



A LENTEN CONNECTION TO YOUR BAPTISM ...AND THE “3 PILLARS OF LENT”

The key to understanding the meaning of Lent is simple: Baptism. Preparation for Baptism and for renewing baptismal commitment lies at the heart of the season. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has reemphasized the baptismal character of Lent, especially through the restoration of the Catechumenate and its Lenten rituals. Our challenge today is to renew our understanding of this important season of the Church year and to see how we can integrate our personal practices into this renewed perspective...

Lent as a 40-day season developed in the fourth century from three merging sources. The first was the ancient paschal fast that began as a two-day observance before Easter but was gradually lengthened to 40 days. The second was the catechumenate as a process of preparation for Baptism, including an intense period of preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation to be celebrated at Easter. The third was the Order of Penitents, which was modeled on the catechumenate and sought a second conversion for those who had fallen back into serious sin after Baptism. As the catechumens (candidates for Baptism) entered their final period of

preparation for Baptism, the penitents and the rest of the community accompanied them on their journey and prepared to renew their baptismal vows at Easter.



The three traditional pillars of Lenten observance are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The key to renewed appropriation of these practices is to see their link to baptismal renewal.

Prayer: More time given to prayer during Lent should draw us closer to the Lord. We might pray especially for the grace to live out our baptismal promises more fully. We might pray for the elect who will be baptized at Easter and support their conversion journey by our prayer. We might pray for all those who will celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation with us during Lent, that they will be truly renewed in their baptismal commitment.

Fasting: Fasting is one of the most ancient practices linked to Lent. In fact, the paschal fast predates Lent as we know it. The early Church fasted intensely for two days before the celebration of the Easter Vigil. This fast was later extended and became a 40-day period of fasting leading

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THE WAYS WE PRAY

Examining the “Why”, “When” and “How” of Prayer for Today’s Catholic

Results! We live in a society that wants to see results. This prevailing mindset can really get in the way when we approach the subject of prayer. If a person prays for a particular intention and the desired “event” does not take place, questions immediately arise: “Did I not pray correctly? Was my intention somehow flawed or selfish?” Or worse yet, “Does God not have concern for this need?” **Is prayer about affecting overt change, or is it something else?**

Prayer is actually very ancient; it predates Christianity and Judaism. Humankind has always had a deep desire to communicate with the Divine, though it is surely true that some of humanity’s earlier efforts have been a bit skewed.

There are many ways to pray, and all of them do have some positive effect. **In our Christian tradition, there are many valid forms of prayer, and most of us**

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Following are some charities that would benefit from your almsgiving of time or money:

Exodus Residence, a service of Catholic Charities, offers single-room occupancy housing in downtown Minneapolis for low-income single men and women with diagnosed mental illness and/or chemical dependency. There is intensive case management, empowerment & support groups. Call 612-332-0815 to learn more.

The Guild of Catholic Women in W. St. Paul is a philanthropic and educational organization dedicated to raising awareness of mental health issues in children, teens, and adults while enhancing the social and spiritual lives of its members. Guild Incorporated volunteers make it possible for individuals coping with mental illness to experience community life more fully and to enjoy new social connections. To volunteer your time, or for more information, call (651) 450-2217 or visit www.guildofcatholicwomen.org.

Foundation Fior Di Loto India is a tax-free foundation helping Indian girls who do not have a chance to get any education in the village of Pushkar in north-west India. In addition, they are dedicated to improving the quality of life in this impoverished community. Newsletter committee member Melanie Otto is very involved with this charity—for more information, call Melanie at (763) 416-4846 or visit their web site at: www.foundationfiordilotoindiainc.com

For additional ideas of charitable organizations to support, visit the Archdiocesan web site at:

www.archspm.org

ASK FATHER

Fr. Jack or Fr. Tom Answer Parishioner's Questions



Q. Are Sundays considered a part of Lent? How does that affect our penance for Lent?

A. Lent is typically understood as being forty days long. It represents Jesus' 40 days in the desert where he is tempted by the devil, as we too are sent out into the desert to overcome temptations to strengthen our relationship with God. However, we do not perform acts of penance, self-denial, or abstinence on Sundays, because they are considered celebrations of the Resurrection. They are mini-Easters. Every Sunday is a celebration of Christ's Resurrection from the dead. Fridays are the days normally set aside for penance and abstinence.

