



PARISH OF ST. AGATHA
22ND/23RD FEBRUARY 2020

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Parish Mass Times

10am Mass & Rosary
 11am Sat. Mass & Rosary/Adoration
 5.30pm Saturday Vigil Mass
 11.30am Sunday Mass

Eucharistic Adoration

10.30am—1pm Weekdays
 11.00am—12.00pm Saturdays

Confessions After Every Mass



ASH WEDNESDAY— 26th February
Mass Times on Wednesday
10.00am and 5.30pm



LENT: A TIME OF FASTING & SACRIFICE

Lent is an opportunity for us to enter into the spirit of fasting and self-denial. There are great graces received from Heaven when we make a sacrifice for the sake of Christ, who sacrificed His whole life in order to bring conversion to the hearts of humanity. Our fasting continues this work of Redemption, rescuing souls from the devil's grasp. 40 days is the period He asks us to abstain from something we will miss for awhile. It begins next Ash Wednesday 26th February and ends Easter Sunday the 12th April. It is actually over a 46 day period, if we were to include Sundays, but Sunday's are not included in the 40 days, because they are reserved to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus.: the Sabbath Day.

During Lent many people give up the likes of chocolates, cigarettes or alcohol but one can go a lot further by making a heartfelt commitment to give up sinful habits, such as practicing Pride by getting Angry and Impatient all the time. Fast from taking the Name of Jesus in vain. Fast from being rude or disrespectful. Fast from sending sexual texts etc etc.

HATRED ACCOMPANIED BY MISGUIDED ANGER IS A SERIOUS SIN

Today's Gospel (Matt 5: 38-48), is a continuation of last week's Gospel, when Jesus uncovered the cause of sin which is Anger accompanied with Hatred. Jesus instructs us today to love our enemy and not to practice hatred, because this only surrenders to the Devil's commandment to Hate one Another and to make enemies of each other until death. God's Commandment is very much the opposite, which is to love one another, to live in harmony and not fallout. To turn the other cheek, giving away our tunic and walking the extra mile symbolises the practice of humility, charity and forgiveness under difficult circumstances. Someone once said; *Show me your enemy and I will tell you what you are. Tell me your hatred and I will tell you your character.*

GET BEHIND ME SATAN

In another Gospel (Mk. 8:33), when it appeared that St. Peter was attempting to frustrate the mission of Jesus to go up to Jerusalem and die on the Cross, Jesus recognised Satan had possessed his heart. He rebuked him by saying; *Get behind Me Satan.* He did not take Peter's comments personally because He understood Peter had fallen for the devil's trickery, even in the presence of God. This is why Jesus showed such compassion and mercy, as He hung suffering on the Cross. He recognised the ignorant crowd had willingly come under Satan's influence, by venting the devil's hatred against Christ. That is why Jesus took pity on them when He cried out; *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do* (Lk. 23:34).

MERCY IS THE ANTIDOTE

If we entertain hatred in our hearts, then we will surely surrender to Satan's destructive hand in loving relationships. We must show compassion when people offend us knowing that they have allowed Satan to take possession of their hearts. Even though they willingly allowed this to happen, they may not understand it and Mercy is the only antidote to counteract hatred and bring healing to relationships. Jesus instructs us to forgive them because they do not know that they are used by the father of hatred. We must give them another chance and they too, must give us another chance, if we willingly fall to misguided anger.

FORGIVE AS I HAVE FORGIVEN YOU

Jesus says that the sun shines on the good and the bad and that rain falls on the honest and dishonest alike. This means that His Grace falls from Heaven on everybody regardless of their sinful state. However, those who make enemies of each other have rejected this Heavenly Grace. We each can convert hardened hearts by praying for their conversion, as is our duty as Children of God. Instead of fighting with each other, we must *pray for those who persecute us; in this way we will be children of our Father in Heaven.* God is asking us to allow Him to fashion our souls and hearts by His Grace shining down from Heaven and to forgive everyone by shining our own love on those who need the rain of our mercy most. God bless, Fr. Brendan.