

From the Deacon's Desk

February, 2017

Seems like Christmas was such a long time ago, doesn't it? This unusually long stretch of eight weeks in Ordinary Time put more distance than usual between major Church seasons. Now it seems suddenly we're looking in the face of Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. Lent will begin on March 1 this year. The beginning of another opportunity for us to work on our relationship to God and each other. I say "another" because Lent has come and gone before. Like New Year's resolutions, we make our Lenten resolutions with the best of intentions and sincerity. Unfortunately, human nature intervenes and we usually come to Easter morning a bit short of the lofty goals we set for ourselves at the start of the season.

I'm reminded of an old prayer: "So far today, God, I've done all right. I haven't gossiped, I haven't lost my temper. I haven't been grumpy, nasty or selfish. I'm really glad of that. But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed; and from then on, I'm probably going to need a lot of help."

For most of us, Ash Wednesday is like sitting on the side of our bed in the morning. The whole day is full of opportunity. We're rested and upbeat. Our guilt is gone and we feel good about ourselves. But like the poor supplicant in the prayer, we haven't put our feet on the floor. We may have not failed at anything yet, but we haven't done anything either.

By the second week of Lent, many of us are already reeling from the list of uncompleted improvements we had hoped to make in our lives. We feel like we've failed again for another year and we still have weeks to go before Easter. No matter how hard we try, we just can't seem to become the better person we thought we were on March 1.

In that one little thought of despair lays the problem for most of us. "We" just can't seem to do any better. "We" think it is all about our own efforts. "We" have to do all the work. The task of improving ourselves is left to us alone – a solitary mission. But that's where we get it wrong. We miss one of the most important elements in the Lenten season – God.

The person who prayed the prayer I mentioned earlier knew where his or her real strength lay. It was easy to be good while you were in bed. The real challenges are outside the bedroom. The real test of endurance begins when you come down for breakfast or head off to work. And the only true help, the only SURE help comes from God. Lent begins and "from then on, I'm probably going to need a lot of help."

This year as we approach Lent, we should do so with a new attitude. We should come with hearts acknowledging the need for God in our lives. We should be more aware of our own inability to accomplish anything on our own. Likewise we then become more aware of just how much we can accomplish with God's help. Regardless of how strong our desire is to become better people, unless we ask God for His help, the goal cannot be achieved. The second part that is just as necessary is, once we ask God for help, we have to let God help us.

So many times we want God to drive when we've gotten in the ditch. But once we're back on the road, we're ready to take the wheel back again. Let God do the driving all the time. That's the best insurance for staying out of the ditch in the first place.

So this Lent, let's approach the season with enthusiasm and a new resolve. Let's remember this old prayer and include God in our plans for preparing for the Easter celebration. We can admit we are going to need a lot of help and we can be sure we'll get it.

Upcoming Events

Stations of the Cross – Each Friday during Lent at Sacred Heart church. Stations begin at 6:30 PM. In addition, we will have guest speakers following the Stations on the following evenings:

March 3	Steve Leugers	Benefits of Eucharistic Adoration
March 10	Fr. Anthony	Reconciliation
March 31	Fr. Alex Zenthoefer	The Eucharist

Westside Ecumenical Lenten Services – We will again be participating with other westside churches in the Ecumenical Services. Please see the flyer at the end of this note for times, locations and topics. Everyone is invited.

First Friday Adoration – We have Eucharistic Adoration on the first Friday of each month at Sacred Heart church. Adoration begins immediately following the 8:00 AM Mass and concludes with Benediction at 5:00 PM. Please stop in anytime during the day for an opportunity to pray before the Blessed Sacrament.

Ash Wednesday – Ash Wednesday is March 1 this year. Masses will be 8:00 AM at Sacred Heart; 10:00 AM at St. Agnes; 12:10 PM at St. Boniface and 6:30 PM at St. Boniface.

Some “Did You Know” Items

Parish Commissions – Our Parish Commissions meet on the first Thursday of the month. Meetings begin in St. Agnes church and then each Commission breaks out for their own meeting. We then come back together for a wrap up session before concluding. The meeting time has changed. Commissions now meet at 6:00 PM. This is a half hour earlier than in the past. Next Commission Night is March 2. Everyone is welcome to attend.

SCRIP – A lot of people must have found out how easy it is to do your Christmas shopping with SCRIP cards. The early reports are that December was a great month for selling SCRIP. This is such an easy way to support the parish and the school because it costs you NOTHING. For

groceries, gas, clothing or dining – almost anything you need, chances are we have a SCRIP card for you. Stop by after any of the Masses or visit the parish office to get your cards today.

Concluding Thoughts

This period of time we are in now is called Ordinary Time. While it may seem like filler to get us from Christmas to Lent, there really is nothing “ordinary” about it. These weeks are not ordinary because the culmination of each of these weeks is still Sunday. Sunday, the day we celebrate the Christ’s victory over death. The day we offer back to God thanksgiving for the gifts we have received. The day we directly connect our earthly selves with heaven through the Eucharist. Nope! Nothing ordinary about that.

God bless all of you!

Deacon Dave

**Westside Churches Observe The Crucifixion From A Character's Perspective
During Our Wednesday Evening Lenten Services**

PERSONAL THOUGHTS WITH A TWIST:



March 8

West Side Christian Church –Co host Dove Chapel

“Judas Iscariot” John 13:21-27

Randall Lander

March 15

Grace Church of the Nazarene

“Peter” Luke 22:31-35, 55-62

Kenny Palmer

March 22

Howell United Methodist Church

“Two Thieves” Matthew 27:38

Tyrone Edwards

March 29

Forest Hills Baptist Church

“John the Apostle and the Roman Soldiers”

Mark 15:39 and John 19:25-27

Dave Seibert and Brett Doninger

April 5

St Agnes Catholic Church

“Jesus” Romans 12:5

Gary Brunson

EVERYONE IS INVITED

6:00 PM SOUP, SALAD, SANDWICH

7:00 PM PRAYER SERVICE

A VOLUNTARY OFFERING WILL BE TAKEN EACH EVENING.

DONATIONS WILL BE GIVEN TO A DESIGNATED LOCAL CHARITY.