

From the Pastor's Heart . . .

For 40 days now, since Ash Wednesday, we have been more deeply involved in fasting, almsgiving and prayers. We revisited the dietary laws, renewed in the early 1960's thanks to Vatican II, with the hope that we might follow the Lord in imitation of the 40 days he fasted for us in the desert and recalling the 40 years our ancient brothers and sisters in Faith wandered in the desert longing for that Holy Land...a place they would reside free from slavery, from harm to connect with the living God.

Jesus often taught us to be careful not to overlook the poor who will always be with us and as he sacrificed his life for us on the wood of the cross, again in imitation of him, we sacrifice in the same measure for others. As I was happily taught in Catholic School: "Mr. Thorne, nailed to the wood of the cross are not the leftovers of God!" The Lord did not nickel and dime us, why would we ever nickel and dime Him?

Finally besides fasting and almsgiving, we have intensified our parish prayers during Lent in providing two daily masses, Sunday evening Prayer Services with Benediction, Tuesday evening and Saturday afternoon as well as our Communal Lenten Penance Service... all opportunities to humbly admit our sin, seek God's mercy, which is always there for the asking, and celebrate reconciliation.

Truth be told, nothing can separate us from the love of God except ourselves. The nature of love involves freedom and we are free to stay more than an arm's length from the Lord, his love and mercy. I hope Lent has been for you what it has been for me...a joyous time where through you, your goodness and fidelity I've come to know and love the Lord with more single heartedness.

I am keenly aware of your simple eating habits these 40 days as in the soup suppers so many of you participated on Sunday evenings with me. I am very moved by the almsgiving as you came forward for holy communion during Lent...there were numerous \$100 bills and \$50's and \$20's dropped in the basket...one teenager gave up going to the movies and handed in over \$100 to me for the poor...that is self sacrificing alms giving.

Last year we collected over \$10,000 for Alms shared with four charities our Social Concerns Ministry identified. Finally, the increase of individuals at our 7:30am and 12 noon Masses was inspiring to me as you came to thank and praise God each day. God has been good to us and you have been good to God these 40 days.

My Easter prayer is that we more deeply realize how loved we are by God, how much he endured to reveal his great love for us and that we would love him back by learning better to love and accept ourselves, our neighbor and our God. May the Lord who began this good work in you bring it to completion. That, my dear sisters and brothers, is Resurrection.

Warm Easter wishes,

*Fr. Tom
Pastor*