

LENTEN INSPIRATIONS



Pope Francis' Guide to Lent: What You Should Give Up This Year

By Christopher J. Hale

No need to throw out the chocolate, booze, and carbs. Pope Francis has a different idea for fasting this year.

Christians around the world mark the beginning of Lent with the celebration of Ash Wednesday. This ancient day and season has a surprising modern appeal. Priests and pastors often tell you that outside of Christmas, more people show up to church on Ash Wednesday than any other day of the year—including Easter. But this mystique isn't reserved for Christians alone. The customs that surround the season have a quality to them that transcend religion.

Perhaps most notable is the act of fasting. While Catholics fast on Ash Wednesday and on Fridays during the Lenten season, many people—religious or not—take up this increasingly popular discipline during the year.

But Pope Francis has asked us to reconsider the heart of this activity this Lenten season. According to Francis, fasting must never become superficial. He often quotes the early Christian mystic John Chrysostom who said: "No act of virtue can be great if it is not followed by advantage for others. So, no matter how much time you spend fasting, no matter how much you sleep on a hard floor and eat ashes and sigh continually, if you do no good to others, you do nothing great."

But this isn't to downplay the role of sacrifice during the Lenten season. Lent is a good time for penance and self-denial. But once again, Francis reminds us that these activities must truly enrich others: "I distrust a charity that costs nothing and does not hurt."

So, if we're going to fast from anything this Lent, Francis suggests that even more than candy or alcohol, we fast from indifference towards others.

In his annual Lenten message, the pope writes, "Indifference to our neighbor and to God also represents a real temptation for us Christians. Each year during Lent we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience."

Describing this phenomenon he calls the *globalization of indifference*, Francis writes that "whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades." He continues that, "We end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility and not our own."

But when we fast from this indifference, we can begin to feast on love. In fact, Lent is the perfect time to learn how to love again. Jesus—the great protagonist of this holy season—certainly showed us the way. In him, God descends all the way down to bring everyone up. In his life and his ministry, no one is excluded. "What are you giving up for Lent?" It's a question a lot of people will get these next few days. If you want to change your body, perhaps alcohol and candy is the way to go. But if you want to change your heart, a harder fast is needed. This narrow road is gritty, but it isn't sterile. It will make room in ourselves to experience a love that can make us whole and set us free. Now that's something worth fasting for.

Time Magazine

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REDEMPTORISTS

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VANCOUVER
B.C. V6R3V9
ESTABLISHED 1923

MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday: 5pm
(Anticipated Mass)
Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm
Monday – Wednesday 8am
Thursday Mass/Novena:
8am & 7pm
Friday, Saturday, Holidays: 9am
(Fridays in July & August: 8am)
Reconciliation
Saturday: 4-4:45pm
Adoration
Saturday 9:30-10am
Library Hours
Sunday: 10-10:45am, 4:30-5pm

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm

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OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

February 14, 2016

1st Sunday of Lent

Dear Parishioners,

We had a wonderful turnout at our Ash Wednesday Masses this week. The school children were there to receive their ashes at the 9am Mass. It was a real joy to see them come forward with so much reverence. It always makes me smile when I see them comparing foreheads to see who got a better cross or who got the messiest smudge.

Just as the children are entering into the spirit of Lent in their own delightful ways, we the grown-ups must nurture their enthusiasm while feeding our own spirits. The Friday Evenings of Lent in this Year of Mercy is a great way to understand more deeply what the spirit of reconciliation and the goodness of God's mercy is all about. We have four excellent speakers – Dr Peter Meehan, Br. John Gale, Dimitri Nikolitsas and Maria J. Murcia sharing their insights on Pope Francis' book, *The Name of God Is Mercy*. There is an opportunity for group discussion at the end of it.

Another opportunity for renewal and contemplation is the Parish Mission which is happening March 13-16. St Alphonsus, the founder of the Redemptorists, wanted his companions to be itinerant preachers of God's Word. The first people they evangelized were the poor and abandoned peasants in the rural and mountainous areas around Naples in southern Italy in the 1700s. They were always known for their passion and zeal in evangelization.