At the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., it was proclaimed that there should be no penances performed on Sunday. It is "The Day of the Lord" and should be treated as the Sabbath. It is a day of rest and relaxation in imitation of the seventh day when the Lord rested after creating the world and everything in it. Penance, self-denial, and abstinence are very important practices coming to us through our Catholic Tradition. They are a form of fasting which is one of the three pillars of the Gospel message (Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving).

Submit Your Question!

If you have a question for Fr. Jack or Fr. Tom, mail it to: **The St. Vincent Voice Editor** at the church, or e-mail it to: editor@saintvdp.org. Please title it, "Ask Father."

THE THREE PILLARS OF LENT

(continued from page 1)

up to Easter. Vatican II called us to renew the observance of the ancient paschal fast: "...let the paschal fast be kept sacred. Let it be celebrated everywhere on Good Friday and, where possible, prolonged throughout Holy Saturday, so that the joys of the Sunday of the Resurrection may be attained with uplifted and clear mind" (Liturgy, # 110).

Fasting is more than a means of developing self-control. It is often an aid to prayer, as the pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God. The first reading on the Friday after Ash Wednesday points out another important dimension of fasting. **The prophet Isaiah insists that fasting without changing our behavior is not pleasing to God.** "This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own" (Is 58:6-7).

Fasting should be linked to our concern for those who are forced to fast by their poverty... those who are in need for any reason. Thus fasting, too, is linked to living

out our baptismal promises. By our Baptism, we are charged with the responsibility of showing Christ's love to the world, especially to those in need. Fasting can help us realize the suffering that so many people in our world experience every day, and it should lead us to greater efforts to alleviate that suffering.

Abstaining from meat traditionally also linked us to the poor, who could seldom afford meat for their meals. It can do the same today if we remember the purpose of abstinence and embrace it as a spiritual link to those whose diets are sparse and simple. That should be the goal we set for ourselves—a sparse and simple meal. Avoiding meat while eating lobster misses the whole point!

Almsgiving: It should be obvious at this point that almsgiving, the third traditional pillar, is linked to our baptismal commitment in the same way. It is a sign of our care for those in need and an expression of our gratitude for all that God has given to us. Works of charity and the promotion of justice are integral elements of the Christian way of life we began when we were baptized.

— Excerpted from www.catholic.org article, "FAQ's About Lent"

THE WAYS WE PRAY

(continued from page 1)

already engage in several of them without realizing that we are "praying". First and foremost is liturgical prayer, the official prayer of the Church. The sacrifice of the Mass and any of the rituals that surround the celebrations of the sacraments, as well as the daily recitation of the Liturgy of Hours, all comprise Liturgical prayer. Each Catholic needs to participate in Liturgical prayer (particularly Eucharist) faithfully. This prayer is the summit of our worship as a people redeemed by the life and death of Jesus.

Besides the formal prayers of liturgy, many people are comfortable with other forms of communal prayer. The rosary is often prayed in a group setting; the Way of the Cross is prayed communally. Both of these are used as private prayer forms also. These are vocal prayers; prayers which use a preset vocabulary and even though they may be prayed silently, still use words—someone else's words.

The interesting thing about prayer is that one form leads to another and then leads back to itself. In order to fully participate in communal prayer, a person really does need to develop a personal prayer life. Each person should develop a comfort level with the divine by going inward and praying in a personal manner—with his or her own words. Moreover, these words



should be words of love and thanksgiving and praise, not just words of petition. I heartily recommend going to the Book of Psalms for some heartfelt examples of those types of personal prayer. Read a psalm, then put the book down and let your heart fill up with more of the same.

There is such a thing as prayer without words: **contemplative prayer**. There are many books written about this discipline. I suggest you read one, to learn the basics, and then try contemplative prayer for yourself. (One does not learn to pray by reading about prayer; one learns to pray by praying.) If you are worried about distraction, remember the words of Meister Eckhart, a 14th century mystic, "If the only prayer you say in your entire life is 'Thank you', that is enough."

It is the Spirit who gives us the gift of praying without words. Prayer has been defined as the raising of the mind and heart to God. A good definition—so long as we remember Who is doing the raising.

Does prayer have "results"? O yes, we will be greatly changed if we are faithful prayers. We will discern God's will, we will learn to live with compassion, we will be at peace and when we die, we will know the Person we are facing.

