

March 6, 2022
From Fr. Jim. . .

Lenten Reflection: I have a piece of art by a Mexican artist who makes sculptures out of clay and then paints them with bright colors – yellow, orange, blue, red, purple, green. All the sculptures he calls “The Tree of Life.” Many of these sculptures have secular themes and many have biblical themes that image the Tree of life in the Garden of Eden and tell the story of creation and salvation.

The piece that I have, as it keeps its shape of a tree, tells the story of Noah’s ark. Amid all the beautiful flowers, fruit and abundant life, animals are safely on the ark enjoying the life of salvation and there are animals climbing up the side of the ark to get into the boat of life and salvation. It’s as if the life in the Garden of Eden is being restored for all creatures and things are returning to the way they were at the beginning of creation.

Jesus suffered, died, and rose for all of us that we might know the salvation of God and join with all creation in being restored to a fullness of life with God. We are in the boat of salvation. God wants and desires for us through Jesus and with their Spirit to live in union with the life of God now and forever.

The forty days of Lent can be like a retreat for the whole church where the people of God examine this reality and grow together more deeply in understanding and appreciating the life, love, and salvation that God so generously shares with us. As we understand and accept this reality, Lent becomes a time when we strive to live more closely in union with what we believe and with the life we know God is giving us.

God has given us a promise that God will never push us out of the boat and that we always have a place in it no matter what. When we feel otherwise, more than likely, the attractions of the world and selfishness have lured us back into the troubled waters of sin and death or we are blinded to see the place that God has prepared for us or deaf to God’s call to take our rightful place.

Lent, then, is a wonderful opportunity for us to repent and to seek God’s forgiveness and mercy, to turn away from sin and remain as faithful to the Gospel as we possibly can. It is a time for us to walk with catechumens and candidates for full communion with the church and to examine our lives and our faith journey together with the Lenten Gospels. It is a time for prayer, fasting and giving alms (works of mercy and charity). We do all of this not to earn our place back onto the boat of salvation or to convince God to keep us on the boat but solely as a response to being saved and to being in union with the life of God. Quite frankly, this is what is expected of us as branches on the Tree of God’s Life. We pray, fast, forgive, and live in charity with one another because God has truly saved us from sin and death.

So, what do we want to do this Lent to celebrate our place on the Tree of God’s life? How will living with God’s forgiveness and mercy, prayer, and the rituals of the church, fasting and giving alms help us to do this? The boat is sailing. Praise God that there is a place for us.

“Jesus taught us that the diabolical senselessness of violence is answered with God’s weapons, with prayer and fasting. May the Queen of Peace preserve the world from the madness of war.” ~~
Pope Francis

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINAR- March 23-

April 20, 2022- Do you want to experience God’s love, power and presence? The Life in the Spirit Seminar is a life-transforming

experience where you

will discover Christ’s personal and unconditional love for YOU.

Listen to dynamic teachings where you can encounter Christ personally and also experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This seminar will take place on 5 consecutive Wednesday evenings from 7:00 p.m. -9:00 p.m. at Saint Ignatius Parish in Loyola Hall, located at 5222 North Bend Road. For more information or to register call Mary Ann at 513.378.4431 or visit www.LRC1.org

Cincinnati Right to Life is hosting the annual Hearbeats for Life 5K to support life in Greater Cincinnati. This provides an opportunity to meet like-minded individuals and support the incredible work of Cincinnati Right to Life. Please visit CincinnatiRightToLife.org to purchase tickets and find out more!

GARDEN RENOVATION – This spring/summer we are looking to renovate our community garden to a Mary/Mediation Garden to allow the vegetable beds to rest for a year. We are looking for volunteers to help prep the garden, weed, plant flowers, clean, re-structure as well as maintain the area. If this is something that interest you please send an email to akleemanstleo@aol.com

The Pillars of Lent –As we begin our Lenten Journey, reflect on how your prayers, fasting and almsgiving can guide you. As Pope Francis explains, these are “elements which, when lived sincerely, can transform life and provide a sure foundation for dignity and fraternity.” How can practicing the Lenten pillars transform your life and the lives of our sisters and brothers around the world? Visit csrcricebowl.org to learn more.

You can **read the Sunday bulletin** at: www.saint-leo.org/Publications/StLeoSundayBulletin

You can **read Fr. Jim’s letter** at:

www.saint-leo.org/Publications/FromtheDeskofFrJim

One way to help with Lenten Almsgiving is to Donate!! We would love to receive gift cards to help with our everyday needs, please consider Staples, Amazon, Kroger, or Home Depot when donating. You can see our latest needs on our Amazon Wish List Link https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1Y6S276N39W08?ref_=wl_share. **Please call the office at 513-921-1044 if you have questions or would like to donate these items.**

