



CORNERSTONE

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Lenten Journeys

From Giving Something Up To Taking Something On

“What are you giving up for Lent?”

That was the question that went around the playground when I was a kid attending Catholic school. When I was twelve, I gave up watching “Dallas” on television. Instead of spending that hour on Friday nights sitting in the living room with Mom and Gram in front of the TV, I spent it on my own with my own thoughts.

I didn’t have any brilliant epiphanies or moments of deep spiritual realization, I just sat with my sentiments, ideas, and hopes. As a 12 year old, I didn’t recognize it as prayer. I was developing my personal relationship with God on

those Friday nights instead of pondering “Who shot JR?” Slowly that went beyond Friday nights and continued beyond Lent.

A few years later, my sophomore Old Testament teacher challenged us to add to our Lent experience. “Don’t just give something up, take something on,” she said, and that really stuck with me.

As a youth and young adult I volunteered for all kinds of projects and gave my time to serve. I volunteered at our church nursery, taught Sunday School to four year olds, and taught CCD to seventh graders. I also spent my Fridays after school at Mercy Hospital as a candy striper delivering meds to nursing stations, wheeling discharge patients to the front doors, and interacting with pediatric patients in the clinic

waiting area. Service became a part of who I am.

Now as an adult and a mom I relish in the many opportunities for service at St. Tim’s. I can give my time and efforts to my community and my daughter the importance of Catholic Social Teaching.

Every Lent at St. Tim’s I recall the words of my high school teacher from years ago and take on coordinating STOP (St. Tim’s Overseas Projects). Several years back Robbie Raaen introduced me to the social justice committee and I learned about the STOP effort that began over 40 years ago. It truly touched my heart. I knew I wanted to get involved, so Maryann Cloutier and Eva Griep taught me about STOP proposals. To be eligible for STOP, it must be in a developing nation

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connected with a U.S. non-profit organization. The project needs to encourage improvement, foster continued success, and provide long term change. It goes beyond Maimonides' saying "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Rooted in our commitment to human dignity and the principle of subsidiarity in Catholic Social Teaching, STOP provides the funding to empower under-resourced individuals and communities to make the change they want for themselves. Each year the social justice committee selects a few of these projects and invites parishioners to direct their Lent almsgiving to help make a difference in those communities to show our global solidarity.



2017 STOP grant recipients in Nepal



Our St. Tim's parish family is very generous in our Lenten collection for these projects. Over the years we have contributed over \$180,000. That generosity amazes me. Our community in Blaine makes a lasting positive impact on communities across the globe. I am so very proud to be a member of this parish family at St. Tim's. At St. Tim's I encourage others, especially our youth, to not only give something up, but take something on during Lent. I hope I've made my sophomore teacher proud and more importantly I hope I've set a good example for my daughter.

- Kate Shea

A Word From the Editor

I think of Lent each year as a time of spiritual spring cleaning. The thoughtful and varied reflections in these pages invite consideration of this Lenten spring cleaning that is both inward and outward. During these forty days we look deeply inward at the places in our hearts where we are not fully free, where a word of forgiveness needs to be received or given, where wounds need to be healed, where griefs and anxieties need to be brought in God's merciful presence.

And yet this Lenten spring cleaning is simultaneously a time to look outward at the needs of others—from our own family, friends, and neighbors to people on the other side of the globe. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving challenge us to be in solidarity with the majority of the world who daily face injustice, poverty, and violence of some kind. Lenten spring cleaning is about something much bigger than just our individual sacrifices of candy or TV. Lent connects with our common home, and all we share that home with, reminding us that all are our sisters and brothers, made in God's image.

Pope Francis has said that we are not saved alone but together. We share this inward and outward spiritual spring cleaning together when we gather for liturgy, when we fast in solidarity with those who experience hunger, when we give of our resources to support the flourishing of all creation, trusting in the renewing and purifying power of the Holy Spirit active in the human heart.

