

YOUTH NEWS

March • www.stpatricksmauston.com • (608)847-6054

How to Live Your Lent with Purpose by SAM BREBNER

Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel.

I was brought up Catholic, so I've been hearing these words every Ash Wednesday since before I could even remember. "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel." Not only do these words mark the beginning of Lent, they also reveal its purpose. Lent isn't about giving up chocolate, or ice-cream, or social media. At its heart, Lent is about turning away from sin, and being faithful to the gospel. Now, I don't know if you've tried turning away from sin and being faithful to the gospel, but let me tell you, it doesn't happen instantly. No one achieves Mother-Teresa-level-holiness overnight. It's a journey—but so is Lent! There are three areas in particular that the Church teaches we should try to grow in over these 40 days: prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Prayer: It's no accident that prayer is first on that list. We often get pre-occupied with the "fasting" part of Lent, which focuses on giving something up, but Lent is first and foremost about our relationship with God. In the book of Hosea, God tells His people "I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." Above all else, God desires that we love him and know him. Once, when Mother Teresa was asked how she prayed to God, she said "I look at Him and He looks at me." That was my model for these 15 minutes of prayer each day. It wasn't about having a deep emotional experience or saying a certain number of Hail Marys — it was just about spending time with God.

Fasting: As early as 200AD, before Lent was even called "Lent", the early Church would give things up, or "fast", in preparation for Easter. Fasting has always been recognized as a powerful tool for building self-discipline and helping us to resist temptation. However, there are a couple of ways that we can get fasting wrong during Lent. The first is that we don't take fasting seriously enough. This was me with chocolate. At the most, giving up chocolate for Lent was a minor inconvenience. It didn't challenge me and it certainly didn't help me grow in my faith. The other way we get fasting wrong is by taking it too seriously. I've been guilty of this one as well. A couple of years after making my commitment to pray for 15 minutes every morning, I decided it was time to up the stakes. I was going to give up hot showers. The first few days went well. Each morning, I would force myself under the

We may have had 4 RE nights cancelled, but that wasn't going to stop our Young People! One of the few Wednesday nights that we had class, we took to the streets (State, Dockstader, and Windsor to be exact) and shoveled walkways and driveways that hadn't been touched yet. Our Confirmation II young people came with their shovels and boots, and spent their class time helping the community. It was a great night!

We Have Been Busy! 😊



On the 27th we had the privilege of having Sister Consolata and Sister Mary David come from the Mater Redemptoris House of Formation in La Crosse, WI. We started the evening with a dinner that included the Sisters and 10 young ladies from our Parish that are in High School. They were able to share laughs, and ask questions. After dinner the Sisters talked to our Religious Ed Students about inviting the Holy Spirit into their lives and we finished the night with silent prayer and confession opportunity. Thank you sisters for coming and thank Ms. Benz for the delicious dinner!

March

- 12th ~ Stations of the Cross after 5:30pm Mass
- 13th ~ RE Classes
- 19th ~ Stations of the Cross after 5:30pm Mass
- 20th ~ RE Classes
- 26th ~ Stations of the Cross after 5:30pm Mass
- 26th ~ Holy Happy Hour 6:30pm-7:30pm @ State Street Tap
- 27th ~ No RE Classes

Happy Spring Break!



WHAT'S COMING UP:

April

- 2nd ~ Stations of the Cross after 5:30pm Mass
- 3rd ~ RE Classes
- 7th ~ 10:00am Student Athlete Mass: Baseball/ Softball
- 9th ~ Stations of the Cross after 5:30pm Mass
- 10th ~ RE Classes
- 16th ~ Chrism Mass in La Crosse 10:30am
- 17th ~ RE Classes
- 24th ~ RE Classes
- 28th ~ Divine Mercy Sunday



(continued from front) freezing stream of water and emerge feeling perceptibly holier, like a hermit who had renounced worldly wealth and would only bathe under icy waterfalls. There was just one problem: it was all about me. My commitment to cold showers very quickly became about my sacrifice, my strength of will and how holy it made me feel. I managed to completely miss the point of Lent: growing in my relationship with God. There's nothing wrong with giving up chocolate or hot showers, but here's a question that might help you fast with more purpose this Lent: *Is there anything in your life that is stopping you from worshipping God and serving only Him? Do you struggle with greed — always feeling like you have to own the latest pair of kicks or newest piece of technology?* Fast from making unnecessary purchases. Do you gossip — saying negative things about people behind their backs? Fast from making such comments. Affirm people instead. Use fasting to break free from anything that is holding you back in your relationship with God. **Almsgiving:** Last of the three is giving to others, or "almsgiving." If you're anything like me, it also might be the last of the three on your priority list. I pray every day, I try to fast in different ways each Lent, but the truth is, I'm not great at almsgiving. I'm not great at giving up my money or my time — especially when it means giving until it hurts. Too often, I think the typically Catholic approach to giving is that when we see the collection plate slowly making its way to us at Sunday mass, we reach into our pockets and whatever loose change we pull out, we give. If you want to approach almsgiving with purpose this year, be thoughtful about what you give. It might be donating to a charity you know is doing great work, volunteering at a local outreach centre, or visiting the elderly at a rest home. Whatever it is, make a commitment and stick to it. **Purpose:** One final thing about prayer, fasting and almsgiving — they aren't exclusive to Lent! The purpose of the commitments you make over these 40 days isn't to drop them the moment Lent is over. They're meant to be a solid foundation for living out your faith every day! Lent is an incredible opportunity to start (or re-start) practices that take you deeper in your relationships with God and with the people around you. Don't miss that opportunity.



On our March 3rd Youth Night we had Dodge Ball in the Gym, and then Anna Boppart and Emily Patton led the group in a Prayer reflection with music and silent prayer. It was a fun night, and one that was Youth led. If any of you High School young people have a suggestion or idea, please let Father John or Mrs. Thayer know. We will do our best to make it happen! re@stpatrickismauston.com or snap it to us as well 😊 "The Young Church"



Dear young people, the Church depends on you! She needs your lively faith, your creative charity and the energy of your hope. Your presence renews, rejuvenates and gives new energy to the Church.

Pope Benedict XVI

Not only have we had a lot going on with our Young People we have had quite a few Adult opportunities as well! In addition to our Adult Faith Formation nights and That Man is You... on the 26th we had a Holy Happy Hour on "Prayer, Peace, Now What", on the 2nd we had Ray Weiss here to speak about the "Art of Dying Well", and this past Thursday we started our Book Study. Please join us at one of our next events!

We would love to have you!

"Our hearts were made for You, O Lord, and they are restless until they rest in you." ~St. Augustine