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ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA

The Greeters Ministry *Serving as a Welcoming Hand to Others*

You never know the impact that a simple “hello” can have upon a person’s life. In a recent homily, Deacon Harry Cramer told the story of a man who fell away from the Church after his wife’s untimely passing. As the years went by, however, the man began to feel an increasing tug on his heart to return to the fold. Yet, having been away so long, he was hesitant. So he started with baby steps, first driving by the nearest Catholic Church simply to find out the Mass times. Then another weekend he made it to the parking lot, while still another he actually made it to the front door. But each time, no matter how close he got, the man would end up leaving, too nervous to actually walk through the doors and participate in the liturgy.

“This all changed, however, one Sunday when he went and there was actually a greeter there ready to shake his hand and open the doors for him,” Deacon Harry says. “From that point on, the man was able to come in because he’d received that welcoming hand.”

Deacon Harry says this is the power of St. Anthony’s Greeters Ministry, a ministry devoted to becoming that welcoming hand to others. A simple ministry in and of itself,



Parish greeters offering a welcoming hand to parishioners as they enter the church building.

greeters are tasked with arriving 15-20 minutes before Mass begins in order to welcome and assist parishioners as they enter our church doors. In doing so, greeters help convey the love of Christ to parishioners and guests alike, cultivating a greater spirit of hospitality here within our parish.

“The greeters are there to make people feel welcome and to make sure that people feel that spirit of hospitality right from

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ST. ANTHONY of Padua
Catholic Church

JOIN US FOR A
**LENTEN
FAITH
FORMATION!**

WISDOM

GOD'S VISION FOR LIFE



During Lent, on Wednesday nights after Mass, we will run Ascension Press' study program on Wisdom literature. This will run for 8 weeks starting on Ash Wednesday and completing the Wednesday after Easter. This faith formation program utilizes short, 25-minute videos along with group discussion following the videos. A simple Lenten soup supper will be held at each session. Please bring a friend, and join us in growing closer to Christ this Lent!

Ash Wednesday Mass @ 6:30pm

***All remaining Wednesday Lenten Masses @ 6:00pm**

"Wisdom" program/discussions to follow each Mass

*Please contact the parish office at 222-5996 if you plan to attend so we know how much soup to provide. Thanks in advance!

In this program, you will...

- Discover what wisdom is (and what it isn't!)
- Learn new habits for increasing wisdom in your daily life
- Gain confidence, through role models and practice, in living according to God's vision

Scripture and the Tradition of the Catholic Church provide an abundance of wisdom, though it can often be challenging to apply it to our lives. In this study, Jeff Cavins and Thomas Smith examine biblical wisdom as it relates to daily life.

Drawing on the wisdom literature of the Bible—Proverbs, Wisdom, Sirach, and Ecclesiastes— Wisdom will teach you how to actively seek out sound guidance and increase your sense of peace in navigating life.

In everything from friendships to finances, from making decisions to attaining peace of mind, Scripture offers a vision for happiness and well-being. With this program, you will learn how to gather, gain, and grow in wisdom, and you will experience the joy it brings to your life.

ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Striving For “The Best Lent Ever” Will Prepare Us to Joyfully Celebrate Easter

Dear Parishioners,

The most important day in February won't come till the very end of the month. Alert parishioners may already have realized I'm referring to Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, which falls on Feb. 26 this year. That means we have most of the month to plan for Lent!

I know what you're thinking right about now: “Father seems particularly happy about getting ready for Lent!” Of course, when we approach Lent in the right way, it will help us get spiritually fit to celebrate Easter. Just as an Olympic athlete goes through a long period of serious training to win a medal, so we prepare during Lent for our great Easter celebration. And “giving up” something during Lent is not supposed to leave a vacuum — we're invited to put something more valuable in its place.

We're all familiar with the three traditional Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These can serve as our framework for how we approach the season of Lent. One might decide, for example, to give up a half hour of television each evening. That doesn't mean you sit and stare at a blank wall for the half hour. Instead, fill it with prayerful reading of the Bible or a devotional book, or praying the Rosary.

