

Saint Teresa of Avila Catholic Church

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 2

Lent/Easter Newsletter

Lent 2014

Lent is a special time of prayer, penance, sacrifice and good works in preparation of the celebration of Easter. In the desire to renew the liturgical practices of the Church, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of Vatican Council II stated, "The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent - the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance - should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepares the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God's word more frequently and devote more time to prayer" (no. 109). The word *Lent* itself is derived from the Anglo-Saxon words *lencten*, meaning "Spring," and *lenctentid*, which literally means not only "Springtide" but also was the word for "March," the month in which the majority of Lent falls.

Since the earliest times of the Church, there is evidence of some kind of Lenten preparation for Easter. The 40 days of Lent became regularized after the legalization of Christianity in 313 A.D. The Council of Nicea (325), in its disciplinary laws, noted that two provincial synods should be held each year, "one before the 40 days of Lent." St. Athanasius (d. 373) in his "Festal Letters" implored his congregation to make a 40 day fast prior to the more intense fasting of Holy Week. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386) in his *Catechetical Lectures*, which are the paradigm for our current RCIA programs, had 18 pre-baptismal in-

structions given to the catechumens during Lent. St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) in his series of "Festal Letters" also noted the practices and duration of Lent, emphasizing the 40 day period of fasting. Finally, Pope St. Leo (d. 461) preached that the faithful must "fulfill with their fasts the Apostolic institution of the 40 days," again noting the apostolic origins of Lent. One can safely conclude that by the end of the fourth century, the 40 day period of Easter preparation known as Lent existed, and that prayer and fasting constituted its primary spiritual exercises.

Of course, the number "40" has always had special spiritual significance regarding preparation. On Mount Sinai, preparing to receive the Ten Commandments, "Moses stayed there with the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights, without eating any food or drinking any water" (Ex 34:28). Elijah walked "40 days and 40 nights" to the mountain of the Lord, Mount Horeb (1 Kgs 19:8). Most importantly, Jesus fasted and prayed for "40 days and 40 nights" in the desert before He began His public ministry (Mt 4:2).

Once the 40 days of Lent were established, the next development concerned how much fasting was to be done. In Jerusalem, for instance, people fasted for 40 days, Monday through Friday, but not on Saturday or Sunday, thereby making Lent last for eight weeks. In Rome and in the West, people fasted for six weeks, Monday through Saturday, thereby making Lent last for six weeks. Eventually, the practice prevailed of fasting for six days a week over the course of six weeks, and Ash Wednesday was instituted to bring the number of fast days before Easter to 40.

However, the rules of fasting varied. Some areas of the Church abstained from all forms of meat and animal products, while others made exceptions for food like fish. Over time, these initial Lenten fasting rules evolved. Eventually, a smaller meal was allowed during the day to keep up one's strength from manual labor. Eating fish was allowed, and later eating meat was also allowed through the week except on Ash Wednesday and Friday. Dispensations were given for eating dairy products if a pious work was performed, and eventually this rule was relaxed totally.

Over the years, modifications have been made to the Lenten observances, making our practices not only simple but also easy. Ash Wednesday still marks the beginning of Lent, which lasts for 40 days, not including Sundays. The present fasting and abstinence laws are very simple: On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the faithful fast (having only one full meal a day and smaller snacks to keep up one's strength) and abstain from meat; on the other Fridays of Lent, the faithful abstain from meat.

The Church, during Lent, has always placed an emphasis on performing spiritual works, such as attending the Stations of the Cross, attending Mass, making a weekly holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament, taking time for personal prayer and spiritual reading, and most especially making a good confession and receiving sacramental absolution. Although the practices may have evolved over the centuries, the focus remains the same: to repent of sin, to renew our faith, and to prepare to celebrate joyfully the mysteries of our salvation.

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*God withholds
Himself from no
one who perseveres.*

The Rev. Edward J. Smith

The Tradition of Blessing Easter Food

In many Eastern European countries, it is a tradition to have a basket of food blessed on Holy Saturday or Easter Sunday. In Poland the blessing of the baskets is a practice dating to the 15th century or earlier, and one which is still maintained by most families in Poland on Holy Saturday. The food items in the Easter basket have special significance. A typical basket would include symbolic foods like these:

Bacon - Symbol of the abundance of God's mercy.

Bread - The staff of life given by God.

Easter Bread - A round loaf of rich, eggy, yeast dough with raisins reminiscent of the risen Lord.

Butter - Dairy products are included to celebrate the end of Lent and the richness of our salvation. Butter is often shaped into a lamb (symbolic of the Paschal Lamb)

Candle - The candle symbolizes Jesus, the Light of the World, and can be lit during the blessing by the priest.

Cheese - Cheese is a symbol to remind Christians of moderation.

Colored Eggs - Both colored and uncolored hard-cooked eggs indicate hope, new life and Christ rising from his tomb.

Ham - Meats are symbolic of great joy and abundance in celebration of Christ's Resurrection.

Sausage - The sausage links are symbolic of the chains of death that were broken when Jesus rose from the dead as well as of God's generosity.

Horseradish - This is a reminder of the bitterness and harshness of the Passion of Jesus and the vinegar it is mixed with symbolizes the sour wine given to Jesus on the cross.



Stations of the Cross and Adoration on Wednesdays

In order to avoid conflict with the Fish Fry, Stations of the Cross will be on Wednesdays this year.

Wednesdays during Lent from March 12—April 9:

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from

7:00-7:30 p.m. and

Stations of the Cross

at 7:30 p.m.



Regular Wednesday Adoration is from 8:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.



Fish Fry Fridays—Beginning March 7, 2014

"We have been recognized as the best around!"

