

Pastor's Column

Rev. Michael Ratajczak
michaelsr@stmoside.org
760-758-4100 x100

Faith and Family—Gifts to Be Nurtured

FAITH

By way of a fortune cookie, at the end of a meal in a restaurant, one of the best definitions of faith came my way: "*Faith is the bird that feels the light and begins to sing while the dawn is still dark.*"

Faith is a gift given to us from God to see the world not as the world sees itself, but as God sees it.

We are called to be people of light in a world that is often filled with darkness.

This gift of faith doesn't just maintain itself. It must be nurtured if it is to grow and deepen into a way of life.

The Season of Lent provides an opportunity to tend to our faith. Through the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we have significant moments in which we can "grow the faith."

Why are we called to prayer? Because we do not pray enough! There are 1,440 minutes in the course of every day. How many of those minutes are spent in prayer? How many of those minutes are spent in connecting with God, the source of all that we are and all that we have?

Why are we called to fasting? Because we live life in excess! Be it food, drink, recreation, shopping, time spent "just on me," or negative activities like gossiping, judging, condemning, ridiculing, etc., we live life in excess.

What things are we able to let go of, from which to fast, at least for awhile? And then when we feel the craving, the longing, the desire of that pleasure or activity, can we, in that moment, ask God to come in and fill that emptiness?

We fast in order to make room for God in our lives, to create ever greater space for God to come into our lives and to keep us focused and in the right direction, the direction that leads to God's Reign, and away from the things of this world which are all passing away right before our eyes.

Why do we give alms? There will come a time in our lives when we will die and will have to give all that we are and all that we have back to God. There is no better time than now, to start getting ready, by giving alms.

Our closets are full, our garages are full, our storage units are full, our wallets and bank accounts are full. We are the richest nation on the face of the earth.

Giving alms now helps us to ready ourselves for the ultimate give-a-way!

And it provides for those who have less than us and are in need of the basic elements of life!

FAMILY

Faith is not just personal; it is also communal. We live our faith in community with our family, our Parish family, and with the world around us.

Faithful Families, Our Parish Mission, will be held on Sunday, March 29, and Monday, March 30, from 7:00-9:00pm each evening.

The retreat is family focused and family centered. All the details have been and are in our bulletin.

I encourage and challenge every Parish household to join in this Parish Mission. It is an opportunity for the entire family to come together in one Lenten activity, to get refocused, to be nourished, and to be refreshed.

Lent is 40 days. Can you give just 4 hours for this Mission as a Lenten activity to enrich and strengthen your family life?

God is closest to you in the members of your family! Do you see, hear, and feel God's presence?

Faith and family are gifts that need to be nurtured if they are to flourish.

Lent is the time to do so!

Now is the time!

F. Mike