



Stronica Proboszcza

The Pastor's Page

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Third Sunday of Lent

Month of Saint Joseph

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

We have all now completed the first two and a half weeks of the holy season of Lent. If you are keeping a count, 18 of the 40 days of Lent are gone. It is important to continuously evaluate ourselves during this special time of year. Have I been to Mass on any of these weekdays of Lent when there was no moral obligation but only the opportunity to show God my love and thankfulness for the gift of His Son and the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist? Have I gone to the Stations of the Cross at church or meditated and prayed over the suffering and death of Christ and what it means for me? Have I showed special kindness, compassion and patience to the people I live and work with as a sign of my sorrow for sin? Have I made some contribution from my own material blessings to help the poor among us? Have I volunteered my time or work in my community or parish to help with special projects going on? What am I planning to do for the other 22 days of Lent? Am I already planning for the Holy Days of Easter and how I will arrange my social life **AROUND** my church attendance, and not vice versa? These are important questions that should fill our minds this day if we are really serious about making this the best Lent ever.

Monday, March 25th – Solemnity of the Annunciation of Our Lord

The Feast of the Annunciation is March 25th, which is exactly nine months before Christmas Day, the day we commemorate Christ's birth. It is the day we remember the Archangel Gabriel's visit to the humble virgin named Mary, when he conveyed to her God Almighty's invitation to play an important role in salvation history. This is the day that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." When Mary responded positively to the angel's request the Holy Spirit came upon her and she conceived in her womb Jesus the Son of God. The Church proclaims this a Solemn Feast Day. Even during Lent we are permitted to rejoice and celebrate. It is a day to recall the holiness of human life and how it begins so vulnerable in the womb. It is a day to look to Mary as the perfect role model in our faith life. She co-operated 100% with the divine will even though she could not fully understand it until much later in her life. The same, of course, is true for us. We will never understand fully what God is doing in our lives and in our world but we know God has a plan and he has revealed our part in the plan through the teaching of His Church. If we only do our part and trust in Him, one day we too just like Mary will understand everything!

Tuesday, March 26th – Feast of the Good Thief, St. Dismas - Świętego Dobrego Łotra

The Gospel of Luke mentions two criminals executed with Jesus on Calvary. The second thief, crucified alongside of the Lord Jesus, not only refused to participate in the mockery of Christ that spewed forth from the mouth of the first, but also chastised his fellow thief as they hung on their crosses and urged him to fear God. He professed his faith in Christ and earned for himself immediate salvation after death. The conversion of the good thief is an example of Divine Mercy as well as the mystery of the power of the cross, which, thanks to the death of Christ, became an instrument of our salvation.

A pious legend originating in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, says the names of these two thieves were Dismas and Gestas. It further says that Jesus and these two criminals had met before their cruel deaths on Calvary, when the two thieves waylaid the Christ Child and His mother Mary and His foster father Joseph on their visit to Egypt. On that occasion, Gestas wanted to rob the Holy Family of the little they had, whereas Dismas dissuaded him and made it possible for the Holy Family to pass in safety. St. Dismas is the patron of criminals, thieves and funeral directors.

Fasting and Feasting

Lent is a season of many different penances. In Polish the whole season of Lent is called Wielki Post/the Great Fast. Fasting should be understood as more than just not eating. It is a spirit of self denial and even it is a desire to stop doing things which are not particularly helpful to our salvation and perhaps replace them with new positive and admirable behaviors. Our Lenten fasting is replaced eventually by Easter feasting. Besides our hams, kielbasa and babka's that we will be eating on Easter Sunday, we can actually begin a kind of feasting right now. Here is an excerpt from a short article I recently came across:

1. Fast from watching television: feast on uninterrupted quality time with others or the peace of silence, in which God's voice can be heard.
2. Fast from bitterness: feast on forgiveness and the peace of soul that comes from releasing pent up negative emotions.
3. Fast from using the internet: feast on the delight of writing to another person using pen and paper or the pleasure of holding an actual book in your hand and reading from it.
4. Fast from gossip: feast on the satisfaction and joy that comes from building up others with our words.
5. Fast from discouragement: feast on the hope which the life, death and resurrection of Christ gives to everyone who believes.
6. Fast from talking: feast on listening to others and coming to know them and their human goodness more and more.
7. Fast from trying to be in control by letting go: feast on letting others come first
8. Fast from complaining: feast on appreciation for the many blessings in your life, all signs of God's goodness.

Deepening Your Prayer Life Seven ways to grow closer to God

#1. Pray in a way that feels natural for you. People don't all pray in the same way, just as not every plant in the garden needs the same amount of moisture. What works for one doesn't necessarily work for another. We need to try on a few prayer styles to see what fits. Customize your prayer life. If you like to write, keep a prayer journal. If you're a person who enjoys reading, read from a prayer book.

