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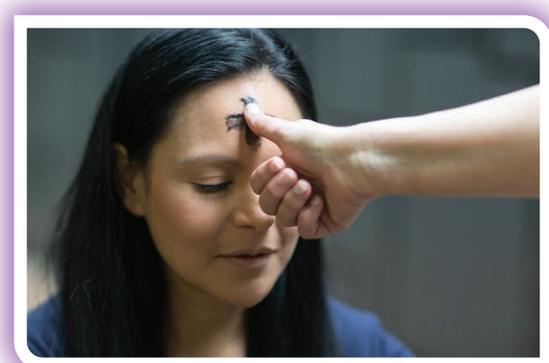
Look Beyond the Ashes To Find The True Spirit and Joy of Lent

By Christine Corbett Conklin

It's difficult, right now, to think about entering the Church's "season of sacrifice." Lent is just around the corner, beginning March 2, but it feels as though we have already sacrificed so much –- with a global pandemic, the loss of loved ones, economic hardships and international strife. What more do we have to give?



With the right perspective, this sacred season of the Church may in fact be a source of blessing for us, says Father Dan Dufner, pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Moses Lake.

"If you just look at it as rules, another hoop to jump through, you're not going to get much out of it," he observed in a recent interview with the *Central Washington Catholic*. Even as more people are beginning to come back to Church, as the pandemic eases, "Lent is pointing us to Easter," a time of joy and promise.

We just need to look beyond the ashes that are dispensed on Ash Wednesday, March 2. Lenten symbols such as the ashes keep us "mindful that we are mortal," yet they're also a joyful reminder that "we look forward to a new life and resurrection," Father Dufner said.

As a child, Father Dufner used to "give up" the typical treats like candy or dessert during Lent, he recalled. Even as an adult, he sometimes sacrifices watching TV, having coffee, or eating bacon at breakfast. However, Father has also come to recognize the value in sacrificing personal time. For example, he will spend more time in group or personal devotions such as the Rosary or Stations of the Cross, or he will devote more time to hearing Confessions.

Making small sacrifices during Lent "can get us a bit out of the rat race, the daily routine, and move us forward on the pilgrimage of life," he believes. There are many opportunities available in our communities to give of ourselves, during Lent and throughout the year, whether that involves speaking out in defense of the dignity of human life, looking in on homebound elderly or handicapped individuals, or feeding the homeless (see related story, page 3).

"It's not always easy" to give of ourselves, Father Dufner said. Yet, in a true Christian life, "there is sacrifice along the way."

In the words of Pope Emeritus Benedict II, at a previous Palm Sunday Mass, "No successful life exists without sacrifice. When I look back on my personal life, I have to say that precisely the times when I said 'Yes' to a sacrifice were the greatest and most important moments of my life."

At the center of our Christian faith, as shown in Christ's crucifixion, is a vision that looks not just inward, but outward, Benedict told a gathering of pilgrims in Vatican City. This perspective involves a continuous giving spirit which shines through ongoing, daily situations, he said.

The milestones of Lent, from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday (marking the celebration of the Last Supper), Good Friday (on which we commemorate the death of Christ on the Cross), Holy Saturday (recalling the vigil Christ's followers held for Him), and Easter Sunday (a celebration of His Resurrection), give us focal points for prayer and meditation.

"Prayer focuses more intimately on our spiritual life," Father Dufner said. "Lent gives us an opportunity to reflect and rededicate our journey of faith."

So, look for the positive in the upcoming season of Lent. And who knows, giving up a little candy or dessert may help with more than just spiritual graces – like losing some of those "pandemic pounds"!

Remember the 'Disciplines of Lent'

To help us give meaning and a bit of sacrifice to our Lenten journey, the Catholic Church sets the following disciplines for the season. Note: Those who have health issues, work schedules or other special circumstances that make following these disciplines unreasonable may be excused.

Ash Wednesday, March 2, required abstinence from meat for those age 14 and above, and fasting between meals for those age 18 to 59, with one normal-sized meal and two smaller meals recommended.

All Sundays of Lent. As with the rest of the year, attendance at Mass is required at a Saturday evening vigil or on Sunday.

Good Friday, April 15, required abstinence from meat for those age 14 and above, and fasting between meals for those age 18 to 59, with one normal-sized meal and two smaller meals recommended.