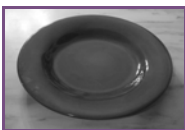
— Sr. Nora Klewicki, Staff Member

FAMILY CORNER

The Purple Plate of Appreciation Leads to Almsgiving within Families

A few years ago, I stumbled across a letter in a family magazine describing a family's use of a "Purple Plate of Appreciation" to help ease family tensions. The letter made an impression, so I bought a purple plate and followed the letter's suggestions.

Here's how it works: The Purple Plate is used at meals when the whole family sits down together and rotates to a different person at each meal. The person with the Purple Plate says the blessing and then listens as each person at the table appreciates something about the person with



the Purple Plate. Each person has to appreciate something different, no copying.

After a few weeks of the Purple Plate, I noticed a change in my home. My children didn't squabble quite so much, my husband and I looked for more positives to praise than negatives to correct, and the words "thank you" flowed more easily from every mouth in my home. Give the Purple Plate a try. With a little practice, it's easy to spot the good in each of us!

— Jacki Latvala, Friend of Parishioner

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT...

"Unanswered Prayers"

— Lyrics from a song made popular by country singer Garth Brooks

Just the other night at a hometown football game, my wife and I ran into my old high school flame. As I introduced them, the past came back to me, and I couldn't help but think of the way things used to be...

She was the one that I'd wanted for all times, and each night I'd spend prayin' that God would make her mine. And if He'd only grant me this wish I wished back then, I'd never ask for anything again.

Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers. Remember when you're talkin' to the Man upstairs, that just because He doesn't answer doesn't mean that He don't care. Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.

She wasn't quite the angel that I remembered in my dreams, and I could tell that time had changed me in her eyes, too, it seemed. We tried to talk about the old days — there wasn't much we could recall. I guess the Lord knows what He's doin' after all...

And as she walked away and I looked at my wife, then and there I thanked the good Lord for the gifts in my life.

Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers. Remember when you're talkin' to the Man upstairs — that just because He may not answer doesn't mean that He don't care. Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.

Some of God's greatest gifts are all too often unanswered...

Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Feb. 10: Annual Cana Retreat & Dinner Dance
- Feb. 21: Ash Wednesday Masses at 8 am, 5 pm & 7 pm
- Feb. 28: Easter Parade/Chanhasen Theatre Parishioner Outing
- Mar. 1: 4-week series on Prayer and Spirituality Begins
- Mar. 2 & 3: Lenten Adult Retreat
- Mar. 11: Daylight Savings Time Begins
- Mar. 17: Family Lenten Retreat
- Mar. 25: Storyteller Family Event
- Mar. 28: Bachman's Flower Show Outing
- April 1: Palm Sunday
- April 5: Holy Thursday Mass at 7 pm
- April 6: Good Friday Service at 7 pm
- April 7: Holy Saturday Vigil Mass at 8 pm
- April 8: Easter Sunday
- April 12: Old Log Theatre Outing
- April 16: Guest Speaker on Fundamentalism

The St. Vincent Voice Newsletter Committee

- **Melanie Otto**, Parishioner
- **Sr. Nora Klewicki**, Staff Member
- **Rose Kahnke**, Pastoral Council Member
- **Marci Siers**, Pastoral Council Member
- **Nikelle Morris**, Editor/Designer, Parishioner

For information on joining the committee, contact Sr. Nora at 763-425-2210.

HOW TO FIND A CATHOLIC BIBLE

There are Different Bibles for Different Needs—Find the One for You

How do you find a Catholic Bible?

The two main translations used in Catholic circles are; The New American Bible, which is the translation used in the Lectionary for Mass readings and the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible--Catholic Edition, which is a translation used in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Our St. Vincent de Paul Gift Shop usually carries both these translations.

Catholic Bibles contain seven books that Protestant Bibles either do not contain or contain in a special Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical section.

These seven Old Testament/Hebrew Scripture books are; Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach and Baruch. The reason for the difference is that St. Jerome used the Septuagint, an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament which included the seven books listed above, when he translated the Bible into Latin. The Protestant reformers followed one Jewish tradition of excluding these seven books because they were not originally written in Hebrew.