If you're a person who enjoys walking, pray while you walk. If you have a long commute to work, use that time for prayer.

#2. Pray like Jesus. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus included this sentence: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," Also, during Jesus' time of deep distress, He asked that His time of trouble be removed, but added these important words: "Yet not my will but yours be done." Pray like Jesus did by placing your life in God's hands with the confidence that "God works for the good of those who love him."

The fact that we cannot always know what is best for us and that what appears to be a burden can become a blessing. A fascinating example comes from a man who was asked to put together a list of things he was grateful for. Though he was a person with many admirable achievements and accomplishments, his gratitude list was as remarkable as it was unusual. This was his "gratitude" list: his first job as a high school janitor upon graduating from college, being laid off from a job due to a bad economy, a diagnosis of melanoma, all the people who did not believe in him.

While that list does not appear in any way to qualify as a "gratitude list," he explained that each one of those "burdens" were actually blessings in disguise. Here's why: Working as a janitor led him to his future wife, the daughter of a fellow janitor, being laid off forced him to jump-start his career as a book illustrator, his cancer diagnosis prompted him to organize events promoting melanoma awareness, all those negative, cynical and critical people fueled his determination to succeed. The lesson in that man's approach is a powerful example of "your will be done."

#3. Pray without words. This is called meditation, and it is highly recommended by the Psalm writers. Some examples include: Psalm 46:10 Be still and know that I am God; Psalm 4:4 Search your hearts and be silent; Psalm 143:5 I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.

Meditation was also recommended by St. John of the Cross: "Learn to abide with attention in loving waiting upon God in the state of quiet." In his book, *The Jesuit Guide To Almost Everything: A Spirituality For Real life*, James Martin S.J., says "being silent is one of the best ways to listen to God, not because God is not speaking to you during our noisy day, but because silence makes it easier to listen to your heart and listen very carefully when God your friend is trying to make a point...If your environment, inside and outside, is too noisy, it might be hard to hear what God your friend is trying to say."

#4. Prioritize prayer. Set aside time, preferably daily, when you will sit quietly and pray. This can be a battle. The battle of prayer, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, is inseparable from the necessary "spiritual battle" to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ: **we pray as we live, because we live as we pray.**

The principal difficulty is: "I don't have the time." Prayer is considered an occupation incompatible with all the other things we have to do. The remedy: make the time for personal prayer.

#5. Pray spontaneously. Whenever you see a need, offer a prayer. Don't hesitate, because prayer delayed is almost always prayer denied. According to St. Augustine, such spontaneous prayer characterized early Christian communities. He noted: "We are told how the monks of Egypt prayed very frequently but very briefly. Their prayers were sudden and ejaculatory so that the intense application so necessary in prayer should not vanish or lose its keenness by a slow performance."

One who seized an opportunity to pray spontaneously is a woman named Carol who was working as a waitress all Thanksgiving Day at a 24-hour truck stop. That day one of her customers was a solo driver. When she brought his plate of food to the table, she noticed that the man was weeping quietly, "I wanted to be helpful so I returned to his table and asked, 'Is there anything I can do to help?'" The man responded with an "I don't think so," explaining that his wife was asking for a divorce. "I wish I could talk to her about it in person, but I'm on the road for three more whole days."

Knowing that those three days would be excruciating for the man, Carol said, "I want you to write your name and your wife's name on this piece of paper." Placing her order pad and pen down on the table in front of him, she said, "I am going to pray for the two of you." He wrote the names down and Carol reassured him of her prayers. She didn't see him again for an entire year but, 12 months later, on Thanksgiving Day again, he was back sitting in her station. "Thank you for your prayers. My wife and I worked things out. In fact we recently had our first baby," he said with a smile.

#6. Pray briefly. Jesus teaches that one model for prayer is brevity. In His parable of the Pharisee

and the tax collector, it's clear that the Pharisee's prayer is far too long-winded and pompous. It's also clear that the other individual in the story – the reviled tax collector – is the one whose prayer is effective by both its sincerity and its brevity – God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Commenting on that seven-word prayer Jesus said: "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God."

And, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus specifically taught: "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words" Recalling these teachings of Jesus about prayer, St. Augustine later wrote: "It was our Lord who put an end to long-windedness, that you would not approach God in too many words, as though you wanted to teach God by your many words. Piety not verbosity, is in order when you pray." Simple, brief prayers such as these are appropriate to offer throughout the day: God, help me. God, strengthen me. God, guide me. God, grant me wisdom, patience, love, insight, etc.

