

## *From My Rectory Window...*



Well, we have entered into this holy season of Lent duly fortified with prayer, good resolutions and a bit of a Mardi Gras celebration. Our Mardi Gras party was a great happy event, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus it was well attended with a very New Orleans flavor. A good time was had by all. The *farewell to the Alleluia* on Shrove Tuesday was beautiful and poignant. It is an old monastic custom to literally bury a beautifully written and decorated text of the Alleluia as the last strains of the joyful chant could be heard in the distance. Well we didn't bury it (it's too costly and beautiful) but we covered it in a dark cloth and removed it from the front of the Altar as the congregation sang the last of the alleluias until Easter Vigil when it will be restored amid great joy and celebration. The pancakes so freshly made and the sausages we're equally wonderful. Thank You to the SEAS Pancake Makers who provided us with fresh pancakes and sausages. They were appreciated by everyone who attended (a sizeable crowd); our Parishioner Pat Magnacavello serenaded us with great music, it was great fun. This was the great prelude to the coming of Lent. There is a certain *bright sadness* about this season, bright because it is full of hope for the future (Heaven and the coming Feast of all Feasts which of course is Easter), even as we deal with the temporary sadness of living in this "valley of tears" as the old Hail Holy Queen prayer says so poetically. Lent is that time to grow in self-awareness, as to how we witness to the presence of the Christ whom we call our Lord and savior. Are we a believable example of the truth making us free? Lent has that ability to lead us over the rugged terrain of the spiritual life as we journey to true holiness. It is like looking in the mirror and realizing the need to change. Our scriptural readings for this weekend are classic Lenten readings dealing with the temptation of our Lord in the desert. Temptations can come even in Lent. Once all the hoopla is over in Church and the ashes have washed off, we are faced with that reality. Sometimes forbidden fruit looks really good at a distance and requires constant vigilance. Those of us who live our respective vocations know how there always has to be a reality check. Ultimately it will be God alone who will be enough to fill us up and to cheer us. Let us pray for each other in this time of renewal. We will be beginning our Catholic annual appeal this weekend. We will be showing a very short video at the beginning of the Mass time as is our custom here. Thank you to Mr. Tom Tedesco for all his help in facilitating this annual appeal, which helps with the day to day expenses of our Diocese and the many charitable and life-giving works it is involved in. As a Parish you are wonderful in your generosity, I am planning to contribute towards this yearly goal and hope you will too. Anything which the Diocese will send back to us because of our success will immediately be applied to the HVAC. By the way, the work on the Parish Center HVAC is just about completed (now I have to learn all the techy stuff, to be able to control heating/cooling from my cell phone, shades of Dick Tracey!). The next phase of this project is the Chapel with a renovation of the existing cooling and heating apparatus and the ability of actually turning on and off the heat or cool with the turn of a toggle switch. Amazing! Well family let us pray for each other during this holy season that the Easter joy which we long for will come before we know it. By the way before I forget our **MINI MISSION** conducted by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal begins on the afternoon of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February (this week) with the Stations of the Cross at 3:30 P.M. with Lenten Soup and Bread to follow at about 4:15 P.M. or so. If there is time, then we'll view a film. A Eucharistic Holy Hour will follow at 6:00 P.M. in the Chapel. On Saturday Morning the Friars will preach at 8:00 A. M. Mass. A light Lenten Breakfast will follow with a Eucharistic Healing service in the Chapel at 9:30 A.M. The Friars (all now ordained Deacons) will preach at each of the Masses next weekend. By the way they will be ordained Priests at the end of May. Many thanks for all who prayed for the speedy recovery of our wonderful Organist and Music Minister Terri Lacalandra who is recovering from a broken ankle after a fall early last month. I am happy to hear that she is coming along and hopes to join us again in a few weeks as she has so much to do to prepare for Holy Week and Easter. Thanks to Pat Ipri our visiting organist who helped with covering the Masses and a special thanks to Esther Nardino our visiting organist, who picked up much of the slack with special services, funerals etc. during this time. It's nice to have good friends at a time like this. Peace and all good things.

Blessed Lent:

Your Pastor and servant: Fr. Pat Papalia