

***Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.***

How often do we do things out of habit or routine? When our actions lack purpose, they not only lack meaning, but they also foster a sense of futility. St. Paul tells us that even the necessary acts of eating and drinking should have a meaning. They, too, are among the routines that should give glory to God, in that they prompt us to give thanks for that which sustains us.

This week we will begin the season of Lent and all its rituals and routines. We mark ourselves with ashes as well as fast, give alms and devote additional time to prayer. Lent is given to us as a time of healing and wholeness through repentance and reconciliation. Spiritual restoration, however, takes time. St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta said, *"Everybody today seems to be in such a terrible rush, anxious for greater development and greater riches. Children have very little time for their parents, and parents have very little time for their children and for each other. So, the breakdown of peace in the world begins at home."*

We are always in such a hurry and busy with many things. Daily life pulls at us and drives us in so many directions, leaving us tired and without much energy or ambition. How often are the words "there is no time!" on our lips? Our entry into Lent and our participation in its rituals and its disciplines need to be done with purpose and dedicated time.

As believers, everything we do must be done for the glory of God. We forget that and, therefore, need this holy time to be reminded of this truth and re-orient the direction of our lives. We can choose to live in the status quo or take a deep dive into some personal and spiritual housecleaning. If we choose this different path, we will discover a deeper relationship with God, others, and our own selves. We will also be able to go to bed each night, wake each morning, and embrace every day with the joy God's salvation brings. In these days of Lent, let us make a commitment to do for the glory of God and our own salvation.

**LENTEN ACTIVITIES** - This week's bulletin contains information on the various spiritual events taking place during the season of Lent. In a particular way, I ask you to consider some weekly hinge points to keep you on the Lenten path.

Beginning on February 26, our Monday evening masses will be celebrated by guest presiders. A full listing can be found elsewhere in the bulletin. The evenings will begin with the Miraculous Medal Novena at 7:15 pm, followed by mass at 7:30 pm. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will follow mass, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available at that time.

Stations of the Cross will take place every Friday at 12:30 pm, and Friday evenings at 7:00 pm in the context of Lectio Divina.

**ASH WEDNESDAY** - Please take note of the schedule for the distribution of ashes found in today's bulletin. The decision to receive ashes as one begins Lent is a personal gesture of one's desire to die and rise with Christ. Ashes will be distributed in the context of mass and prayer services.

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION** – The season of Lent is a particularly opportune time to go to confession. As always, priests are available after the 9:00 am mass from Monday to Friday, and at 4:00 pm on Saturdays. As mentioned above, there will be an opportunity for confession after the 7:30 pm mass on Mondays during Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. There is also a special day reserved for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation throughout Long Island and New York City on Monday, March 25.

**FAST AND ABSTINENCE** - All Catholics who have reached their 14th year are bound to abstain entirely from meat on Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent.

All Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 inclusive are also bound to observe the law of fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. This means limiting oneself to a single full meal and avoiding food between meals. Two other light meals, which together do not equal a full meal, may be taken during the day.

Peace,