- Rhonda Miska, Communications Director

Waiting On The Lord With A Strengthened Heart

I recall Lent as a child living above our family grocery store. As a child, I gave up sweets - namely candy. That was tough to do because right downstairs was an array of candy that was unwrapped and easy to grab. There were peanut butter cups, malted milk balls, sticks of colored licorice, just to name a few. My family and I had to help customers select the candy they were buying, so our hands were tempted as we worked in the store. The only saving grace was that Sundays were considered free from Lenten sacrifices.

My mind moves from childhood to past Lenten seasons at St. Tim's. I recall the years that there were parish mission opportunities with meaningful speakers. I remember preparing a candidate for initiation into the Church as a sponsor in the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) program. Having a role as a sponsor during those years helped deepen my practicing of my faith as I helped someone else deepen their faith.

I have memories of special Holy Week services through the years with beautiful liturgies starting with Palm Sunday and leading up to Easter Sunday. Highlights always were the palm braiding that has become tradition for my husband Greg, the living stations of the cross presented by our parish youth, and the light of the Easter Vigil Mass.

I recall with sadness missing those precious Lenten and Holy Week liturgies and traditions last year due to Covid and my deep sadness at missing Ash Wednesday and all the Lenten services. Our connection to St. Tim's was through services viewed on my computer.

There was such comfort in being able to receive the Eucharist in the parking lot on Sunday mornings during those long months. Finally on the Fourth Sunday of Easter last year, we were able to walk back into St. Tim's for Mass in person. What great joy!

I approach Lent this year with a new perspective. In early January, I was told that I needed heart bypass surgery as soon as possible. I was scared. I needed to isolate due to a Covid diagnosis and then isolate some more as I awaited surgery. During that time attending Mass in person wasn't possible and I missed that deeply, though I kept in touch through the live-streaming. I was prayed for by our two parish prayer lines. In addition, I had been anointed by Father Joe, so I believed that I truly was in God's hands.

I now have a repaired heart, thanks to surgeons who have been gifted by God with knowledge and skill. I've been able to return to in person Mass and I look forward to this Lent and singing Psalm 51: "Create in me a clean heart, O God!"

Physically, I have a heart that now is repaired. Spiritually, I feel so much more open to Lent as a time to search for and receive God's grace. As it says in Psalm 27, "I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord... And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!"

So, as a member of St. Tim's, I journey with a strengthened heart and I wait on the Lord to continue my life journey with me.

- Kathy Piche



Remembering the Parish Mission I Couldn't Remember

Our Church of St. Timothy Lenten mission speakers over the years have all had something in common: passion and a higher level of spiritual awareness than most people. However, there is one speaker that has a particular impact on my faith journey.

I served on the parish staff in adult education for sixteen years. The last mission I planned was with Father Albert Haase, OFM in 2014. I was so excited to meet him.

Unfortunately, I developed a spinal fluid leak which meant I could no longer do simple things or remember much of what I did or said. I fervently prayed that I would meet Father Albert and would remember meeting him. I had been so impressed from seeing his website and videos of his preaching. God gave me what I prayed for. I remember entering the back of the church and a Franciscan came zipping down the center aisle. He said, "You must be Diane!" He made me smile as he introduced himself. Given the spinal fluid leak, I had no other mission memories.

Later, when I listened to the recorded talks from that mission, everything seemed to be directed right to me. What really struck me was the story Father Albert told of the king who abdicated his throne to seek and marry the maiden who had captured his heart. Even though she had been blind from birth, the king knew he wanted to marry her.

Upon finding her, the king asked the maiden two questions. "Do you think you could trust me enough to let me lead you through your darkness into tomorrow? And more importantly, do you think you could

come to love me enough to give me the greatest gift possible, the gift of your heart?"

Jesus asks all of us these questions. I needed Jesus to lead me through my darkness of the spinal leak. Father Albert opened my heart to seek a much higher spiritual awareness than ever before. I am aware of receiving many healings from past difficulties, as well as blessings, insights, miracles since this mission. The growth I experienced from the mission talks was enhanced by meeting with Father Chuck Brambilla regularly for spiritual direction.

Even though I am not able to remember that parish mission, each Lent I listen to Father Albert's recorded talks and continue to be challenged and changed.

What are the truths I have learned through this mission? Jesus wants our trust and our love in the storms of life. God will always give us everything we need. We may not get everything we think we need, but we will always get what God knows we need. We must keep our eyes and minds open to receive the gifts God gives and always to be grateful.

