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PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

'Lent,' derived from an Anglo-Saxon term for springtime, is a time of new growth and life. This is often not what many of us have in mind when we think of Lent. Another very common aspect of Lent that we perhaps do not think about too much is: the color 'purple.' It was the color used exclusively by the emperors and nobility of Egypt, Rome, and Constantinople to designate their social status and position. They were the megarich and powerful. But, what is the color 'purple' saying about nobility and status to us during Lent? It is there to remind us that we are all God's children: all equal and noble in the sight of God, including particularly the poor and forgotten and those whom we have learned to consider of less worth. This is the time to redress that blindness. Lent is a new beginning for the rest of our lives, a new springtime. Therefore, it is not a short period of great effort and then, back to normal life when it is over. Our Catholic Tradition offers us an effective formula for a deeper and more meaningful Lent that maybe some of us have not had in recent years. It is: "Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving." Please keep in mind these three are all interconnected and were never meant to be separated.

Prayer: Take some quiet time for yourself, read the Scriptures before coming to mass, or arrive early and do it. Be hungry for God to speak to you through the Word. This is probably the best place to start. How could a commitment to a deeper prayer life cease when Lent is over? This would be a lifestyle change with immeasurable possibilities. Listening to God's Word, we will hear the call to care and minister to one another. This is also a call to Fast. The *Shepherd of Hermas*, a second-century text, reads: "In the day on which you fast you will taste nothing but bread and water; and having reckoned up the price of the dishes of that day which you intended to have eaten, you will give it to a widow, or an orphan, or to some person in want, and thus you will exhibit humility of mind, so that the one who has received benefit from your humility may fill his own soul."

Fasting, if it is to be truly Christian, is done for someone else. This is not the time to be thinking only of getting back on that diet or to be thinking only of oneself. Otherwise, it would be a form of "binge dieting" which you and I know does not work. Lent is the time to help others by helping ourselves become more caring and loving people. Lent is a time of conversion - it is a commitment to a lifestyle change.

Almsgiving: Our prayer and fasting lead us to the door of almsgiving and works of mercy. There are innumerable possibilities for works of mercy from caring for the sick to caring for the caregivers who need a break (often in our own families or among our fellow workers).

At the moment, Spring Branch ISD is looking for adults to mentor students who are having learning difficulties for just one hour at the student's school. There is more information on the notice board. Also, there are lots of people and institutions that need our financial help. Look at the list of Sunday second collections coming up in Lent, which are always posted in the bulletin the previous week. Do not forget the people and volunteers in Haiti. Maybe you would like to help with the "Rice Bowl of Caring" supported by your children's contributions, which will be presented at mass each Sunday during Lent along with the regular collection. Consider perhaps joining a church ministry. I have one in mind for you to pray about during Lent: offer to become a member of the to-be-newly-formed-Pastoral Council. I will mention more about that in next week's bulletin. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are all united in our Lenten-Friday Stations of the Cross. A simple supper of homemade soup and bread will be offered after the Stations. Any donation given will go to The Mission of Yahweh which provides shelter for homeless women and children. This Friday, February 19, the Stations of the Cross and supper will be led and coordinated by the parish staff. These are but a few suggestions.

Let us pray for guidance:

**"Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation;
You make us hunger and thirst for holiness.
Blessed are You, Lord, God of all creation;
You call us to true fasting:
to set free the oppressed,
to share our bread with the hungry,
to shelter the homeless and to clothe the naked."**

(The United States' Conference of Catholic Bishops).

Have a blessed week, Fr. Niall

THE SUPER SENIORS will meet this Sunday, February 14, 2010. The Super Seniors will have their Meeting/potluck luncheon. The speaker is Sister Mary Dennison of The Cenacle Retreat House. The theme will be "How to Age Gracefully." Please consider giving a donation. If you have any questions, please contact Zita Claytor at 713-464 1768.

THE LUNCH BUNCH: The February "Lunch Bunch" will meet on Monday, February 22 at 12:30 pm at Salt Grass Steak House, 8943 Katy Freeway. Please contact Merryl Piper at 713-465-9089 or mwpfwp2019@hal-pc.org or call Pat Mancuso at 713-461-7764 in order to make arrangements and reservations. Merryl Piper

FYI: The City of Houston and Direct Energy are currently helping our neighborhood to lower your energy usage. To receive FREE energy efficiency products and service, please call 713-277-3672 or 713-877-5778 to see if you qualify. The improvements are performed at NO COST to the homeowner.



February 13-21, 2010

- Sat. 02/13** 5:00 pm † Glada Fern McAvoy
- Sun. 02/14** 8:30 am S.I. Mike & Sandra Hawkins
11:15 am S.I. Susan Decker
- Mon. 02/15** 9:00 am † Loredana Guidotti
- Tue. 02/16** 9:00 am S.I. Mike Hawkins
- Wed. 02/17** 12:15 pm S.I. Sandra Hawkins
- Thu. 02/18** 12:15 pm S.I. Jim
- Fri. 02/19** 12:15 pm † Alphonse Dombrowski
- Sat. 02/20** 5:00 pm † Charles & Audrey Farrell
- Sun. 02/21** 8:30 am S.I. Margaret & Ron Herzig
11:15 am † Anthony Apollo

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

- Monday:** Jas 1:1-11; Mk 8:11-13
- Tuesday:** Jas 1:12-18; Mk 8:14-21
- Wednesday:** Jl 2:12-18; 2 Cor 5:20-6:2; Mt 6:1-6, 16-18
- Thursday:** Dt 30:15-20; Lk 9:22-25
- Friday:** Is 58:1-9a; Mt 9:14-15
- Saturday:** Is 58:9b-14; Lk 5:27-32
- Sunday:** Dt 26:4-10; Ps 91; Rom 10:8-13; Lk 4:1-13

TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading — Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings; blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD (Jeremiah 17:5-8).

Psalm — Blessed are they who hope in the Lord (Psalm 1).

Second Reading — Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:12,16-20).


Gospel — Blessed are you who are poor, hungry, weeping. Woe to you who are rich, filled, laughing (Luke 6:17, 20-26).

CHURCH CALENDAR



- Sat. 02/13** **Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
St. Catherine's Black Bag Collection
5:00 pm Mass
- Sun. 02/14** *St. Catherine's Black Bag Collection*
8:30 am Mass
11:15 am Mass
12:30 pm *Super Seniors Meeting*
3:00 pm Indonesian Mass
Followed by Lunar New Year Celebration
- Mon. 02/15** 9:00 am Mass
- Tue. 02/16** 9:00 am Mass
7:00 pm *KC Meeting*
- Wed. 02/17** **Ash Wednesday**
Diocesan Social Ministries Collection
12:15 pm Mass
6:00 pm *CCE Classes*
7:00 pm Mass
- Thu. 02/18** 12:15 pm Mass
- Fri. 02/19** 12:15 pm Mass
7:00 pm *Stations of the Cross*
7:30 pm *Lenten Charity Supper*
- Sat. 02/20** **First Sunday of Lent**
Black and Indian Missions Collection
5:00 pm Mass
- Sun. 02/21** *Black and Indian Missions Collection*
8:30 am Mass
11:15 am Mass

ASH WEDNESDAY MASS
12:15 PM & 7:00 PM



LENT WEEKDAY MASS
MONDAY THRU FRIDAY
12:15 PM