

Saint Teresa of Avila Catholic Church

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 1

Lent/Easter 2015
Newsletter

Evangelizing During Lent by Fr. Edward Smith

The liturgical season of Lent has, once again, come upon us. For many Catholics, Lent is not their favorite Church experience. It is a time focused on prayer, self-denial, and self-discipline. A season of “giving things up” as an expression of our spiritually “making room” for God in our lives. All that being said, one very positive aspect of the season is the wonderful opportunity it affords us for evangelization. This is probably something most Catholics have not considered. The fact of the matter is non-Catholics are often interested in our customs and practices. Lent is an opportunity to engage many of our Non-Catholic family members, coworkers, and friends, in discussions about what we believe, and why we believe it. The following Lenten topics for evangelization are provided by The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

What’s with that dirt on your head?

Who hasn’t gotten that question on Ash Wednesday before? Do you feel silly when people ask you about your ashes? And is it hard to answer their questions? Having ashes on your forehead isn’t just some weird Catholic thing; it’s a tradition that

finds its roots in the Old Testament. “I turned to the Lord God, to seek help, in prayer and petition, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes” (Daniel 9:3). When the ashes are placed on our foreheads in the sign of the Cross, it is a reminder of several things. First, it is a call to repentance: a physical sign that we are sinners in need of forgiveness, which is how the prophets used it in the Old Testament. Second, it is to remind us that God created us from the earth and when we die, we will return to it. But here’s the best part: As Pope Benedict XVI has said, “Man is dust and to dust he shall return, but dust is precious in God’s eyes because God created man, destining him to immortality.” God so loves us that, even when our bodies return to the dust, our souls are meant to live forever with him. The ashes symbolize all of this. Not so silly anymore, is it?

Abstinence: So why aren’t you eating pepperoni pizza on Friday?

You love pepperoni pizza. You eat it all the time. Suddenly, you can’t have it on Fridays?! What could possibly be going on? It must be that Catholic thing, again. Absolutely! On Fridays dur-

ing Lent, we particularly remember the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. In memory of this great sacrifice, we continue the tradition of penance and sacrifice – abstaining from meat on Fridays is an outward manifestation of an interior reality: the conversion of our hearts. As Pope John Paul II has said, “In fact, the external aspects of fasting, though important, do not convey the full measure of the practice. Joined to the practice should be a sincere desire for inner purification, readiness to obey the divine will and thoughtful solidarity with our brothers and sisters, especially the very poor.” Christ himself fasted and prayed in the desert. Through fasting and praying, we unite ourselves with the sacrifice of Christ and offer him reparation for our sins and failings. It’s a little thing to give him in the face of his ultimate sacrifice, but what a grace that our God accepts and loves little gifts!

External Sacrifice: So why exactly are you not eating candy for the next month?

This is a very popular penance during Lent, and the questions about it are just as popular. Heaven forbid you should avoid the cake at the birthday party! You LOVE cake! But it’s Lent – a time for penance and sacrifice.

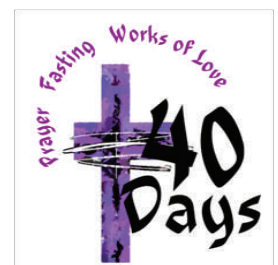
Continued Page 2

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|---|
| Increased Giving Campaign | 2 |
| Evangelizing (cont’d) | 2 |
| New Flag Flying in Front of St. Teresa | 3 |
| Holy Week | 3 |
| The Sacrament of Reconciliation | 3 |
| Upcoming Parish Events | 4 |



*God withholds
Himself from no
one who perseveres.*



Parish Finance Council: Increased Giving Campaign—by Lou Varos

St. Teresa's Parish Finance Council includes: Lou Varos, Ed Niemiec, Bill Brock, Lee Belardo, and Dan Gillotti.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the parishioners of St. Teresa Parish for their positive response to the campaign to increase the Sunday offertory contributions. During our campaign we asked for a five to ten dollar increase per week per family. You responded with great generosity by doing even more.

Here are some of the facts of the campaign: of the 386 families currently registered in the parish, 158 families are

actively using their contribution envelopes. Of the 158 active users, 97 families responded with an average combined increase of \$1,195.00 per week.

- 158 out of 386 registered parishioners use their contribution envelopes
- Average weekly increase of \$1,195.00
- 123 families responded with an increase to their weekly giving

We asked, and at least 123 families responded positively. *We pray that your family will continue to contribute your*

pledge amounts for the sake of the parish.

For those parishioners who were unable to respond positively, we ask you to please take a few minutes and re-assess what being a part of St. Teresa of Avila Parish is worth to you in both spiritual and practical ways.

On behalf of your Parish Finance Council, may God bless all of the parishioners of St. Teresa of Avila Parish.



Evangelizing During Lent (cont'd)

Christ has said, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Giving up something we enjoy strengthens our love for Christ and our resilience against temptation. As Pope Benedict XVI said in his Lenten address of 2009, "Through fasting and praying, we allow [Christ] to come and satisfy the deepest hunger that we experience in the depths of our being: the hunger and thirst for God." It unites us with Christ's own sacrifices and gives us a deeper appreciation of the blessings in our lives.