Different Bibles may have a specific purpose, for example, study Bibles may have special articles/maps to aid the user in studying the Bible, family Bibles tend to be large in size and more elaborate and are meant for home use and often have a place to record special family occasions such as reception of Sacraments, pocket

or purse-sized Bibles are for those who want a Bible readily available for their use without having to carry a large book with them. Bibles for teens such as Break-through for young adolescents and The Catholic Youth Bible for older adolescents are printed by St. Mary's Press of Winona and feature special articles and illustrations to help teens connect the Bible to their daily lives and their Catholic faith. Bibles can be purchased with a variety of covers from leather to paperback.

Some good aids for studying the Bible are; Dictionary of the Bible by John McKenzie and The Collegeville Bible Commentary Series, written by a variety of authors, which allows you to purchase inexpensive commentaries for individual books or purchase sets--www.litpress.org or 1-800-858-5450. Of course, don't forget to take advantage of resources that your Bible may already include such as footnotes, a dictionary, index of themes, cross references, maps and the introductory remarks usually found at the beginning of each book of the Bible.

Adult Faith Formation has already offered two Bible studies and two guest speakers on Scripture this program year. On April 16, Bill Cahoy, Dean of the School of Theology at St. John's University, Collegeville, will be a guest speaker on fundamentalism, including Biblical fundamentalism.

— Chuck Pratt, Staff Member

DO YOU "CELEBRATE" LENT?

... or Do You Just "Observe" Lent?

We often say that we "observe" holidays when we mean that we are participating in them, and it's a perfectly acceptable term to use. However, it seems that for the happiest occasions—birthdays, Christmas, Easter, etc.—we are more likely to say that we "celebrate" them.

Although both terms are interchangeable in common conversation, it's worthwhile to take a closer look at the word you choose to use when you are talking about Lent. Some people truly just observe Lent, by doing just that—*observing* others who participate, but doing nothing themselves.

Some just endure Lent—surreptitiously rubbing the ashes from their foreheads on Ash Wednesday after Mass, fulfilling the minimum requirements of abstinence and fasting, but meanwhile really just anxious for it all to be over so that they can return to their "normal" lives.

Finally, there are those who celebrate Lent, using the 40 days as an opportunity to deepen their faith and improve themselves as Catholics. **Think about which term will define your Lent in 2007.**

— Nikelle Morris, Editor

PENITENTIAL ACTS...IN PRACTICE

St. Vincent Parishioners Share Some Examples of Their Lenten Commitments

- † I refrain from unnecessary shopping. I try not to use my Visa card. At the end of Lent, I look at the previous month's bill and pay the difference to charity. Last year it was a lot.
- † In the past for Lent I have always tried to go to daily Mass...Hopefully that will work this year, but with a new baby it may be a bit tougher. Also, my husband and I do something together...this year we are tossing around the idea of giving up eating out at restaurants and making meal time quality family time at home.
- † I'm going to attend Mass more regularly.
- † I try to do something extra during Lent... Random acts of kindness, send an e-mail or call someone I haven't talked with lately...
- † I always try to deepen my prayer life by participating in some sort of speaker/program/retreat on prayer/spirituality.
- † We have a jar on the counter. Each day during Lent we add a slip of paper that has a practice we've done for the day (either an almsgiving, fasting or prayer). At the end of the week, over breakfast on Sunday, we read them and give ourselves pats on the back.
- † **Attending the Stations of the Cross**
- † I have always fasted during Lent (Monday through Saturday and abstain from meat on Wednesday in addition to Friday). This year I hope to make the Way of the Cross daily.
- † I'll be giving up a bad habit that interferes with my relationship with God.
- † As a mom with little ones, it can be hard to attend the Stations of the Cross, so we do them at home. Each child takes a turn choosing where in the house each station is said. We take our pictures and prayers for each station to that spot and say them there. We also have a jelly bean jar. Every time the children do something kind or "extra" for someone, they get to put a jelly bean in their jar. Those jelly beans are then left out for the Easter bunny to put in their baskets. So, essentially, the children have to earn their candy. It has worked great for our children for a few years now. Their ages are 7, 5, 3 and 4 months.
- † I'm going to try not to yell at my children (even once) during Lent.
- † I plan to make the time for some reading of spiritual books. *(Editor's note: for some ideas, see the list on pg. 6)*
- † **We plan on making a point of praying more together as a married couple, a family, and as individuals.**
- † I want to go out of my way to love others more as Jesus taught us to do.
- † I'll be attending the Sacrament of Reconciliation as part of my Lenten preparations.
- † Doing charitable works, volunteering.
- † Praying the Divine Mercy novena and chaplet during Lent and then attending Divine Mercy Sunday Mass, which is the Sunday right after Easter.
- † **I'm using Lent to practice not only forgiving others, but also forgiving myself. I have a tendency to berate myself in my mind for not doing things perfectly... I need to learn to treat myself with the loving kindness that Jesus would use. I think that will make me a happier person, and make it easier to forgive faults in others as well.**
- † Our family plans to make it a habit this Lent to say Grace before every meal.
- † I'm going to give up one of my vices for Lent... either biting my fingernails or sweets. (I haven't decided which one, yet.) Maybe I can try for both, but that's a little scary to think about.
- † I'm habitually late, so I'm going to try to fix that and improve my prayer life at the same time. I'm going to work on arriving at all my appointments about 10 minutes early, and then spend that extra time in a little quiet prayer. I think it will help to make my day less stressful, and before my work meetings I can even pray for success in my meetings or for guidance and patience when dealing with my co-workers.

