

# THE PARISH OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

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March 2, 2017

Dear Parents,

I encourage you to take time this Lent to...

*"Are you crazy? Do you know how busy I am? I can't take time. I don't have any time!"*

Does it seem like we're busier than ever? Probably it does. Does our busyness enhance our happiness...or better yet, our experience of joy? Well, most likely it doesn't. Joy is something that runs much deeper than happiness. True joy comes from God; nevertheless, our choices can help open us to joy or they close us from it.

The Catholic faith invites us every year at this time to *take time*, to enter into *retreat mode*...to live more reflectively and more attentively to the movement of grace in our lives. The common metaphor is to go out into the desert for 40 days, as Jesus did. Lent is a season of desert grace, where life is quieter and more focused. Or at least it can be, if we choose.

Maybe some of us can take an actual retreat. It's a good thing. However, most of us probably have trouble getting an hour to ourselves these days. So I'm encouraging all of us to find realistic ways we can slow down and take some time to just *be*...to simply rest in God, our heavenly Father, who longs to be close to us.

Why are we so busy these days? Well, there are likely several reasons, but perhaps one is that we tend to dedicate time to things that, at the end of the day, are probably not as essential as they may seem. We might want to ask ourselves, how much time do we spend watching sports? How much time are we on social media? How much time do we spend repeatedly checking our smart phones?

It can be a very good thing to consider what we can trim a bit in order to create some time in our lives to simply stop, to be still, and to allow God into our lives...once again or for the first time. Perhaps we can find a regular pattern to live this Lent that connects us to grace and all the surprises that grace has to offer us. It might be in the car. It might be a regular walk. Maybe some dedicated time for spiritual reading and for prayer; and, yes, to go to Sunday Mass where Jesus nourishes us in both Word and Sacrament.

As we turn down the volume and slow the pace this Lent, we'll be giving ourselves the gift of joy...or at least a chance at more joyful living. In the process, consider how this "pause time" may bless our families, too. We can model this for them. We can practice greater discipline with the phone and other devices that tend to distract us from what really matters in life. As a family, we can venture into the mystery of grace, getting to know our God more personally as well as each other.

Lent, which began yesterday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, is one of the many blessings that comes to us from the Catholic faith. Lent asks us to take time to prepare ourselves to receive the holiest days of our Church year, the Lord's Passion and Easter, and the incredibly good news that it delivers: God, in Jesus Christ, is victorious...over evil, over death...and that victory is ours!

May you and your family live in this peace and joy throughout Lent and in the Easter Season to come.

May God bless you always!



Rev. Scott Thelander, SJC  
Parochial Administrator