Some people decide to forego desserts during Lent (fasting). But just losing weight is not the purpose of Lent!

The goal is greater discipline in our spiritual lives. However, a family can put aside the money saved by skipping desserts and contribute it to a Church-related charity (almsgiving), so that our self-denial can benefit others.

These are just possible examples. There are many ways of combining prayer, fasting, and almsgiving into our daily lives during the Lenten season. The object is to develop a spiritual routine that challenges us but still fits into our lives with our individual responsibilities and schedules.

By the way, most of us will stumble at some point during our Lenten journey. Our first instinct will be to throw up our hands and give up. What we should do is just pick up where we left off and continue to do our best as we proceed on the Lenten journey.

Of course, most of February is Ordinary Time. But that gives us time to figure out what we should do in the areas of prayer, fasting and almsgiving so we can keep our best Lent ever and arrive at Easter spiritually fit.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Tom Donovan
Pastor

Prayer Chain Ministry

The Power of Intercession

“It helps me think more about praying for others, and it’s also helped me to set aside a time to pray specifically for the needs of others. In my life and my family, I’ve seen the results of prayer — and seeing other people’s prayers answered, that reinforces why we’re praying.” — Jan Barnard

For most Catholics, “spending time in prayer” may mean a number of different things — from praying the Rosary, to reading and reflecting on Scripture, to asking God to provide for their needs or the needs of others in their family. However, for a dedicated group of parishioners at St. Anthony of Padua, prayer also means taking time to intercede specifically for the needs of others — sometimes strangers — in our parish and larger community.

“Our Prayer Chain Ministry is a vehicle where people can ask for prayers for themselves or their loved ones in times of sickness or times of tragedy or some other need,” says parishioner Jan Barnard, who began the group over 15 years ago, and currently serves as one of the coordinators.

“It gives you an opportunity to help people,” she adds. “And it gives family members, as well as those in need of the prayer, a feeling of comfort knowing so many people are praying for their request.”