WHAT ARE PENITENTIAL ACTS?

Penitential acts are individual practices one can do to deepen their own relationship with God. Each time these sacrificial acts are performed, it will remind us of our relationship with God and of His own sacrifice of His only Son for our sins and for our salvation.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday, in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice. These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works).

— Marci Siers, Pastoral Council Member

THE ALMSGIVING OF OUR YOUNGEST PARISHIONERS

When it comes to our youngest parishioners, almsgiving with money might not always be possible—so they must find other ways to give of themselves.

Each week on the children's envelopes, there is a place for them to write a good deed from the past week. This is a wonderful way to teach them that although their *finances* may be limited, their opportunities to give are not. Here is a sampling of some of their offerings to God from envelopes collected at the parish:

- *Hugged my Mom when she got hurt*
- *Shoveled Nana & Papa's driveway*
- *Helped around the house*
- *Shared toys with my friends & cousins*
- *Had a slumber party with my little sister*
- *Told my Mom I loved her*
- *Shoveled the neighbor's driveway*
- *Helped wrap some gifts*
- *Helped my sister wash the dishes*
- *Went to Reconciliation*

(Note: most children will begin to receive envelopes when they first sign up for Faith Formation at St. Vincent's. If you have not received envelopes for your child, you can contact the parish office at 425-2210.)

LENTEN READING RECOMMENDATIONS

From the Staff of St. Vincent de Paul, with Descriptions from the Publishers

Holy Longing by Ronald Rolheiser:

Posing the question "What is spirituality?", Fr. Rolheiser gets quickly to the heart of common difficulties with the subject, and shows through compelling anecdotes and personal examples how to channel that restlessness into a healthy spirituality.

The Day Christ Died by Jim Bishop:

This simple, direct account of Jesus' last hours traces the route from Gethsemane to a windswept hill called Golgotha. Bishop's meticulous research has uncovered little-known facts that contribute to the overwhelming sense of immediacy in this story of God's love for humanity.

Living the Mass: How One Hour a Week Can Change Your Life by Grassi and Paprocki:

Studies show that most Catholic young adults do not attend weekly Mass. But what if they saw it as the one hour of their week that could transform the way they live, dream, work, play, serve & love? These experienced, engaging authors not only explain the Mass, its purpose and its parts, but draw readers into the question, "What would our faith look like if we truly understood the gift of the Eucharist?"

Teresa of Avila: An Extraordinary Life by Shirley du Boulay:

A colorful and compelling journey into the heart of one of the greatest mystics of all times.

The Dreamgiver by Bruce Wilkinson:

The bestselling author shows how to identify and overcome the obstacles that keep millions from living the life they were created for. Wilkinson gives readers practical, biblical keys to fulfilling their own dream, revealing that there's no limit to what God can accomplish when we choose to pursue the dreams He gives us for His honor.

The Inner Voice of Love by Henri Nouwen:

This Catholic priest and popular author hit a six-month spiritual and mental crisis in 1987. This book is his personal journal written during his time of anguish.

Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World by Henri Nouwen:

What is our place in the world? How can we blend service and spiritual worship with

the harshness of the everyday world? How can we, imperfect and each broken in our own way, feel beloved by the Almighty? Nouwen ponders these topics in an open letter to a troubled friend.

