

Feb. 10-11, 2018

Thoughts from the pastor,

As we are surrounded by white (snow) we now get ready to say goodbye to the green (vestments). This Wednesday is the beginning of Lent. Ash Wednesday is that lovely reminder that without God and the Resurrection there is no hope, only darkness and death. With Resurrection it is glorious, but that has to wait until we prove faithful to the Lord. We fast and abstain during Lent to remind ourselves where our priorities must lay if we are go from death to new life.

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. In addition, Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence.

For members of the Latin Catholic Church, the norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until age 59. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. The norms concerning abstinence from meat are binding upon members of the Latin Catholic Church from age 14 onwards.

We also work on our souls in other ways. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is important. The Lenten insert gives many opportunities for confession and also other opportunities to grow spiritually. The decisions are up to us. Jesus never dragged anyone around. He invited people to follow Him. Some did and some didn't.

Last week I mentioned that [The Catholic Company](#) has a free daily email of the *Morning Offering*. Sign up on your phone or computer and receive a daily email that has the daily readings, a meditation, the daily Divine Office readings from the priest's breviary, and more. For those of you with phones it is a way to have it handy anywhere you go. I was actually able to sign up with very little difficulty. So if I can do it you probably can. The cartoon [Pickles](#) must have been thinking of my tech skills this past week. Grandma Pickles said: "Where've you been? I sent you to the store for eggs and butter an hour and a half ago!" Grandpa replied, "I decided to use the self-checkout to save time. The dang thing kept shouting 'Unexpected item in the bagging area!' And I kept yelling 'There is not, you dumb robot!' Anyway, things went downhill from there, and I'm not allowed in the store anymore." That is me with technology, how are you?

This Monday and most of Tuesday, Fr. Don and I will be at the Benedictine Retreat Center near Schuyler for a clergy conference. I will have my phone but I suggest texting if you need to get ahold of me even though it is not a retreat. Replying to texts makes me feel younger as long as they work.

The following week Alan Ames will be coming to St. Elizabeth Ann Parish on Friday, 2/23, after the 5:30 Mass. There will be no Stations of the Cross that evening. The next weekend will be the Parish Mission. The year St. James is not having a parish mission. Instead they are doing a series on the seven Sacraments. Those talks will be from 7-8:00pm on the 1st through the 5th Sunday of Lent in St. James Church. So there are a lot of ways to learn your faith.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank