



# Sacred Heart PTO News

February 2012

## Saints and Feast Days for February:

**February 2nd: Presentation of our Lord:** This is the day we commemorate Jesus' presentation at the Temple in Jerusalem. Luke's Gospel (2:22-38) tells us that Simeon recognized Jesus as a light to the nations. We, too, are called to be light and salt for the world.

**February 3rd: St. Blaise:** Bishop Blaise was forced to flee persecution in Armenia in 316 and lived as a hermit in solitude and prayer. Legend has it that he made friends with the wild animals. One day a group of hunters seeking wild animals stumbled upon St. Blaise in prayer, surrounded by patiently waiting wolves, lions and bears. As the hunters hauled Blaise off to prison, the group came upon a mother whose young son had a fish bone lodged in his throat. At Blaise's command the child was able to cough up the bone; hence, St. Blaise has become known as the Patron Saint of throats and throat ailments. Many Catholic churches today hold a special service for the blessing of the throat. "Through the intercession of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from ailments of the throat and from every other evil. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Blessing of St. Blaise).

**February 10th: St. Scholastica:** Twins often share the same interests and ideas with an equal intensity. Therefore, it is no surprise that Scholastica and her twin brother, Benedict, established religious communities within a few miles from each other. Scholastica and Benedict gave themselves totally to God and gave top priority to deepening their friendship with him through

## Save The Date:

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, March 7th at 6:30 p.m. and join us in the Church meeting rooms to hear a presentation by Debbie Nearmyer. Nearmyer is Director of Faith Formation at St. James Academy and Co-director of Camp Kateri Tekakwitha for the Archdiocese. We hope to see you there!

## Mr. Antista Celebrates His 40th Birthday:

A special thank you to all staff and parents who helped us carryout a surprise program after Mass last Thursday to celebrate Mr. Antista's 40th birthday. There was a game-show-style short program after Mass, followed by donuts in the multi purpose center. We were honored to be joined by the St. James Drum Corp who performed at the church and afterwards.



## Important Dates:

<b>WEDNESDAY</b> <b>2/1</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b> <b>2/3</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b> <b>2/14</b>	<b>THURS/FRI</b> <b>2/16 &amp; 2/17</b>	<b>MONDAY</b> <b>2/20</b>
<b>PTO Meeting</b> 6:30pm	<b>Talent Show</b> 1:00pm	<b>Valentine's Parties</b> 2:30pm	<b>No School Conferences</b>	<b>No School President's Day</b>

# Cultivating a Spirit of Sacrifice in Ourselves and Our Children: **Fasting as a Means to Holiness**

**By: Kay Farley**

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*“Likewise in each of the provinces, wherever the king’s legal enactment reached, the Jews went into deep mourning, with fasting, weeping and lament; they all slept on sackcloth and ashes.” Esther 4:3*

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We generally associate sacrifice with Lent, a time when we are asked to make amends for our sinfulness and turn back toward God. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* defines sacrifice as “a ritual offering made to God . . . as a sign of adoration, supplication and communion” (CCC 2099).

It’s important to have a conversation with your children about sacrifice and ridding ourselves of unhealthy attachments. Making a sacrifice such as fasting from our favorite food teaches us self-discipline, which we should want for ourselves and our children.

The goal of our lives is holiness; we should strive toward sainthood. Our means of reaching holiness is through prayer—a close personal relationship with God. However, because we are human and weak, we let ourselves become attached to things that lead us away from God. In our Catholic faith we have many tools to assist us in our quest for holiness, among them are sacrifice and fasting.

When we love someone we are willing to make sacrifices for that person. How much of our time and money do we give up to support our kids in their endeavors such as sports, dance or scouting? How many of us make sacrifices to send our kids to Catholic schools? We don’t keep a tally of everything we do for them because we do it out of love. That’s the whole point of making a sacrifice—to grow in love for others and for God.

Fasting is a form of sacrifice and is defined by the Catechism as “refraining from food and drink as an expression of interior penance in imitation of the fast of Jesus for forty days in the desert” (CCC 538).

By fasting we practice spiritual discipline, asserting control over our bodies and our attachments to food and drink, leaving us free to turn our attention to God. We can fast in a variety of ways, such as not eating between meals or denying ourselves our favorite foods.

It is a good practice to detach ourselves from things we feel a strong desire toward, not just food and drink but other things such as material goods, an activity or favorite pastime, our own opinions or ideas, our selfish desire for comfort. By detaching ourselves from something we love, we are more available to let ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit. Try reading something spiritual, perhaps a passage from Scripture or the life of holy person, such as St. Augustine or Blessed Mother Teresa.

We also can be attached to ourselves, our opinions, ideas and plans. Being self-absorbed prevents us from recognizing the movements of the Holy Spirit within our hearts. We can fast from self-absorption by refraining from worry, from trying to control every aspect of our lives or by not complaining. Maybe we are too attached to our way of doing things, always thinking our ideas are better than others. We can fast from these things by making a conscious effort to listen to others and to be open to new ways of doing things. By practicing detachment from ourselves, we grow in the virtue of humility—a virtue necessary for discerning the will of God in our lives.

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prayer. They sacrificed some of the opportunities they would have had to be together as brother and sister in order to better fulfill their vocation to the religious life. In coming closer to Christ, however, they found they were also closer to each other. In joining a religious community, they did not forget or forsake their family but rather found more brothers and sisters.

