

Lent: 40 Days to Pray, Fast, Serve

Dear Parishioner,

For a full year, humanity has faced together the scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic. But together we have stood spiritually and physically strong, firm, and supportive of one another. Lent offers us an opportunity for sober reflections on our lives and conditions as Christians and parishioners. In light of our parish theme: Seeking Healing through Prayer and Kindness, we are so excited to announce some initiatives we are taking here at St. Isidore to help you grow spiritually this year, especially during the Lenten Season. We want to stay connected with you in prayer and study in person, on zoom, livestreams, and on the parish website.

1. Lent is a communal journey of repentance, rebuilding, and encountering Christ for our salvation. We want to journey together this Lent in our **Fasting, Praying and serving** as a community as it is always easier to do these things together. This year, St. Isidore is encouraging our community to fast as a family of faith. We need at least one person each day to be fasting. While you are fasting, the rest of us will be praying for you.

Together we are praying for an end to the virus, protection and wellbeing of our parish families, peace in our world, and for all the deceased of our parish and families. To ensure that every day is covered except Sundays, sign up to join the Communal Fast from the parish website. Fast time: **6 am-5pm**. You can choose to fast any day except Sunday.

Here is the Church's stands on fasting (from USCCB website):

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence. The norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until age 59. *When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal.* The norms concerning abstinence from meat are binding upon members of the Latin Catholic Church from age 14 onwards.

Christian tradition can name some reasons for fasting:

- For the Christian, fasting is ultimately about fasting from sin.
- Fasting reveals our dependence on God and not the resources of this world.
- Fasting is preparation for the sacraments—for the reception of grace.
- Fasting is a means of saving resources to give to the poor.
- Fasting is a means of self-discipline, chastity, and the restraining of the appetites.

2. Stations of the Cross: Each Sunday of Lent, starting Feb. 21st, we will have the family Stations of the Cross at 4:00 pm here at church and we will have them to be livestreamed so that families can join us from home. Each Tuesday of Lent, starting Feb. 23rd, we will have the Stations of the Cross following the 8:00 am Mass.

3. The Year of St. Joseph: On December 8, 2020, Pope Francis dedicated this year as the Year of St. Joseph to help us learn more about this amazing Saint and grow with him in faith. You can read the full Apostolic Letter from our parish website.

As part of the liturgical and spiritual activities and events to mark the year here at St. Isidore, we will continue to “pray together” the prayer of **Saint Joseph**, in concluding the General Intercessions during weekend Masses. Other spiritual and liturgical events will follow later. Visit the website to learn, follow, and receive **The Plenary Indulgence that is granted concerning the year of Saint Joseph**.

4. 40 Acts of Mercy: We encourage our parishioners to engage in communal and spiritual service by doing one act of mercy a day. The act can be a simple thing like praying for a specific person, a phone call to a parishioner, reaching out to assist or support someone, shoveling snow, doing grocery, picking medication, etc. It must be intentional and done for someone you have no natural obligation or responsibility to do such acts for them.

5. Health worker’s Mass and Anointing: Each year the month of March will be dedicated towards health workers and the sick. During Mass on March 6, 2021, we will be praying for health workers in our parish and beyond. Then during Mass on March 20, we will be praying for the sick and offer the sacrament of anointing for those who wish to receive it.

6. Operation Rice Bowl: All parishioners are encouraged to join in the Lenten Almsgiving project for the CRS RICE BOWL, as a response to the kindness component of our parish theme.

Please make use of our parish website for the many resources and opportunities available to assist you grow in your faith and Christian life.

Many blessings to you.

In Christ,

Fr. Andrew.