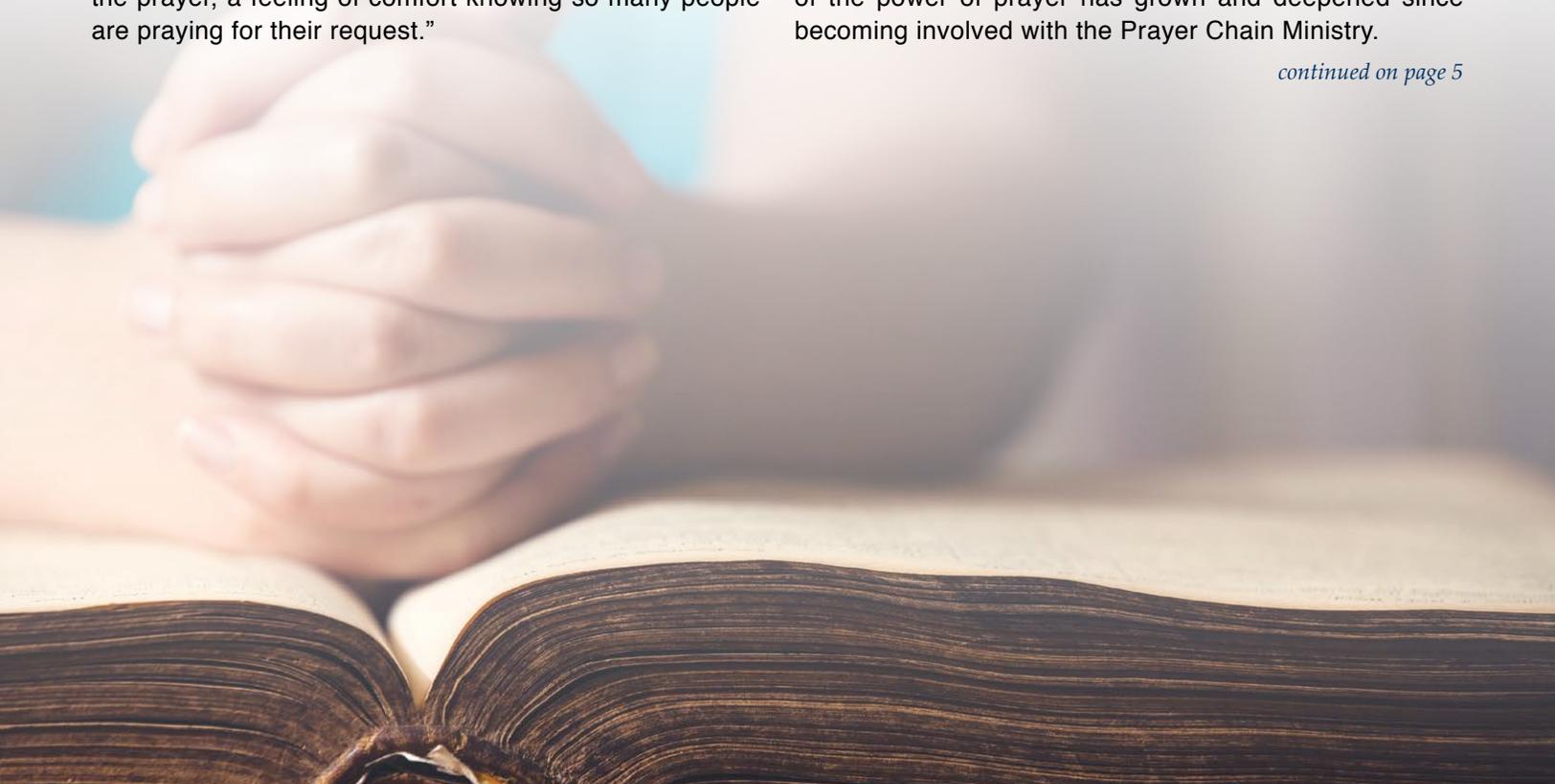
Over 60 people serve with this ministry, and are divided into several groups, led by Prayer Chain captains. When someone receives a prayer request for the Prayer Chain, the captains call all of the people in their group to inform them. Those who are part of the Prayer Chain pray in a variety of different ways, based on their own schedule. In addition, parish nurses and deacons who visit the hospital also share prayer requests with the Prayer Chain.

According to Jan, the Prayer Chain has helped to increase the sense of “family” within the parish, as people are more aware of the needs of others and conscious about interceding for them.

“This ministry helps our church family grow closer as we pray for one another and as we know each other’s many prayer needs,” she says.

Jan has found that her own faith and appreciation of the power of prayer has grown and deepened since becoming involved with the Prayer Chain Ministry.

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ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



Prayer Chain Ministry continued from page 4

“It helps me think more about praying for others, and it’s also helped me to set aside a time to pray specifically for the needs of others,” she says. “In my life and my family, I’ve seen the results of prayer — and seeing other people’s prayers answered, that reinforces why we’re praying.

“It’s good to hear back later — people often tell us, ‘Thank you for the prayers, they really worked,’” she adds. “It’s the power of prayer. God is there for them and they can feel that.”

Jan hopes that people will not hesitate to share their needs with the Prayer Chain, so that the parish family can be praying for them in times of struggle. She also offers an important reminder that needs can be expressed anonymously if confidentiality is a concern.

“There’s no need too small to be included,” Jan says. “If that’s the need you have, we would be glad to pray for it. And if you want, you can ask us to pray for a special intention — God knows who it is.”

She also encourages parishioners to consider serving as a prayer warrior, interceding for the needs of others.

“Our prayer warriors are also enriched by being able to pray for others in this way,” Jan says. “We have all different ages and types of people on our Prayer Chain — it’s something that a lot of people could do, even if they’re working full-time or have a lot of commitments. You can pray on your time and the way you’re accustomed to praying. I think it’s a good fit for a lot of people.”