Patrons of our fish fry come from near and far because we use only the best quality ingredients, we have dedicated workers and generous donations of fantastic pastry and pop. We are the only fish fry that offers a drive-thru service!

We offer Lake Erie yellow perch, baked tilapia, and shrimp in full and half size meals, Chef Chris' famous

New England clam chowder, homemade cabbage and noodles, macaroni and cheese, pierogi, parsley potatoes, French fries, coleslaw, and pizza. All dinners come with your choice of dessert and either pop, coffee, or tea. We have been recognized as the best around!



Our parish fish fry is a successful fundraiser because of generous volunteers and donations. Last year we served 4,839 dinners with 3,435 of those dining in. With this in mind we used 420 pounds of shrimp, 1,660 pounds of Lake Erie perch, 1,290 pounds of fries, and 3,456 pierogi. This enabled us to make \$35,000.00. Our goal is to make this year's even more successful than last year's and we need your help! There are many ways your talents and time can benefit this wonderful fundraiser.

Here's how you can help! Advertise by word of mouth and display fish fry signs beginning March 1st. We also need a few people to take fliers and display them at local businesses and places of work.

Donate Desserts! One (of many) distinctive components of our fish fry is that we include desserts with every meal. Our patrons rave

about how delicious they are! Through your efforts we can offer quite a variety of homemade desserts. Some nights we serve over 800!

Can you help us on Thursdays and/or Fridays during Lent? We need you! Come join the fish fry group, have fun, and make new friends all while benefiting our parish. We need people to prep on Thursday and Friday, and bus tables and serve food on Friday.

Clean up is on Fridays from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Donate pop! Pop and bakery donations are taken on Thursdays and Fridays in the PLC.

Please join us. If you have questions call the church office.

A planning meeting will be held on Monday, March 3rd at 7 p.m.

Living Stations of the Cross

While praying the stations, you will witness each one come to life in dramatic fashion and feel like you are there, as we explore the thoughts of those who walked with Christ.

This is a powerful performance, for the entire family, that you won't want to miss!

Presented by:

Elyria Catholic High School Students

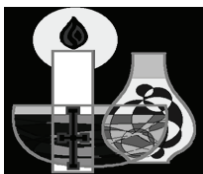
This production is now in its 17th year and is made up of a cast of 18 dedicated high school students. Each year this group travels all over the Diocese of Cleveland and has performed at dozens of parishes, where they have been very well received.

**"WERE YOU
THERE WHEN
THEY CRUCIFIED
MY LORD?"**

St. Teresa of Avila Church
Sunday, March 16th at 7:00 p.m.



April 17, 2014
Mass of the Lord's
Supper
7:00 p.m.



April 19, 2014
Blessing of Easter Food
Noon
Easter Vigil
9:00 p.m.



April 18, 2014
Celebration of the
Lord's Passion
Noon
Stations of the Cross
3:00 p.m.



April 20, 2014
Easter Masses
9:00 a.m.
11:00 a.m.



If there is any week for us to make time to practice and celebrate our faith, it is most definitely this week. Make the liturgies of this week a part of your experience of Easter. At the Mass of the Lord's Supper, on Holy Thursday, we will remember that first Eucharist and our commission to serve our brothers and sisters. On Good Friday, we will celebrate The Lord's Passion with a service at Noon. Also, at 3:00 pm on Good Friday, we will pray the Stations of the Cross, as we remember our Lord's sacrifice for our sins. Finally, our Easter celebration will reach its highest point on Holy Saturday at 9:00 pm, as the Church celebrates her most important liturgy: The Easter Vigil. Easter Sunday Masses will follow our normal schedule at 9:00 am and 11:00 am.

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Up Coming Parish Events!

Religious Formation

PSR: Tuesdays from 6–7:15 p.m.

RCIA: Sundays from 10:15–11:30 a.m.

Confirmation: Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Schedules are in the bulletin, on our Parish website or call the office.

Children's Mass

March 16 at 11:00 a.m.

Food Pantry Donations

Donations taken 1st Weekend/month

March 1/2 and April 5/6

Non Perishable Food Items Please

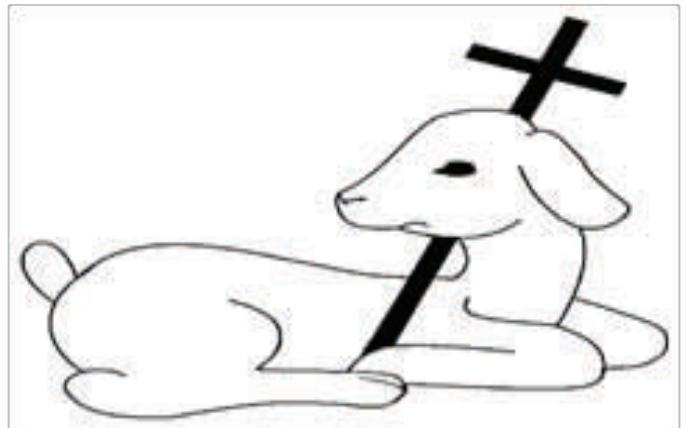
Eucharistic Adoration

Wednesdays from 8:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Please consider spending one hour of the most blessed "quality time" you will ever have! Call the office if interested.

The Edge–Youth Ministry

See bulletin/website for updates



For monthly Parish Committee meeting dates, visit our website at www.stteresaparish.com or watch the bulletin for current dates/times.

Volunteer at Food Pantry

3rd Saturday/month 9:30 am–1 pm
March 15 and April 19

Parish Life Center is for Rent

For information visit our website or call our office at 440-934-4227.