That work is still carried out today in a variety of ways. One of them is the parish mission in which a Redemptorist visits a parish for 4-7 days or more offering a special series of talks usually with music, inviting the listeners to a deeper sense of the love of God and His redeeming love for us. This renewal of heart, mind and spirit is what I am hoping we can bring about in this parish through the mid-March mission. I know you have it marked in your calendar... at least I hope you have! Let us make a special effort to, not just be there, but also bring the whole family.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R.

Be with me Lord when I am in trouble - Psalm 90

NEWS & NOTICES

Family Mass: This is a special Mass led by children to be held once a month. The first one will be on Sunday Feb 21 at 9am. Families with young children are warmly invited to join us. Refreshments will be served after Mass. Donations of snacks would be appreciated! Please contact Heather Sage for more info. Email: hleachsage@gmail.com.

Encourage Meeting: There will be a meeting of Encourage on Sunday Feb 21, 2016 from 2 – 4pm in the Madonna Room at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 2465 Crown St. Encourage is a spiritual support group for family members or friends of persons with same-sex attraction.

All Welcome to CWL Talk: Barb Dowding is the Vice Chancellor of the Vancouver Archdiocese and our National President for the CWL. She will be talking to us about the work of the CWL and its significance to our faith and country at our CWL General Meeting on February 18, after the 7pm devotions. Everyone is welcome to attend. You do not have to be a CWL member.

CWL Members: Membership renewal for 2016 is due. Please place the \$30 fee with your name into an envelope marked "CWL" and drop it into the collection basket.

Lenten Prayer Series: The churches around our parish will gather for a series of Lenten Vigils at noon on Wednesdays for half an hour followed by soup and bread. during Lent. The next one is on Feb 17 at Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, 4000 W.11th Avenue. March 16 is our turn to host.

Spring Retreat: There is a Spring Retreat April 1-3, 2016 sponsored by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services at Westminster Abbey in Mission, BC. The Retreat Master is Fr. Bill Comerford C.Ss.R. and the Theme is "Mary, Mother of Merciful Love". For information and to register Call Lennie David at 604-597-8227.

2016 Envelope Boxes: The 2016 donation envelope boxes are now in the Parish office. If you have not picked yours up yet, please come by the office during the week Mon-Fri 9am-4pm. For the sake of accurate records and receipts, please do not use envelopes from previous years.

VC & LFA Joint Production: The two schools join forces to put on a comedic play called You Can't Take It With You. The show to be held at Kucher Centre, VC, runs Wed Feb 17-Sat Feb 20 at 7pm with a matinee on Sat. Tickets at \$18 available at <http://lfavc.brownpapertickets.com>.

ONE Conference 2016 - In the Father's Mercy: The Church's mission is to make disciples of us all and you're invited. Hear inspirational messages from world class speakers and visit local ministry exhibits. Saturday, March 5, from 9-5:30pm at the Vancouver Convention Centre. Tickets are \$45 and can be purchased online at rcav.org/one or at any parish.

FRIDAY EVENINGS OF LENT

Experience a transformation of the heart this Lent.

6pm: Adoration & Reconciliation

7pm: Stations of the Cross

7:30pm Talk/Group discussion based on Pope Francis' book *The Name of God is Mercy*. Reading the book is encouraged but not essential.

This coming Friday our guest speaker and discussion leader is Dr. Peter Meehan, Principal and Vice-Chancellor for Saint Mark's College and President of Corpus Christi College. See you on Friday!

POPE
FRANCIS

THE NAME
OF GOD
IS MERCY

Stewardship Reflection

"I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O Lord, have given to me." (Deuteronomy 26:10)

This line from the Old Testament offers two challenges. First, do you give to God from your "first fruits", the best that you have to offer, or do you give from what is leftover? Second, do you remember that everything you have has been given to you by God? Ask God for a grateful and generous heart, every day.

