

When Lent Comes to Us: A Lenten Retreat

It seems that the beginning of every Lent is accompanied by a question: What are you going to do for Lent? What are giving up for Lent? Of course, there are those things that I intend to do: fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays. Give up chocolate, candy or chips etc. What I am thinking as I am responding to this question is: what is God going to send my way this Lent? It seems to me that often times Lent is not primarily about what I intend to do for God as it is responding to what God sends my way. This is manifested in life circumstances. It could be as simple as being asked to attend an event or provide pastoral care when other things are already on the calendar: things that at first glance seem demanding or cause stress. I think that the Lord is working in and through these experiences. The Lenten challenge is: how to I respond with love to these challenges?

Lent has come our way this year with the Covid-19 pandemic. Our normal way of life is changed by something beyond our control. This can seem scary and difficult. As His disciples, we have confidence that God is working through these events. God is speaking to us through this situation. The question is: what is God saying to us? How are we to respond in love to this Lenten Challenge? God is calling us to go deeper in our relationship with Him. God is giving us an opportunity for a "Lenten Retreat." He is giving us time to spend with Him and our family. On the back of this page are some ideas of how we can enter into this Lenten retreat.

DIRECTIVES FROM THE APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY OF THE HOLY SEE

TO BE USED IN THE DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Can be found on page 3 of the March 23rd Coronavirus Update from the Diocese of Scranton, which can be accessed from the home page of <https://holychildparish.com/wp/>

- Go to church to pray in the presence of the Eucharist. Saint Mary's is open daily from 10 am to 4 pm. Holy Child is open from 9 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday and 12 noon to 4 pm Saturday and Sunday.
- Call Father to make an appointment for the sacrament of Penance or for any spiritual need. (570) 662-3568.
- Pray the rosary, either alone or join together with others living in your home.
- Pray the Stations of the Cross.
- Reach out to other parishioners. Ask for help if you need it.
- Call Senior Helpers, a group organized in Mansfield if you need errands run because you cannot get out. Call Denise Garrison at (585) 808-9902.
- Call Denise Garrison to volunteer if you are willing to help with this much needed Senior Support!
- Write notes, letters or call your family and friends.
- Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet for those dying alone from the Coronavirus.
- "Attend" Mass on television. EWTN broadcasts daily Mass at noon and midnight.
- Light a candle, have a crucifix, stand and sit when appropriate, speak the responses out loud. Make an Act of Spiritual Communion. (See enclosed, there will also be copies in the churches.)
- Schedule your day as much as possible. Plan time for prayer, exercise (even a little), creativity, sing a hymn, sing a song, tell a joke, make someone smile.
- Share any idea you have with the Parish office. We can put them under "Useful Links" on our website or share them with others.