



The Messenger

February, 2018

Morsels of Faith from Mr. Kuhar



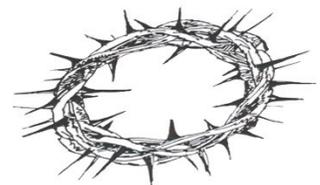
Lent is a word that typically brings to mind the thought that it is time to figure out what I am going to give up this year. As a kid Lent was my least favorite time of year. I just did not look forward to those 40 days that seemed to take forever to end before I could have candy or sweets or watch TV again or whatever it was that I had given up that particular year. It was a time filled with praying the Stations of the Cross and I did not like thinking about the fact that it was my sins for which Jesus suffered and died. Lent was just no fun in my younger self's opinion. Part of the issue was that I did not fully understand the importance of the season and penance and prayer. I did not realize how much God loved me and it was a time set aside to prepare my heart and show God a little love in return for His great love. All I saw, though, was a time of sacrifice as opposed to a time for growth in my relationship with the Lord.

The purpose of our faith is to grow in loving the Lord which in turn leads to growth in loving one another. This is so important. Our goal is to grow in our relationship with the Lord. So often I can lose sight of this very fact. I can see faith as more of a burden or something I have to do as opposed to an opportunity to love and be loved. A chance to come to know more deeply how much God loves me and longs for me to be with Him in heaven once I die.

The other night in class we were discussing this very point and it came about through a great question from one of the students. The question posed was, "What is the line or limit of things we can do and still go to heaven?" After a bit of discussion I asked the students how many of them have ever asked how many ways could they bother or annoy their best friend and still be best friends with that person. They immediately looked at me like I was crazy (which probably happens more than I like to admit). Their response was a resounding, "No! Why would I do something like that?" They had no desire to test the boundaries of their

friendships or even ask that question. I then suggested the question we want to ask is not "what can I do and still go to heaven" but rather "how can I love God and neighbor the best."

I would like to suggest that as we reflect on our Lenten prayers and penances this year we do that with an eye to how we can best love God and express our love to Him and grow in our relationship with Him. I hope during this Lent the idea of penance and prayer be not a burden but rather a time to give back to the Lord and open our hearts to receive the love He wants to shower down upon us. May we ask how we can best love God as we travel through this very holy and blessed season of preparation for the remembrance of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection!



Cindy's Corner



Next week we welcome in the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, February 14, and St. Valentine's Day.



I know you have seen this combination in the stores, Valentine hearts and Easter bunnies (along with a smattering of shamrocks for St. Patrick's Day). Due to such little information known about St. Valentine, the church's liturgical calendar no longer commemorates this day. However, Saint Valentine is still recognized as a saint. We associate Valentine's Day with romantic love and how appropriate as St. Valentine is the patron saint of engaged couples and happy marriages. I would also like to mention that he is the patron saint of young people, travelers, greetings and love in general. I always celebrated Valentine's Day as a family and/or friends day, not wanting anyone to be left out. Somehow we started the tradition of enjoying a nice dinner at Macy's with my immediate family along with friends and family who were the "Loves" in our lives. One year I never got around to sending out Christmas cards so I sent out Valentines instead to those on my Christmas card list. Many

friends let me know how nice it was to receive a Valentine out of the blue. When my children were younger I would have a scavenger hunt around the house with little love notes leading them to the next location and a small surprise. Now we hear of Galentine's Day, a pseudo-holiday that has caught on; it is February 13 when girlfriends meet up and enjoy each other's company. Well I hopped on that band wagon and made some plans.

Speaking of plans it is always helpful for me to plan ahead for the season of Lent. There is that Momism in my head, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." In the envelope this month you will find "Our Lenten Plan". This is a simple guideline calendar to journey through Lent with your family this year. It suggests doing a little something extra each day during Lent. These "little somethings" are simple ways in which we can share God's love with others. Invite your children to come up with some ideas to write in the calendar boxes. Leave the calendar where it can be seen each day and the cross can be colored to show the passage of the time until Easter. Maybe create a little prayer table for the season or leave your plan on your dining table. Also, ask your children what they have planned for Lent. We will be discussing it in the classroom and some students will come home with their own individual plan.

So, no Macy's for a Valentine's dinner this year as it will be Ash Wednesday. These two special days on my calendar coming together on one day this year remind me of our Father's love for us. It was God our Father who loved us first, before we were born, before time began, with no strings attached. God our Father who loved us so much that He sent His son Jesus who laid down His life for us. Indeed there is no greater love than this. His love resides in our hearts and can be shared with another just through a warm greeting, a word of appreciation or a simple compliment. Yes, you are God's beloved, so beautiful in His eyes, He writes these words on your heart: "I have loved you with an everlasting love, I have called you and you are Mine."

A perfect Valentine.



*Remember man
that you are
dust and into
dust you shall
Return.*