

From the PASTOR'S DESK



Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving

The word Lent comes from the Old English word for spring. Lent calls us out of the winter of our sins. We confront our weaknesses, frailties, and anxieties. We are given forty days to concentrate on making changes and substituting “good works” for habits of carelessness or selfish behaviors. Through the traditional practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, God leads us to newness and freedom.

The first “good work” of Lent is prayer. Prayer is an action of the will. In Lent, we try to pray more often and more attentively. While distractions may plague us, we achieve success in the act of trying. Lenten focus on prayer raises our minds and hearts to God more deliberately and less routinely than usual. Because of Lenten opportunities, prayer can become a sign of the universality and oneness of the Church, as we unite in Stations of the Cross, Holy Hour, and other parish devotions.

The second “good work” is depriving ourselves of some physical comfort. For more than 2,000 years, fasting and abstinence have been recommended as a way to self-knowledge. In giving up something good, I fill that place with an awareness of God’s presence. I come to see myself as I am and can strengthen my intentions to amend what is necessary. Fasting is an exercise in submitting physical desires to reason and reason to will. In fasting and abstinence, I learn to control myself and appreciate my dependence on God.

The third “good work” is almsgiving. Almsgiving is the act of giving to those in need. Almsgiving has become the easiest Lenten practice. We click and donate to a worthy cause online. One drawback is that we don’t experience a meaningful personal connection. May I make a suggestion? I would like to recommend our parish as a recipient of your almsgiving. This past week, all parishioners received a concerning letter from me and the Finance Committee. The decline in weekly collections, and most staggering, the Christmas collection, is a great unease. Our parish needs financial help. We have proposed a modest increase in your weekly donation and would greatly appreciate any additional contribution you can make this Easter.

Lent calls us to newness and freedom through good works that enhance self-knowledge. As a faith community, we are facing some fiscal challenges. Please help us eliminate these distractions from our Easter feast.

Together, God will enable us to meet the challenges of today and the promise of tomorrow.

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Pastor



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