External Sacrifice vs. Internal Conversion: I don't get it — All you do is give up candy?

Now, here is an interesting question. External sacrifices are the most obvious kind, so sometimes it does look like all we do is avoid chocolate. However, if you look closer, you'll realize that fasting and abstinence have always gone hand in hand with two of their best friends: prayer and almsgiving. External sacrifice is a manifestation of interior conversion: "...interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance" (CCC no. 1430). Interior conversion is where prayer and almsgiving come into play. In almsgiving, we show mercy and generosity to others, giving them a chance to experience the blessings we have. In prayer, we are communicating with God, asking him to bless and perfect our fasting and almsgiving: "... prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit" (CCC no. 2565). It's not just avoiding sweets. It's glorifying God by growing in

his Love.

Palm Sunday and Symbolism: Why are you carrying around tree branches?

Sometimes, one of the hardest things to explain as a Catholic is our attachment to symbolism. Palm Sunday is a great example of that. We come home from Mass holding palm branches, and we tuck them behind a crucifix or next to the picture of the Last Supper. To anyone who does not know our faith, it looks as though we stuck a few weeds on the wall... imagine their questions! The truth behind this tradition, however, goes to the story of Palm Sunday, when the people heard that Christ was coming and "they took out palm branches and went out to meet him, and cried out 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, [even] the king of Israel.'" (John 12:13). It was a tradition to spread palms be-

fore a king as he processed into his city. It was a way to welcome him, to show him glory and homage. Thus, Christ, the true King, was welcomed into Jerusalem. This fulfilled the prophecy in the Old Testament, which declared, "Behold: your king is coming to you, a just savior is he, humble and riding on a donkey." (Zech. 9:9) It revealed that Christ was a great king, but also a humble king. The people greeted him with wild joy and cheers of Hosanna. But one short week later, they crucified him. We celebrate this feast and carry palm branches home with us to commemorate the great humility of Our Lord, who loved us so much that he chose the cross for our salvation.

The Rev. Edward J. Smith

New Flag Flying in Front of St. Teresa Church

The flag, which was installed during the summer of 2014, is the Vatican City or Papal States flag. The design has gone through many changes through the years, but since 1929 has consisted of two vertical bands, one of gold or yellow (hoist side) and one of white. Centered in the white band is the Vatican City coat of arms consisting of the crossed keys of Saint Peter and the Papal Tiara. The keys symbolize the keys to Heaven given to St. Peter (Matthew 16:19). The gold key represents spiritual power and the silver worldly power. This flag is flown in Roman Catholic churches throughout the world, often alongside the national flag.



Holy Thursday, April 2

Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday, April 3

The Lord's Passion at Noon

Stations of the Cross at 3:00 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 4

Easter Vigil at 8:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 5

Mass at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

St. Teresa's Fish Fry

The Fish Fry will begin Friday, February 20 and continue every Friday during Lent including Good Friday.

Dinner will be served from 4:30—7:00 p.m.

Volunteer help is always needed and appreciated!

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ represented by the priest in the confessional. The penitent admits to God that he or she has sinned, makes an act of contrition, accepts a penance, and resolves to do better in the future. The Church precept that the faithful must confess at least once a year is a reminder to receive the sacrament on a regular basis. However, if no grave (mortal) sin has been committed in that time, confession is not necessary as the reception of the Eucharist forgives all venial sins.

“Be merciful to me, O God, according to your great mercy. And, according to the plentitude of your compassion, wipe out my iniquity.” Psalm 51:3

Confession Times During Lent

- Every Saturday from 3:30—4 p.m.
- Wednesdays, March 4 & April 1 from 6—7 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 11, 7 p.m. at Parish Mission

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Up Coming Parish Events!

**Adult Study Program—
"Angels & Demons"**

Mondays: Feb. 2—March 16 at 7 p.m.

Wednesdays During Lent

Eucharistic Adoration 7-7:30 p.m.

Stations of the Cross 7:30 p.m.

(Except Wed, March 11 & Wed of Holy Week)

Bible Study

Thursdays, Feb 19 & March 5 & 19

Extra Confession Times

March 4 & April 1 from 6–7 p.m.

March 11 at Parish Mission

Parish Mission

March 10 & 11 at 7 p.m.

Parish Life Center

Fish Fry

Fridays, Feb 20—April 3, 4:30–7 p.m.



Holy Week

Mass of the Lord's Supper, Thursday, April 2 at 7:00 p.m.

The Lord's Passion, Friday, April 3, Noon

Stations of the Cross, Friday, April 3 at 3 p.m.

Food Blessing, Saturday, April 4 at Noon

Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 4 at 8:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday Mass, April 5:

9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Religious Formation

PSR: Tuesdays from 6–7:15 p.m.

RCIA: Sundays from 10:15–11:30 a.m.

Confirmation: Sundays 9–11 a.m. at St. Thomas Church/School

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

Eucharistic Adoration

Wednesdays from 8:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

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