

February 11, 2018

***From Fr. Jim . . .***



**Lent is coming.** This Wednesday, February 14 is Ash Wednesday. With the markings of an ashen cross on our foreheads and the words, “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel,” the holy season of Lent begins. Please join us for the celebration of the Eucharist with reception of ashes at 7pm.

Lent is a time for renewal and conversion. The Scripture for Ash Wednesday reminds us that traditionally it is through prayer, fasting and almsgiving or acts of charity that renewal and conversion can happen. With this in mind, Catholic Christians usually ask themselves this question, “What will I do for Lent this year specifically through acts of charity, prayer and fasting that will allow me to live my faith more fully and closer in union with God’s life, love and grace? This happens individually and communally.

Lent is also a time to journey with the Elect – those who have not been baptized and who are seeking baptism at the Easter Vigil. It is a time to journey with those who have been baptized in other Christian faiths and who want full communion with the Catholic faith through the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. At St. Leo, our Lenten prayer especially includes these two groups of people from our partner parishes. Our Book of Intentions includes names from these parishes: St. Ignatius, St. John, Westchester, Corpus Christi, Cincinnati, St. Savior, St. Joseph, Strongsville, St. John the Baptist, Harrison and Our Lady of the Visitation. Please hold these people in your personal Lenten prayer, also. This year, St. Leo is very blessed to be welcoming a family into the Church with the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation at our Easter Vigil. If you remember, since the Fall, we have been offering classes in English for anyone who needs the Sacraments of Initiation. Their catechists inform me that this family will be ready to receive these Sacraments at the Easter Vigil. Also, there is a group of about 34 people from St. Leo who have been baptized Catholic but have not received the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation. They are receiving instructions now in Spanish. They will complete their initiation into the church at our Sunday Eucharist on the Sunday after Easter. So this Lent, we will journey together with those from our partner parishes and from St. Leo who are taking their final steps to be initiated or complete their initiation into the Faith. During this special time to get closer to God, let us hold each other in prayer.

Please check this bulletin for additional prayer times during Lent and suggestions for fasting and almsgiving. Whatever we choose to do during this holy season, may we grow closer to the Lord and to each other and learn to live more fully in his image and likeness.