



## Preparing for Lent

As we enter into Lent this year, Pope Francis invites us *“to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter us. I ask all of you do this unfailingly each day. Thus the season of lent should be lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God’s mercy. It is the opportune moment to change our lives! This is the time to allow our hearts to be touched, to listen to the cry of innocent people who are deprived of their property, their dignity, their feelings and even their very lives. God never tires of reaching out to us and is always ready to listen. All one needs to do is to accept the invitation to conversion....”* Francis

Traditionally Catholics are obliged to sacrifice or “give up something” for Lent. Another way to approach this is to **add** something that would be pleasing to God to your day. Volunteering your time to an organization that serves those less fortunate, making some charitable gift (almsgiving), or trying to be more kind are all good ways to add to the Lenten journey.

### **Three Pillars of Lent**

1. **Prayer** – Spending more time in prayer during Lent will bring us closer to God.
2. **Fasting** – to fast means to consume only one full meal and two small portions of food per day. Those aged 18-59 should fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Those 14 and over should abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays of Lent. The very young, the elderly and those who are ill are exempted from fasting and abstinence.
3. **Almsgiving** – charitable giving. This can be giving of our financial resources or of our time and energy. The Rice Bowl is a good way to eat simply and put some money aside for those who lack food – locally & internationally. Rice Bowls are available at both churches.

### **Reconciliation**

We are encouraged to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist during the Lenten-Easter Seasons. In addition to our regularly scheduled confessions on Saturdays, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered on Monday, Tuesday & Thursday, April 3, 4, 6 at 6:30 -7:30 PM at St. Pius X. On Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> there will be a Prayer Service of Reconciliation and confessions at 6:30PM at St. Pius X.

*“God never tires of forgiving. God is the loving Father who always pardons, who has that heart of mercy for us all. So let us too learn to be merciful to everyone.”* Francis