

**Saint Francis of Assisi Parish**  
**136 Saxer Avenue**  
**Springfield, PA 19064**

Lent, 2012

Dear Friends in the Lord:

On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, each of us will begin a journey – a journey we have taken many times before. Masses on Ash Wednesday will be celebrated at **6:30 & 8:00AM and 7:30PM**. We will have a Prayer Service at **9:30AM and at 3:30PM**. Our Lenten journey will lead us into the core of our being to root out whatever prevents us from deepening our relationship with God and one another. Ultimately, our journey will lead us to experience the overwhelming love, healing and peace of the Risen Jesus. Any journey needs preparation. How you spiritually prepare for your Lenten journey depends on you. Our provisions for the journey are found in Scripture: **prayer, fasting, almsgiving and good works**.

Our relationship with God will only grow if we spend time with God in prayer. I encourage you to attend daily Mass either here at St. Francis (or attend Mass in a neighboring parish). We also have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every Monday until 8:00PM which is a tremendous way to draw closer to Jesus.

In addition to daily Mass, I invite you to participate in some or all of our Lenten Journey Opportunities that we have listed for you. I encourage you to read the scriptures, pray the rosary as a family, walk the Stations of the Cross before or after Mass or attend Stations of the Cross on the Friday evenings of Lent at 7:30PM. Experience God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance every Saturday at 3:00PM or attend our communal Penance Service on **Monday, April 2<sup>n</sup> at 7:00PM**. Join one of our small faith sharing groups that are now forming.

In addition to prayer, Scripture tells us that Jesus fasted. Fasting is a means of cleansing and purifying our soul. Fasting is also a way by which we unite ourselves with the hungry of the world. I ask you to participate in Operation Rice Bowl by fasting **one day** a week for an end to violence in our city, our nation and for world peace. This Lenten program asks us to have one sacrificial meal a week at dinnertime. The purpose is two-fold: to unite with our sisters and brothers who go to bed hungry every night and also to contribute the money saved from having a sacrificial meal to Operation Rice Bowl.

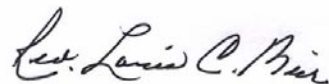
Jesus commands us to **"Love one another."** In addition to prayer, fasting and almsgiving consider performing charitable works. Drive a neighbor to Mass or to the store; participate in our food drive; become involved in a Parish ministry; reach out to someone alienated from the Church and invite him/her to come back to the Sacraments; take the first step in healing a relationship between you and a relative, friend or neighbor.

Our Lenten journey is 40 days. See these 40 days as an opportunity, as a gift from God to draw closer to him. See this journey as a way to become spiritually renewed so that when your Lenten journey ends at the beginning of the Easter Triduum – a new journey will begin with the Risen Jesus – a journey of peace, a journey of love and a journey which will bring you one day to eternal life.

I promise to pray for you daily and I ask for your prayers. May this Lenten Season be a great source of renewal, healing and spiritual growth for you, your family and our parish of St. Francis of Assisi.

With warmest wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Reverend Louis C. Bier  
Pastor