



### VESPERS

You've heard a lot about it, but maybe you're still a little unclear as to what it actually entails. Vespers is a Latin word and refers to Evening Prayer. The early Church consecrated the different times of the day by praying at various hours: morning, noon, evening, etc. (matins, lauds, etc). It used to be that these different prayers (collectively called the Liturgy of the Hours) were considered the sole reserve of monks and religious. Vatican II, however, offered the rich prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours to the entire Church as a way of consecrating the entire day. The beauty of it is that it is the prayer of the whole Church and at any given day or time, somewhere in the world, others are praying the same prayer. If you're interested in learning a bit more, take a look in the blue Sunday Missal book on page 587 and following. There, you will see abbreviated versions of Morning and Evening prayer. Vespers is actually a sung version of evening prayer, and if you find that a bit daunting, relax! We have music ministers who sing most of the really serious stuff. Vespers is a wonderful way to close out your day, to come and sit in the silence, to pray with the community, and to offer praise and thanks to God. This Lent, why not come and give it a try, on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m.

### HOW WE CELEBRATED LENT

Richard, OMI

Growing up in the late '50's and early '60's, Lent was quite different than it is today. Rules for Lent were quite stringent. NO MEAT ON FRIDAYS - PERIOD! Wednesdays were usually meat free as well (part of the Ukrainian tradition). Since fresh fish was scarce on the prairies, especially in winter, we had a lot of pickled herring during Lent. It came in a small wooden cask, usually from Holland. Pretty good fare, we thought. The penance seemed more like a treat. Fridays after school we knew that we had a job - making perogies, since that was a Friday staple. Since the cows were often dry by then, the perogies were potato and sauerkraut, which were still in plentiful supply. No bacon to go with the fried onions. Potato pancakes were for Ash Wednesday, with regular pancakes for supper on Shrove Tuesday. We all had to give up something for Lent (as children it seemed that we gave up everything!). What money we did not spend (10 cents for a movie or 5 cents for candy) went into a jar on the table. At the end of Lent, that went to the Holy Childhood collection at school. We were taught that our penance should help someone else too.

### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The dates for the 7:00 p.m. communal celebrations of the sacrament are:

Mar 13 (STM)

Apr 5 (IC)

Apr 6 (COS)

Apr 11 (SHC)



# THE GRRRAPEVINE

"I am the Vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5)

Number 11

February 26, 2006

### WELCOME TO THE GRRRAPEVINE!

Once again, we invite your feedback, suggestions, etc. to our efforts to communicate more regularly and more effectively with the members of the parish community. You can respond on the website, through email, in writing or in person. Let's keep the dialogue going. Once again, a reminder that our parish website can be accessed at: <http://www.geocities.com/saintmaryspg/>.

### PASTORAL TEAM TIDBITS

Richard: The trip to Vancouver was a good diversion, and the time spent with my Oblate brothers was refreshing. Preparing for the beginning of Lent is taking some time and effort, along with regular parish meetings and diocesan commitments. I will be out to McBride for Eucharist next Saturday, then up to Fort Ware for a pastoral visit March 7-9. Here's hoping the flying weather is good!

Giselle: I'm back from Lay Formation in Terrace and back in the thick of parish life. At the moment, I'm helping out with the sacramental preparation classes, organizing the Rite of Election and of course there's always RCIA and Children's Liturgy of the Word to keep me busy. In between, I try to keep the parish website up-to-date and current!

### SEMINARIAN TIDBITS

Rectorino and Venerando will be admitted to candidacy for ordination at the Chrism Mass on April 3 at Sacred Heart Cathedral. In the meantime, Rectorino continues to live and work at Sacred Heart. Venerando will be returning to Prince George on March 5, and will take up residence at St. Mary's. He will be involved at St. Mary's and in several other places in the area.

### LENTEN/EASTER CUSTOMS

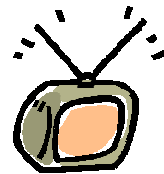
We are looking for Shrove Tuesday and Lenten customs for our next edition, and after that we would welcome Easter customs. Get your pens out and start writing! You can send things to us by email, regular mail, the web page or in the collection basket. (P.S. Did you know that the pretzel is an ancient Lenten custom originating in the 5<sup>th</sup> century in Rome?)

