

# JOIN

## Saint Brigid Catholic Church FOR LENT

Please use this as a  
guide for our Lenten  
Parish Activities.



### WELCOME!

We invite you to come and be a part of our Lenten journey. If you are a Catholic who has been away from the church for a while, welcome home! We are so happy you have joined us. If you are not Catholic, please know you are always welcome here at Saint Brigid Catholic Church. We welcome you to join us anytime.

This brochure is meant to assist us on our Lenten journey. It contains information to remind us how we should travel on this journey as well as a schedule to keep us posted on all of our Lenten and Holy Week activities. There are many opportunities to walk with us during this Lenten season beginning with Ash Wednesday. Come as we walk on this journey together.

“Lent stimulates us to let the Word of God penetrate our life and in this way to know the fundamental truth: who we are, where we come from, where we must go, what path we must take in life...”

*Pope Benedict XVI*



**Why 40 Days?** 40 has a symbolic value in the Bible. It reminds us of Jesus' 40 day fast in the wilderness and the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the desert before entering the promised land.

### Lent begins on Ash Wednesday

The ashes are traditionally made of the burned palms from last year's Palm Sunday, worn by Catholics and other Christians on this day. They are a sign of repentance. They are a sign of humility and of mortality, which is why when ashes are distributed, the Minister says "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel" or "Remember that you are dust and to dust, you shall return". We don't wear ashes to proclaim our holiness but to acknowledge that we are sinners in need of repentance and renewal. Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation or a day just for Catholics. Ash Wednesday is a day when Christians renew the three practices of fasting, praying, and giving.

### Why do we fast, pray and give?

**We fast** because choosing to go without something reminds us of our dependence on God and Jesus' sacrifice for us, and teaches us to live in solidarity with the less fortunate Catholics. We abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent as a penance to remember Jesus's death on Good Friday. Many people give up something for Lent which is also a form of fasting.

**We pray** to grow closer to God. We reflect on where we have fallen short of God's hope for us. We pray for forgiveness and ask God to help others and to change our hearts and to help us to be better agents of Christ's love in the world. Pray everyday. Prayer can take place in the silence of the chapel before the Blessed Sacrament, in your homes, at work, taking a walk... really almost anytime. Saint John Paul II was once asked how people should pray. He responded, "It doesn't really matter—just pray!"

**We give.** Jesus says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

What God gives us isn't meant for us to keep to ourselves but to share with others, especially the poor. By following Jesus' example, it invites us to think about how to help create a more just world by giving our money, time or talents.

**Fasting, praying and giving** improves our spiritual well-being by getting rid of all that is unnecessary and to help us to become more mindful of how God is working in our lives. Remember this Lenten road of reflection; ultimately leading to joy. So this Lent, make a donation to a charity close to your heart, reflect on the readings before Mass, give something up, volunteer with your local soup kitchen, give to St. Vincent de Paul, attend the Stations of the Cross, do a random act of kindness. Everyday pray for friends, family, strangers, and our world. Consider all the ways in which you might grow closer to God.

### How to Fast or do Penance?

The Church prescribes general fasting practices for Lent. Those 14 years of age or older must *abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and the Fridays of Lent*. Those between the ages of 18 and 59, if physically able, *must fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday*. These prescriptions are important because we do them together, as a family, and recognize our common struggle for spiritual victory.

In addition, as Catholics, we choose a penance to perform for all of Lent. Penance should get you out of your comfort zone. It should generally not be motivated by mere self-improvement, but rather to address some of our flaws and repeated sins.... to bring us closer to our Lord. Our fasting and penance should be done always in recognition of the fact that Jesus has sacrificed everything for our sake and we desire to respond in love.



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