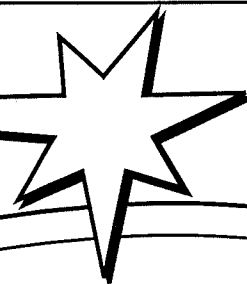


Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

March 2017

St. Therese Catholic School
Ms. Jeanette Donovan, Principal



Thoughtful Moments

St. Dominic Savio

Born to a peasant family in Riva, Italy, St. Dominic became a student at St. John Bosco's Oratory. Even from a young age, he was roundly recognized for his holiness. Dominic also had mystical experiences in prayer that he called his "distractions." He made a resolution to receive Confession and Communion as often as possible and encouraged his peers to do so. He died from a lung infection when he was about 15.



Share the load

Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you" (Matthew 11:29). In Jesus' day, a farmer used a yoke to link two farm animals together to plow a field more effectively. Likewise, when we are wearied by family burdens, we can "link up" with Jesus. He promises to be with us always. If we stay connected to him, he will bring us through any trial.

"Shame not a repentant sinner; remember, we all are guilty" (Sirach 8:5).



Teach children to be cheerful penitents

Invite children to go for a swim or a bike ride, and you'll hear squeals of delight. Ask them to accompany you to Confession and you may hear groans instead. In fact, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is more refreshing than a swim and more strengthening than a bike ride. It is our gift from Jesus to help us experience his grace and make things right with God. Try these tips to brighten the family trip to the confessional:

Establish the background. Explain that Jesus created this Sacrament (Matthew 16:19) not to blame us or "catch" us breaking the rules, but because he loves us and knew we needed help to stay holy.

Work out the jitters. It's normal to be

anxious about admitting wrong and taking responsibility for our actions. Rehearse ahead of time so that it will feel familiar when your child is faced with the real thing. Remind her that she can ask the priest for help.

Build the expectation. Regular Confession will strengthen the entire family.

Pick a set day and time – once a month, for example – so that no one is surprised

when it comes around. Mark it on the calendar and schedule around it.

Celebrate. Then go for a swim or a bike ride to celebrate the entire family coming back into friendship with God.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics fast before Communion?

In the Bible, people fasted before coming into God's presence or doing a special job for him. In addition, the Church recognizes that prayer involves the spirit and the body. By fasting, we prepare our bodies to enter God's presence in



the Mass, as well as preparing our souls.

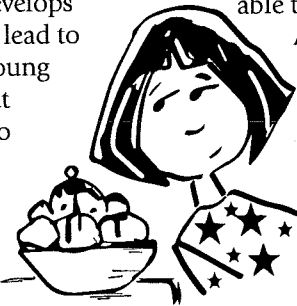
In fasting, we experience a physical hunger, which expresses our spiritual hunger for God. Finally, fasting shows respect for Jesus in the

Eucharist; it's a concrete way to give him top priority.

Help children unwrap the gift of Lent

The Catholic practice of giving something up for Lent – abstaining from a favorite food or activity – develops self-control, serves as penance for sin, and can lead to a greater appreciation of our blessings. Even young children can benefit from a Lenten sacrifice but choosing one that's too hard can turn Lent into a chore. Try these ideas to help choose a rewarding sacrifice:

- Give up something valuable. This can be a favorite dessert, game, toy or activity.
- Make it reasonable. The sacrifice should be



something specific and age appropriate so that she will be able to see it through.

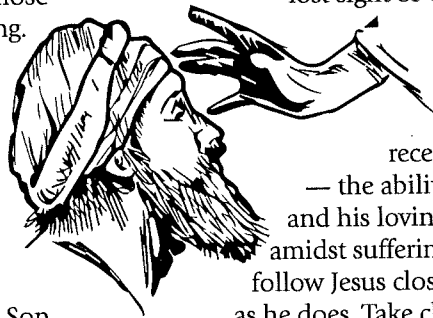
Add back. An alternative to giving something up is to add instead: more prayer, an extra chore, a daily devotion such as the Rosary.

Give up luxuries. Consider encouraging your youngster to pick something that may not be good for him anyway. For example, sweets, soft drinks, or television watching during the week, make healthy choices for Lenten abstinence. He may even decide to do without it when Lent is over.

Scripture LESSON

John 9:1-41, See as Jesus sees

In Jesus' day, it was believed that suffering was a punishment for sin. So, when Jesus encountered a blind beggar, his disciples asked for whose sins the man was suffering. Jesus explained the man's suffering was not for punishment but for God's purpose. His subsequent cure was twofold: Jesus gave the man physical sight which enabled him to believe in Jesus as God's Son.

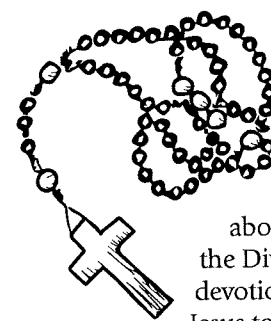


sinner for curing the man on the Sabbath. These Pharisees were so focused on following the Law, they lost sight of God and his priorities.

What can a parent do? In baptism, we receive the gift of faith — the ability to "see" God and his loving plan, even amidst suffering. When we follow Jesus closely, we learn to see as he does. Take children to Mass at least weekly and Confession at least monthly and make prayer part of daily life. That will help to sharpen children's spiritual "vision."

Parent TALK

This year I wanted to shake up our practice of Lent. Normally, we made our usual sacrifices of candy, TV, and video games, and those are all good sacrifices to offer, but I wanted to find a way to make more time for prayer. The



problem is that with young children, it's hard to get through an entire Rosary. Then I learned about the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy. This devotion was revealed by Jesus to St. Faustina, a

simple Polish nun. The Chaplet is prayed on regular rosary beads and takes less time to pray than a Rosary. Even my young children enjoy saying the short, easy-to-remember prayers.

