Faith Formation Files: Vol. 1, Issue 20 February 24, 2019

Lent will be starting in just over a week. Lent is a time for us to prepare ourselves to celebrate Easter, to be ready to renew our baptismal vows. As the Elect take their baptismal vows we, the Order of the Faithful, will be asked to renew our vows. (Do you believe in God?  Do you believe in Jesus Christ?  Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?) Will we be ready? To get ourselves ready, we pray, fast, abstain, and engage in acts of spiritual self-discipline. It begins on Ash Wednesday, which is March 6th this year. Lent is 40 days long since that is how long Jesus was in the desert fasting and praying before He began His public ministry. (Forty is a traditional number regarding judgement and spiritual testing: the # of days that it rained during the great flood/Noah’s Ark, the # of days Moses stayed on Mt. Sinai with the Lord praying and fasting before receiving the 10 Commandments, the # of days and nights that Elijah walked to get to Mt. Horeb, the # of years the Israelites wandered the desert to give a few examples.) Lent includes the days of Monday through Saturday. Each Sunday is a “mini-Easter” and is exempt from your fasting. But if you give something up for the Lord, tough it out. Don’t act like a Pharisee looking for a loophole. Read Matthew 6: 1-18.

While many of us give up something we typically indulge in such as sweets, our daily latte or Diet Coke, potato chips, wine, or beer, we usually return to allowing such things as soon as Lent is over. But Lent is a time for conversion. It is a time for us to purge our gluttony and greed. We are to rid our lives of pride, envy, and anger. We need to overcome the sins of sloth and lust. The goal is to convert our lives of sin to those that are pleasing to God, to do more than just abstain for the duration of Lent but to root out sin forever. Lent is a time for us to draw closer to Him. Emphasis should be placed on performing spiritual works like attending the Stations of the Cross (we have them every Friday during Lent at 7 pm at CTK and in Lakeview after the Fri 9 am Mass,) attending daily Mass (Mon- noon, Wed- 7 pm, Thurs- 9 am all at CTK, Fri- 9 am at SF,) spending a weekly holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament (we have Adoration on the first Thursday each month and a Holy Hour on the other Thursdays during Lent,) engaging in daily, personal prayer and spiritual reading, and most especially making a good confession and receiving sacramental absolution. Our focus is to repent of sin, to renew our faith and to prepare to celebrate joyfully the mysteries of our salvation.

I strongly encourage you and your family to make this Lent more meaningful. Try a little harder. Do something different. Do something more. Some great online resources include:

* https://www.yourmodernfamily.com/10-lent-ideas/
* http://sacraparental.com/2015/01/16/lent-everything-you-need-all-in-one-place/
* https://catholicsprouts.com/40-faith-building-lenten-activities/

As always, please let me know what I can do to help you.

Blessings,

Julie Gould

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* Sunday, Feb. 24, 4-6 pm at Fellowship Hall: GIFT- Potluck and card-making
* Monday, Feb. 25, 7 pm at St. Francis Church, Lakeview: Adult Enrichment Class