I know that Jesus asks me those two questions and invites me to trust in moments of darkness and to give Him my heart, and I daily seek to respond. I now pray to see with God's eyes, to hear with God's ears and to respond with God's heart.

- Diane Vonderharr



Father Albert Haase, OFM



A Lenten Lesson From Loss

Lent seemed a cold and dreary time when I was young. The weather in Northern Wisconsin was bad with gray skies and snow “as high an elephant’s eye.”

I remember my family gathering around the woodstove in our old farm house. We would all kneel down and say the rosary after dinner during Lent. My mother was raised Lutheran and seemed to make lots of mistakes with the prayers. This caused us kids to giggle uncontrollably, and Dad gave us the disapproving “stink eye.”

While the floor was hard and the prayers were monotonous, I remember the spirit of the season and the love and closeness of my family. In addition to the rosary, my parents also encouraged us kids to give up something for Lent. For me it was chocolate or some other favorite candy. We could hardly wait until Sunday, the day of reprieve, when we could “pig out.”

I continued this Lenten practice well into my late 20s. I considered it a good time to lose a few pounds or give up something that was bad for my health. This all changed when my uncle Anker died.

Uncle Anker - “Ank,” as he was called - was a tall wavy-haired bachelor with a third-grade education who worked on a farm his entire life. In his early 80s he came to stay with my grandmother whose house was next door to ours.

Like a lot of men of his generation, Ank went to town every Friday night to buy groceries and socialize in a local tavern. He had few friends and never dated a woman in his life to my knowledge. It was generally thought that this was because of

a peculiar malady which left him with a high, squeaky voice. Because of this condition, he hardly ever talked.

As time went on, he became more frail and had a tendency to fall down, which frequently happened after his Friday night tavern stop. My mother got increasingly worried and placed him in a nearby nursing home.

By this time, I was married and living in the Twin Cities. My wife’s folks lived on a farm near my hometown. Most weekends we traveled between these two families with our young kids, returning exhausted to the Twin Cities on Sunday evening.

We never seemed to have time to visit anyone else, and Uncle Ank was no exception because the nursing home was nine miles east of my hometown, and not on my route back to the Twin Cities.

It came as no surprise when we got the call that Ank had died. He was well into his 80s with declining health. He had no church affiliation, so a Sister who was a family friend led the prayer at the funeral home.

When the simple ceremony was completed, we went through his meager effects, most of which could fit in a shoebox. I remember a pipe, a comb, a cheap pocket watch and a dusty old billfold. The billfold was filled with newspaper clippings of my life. It had my birth announcement, my first communion, confirmation, graduations, marriage, and references to my children.

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Parishioner in the Spotlight: Elizabeth Swanson



If you have attended St. Tim's annual presentation of the living stations of the cross on Good Friday, you have experienced Elizabeth Swanson's sharing of her creative gifts in the costumes.

"Living stations is a tradition," Elizabeth said, "and a moving reflection of Jesus' last hours. Each year it is a Lenten journey for our youth. We start the beginning of Lent with practices and they're hearing these reflections. Good Friday's performance is a culmination of their hard work and commitment."

For Elizabeth, the most poignant moment of the living stations every year is "when they put Jesus on the cross and it's silent in church and you hear those three hammer bangs echoing. It makes you think of what Jesus went through for us."

This parish tradition, now in its twentieth year, was introduced by Fr George Kolath.

"He brought living stations to us in 2002 by inviting teens from his previous parish to present. Everyone was taken with it because it is so moving, and our youth wanted to do it. Maria Amundson, the youth minister at this time, got the script and some props. I said 'I can do the costumes,' since I like to sew," Elizabeth recalled. "I had fun going to fabric stores and finding discounted fabric, and going on the computer and looked through books to find costume ideas" for Jesus, the Roman soldiers, and others.

Making costumes for living stations is just one way that Elizabeth has shared her gifts in her more than forty years at the Church of St. Timothy. Elizabeth has also assisted with Early Christian Family Life, religious education, and confirmation preparation. Along with her children, she clowned at the annual parish carnival.

