

The Witness

Mount Saint Francis Cursillo Center
Mount Saint Francis, Indiana 47146



You are my witnesses, says the Lord, my servants whom I have chosen [Isaiah 43:10]

Fasting

By: Greg Hamilton

As a convert to Catholicism, fasting has been one of those traditions that I have found foreign and confusing. I participated like most of us do, with only a vague understanding of why I'm doing it. I believed that I was somehow joining in Christ's suffering, or showing God love by paying for some of my own sins, or humbling myself to live like the poor who can't feed themselves regularly, or just dieting since I eat too much on regular basis anyway. Frankly, it didn't make me look forward to the "Lenten Experience."

Why do we fast during lent? Is it just to be good Catholics? That can't be all there is to fasting. Jesus himself fasted from time to time. He even attributed being able to expel particularly nasty demons to fasting and prayer. The Jews of his day fasted often. In fact they were surprised to see that the disciples of Jesus didn't fast. It all makes me very curious about fasting and what exactly we are supposed to get out of the fast?

The first thing I noted while fasting was the constant reminding that I was fasting. Darn it; I'm hungry! That feeling reminded me that I was intentionally giving up something for some reason. It would remind me to say another little prayer for the focus of my fast. I would also be reminded that Christ did this for 40 days, in the desert, preparing himself for his ministry. In the end, I would either leave with a sense of accomplishment that I had completed something difficult, or if I failed my fast, a sense of determination to do better next time.

In his book, Rediscovering Catholicism, Matthew Kelly points out that fasting is a practice of controlling our human desires. "There is a war taking place within you. It is the constant battle between your body and your soul. At every moment of the day, both are vying for dominance. If you wish to have a rich and abundant experience of life, you must allow your soul to soar. But in order to do that, you must first tame and train the body." (pg. 235) It's like the brain teaching the stomach who's boss. OK, maybe that's an oversimplification but in its most basic sense, fasting is saying no when we can

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Lent

By: Brother Ambrose Eischens

The Holy Season of Lent is upon us once again and I believe we must all ask the question of whether Lent this year will be any different than so many others in the past?

*Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel!
Remember, man, that you are dust and to dust you will return!*

Ash Wednesday called us to be faithful (TO LIVE) to the Gospel. All the scriptures for the Mass of Ash Wednesday call us to a deeper relationship – first of all with God....and then with all our brothers and sisters and with all of creation. The ONLY WAY to that deeper relationship is by LIVING THE GOSPEL. Knowing the Gospel is one thing.....LIVING it is another! Lent calls me (and you) to

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Are You Connected?

The Witness is a pretty good newsletter but the information here is just a drop in the bucket. For pictures, archived articles, and the latest Cursillo news, check out what Steve Volpert is doing at our website — www.cursillo.org/mtstfrancis. Then send your email address to msfcursillo@yahoo.com to get meeting reminders and real-time updates.

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say yes to our desires.

This caused me to start thinking how many ways we fail to say no to ourselves. We give in to our desire to get to places faster and speed down the highway. We don't want to wait and save for the fancy new item in the store, so we add one more charge to the credit card. We should sleep more but end up watching late night TV and try to make up for sleep with highly caffeinated drinks. Mostly though, I see examples around food.

I love food. When I was younger and more active, I could eat most anything and it wouldn't affect my body much. Now, just smelling a donut adds a pound of fat to my frame. I know when I was a boy there just wasn't as much candy around my house. It wasn't a matter of saying no, because I couldn't say yes. But today, our candy companies have given us the ability to bring it in by the bucket full.

I've also noticed that when I want to do something nice for someone or give them a gift, my thoughts often gravitate towards sweets. In fact, when my wife and I are dieting, I have to work harder to think of little niceties I can do that don't include food. We are a country blessed with abundant food and we show it. What's more, it's killing us. But fasting has to be about more than just dieting or following rules we should be following any way.

During adult education last year, a seminarian named Peter Marshal gave me a new insight into fasting. He asked if we thought God wanted us to punish ourselves through fasting, or if we had any trouble believing that Jesus paid the full price for our salvation. He said that instead of looking at fasting negatively as denying ourselves, we should take the thing we desire and say, "God I love you more than this and I'm going to prove it." Now fasting becomes a positive personal choice. Further, it opens up a whole world of things we can fast from as an act of devotion.

This thought has changed my whole outlook on the subject. I have even joined a group dedicated to fasting monthly as a devotion to the women in my life. It comes from the passage in Ephesians 5 which talks about loving your wife as Christ loves His Church. You can find more information by going to e5men.com.

It has taken a long time for the development of my understanding of fasting and I'm sure I'm not done learning. There is much power in the fast that I can see but haven't learned to tap yet. Exploring that will just give me something to *chew* on while I fast in the future.

Calendar Of Events

**Pilgrim's Way 3rd Monday 7:00 PM,
March 16, April 20 & May 18**

**Ultreya 4th Monday 7:30 PM,
March 23, April 27 & May 25**

**Men's Cursillo Weekend
Apr 2-5, 2009**

**Women's Cursillo Weekend
Apr 23-26, 2009**



**"Father into your
hands I commend
my spirit"**

Being Seen but not Heard?

By: Charla Perez

If you have not been receiving email information about Ultreya, Pilgrim's Way or other Cursillo events, please contact Charla Perez at ckperez@insightbb.com to update your information. There have been several people whose email addresses come back with "error" messages. So be certain that you contact Charla if you haven't been receiving emails. If you have a "Spam Filter" you might check in this box on your email page. If you happen to find a Cursillo message, click "allow" to prevent the message from being filtered in the future.

