**LENT**

**The ashes remind us that worldliness is like the dust that is carried away by a slight gust of wind. Sisters and brothers, we are not in this world to chase the wind; our hearts thirst for eternity.**

Pope Francis



**This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.**

-Isaiah 58:6-7

**Spiritual Practices During Lent**

During the season of Lent, there are various spiritual practices that can help deepen our relationship with God and foster personal and communal renewal.

1. **Prayer** is a fundamental aspect of the Lenten journey.
* It allows us to communicate with God, seek His guidance, and reflect on our lives.
* Consider participating in an extra weekday mass, setting aside dedicated time for personal prayer, or joining a Lenten prayer group.
* Engaging in these practices can help us cultivate a deeper sense of spirituality and connection with God.
1. **Almsgiving** is another important practice during Lent.
* It involves acts of charity and giving to those in need.
* This can be done through volunteering at a local charity, donating to a worthy cause, or simply reaching out to someone who may be in need of support.
* By practicing almsgiving, we not only help others, but also cultivate a spirit of generosity and compassion within ourselves.
1. **Fasting** is a traditional practice during Lent that involves abstaining from certain foods or activities.
* It serves as a reminder of our dependence on God and our need for spiritual nourishment.
* Consider fasting from a particular food, habit, or activity that may be distracting or hindering your spiritual growth.
* By doing so, you create space for reflection, self-discipline, and a deeper focus on God.

Incorporating these spiritual practices into our lives during Lent can help us embrace the season as a time of personal and communal renewal. By dedicating ourselves to prayer, almsgiving, and fasting, we open ourselves to a deeper experience of God's presence and grace. We can choose to use this sacred time to grow closer to God and to one another. Is that something I might do?

**Reflection questions:**

I. Apart from foods, what other activities might one choose to **fast** from?

 (e.g. bitterness, negativity, gossip, ………..other?????)

ii. Apart from money, what other types of “**alms”** might we consider giving?

 (e.g. kind words, a smile, patience and a listening ear, a hand on a shoulder in difficult times, random acts of kindness to a stranger, the gift of forgiveness to someone who has offended or hurt you,……..other?)

iii. What forms of **“prayer”** are meaningful to you? (When? How?)