"My two oldest children participated in the very first Vacation Bible School. My four kids were in VBS, and now my grandkids are in it. I enjoy it so much," she said.

Elizabeth credits her mother's commitment to volunteering as well as her firm belief that God has given each of us gifts to share, as the inspiration for her service.

A line from Paul's letter to the Romans has guided Elizabeth through life: "We, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them."

This truth has influenced the way Elizabeth invests her time and talent, the way she raised her children, and the way she approaches Lent.

"God has given us all a talent, at least one thing, to help one another...Lent is a time to make a positive change in yourself and do something to serve others. What one thing can you do that, for these forty days, can make a difference in your own or someone else's life?"

Memories of Lent at St. Tim's

I've participated in both the stations of the cross and the Knights of Columbus fish fry dinners. Both have become an essential part of my Lenten journey.

Participating in the stations of the cross has allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of Jesus' journey to the cross. It has greatly strengthened my faith by making me realize how big of a sacrifice Jesus made for us. I think the Stations of the Cross reenactment is a wonderful opportunity for us youth at St. Tim's to expand our knowledge and faith in a very simple way. Living stations is very educational and spiritually powerful but in a way that is easy for young people to understand and be engaged with; whether they are watching or participating.

The fish fries have also strengthened my faith journey. They provide the opportunity to follow the fasting guidelines of Lent with a delicious meal that does not contain meat. It also opens the door for fasting. Personally, I fast all day Friday until the fish fry Friday night. Along with following Lenten guidelines, the fish fry has offered me the opportunity to connect with the St. Tim's community. Sitting at a large table and standing in line has allowed me to meet new people that I would not have had the opportunity to connect with otherwise.

- Kayla McLellan



Palm Sunday, 2018



Youth living stations, 2018



Youth living stations, 2019



Youth living stations, 2021



Fr Joe Whalen at a Knights of Columbus Friday fish fry

A Work in Progress

Although my family of six didn't eat many sweets, it seemed like the right thing to give up for Lent. After all, that's what my classmates at St. Mary's in Laurel, Maryland did. As the older sister, and built-in babysitter, I also thought I should give my three brothers a break and not be so tough on them during the Lenten season. Not to mention no eating between meals, no meat Fridays, and family Stations of the Cross. If I did slip up, I thought I had committed a mortal sin and off I went to confession. As a child, forty days seemed like an eternity!

Year after year and a few tweaks here and there, I continued the practice of "giving up" and I added fasting to my Lenten journey. After much reflection and soul searching, I came to the realization that this practice was rather self-serving as I looked at it as a path to also lose weight. Well, what kind of sacrifice was that?

Then came the revelation. Instead of giving something up, how about spending more time in prayer and reflection? This was definitely more spiritually enriching, but I still felt like something (or Someone) was missing.

While on a Lenten retreat, I realized I was trying too hard to create the perfect Lenten experience. God was asking me to show up, be present, be sincere and listen with the ear of my heart.

Over time I began to develop a closer, more meaningful relationship with my Creator. I made more time for quiet prayer; participated in Lenten faith sharing groups, attended retreats, read more, and embraced my childhood tradition of Stations of the Cross, the somber reflection on the passion and death of Jesus that reminds me of what Lent is all about.

My journey is still a work in progress. I still slip up. I get distracted and I put God at the bottom of my to-do list. Now I don't beat myself up; I come before Jesus and "lay down my burdens" knowing I am always loved, forgiven, and welcomed home.

- Carolyn Breitbach

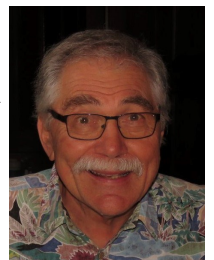


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As I examined the box's contents, my eyes filled with tears. I realized that I was the only family he had. Not once had I stopped to see him in the last two years of his life.

It was a week after Easter, and it was at that moment that I resolved to visit family and friends instead of giving up something up for Lent. And I have done this every year since his death in 1965. Because of Uncle Anker, Lent has gone from a dreary winter season of giving up candy and required rosary recitation to an annual reminder to invest time in my most cherished relationships. Since retiring in 2000, I use my free time to visit people, especially those who are confined to their homes, throughout the entire year as a St. Tim's Befriender.

