



REMEMBER AND BE TRANSFORMED

Did you know that our word “Lent” comes from the Old-English word for “springtime?” This gives us a wonderful insight into what the days between Ash Wednesday and Holy Thursday are all about: a season when faith and the virtues of the Christian life grow and flower within our hearts and souls. But, as Ash Wednesday approaches each year, one of the first questions we Catholics ask is, “What should I give up for Lent?” And it’s a fair question because, as we know, penance is *a part* of Lent.

So, how do you or your family and friends answer this question? Do you give up social media? Television? Chocolate, or another favorite food? Soft drinks, coffee, or alcohol? While it’s true that taking a break from any of those can be good for us, we also have to ask ourselves if these sacrifices are really helping us to grow in our lives as Christians. Lent isn’t only about doing penance. We have to think of other opportunities for “good works” during the Lenten Season.

The traditional works of prayer, almsgiving, and fasting help us focus our attention on what is most important in life. If we can think of our Lenten penance as a “good work” to be taken on and shift our focus away from what we “give up,” we will find that our Lenten prayer and devotions will be richer and more fruitful. As Henri Nouwen has reminded us: “Lent is a time of returning to God... a time of refocusing, of re-entering the place of truth, of reclaiming our true identity.”

But, there’s more at stake because, as we reflect on all of this, we have to remember that Lent isn’t an end in itself. *The purpose of the season of Lent is to help us prepare for Easter when we will renew our baptismal commitment.*

In the first centuries after Jesus, those individuals who wanted to become Christians spent months and even years preparing for Baptism, which almost always took place in a special ceremony on the night before Easter. That night was anticipated by a time of prayer and fasting so that the soon-to-be Christians would be as ready as they could be to receive the gifts of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. This is the origin of Lent. (Our contemporary process of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) is built around this model of initiation.) Those Christians who were already baptized would also pray and fast as they prepared to renew their own commitment to Christ by renewing their baptismal promises on Easter Sunday.

If we keep the themes of Baptism and discipleship in mind as we consider the value of fasting and sacrifice, we quickly realize that fasting isn’t about just giving up something we enjoy. After all, there isn’t any real spiritual value in giving up chocolate or soft drinks. The point of fasting is that we give up something that we enjoy to help us pay better attention to our deeper hungers and desires.

Each one of us lives with needs—physical needs and the need for love, security, and community—that we often bury or try to hide by filling our lives with “stuff” and relationships that can never really make us happy or give us peace. And so, Lenten fasting means that we set aside those things with which we self-medicate so that we can be free to recognize what our real hungers and desires are—including our desire for God.

Only God can truly satisfy the deepest desires and needs of our hearts.

These ideas of baptismal renewal and our deepest hungers are at the heart of our readings on this 3rd Sunday of Lent. As we hear the story of the woman at the well, we are being invited to remember our own Baptism and to think about how our lives have been—and are being—transformed by the Living Water of Jesus. Our prayer, fasting, and works of charity and mercy should be helping us become more aware of how the grace of Baptism is at work within us.

In the end, every Easter Sunday we are given an opportunity to renew the promises of our Baptism. This means rededicating ourselves to live as Christians in the world, and to continuing the mission of Jesus, especially for the poor and those in need. The 40 days of Lent are a time for us to get back to the basics of who we are as followers of Jesus.

Br. Silas Henderson, SDS

St Mary’s
Parish

Serving
the
Community

Serving
the
Family

Serving
the
City

COVID19 INFORMATION

This situation is developing very quickly. St. Mary's will be strictly following all Government regulations as well as advice issued by the Archdiocese of Dublin during this very difficult time.

At this point it would appear that this includes the suspension of some or all masses. In this situation the parish will have to rely increasingly on our online services and our newsletter, which will continue to appear on our website where you can also find our Church Services TV streaming. In any circumstances Masses will continue to be broadcast from this service. Please see our website for updates

We have received the following Covid 19 Helpline numbers:

ALONE COVID-19 Helpline

ALONE has launched a national support line and additional supports for older people who have concerns or are facing difficulties relating to the outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in Ireland. Professional staff will be available to answer queries and give advice and reassurance where necessary. The support line will be open Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm, by calling 0818 222 024, and hours may be extended to meet the demand.

SeniorLine

SeniorLine has been the national, confidential listening service for older people, run by trained older volunteers since 1998. This peer-to-peer helpline for older people receives in excess of 10,000 calls per year.

The corona virus is a particular threat to older people and subsequently SeniorLine has put in place a number of protocols to support our many older callers from all over Ireland. Any caller, concerned about Covid 19, will receive the most up to date guidance as recommended by Government sources. Good health practice is reinforced at all times. This information is updated daily as the situation changes and is available to each of our volunteers at the phones.

SeniorLine is a FREEPHONE service and our older callers can call free between 10am and 10pm every day of the year on 1800804591

For the statement of the Irish Bishops' Conference see <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2020/03/11/irish-catholic-bishops-conference-statement-on-liturgical-considerations-in-the-context-of-covid-19-coronavirus/>

Prayer for our protection

We ask for prayers for those affected by the Coronavirus. Placing all our trust in the Lord, and asking Our Lady to intercede for us, we invite everyone to pray these prayers:

Extract from Saint Patrick's Breastplate

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer. Amen.

In Memoriam

Masses on 21st /22nd March 2020
Sunday 5pm: Angela Phelan (Anniversary)

Masses and Confession

Sundays: Vigil, 6pm (Saturday), 9.30am, 11am, 5pm
Croatian Community Mass 6.30pm
Messe en français 12.30 (2^e et 4^e dimanche du mois)
Daily masses 10am and 12.40pm, Saturday 10am only
-Rosary daily after 10am mass
Confession: Tuesdays 12.00-13.30

Adoration Blessed Sacrament, Weds 10.30-12.40

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

1st Collection: €965

Share Collection: €735

Weekday collections: €475

THANK YOU