

Nativity News

*The Newsletter of the Cathedral Parish of
the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Volume 3: No 2

February 2008

Fasting from Clutter.



As Lent quickly sneaks upon me I have been making plans about what to do and not do. I sit here trying to type this up and as I look around my office and at my desk I am easily distracted by the many piles of stuff. There are piles of junk mail one step away from being recycled. Magazines that I enjoy reading are

stacked in different piles according to the week they arrived, yet they have not been looked through, or migrated to the piles upstairs. There are minutes from meetings, proposals for new programs, calendars, prayers, homily helps, and a few things so old I am not really sure what they are. Are those tools and supplies left over from when the door was put in between the offices, in September 2005? It was not long ago that my office was totally empty, no desk, no book shelves, no computer, etc... it was being painted. Now I can play archaeologist and go back in time as I dig deeper into piles, hoping that nothing of real importance has been buried for too long. ... I wonder what is over there under that dusty pile?

How did all this junk get in here? One small piece at a time apparently, because the doors and windows are too small for a dump truck to have delivered all this stuff. I recognize this stuff; it has a comfortable kind of home office appeal. I do live at work. Yet, what happened? I graduated from the Coast Guard Academy where I trained for a full year as a professional janitor and put-that-away-in-its-proper-place expert my freshman year. Did I forget or just succumb to the new trend in science that values chaos? Maybe I should submit my office as a prime example of the value of chaos. You know *semper clusta* always messy, always messy, and always messy!

The one thing I do know is that if my office were a boat, one good storm and I would be buried under a ton of junk mail. It is just not safe to have this much stuff adrift in my office. I really do believe it affects my ability to think straight and work efficiently. Maybe that is why I can think better outside in nature, or maybe it is just that I am not at work. I wonder

how much my ability to do my job is hampered by the sheer amount of junk disorganized in my office? Truth be told, it is not just my office that could be Exhibit A for those spaces that have succumbed to chaos. It has come into sharp focus because for my birthday at the beginning of January a friend cleaned my apartment. In just three hours I had cleaned up all the piles and put all the stuff away that had collected on all the horizontal surfaces before she came, and seven hours later all the dirt and chaos was gone. Wow, I felt so much better, mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, living in an apartment that is nice and neat and clean. So I thought, I wonder how much the clutter in my life is distracting me from following Jesus and proclaiming the Kingdom of God and the Gospel of Love?

So this year for Lent I am going to try to fast from clutter. What kind of clutter? All kinds of clutter: mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual. The junk that has accumulated in the office will be the first to go, and may be the easiest. Next I will review those old ways of thinking and seeing the world that are not open to the movement of God—you know mental clutter. What habits do I have in how I care for my physical body, in the food I eat or do not eat, in the sleep and exercise that I get or do not get that are no longer good for me, and now amount to no more than physical clutter? Oh, yes and the moving boxes and piles of stuff have to go as well—a real spring cleaning on all levels. Holding on to prejudices and stereotypes that injure the human family, grudges and a habit of avoiding people I find difficult—all that emotional clutter that needs to be tossed out. What prayers or images of God are cluttering up my relationship with the God who calls me beloved and asks that I follow?

Where to start this fasting from clutter? I am going to start with the physical things I can grab hold of and recycle or toss out, because I will be able to see progress and that will help me work on the more difficult interior clutter.

May you have a great Lent, and then Easter will find us all rejoicing at the Resurrection of Jesus and free of clutter!

Shalom, Fr. Thomas

LENT SCHEDULE

Ash Wednesday, February 6th, Masses:

7am, 12:10pm & 7:00pm

Lenten Lunches, Thursdays of Lent, beginning, February 7th, Noon-1pm, Northern Light Church

Supper & Stations of the Cross, Fridays of Lent beginning, February 8th, 6:15pm dinner in the Cathedral parish hall, 7:15pm, Stations of the Cross, Cathedral

CENTERING PRAYER, Tuesday, February 19th, 6:30-8:30pm & Thursday, February 21st, 6:30-8:30pm, Cathedral

Morning Prayer, 8am, Monday through Friday

Evening Prayer, 5pm, Monday through Friday

St. Paul's Lenten Penance Service, Wednesday, March 5th, 7pm

Cathedral Lenten Penance Service, Thursday, March 6th, 7pm

Diocesan Chrism Mass, Thursday, March 13th, 7pm, Cathedral, Archbishop Francis Hurley, presiding

Palm Sunday, March 16th, Sunday Mass schedule as usual with Blessing of Palms & Processions

Holy Thursday, March 20, Mass of the Lord's Supper, 7pm

Good Friday, March 21, Stations of the Cross, 12:10pm, Service with Veneration of the Cross, 7pm

Holy Saturday, March 22, Easter Vigil, 8pm

Easter Sunday, March 23, Easter Sunday Masses, 8:30 & 11:00am. No 5:30pm Mass.

