

Pastor's Ponderings . . .

With the mark of an ashen cross and the words, "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel," the holy season of Lent begins, Wednesday, February 14, 2018.

There is a story of a little boy who was waiting for his mother to come out of the grocery store. As he waited, he was approached by a man who asked, "Son can you tell me where the Post Office is?" The little boy replied, "Sure just go straight down this street a couple of blocks and turn to your right." The man thanked the boy kindly and said, "I am the new pastor in town. I'd like for you to come to church on Sunday. I'll show you how to get to heaven." The little boy replied with a chuckle, "Awww, come on...You don't even know the way to the Post Office."

Lent is a time for finding the way to heaven that the Lord has made for us. We renew and recommit to this way by turning away from the sin in our lives and adhering more faithfully to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a time to walk the spiritual journey through this world to the next one seriously. It is a time for recommitting and committing more deeply to the life of our baptism and for acknowledging Jesus as our only way to heaven and to salvation. It is a time to prepare others for the Sacrament of Baptism and for walking closely together on the trail of salvation.

This year, we have adults and children preparing for all three sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist and we have a number of children and adults who are already baptized Catholics and who are completing their initiation into the Church by receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. A mother and six of her children will be baptized and receive the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation at the Easter Vigil. Over fifty adults and children, who are already baptized in the Catholic Tradition, will complete their initiation into the Catholic Faith by receiving the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation during the Easter season at St. Leo. "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15) They join us and we join

with them to trust Jesus to be our way, truth and life to the Father. We pray with them and support them as they prepare to receive these Sacraments.



Lent is a time to admit that we don't always know the way, on our own and we turn to Jesus to show us the way. It is a time to admit that we often get sidetracked or tempted into detours and so we seek the Lord's forgiveness and mercy and begin walking a straighter path with the Lord as our guide. It is a time through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to enter deeply into the paschal mystery of dying to self so that others may truly live. It is a time to acknowledge that dying leads to eternal life because the Lord suffered and died for us so that we might share with him the joy and glory of an everlasting kingdom. It is a time to feast on the mercy of God as food and nourishment for the sacrifice of self and the carrying of the cross that is of utmost importance as we learn to walk in the footsteps of Christ to a life where pain and suffering are no longer.

So, what do we want to do, as individuals and as a parish for Lent in the ways of prayer, fasting and almsgiving? Remember, whatever we decide to do, it should be leading us in the way of heaven and witness to others that all of us are heaven bound. It's time for all of us to grab our walking sticks, put on our hiking boots, take the Lord's hand and keep walking with our eyes fixed on heaven. Happy Lent, Everyone!



St. Leo's Prayer Wall is a place where all, regardless of age, race or creed, are invited to sing God's praises, give Him thanks, and/or call upon His presence for help in times of need. The wall, a place of prayer for all peoples (much like the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem), captures the faces of the community, as well as peacemakers and saints who have inspired us through the ages.



The Wall is a place for staff and volunteers, youth groups, community meetings, and for individuals who pass through our parking lot on the way to work, school, etc., to pray, reflect and pause. We invite you to share in this special way of prayer, joy, and thanksgiving. Praise God!

God cares about every need in your life and knows what you need even before you ask Him for help. Our St. Leo the Great parish community promises to remember you in our private prayer, as well as in our communal prayer, which is to say that we are praying for you all the time.

All prayer requests are held in strictest confidence. **Send your prayer request to:** Saint Leo the Great Church, 2573 Saint Leo Place, Cincinnati, OH 45225. You can also submit your prayer request online at: <http://saint-leo/WorksofMercy/PrayerWallMinistry.aspx>.