

Second Sunday of Lent



News You Can Use...from Fr. Steve

Lenten Disciplines of Fasting and Self-Denial

I heard this story long ago and it seems to have some actual historical connection to the late Archbishop Gerald Bergan of Omaha, Nebraska. I have also heard it in other formats with other characters but the point is well taken. A priest is taking a walk in the late afternoon in the cemetery behind his church. It's a chilly Lenten day so he is wearing a heavy coat with the collar turned up. Suddenly, he feels an arm wrap around his throat and a hard, metallic object jabbed in his lower back. In a gruff voice, his assailant demands his money or his life. Frightened out of his wits, the priest starts to tremble. The man forces the priest to slowly turn around and as he does, the gunman notices the priest's clerical collar and is suddenly apologetic, "Father," the man says, "I'm so sorry! I didn't realize you were a priest." He puts the gun away and asks for forgiveness. Relieved, but still shaking, the priest takes out a pack of cigarettes and puts one to his lips to calm down. In doing so, he offers one to his former attacker. The man responds: "No thank you, Father, I gave up smoking for Lent."

Hopefully, you get the joke and the point - how absurd a Lenten penance can be when it is completely divorced from any kind of change in negative behaviors. When we fast, even for health or cosmetic benefits, when we deny ourselves sugar, coffee, chocolate, liquor or TV, do we do so with the purpose of transforming negative or sinful attitudes and behavior?

Discipline and disciple have the same Latin root, *discipulus*, meaning "a learner." The Webster Dictionary describes discipline as restraining oneself to develop self-control and character. It's easy to make this connection during the Olympics, when we see extremely disciplined men and women who have denied themselves many things to achieve the one thing that matters to them - excellence. In our case, for these next six weeks, Lenten restraint is practiced for the purpose of learning, of discovering what attitudes and behaviors are to be changed in order to reflect and embrace the teachings of Christ.

- Consider the discipline of daily PRAYER

As we quiet our mind and heart, we recover a state of consciousness in which we are once again aware of being united with the Holy One. This inward attention enables us to identify those hidden qualities of goodness that have gone astray. We learn again who we are, why we are, and restore what is of most value to our life.

- Consider the discipline of FASTING

One of the best explanations of fasting and how it is supposed to work for us spiritually comes from Joyce Rupp, a spiritual writer. "Get bold and cut out *all* snacks, not just one favorite. Use the constant confrontations with your mouth and stomach as reminders of your spiritual goals and your relationship with God. It's a vivid lesson, shining light on our habits of thoughtless consumption and the abundance we take for granted. It's also an opportunity for solidarity with hungry people in our world. Plenty of grist for our prayer lives and even more for our lives of charity."

Stations of the Cross – Fridays in Lent...

5:15pm in the Church. All are welcome to attend.

The Lord is my light and salvation. Psalm 27

This Week at St. AJ

Saturday, February 27

4:00PM Confessions

5:30PM Vigil Mass *Intentions of Michael Campion-Motyka*

Sunday, February 28

Second Sunday of Lent

10:00AM Mass *Anton Jung*

Catholic Forum Today- February 28 - after 10:00AM Mass

11:30AM Mass *Dolph J. Tokarczyk*

5:00PM Mass *Mamie Pizzi*

10:00PM Mass *Cynthia McKeown*

Wednesday, March 3

12:30PM to 2:00PM Church open today. Please ring Rectory bell.

Thursday, March 4

6:00PM Rehearsal Thomas McCoy and Kate Grahsler VRM

Friday, March 5

No 7:30AM Mass

5:15PM (Church) Stations of the Cross

Saturday, March 6

2:30PM Wedding Thomas McCoy and Kate Grahsler VRM

4:00PM Confessions

5:30PM Vigil Mass *Intentions of St. AJ Parishioners & Benefactors*



Men's Spirituality Conference

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Men's Spirituality Conference will be held March 13, 2010 at Archbishop Ryan High School. Philadelphia area native Mike Piazza, the 12-time All-Star catcher; Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey; Catholic lay evangelist Jesse Romero; and Mark Houck of the King's Men headline an impressive lineup of speakers for a day of faith-sharing, reflection and fellowship. Cardinal Justin Rigali will celebrate the closing Mass at 4 PM. To register go to www.archphila.org and click on the Men's Spirituality Conference 2010 Logo. For additional information contact the Family life Office at 215-587-5639, or email: mscquestions@adphila.org.

Lenten Button – Catholic Word and Witness

The ashes are gone but the SJ AJ Lenten button offers us another opportunity to remind ourselves of our Lenten journey and personal commitment to turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel. It also allows us to express in a simple way our Catholic identity and our membership in St. AJ parish, as well as continuing our Lenten witness to others, as we wear it on our clothing, backpacks, or fastened to our dorm door.

The principal symbol on the button is the Scallop Shell. This symbol has multiple layers of spiritual meaning for us here at St. AJ. First of all, as disciples, we are all on a personal pilgrimage to Christ, to know Him, love Him and serve Him, and Lent is what you might call a journey within a journey. Secondly, the scallop shell has significance because it is directly associated with St. James the Greater, Patron Saint of our parish. If you check the Sanctuary center high stained glass window in the central triad, you will see that St. James has a scallop shell on his shoulder. The scallop shell was used by those making a pilgrimage to the famous shrine of St. James in Compostella, Spain. It was necessary for a pilgrim to identify himself as a pilgrim because it was impossible for an individual to carry on his person what was needed to survive the journey; the shell was a sign to others that this person needed food, shelter and protection on his pilgrim journey. When you helped a pilgrim, you yourself would enjoy the spiritual benefits and blessings of the person making a pilgrimage. So this is a powerful sign of our commitment to help each other as we embark on our Lenten journey together. Thirdly, if you google Pope Benedict XVI's coat of arms, you will discover that the scallop shell holds a prominent position in the shield. The three crosses are Pope Benedict's addition.