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St. Louis

JUBILEE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Rites of Election

Our RCIA inquirers and candidates will be taking an important step towards formalizing their entry into the Catholic faith. If all of them are ready, we will have six people receiving the sacraments of Baptism, Communion and Confirmation and another eight for Eucharist and Confirmation. We urge you all to keep them in your prayers.

Blessing of Marriages

Married couples will be blessed at all Masses this weekend for Valentine's Day.

Healing Mass & Potluck Supper

A healing Mass and the Anointing of the Sick will be held on Monday Feb 29 at 4pm. This will be followed by a potluck supper. Sign-up sheets are at the front of the church.

MARCH EVENTS

Parish Mission: In the Desert with Jesus

Mark your calendar for the Parish Mission starting on Sunday evening March 13-16 led by Fr. Eugene "Red" O'Reilly. Fr. Red was born in Ireland, came to Canada with his family and later joined the Redemptorists. He is known for his teaching on joy and compassion, his touching stories and his humour.

He is also known for his music which was developed mainly in support of his parish mission preaching work. Some of his pieces, such as *The Prodigal Son*, *Children of the Light* and *Woman of Mystery* are well-known and well-loved across the country and around the world.

Please pray for:
The souls of
Andrew Augustine Shaw
(Father of Andy Shaw)
Mary Moira Thompson

The LORD is near to all them that call on him, to all that call on him in truth.
Psalms 145:18

"What's That On Your Forehead?" Ash Wednesday and Lent explained on the school yard

Q: Hey, your forehead's dirty. What's that on your forehead?

A: Ashes... they're from church.

Q: Why did your church put dirt on your forehead?

A: It's not dirt; they're ashes. Ash Wednesday's the first day of Lent. Catholics wear ashes to show that we want to change to get ready for Easter.

Q: Are they supposed to be in a shape or something? Just looks like a smudge to me.

A: It's supposed to be in the shape of a cross – like the one that Jesus died on.

Q: So you think you're something special because you're wearing ashes on your forehead?

A: No, just the opposite. It shows that without God, this is all we are – ashes. It's a way of admitting how much we need God.

Q: So how're you gonna change... gonna become all holy on us?

A: Just trying to become what God wants me to be... a good person.

Q: I hear you guys give up stuff for Lent too. What for?

A: Giving up stuff – like snacks or watching TV or swearing – is kinda like exercise – it's hard work but it makes us stronger.

Q: So you can't have any fun for how long?

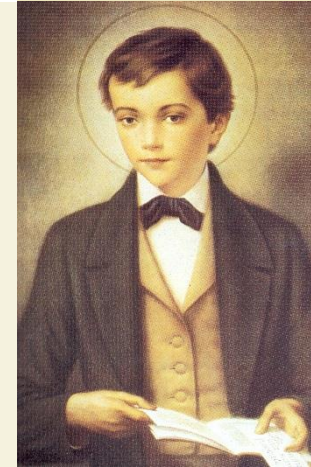
A: I can still have fun, I'm just gonna be doing some stuff a little differently for 40 days... that's how long until Easter.

Q: Then you can go back to being your old self?

A: No, that's the point, hopefully I'll be an even better version of myself!

Joe Paprocki's Catechist's Journey

Ash Wednesday School Mass



Students of OLPH School celebrated the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday with beautiful music and an inspirational message from Fr. Joseph Horo. He urged students to renew their hearts and stay away from sin just like the young Saint Dominic Savio who died at age 14 from illness. St. Dominic Savio was born in Italy in 1842. When he was just four, his mother found the little fellow in a corner praying with his hands joined and his head bowed. He already knew all his prayers by heart! At five, he was an altar boy. When he was seven, he received his First Holy Communion. On that solemn day, he declared his motto: "Death, but not sin!" and kept it always. He is the patron saint of choir boys and the falsely accused. His feast day falls on March 9. He is an inspiration for all young people.



Grade 7 students were present with their kindergarten buddies.



Mr. Venegas with students from Grade 5.