



CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

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Dear Parish Family,

March 27, 2011

Lenten Soup Suppers continue this Wednesday, March 30 at 6:00 pm at St. Mary. This week's speaker is Bishop Cistone and his talk is on the Spirituality of the Mass beginning at 6:30 pm. Stations of the Cross continue on Fridays at 7:00 pm at Mt. St. Joseph. Come and walk the road to Calvary with Our Lord in prayer.

LENTEN FAST AND ABSTINENCE GUIDELINES

FASTING is required of those between the ages of 18 and 59 on **Ash Wednesday** and **Good Friday**. On days of fasting, one full meal and two smaller meals are permitted with **NO** eating between meals.

ABSTINENCE is required of all those 14 years and older on **ALL Fridays of Lent**, as well as on **Ash Wednesday** and **Good Friday**. Abstinence means refraining from eating food items made of or from red meat (beef and pork), animal fat, or poultry.

Saturday April 2 from 4:30 pm - 8:30 pm at Holy Spirit Parish in Shields is a Diocesan Youth Program called Feed the Fire. This includes Mass with Bishop Cistone, a Taco/Nacho Dinner for \$5.00 (please bring money), nationally known motivational speaker Brian Pruitt, Praise and Worship music, and Eucharistic Adoration. The Mass fulfills your Sunday obligation; and it's a great opportunity to visit one of our former pastors, Fr. Dave Parsch!

Tuesday evening daily Mass continues at St. Mary at 8:00 pm followed by Adoration and Compline; ending right around 9:00 pm. This is an excellent opportunity to enhance your prayer life during Lent.

This week Thursday, March 31 at 7:00 pm at St. Mary will be our first Lenten Penance Service. There will be several priests on hand to hear confessions. Also, due to the snow days, we have rescheduled first penance for after Spring Break.

As we continue to move deeper into Lent, please pray for each other and for our parishes. "Seven days without prayer makes one weak!" - so pray! God bless you!

Fr. David

The Faith Explained

Evolution and the Church

What is the Church's position concerning belief or unbelief in evolution? The question may never be finally settled, but there are definite parameters to what is acceptable Catholic belief.

Concerning cosmological evolution, the Church has infallibly defined that the universe was specially created out of nothing. Vatican I solemnly defined that Catholics must "confess the world and all things which are contained in it, both spiritual and material, as regards their whole substance, have been produced by God from nothing" (*Canons on God the Creator of All Things*, n. 5).

Concerning biological evolution, the Church does not have an official position on whether various life forms developed over the course of time. However, it says that, if they did develop, then they did so under the impetus and guidance of God, and their ultimate creation must be ascribed to him.

Concerning human evolution, the Church has a more definite teaching. It allows for the possibility that man's body developed from previous biological forms, under God's guidance, but it insists on the special creation of his soul. Pope Pius XII declared that "the teaching authority of the Church does not forbid that, in conformity with the present state of human sciences and sacred theology, research and discussions . . . take place with regard to the doctrine of evolution, in as far as it inquires into the origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter—[but] the Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God" (*Humani Generis* 36). So whether the human body was specially created or developed, we are required to hold as a matter of Catholic faith that the human soul is specially created; [the soul] did not evolve, and it is not inherited from our parents, as our bodies are.

While the Church permits belief in either special creation or developmental creation on certain questions, it in no circumstances permits belief in atheistic evolution. *Excerpted from 'Catholic Answers: Adam, Eve, and Evolution'*

LENT AND THE RENEWAL OF OUR BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Lent means "springtime." It is the springtime of our life in the Spirit. Lent is a special gift of God to His people. It is an opportunity to imitate Jesus as He fasted forty days in the desert. During Lent, we can walk with the catechumens as they prepare for the greatest event of their lives: receiving the sacrament of Baptism on Easter Vigil. In this way, we can prepare for one of the greatest moments of the year — the renewal of our baptismal promises. This renewal is so important that the Church offers this opportunity on the greatest day of the year, Easter Sunday, at every Mass in every Catholic church in the world. Pope John Paul II has taught: "It is no exaggeration to say that the entire existence of the lay faithful has as its purpose to lead a person to a knowledge of the radical newness of the Christian life that comes from Baptism" (*Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People*, 10).

The renewal of our baptismal promises is the goal of Lent. All our Lenten activities should move us toward this goal. For example, when we go to Confession during Lent, it has an added significance. Our Lenten Confessions should prepare us to reject Satan, all his works, and all his empty promises and to make a deep act of faith in the Father, Son, and Spirit.

When we give alms, pray, and fast during Lent, we should do so secretly and sacrificially (see *Mt 6:1-18*). We should let the Lord put us in a position where we need help, when no one but our heavenly Father knows our need. Then, when our Father provides, we will know that He did it, for He was the only One Who knew our need. Thus we will have a greater faith in our Father. This will encourage us to simplify our life-style, which will give God the Father more opportunities to father us. We will then be in a life-style of ever-increasing faith. This kind of life-style is the best context for renewing our baptismal promises.

When we read, pray, and study God's word during Lent, we are not merely reading for information or inspiration. We are reading to grow in faith, for faith comes through hearing and hearing through the word of God (*Rom 10:17*). With our faith growing deeper, we are preparing to make the greatest act of faith: the renewal of our baptismal promises.

When we see that all the roads of Lent lead to the renewal of our baptismal promises, we understand that a "good Lent" does not merely mean that we've gone to Confession and have been faithful to our

Lenten practices. This is a necessary start, but a good Lent also means:

1. *I have repented of all sin in my life and have gone to Confession. Despite my weakness, by God's grace, I've committed myself to obeying the Lord. Therefore, I can renounce Satan and be protected from his retaliation (see Acts 19:13 ff). I can use my authority over him and bring down his strongholds (see 2 Cor 10:4).*
2. *The extent of my penitential practices has put me in a position where I obviously needed God's practical help immediately. My heavenly Father has fathered me, and I now have a deeper faith than ever before.*
3. *God's word is burning inside me (Lk 24:32). My communication with God is better than ever and my faith is stronger than ever.*

If the Lord has His way, the renewal of our baptismal promises on Easter Sunday will be the greatest act of faith of our lives. Even if we previously have totally committed our lives to the Father, Son, and Spirit, this Easter's renewal of our baptismal promises should not be a re-run. The love which God has poured out on our lives since last Easter should bear fruit in the deepest expression of faith in God that we have ever made.

In preparation for the renewal of your baptismal promises, review the six questions of the baptismal promises: (1) *Do you reject Satan?* (2) *And all his works?* (3) *And all his empty promises?* (4) *Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?* (5) *Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?* (6) *Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?*

Now renew your baptismal promises. Answer "I do" to each of the six questions. Renewing these promises is a way of making a total commitment of our lives to God. This is the most important decision a human being can make. Give your life to the Lord. Decide to live for Him and not for yourself (*2 Cor 5:15*). Respond to His total love with your total love. After making this new act of faith, you will notice major changes in your life.

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