SUPPER & STATIONS

On the Fridays of Lent, beginning February 8th, the **Cathedral parish will offer Rice Bowl Supper & Stations of the Cross**. Dinner will begin at 6:15pm in the parish hall and Stations of the Cross will start at 7:15pm in the Church.

February 8-Introduction to Catholic Relief Services

February 15 - Guatemala

February 22 - Mali

February 29 - India

March 7 - Haiti

March 14 - Cameroon

Rice Bowl Suppers - Come and share the Rice Bowl meal of the week with friends and family while learning about another country and how the work of Catholic Relief Services in that country relates to Catholic Social Teaching.

To learn more or to offer to cook, please contact Daniel Cornwall (364-4673 or e-mail dnlcornwall@alaska.net).

THURSDAYS OF LENT

The Juneau Cooperative Church Council will be sponsoring the weekly **Lenten Lunches Series every Thursday of Lent from Noon to 1:00pm, beginning February 7th, at Northern Light United Church, 400 W 11th St**. The series will consist of soup & bread, a short musical performance and a speaker. All are invited to attend. A \$5.00 donation is asked.

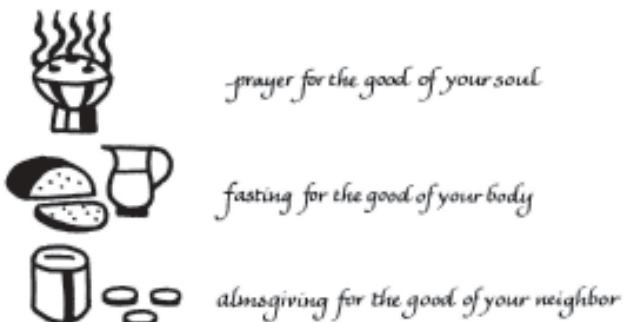
CHARISMATIC RENEWAL EVENTS

Our Lady of the Rosary Prayer Meetings are held on Friday evenings at St. Paul's Parish Church at 7:30pm.

Twin Hearts Prayer Meetings are held on Sundays at 1:00pm at the Cathedral.

Good Shepherd Prayer Meetings are held on Sundays at 2:15pm at St. Paul's Church.

Holy Trinity Catholic Prayer Meetings are held on Sundays at 1:30pm in the Cathedral Parish Hall meeting room.





RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

KATY RICE, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism: Baptism classes for parents of infants and young children are available by appointment. We recommend you take the class before your child is born, if possible. Please call Katy to inquire about classes: 586-1317 or cathedraldre@acsalaska.net.

First Communion: First Communion classes are open to children in 2nd grade or above who have been baptized. There will be a parent meeting on Sunday, February 24th from 9:45am to 10:45am in classroom #5. We will go over the schedule of classes and talk about ways to prepare for 1st Communion at home. Please contact Katy to register your child for these classes.

GODLY PLAY FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

Pre-school & Kindergarten Schedule

February 3rd: Parable of the Sower

February 10th: Faces of Easter I & II

February 17th: Faces of Easter III

February 24th: Faces of Easter IV

Middle Grades Schedule

February 3rd: The Nicene Creed

February 10th: Faces of Easter I & II

February 17th: Faces of Easter III

February 24th: Faces of Easter IV

Upper Grades Schedule

February 3rd: The Parable of the Two Sons

February 10th: Safe Environment: Internet Safety

February 17th: Prayer: The Our Father

February 24th: Faces of Easter I & II

CATHEDRAL YOUTH MINISTRY FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

The Youth group will meet on Wednesdays February 13th, 20th & 27th from 7pm to 8:30pm. Wednesday, February 6th is Ash Wednesday. Youth and their families are encouraged to attend the 7pm Ash Wednesday Mass at the Cathedral.

On Wednesday, February 20th the Youth Groups will meet at the Rock Dump for an evening of Rock Climbing. Look for more information about this event in your mailbox. If your child is not on our mailing list but would like to attend this event, please contact Katy: 586-1317 or cathedraldre@acsalaska.net.



