

THE SHEPHERDS WALKING STICK

This Wednesday, February 26, is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the season of Lent. It is not a holiday of obligation, but everyone is encouraged to come to Mass on that day at 7PM to dispose us to the penitential spirit of the season. There will be imposition of ashes within the Mass..... Furthermore, I would like to remind that Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (April 10 this year) are days of fasting and abstinence. Fasting means reducing our food intake. To satisfy the obligation, the least one can do is to take only one full meal during the day and two half meals and, of course, without snacks. Abstinence, on the other hand, means to refrain from eating meat (of warm blooded animals) and meat products (e.g., beef, pork, venison, fowl, sausage, bacon, corned beef, soups and gravies made from meat, etc.). One may eat fish, eggs, meat from reptiles and amphibians (as long as they don't carry the corona virus) as well as dairy products..... All faithful aged 14 and up are bound by the obligation to abstain from meat, while the obligation to fast binds those who are 18 to 59 years old. Exempted from fasting and abstinence are those outside of the age limits, the sick, pregnant or nursing women, manual laborers who do hard labor..... The Fridays of Lent (and in fact all Fridays of the year) are supposed to be days of abstinence (sans the fasting). However, one may substitute it with a work of mercy (NB There are 7 spiritual works of mercy and another 7 corporal works of mercy) or an act of piety (e.g., praying the Rosary, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, participating in praying the Stations of the Cross in our parish every Fridays of Lent at 7 PM, etc.)..... Finally, what's the reason for these obligations? Well, we are embodied spirits (a body with a spirit or a spirit with a body, if you prefer). What we do to our bodies affects our spirits/souls. It is hoped that through the discipline of Lent, the hunger for food will redound to hunger for God especially for the Body of His Son in the Eucharist. Also, the money saved from fasting and abstinence is meant to assist those who have less in life. As the Third Preface for the Mass during

By Father Ramon

February 22, 2020

Lent says, “our self denial should...humble our sinful pride, contribute to the feeding of the poor, and so imitate [God’s] kindness.”