For more information, to share a prayer request, or to become involved as a “prayer warrior,” please contact the parish office at 217-222-5996, or one of the prayer chain coordinators — Jan Barnard at 217-224-7487 or Carmel Akins at 217-222-7855.

The Greeters Ministry continued from front cover

the very beginning,” Deacon Harry says. “Hopefully, this communicates the welcome of Jesus at the altar and also shows us to be a welcoming parish.”

The simplicity of the ministry makes it one in which anyone from the parish can serve. And since the time commitment is minimal, it’s easy for people to fit greeting into busy schedules.

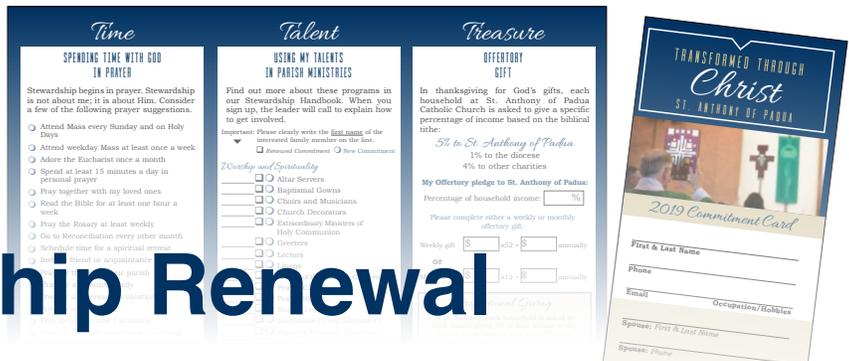
While the service itself may seem small, Deacon Harry says that are abundant blessings that come from it — beginning with smile that appears on the greeted

person’s face when they feel truly loved and welcomed by their faith community.

“It’s one of those ministries that you can do that almost has an instant reward,” Deacon Harry says. “You know you are making that contact — making that difference, especially for someone who is handicapped or even a family with a lot of kids. And it’s a ministry that truly anyone can be part of. We’ve even had some entire families serve as greeters, which is really just a win for everybody.”

Families or individuals interested in joining the Greeters Ministry can contact Deacon Harry Cramer at either 217-224-1160 or deacon@stanthonypadua.org.

Highlights of Our 2019 Stewardship Renewal



This past September, our St. Anthony of Padua parish leadership conducted the 2019 Stewardship Renewal. The Stewardship Renewal gave parishioners an opportunity to discern and make commitments using their stewardship gifts of time, talent and treasure here in our community.

So, this month, we are happy to share with you some of the highlights of the 2019 Stewardship Renewal here at St. Anthony of Padua.

- There were 228 commitment cards received from 54 percent of active parish households.
- There were 1,685 commitments to prayer — the stewardship of time — from 84 percent of participating households.
- Some of the commitments to prayer included: Attend Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days, 181 commitments; Spend 15 minutes a day in personal

prayer, 151 commitments; Pray for the sick of our parish, 152 commitments.

- There were 1,271 commitments to ministry — the stewardship of talent — from 86 percent of participating households. Of these, 149 were new ministry commitments, while 1,122 were re-commitments to parish ministries.
- Some of the commitments to ministry included: Picnics, 188 commitments; Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, 97 commitments; Greeters, 90 commitments; Funeral Dinners, 67 commitments; Prayer Chain, 53 commitments; Church Cleaners, 51 commitments.
- There were 195 offertory commitments — the stewardship of treasure — from 86 percent of participating households. The average pledge was \$2,250.

We thank all those who participated in the 2019 Stewardship Renewal. And if you did not have the opportunity to fill out and return a commitment card, we invite you to consider the ways you may share your time, talent and treasure with God and our parish community!

Sharing in Fellowship and Food this Lent

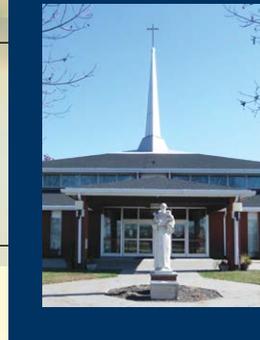
Our Upcoming Fish Frys

Please join us for our upcoming Lenten fish frys!