HISTORY OF LENT (COLES NOTES VERSION)

From the very beginning, the early Christian community celebrated the Resurrection of the Lord. By the second century, this celebration extended 50 days, from Easter Sunday to Pentecost. Over time, the early Christians began to prepare for this 50-day festival with fasting and penance, showing solidarity with the catechumens who were being prepared for baptism. This period of fasting and penance was only a few days at first, but was then extended to a week and by the 6<sup>th</sup> century, had become the traditional 40 days. It was still primarily a period in which the entire Christian community fasted, prayed and performed penance in solidarity with the catechumens who were preparing for baptism. With time, and the loss of the adult catechumenate, many of the baptismal overtones of Lent were lost. With Vatican II, the essential focus of Lent as a period of purification for the catechumens and candidates has been recovered.

LENTEN FASTING

One way in which we can help build community and begin our Lenten Fast, is simply by turning off our televisions. It's a sad fact, but the more we watch TV, the less we talk to each other, the less we play with our children, and the less time we have for other activities. It's so easy, to come home, turn on the TV as "background noise" while we're cooking dinner, and then find that after dinner, we slip from sitcom to sitcom, always saying to ourselves, "I really should do something". That doesn't mean that we can't watch ANY TV, but just to limit it a little bit. Turn it off during dinner. Don't turn it on as background noise. Choose the shows you want to watch. But remember... getting into heaven won't be a matter of "How many episodes of Jeopardy have you watched", it'll be "How much time did you spend loving people." So, take control of your remote!!! Phone someone. Go for coffee. Play a game. Come to Mass.



LENTEN ALMSGIVING

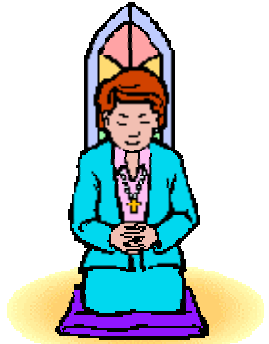
St. Vincent de Paul Society seeks to respond to the needs of the poor in our community, but they rely on our help to do so. We have a collection bin at the entrance of the church to receive food donations. If you are looking for some practical almsgiving, find the column with the first letter of your surname, and contribute some of the items listed in that column to our food bin.

<u>A-C</u>	<u>D-J</u>	<u>K-N</u>	<u>O-Z</u>
Pasta	Canned Meat	Dry/Canned Soups	Peanut Butter
Canned Fish	Rice	Dry/Canned Stews	Flour
Breakfast cereal	Canned/Powdered Milk	100% Fruit Juice	Canned Fruit/Veggies
Pasta Sauce	Canned/Dry Beans & Peas	Infant Formula	Baby Food
Crackers	Cereal bars	Tea	Hot Chocolate

LENTEN PRAYER

Lent is traditionally a time to practice prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We have a variety of different prayer forms to offer you on our Lenten menu:

Ash Wednesday	March 1 (morning Mass)	7:20 a.m.
	March 1 (school Mass)	9:00 a.m.
	March 1 (with Vespers)	7:00 p.m.
Morning Prayer Eucharist	Weekday mornings	7:00 a.m.
	Weekday mornings	7:20 a.m.
Eucharist Lenten Vespers	Monday evenings	7:00 p.m.
	Wednesday evenings	7:00 p.m.
Reconciliation Sunday Vespers	March 13 (STM Parish)	7:00 p.m.
	March 19	4:30 p.m.



ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday is rooted in our early Christian history and in our Jewish heritage. Initially, public and notorious sinners were expelled from the community on Ash Wednesday, highlighting the link between sin and death. Later on, the entire Christian community joined this practice. Ash Wednesday is a reminder to us that without God we are nothing but dust. It is also a solemn entrance into the period of Lent, traditionally a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, when we join with the catechumens in preparing for the Easter Vigil. Contrary to popular thought, Ash Wednesday is not a Holy Day of Obligation (here in Canada, we only have two: Dec 25 and Jan 1). Nevertheless, Ash Wednesday remains popular and is a wonderful jumping off point for the Lenten season.

ASH WEDNESDAY CELEBRATIONS

This year, we are offering three celebrations on Ash Wednesday:

- Eucharist at 7:20 a.m.,
- School Eucharist at 9:00 a.m.
- and Vespers at 7:00 p.m.

Since Ash Wednesday is not a Holy Day of Obligation, ashes may be blessed and distributed outside of a celebration of the Eucharist, for example, at the Vespers celebration. We invite you to attend any of the three celebrations and join the community as we embark on our Lenten Journey of renewal.