In addition, **reception of Holy Communion** is required for those without serious sin sometime between Easter Sunday, April 17, and Pentecost Sunday, June 5, known as the "Easter duty."

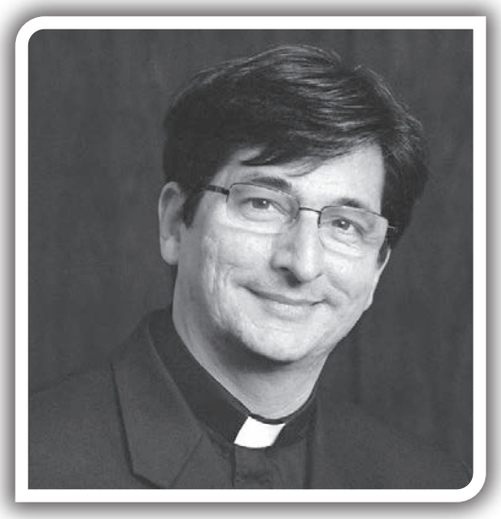
For questions or additional information regarding Lenten disciplines, check with your local parish office.

A Message from Bishop Tyson…

Dear Friends:

Lent is just around the corner. For Spanish speakers, the word "Cuaresma" suggests our joining Jesus in the desert for 40 days. The 40 days lead up to His dying a torturous death and then, to the surprise of His own disciples, His rising from the dead on Easter. For English speakers the word "Lent" is related to the old English root "to lengthen." In the northern climates, the days are getting longer, the first shoots of spring growth can be seen, and ravens return to build nests. The chirps of various birds become notably audible.

The growth of the Church is what marks our lineup of articles in this month's *Central Washington Catholic*. Father Dan Dufner, who is pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Moses Lake, came to his vocation as a priest through the biological sciences. I have affectionately referred to him as "Father Dan the Science Man." We easily forget how scientific methodology grew from the intellectual soil of Benedictine monasteries. Gregor Mendel is often considered the grandfather of genetics. But he was a monk and abbot. Our attention to nature can grow from an attention to the movements of the Holy Spirit in our spiritual lives.



Bishop Joseph Tyson

Similarly, Catholic Schools Week uplifts the growth of young minds and celebrates the ways Catholic schools anchor education in the Church's rich intellectual heritage. Many of you know that my unbending intent is that every child be able to get a Catholic education regardless of the family's income. Our Central Washington Catholic Foundation as well as so many partner donors help us make this steep climb. We actually had an increase in enrollment this year despite the challenge of COVID-19.

At the heart of Lent are the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. St. Joseph Catholic Church in Yakima has a long, rich pattern of reaching out to the homeless. It is a pathway to live the Lenten discipline of almsgiving all year round.

Indeed, the Lenten disciplines in which we engage with particular intensity during these 40 days are not meant to end. Rather, these 40 days are about rebooting the pattern of our spiritual lives in an intentional way so they endure in our daily lives.

My thanks for your support of the Annual Catholic Appeal which makes this *Central Washington Catholic* possible. I hope these stories inspire your own faith journey this Lent.

With every best wish and blessing!

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

Magnificat Classes Offered

The Magnificat program resumed in February with online faith formation classes.

In March, Bishop Joseph Tyson will present "Ecclesiology" on Tuesday, March 8, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., followed by Father Edgar Quiroga, parochial vicar of Christ the King Catholic Church in Richland, who will present "Sacraments" on Thursday, March 10. The link for these and all of the English presentations is https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84116935317, Meeting ID: 841 1693 5317. All classes are offered at the same time in the evening.

Rounding out the year will be Father César Izquierdo, parochial vicar of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Kennewick, who will present "Social Doctrine of the Church" on Saturday, April 30, at 9:00 a.m.

For those working toward certification as catechists in the Diocese, the following in-service dates are important as well:

- April 6, 2022 – Virtual Reunion with Catechists
- May 4, 2022 – Virtual Reunion with Catechists
- June 4, 2022 – Synthesis Day
- October 15, 2022 – Church Mission Congress, Holy Family Parish, Yakima.

For more information about the classes and the Magnificat program in general, contact Valeria Flores at (509) 965-7117 or via email valeria.flores@yakimadiocese.org, or visit the Magnificat page on the Diocesan website, www.yakimadiocese.org, or directly through this link: https://tinyurl.com/bdz46u8b.

