Lent: Encountering the Mercy of God

Remember, Repent, Believe

As ashes are imposed on Ash Wednesday we are exhorted to three actions: remember, repent and believe. We are called to remember the brevity and fragility of our lives. We are called to repent for the sin that our human weakness has allowed to enter our lives and hearts. We are called to believe that we can be forgiven, reconciled, saved and raised up. Please join us for Mass on Ash Wednesday as we enter into this season of renewal.

Ash Wednesday Masses

7:00 a.m. at the Church of the Holy Redeemer
8:30 a.m. at the Church of St. Mary, Tracy
12:00 p.m. at the Church of the Holy Redeemer
5:00 p.m. at the Church of the Holy Redeemer
6:00 p.m. at the Church of St. Mary, Cottonwood
7:00 p.m. at the Church of St. Michael, Milroy
7:00 p.m. at the Church of St. Mary, Tracy

The Church offers us three penitential disciplines during this season: prayer, fasting, and alms giving. Here are some ways to accomplish these disciplines.

Prayer

"Daily Reflections for Lent"

We are making the Lenten copy of "Daily Reflections for Lent, Not by Bread Alone" available to all of our parishioners. These daily reflections and prayer guides are a wonderful way to follow the rhythm of Lent. Please take a copy home with you and use it with your family.

Bible Study "The Gospel of Mark"

The Church of St. Michael in Milroy will serve a soup supper after the Tuesday, 5:30 p.m. Mass starting on February 24th through March 24th. The study group will meet after supper at 6:45 pm. Join us for Mass, Stations of the Cross and Bible study.

Bible Study "Foretold"

The Church of St. Mary's in Cottonwood is hosting a Lenten Bible study video series starting February 22nd. Sessions are held on Sunday's after the 9 am Mass in the gathering space of St. Mary's Church. A light breakfast will be served.

Soup and Sermon

The Church of the Holy Redeemer will host Wednesday Soup and Sermon gatherings during Lent beginning on February 25th. Lunch will begin to be served at 11:45 a.m. and the sermon by one of our priests will begin at 12:10 p.m. Our topic is "Faces of Conversion: Six Biblical Stories for Lent".

Stations of the Cross

An ancient devotion of the Church that is observed in each of our parishes is to accompany the Lord through his passion in the praying of the Stations of the Cross. Each parish offers opportunities to celebrate throughout Lent on the following schedule:

Church of St. Mary, Tracy: 2:00 p.m. Fridays & 6:30 p.m. on Fridays
Church of St. Michael, Milroy: 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays
Church of the Holy Redeemer: 1:40 p.m. on Wednesdays at the school & 5:30 p.m. on Fridays
Campus Religious Center: 3:00 p.m. on Tuesdays
Church of St. Mary, Cottonwood: 5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays

There are some weekly variations of this schedule, so please check the weekly bulletin.

Fasting and Abstinence

The catechism reminds us that "*Jesus' call to conversion and penance . . . does not aim first at outward works, 'sackcloth and ashes', 'fasting and mortification', but at the conversion of heart, interior conversion. However, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance.*"

Fasting:

Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 are required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Fasting consists of eating only one regular sized meal during the day with two other smaller meals also allowed. Fasting forbids eating between meals.

Abstinence:

Catholics, 14 years of age or older, must abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays of Lent. ***Please note that the abstinence of eating meat does not lapse because of your age.***

Almsgiving

The parishes of our area will be participating in Catholic Relief Service's annual ***Rice Bowl Program.*** Through our participation in the Rice Bowl Program we learn of the plight of the poor throughout the world and are encouraged to donate to their relief. You will receive Rice Bowl materials before or on Ash Wednesday. You will have the opportunity to return your gifts to the parish on Holy Thursday.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

The season of Lent is a time to seek the Lord's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In addition to our regular Reconciliation times, we will be having an AFC Communal Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Sunday, March 22nd at 3:30 pm at Holy Redeemer Church.

Upcoming Catholic School Events

Saturday, February 21 at 5:00 pm: St. Mary's **Winter Warm Up** at the Caboose in Tracy

Thursday, February 26, 5:30 pm: Holy Redeemer's **Charge Up the Night** at the 5 Family Ranch in Marshall