



Dear Parishioners,
As we have begun the Season of Lent, here are the reflections of Pope Francis on the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting (penance/sacrifices), and almsgiving (works of charity), from his Ash Wednesday homily:

The first element is the prayer. Prayer is the strength of the Christian and of every believing person. In the weakness and fragility of our life, we can turn to God with the confidence of children and enter into communion with Him. In the face of so many wounds that hurt us and that could harden the heart, we are called to dive into the sea of prayer, which is the sea of God's boundless love, to enjoy its tenderness. Lent is a time of prayer, a more intense, more diligent prayer, [one] more able to take care of the needs of the brethren, to intercede before God for the many situations of poverty and suffering.

The second element of the Lenten journey is fasting. We must be careful not to make a formal fasting, or one that in truth "satisfies" us because it makes us feel as though we have all in order. Fasting makes sense if it really affects our security, and also if a benefit to others comes from it, if it helps us to grow in the spirit of the Good Samaritan, who bends down to his brother in need and takes care of him. Fasting involves choosing a sober life, which does not waste, which does not "discard". Fasting helps us to train the heart to essentiality and sharing. It is a sign of awareness and responsibility in the face of injustices, abuses, especially towards the poor and the little ones, and is a sign of our trust in God and His providence.

The third element is almsgiving: it is a sign of gratuity because alms are given

to someone from whom you would not expect to receive anything in return. Gratuity should be one of the characteristics of a Christian, who, aware of having received everything from God freely, that is without any merit, learns to give to others freely. Today often gratuity is not part of everyday life, where everything is bought and sold. Everything is calculation and measurement. Almsgiving helps us to live the gratuitousness of the gift, which is freedom from the obsession with possessing things, [freedom from] the fear of losing what one has, from the sadness of those who do not want to share their well-being with others.

I hope that these thoughts of our Holy Father will help us to focus on the authentic spirit of Lent.

On another note, I want to thank the Knights of Columbus for providing the first pasta supper as a fundraiser for our new Religious Education Center. The Knights presented a check for \$1456 to the parish this week. Also, thank you to the members of our Lady's Guild for providing the desserts for the dinner. Finally thank you to all who came to the dinner for your support, especially for coming out on such a frigid evening.

Have a grace-filled and blessed week.
God bless you,
Fr. Gutowski

Mass  *for the*
Intentions *Week*

MAR. 10 THRU MAR. 16

Monday	Priest's Intention
Tuesday	Priest's Intention
Wednesday 8 a.m.	Priest's Intention
6 p.m.	Priest's Intention
Thursday	Priest's Intention
Friday	Ida McNulty
Saturday	Con Kwapnoski
Sunday	People of St. Joseph