St. Dominic — Feb. 28, March 13 and 27
 St. Anthony — March 6 and 20, April 3



ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA



Lenten Practices: *Penance and Abstinence*

This Lent, as the world prepares for the anniversary of Christ's death and resurrection, take on a few Lenten practices of your own. In addition to abstaining from meat on Fridays and Ash Wednesday, find a way to share the love of Christ with others through gifts of time, talent and treasure.

For many Catholics, the practice of fasting and abstinence during Lent is as much a part of our faith as is our sacred liturgy. Catholics know that when Lent arrives, it's time to say "goodbye" to meat on Fridays and "hello" to fish sticks and bean burritos. It's almost as if our Lenten obligations were hard-wired into our biological clock at the moment we were baptized.

If there is one thing that Catholics definitely understand, it's adhering to the laws of tradition. Indeed, the tradition of fasting and abstaining from meat during Lent draws its lineage from the early days of the faith.

But why, exactly, do we fast and abstain from meat during Lent? And what are the Church's guidelines for this tradition?

In November 1966, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral statement on penance and abstinence. The statement outlines the Scriptural significance behind fasting and abstinence, and directs the faithful on when it is encouraged and appropriate to do so.

According to the statement, there are four main points the Church wants to make about the tradition of penance and abstinence.

First, all humans are sinners. Second, penance and abstinence are ways to turn away from sin and back to God. Third, the Church is constantly in a stage of ongoing renewal and penance. And finally, Advent, Lent and the vigils of certain feasts are the primary penitential seasons of the Church.

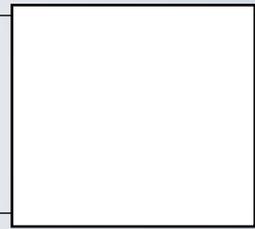
The statement makes clear that the practices of penance and abstinence are tools created to help lead us to Christ — they are not stringent laws designed to cause discomfort and pain. Fasting, abstinence and penance help us to reflect on, and in some way understand, the suffering and selflessness our Lord experienced during His passion and death.

Traditionally, Catholics must abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, which falls on Feb. 26 this year, and Good Friday, falling this year on April 10. And, because Christ died on a Friday, the Church asks us to also abstain from meat on all Fridays during the season of Lent.

Lent is also a time of penance. In preparation for Jesus' death and resurrection, the Church encourages all Catholics to seek forgiveness from sins and to renew their spirits in accordance with the Father's spirit. The overarching goal of

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ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA



2223 St. Anthony Rd.
Quincy, IL 62305
217-222-5996

Return Service Requested

WWW.STANTHONYPADUA.ORG

DAILY MASS: MON, TUE, & THU - 7:30 A.M.

SATURDAY: 4:00 P.M. & 6:30 P.M.

SUNDAY: 8:00 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.

CONFESSIONS: SATURDAY 5:15 - 6:15 P.M.

Lenten Practices continued from page 7

all Christians is to become “one with the Father,” and penance and abstinence help us attempt to do that.

But Lent isn't just about what we aren't “allowed” to do. The Church encourages us all to seek ways to alleviate the pain and suffering of others — just as Christ lifted the burden of sin from the spirit of humankind — “by special solicitude for the sick, the poor, the underprivileged, the imprisoned, the bedridden, the discouraged, the stranger, the lonely, and persons of other color, nationalities, or backgrounds than our own” (Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence, 15).

This Lent, as the world prepares for the anniversary of Christ's death and resurrection, take on a few Lenten practices of your own. In addition to abstaining from meat on Fridays and Ash Wednesday, find a way to share the love of Christ with others through gifts of time, talent and treasure. The life of a disciple, as outlined in the Gospels, requires a renewed heart and a penitent soul. Seek to understand this Lent, in some small way, the magnitude of our Lord's suffering and love.



To learn more about stewardship at St. Anthony of Padua, please contact the Stewardship Committee at stanthonystewardship2015@gmail.com.