



**Mon. 02/24** *A Day of Prayer for Victims of Cancer*  
 Feast Weekday  
 8:00 AM Mass Health of Parish Friend Helen, C. Smith  
**Tues. 02/25** *A Day of Prayer for Victims of Heart Diseases*  
 Feast Weekday  
 8:00 AM Mass David C. Riley, Tim and Ricki Lantz  
**Wed. 02/26** *A Day of Prayer for Victims of Arthritis*  
 Feast Weekday  
 8:00 AM Mass Bill Conrad, Ed and Lois Simanski  
**Thurs. 02/27** *A Day of Prayer for Victims of Nervous Disorders*  
 Feast Weekday  
 8:00 AM Mass Lois J. Riley, Husband Jim  
**Fri. 02/28** *A Day of Prayer for Victims of Emotional Disorders*  
 Feast Weekday  
 8:00 AM Mass Eric Hockenberry, Jr., Family  
**Sat. 03/01** *A Day of Prayer for Victims of Diabetes*  
 Feast Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
 4:30 PM Mass Mary Moses, Fran Moses  
**Sun. 03/02** *A Day of Prayer for Victims of Addictions*  
 Feast Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
 9:00 AM Mass Coy R. Smith, Sr., B/day Ann., C. Smith  
 11:00 AM Mass Our Lady of Fatima Parish Family

*Lord  
 Jesus  
 Christ  
 Son  
 Of  
 God  
 Have  
 Mercy  
 On  
 Me  
 A  
 Sinner*

**Happy Birthday:**

- 02/25 Carol Riley
- 02/26 Connie McKnight
- 02/27 Adaline Cassarly
- 03/01 Alicia Carper
- 03/02 Shawn Kelly

**Wedding Anniversaries**



*Our Lady of Fatima Pleaded That we  
 pray the Holy Rosary  
 Daily  
 At O.L.F. before each Mass and privately  
 from 8:30am to 7:00pm*

**MONEY MATTERS**

**Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (February 16, 2014)**

164 people Celebrated Liturgy at O.L.F. contributing \$ 1945.00 of which \$ 101.00 accounted for non-envelope contributions.

# Envelopes In Circulation	191	# Used	76	# Unused	115
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Collection One Year Ago = \$ 2,713.00

# The Shrines at Fatima

Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Altoona is engaged in what we consider a Divine Mission to renew our community's appreciation of the Doctrine of the Communion of Saints. We want to insure that all are aware that the souls who have gone before us and have been judged worthy of a heavenly reward retain their accessibility to us through public and private prayer.

One aspect of our renewed devotion to those whom we call Saints is to take home from our communal church experiences at their shrines an on going extension of those prayers prayed. To accomplish this dynamic we are making available individual glass miniature shrines, if you will, dedicated to Saint Peregrine each of which encloses a prayer candle. The complete item costs \$8.00. Additional refill prayer candles for the permanent encasement cost \$3.00 each. Please examine this novel item on the table in the rear of the church. Purchase one for yourself and consider advancing the devotion by purchasing one or more for friends whom you might convince to become part of our little alliance.

We regret that at this time our suppliers are unable to acquire similar mini shrines for Saint John Vianney. The search continues. In time we hope to have similar home shrines to match our church shrines dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul, Saint Leo the Great, Saint Michael, the Holy Family, and most reverently, the Shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima.

Remember all our Church Shrines offer the opportunity for devotional prayer to take place in Divine presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Our shrines are accessible 12 hours each day.



# History of Lent

FR. WILLIAM SAUNDERS

## What are the origins of Lent? Did the Church always have this time before Easter?

Lent is a special time of prayer, penance, sacrifice and good works in preparation of the celebration of Easter. In the desire to renew the liturgical practices of the Church, The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican Council II stated, "The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent -- the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance -- should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis.

It is by means of them that the Church prepares the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God's word more frequently and devote more time to prayer" (no. 109).



Since the earliest times of the Church, there is evidence of some kind of Lenten preparation for Easter. For instance, St. Irenaeus (d. 203) wrote to Pope St. Victor I, commenting on the celebration of Easter and the differences between practices in the East and the West: "The dispute is not only about the day, but also about the actual character of the fast. Some think that they ought to fast for one day, some for two, others for still more; some make their 'day' last 40 hours on end. Such variation in the observance did not originate in our own day, but very much earlier, in the time of our forefathers" (Eusebius, History of the Church, V, 24). When Rufinus translated this passage from Greek into Latin, the punctuation made between "40" and "hours" made the meaning to appear to be "40 days, twenty-four hours a day." The importance of the passage, nevertheless, remains that since the time of "our forefathers" -- always an expression for the apostles -- a 40-day period of Lenten preparation existed. However, the actual practices and duration of Lent were still not homogenous throughout the Church.