#7. Pray when you don't feel like it. Thomas Merton observed: "True love and prayer are learned in the moment when prayer has become impossible and the heart has turned to stone." Don't permit discouragement, despair or dismay to keep you from prayer. When you just don't feel like praying tell yourself, "I will do it anyway!" and then proceed to do so. Writing on his blog one man said:

"Sometimes even I don't feel like praying – and I'm a pastor. It's normal. Human beings are very fickle. One day you feel like you can take on the world; the next day you feel like you don't want to be in this world. When I don't feel like praying, here's what I do: I pray anyway. And I find that, just like a lot of things in life, once you start doing something, the feeling will follow. **First motion; then emotion.** The main thing is to settle in your head that you absolutely need to pray. It's not an option."

Finally, let your whole life be a living prayer. St. Francis de Sales advised: "Aspire to God with short but frequent outpourings of the heart; admire His bounty; invoke His aid...give Him your whole soul a thousand times a day."

Via Crucis

There are wrongs that cannot be
righted,
And crosses that must be borne.
There are duties that cannot be
slighted,
And thorn crowns that must be worn.

There are griefs that cannot find
comfort,
And wounds that cannot be healed.
There are sorrows so deep
in the human heart,
They cannot be half revealed.

But, oh, let us carry our crosses;
We carry them not alone.
Let us tread over earth's rough places
Even as Christ has done.

Let us bury our bitter sorrows
Deep in His Sacred Heart,
And think what a blessed thing it is
To have in His sorrows a part.

Let us think of the wrongs He
suffered;
Let us think of the Cross He bore;
Let us think of weary journeys;
Let us think of the crown He wore.

Surely the pain and the sorrow
Christ chose for Himself must be best.
Let us follow Him,
then in the Way of the Cross;
'Twill lead unto Heaven's sweet rest.

Life has many choices. Eternity has two.
What's yours?

A Special Time of Grace in our Parish!

Next weekend we observe our annual Forty Hours Devotion.

These three days have the potential to be a time of great grace for our parish, that is, if parishioners take advantage of them. Jesus our Eucharistic Lord will be exposed in the monstrance on the main altar of our church, practically speaking for three days. The purpose of this devotion is to give believers an opportunity to come to the church and quietly pray to our Lord who is present here in our tabernacle day and night ALWAYS! It is a time to contemplate the gift of the Holy Eucharist. This was a costly gift for our dear Lord to give because it required the sacrifice of His life on the altar of the cross. Do you realize that that same sacrifice happens over and over on the altar of our church every time the Mass is offered? Your own salvation is being accomplished right before your very eyes each time you are present at Mass. This is why you should take an active role in the liturgy and make the responses and sing the hymns. You should try to focus on what is happening at the altar and not let yourself be distracted by other business of infinitely lesser importance that waits for you after Mass. How should we adore Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist? We should look at the host devoutly and ask the Lord to strengthen our faith that He is truly present as He said He would be. We should remember the gift He has given us in His Passion, Crucifixion Death and Resurrection and thank Him for this. We should beg Him to share the power of the Holy Spirit with us so we can live in a way pleasing to God our Father. Please don't pass up this wonderful opportunity to grow in your Catholic Faith!

Schedule for the Forty Hours Devotions

Friday, March 29th – 8:00 AM Mass followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in church all afternoon. Confessions will be heard at 6:00 PM. At 6:30 PM Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament will take place. 7:00 Stations of the Cross will be prayed with distribution of Holy Communion.

Saturday, March 30th – 8:00 AM Mass followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in church all afternoon. Confessions will be heard at 3:00PM. At 4:00 PM Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament will take place, followed by the regular 4:30 PM Mass.

Sunday, March 31st – 12:00 noon Tridentine Mass in Latin – *Fourth Sunday of Lent*, followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in church. Confessions will be heard at 2:00 PM, 3:00 PM Gorzkie Zale. **4:00 PM Closing Ceremonies of the Forty Hours Devotion**

The closing ceremony will be followed by a “**Polish**” banquet in our hall. **Maryann Rogowski** is cooking again! Tickets are \$12 and are available now for purchase. Seating is limited.



Easter Lilies



In Loving Memory of Our Beloved Deceased

Once again this year we are offering the Parishioners and friends of Our Lady of the Scapular the opportunity to buy a lily for our sanctuary in memory of a deceased member of their family. The cost is \$25 per lily.

On Easter Sunday a special insert will be included in the Sunday bulletin listing the names of the deceased and those who remembered them in this special way.

At the end of the Easter Season those who purchased a lily are welcome to take it home and plant it in their garden. Any lilies that remain will be planted on the church grounds. 40 lilies will be purchased to decorate our sanctuary. * Note: Money that is contributed toward the church flowers in the envelope provided will be used to purchase flowers for the tomb.

I would like to purchase _____ lily (lilies) in memory of

Enclosed is a check for \$25 for each lily I want to offer.

My Name & phone number: _____