Walk in a Relaxed Manner by Joyce Rupp:

In this edifying and inspirational book, Rupp presents her adventures on a 47 day pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago in Spain. At the age of 60, she took this arduous journey of 450 miles with Tom, a retired pastor & close friend.

Praying Our Goodbyes by Joyce Rupp:

This is a book for anyone who has experienced loss, whether it be a job change, the end of a friendship, the death of a loved one, a financial struggle, a mid-life crisis or an extended illness. It is designed to help readers reflect, ritualize, and re-orient themselves—to help heal the hurts caused by goodbyes and the anxieties encountered by change.

The Seven Last Words by Michael Crosby:

This book reveals the powerful implications for contemporary followers of Jesus in the final words from the cross. The Seven Last Words makes profound spiritual reading not only for personal Lenten reflection but for groups studying the scriptures and everyone concerned with making the scriptures come alive.

Story of a Soul by Therese of Lisieux:

Two and a half years before her death in 1897 at the age of 24, Thérèse Martin began writing down her childhood memories, which became this powerful book.

The Cloud of Unknowing:

This 14th-century manual was written by an unknown monastic as a guide for a young person starting on the path to a contemplative life. It states that a "cloud of unknowing" separates people from God, and that this cloud cannot be penetrated by the intellect—only by love.

What Makes Us Catholic by Thomas Groome:

Inviting readers "to critically consider and deliberately choose what could be life-giving from their faith tradition," he describes eight spiritual qualities that he believes are distinctively Catholic.

REMEMBERING...

The Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast



Everyone ate their fill of freshly made pancakes, scrambled eggs & sausage.
 (from the left) Knights Randy Hollingsworth, Tim Ryan, Ken Ford and Paul Casper. (in the back at the stove is Kevin Ahlers)



Meanwhile...things were really hopping back in the kitchen, where Knight Joe Koenen worked busily to mix up the batter and others flipped many rows of hotcakes (Knight Lee Bilbro is pictured here at the griddle).



<< The Andres Family arrive for some food and fun after the 7:30 am Mass.



<< Young parishioners Amanda Meissner & Alexis Peterson helped out, passing out juices with friendly smiles.



The Lanbrecht Family enjoyed some juice and pancakes. >>



This breakfast is just one of many service projects the Knights of Columbus perform each year to benefit our church, our families, and our community. Thank you to all the men in this wonderful organization!

Please give us some feedback on The St. Vincent Voice. We want to create a publication that will serve the needs of our parishioners.

What topics would you like to see addressed in this newsletter?

How can this newsletter most benefit you as a parishioner?

What questions do you have about the Catholic faith that we might address?

Please cut out and return this form to: Attn. St. Vincent Voice Editor,
 St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 9100 93rd Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

Or e-mail your feedback to: editor@saintvdp.org

Other comments:



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ONE YOUNG PARISHIONER'S LENTEN EXPERIENCE

St. Vincent de Paul 8th Grader Katelyn Thoresen Shares Her Thoughts on the Season

I'm a student at St. Vincent de Paul School, and at our school, the teachers really promote the meaning of Lent within us to keep all our lives. They have weekly prayer services and The Stations of the Cross every Friday. The final Friday, it is a brilliant production. They have reflections between every station and on the final Friday they have servers going around to each station on the wall of the church. They really help us understand the meaning of Lent, as we should.



Here are some of our students serving during the Stations of the Cross in 2006.

Some important aspects of Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. **We can pray however we want;** whether it's right before your faith is being tested, or at school for a big test. You could also pray at the end of the day by just having a talk with God to reflect on everything, bad and good, that you've done. Praying is a great and confiding way to express yourself and your belief.

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Fasting is another great way to focus on God. You give up part of your daily routine, eating, to focus even more on God. In the end, you have more time and surprisingly, more energy to give to God. Kids my age also generally give up something for Lent: TV, candy, a favorite pastime or something that's important to them or that keeps them from focusing on God with all their hearts.

Almsgiving is the final way to give even more to God, or rather His people, with your money. It shows the world that you care and you're

willing to give a little cash here and there to people that need it more than you do.

I hope you do the same--devote this Lenten season to God and maybe even your whole life to God, with all your heart.

— Katelyn Thoresen.

8th Grade student at St. Vincent de Paul School