

We are rapidly approaching Lent and the spiritual benefits of observing ancient traditions of the Church. When we say "Lent" – we immediately think of ashes on their foreheads, not eating meat on Fridays, or practices like the stations of the cross. These are all good things, *but* they are not what the Church asks us to focus on. The three traditions of our Lenten observance are prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

From the Pastor

Prayer: 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 Catechumens who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. We might pray that Our Lady of Grace community will be truly renewed in their baptismal commitment at Easter.

In addition to your individual prayer, there are many communal prayer opportunities at Our Lady of Grace every year, including Lauds (Morning Prayer) after the morning mass Tuesday through Saturday. Those who have attended these services have found them deeply reflective, with a focus on the psalms and breaking open the Word of God. As one of our Lectors reflected, the Voice of God spoke at Jesus' transfiguration and said "Listen to him." She urged us simply to "listen." That's the essence of prayer.

Fasting: Fasting is one of the most ancient practices linked to Lent. Simply put, fasting is the opposite of feasting. It means going without food and/or drink. Not just cutting down, but going without. Some may remember the old rule of fasting before receiving Communion: from midnight on, no food or drink (not even water). This practice began in the fourth century, and continued until 1957.

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 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." (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy # 110). Fasting is an aid to prayer, as the pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God. 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)."

Besides helping us to not take food for granted, fasting can be healthy (for those who are able) because it cleans out our body. More than that, it activates our mind and spirit, directing energy that would have been spent on digestion. Usually our bodies spend more energy on digesting than on anything else. If we significantly reduce our food consumption, or as some do, have only water for 24 hours, we have a great store of energy not usually available, which can drive us to thoughts much deeper than usual.

Fasting should be linked to our concern for those who are forced to fast by poverty, those who suffer from the injustices of our economic and political structures. Abstaining from meat traditionally linked us to the poor, who could seldom afford meat for their meals. It can do the same today only if we remember the purpose of abstinence and embrace it as a spiritual link to those whose meals are sparse and simple. Avoiding meat while eating lobster misses the whole point! By experiencing hunger in our fasting, we become more closely in touch with those who have little to eat, the poor, and that leads to the final Lenten practice: almsgiving.

Almsgiving: It should be obvious at this point that almsgiving, linked to our baptismal commitment, 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 justice are integral elements of the Christian way of life we began when we were baptized.

St. Augustine wrapped it all up: "Let us by our prayers, add the wings of piety to our alms deeds and fasting, so that they may fly more readily to God."

In Christ Jesus and St. Augustine,
Fr. Gregory Heidenblut, O.S.A.



IT'S MARDI GRAS TIME !

Mark your calendars! Invite a friend! Family Mardi Gras Night! All families are invited to attend 2015 Family Mardi Gras on Tuesday, **February 17th** from 6:30pm - 8:30pm in the Stack Center. Hosted by the Faith Formation Center, this fun evening begins with a potluck dinner followed by games. We end with a transition to Lent, as we set the room for Ash Wednesday Soup Meal.

Mark your calendars! Invite a friend! To rsvp or sign up to help, please contact the Faith Formation Center 510-582-9266 or email ffc@olgcv.org.

LENTEN LECTURE SERIES

*Reclaiming Our First Love:
God's Call to Holiness of Life*

All are invited to Fr. Greg's Lenten Lecture series on four Wednesdays in Lent following our soup meals.

By virtue of our baptism into Christ, God has called each of us into a deeper relationship with Himself. We find this calling to be triune; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This lecture series is intended to provide proven methods and examples, based on the teachings found in Sacred Scripture and the Church, on how to reclaim our first love - Jesus Christ - and how to live a life founded on God's word and the Tradition of the Catholic Church.

The lecture will begin at the end of our soup meals; around 7:00 p.m. and last until 8:30 p.m. The four Wednesday evenings for this lecture series are as follows:

- Wednesday, **February 25th** - Personal Evaluation (Inventory): Where We Are as Lay Catholics
- Wednesday, **March 4th** - Jesus, Our Model for Life as Catholic Christians
- Wednesday, **March 11th** - Where It All Begins: Following Jesus and Asceticism
- Wednesday, **March 25th** - Socio-political dimension of the radical following of Jesus

The lecture series is intended to provide a deeper understanding and more intimate relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

PRESIDENTS' DAY PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday, **February 16th** is a federal holiday. The Parish Offices will be closed on Monday and will re-open on Tuesday at 9:00am. The entire parish staff wishes all a safe and relaxing holiday.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES FEBRUARY 18th

All Ash Wednesday services will be in the Church. The schedule is as follows: 7:00am Mass, 8:30am All School Mass, 12:00Noon Communion and Distribution of Ashes, 6:00pm Mass, followed by Soup Meal in Stack Center.

