

February 11, 2021



Dear Parishioners,

You might have noticed that the past two Sunday gospels have been about healing and the one for this coming Sunday is as well. The previous two, the ones immediately after the conclusion of the Christmas season, were about Jesus calling the first disciples, Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John. Even though the ones called and the people healed are two different groups of people, might there be some relationship between being called and the need for healing? As we move into Lent on Ash Wednesday, February 17, would reflecting on our personal experiences of being called as Catholic Christians and our own need of healing be a good place to start this holy season?

As I shared with the RCIA group last evening, the first feast the Christians of the earliest centuries celebrated was the Resurrection of Jesus, Easter. This was preceded by a time of preparation for those wanting to follow Jesus and join this originally small community, called Followers of the Way. With deadly persecutions occurring, only adults were initiated, since no one wanted their children to be killed. This time of preparation evolved into our Lent and became not only for those coming newly into the community, but also as a period of renewal and recommitment for those already initiated through baptism and the other sacraments.

Lent is 40 days because of the symbolism of this length of time in the Old and New Testaments: the Jewish people spent 40 years wandering in the desert and Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness of Palestine, to name just two. In both situations, there was hardship and there was relief and clarity when the time was over. Remembering that the three main practices of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving, what might each of us be called to during our 40 days? How might we deepen our prayer, perhaps, trying to make it part of our every day instead of just once in a while? In addition to our fasting on Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent, do I need to fast from judging others or being negative? (What form of fasting might those I live with appreciate?) In terms of almsgiving, might this be the Lent when I think about how I regularly spend money on things I don't really need and donate what I save to a relative who's hard-pressed from a job loss or to the Rice Bowl efforts for members of our global family?

May the Holy Spirit lead each of us to make more room for God's presence and guidance in our lives, this Lent!

Sr. Sheral