

The Mustard Seed

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February, 2010

Grace and peace be yours,

It seems like we just put the Christmas decorations away and here we stand on the threshold of Lent.

What do you think of when you hear “Lent”? For cradle Catholics that word brings back memories of “giving up” something tasty, of stations of the cross every Friday and lots of tuna casseroles.

But the word “lent” actually has its root in the Anglo-Saxon word for “spring” and connotes “new life”. It is during this holy season, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17, this year, that we reflect on the new life given us at baptism and discern how faithful we have been to our baptismal promises.

New life. It doesn’t come into being effortlessly, does it? There is usually some dying to be done. The young mother-to-be, gives up spicy foods, sleeping comfortably through the night and her previously slender silhouette. The athlete who wants to be a champion gives up sleeping in on the weekend in favor of early morning exercise. Just so, the disciplines of Lent...prayer, fasting and almsgiving...stand in service to the new life God offers us. By paying increased attention to our prayer life, by fasting, by looking beyond ourselves to the neighbor in need and giving alms, we nurture the new life that lies like a seed sleeping under the winter snow.

As we enter the Lenten season then, it is good to remember that it is not an end in itself, but a time of preparation for Easter. Like the catechumens who will step into the baptismal pool and emerge a new creation, we, too, take this Lenten opportunity to die to sin so that we may be more fully “alive for God in Christ Jesus.”

For discussion: If today were Holy Saturday what would I wish I’d done more of during Lent? Less of?

Good News! It’s not Holy Saturday! You still have time!

Love,
Pat

Letters to the Editor Wanted

The feedback I received after last month's issue indicated that a Small Christian Community newsletter is worthwhile to many of you. I even received some "news items" for which I am grateful. That's just the kind of communication that will keep our SCC network thriving.

I especially want to hear "resource reviews" from our groups. Resources arrive here in the office but until a faith sharing group "test drives" one I don't really know how user-friendly it is. If your group has found a resource or a series that has been very good for you, let me know so I can pass the information on the other SCC's



Fifteen Years and Still Going Strong!

Colleen Ahern writes that the Holy Joe Jr's., her SCC, will celebrate fifteen years together this year. While there was some adjustment in membership that first year, the current group of **Colleen and Sean Ahern, Mike and Mary Beth Waickman, Jeff and Sandra Kornick, Paul and Suzanne Horning and Ed and Chris Parisi** have been sharing their faith with one another for fifteen years !

The nucleus of the group began under the tutelage of mentors, Ray and Joyce Cunningham. They have weathered life transitions together, (births, deaths, sending children off to college...) and served as godparents for one another's children. They've reached out to the community at Christmas by adopting needy families and singing carols at nursing homes; they've nurtured their growth through family workshops and conferences at Steubenville. They've even been "guest presenters" are RCIA, teaching prayer and modeling how a SCC works.

Congratulations, Holy Joe Jr's, on your fifteen years of growing together.

PS: Ask them how they got their name!

Speaking of Growing Together...

A Small Christian Community often reads a book together but there are other ways to grow. Consider attending the series of Wednesday Lenten lectures at St. Hilary as a group. You can eat together (soup supper at 6:15pm), pray together (evening prayer, 7:00) and then, at 7:30 pm, listen to an outstanding slate of speakers: Sr. Mary McCormick, Tom Allio, Fr. Michael Denk and Fr. Don Cozzens. Table discussion as part of the evening is made to order for a SCC. This year child care will be offered as well. See the parish bulletin for details