ASH WEDNESDAY SOUP MEAL

Please plan on joining us for a simple meal of soup and bread each Wednesday during Lent. It will be a time for fellowship and families coming together. Our Soup Meal follows the 6:00pm Mass. The Ash Wednesday (**February 18th**) Soup Meal is sponsored by The Faith Formation Center. Volunteers and donations are still needed, call 582-9266 to see how you can help. We thank the Faith Formation Families for their ministry of hospitality for this meal. Donations will be accepted to benefit Operation Rice Bowl.

OLG FOLK GROUP CD *Our Lord's Grace*

During this Holy Season of Lent allow the Folk Group's music to accompany you through this time of prayer and Reconciliation with God and lead you into the joy of Easter and Pentecost. You will find on this 16-track CD songs like "Day of Peace," "I Hunger and Thirst," "My God, My God" and "O Sacred Head," and many more. The CD is available for purchase in the parish office. Share this prayerful gift with your family and friends and don't forget yourself! The CDs are \$15.00. Proceeds from the sales benefit upgrading the OLG sound system.

Thanks for your support and may God's mercy and peace embrace you during this most holy Lenten Season.

Our Lady of Grace Folk Group

REGULATIONS FOR LENT

Abstinence and Fasting:

Abstinence from eating meat is to be observed on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays during Lent. This applies to all persons 14 and older. The law of fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday applies to all persons 18 or older and younger than 59.

Fasting means that one full meatless meal per day may be eaten. Two other meatless meals may be taken sufficient to maintain strength, but together they should not equal a full meal. Liquids, including milk and fruit juice, may be taken between meals. If health or ability to work is affected, fasting does not oblige. Private, self-imposed observance of fasting on Lenten weekdays is strongly recommended. Parents should ensure that children who are not bound by the laws of fast and abstinence are taught an authentic sense of penance, conversion and reconciliation.

Lenten Observance:

Catholics are encouraged to participate in Holy Mass and in the Sacrament of Penance during Lent, and parishes are encouraged to provide regular and frequent opportunities for such participation. Likewise encouraged are devotions such as Stations of the Cross, vigils and prayer services (with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, if opportune). Traditional practices - including increased prayer, Scripture and spiritual reading, alms, personal self-denial in food and drink, increased care and service to the sick and needy - are also suggested.

Easter Duty:

All initiated Catholics are bound by the obligations of receiving Communion at least once a year and to confess sacramentally all serious sins not previously acknowledged in individual Confession. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter duty season, which is from the first Sunday of Lent until Trinity Sunday.

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21st**



Our next Holy Hour with the Blessed Sacrament:
Saturday, February 21st
Following the 8:30am Mass
Private Devotion
In the Chapel
All are welcome.

SUNDAY COLLECTION

Stewardship of treasure involves trust in God. You have to really believe in God's Providence and trust that if you give ten percent of your income to the Church and charity for example, God will help you live on the rest.

Offerings of February 8th

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Sunday Plate: | \$ 8,375.00 |
| Last Year this week | \$ 7,893.00 |
| Weekly Budgeted Goal: | \$ 8,815.00 |
| Year-to-date this year: | \$ 49,066.00 |
| Year-to-date last year: | \$ 45,726.00 |

February Budgeted Expenses \$60,000.00

May God bless your continuing generosity.



Your Prayers Are Requested

Please lift up in your prayer those many among us who are ill and those who have asked for our prayerful remembrance:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Jose Cisneros | Raymond Lowe |
| Kathleen Denning | Richard Martin |
| Estela Enriquez | Florence Sharp |
| Mary Franks | Josephine Sisler |
| Byron Griffith | James Van Wert |
| Liz Griffith | Yvonne Wheeler |
| Nicholas Guinea | |

As we pray for an end to war and violence in our world, let us remember in prayer those family members of our parish community serving on active duty, including:

- DAVID SANCHEZ MICHAEL SANCHEZ**

Please remember in your prayers the recently deceased in our parish families and all who mourn the loss of a loved one.

DENISE MARINA FANTONE-JENNISON

**Gospel for The First Sunday of Lent
(February 22nd) Mark 1:12-15**

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

**WINGS
(Women in God's Spirit)**

We invite all women to join us for WINGS.

WINGS is a faith enhancement group that encourages Spiritual growth through prayer, scripture study, catechesis, life sharing and community.

We meet at Transfiguration Church
Marion Room

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 19th
9:15 to 11:15 a.m.

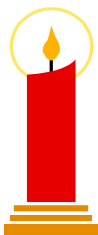
Father Mark Wiesner

Topic: Lent: A Time For Joyful Growth

NEW PARISHIONER REGISTRATION

We extend a warm welcome to new parishioners and guests. If you would like to register or update information, please stop by Stack Center on either the 2nd or 4th Sunday of the month immediately following the 9:00am Mass. There will be a hospitality volunteer there to greet you at the New Parishioner Registration Table. We are grateful to our volunteers for providing this ministry on our behalf.