If you have been abused or victimized by a member of the Catholic clergy, please believe in the possibility for hope and help and healing. We encourage you to come forward and speak out.

The Yakima Diocese has a sexual abuse hotline for those who wish to report some incident concerning that issue as regards a bishop, priest, deacon or diocesan employee or volunteer. (888) 276-4490.

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Volunteers Needed for Yakima Homeless Outreach

By Vic Kusske

Laurie Rader, a member of Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Yakima and a volunteer with Saint Vincent's Charity, has a heart for the homeless. Personal struggles she has endured, with the aid and grace of the Holy Spirit, have given her a mission to help those less fortunate.

Laurie's kitchen turns out many meals for the homeless.

On her own initiative, she began making meals in her tiny second-floor apartment kitchen with food from the food bank and food she buys herself. She then packs hot coffee, bottled water, packages of snacks, disposable cups, bowls and utensils, sanitary items and donated warm clothing into her small gray Ford sedan and drives into the areas where the homeless hang out in Yakima. They know her car when they see it. If they don't look her way as she drives by, she yells out, "Hey! Do you want a hot meal?" She is always greeted with smiles and usually a nod.

She pulls her car over, gets out and opens her trunk lid revealing two big stainless steel pots of soup with vegetables, noodles and protein. She takes a large cup, dips it into the pot of stew and puts it into a disposable bowl, adds four slices of buttered bread and gives it, with a plastic spoon, to those in need. It was my duty to serve hot coffee from four carafes which she carried on the back passenger seat. It took only about 30 minutes to hand out all the food, bottled water, coffee and donated clothing.

Laurie said she leaves her cash, credit cards and other valuables at her apartment when she serves the poor because she knows how desperate they can be. She is out among Yakima's homeless Tuesday and Saturday afternoons every week and she likes to have someone with her to help and for security purposes. If you have the heart and the courage, Laurie invites you to ride with her to reach out to those in need.

Could you help to deliver meals to the homeless?

Saint Vincent's Charity meets at Schoenberg Hall on Saturdays once each month. Contact the parish office at (509) 249-1911 for details.

Chrism Mass is Scheduled

The annual Chrism Mass is scheduled for 7 p.m., Tuesday, April 5, at St. Paul Cathedral in Yakima. With most COVID-19 related restrictions set to end Monday, March 21, there likely will be no attendance limits, although masks will remain an option.

If there is a livestreaming option, online participation will be through the parish Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/StPaulCathedralYakima, and shared to the diocesan page.

Bishop Joseph Tyson will be the principal celebrant, with priests of the Diocese concelebrating and deacons assisting. Priests, deacons and deacons' wives also will take part in a Day of Reflection in the afternoon, scheduled to be directed by Abbot Marion Q. Nguyen, OSB, of St. Martin's Abbey in Lacey, Washington.

This annual Mass features both a blessing of the holy oils used in rites throughout the liturgical year and a renewal of promises by the priests. Please pray for the clergy of our Diocese as we work together to build the Kingdom of God.

Catholic Schools Week Is Celebrated

National Catholic Schools Week, an annual celebration of Catholic education, was observed January 30 through February 5. Around the Diocese of Yakima, the week was filled with Masses, assemblies and other special activities for students, teachers, families, parishioners and other community members.

Catholic Schools
Faith. Excellence. Service.

Students at St. Joseph School, Wenatchee, celebrated the week by playing bingo!

Spiritual "bouquets" were made by students at Christ the King School, Richland, to honor vocations.

Kindergarten students at St. Rose School, Ephrata, celebrated "Anything But A Backpack" creativity.

Students at Christ the King, in Richland, feted "the Nation" with a patriotic parade in their classroom after making cards for the veterans at the Walla Walla Veterans' home.

Eighth graders at St. Joseph Marquette School posed by a rock climbing wall as part of a photographic "scavenger hunt."

A kindergarten student at St. Joseph School, Kennewick, dressed up as a teacher to celebrate Catholic Schools Week.

Students at Christ the Teacher School in Yakima dressed up for Catholic Schools Week.

La Salle students delivered goody bags to students at St. Joseph Marquette School.

A Catholic Schools Week Mass was held at Holy Family Parish in Yakima.