We say the Chaplet together at bedtime. What a great reminder of Jesus' great sacrifice and God's unending mercy! It has become one of our favorite bedtime rituals. Most importantly, it helps us to place our focus on Jesus during Lent.

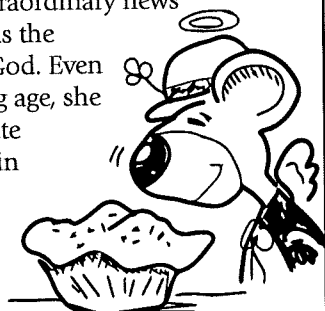
Feasts & Celebrations

March 15 – Pope St. Zachary (752). Born in Calabria, Italy, St. Zachary was pope at a time of civil unrest in Italy. A skilled diplomat, he successfully negotiated peace for Italy on several occasions. He was integral to St. Boniface's German mission and was also a generous patron of restoring churches. He is also known for freeing slaves sold by Venetian merchants.

March 17 – St. Patrick of Ireland (461). Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was the son of a Roman citizen, Calpornius. He was kidnapped by pirates at the age of sixteen and brought to Ireland as a

slave. He escaped but later returned to become the bishop of Ireland and is credited for having established the Church there.

March 25 – The Annunciation of the Lord (1st century). The angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary with the extraordinary news of her role as the mother of God. Even at her young age, she had complete confidence in God's grace and trusted in his wisdom.



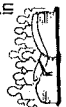



















Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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Lent Family Calendar

 = a day of fasting and abstinence from meat
 = a day of abstinence from meat

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>"Lent is the liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (Easter Triduum). Lent is the primary penitential season in the Church's liturgical year, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying" (<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>).</p> <p>5 After Mass today, explain the Gospel and the homily in terms your children can understand.</p> 	<p>6 Contact Catholic Relief Services (877-HELP-CRS, www.catholicrelief.org) to see how you can help any of their ongoing projects.</p>	<p>7 Invent a new family prayer you can say together each day.</p> 	<p>1 Take your family to an Ash Wednesday liturgy and wear the cross of ashes all day.</p> 	<p>2 Tape a drawing of a vase on the fridge and label it, "Lent." Each day draw a flower in the vase and watch Lent blossom.</p>	<p>3 Share a meatless family meal. Discuss your Lenten offerings to be sure all are doable and sacrificial.</p>	<p>4 Choose a family Lenten offering, such as giving up desserts, attending daily Mass, or praying a family Rosary regularly.</p>
<p>12 Before Mass today, pick a saint represented in one of the statues in your church and find out more about him or her during Lent.</p> 	<p>13 Collect stuffed animals or soft pillows in good condition and bring them to a local nursing home. Older folks love soft things to hug.</p>	<p>14 Ask each person to share a game, toy, or treat with someone else in your home.</p> 	<p>15 Plan how each of you can show kindness or compassion to someone else tomorrow.</p> 	<p>16 Think of someone you don't like and say three nice things about him or her.</p>	<p>17 Figure out how much your family saved by not eating meat today, and put that money in the poor box at church.</p>	<p>18 At bedtime say, "Let's turn our hearts to God and think of him." Sit in silence together for a few minutes.</p> 
<p>19 Light a candle in church today for someone who passed away or who needs special help.</p> 	<p>20 Ask each family member to write a letter to Jesus thanking him for his sacrifice on the Cross.</p>	<p>21 Make cookies and bring them to a nearby nursing home.</p> 	<p>22 Encourage each family member to perform an examination of conscience.</p> 	<p>23 Place a crucifix or picture of Jesus in a central place to keep the focus on him.</p> 	<p>24 Whenever someone does a good deed, put a jelly bean in a jar. Share the jelly beans at Easter!</p> 	<p>25 Ask each person to make a sacrificial offering, such as doing an extra chore without being asked.</p>
<p>26 Laetare Sunday Have a special meal at home or a restaurant to celebrate the half-way point through Lent.</p>	<p>27 Pick a friend or neighbor and perform an anonymous good deed for him or her.</p>	<p>28 Encourage all family members to refrain from bickering today.</p> 	<p>29 Say a short prayer before each cross or crucifix in your home.</p> 	<p>30 Make up a box for a needy family or homeless shelter. Put canned goods, clothing, toiletries, and gently used toys in it.</p>	<p>31 Serve pretzels as a reminder that Catholics used to fast from milk, butter, eggs, cheese, cream, and meat.</p>	<p>1 Make simple crosses out of construction paper. Write on them, "He died for me," and post them around your home.</p>
<p>2 After Mass, light a candle, and recite the Apostle's Creed as an affirmation of faith.</p> 	<p>3 Pray for victims of violence and war in the world.</p>	<p>4 Send a card to someone who might need cheering today.</p> 	<p>5 Give up a favorite toy or treat just for today.</p>	<p>6 Visit someone who is sick and can't leave home.</p>	<p>7 Place any final donations in the box you set up. Make a family trip to deliver it to its destination.</p>	<p>8 Go to Confession or attend a Reconciliation Service. Then go out afterwards to celebrate forgiveness.</p>
<p>9 Have a Palm Sunday procession around the house and take turns playing Jesus.</p> 	<p>10 Take a walk outside and look for signs of new life.</p> 	<p>11 Forgive someone who hurt you today.</p> 	<p>12 Get up 15 minutes earlier than usual today and pray as a family.</p> 	<p>13 Wash and dry each other's feet in commemoration of Jesus washing the feet of his Apostles.</p>	<p>14 Pray the Stations of the Cross today, and meditate on each one.</p>	<p>15 Dress a doll in a white garment and talk about the Baptismal vows we renew each year.</p>