

The Holy Season of Lent is truly a serious time of the year - a time when we carefully analyze purpose and observance. Purpose and observance cannot be taken casually and they should not be placed under repair only at such times convenient to us. Yet, because of our fast life and busy life we give little time and small importance to these concerns. Thank God for Lent! which forces us to stop and ponder! Unfortunately our analysis of purpose and observance and other similar matters of importance can be understood only after proper instruction and direction given by those trained to do just that. Once, when Catholic Life Experience was still in evidence, and the spiritual life was still in practice, there was good direction and example, and the people reacted peacefully and beautifully. This is no longer the case, and for any one of several reasons, the instruction and the learning process has fallen into the hands of those who have only faulty familiarity with Catholic experience and Catholic spirituality and whose working knowledge of the Catholic ceremonial - usually gathered up from out of the computer - is certainly dubious. Without depth, for these, Catholicism is no more than knowing that women's heads should be covered in church; the saying of the Rosary; church-going Sunday mass attendance - someplace; having plenty of Holy Water in the house; not eating candy during Lent, and all of the rest. THIS IS NOT CATHOLICITY AND IT IS NOT THE SPIRITUAL LIFE! Then, there is the matter of VALIDITY! When anything, because of lack of education and theological training, is not clearly understood, it is immediately labeled "INVALID" - and all to the detriment of good people whose will is to save their immortal souls. Men and women who are seriously intent on the salvation of their souls should not be forced to waste precious prayer time discussing theological theses (way above their heads) and pampering the spiritual whims of uninstructed people. During Lent we must put aside this rather sophomoric perception of true Catholic life. Rather, we should work more intently to grasp more firmly the reality of purpose and the purpose of observation. Without this, our entire effort is reduced to a manufactured and mechanical and meaningless and trivia laden religion which profits us nothing.

1. Wednesday, February 17, 1999 is ASH WEDNESDAY -and is a day of complete abstinence and solemn FAST (for all who are supposed to fast).

MASSES IN THE ABBEY CHURCH

6:00 A.M. 8:00 A.M. 7:00 P.M.

ASHES will be blest at the 6:00 A.M. Mass

As is customary, we will bless small packets of ashes. These ashes might be kept in the home as Sacramentals, or they might be scattered about the grounds outside the house, also in the gardens, etc.

2. Stations of the Cross and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament every Friday during Lent at 7:00 P.M.
3. Please pray for all the Sick and Shut-Ins of our Chapels, especially remembering Al Sachs, Iva Roy.
Please remember the REAL NEED of someone who has asked for prayers.
4. MASSES FOR THE WEEK: (Abbot Leonard's)

SUNDAY: For the People of the Chapels
 MONDAY: Dec. Abbot Hilary Dreaper, O.S.B.
 TUESDAY: Dec. Frank Frey, Jr.
 WEDNESDAY: Dec. William Wendorf - Anniv.
 THURSDAY: For the Poor Souls
 FRIDAY: For Geoneva Thomas and Family
 SATURDAY: Special Int. Jeannette Black

LENT

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the center of the Christian Life. For that reason, the Mass is closely connected with the fundamental virtue of humility. The immediate connection between the Mass and humility is the virtue of religion. Religion manifests reverence, modesty, piety, respect, adoration, prayerfulness, devotion and all the rest. Because of these dispositions, religion inclines us to WORSHIP God as we ought, leading us especially to offer God the supreme act of worship - SACRIFICE. The most perfect of all sacrifices is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in which we offer God to God: (no longer the useless offering of bulls and goats).

The act of sacrifice is the most "creaturely" of all the acts of man (every man no matter who or when or where, is inclined toward the act of sacrifice - to something) in that it expresses and epitomises the desire and yearning he has for God. In his act of sacrifice man best indicates his recognition of the greatness of God. Man - at the same time - also recognises that he is no more than just a creature. In his sacrifice man shows that he needs God, that he depends on God and that he owes everything to God - EVERYTHING! Therefore, he immediately bows down in humble adoration, humble petition and humble thanksgiving. When man goes further - when he comes to recognize his sinfulness - he adds humble reparation to these three. And in this attitude of mind - - this point of view - - man is essentially expressing his humility. Therefore, the ends for which the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered are certainly and immediately an expression of humility. The ends imply man's recognition of his own condition of unprofitable nothingness before God. As said earlier (cf. Bulletin #547) our conviction of our own personal nothingness and unworthiness has nothing to do with our own natural sense of inferiority. Humility is primarily concerned with God - - NOT WITH OURSELVES. Sacrifice is for God and God alone!