**The Following
Cursillistas Need
Your Prayers**

The lost I will seek
out, the strayed I
will bring back, the
injured I will bind
up, the sick I will
heal
Ezekiel 34:16

The Franciscan
Friars

Tony Aemmer

Sharron Barker

Sharon Beck

Keith and Ron

Byerley and Family

Kathy Eberle

Malia Edmonds &

Family

Juanita Engle

Charlie Good

Sally Halas and

Family

Matt Kruer

Eva Libs

Mary Jane Lockett

Patty Lockett

Eunice Luther

Steve Volpert &

Family

Jeanette Voyles

*Please help keep
our prayer list
updated. Contact Sr.
Karen at 812-949-
3189 or send an
email to
karenbyerley
@msn.com*

Lent, Brother Ambrose (Continued from Page 1)

step back, to stop and take another look at our lives. What am I doing or not doing that I should or must be doing? Listen to your heart where God is speaking to you. "Be still and know that I am God" ---- Yes, be still and listen!

The Gospel of Matthew speaks about ALMSGIVING, PRAYER, and FASTING! These are the substance, the STUFF, of our Christian Living – our Gospel living! These really are the opportunities, the challenges to deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ.

ALMSGIVING: So often we think of this as giving money or material things and this is true but for me it is reaching out to our brothers and sisters in need of love, caring, affection, and affirmation. We need to recognize all peoples as our brothers and sisters and show that in some very tangible way.

PRAYER: Yes prayer! We can pray constantly as it says somewhere in the Gospels. We don't need to use words or gestures but simply raising our minds and hearts to God – at all times and in all places.

FASTING: Here we immediately think of refraining from food and drink but I believe there is another form of fasting. My dear friend, Fr. SAM YATES, always spoke of fasting from those sinful things such as gossiping, ridiculing, criticizing, injustices, and the many other things that divide rather than unite. We are called to BUILD UP.....rather than TEAR DOWN.

**"A CLEAN HEART CREATE FOR ME, O GOD,
AND A STEADFAST SPIRIT RENEW WITHIN ME". (Psalm 51)**

AN OUT OF THE BOX LENT

By: William Orberon

As we all know, Lent is a time of growing toward God, through self reflection and mortification. All too often though, it seems that we spend this time focused on self denial alone. Giving up chocolate, soft drinks, red meat, etc. Recently, I was reminded of a different approach, which highlighted Lent in a positive tone.

I bet we all have problems keeping all three legs of the " tripod" balanced. For me, the third leg -- evangelization -- or putting my faith into action, seems to be the hardest of all. Truth be told, it's the leg that requires the most of my self, which explains why I have trouble. Through Lent, we can deny ourselves and, in doing so, positively evangelize at the same time. Here's an example. Volunteer to help at the next parish function, especially if it's not your cup of tea. There's always some Church function that is short handed. Make this your Lenten resolution and follow through.

For others, Holiness may be a problem. " Dry spells" and the world we live in seem to go hand in hand. There's no better way I've found to pray than before the Blessed Sacrament. But, with busy schedules, it can be hard to make it to an Adoration service. So, try praying at your computer -- at the "Virtual Adoration Chapel" . Believe it or not, there really is such a web site, which has a live web cam showing the Blessed Sacrament. It's great for people working at a computer, and you can keep it on screen or minimized all day. This Lent, try having Jesus present in your office and see the difference.

And for those who are having a tough time finding the time or energy to study, try listening to local Catholic radio in the car on the way to and from work. 1040 on the AM dial. Puts the commute, and even rush hour traffic, in a whole new light.

Cursillo 2009

By: Laurie Slusser

Time is approaching for the Men's and Women's Cursillo weekends. The teams are selected and formation has begun. The following team members need your prayers and support:

Men's Weekend Team: Jim Smith (Team Coordinator), Tony Aemmer, Allan Barker, Bill Carrico, Mark Fuchs, Howard Gettelfinger, Gerald McDaniel, Elfren "Joe" Padilla, Carlos Perez, Joe Proctor, Joe Rash, Dave Schickel, Bill Schwender, David Slusser & Sister Karen Byerley.

Women's Weekend Team: Ann Marie Camarata (Team Coordinator), Carol Aemmer, Sharron Barker, Christy Beeler, Sister Karen Byerley, Brother Ambrose Eischens, Pam Cox, Jan Fishback, Stacie Henehan, Sue Kochert, Joann Reas, Gayle Schrank, Lu Simpson, Laurie Slusser & Father Jerry Timmel.

If you know of a baptized Christian that would be interested in growing in knowledge and conviction of Gods love through an encounter with oneself, with Christ and with others on a 3 day weekend, please call Don or Sue Kochert at 812-923-5787 or email them at sbirds1@aol.com.

To print weekend registration forms, to read "What is the Cursillo Movement?" and to see more of what the Mount St. Francis Cursillo Movement is about, log onto the Mount St. Francis Cursillo website at: www.cursillo.org/mtstfrancis.

It is not too late to begin your Palanca for either weekends! Thank you and God Bless!



Secretariat

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Wanted: Your witness articles
 E-Mail your newsletter items to: msfwitness@sbcglobal.net, or mail to: David & Laurie Slusser, 1229 Lafayette Drive, New Albany, IN 47150

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