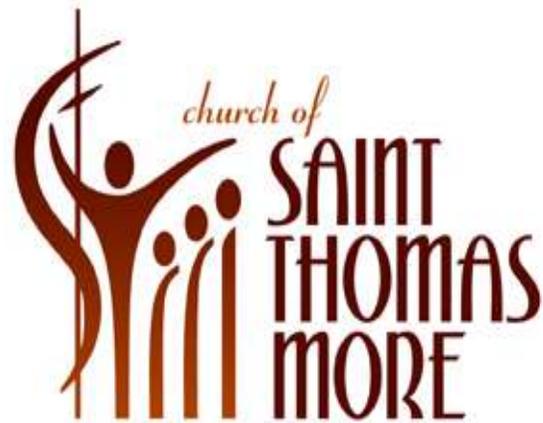


Lent – Spirituality

On Ash Wednesday, we enter the season of Lent. The Church sets these 40 days aside to prepare for the celebration of the Easter Triduum, the apex of the liturgical year. As you receive the ashes on your head, what goes through your mind?

Do you take the approach of “giving something up” for Lent, only to return to the practice once Lent ends? Or maybe you decided to really let the readings & your participation in the liturgy help bring about *metanoia*, a real change in your life?



In the early church, the only sins one needed to confess were apostasy, adultery & murder. Because those sins (“the big three”) caused a rupture within the structure of the community, the sinner needed to be reconciled not only with God, but also with the community.

Through the centuries our understanding of sin has changed & along with that, our understanding of forgiveness. We are not perfect, so the Church sets this time aside each year for us to look at our relationships. It’s a time to remind us to pay attention to our words, actions, beliefs or attitudes. Even though most of us will not commit the “big three”, our smaller sins can still be disruptive to our families, our community & our relationship with God.

Lent is a time to ask ourselves whether we are living the values of the gospel & our Catholic faith. If not, we may need to make some changes in our lives. This is, to use the words of St. Paul in our Ash Wednesday reading, “a very acceptable time.” (2 Cor 6: 2)

The Church knows we need help to change, so in the readings for Ash Wednesday we are given three actions for the season of Lent: prayer, fasting & almsgiving (acts of charity). For your prayer, try to spend a little more conscious time with God each day, or attend a special prayer event during Lent. Fasting doesn’t have to be from food & drink, it could be from an activity that takes you away from your family. Almsgiving or acts of charity can be something big like a Habitat for Humanity build or just being more conscience of how we interact with co-workers, family members or strangers on the street.

Whatever you decide to do for Lent, may it bring you closer to God. May this season prepare you to enter fully into the Easter Triduum, when we celebrate Jesus’ journey from death to new life. May you find a new practice that will be life giving as you continue your own journey from death to new life.

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