- Gary Buhr



Pork Chops On A Lenten Friday

I hold dear the Catholic practices of prayer, fasting /abstinence, and almsgiving. Outside of Lent though, scheduling or being aware of these disciplines is off my radar screen at times.

A decade ago, my mom, Gert, agreed to have a party to co-celebrate her 80th birthday and her sister Betty Parker's 90th birthday. The party was scheduled on the Saturday between their birthdates at a Butte, Montana hotel banquet hall. All my many cousins were invited.

We knew that many would be arriving in Butte on Friday, so decided to have a pre-party gathering that evening. I had previously purchased a dinner from Pork Chop John's advertised as "Feed Your Family" at the Butte Central High School's fundraiser auction. I wanted to cash in the "Feed Your Family" auction item at the Friday pre-party gathering. Since I knew that many cousins would attend, I offered the caveat that I would pay for the amount not covered by the auction donation.

Now this isn't any ordinary sandwich shop. It was

founded in 1924 by the original Pork Chop John, John Burklund, who sold his pork chop sandwiches from the back of a wagon located on the corner of Mercury and Main Street in Uptown Butte. Burklund moved his business into 8 W. Mercury Street in 1932, where it is today, and was purchased by John Orizotti in 1969. It was recently featured on the Food Network's "The Best Thing I Ever Ate."



As a lover of this sandwich, I try to eat an average of one each day that I am home in Butte.

When I called Ed Orizotti, the owner of Pork Chops John's, he agreed to bring pork chop sandwiches and salads and keep them coming until everyone was filled at our Friday pre-party gathering. We anticipated over fifty

immediate family attendees, and eventually ate a hundred pork tenderloin sandwiches!

But wait— what about abstinence during Lent? When sending the invitations out, we described the Friday evening gathering. I then received an email from my cousin Terri Sinn in Washington State wondering if we should serve meat on a Friday during Lent.

Yikes! I then sent a letter to Bishop Leo Thomas of the Helena Diocese stating our dilemma. He wrote back a beautiful letter absolving us from the Church's requirement to abstain from meat on *that* Lenten Friday. He wrote, "170 years of good Catholic living by Betty and Gert should be rewarded."

Did it help that Bishop Thomas graduated from Butte Central High School? We'll never know.

- Tim Downey, Jr.



For your reflection

Kate Shea's high school teachers invited students to "take something on" which helped to encourage Kate in her journey of service. How might God be calling you to "take something on" and to serve others this Lenten season?

Kathy Piche reflected on how her recent heart surgery impacts the way she thinks about Lent and the prayer for God to create in us clean hearts. How has an experience of a physical health challenge impacted you spiritually?

Carolyn Breitbach wrote about how her practice of Lent has evolved through her life. How has your understanding and practice of Lenten disciplines changed over the years?

Kayla McLellan and Elizabeth Swanson spoke of their powerful experiences of being a part of the youth living stations. What has your experience of stations been—at St. Tim's or in other communities?

Diane recounted how she listens to mission talks by Fr Albert Haase and continues to be challenged. Is there a book, talk, or section of the Bible that you have returned to multiple times in your life, finding new levels of richness there?

Gary Buhr reflected on how the death of his uncle led to his commitment to prioritizing relationships during Lent. Is there a relationship in your life you are called to nurture and prioritize this Lent?

Tim Downey wrote of how a bishop made an exception to the fasting rule for the sake of a family celebration. When is it right to "break the rules" for a larger purpose? Have you experienced this in your own life?

Elizabeth Swanson's belief that each of us is given talents by God to serve others has led to her sharing her gifts of sewing, clowning, teaching, and more. What is a talent of yours God is inviting you to develop this Lent to better serve others?

CORNERSTONE

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Editor Emeritus: Tim Downey

Church of St. Timothy mission: We are a progressive, welcoming Catholic community that values full participation in worship and community service. We commit to being a peace-loving, Eucharistic community providing integrated faith formation and applying gospel values to daily living.

"You are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone." (Ephesians 2:20)



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