

THE FATIMA FAITHFUL

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Welcome to the 4th Edition of The Fatima Faithful newsletter. This is published once a month, shared as an insert in the Bulletin, available on our website and FaceBook page. We would love to know what you think and include suggestions you may have for future articles. Emailing newsletter@ourladyoffatima.org is the most effective way to reach out. Vicki Johnson, Editor

Take a closer look at Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the Lenten season. I find it odd that people desire to proudly wear the mark of ashes upon their forehead for the world to see. After all, these ashes that we dare to wear, are a mark of our sinfulness not a source of pride. They serve as a reminder that we have transgressed against God and His Holy Commandments and are thus in need of His abundant mercy.

If we go to Sacred Scripture, we will see that ashes are an expression of mourning, mortality, and penance. For example, we find in Daniel Chapter 9, verse 3: "I turned to the Lord God, pleading in earnest prayer, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes." As the minister traces the cross upon your forehead, they will either say "Repent, and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Traditionally these ashes came from palm branches blessed and distributed on Palm Sunday. To use these branches is to remind us that the crowd joyfully welcomed Christ into Jerusalem and yet He would be condemned to die for their sinfulness. We too are sinful and should regret that because of man's sinfulness Christ had to die brutally upon the cross for us to be forgiven.

As we enter into Lent via Ash Wednesday may we undergo the true penitential reality of this Lenten season and faithfully allow ourselves to return to the Lord whose mercy endures forever.

Fr. Dustin Collins

Stations of the Cross by Toni Jacobs

Many of the saints received great graces by regularly reflecting on Jesus crucified. Lent is a natural time for us to reflect on this great mystery. The Stations of the Cross help us to do this through a series of images depicting Jesus on the day of his crucifixion. The devotion grew out of imitations of Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, which is believed to be the actual path Jesus walked to Mount Calvary. The spiritual journey that we take with Jesus is usually accompanied by prayer and meditation on the Passion of Christ.

Traditionally, there are 14 images arranged in numbered order along a path. The faithful travel from image to image, in order, stopping at each station to pray and reflect. This can be done individually or in a procession, most commonly during Lent on Fridays, in a spirit of reparation for the sufferings and insults that Jesus endured during his passion.

There are numerous Stations of the Cross booklets from various saints and popes, including St. Francis, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, Mary's Way of the Cross, and Scriptural Ways. They are

available in many Catholic bookstores or online.

Depictions of the Stations are also located inside churches. Did you know that the Stations at Our Lady of Fatima are non-traditional? They depict only scriptural scenes. There are also beautiful Stations of the Cross that are relatively new, and they are located behind the Social Hall. It may be a bit cold to go outside during Lent, but what a wonderful sacrifice it can be as we reflect on Christ's Passion (and suffer a little bit ourselves!).

One way to walk these Stations is to simply stand below each as you pray the Our Father, Hail Mary, & Glory Be and reflect on each depiction. We may not be able to go to the Holy Land anytime soon, but this treasure of our Catholic faith can be just the pilgrimage we need to lead us to a closer walk with our Lord.

Group Stations of the Cross at Our Lady of Fatima will be held every Friday during Lent at 6:00PM in English and 7:30PM in Spanish. In between the two there will be a meatless Lenten meal in the Social Hall. Hope to see you there!



The Helping Hand



ON FORMED. Remember to sign up for this free and extensive Catholic resource service, including top rated videos, audio books and Bible studies.



- 1) Daily emailed Lenten Reflections
- 2) Into the Desert-A Lenten Study on Prayer
- 3) A Lent to Remember: A Lenten Encounter with Mercy

REPENT MAY NOT MEAN WHAT YOU THINK IT DOES!

