



Family Faith FORMATION

February

Dear Families,

"O ye ice and snow, bless the Lord: praise and exalt him above all forever." —Daniel 3:70

Here we are in the middle of winter and that places us at the doorstep of Lent, a season that gently invites us to reflect, refocus, and return to what matters most. As parents, we know how easy it is to get caught up in busy schedules and good activities, only to realize we need to realign our hearts and homes with our faith. Lent gives us that opportunity, not to be perfect, but to be intentional.

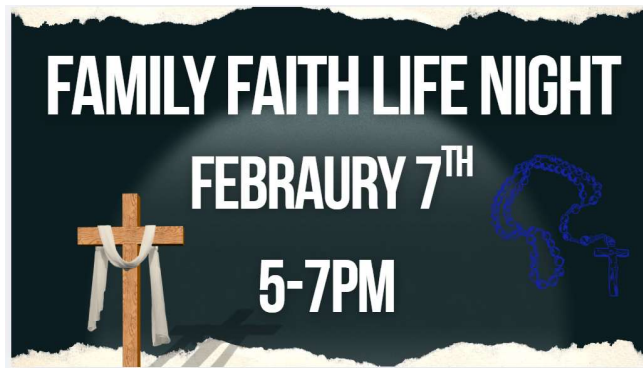
Now is the time to prepare. I have included a small list as a help guide. Does your family have special traditions? On our dining room table I drape a burlap table runner and in the center of the table we place a small jar of beans. When a child makes a quiet sacrifice and is noticed by a parent, they are given permission to move a bean into an empty jar. The goal is to fill the jar, and on Easter the beans are replaced with jelly beans. I also place fake cacti on either side to remind us of our time in the desert.

The most important single thing we can do for a fruitful Lent is to take advantage of the sacrament of reconciliation. It is so timely that the month of February for Family of Faith is focused on this sacrament. It is often called the sacrament of Joy because of the tremendous benefits it gives us. God's love is imparted to the sinner in a profound way through this sacrament. Through this sacrament our sins are forgiven and we are restored to the right relationship with God and the Church. We are strengthened in our resolve to sin no more. It brings about a "spiritual resurrection" in us. It reconciles the sinner in his inmost being, enabling him to regain his true identity as a dearly loved child of God. Frequent confession truly strengthens us in the life of grace and virtue. The Church only requires us to go once a year. I strongly recommend trying to go once a month. It is reported that some Saints went daily. Confession is the key to breaking free of some of the sins that bind us. Remember that "God never tires of forgiving us, it is us who tire of seeking His forgiveness." (Pope Francis).

As always, thank you for the ways you are guiding your children in faith at home. Small, faithful steps truly matter, and God multiplies what we offer.

In Christ,

Pam



Feb 1: St. Brigid of Ireland **Feb 2:** The Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas) **Feb 3:** St. Blaise **Feb 5:** St. Agatha **Feb 6:** St. Paul Miki and Companions **Feb 8:** St. Jerome Emiliani & St. Josephine Bakhita **Feb 10:** St. Scholastica **Feb 11:** Our Lady of Lourdes **Feb 14:** Saints Cyril and Methodius & St. Valentine **Feb 17:** Seven Founders of the Order of Servites **Feb 20:** Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto (of Fatima) **Feb 22:** Chair of St. Peter **Feb 23:** St. Polycarp **Feb 27:** St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows

Preparing For Lent

1. Write out your prayer, fasting and Almsgiving plans
2. Decide your devotional or reading materials
3. Plan time each day to sit in silence with the Lord
4. Have purple cloth to put over sacramentals
5. Talk to your children about what Lent is
6. Check Ash Wednesday's mass times
7. Which Stations of the Cross to do home or church
8. Decide when will you go to confession during Lent
9. Figure out new meatless meals Plan Holy Week learning activities for family
10. Get an idea of what Easter will look like
11. Have your spring cleaning list ready
12. Have Easter 'gifts' completely bought

