starting with the weather, coffee, work place, machines, coworkers, spouses, children and church etc. Throughout these 40 days of lent, let us take a common resolution not to **COMPLAIN** and live with it. As is the practice of Catholics during this season, we are also called to focus on three aspects of our spiritual lives: Prayer, Fasting, and works of Charity. Here are just some suggestions on how we can engage in these three disciplines in a more in depth manner.

Prayer: It goes without saying that we are to be a people of prayer 365 days of the year; however, during the season of Lent, perhaps we could focus our prayer in a particular way or for a particular cause. Perhaps we may want to pray the rosary, attend adoration, daily mass, or evening prayer. Maybe we would find some spiritual reading or biblical reflection as a good means to deepening our prayer life. All of these are laudable practices and could enhance our prayer life. It may also be beneficial, not only to us, but to others, if we focus our prayers on a particular purpose; the sick, the elderly and shut ins, promoting life in all of its stages, end to the death penalty, economic justice, peace in our community and world. All of these are laudable and many others as well.

Fasting (and abstinence): We Fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday which means we have only two small or simple meals and one typical. The purpose of Fasting is not only deny ourselves, but to unite ourselves with those in the world who have little or nothing. We also fast so as to invite the Lord into our emptiness. Fasting for its own sake can be hallow and routine, but Fasting with purpose can be redeeming. We abstain from meat on each Friday of Lent as a way to remind ourselves that this world is not all there is. That life is more than food and material satisfaction. We also "give something up" so that we can detach ourselves from worldly things a bit more. Giving up things like chocolate, bakery, drinking, smoking, soda, other things that may be unhealthy for us etc, are worthy pursuits, but our intentionality in giving them up can lead to spiritual renewal and physical well-being.

Works of Charity (Almsgiving): Giving of one's time or material wealth for the benefit of the community or those in need is an ancient practice of the Church (along with Prayer and Fasting). This year the Holy Father has asked us to add an extra chair at our dining table. It is a symbolism of feeding one extra hungry person of our family. Catholic Church is strongly addressing the pressing needs of the world. At the end of lent please bring your contribution to the parish office. We will donate the same to the missions to feed the hungry.

Have a blessed lent,

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*Keeping
a Holy Lent*