Mark 1:14-20 are the first words of Christ's ministry: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent (metanoia), and believe in the gospel." Metanoia means "change of mind", yet the full meaning is somewhat more because this kind of repentance is not about regret or guilt or shame. It implies making a decision to turn around, to face a new direction; to examine yourself to find those habits that need to be changed. The term, metanoia, was used consistently in the literature of that time to express a fundamental change in thinking that leads to a fundamental change in behavior and/or way of living. In 2006, an ecumenical group of scholars published a study of repentance in the Bible and the Church. After "a thorough examination of Hellenistic Jewish writings," the study found that for Jews living at the time of Jesus, "repentance" meant "a fundamental change in thinking and living."

Throughout the centuries there has been and continues to be disagreement regarding our traditional interpretation of

repent, which in most dictionaries (and in the minds of most Christians) carries the primary meaning to look back on past behavior with sorrow, self-reproach, or contrition.

In *Repentance: A Cosmic Shift of Mind and Heart*, Edward J. Anton notes that neither Jesus nor John the Baptist says to look back in sorrow. For St Paul, "*metanoia* is a transfiguration for your brain" that opens a new future-which is exactly what the gospel offers us!

Thus, English translators of the Christian Scriptures fail to find a proper corresponding word for metanoia, so they fall back upon the comfort and ease of the word repent. Yet repent carries with it a negative tone, almost an inhibition caused by guilt. Metanoia, on the other hand, forces a positive, proactive life-affirming response. When Jesus calls people to "repent," to "metanoia," could it be that he means: "Change your thought processes and go beyond your mind's present state of limitations"? Is a "conversion" more closely aligned with Jesus' call to us? -Vicki Johnson

Fasting and Abstinence

During Lent we have the opportunity to prepare for Easter by the ancient practices of fasting and abstinence. These practices are known to draw us closer to the Lord.

Catholics are required to FAST on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, as well as to ABSTAIN from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent.

Fasting (limiting our meals) applies to those between the age of 18 and 59, while abstinence (not eating meat) applies to anyone age 18 or older. Exceptions are made for pregnant women and those with certain health conditions.

Did you know that we are also required to observe EVERY Friday of the year as days of penance? If we choose to eat meat on Fridays outside of Lent, we are obligated to substitute some other form of penance on those days.

Many also choose to voluntarily abstain from various foods or activities during Lent. This is not required by the Church, but it does help us to better experience the sacrificial nature of the season.

-Deacon Scott Maentz

HAITI OUTREACH MISSION

Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas with 80% population living below the poverty level. Did you know Our Lady of Fatima parish has been active in Haiti for over 29 years! Our Mission is a member of the Parish Twinning Program of America (<http://www.parishprogram.org/>) who partners parishes in the US and Canada with churches and schools in Haiti. For the past 15 years we have been twinned with the College Monsignor Jean Baptist Decoste in Thomonde, Haiti. The College (Haitian education system is similar to the French education system) is a high school (6-12th grades) serving more than 300 students located in Thomonde, Haiti. Our Mission of Education supports a critical pillar of Haiti's future.

Thomonde, a rural town of approximately 3,800, is located in the central part of Haiti. Until recently the only way in and out of the town was dirt roads and there was no electricity. Even so the people are vibrant and friendly!

Our parish Mission sponsors 100% of the teachers' salaries and supports the operating budget of the school. As needed, we send money for food in case

of emergencies (especially during hurricane season). Once per year (March/April) we send school supplies and medications donated by our members to Haiti through the PTPA's annual container shipment. In past years we have been able to supply the school with larger capital projects such as a generator and desks. This year we are working to repair the roof of the school.

Our financial support comes from the members of our parish family through weekly collections (green envelopes) and special events (Harvest of Blessings). 100% of the collected resources go to direct support of our school in Haiti.

How you can participate in our parish Mission: 1) Pray for the students, teachers and families of our Mission school. 2) Participate in the school supply drive in the Spring. 3) Participate in the Harvest of Blessings. 4) Donate using the monthly green envelopes or Faith Direct. 5) Join our committee – we meet the 2nd Monday of every month!

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