

March 8, 2020

From Fr. Jim . . .

Traditionally, Lent calls us to prayer, fasting and almsgiving. In these ways we align ourselves more according to God's ways and we depend more on God's grace and we can become less dependent on the ways of the world and secular attitudes. Also, we become strengthened to say no to sin and temptation. As Ash Wednesday reminds us and the Gospel from last Sunday: "Repent and believe in the Gospel."

I want to highlight some opportunities for almsgiving or works of charity during Lent that we are being asked to consider doing with all the parishes in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. One opportunity is the Catholic Ministry Appeal (CMA). You have received in the mail an invitation from Archbishop Schnurr to participate in this appeal and to pray about what level of response you want to participate.

Today we hear the Gospel of the Transfiguration of the Lord. As the Lord was transfigured before the eyes of the Apostles, so shall we be transfigured and share in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Paschal Mystery of the Lord is definitely about transforming our lives into sharing the glory of the Lord. The church, in the image of Christ, is likewise about transforming lives and helping all God's people move in the direction of the kingdom of heaven.

The CMA is about transforming lives. Our pledges to the CMA put food on the table for hungry families through Catholic Charities and social services. We help others hear the call to priesthood through vocational outreach and support the education of seminarians, deacons, and lay ministers at the Athenaeum/Mt. St. Mary's Seminary. We assure that chaplains will bring God's presence on college campuses, in hospitals, and in prisons. We bring hope to children with communication difficulties, and their families, at St. Rita School for the Deaf, and we provide continuing support for our retired archdiocesan priests who generously serve us all their lives. Our pledges will help fund new initiatives to encourage young Catholics to more fully engage themselves in the life of the Church, and to reach out to those who have drifted away from the Church.

Also, this is a good time to continue your pledge to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's One Faith, One Hope, One Love capital campaign. Mt. St. Mary Seminary, Retired Fund for Priests and Catholic Social Services are included as beneficiaries in this campaign as they are in the CMA but the majority of the funds in this campaign will be for Catholic education and Catholic Schools, specifically to create affordable tuition rates for anyone who is seeking a Catholic education. There are many good causes that this fund supports.

St. Leo, for many years has participated in Operation Rice Bowl. We are again this year. Information and donation boxes are at the doors of church. This is an almsgiving exercise that the whole family can do together.

Based on last week's Gospel and as our catechumens/The Elect learn to confront sinful ways in their lives and prepare to celebrate the ritual of Scrutiny with us, please try to identify a major temptation in your personal life that could be destructive to you and/or to your family. Focus your energy on it this Lent and pray for a change in your attitude to resist the temptation. Stay in and with the Lord in this and share the victory of God's love and presence over sin and death. Can you also name a temptation against the "diversity in unity" that characterizes our parish? Are there any jealousies, judgements, prejudices, fears, concerns that could be destructive to our unity as a parish? How can we, as a parish community, stay together with the Lord and in the Lord to address these concerns and continue to be a place and a home that welcomes all people?

I encourage everyone to participate in some forms of prayer, fasting and works of charity. Let's celebrate the power of God's love over sin and death and grow deeper in our relationship with the Lord and each other. What transforming love we have been given and such transforming love we can share!