FROM SR. MARIE LUCEK, OP
CATHEDRAL PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

A MISUNDERSTOOD SACRAMENT

A question for those of us who were born before 1955: do you remember the sacrament of Extreme Unction? These days of extreme games and extreme make-overs this sacrament sounds quite dire. Besides, what does unction mean? The words actually mean “last anointing,” and it was used to prepare people for death. Is it any wonder then that many people are not inclined to request this sacrament until they’re on their deathbed?

No longer do we have to wait until we’re in our last days of life to receive this sacrament. The Church has renamed the sacrament Anointing of the Sick, while at the same time it has restored the original intention of the sacrament, to give God’s special grace to those who are elderly, about to undergo surgery, or suffer from a serious illness. However, some Catholics do not yet realize how the Church’s thinking on this sacrament has changed and miss this opportunity for special grace.

Illness and suffering can cause great anguish and can make us feel powerless. During this time we need comfort and strength. The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick offers this comfort, besides helping us to unite our sufferings with those of Christ Himself. Persons who receive this sacrament often experience healing—usually spiritual or emotional, but sometimes physical. This sounds like an opportunity none of us would want to pass up.

Good news! This sacrament is offered to parishioners at least twice a year at the Cathedral at a weekend Mass. The next time will probably be in the spring—watch the bulletin for dates. And for those who can’t come to Church, the Church wants to come to you. Is it difficult or impossible for you to get to Church? Do you have a family member who no longer can get to Church? If so, we want to come to your home. Give Fr. Thomas (209-7307) or me (209-3577) a call or stop one of us after Mass.



Reception and Anointing of the Sick at Mass

CELEBRATING LENT WITH CHILDREN

By Katy Beedle Rice

When we think of Lent we don't often think of it as a season for children. Unlike Advent and Christmas, which seem to lend themselves to childish excitement and imagination, Lent seems too serious, too stark, and too plain to capture the hearts of our children. But when we look deeper I think we find this assumption might be wrong. Our children, while easily excited by Christmas trees and presents, and nativity scenes, can also become excited about ashes, palms, and the color purple. Why? Because all of these symbols, though serious and grave at times, also convey to our children the importance we place on this time of year. Something important is about to happen—something that changed the entire world. And our children watch us and wait, wondering what this mystery is all about.

Last year, when my twin girls were 2, I believed they were too young to understand about Lent. And it is true that a two year old isn't going to understand all the readings, or the symbolism of our Lenten celebrations, but there was something they did understand—singing. Ever since they could talk my girls have loved to sing. Each night my husband and I sing them to sleep and one of their favorite songs is “Michael Row the Boat Ashore.” When Lent came around last year and the girls requested their favorite song, Jeff and I told them gently that we could not sing “Michael Row the Boat Ashore” until Easter because during Lent we do not say or sing the word “Alleluia.” We save that special word until the great celebration of Easter. And astonishingly to me, the girls seemed to understand this. I would catch them reminding one another that we couldn't sing THAT SONG right now. At the beginning of Holy Week Fr. Thomas began to tease them by singing the first line of “Michael Row the Boat Ashore” whenever he saw them. The girls would admonish him in unison, “Not until Easter!” And on Easter morning I think that was what made the biggest impression on them . . . not the egg hunt or the special foods for brunch, but instead going to Church and hearing us altogether sing that special word of pure celebration.

The season of Lent is rich in symbols and traditions that reach out to our children because of how tangible they are. Look for the ones that capture their imagination and interest and explore these with them. Their enthusiasm and interest might surprise you.

Below are a few ideas on ways to incorporate the three pillars of Lent: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving, into your family life, whether you're living with toddlers or teenagers.

Prayer

Make a sacred place in your house for praying during Lent. It doesn't have to be elaborate, but it should give the sense that prayer is an important part of who your family is. Prayer altars can take many different forms: whether it's the middle of the dining room table or a small table in your family room or living room—any place where your family gathers is suitable. Have your children help decorate the altar. They might want to use a special candle (or to help you purchase one), crucifix, or another symbol that reminds them of God. Prayer altars can also hold reminders of what you wish to pray for this Lent: a family member or friend who is ill, a part of the world which is experiencing famine, or another event which your children care about. Ask them what they wish to pray for and then help them find something to place on the altar, whether it's a picture, a newspaper article, or a special prayer written by them, that will remind all of you to hold this intention in your hearts throughout the forty days of Lent.