Lent becomes more regularized after the legalization of Christianity in A.D. 313. The Council of Nicea (325), in its disciplinary canons, noted that two provincial synods should be held each year, "one before the 40 days of Lent." St. Athanasius (d. 373) in his "Festal Letters" implored his congregation to make a 40-day fast prior to the more intense fasting of Holy Week. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386) in his Catechetical Lectures, which are the paradigm for our current RCIA programs, had 18 pre-baptismal instructions given to the catechumens during Lent. St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) in his series of "Festal Letters" also noted the practices and duration of Lent, emphasizing the 40-day period of fasting. Finally, Pope St. Leo (d. 461) preached that the faithful must "fulfill with their fasts the Apostolic institution of the 40 days," again noting the apostolic origins of Lent. One can safely conclude that by the end of the fourth century, the 40-day period of Easter preparation known as Lent existed, and that prayer and fasting constituted its primary spiritual exercises.

*Nevertheless, I was always taught, "If you gave something up for the Lord, tough it out. Don't act like a Pharisee looking for a loophole."*

Of course, the number "40" has always had special spiritual significance regarding preparation. On Mount Sinai, preparing to receive the Ten Commandments, "Moses stayed there with the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights, without eating any food or drinking any water" (Ex 34:28). Elijah walked "40 days and 40 nights" to the mountain of the Lord, Mount Horeb (another name for Sinai) (1 Kgs 19:8). Most importantly, Jesus fasted and prayed for "40 days and 40 nights" in the desert before He began His public ministry (Mt 4:2). Once the 40 days of Lent were established, the next development concerned how much fasting was to be done. In Jerusalem, for instance, people fasted for 40 days, Monday through Friday, but not on Saturday or Sunday, thereby making Lent last for eight weeks. In Rome and in the West, people fasted for six weeks, Monday through Saturday, thereby making Lent last for six weeks. Eventually, the practice prevailed of fasting for six days a week over the course of six weeks, and Ash Wednesday was instituted to bring the number of fast days before Easter to 40. The rules of fasting varied. First, some areas of the Church abstained from all forms of meat and animal products, while others made exceptions for food like fish. For example, Pope St. Gregory (d. 604), writing to St. Augustine of Canterbury, issued the following rule: "We abstain from flesh, meat, and from all things that come from flesh, as milk, cheese and eggs."

Second, the general rule was for a person to have one meal a day, in the evening or at 3 p.m.

These Lenten fasting rules also evolved. Eventually, a smaller repast was allowed during the day to keep up one's strength from manual labor. Eating fish was allowed, and later eating meat was also allowed through the week except on Ash Wednesday and Friday. Dispensations were given for eating dairy products if a pious work was performed, and eventually this rule was relaxed totally. (However, the abstinence from even dairy products led to the practice of blessing Easter eggs and eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday.)

Over the years, modifications have been made to the Lenten observances, making our practices not only simple but also easy. Ash Wednesday still marks the beginning of Lent, which lasts for 40 days, not including Sundays. The present fasting and abstinence laws are very simple: On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the faithful fast (having only one full meal a day and smaller snacks to keep up one's strength) and abstain from meat; on the other Fridays of Lent, the faithful abstain from meat. People are still encouraged "to give up something" for Lent as a sacrifice. (An interesting note is that technically on Sundays and solemnities like St. Joseph's Day (March 19) and the Annunciation (March 25), one is exempt and can partake of whatever has been offered up for Lent. Nevertheless, I was always taught, "If you gave something up for the Lord, tough it out. Don't act like a Pharisee looking for a loophole." Moreover, an emphasis must be placed on performing spiritual works, like attending the Stations of the Cross, attending Mass, making a weekly holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament, taking time for personal prayer and spiritual reading and most especially making a good confession and receiving sacramental absolution. Although the practices may have evolved over the centuries, the focus remains the same: to repent of sin, to renew our faith and to prepare to celebrate joyfully the mysteries of our salvation.

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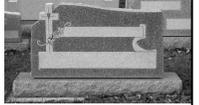
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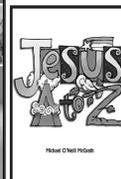
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