Next registration date: February 22nd.



**DEVOTIONAL CANDLES
OUR LADY OF GRACE**

Candles for our candle stand are available for purchase in the Parish Office or in the Sacristy after mass on Sundays. The candles will burn for 5 days. The cost per candle is \$3.00. *The glass globes in the candle stand must be left in the church. Simply insert the plastic candle purchased from the Parish in to the globe in the candle stand.*

THIS WEEK

Sunday, February 15th:

Coffee & Donuts After All Masses

Children's Liturgy of the Word
9:00am--Mass

Spanish Mass
2:00pm--Church

Monday, February 16th:

*Presidents Day
Offices Closed*

Tuesday, February 17th:

Bible Scripture Study
9:30am--Parish Office

Religious Education Classes
3:45pm--Stack Center

Thursday, February 19th

Serenity Group
8:15pm— Stack Center

Saturday, February 21st:

Eucharistic Adoration
Following 8:30am Mass--Chapel

Sunday, February 22nd:

Coffee & Donuts After All Masses

Children's Liturgy of the Word
9:00am--Mass

Religious Education Classes
10:30am--Stack Center

Youth Ministry
After 9:00am Mass in the Gym

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL COLLECTION

The last Sunday of every month our St. Vincent de Paul Society members are outside to receive your financial donations. Your generosity enables this ministry to help the less fortunate in our parish community. With your support our community families will be more able to handle the economic challenges that are impacting their lives. Thank you for your past support and current generosity.

Mass Intentions for the Week

Please note: During the school year, our 8:30am Monday Mass will be celebrated in the Church. Unless otherwise noted all other weekday masses will be held in the Chapel.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16th (CHURCH)

Blessed Simon of Cascia, priest
8:30am Louis Rodriguez (D)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17th

The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order
7:00am Thomas Hayes (D)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18th

ASH WEDNESDAY

7:00am *Mass with Ashes*
8:30am *Mass (School Liturgy)*
12:Noon *Communion Service and Ashes*
6:00pm *Mass with Ashes*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19th

7:00am Wayne Clark (D)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20th

7:00am Lee, Yaka, & Frank Music (D)

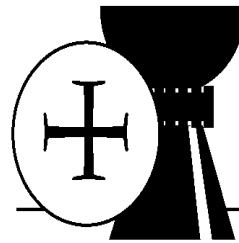
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21st

St. Peter Damian, Bishop, Doctor of the Church
8:30am John McCann (D)

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

February 9th through February 15th

Monday: Genesis 4:1-15, 25; Mark 8:11-13
Tuesday: Genesis 6:5-8; Mark 8:14-21
Wednesday: Joel 2:12-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
Thursday: Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Luke 9:22-25
Friday: Isaiah 58:1-9a; Matthew 9:14-15
Saturday: Isaiah 58:9b-14; Luke 5:27-32
Sunday: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46; 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1; Mark 1:40-45



THE LORD IS PRESENT TO US IN THE GIFT OF THE EUCHARIST

©Religious Graphics, Ltd.

SCRIP NEWS

Did you know scrip is available year round in the Parish Office? Buy gift cards (at face value) for various retailers through the Parish office, helping the school earn 2%-17% per certificate. Stop by the Parish office and look over the list. Thank you for your support!



ROSARY FOR WORLD PEACE

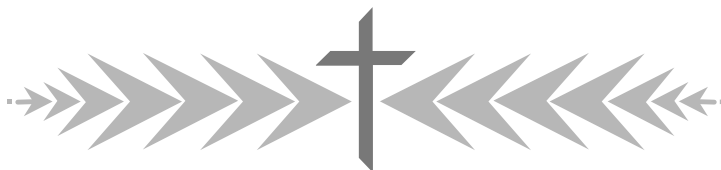
The rosary will be recited for World Peace after the 8:30 am Mass each Monday in the Church. Please join us.

Misa en Español

A las 2:00pm

SPANISH MASS

Fr. Greg will be offering a mass in Spanish one Sunday of every month at 2:00pm in the Church. The next Spanish Mass will be Sunday, **March 15th** at 2:00pm.



EXECUTION ALERTS

The following executions are scheduled to take place in **February**:

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|----|
| February 19th | John Grant | OK |
| February 19th | Tommy Arthur | AL |
| February 26th | Jerry Correll | FL |

We ask your prayers for these persons, for the victims of their crimes, and for their families.

THANK THEM WITH YOUR SUPPORT

Please support our advertisers who make our weekly bulletin possible and so generously support our parish. We are grateful to them !

This week we extend our gratitude to:

COMFORCARE HOME CARE