Praying as a family can take many different forms. Try to find a way that matches who you are . . . whether it's to say a decade of the Rosary together each night, to simply gather in silence around lit candles, or to share spontaneous prayer aloud. Another great way to pray with children of all ages is to use a simple form of St. Ignatius' Examen. The Examen invites all of us to look at our lives and to reflect on where we find God. With small children, you can do the Examen by asking them “When were you happiest today?” and “When were you saddest?” You can use these answers to help them discover what brings them close to God and what distracts from that closeness. For more information on doing the Examen with your family, I highly recommend the book *Sleeping with Bread: Holding what Gives You Life* by Denise, Shelia & Matthew Linn.

Fasting

In Church law, children are not required to fast. Starting at 18, Catholics without preventing medical conditions, are asked to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The definition of fasting is eating one regular meal and two small meals throughout the day. Fasting, far from being a practice of self-control, is a way to remind us of our hunger

(continued on page 5)

for God. For children fasting can take different forms. Children can be encouraged to fast from sweets, junk food, or television. In order to make their fasting meaningful, help your child think about why they would want to give up any of these things. Perhaps by only watching a ½ hour of television a day instead of 2 hours they will have more time to spend with family or play with friends. Building up these relationships is a way that children come close to God. By fasting from junk food or sweets, your family might have more money to donate to Operation Rice Bowl, which helps those without enough food in our own community and throughout the world. In order for fasting to make sense to children it has to have a purpose and not just be an exercise of self-denial. Hopefully this purpose will be one that draws our children closer to God and to others.

Almsgiving

As they grow older, children, especially teenagers, become aware of the suffering that takes place around our world. Before Lent, have a conversation with your child about what world or community problems they care about and then help him or her to find a way to give “alms” to help this problem. We give alms in thanksgiving for the bounty in our own lives. You might help your child decide what they are most thankful for this winter—good food to eat, warm clothing, friends and family—and then help them find a way to give to people who are not blessed with these gifts. Offering to match their donation to a local charity or doing a service project together is a good way to let your child know you value their almsgiving.

Throughout Lent, be present to where your child is on their own spiritual journey. This might be the Lent where your 5th grader is ready to learn how to pray the Rosary and will look forward every night to praying together as a family. It could be that your high schooler has been waiting for an opportunity to make a difference in the community through creative almsgiving. Or it might be the year your 2 year old learns that sometimes we don’t sing “Alleluia!” and that just makes it all the more special when we do.

May you and your family enjoy a blessed Lent.

FREE LENTEN CENTERING PRAYER WORKSHOP

Come learn Centering Prayer with Fr. Thomas Weise in two evening sessions held in the **Cathedral Church: Tuesday February 19th and Thursday February 21st from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.** This is a special free Introductory Workshop; all are welcome, so please bring a friend. Six follow-up sessions will be offered from 4 to 5 pm on Sundays in the Cathedral Parish Library. Several different Centering Prayer books will be available for purchase.

Nearly 30 years ago three Trappist monks introduced contemplative prayer to a group of “non-contemplatives,” and no one could have predicted the prayer’s tremendous popularity with those outside the monastery walls. These monks dreamed of taking the church’s rich, centuries-old tradition of contemplative prayer and distilling it into a simple, easily learned prayer that ordinary people could practice. They believed that the daily practice of this prayer could lead to a more powerful experience of God’s presence and action in their lives. This active presence heals, transforms and offers freedom and peace. Today, many hundreds of thousands of Christians throughout the world are deeply committed to the daily practice called Centering Prayer, which they experience as a cornerstone of their lives.

Nearly 20 years ago I learned Centering Prayer as a college student at the US Coast Guard Academy. Since then I have been spending 20 to 30 minutes in silence twice a day resting in the heart of God—that is just over 8 months of silent prayer. This prayer practice more than any other has helped me pattern my life after Christ and has been a huge blessing to my whole life and to the life of my friends and family. All of my college roommates, many friends and family members have joined in practicing Centering Prayer because of the change they saw in my life.

Please come and learn a new way to pray this Lent, to open your mind and heart—your whole being—to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words, and emotions.

CATHEDRAL HOMILIES ON THE WEB!

If you would like to hear the homilies preached at the Cathedral again, or share them with a friend, go to the Cathedral website at www.juneaucathedral.org and click on *Weekly Homily Podcasts*.

CATHEDRAL PARISH DIRECTORY

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Cathedral of the Nativity Web page

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Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil 5:30 pm

Sunday 8:30 & 11:00 am & 5:30 pm

Monday-Friday 12:10 pm

Friday 9:30am **Wildflower Court**

Saturday 9:30 am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 4:00 - 5:00 pm

and by appointment.

Celebrating 125 years of the
Catholic Community of Juneau

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Ash Wednesday
February 6
Masses at 7:00am,
12:10pm & 7:00pm