



From the desk of *Father Rich Yanos*

Today we begin the First Sunday of Lent.

Our first reading from the book of Genesis takes place after the story of Noah and the great flood. The Israelite people of long ago saw the rainbow as a symbol of a Warrior-God hanging up his hunting bow as a peaceful gesture. The rainbow symbolizes the solemn promise that God makes to Noah.

Our second reading from I Peter reminds us that just as Noah was saved through the ark, we are saved through baptism. Early Christians believed that those who died before the coming of Jesus awaited redemption in a shadowy existence described here as a prison. When we say in the Apostles' Creed that Jesus "descended into hell," we are saying that Jesus went to announce to those waiting in that "prison" that they had been saved.

2024 Annual Catholic Appeal

Together at the table

Our parish is conducting our campaign for the Annual Catholic Appeal. Please remember that the Annual Catholic Appeal is much different than a one-time special collection. It is a pledge campaign where you can make a gift payable in installments. The new Annual Catholic Appeal theme, "Together at the table," is an important theme as we prayerfully consider our support for the Appeal but also important for embracing the life that the Lord wants us to live. Each pledge makes a difference! All parish communities participate in the campaign and the gifts of many enable our parishes, schools, and ministries to deliver needed services. Thank you for your prayerful consideration and generous response. To make your gift, you can complete the mail-in giving envelope available here at church or make a gift online at annualcatholicappeal.com.

We have entered the holy season of Lent this past Wednesday, and it offers us an opportunity to reclaim basic elements of our discipleship. It is, for example, a time to embrace once again the call to conversion, to change our lives and attach ourselves more deeply to the Lord. As we hear in today's gospel: "Repent and believe in the gospel." Lent is also a time to enter more deeply into the Lord's Paschal Mystery of his death and resurrection that culminates in our celebration of the Sacred Triduum. Lent is, finally, a time to take up the holy disciplines of prayer, fasting, and works of charity.

St. Mark's short account of Jesus' temptations and how he moved through them to embrace his heavenly Father's will becomes a template or model for our own lives. As we move through our own struggles and challenges, we do so with a confidence that the Lord is with us and that, as we heard in the gospel, angels minister to us. We are not alone. We are together with the Lord and with each other on the journey.

We make this Lenten journey together, as, indeed, we make our whole life's journey in the company of one another. We support each other in our needs—with our prayer, compassion, and resources. Last Sunday, for example, we began the Annual Catholic Appeal that helps those in need, individuals, and communities. If you did not have a chance to make a commitment then, you can do so today by dropping your filled out pledge envelope in the collection basket. These pledge envelopes can be found in your pew today.

The theme of the Annual Appeal but also a refrain of the national Eucharistic Revival is together at the table. In a short time, we will be together at the table, the Lord's altar of sacrifice and share in his Eucharist. As we gather there, we are mindful of the gift of this holy season of renewal and our responsibility to support and care for one another on our holy journey.

This past week, with the observance of Ash Wednesday, we began the Season of Lent. In many ways this 40-day period of time which the Church sets aside is intended to be used for our personal and collective spiritual preparation for Easter. As Jesus went to the desert to find peace and solitude, he prayed for the strength to carry out His Father's will in the days that would follow. May these days that lie ahead for us be an opportunity for our renewal and penance as well. May the Lenten activities we partake in help us in our efforts to seek forgiveness in our lives where we need it most. May the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving also assist us in reconciling ourselves with God, our Church and with all those who make up the body of Christ. I encourage everyone in our parish to do all that you can to make this Lenten Season and upcoming Holy Week, the means by which your faith is strengthened and renewed.

So often I hear people say that Lent is a somber and sad time. I suppose there is some truth to the sadness we feel as we walk with our Lord to His impending death upon the cross. Let us not forget, though, that the cross was not the end. It was the means by which Jesus died for the sake of the world's human sinfulness, but which also culminated in his rising from the dead, so that we might be able to share in the eternal glory and everlasting life Christ won for us.

Lent teaches us that there is joy even in our darkest moments. So, decide on your own plan for the upcoming Lenten Season that will help you to develop a more joyful approach to Lent. Perhaps you might start by being willing to admit your own sinfulness and the need for a change of heart in your life. In the process, fill your life with love God's love for all those you meet. If you can achieve this on your Lenten journey, it will indeed be a more joyful and meaningful 40 days.

Some important news that effects all our parishioners... Although it has been over a year that our three parishes united under the new name of Queen of Peace, it was not until this past November that we were able to merge our three data bases. This meant that every parishioner now has a new envelope number. Our bank has asked us to remind our parishioners that all checks should now be made out to our new parish name: Queen of Peace. No longer should you be making checks out to St. Eugene, Our Lady, Mother of the Church or Divine Savior as very shortly our financial institution will not be accepting them. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

I want to let you all know that there is a special parish event coming up! Save the following dates on your calendar. Our parish will be having a Mission that will begin at all the Masses on the weekend of April 27 – 28 with our Mission presenter, Augustinian priest, Fr. Tom McCarthy, speaking at all the masses that weekend. He will be inviting us all to come together for three nights, April 28th, 29th and 30th at 7:00 p.m. at Our Lady Mother of the Church. You won't want to miss this opportunity for spiritual renewal. You will be hearing more about the Mission in the weeks ahead.

Wishing you all a wonderful week ahead!

Fr. Rich Yanos