## **February 11th: Our Lady of**

**Lourdes:** Mary revealed herself to a young, poor girl, Bernadette, and Lourdes has become a place of pilgrimage and healing, but even more of faith. Church authorities have recognized over 60 miraculous cures, although there have probably been many more. To people of faith this is not surprising. It is a continuation of Jesus’ healing miracles—now performed at the intercession of his mother. Some would say that the greater miracles are hidden. Many who visit Lourdes return home with renewed faith and a readiness to serve God in their needy brothers and sisters. There still may be people who doubt the apparitions of Lourdes. Perhaps the best that can be said to them are the words that introduce the film *Song of Bernadette*: “For those who believe in God, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not believe, no explanation is possible.”

## **February 14th: St. Valentine:**

A kind-hearted Roman priest, he aided young Christians being persecuted by the Roman Emperor, Claudius II, and was imprisoned. While in custody, he converted 46 members of a guard’s family to Christianity. Upon discovering this, Claudius sentenced him to death. He is the patron of love, young people and a happy marriage (by John Sheppard).

## **February 22nd: Ash Wednesday:**

The season of Lent starts today. This day marks the fortieth weekday before Easter Sunday. The day takes its name from the custom of Christians marking their foreheads with ashes in the form of a cross. This striking symbol is a visible sign of the beginning of an inward change of heart. On this first day of the forty, let your outward pride fade into humility of wearing the cross of those who seek forgiveness (*Celebrating Saints and Seasons: Hundreds of Activities for Catholic Children*).

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Abstinence also is considered a form a sacrifice that together with prayer fosters a state of interior penance. Abstinence is defined as the practice of refraining from indulging an appetite or desire.

The Church calls each of us to fasting and abstinence in a special way during the season of Lent.

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**It's important for us to obey the rules of the Church on fasting and abstinence:**

- Every person 14 years of age or older must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent.
- Every person between the ages of 18 and 60 must fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. (one average sized meal a day and a smaller meal in the morning and evening–no food between meals)
- Every person 14 years of age or older must abstain from meat on all other Fridays of the year, unless he or she substitutes some other form of penance for abstinence. Father Craig suggests we think of each Friday as a “mini Good Friday.”

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If you currently do not practice this rule, this might be a good place to start the discussion about sacrifice within your family. Consider making meatless meals on Fridays throughout the year or decide on another form of sacrifice that your family could offer together on Fridays.

In Matthew 6: 16-18, Christ tells his disciples, *“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.”*

Whether you are fasting from food or your favorite pastime, keep it between you and God. Don't be like the Pharisees who made a show of their fasting. Boasting about your fasting success, grumpiness and complaining have no place in the Catholic practice of fasting. We need to call upon the Holy Spirit to assist us in fulfilling our commitment to fasting and sacrifice. Remember, the best way to do this is through prayer.

Family Fun Nights:



**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**The Next**  
**Sacred Heart School**  
**Family Fun Night**  
**will be an evening at the**  
**T-Bones Stadium on**  
**Saturday, May 19th**

## SHOJ PTO Resource Library:



**SHOJ PTO Resource Library is now up and running!** We have a collection of more than 80 resources (books, devotionals, audio CDs) for you to check out and take home with you. These resources are located in the school library. As you enter the library through the double doors, you will see a library cart to your right placed in the corner. On the cart is a clipboard which has a sign-out sheet for you to fill in. We ask that all items be returned within a month and that you mark the items as returned on the check-out sheet. If you are unable to get to the library to check out resources, please contact Charlene Mies at 422-3023 or [charlmies@kc.rr.com](mailto:charlmies@kc.rr.com) and we can make arrangements otherwise. Check out the available resources on the parent page of the school website: <http://school.shoj.org/parents.asp> If you wish to donate any resources to this library, please contact Charlene or you can leave them on the cart marked "donations!"

## Family Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for our family. You have created each of us with special talents and strengths. Help us to use our gifts to glorify You in everything we do. Please help us to seek you first in our thoughts, words, and actions.

In your name we pray,

Amen



## Box Tops for Education:



### CLASSROOM COLLECTION CAMPAIGN

It's that time again. During the week of February 21st-24th (there is no school that Monday), please send in your Box Tops. The classroom with the most Box Tops collected will earn a reward.

Box Tops can be found on a variety of products you have already purchased, such as General Mills, Betty Crocker, Scotts Tissues and more. With each product purchased with a Box Tops for Education label, Sacred Heart earns \$.10.

You can also earn Box Tops by registering online at [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com). There are more than 100 retailers that donate Box Tops to our school when you shop online with them through the Box Tops website, including Gap, Justice, Ann Taylor, Lego just to name a few. Please take a moment to check this out.

**Any questions, contact Misti Ranck at 302-9078 or [mistiranck@hotmail.com](mailto:mistiranck@hotmail.com).**

## PTO Prayer Group:

**Time:** 7:00 to 8:00 pm

**Dates:** Thursday, February 9th

*Location:* Church Mtg Room ~ Groom's Room

**Wednesday, March 28th**

*Location:* Church Conference Room, Lower Level

**Thursday, April 19th**

*Location:* Church Conference Room, Lower Level

## Prayer of Intentions:

1. For the Holy Father's general intention that all people may have access to water and other resources needed for daily life.
2. May we be filled with faith, hope, and charity as we make our sacrificial offerings through the season of Lent.
3. May the Holy Spirit grant wisdom and knowledge to all students who will be taking the Kansas State Assessments.
4. For Fr. Craig, Mr. Antista, teachers, staff, and students that they may feel refreshed after the Christmas Break to begin a successful second half of the school year.
5. For an increase in vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated religious life.